

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

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

received FEB 7 1985

date entered MAR 7 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wolfeborough, Brookfield and Wakefield Meetinghouse

and/or common COTTON MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY CHURCH (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Stoneham Road n/a not for publication

city, town Wolfeborough n/a vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Carroll code 003

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"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Cotton Mountain Community Church Association

c/o President Henry Maxfield

street & number RFD #2

city, town Wolfeboro n/a vicinity of state New Hampshire 03894

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Carroll County Registry of Deeds

Carroll County Complex

street & number Route 171

city, town Ossipee, state New Hampshire 03864

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wolfeboro Historic Preservation Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Lakes Region Planning Commission

city, town Meredith, state New Hampshire

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Cotton Mountain Community Church is a wooden church, which stands on its own lot on the northerly side of Stoneham Road, in the town of Wolfeboro, near the Wolfeboro-Brookfield town line. Rectangular in plan, the one-story, gable-roofed building is set with its gable end facing the road. The cut granite block foundation is set on a lower course of fieldstone, the last being exposed only partially on the east facade. The clapboarded walls are trimmed by wide corner pilasters with capitals. (The seldom seen corner pilasters on the rear facade are somewhat narrower.) The heavy box cornice with mouldings and deep frieze is pedimented on the southern (road) gable. The north (rear) gable, however, has only close verges with returns of the lateral cornices. The gable roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles.

The main facade is the three bay wide south gable end facing the road. In the central bay is a large twelve over twelve sash window, with plain trim and louvred shutters, whose lintel butts up against the pediment's frieze. Beneath the window are the dates "1801-1852" in plastic letters and a painted wooden sign identifying the building. The side bays of the main facade each contain an identical entry--a six-panel door with plain trim and four-fifths sidelights, the latter now covered by louvred shutters. Granite steps with wrought iron hand rails lead up to the entries. (The eastern steps now have a lower concrete step dated "1914".) The pedimented gable is filled with clapboards.

The three bay long east and west side facades are virtually identical. Each has three large twelve over twelve sash windows with plain trim and louvred shutters. The rear facade is completely clapboarded and is broken only by a large central exterior brick chimney, whose corbeled cap is topped by a brick pointed arched vault.

The church interior is essentially one large room with vestibules in the front (southern) corners. The two vestibules are shorter than the main room, with their own ceilings and walls that do not reach to the main room's ceiling. The eastern vestibule has been cut in half to provide a new closet. Both vestibules and the closet have board floors and plaster ceilings. The vestibules both have an outer six panel door with four-fifths sidelights and plain trim in the south wall, and a two panel inner door with plain trim in the north wall, the northern door opening into the main room. The east vestibule also has a fourpanel door with plain trim in its east wall which serves the small closet. The western vestibule has plaster walls, the outer walls having a wide board wainscoating with a simple coping, the inner walls having simple baseboards. The east vestibule's walls are now all plaster with baseboards. But the closet still retains the wide board wainscoating on its outer walls, although its plaster walls are largely hidden by builtin shelving.

The main room, the auditorium proper, has a board floor, with rubber runners in the aisles. The plaster walls have wide board wainscoating whose simple coping also serves as the stool for the large windows. Plain trim surrounds the windows and the doors. The high plaster ceiling, coved on the east and west sides, is interrupted by an elaborate central chandelier with two tiers of kerosene lamps, and ornate metalwork, and, towards the south end of the room, by a small trapdoor into the unfinished and unlit attic.

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In the center of the main room's south wall is a large twelve over twelve sash window. And in each southern corner is a shorter vestibule whose plaster walls have the usual board wainscoating and a moulded cornice. (Kerosene lamps on brackets are found at the corners of each vestibule.) The east and west side walls each have three large twelve over twelve sash windows. In the center of the north (rear) wall is a painted cross, hanging in front of a small curtain topped by its own simply moulded cornice. To each side of the cross and curtain are found pairs of kerosene lamps on ornate brackets.

