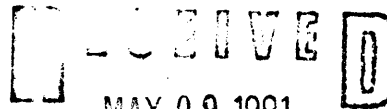


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



MAY 09 1991

NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 18). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name (Former) First Congregational Church
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number SW Corner of Rt. 1 & Barker's Lane N/A not for publication
city, town Wells N/A vicinity
state Maine code ME county York code 031 zip code 04090

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official *Edward J. [Signature]* Date 5-2-91
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Patricia Andrews 6/21/91

(for) Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/& Culture/Museum**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

GothicRomanesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granitewalls Wood/Weatherboardroof Asphaltother Three stage wooden tower

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The (former) First Congregational Church is a rectangular wooden frame building featuring a three stage tower mounted atop the roof and a two-story vestry addition at the rear. It exhibits a combination of Romanesque and Gothic Revival style features. The building is sheathed in weatherboards and it rests on a granite foundation. The church stands along the west side of US Route 1.

Facing east, the principal elevation is divided into three bays with the entrance centrally located. The two-leaf door is surmounted by a round-arched panel and is framed by a robust hood molding terminating in console brackets. Flanking this doorway are long sixteen-over-sixteen windows located below lancet-arched louvered panels. Louvered shutters also remain. A tripartite window with a large central window and narrower side units occupies a space above the entrance. Its windows have blind round-arched heads. A triangular louvered vent is located in the gable whose unadorned raking cornices meet short gable returns. The tower has a two-part square stepped base and an octagonal belfry whose round-arched openings contain louvered shutters. A spire crowns the tower. The three-bay side elevations feature a trio of windows identical in composition to those which flank the entrance. A brick stove flue rises through the roof at the extreme west end.

In 1888 the two-story frame vestry was added to the rear of the church. According to the church history, this was formerly a store which was moved to the site and remodeled. It was joined to the main building by way of a short gabled connector. The vestry, which is also sheathed in weatherboards, contains a variety of six-over-six window openings and doors. It is compatible with the church in terms of scale and materials.

The somewhat modest appearance of the church's exterior belies the existence of a considerably more elaborate and in some ways quite unusual interior. In plan, it consists of a wide vestibule with curving, enclosed stairs leading to the gallery, and a spacious nave featuring a raised pulpit. There are two entrances into the nave where three groups of pews are separated by the aisles. The door surrounds here and, in fact, all window and door surrounds throughout the interior, feature shallow triangular lintels. The pulpit platform has a balustrade at either side and a paneled

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screen at the rear located between two large projecting posts that rise to the ceiling and frame an elliptical arch. Below the arch is an elaborate double scroll containing the verse, "Thou Art Worthy O Lord To Receive Glory and Honor and Power." The most significant feature of the interior, however, is the architectural treatment of the gallery. An arcade of three elliptical arches defines the space and features two square posts corresponding to those at the pulpit. They frame a raised organ platform located below the balcony at the rear of the nave. The paneled cantilevered projection of the gallery is supported by brackets. In 1909 the metal ceiling and lighting fixtures were installed.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1862

Significant Dates
1862

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Robinson & Huzzey, Builders

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The (former) First Congregational Church is an intact wooden frame building featuring a three stage tower and a mix of Romanesque and Gothic detailing. It was constructed in 1862 by the Lynn, Massachusetts contractors Robinson and Huzzey. The present church stands on or near the site occupied by three earlier structures, the first of which is thought to have been erected in 1664. Although the exterior of the Congregational Church is rather modest in its configuration and not unlike numerous other Maine churches, the interior detailing is unusual. For this reason the building is eligible for nomination to the National Register under criterion C.

According to local historians, the first religious gatherings in Wells began in the early 1640s under the pastorate of Rev. John Wheelwright. However, a permanent meeting house was not erected until about 1664. This very modest first structure was burned in 1692 during raids by the native Indians. A second structure was built in 1699 and was gradually improved and enlarged during the next forty years. The construction of its replacement was begun in the late 1760s. Tradition holds that some of the framing materials used in the earlier building were incorporated into the new one, and that in turn recycling of structural elements took place when the existing church was erected in 1862. It has not been possible to verify this through the inspection of the historic fabric. In any event, Church records indicate that it took some nine months to build the present structure at a cost of \$3,500. In 1868 a bell was acquired; the scroll painting by a Mr. Hillings was added in the 1880s; the vestry building was acquired and moved to the site in 1888; and the tin ceiling was installed in 1909.

The First Congregational Church occupied the building on a regular basis until the early 1960s. With the merger of the Congregationalists and the Church of Christ in 1963, a decision was made to transfer the 1862 building to the Historical Society of Wells and Ogunquit. This action was formally taken in 1967. At present, the vestry serves as a museum and research library whereas the sanctuary is maintained for community concerts and a yearly religious service.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Shelley, Hope Moody. The Congregational Way at Wells: A History of the Congregational Church and Some of the Personalities Who Shaped It. Wells, Maine: The Congregational Church. 1981.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1

UTM References

A

1	9
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3	7	1	3	0	0
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4	7	9	5	2	9	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies the Town of Wells tax map 120, lot 4.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the entire lot historically associated with the First Congregational Church.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian
 organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date 4/1991
 street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132
 city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333

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Architecturally, the (former) First Congregational Church has an exterior profile which is not unlike countless other buildings of the type in Maine, particularly those in non-urban areas. Its rectangular gable front orientation with a tower surmounting the roof is a form which began to appear in the late 1820s and 1830s as the transition was made between the Federal and Greek Revival style modes. This basic configuration was common throughout the 1860s and into the 1870s, although adjustments to window, door and other details kept the buildings updated with the popular architectural styles. A similar pattern is evident on the interiors, particularly in the basic arrangement of a narrow entrance vestibule across the rear of the nave below a gallery. Typically, these galleries are given little attention in the way of decorative embellishment, perhaps only the parapet wall having a paneled configuration. Thus, it is with this context in mind that the arrangement in the Wells church is unusual. In this scheme the cantilevered gallery is supported by large brackets, and the space is defined by an arcade of elliptical arches that meet a pair of structural square posts.

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000768 Date Listed: 6/21/91

Former First Congregational Church York Maine
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

6/21/91
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

It has been clarified with the ME SHPO that National Register Criteria Consideration A (Religious Property) applies to this building. The form is now officially amended to include the Criteria Consideration.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)