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DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 2 1976

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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

Old Walpole Meeting House

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

W of Walpole Rd

Meeting House Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Walpole
South Bristol

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st 2nd Hon. William Cohen

STATE

Maine

CODE

23

COUNTY

Lincoln

CODE

015

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Walpole Meeting House Corporation

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

South Bristol

VICINITY OF

Maine STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Lincoln County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Wiscasset

Maine STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

436

Historic American Buildings Survey (Me. 50)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built by the Town of Bristol in 1772, the Walpole Meetinghouse in South Bristol, Lincoln County, Maine, remains today in a virtually unaltered condition. Originally the home of a Presbyterian Church, in 1796 it became Congregational and even today serves as a place of worship during the summer months.

In 1872 repairs were made to the church's interior, and the exterior was painted. It was decided at that time that the shingles were in such a fine condition that to replace them would be unnecessary. Hardware for the building, including the nails are all hand-made. The twelve over twelve double hung wood sash windows were imported from England. It is rumored that at the time each window cost the price of one cow.

This rectangular, wood-framed meeting house measures forty-two feet six inches by thirty-two feet six inches. The two story structure has a high gable roof with a closed vergeboard. The southerly facing facade has five bays with two tiers of windows. The center bay on the first floor serves as the main entryway. The structure's other two entrances appear at the center of each of the gable ends. The main entry has a double panel door, while the two side doors have a single panel. Curiously, each of these side doors is of a different design. The front and left-side doors are decorated by pilasters at each side and a plain triangular pediment above. The right side door, lacking the pilasters exhibits only a modest wood architrave. The side walls have a window on each side of their respective entrances, with a second tier of three windows above. The left side has a third tier with one attic window, while the right side does not. The structure's northerly rear wall has a large arched window set squarely in its center, with two tiers of two windows each on either side.

All three doors open directly into the body of the meetinghouse. The pulpit is situated directly opposite the large entryway and is connected to it by a broad center aisle. The beautifully hand crafted and panelled pulpit is located about five and one-half feet above the first floor of the building. Fluted pilasters which have been marbelized seem to support a finely ornamented sounding board. Directly below the pulpit is the deacon's seat, while just above and behind the pulpit is the curtained arched window. The box pews are all panelled. First floor pews, elevated about six inches above the floor are painted gray and have seats on three sides. These seats swing up and down on hinges to allow for adequate room while praying. A gallery of plain board seats, said to have been placed there for the use of the slaves of the community, surrounds the room on three sides. Two sets of stairs, in opposite corners on the side of the facade lead to the gallery. The front of the gallery, instead of being plastered, is finished with panels of pine 30 inches in width.

The great interest of this old meetinghouse in Bristol stems from several areas: its age, its favorable condition, its unaltered appearance and original fabric. In 1872 an article appeared by a preacher who had delivered a sermon at the church. In the course of his comments he remarked, "We are not aware that there is another church in Maine, a century in years that retains its primitive form." While this comment rang true one hundred years after construction of the meetinghouse, it rings even truer today - two hundred years after its erection. The Walpole Meetinghouse serves Maine as a prime example of architecture built in "perfect keeping with the times in which it was produced.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input 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

1772

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1772, the Walpole Meeting House is one of the oldest churches in Maine still serving as a place of worship. Of greater significance is the fact that it stands today in its original form, appearing exactly as it did at the time of its construction.

While at the outset the meetinghouse was Presbyterian in denomination, largely owing to the preponderance of settlers of Scottish origin in the area, its distance from Boston, where the Presbytery met, was so great that it subsequently became a Congregational Church. Inasmuch as the Congregational headquarters was in Portland, the easier accessibility of this Conference was a strong determining factor in bringing about the change of affiliation.

The original hand-shaved shingles are still on the walls of the edifice. When in 1872, extensive general repairs of the church were undertaken, the shingles were found to be so far superior to the modern product that it was decided not to disturb them.

Especially interesting is the paneled balcony, which was set aside for the Negro slaves and servants. These old panels contain boards thirty inches in width.

As an unspoiled and unaltered building reflecting unusually fine colonial craftsmanship, the Walpole Meeting House is a rare historic relic deserving of recognition and protection.