In the center of the north end of the church is a large carpeted pulpit platform raised one step above the main floor. A row of pews in each rear (north) corner faces the platform, as do four rows of pews south of the platform, in the main area of the church. These rows are separated by aisles running north from the vestibule doors, and by aisles running east and west besides the rows in the rear corners. There is therefore one row along each side wall, two rows in the center of the room which share a board partition, and one row in the rear corner. The front pew in each row is fronted by a board partition. The slip pews themselves are simply designed with wide board seats, backs and partitions topped by simple copings, and paneled ends with curved arm rests. Hinged shelves on the front partitions of the south rows and on the north wall between the northern pews are used for floral displays. At the south end of the room between the vestibules is found another long pew set against the south wall, and the church stove. The stove, a cast iron stove manufactured by the Somersworth Machine Co., has a long high stove pipe which traverses the length of the room to exit, through bricked square high in the north wall, into the exterior chimney. The other furnishings in the church are movable, including tables in the west vestibule and the rear of the main room, and, on the platform, the pulpit, chairs, another table, and the ornate Victorian organ.

The rectangular lot, five rods wide and four rods deep, is enclosed on three sides by a stone wall, but is unfenced on the south (road) side. The land slopes to the south and the east. The grounds are grassed, with shrubs at the front corners of the building, one tree on the west boundary, and two trees on the north boundary. Graveled walks connect the paved road with the two entries.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
..... prehistoric	..... archeology-prehistoric	..... community planning	..... landscape architecture	..... religion
..... 1400-1499	..... archeology-historic	..... conservation	..... law	..... science
..... 1500-1599	..... agriculture	..... economics	..... literature	..... sculpture
..... 1600-1699	X architecture	..... education	..... military	..... social/
..... 1700-1799	..... art	..... engineering	..... music	..... humanitarian
X 1800-1899	..... commerce	..... exploration/settlement	..... philosophy	..... theater
..... 1900-	..... communications	..... industry	..... politics/government	..... transportation
		..... invention		..... other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1852 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Cotton Mountain Community Church is significant architecturally as a fine, well preserved example of a mid 19th century rural New England meetinghouse, showing the strong influence of the Greek Revival style on the vernacular tradition.

The Cotton Mountain Community Church was erected in 1852 for the Wolfborough, Brookfield and Wakefield Meetinghouse Association. The building replaced an earlier meetinghouse, built nearby (on the other side of Stoneham Road) to serve both the Baptists and the Methodists of the East Wolfboro and Wakefield area. The new meetinghouse was also intended to serve both denominations. The Articles of Agreement and Subscription, the only surviving document of the Association, stated that the board of trustees would "consist of an equal number of members of the Free Will Baptist and Methodist Episcopal Churches".¹ The undated Articles also stated that the meetinghouse was to be "completed to the acceptance of the Association by the 1st of November 1852, at a cost not to exceed \$25 [per] pew or \$1000 in all to the Association."² The Articles were somewhat vague about the location, saying only that, "The house shall be located on or near the ground where the old meeting house now stands..."³ Presumably, therefore, the Articles predate the acquisition of the present twenty square rod lot, sold to the Association on April 23, 1852 by Eliot Cotton for fifty dollars. Unfortunately, the Articles of Agreement and Subscription and the deed appear to be the only surviving documents from the period of the meetinghouse's construction. We cannot now identify either the designer or the builders of the meetinghouse.

The Cotton Mountain Community Church is strikingly well preserved, having seen very few changes. The population of the rural area served by the meetinghouse declined in the late 19th century and the early to mid 20th century. The congregations dwindled as well, so the church was spared any major rebuilding. The only renovation campaign was a 1901 remodeling of the interior, that was rather limited in scope. The original high pulpit was replaced by a low platform with a more modern pulpit. (Also removed were "the old singing seats".)⁴ The lighting was improved by an ornate kerosene chandelier given by the Baptist Society of Wolfboro, and smaller kerosene lamps on brackets donated by the minister. This quite limited modernization could not prevent the further decline of the Baptist and Methodist congregations, which were eventually absorbed into the congregations of more prosperous nearby churches. In 1957, the meetinghouse was conveyed to the newly formed Cotton Mountain Community Church Association, a local group

¹"Articles of Agreement and Subscription of the Wolfborough, Brookfield and Wakefield Meetinghouse Association", manuscript, collection of Cotton Mountain Community Church Association, Wolfboro, N.H.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Abbie Cotton Lang, "Rich Traditional Heritage of Cotton Mountain" Granite State News, April 16, 1937 (newspaper clipping in scrapbook, collection of Marshall Ray, Wolfboro, N.H.).

