

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 20 1980
DATE ENTERED	JUN 30 1980

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Union Meeting House

AND/OR COMMON

The Old Meeting House, East Montpelier Center

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

The Center Road

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

East Montpelier

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Vermont

STATE

Vermont

CODE
50

COUNTY
Washington

CODE
12

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

The Old Meeting House Society

STREET & NUMBER

RD #1

CITY, TOWN

East Montpelier Center

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Vermont

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the City Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Vermont Historic Sites & Structures Survey

DATE

June 1978

— FEDERAL STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

STATE
Vermont 05602

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Meeting House is a 1½-story, 3 x 5 bay clapboarded structure with a central pedimented entrance pavilion and steeple. The pavilion has two six-panel Christian doors with plain surrounds and cap-molded lintels. Two 12/8 windows above the doors illuminate the gallery within. There is a semi-circular louvered vent in the tympanum of the pavilion pediment.

The main block of the meeting house sits on a dry-laid stone foundation which is buttressed at the base with additional courses of stone. The portions of the facade flanking the entrance pavilion are blind walls and the front gable is pedimented. There are 12/12 double-hung windows with clear panes on the sides and rear of the structure. Originally, the windows contained hand-blown glass panes, some of which were still extant in 1969.¹ Thin cornerboards, a simple box cornice with plain fascia, and a plain sill board at the base of the clapboards frame the main block. The fascia and a cap molding return slightly on the rear facade, which also exhibits a round louvered vent in the gable. The original wood shingles which covered the roof were replaced by slate shingles around the turn of the century.²

The three-stage steeple is the dominant feature of the meeting house's design. Its square base straddles the roof ridges of the main block and the lower entrance pavilion and has rectangular louvered vents and a simple projecting cornice. A balustrade with cut-out panels and urns on the corner posts surmounts the roof of this stage. The flushboarded second and third stages are octagonal, with rectangular louvered vents and projecting cornices. An octagonal bellcast roof with a heavy tapering spire and ball ornament topped by a stylized fish weathervane caps the steeple.

The front doors of the meeting house open into a small room which contains stairs to an overhead singer's gallery and two doors to the main meeting room.

The open meeting room has a plastered coved ceiling, supported on a series of central posts. Unpainted, pegged pine box pews face the wide elevated pulpit located between the two doors to the entry. A curved paneled balustrade defines the gallery behind and above the pulpit. Two wood-burning box stoves set in front of the first pews have overhead stove pipes which run the length of the meeting room to the rear chimney. Electrified candle sconces hang from the ceiling.

Also located on the meeting house grounds is a hip-roofed open shelter housing a large bell. The mid-19th century bell was salvaged from the Universalist Church in North Montpelier when that structure was razed in 1954.

¹ Lyman, Dot, "At East Montpelier Center: Special Survivals of a Colorful Past",
Vermont Sunday News, St. Albans, Vermont, August 31, 1969, Page 16.

² Ibid.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1823-1826

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Meeting House at East Montpelier Center, constructed between 1823 and 1826, is an outstanding example of Federal Vermont meeting house architecture. Its significance is greatly enhanced by the fact that both its exterior and interior have retained an unusual degree of architectural integrity. In 1940, a noted authority on Vermont architecture wrote that the Old Meeting House was the ". . . only [meeting house] in Vermont that is now just as it was when the builders finished it . . ." In 1970, a furnace and electricity were installed for the first time.

The Old Meeting House stands on land originally part of a town common set aside by Parley Davis, the first surveyor of the town, who believed that it would be the center of the new town of Montpelier. The first quarterly meeting of the Methodists organizing to found the church took place in this "Center Grove" in 1820. A lease for the site was signed September 9, 1822, with payment pledged in money, beef cattle, butter or pork. Pews were sold for twenty to fifty dollars and were usually paid for in services or in kind.³

Pines from the site and from the "land owned by Carroll Strong, 'northeasterly up the road a piece'"⁴ provided lumber for the building. "In true New England fashion, word of mouth relates that the church was planned and built through community effort, and to this day, none has been able to point to any one of the men who had a part in its building to say: 'This man was its architect; that man, its contractor'"⁵.

In addition to serving several religious denominations for church services, the Old Meeting House was the site of Montpelier's Town Meetings until 1849. In that year, East Montpelier became a separate town, and its Town Meetings continued to be held in the Meeting House until about 1890, when a town hall was constructed.

