

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 11 1985
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Creek Preparative Meeting House

and/or common South Starksboro Friends Meeting House and Cemetery (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Starksboro Town Highway 6 (Dan Sargent Road) N/A not for publication

city, town Starksboro N/A vicinity of

state Vermont code 50 county Addison code 001

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	N/A 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 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 South Starksboro Friends Meeting, Inc.

street & number c/o Bertha Hanson, Historian RD #2 Box 283

city, town Bristol N/A vicinity of state Vermont 05443

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Starksboro Town Clerk's Office

street & number N/A

city, town Starksboro state Vermont 05487

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 1975 federal state county local

depository for survey records Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier state Vermont

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>November 1983</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The South Starksboro Friends Meeting House is a rectangular one story tall clapboard-sided wood frame building located in a quiet rural hillside setting. Its entrance is in the center of the three bay wide west gable end, which faces the road--Starksboro Town Highway 6. Exterior detailing is spare and restrained. Notable interior features include grained woodwork, and furnishings installed in the 1870s and 1890s. On the property to the south of the building is the related Quaker cemetery.

The Friends Meeting House is located in a rural setting on the east side of the dirt Dan Sargent Road (Starksboro Town Highway 6). It stands near the northern end of its one half acre lot. Occupying much of the rest of the lot is the related Quaker cemetery with simple fieldstone, marble, and granite tombstones. The one story tall rectangular wood frame clapboard-sided building has its main entrance in the center of the three bay wide western gable end that faces the road. The eaveside (north and south) walls each have two evenly and widely spaced windows. The pitched roof has raking eaves, is covered with sheet metal, and has a brick chimney emerging through the ridge near the rear wall. All corner boards are plain but distinguished by their approximately eighteen inch width.

The main (west gable front) facade has two nine over nine pane windows flanking the central four paneled door. The door surround consists of plain wide boards supporting a large simple wooden entablature with a three level projecting cornice. The proportionally smaller window surrounds are similar, although their cornices have only two stepped levels. The north and south eaveside facades have the same treatment, being punctuated by two evenly spaced twelve over twelve pane windows. The window surrounds are the same as those on the front wall. The sill of the left (eastmost) window in the north wall has two equally spaced metal pegs protruding upward about two inches. It is likely that these date from the last quarter of the nineteenth century when a platform was erected outside this window for the preacher to stand on during the crowded Quarterly Meetings, speaking to both those inside and gathered around the grounds. The rear (east) gable wall has no openings on the first floor. A nine over six pane window to the right of center lights the attic. Near the right edge of the foundation wall is a small square door leading into the crawl space below the building.

The Meeting House interior is divided into two spaces, a small entry hall running across the width of the building and a large meeting room. All interior woodwork is grained and simply designed. All exterior walls have a wainscot of approximately five inch wide vertical boards with beaded edges. Very narrow vertical beaded boards make up the wainscot lining both sides of the interior wall between the hall and meeting room. The flooring is approximately four inch wide varnished boards.

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In the entry hall, the main entry door is framed by a plain surround made of boards about ten inches wide. The front windows, which have about five inch deep reveals, also have plain surrounds. Leading into the meeting room are two evenly spaced four paneled doors with beaded edged door surrounds.

The outer walls of the meeting room are about one foot thick with window reveals about ten inches deep. The window sills extend an inch beyond the wainscot, meeting and matching the molding topping the wainscot. The moveable, grained, and stylistically plain pews, built in three lengths, originally were placed with the shortest in the southeast corner of the room, the middle size along the north and south walls, and the longest up the center of the room. They are now arranged in a circle for unprogrammed worship. The pew backs, seats, fronts, and ends are each made of one wide board. The pew ends are distinguished by scrolled armrests with applied circular ornaments at the top and bottom.

In the center of the room is a large late nineteenth century cylindrical cast iron wood-burning stove with decorative leaf motifs standing about four feet high. It is topped by a foot tall brass and nickel plated ornament. The inscription on its door reads, "No. 20. The Hub Oak Smith and Anthony Company, Boston."

The room is lighted by two matching equally spaced kerosene lamps that hang by chains fastened to the ceiling. The lamps have nickel plated bases with an ornate chased leaf pattern, large glass chimneys, and simple white porcelain shades. An inscription on the lamp base reads, "The Juno Lamp, Made in U.S.A. Patented Nov. 28, 1893."

The post and beam frame of the building is covered with thick horizontal planks and narrowly spaced clapboards on the outside. Thick horizontal planks also cover the inside of the framing underneath the finished interior walls. In the attic, reached only through the rear wall window, can be seen the heavy trusses supporting the roof.

Just to the south of the Meeting House and occupying much of the rest of its one half acre lot is the Friends Cemetery. A simple iron fence runs along its roadside frontage. All those buried in the cemetery are Quakers or descendants of Quakers. Burials date from soon after the property was purchased by the Friends in 1826 to the early 1970s. The stone markers are relatively plain, reflecting the religious philosophy of the Quakers. Graves include unmarked sites, early fieldstone slabs with no inscription, simple engraved marble slabs, and later slightly larger granite monuments.

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The present appearance of the Meeting House dates from 1871 when the original 1826 church was remodeled with the building of an approximately seven foot long addition to its front (west) wall for an entrance hall. It is likely that the position of the two doors from the hall to meeting room is where the original separate entrances for men and women into the building were located.

