

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED **AUG 2 1976**  
DATE ENTERED **NOV 7 1976**

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

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

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

First Baptist Church

AND/OR COMMON

### LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Park and Elm Streets

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Waterville

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st. Hon. David Emery

STATE

Maine

CODE

23

COUNTY

Kennebec

CODE

011

### CLASSIFICATION

#### CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

#### OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

#### PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

#### STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

#### ACCESSIBLE

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

#### PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

### OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Waterville Baptist Church, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

Park and Elm Streets

CITY, TOWN

Waterville,

\_\_ VICINITY OF

Maine

STATE

### LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kennebec County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

State Street

CITY, TOWN

Augusta

Maine

STATE

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_ STATE \_\_ COUNTY \_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                     |                                       | CHECK ONE                                   | CHECK ONE   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD                 | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR                 | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED    |   |   |

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The First Baptist Church rests on its original granite foundation in the center of downtown Waterville. The exterior dimensions of the old meetinghouse have never been changed, though a vestry has been added to the rear of the church. Built in 1826 and renovated in 1875 the design is a combination of styles ranging from the Neo-classical revival to the Victorian Era.

The rectangular two story wooden building is sheathed with clapboards and crowned with a low pitched gabled roof. At the south-east end of the church rises the steeple-tower. Through the years slight changes have been made in its form, to better protect the bell. However the height of the tower has remained unchanged. The steeple rests on a square base punctured by three arched windows on the front face. The base supports four small corner spirelets and gives rise to an octagonal drum that houses the bell. Carved louvers were added to the arched openings in 1875. The spire continues the eight faces and has small gable projections at the base of the final rise. A wrought-iron weather vane is attached to the top of the spire.

The five bayed facade of the church faces southeast. Such ornamental elements as the window moldings and gable decorations were added by Francis H. Fassett in 1875. A pedimented pavilion projecting from the gabled main block occupies the inner three bays. The entablature recalls that of a Greek Temple. The inner cornice is interrupted by a modified Palladian window capped by a pointed hood-moulding. The type of moulding is found above all the windows and around the entrance door. The bays are divided by pilasters, which, along with the capitals and architrave, are adapted to wooden construction. The tall, slender pilasters display a rosette half-way up their length.

Four steps lead to the main entrance, of Romanesque styling. A fan-like tympanum is enclosed in a shallow archway which is supported by a pair of columns on each side of the double doors. Around this is the already mentioned pointed moulding. The windows, two stories in height, echo the Romanesque flavor. The diamond-paned glass, divided at the level of the second floor, forms a round-headed arch. The steeple tower rises boldly out of the main gable to continue the facade upward.

The northeast and southwest walls of the old sanctuary are identical to one another. Divided into five bays, they continue the windows and pilasters of the facade along the length of the church.

In a series of changes occurring between 1853 and 1951, classrooms and service features were added to the rear of the church. The vestry was moved from its site on Elm Street to its present location and attached to the west corner of the sanctuary. The facade of the vestry is connected to the southwest wall of the old meetinghouse. It is similar in design to the main facade. The pediment, modified Palladian window and pilasters are the same. Below the Palladian window is a corresponding three part window on the first floor. The side windows are modified versions of the (See continuation sheet)

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sanctuary windows, altered to suit the needs of the two-story vestry. A gabled portico at the right leads to the parish office door.

The original interior of the First Baptist Church contained high pews and lofty central pulpit. The pulpit was so high that the minister looked straight at the people sitting in the balcony. In the many alterations of the sanctuary, the pulpit was lowered; and ultimately the window behind it was removed and the wall plastered over.

A description of the church interior was recorded in 1839 by a Professor Champlin. In the account he referred to the church as "a primitive structure modeled after the old style, a sort of double decker, with large windows that let in an abundance of light and air". Like many New England Meetinghouses, the windows have never been of stained glass. The windows did not originally extend so far up the walls in the balcony.

In 1875 the sanctuary was completely renovated under the direction of the Architect Francis H. Fassett. Of the original interior, only the three-sided balcony remains. The pews are in four sections with a double section in the center of the church. The curve of the pew backs suggests that the existing pews were installed in 1875 or later. The balcony is reached by curving corner stairways at either end of the vestibule.

The most recent change in the chancel occurred in 1952. As it is today, the pulpit is on the left side and the lectern and organ console on the right. A recessed area behind houses the choir pews. The back wall displays a simple reredos and central entablature of Greek design. In this a red curtain is hung which hides the baptistry, first installed in 1871. Two doors on either side of the chancel lead to the back additions.