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 125 acres

Quadrangle name Wolfeboro, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	9	3	3	1	6	5	0	4	8	3	0	9	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David L. Ruel

organization Lakes Region Planning Commission date August 30, 1984

street & number Main Street telephone (603) 279-8171

city or town Meredith, state New Hampshire

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 *Paul Blaisdell* 1/24/85

title State Historic Preservation Officer date

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Melissa Byers date 3-7-85
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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dedicated to the preservation of the building. The Community Church Association has kept the building in good repair, making only a few changes, notably the installation of iron hand rails on the front steps and the creation of a storage closet in half of the eastern vestibule. The only other 20th century change of note was the building of the rear exterior chimney at an unknown date. (An early 20th century photograph shows an interior chimney projecting from the roof.) With the exception of these few and relatively minor changes, the Cotton Mountain Community Church appears today as it did in 1852.

The basic form and plan of the Cotton Mountain Community Church was a common one for small 19th century meetinghouses in rural New Hampshire, a rectangular, gable roofed building with the gable end serving as the main facade, often with two entries in the side bays of that facade. A vestibule (or vestibules) served a large auditorium, which occupied most of the building. The nearby Wolfeboro Center Community Church, built in 1841, is typical of these simple meetinghouses.⁵ The Wolfeboro Center church has the same basic facade design as the Cotton Mountain Community Church--a three bay wide gable end facade with a window in the central bay and doors in the two side bays, and three bay wide long facades with large windows lighting the auditorium. Larger meetinghouses, such as the First Free Will Baptist Church of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham, built in the neighboring town of Ossipee in 1856-7,⁶ might have a two-story gable end facade to accommodate a gallery above the vestibule. But, in Ossipee and elsewhere, three bay wide facades, with two side entries in the gable end, were still the basis of the exterior design.

Many of these small meetinghouses were built in the vernacular tradition of clap-boarded walls, plain window and door trim, and simple eaves. The Wolfeboro Center Community Church is typical of that unadorned vernacular style, as it can boast virtually no exterior ornament. But, in the mid 19th century, the Greek Revival style influenced the design or, at least, the ornament of the more pretentious rural meetinghouses. The First Free Will Baptist Church of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham is a good example, as it was embellished with triangular pediments over the doors and windows, and wide paneled corner pilasters supporting a heavy box cornice with deep frieze. The Cotton Mountain Community Church also shows the influence of the Greek Revival style, although here the Greek references are limited to the wide corner pilasters and the wide pedimented box cornice with its deep frieze. Basically, the meetinghouse remains a vernacular structure. However, the pilasters and pedimented cornice do impart to the building some of the monumentality that is the basic characteristic of the Greek Revival style, thereby giving the meetinghouse a dignity not found in the otherwise similar Wolfeboro Center Community Church. The result in a simple but impressive rural meetinghouse, one of the most attractive country churches in the Lakes Region.

⁵The Wolfeboro Center Community Church was listed in the National Register on March 15, 1984.

⁶The First Free Will Baptist Church of Ossipee, Wakefield and Effingham was also listed in the National Register on March 15, 1984.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Articles of Agreement and Subscription of the Wolfborough, Brookfield and Wakefield Meetinghouse Association" (manuscript, collection of Cotton Mountain Community Church Association, Wolfeboro, N.H.).

Clark L. Dexter "A Brief History of the Meeting House" in Cotton Mountain Community Church Old Home Sunday Program, August 12, 1984.

Benjamin Franklin Parker - HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF WOLFEBOROUGH (Wolfeboro, N.H., 1901).

Scrapbook, collection of Marshall Ray, Wolfeboro, N.H. (of particular note is a newspaper clipping - Abbie Cotton Lang, "Rich Traditional Heritage of Cotton Mountain", Granite State News, April 16, 1937.

Interview, Charles Buckland, August 12, 1984.

Interview, Marshall Ray, August 14, 1984.

Interview, Herbert Van Blarcom, August 14, 1984.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The nominated property is a rectangular lot, five rods wide and four rods deep, on the northerly side of Stoneham Road. The lot is bounded on the south by Stoneham Road and on the other three sides by stone walls. The nominated property includes the Cotton Mountain Community Church and the lot on which it has stood since its construction in 1852. (Wolfeboro Tax Map 18, block 4, lot 5)

Boundaries of the nominated property have been highlighted in yellow on the enclosed sketch map.

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