¹Congdon, Herbert Wheaton, Old Vermont Houses, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1946.

²East Montpelier Bicentennial Souvenir Booklet, 1976.

³Lyman, Dot, "At East Montpelier Center: Special Survivals of a Colorful Past", Vermont Sunday News, St. Albans, Vermont, August 31, 1969, page 16.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet 9-1

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3/4 acre +

QUADRANGLE NAME Montpelier, VT

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 | 619.7 | 310.0 | 4.9 | 10.6 | 10.9.5

B | | | | |

C | | | | |

D | | | | |

E | | | | |

F | | | | |

G | | | | |

H | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Same as property boundary of the Old Meeting House lot.
the deed describing this property is in V.S. P. 527 Montpelier Land Records, Montpelier City Clerk's office (see phone report of 6/26/80).

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Betsy Bouton and Nancy E. Boone, Architectural Historians

ORGANIZATION

Division for Historic Preservation

DATE

March 1980

STREET & NUMBER

Pavilion Building

TELEPHONE

802-828-3226

CITY OR TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

William B. Timmer

TITLE

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

(Signed on 5/13/80 - see phone report of 6/26/80)

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

June 30, 1980

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6/27/80

ATTEST: *Patrick Anderson*

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received MAY 20 1980

date entered JUN 30 1980

Continuation sheet 8-2

Item number 8

Page 2

For many years in the present century, services at the Meeting House were irregular and few. In 1965, the non-denominational Old Meeting House Society was formed and the united church currently shares a minister with the Old Brick Church in East Montpelier (nominated to the National Register April 9, 1980).

The Old Meeting House remains rich in architectural value and historical associations, and is today an important part of community life in East Montpelier Center.

The boundary of the nominated property coincides with the boundary of the Meeting House lot. A line of old trees marks the southern and western boundaries. A road (Town Highway 3) defines the northern edge of the property, and a change to residential use marks the eastern boundary.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received MAY 20 1980

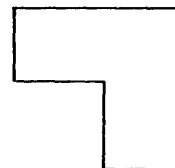
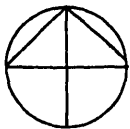
date entered JUN 30 1980

Continuation sheet 9-1

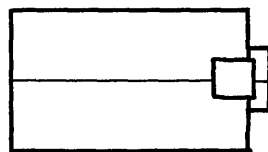
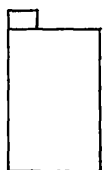
Item number 9

Page 1

- Child, Hamilton, Gazetteer of Washington County, Vermont. Syracuse: The Syracuse Journal Company, 1889.
- Congdon, Herbert Wheaton, Old Vermont Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946.
- Hemenway, Abby Maria, Vermont Historical Gazetteer. Montpelier, Vermont: Vermont Watchman and State Journal Press, 1882. Volume 4.
- Lyman, Dot, "At East Montpelier Center: Special Survivals of a Colorful Past", Vermont Sunday News. St. Albans, Vermont, August 31, 1969. Page 16.
- Sinnott, Edmund W., Meeting House and Church in Early New England. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1963.
- East Montpelier Bicentennial Souvenir Booklet, 1976.
- Copy of original lease for the Meeting House. Copied in 1956 by Ellen Hill.



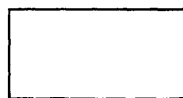
CENTER ROAD (TOWN HIGHWAY 3)



MEETING HOUSE



BELL SHELTER

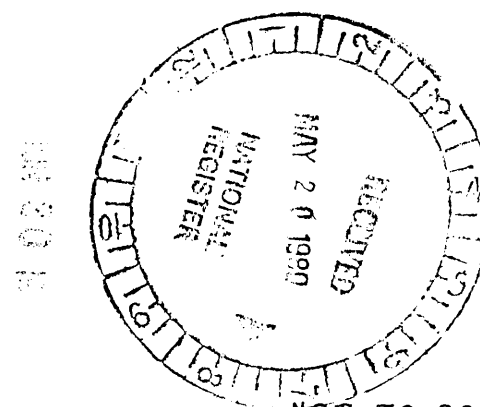


TOWN HIGHWAY 50

THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

EAST MONTPELIER CENTER, VERMONT

○ OLD TREES



1990 5 20 15

NOT TO SCALE