The ceiling still retains its original shape of a flat surface with a downward curve over the side balconies. In 1889 a pressed tin ceiling was put in both the sanctuary and vestry. The Baptist church was the first in the state to install this type of ceiling. It has since been removed. The organ pipes originally lined the back walls of the chancel. In the renovation of 1875 they were moved to a specially built platform in the rear balcony where they have remained.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |  |

SPECIFIC DATES 1826

BUILDER/ARCHITECT James Packard, Francis H. Fassett

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The city of Waterville's oldest existing public building and first denominational structure is the First Baptist Church. The founding of the church in 1818 was a result of the arrival of Rev. Jeramiah Chaplin. He came to Waterville to be president of the Maine Literary and Theological Institute which had been chartered by the Massachusetts legislature in 1813.

Holding services in the old meetinghouse built in 1796 on the site of the present City Hall had many disadvantages. Therefore, in 1824, the Baptist Church decided to build their own house of worship. Since it was illegal for a religious group to own property at the time, an organization of pew holders was formed, they were known as the Waterville Baptist Society. The society was responsible for the financial affairs of the church. Through the selling of pews, money was raised to build the meetinghouse in 1826. The lot on which it stands was given by the Hon. Timothy Boutelle, a Waterville attorney and state senator. The building had no architect. Instead it was designed by the joint efforts of the contractor James Packard, and the church building committee.

From its formation the church had been closely tied to the Maine Literary and Theological Institute, later called Waterville College and still later Colby College. It had no pastor until 1829, since it used the services of the college ministers. After the building was completed, the congregation felt it could now begin to provide spiritual needs to the college instead of taking from it. Through the years many members of the college have found a home in the church.

From the years 1835 to 1841 the famous hymnologist Samuel Francis Smith was the pastor of the First Baptist Church. Rev. Mr. Smith was ordained into the ministry at Waterville in 1834. While he was pastor he was also an acting professor of modern languages at Waterville College. He wrote several well known hymns and anthems, among them "Rock of Ages" and "America" (My Country Tis of Thee). A plaque by the main door notes this fact.

In 1875 the building was rededicated after extensive renovations and additions were made. The work entailed remodeling the pews which resulted in their being made free. The renovations and exterior remodeling was done by the Portland architect Francis H. Fassett.

Fassett was born in Bath in 1823. He was apprenticed in the carpenter's trade and later studied architecture in Boston and New York (See continuation sheets)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Millet, Rev. Joshua, History of the Baptists in Maine, 1845  
Morning Sentinel, Waterville, Nov. 20, 1975

Philbrick, Minnie, 1818-1918 Centennial History of the First Baptist Church of Waterville, Maine, 1925

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 

|      |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 9 | 4       | 4 | 9 | 7 | 1        | 0 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| ZONE |   | EASTING |   |   |   | NORTHING |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ZONE |  | EASTING |  |  |  | NORTHING |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Patricia Brown, Student Assistant

ORGANIZATION

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

DATE

1976

STREET & NUMBER

31 Western Avenue

TELEPHONE

207-289-2133

CITY OR TOWN

Augusta,

STATE

Maine

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

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

Carle S. Shettleworth, Jr.

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

July 26, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ACTING

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/9/76

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11/2/76

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offices. He began his own practice in 1850 in Bath. In 1864 he moved his practise and residence to Portland. He expanded his knowledge through visits to Europe to study the great architectural monuments across the ocean.

His works included rebuilding the city of Augusta and portions of Portland after disastrous fires in the years 1862 and 1866, respectively. Some of his famous buildings are the Maine General Hospital; Baxter Memorial Block in Portland; the Portland Public Library to which he donated his services as a gift to the people of Portland; and the church of the Sacred Heart. He was active in public affairs, and a member of the Fraternity Club in Portland and president of the Cumberland Club. His architectural designs showed his acquaintance with the major styles of the day. He devoted himself largely to the Queen Anne and Romanesque revivals based on European models and his office became a learning center for young architects from the city and much of the state. John Calvin Stevens, Maine's most famous architect began his studies with Fassett. In the later years of his career Fassett entered into a partnership with Frederick Thompson. Fassett died in 1908.

Maine state law was changed in 1901 to allow the incorporation of church organizations and this led to the abandonment of the Waterville Baptist Society. In its place was formed the Waterville Baptist Church, Inc.

Its early origins and its renovation by a noted Maine architect render the First Baptist Church of Waterville a building of unusual interest.