As was common in Quaker meeting-houses, the original building probably had high backed pews with a partition down the middle. At the time of the 1871 addition, it is likely that the present pews were installed. A platform was added across the east wall of the meeting room for the pulpit, a freestanding wooden grained piece with two panels in front and sloped bible stand on top. By the late nineteenth century, an Esty organ was also located on the platform. All the woodwork in the building was grained in the 1890s, perhaps at the same time the present stove and kerosene lamps were installed.

In 1984, the platform was removed in order to place the pews in a circle for unprogrammed worship. Its position is indicated by an outline in the flooring revealing the original wide pine boards underneath. The stove was then moved from its original position near the west end of the room to the middle of the room. The stove and kerosene lamps are the sole sources of heat and light, as the building has never received any modern improvements.

Over the years, the original fieldstone foundation walls had gradually deteriorated, and repeated attempts to shore them up failed. The sills had also badly rotted, in part due to inadequate ventilation in the crawl space under the building. In 1983, it was decided that the most expedient and economically feasible way to remedy this was to place the Meeting House on a new poured concrete foundation with a proper crawl space. The foundation was poured one building width immediately to the north of its original site. The Meeting House was then jacked up, its underpinnings repaired, and then moved on tracks to its new foundation during the week of November 11, 1983. The wooden platform in front of the building was removed at this time. This move did not affect the historical associations of this building and its setting, as it was only moved immediately to the north of its original site, and retains its original gable front orientation to the road.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1826/1871 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The South Starksboro Friends Meeting House, built in 1826 and remodeled in 1871, is an excellent and well preserved example of Quaker meeting house architecture. Its simple and spare but well-proportioned design, with restrained detailing, serves to reflect their religious philosophies. In continuous operation since 1826, the building is the oldest Quaker meeting house still being used in Vermont and stands as a visible reminder of the importance of the role members of the Religious Society of Friends played in the settlement of the state. Most of the interior furnishings, including the pews, pulpit, cast iron stove, and kerosene lamps, installed in the last third of the nineteenth century remain intact. With its unspoiled rural setting along a dirt road, adjoining Quaker cemetery, and no improvements of modern heating, electricity, or plumbing, the building continues to evoke a strong sense of historical place and spiritual peace.

Among the early settlers of Starksboro (chartered in 1780 and organized in 1796) as well as neighboring Lincoln, Monkton, Ferrisburg, and Charlotte, were a number of members of the Religious Society of Friends. For many, the choice to settle in this area of Vermont was influenced by the work of Joseph Hoag. He and his wife Huldah, both from Dutchess County, New York and recorded ministers of the Society of Friends, moved to Charlotte in 1791. As a minister, Hoag traveled to many Quaker meetings throughout New England and New York, and through his leadership encouraged settlement in Vermont. In 1799, Quakers in South Starksboro and Lincoln requested from the nearest monthly meeting (as required by Quaker procedure) the privilege of establishing an "allowed" or "indulged" meeting. The nearest monthly meeting was that in Danby, Vermont, which dated from 1780 when it was set off by the Easton Monthly Meeting in Saratoga, New York. In 1801, the newly established Lincoln Preparative Meeting (preparative meetings being subordinate units of monthly meetings, the basic unit in the Quaker organization) was referred to the newer and closer Ferrisburg Monthly Meeting, set off from Danby in 1801. In 1802, they built a meeting house, building another in 1809 closer to the center of Lincoln where more Quakers were settling. Members from South Starksboro, finding the distance inconvenient to travel, received permission to hold twice weekly meetings in the home of David Morrison (his two story Federal style house still stands a few hundred yards north of the South Starksboro Friends Meeting House). In 1825, it became a preparative meeting known as "Creek Meeting."

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Bristol

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	6	5	8	7	2	0	4	8	9	2	1	6	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 The nominated property is an irregularly shaped lot consisting of two adjoining square parcels with their western boundaries on the east side of the road. The north parcel is 66 by 66 feet and the south parcel is 128 by 128 feet. (Continuation sheet)

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elsa Gilbertson, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization N/A date June 18, 1985

street & number RD # 2, Box 3550 telephone (802) 453-2079

city or town Bristol state Vermont 05443

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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elsa Gilbertson

title Director, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation date September 30, 1985

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

date 11-7-85

Alburtus Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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In 1826, members of the Creek Meeting were permitted by the Starksborough Monthly Meeting (set off from Ferrisburg Monthly in 1813, and made up of meetings in Lincoln, Monkton, South Starksboro, northern Starksboro, and East Montpelier) to buy one and a half acres of land from David Morrison and Philander Orvis for a burying ground and site for a meeting house. The total cost of the property was \$18.30. The proposed size of the building was 36 feet by 24 feet with ten foot posts, but the monthly meeting recommended that it be 34 by 26 feet. The meeting house was completed in 1826 at a cost of about \$360.

By 1828, membership in Creek Meeting reached 70. Thomas C. Battey, a Quaker who was born in Starksboro in that year, was one of its most notable sons. He went West to spend many years as a teacher among the Indians, writing a book on his experiences entitled The Life and Adventures of a Quaker Among the Indians. Sometime between 1838 and 1851, the Creek Meeting and the one in Lincoln became known as Lincoln Preparative Meeting although they continued to hold separate meetings. In 1850, they were allocated to the Monkton Monthly Meeting, the Starksborough Monthly Meeting having been discontinued (many of its members having moved during this period to western New York and on to Iowa). The Starksboro and Lincoln meetings chose to disregard this reallocation, and as a result their meetings were discontinued and the members assigned to the Monkton Preparative Meeting.

Several Quakers in the South Starksboro and Lincoln area felt that the distance to Monkton was too far to travel, and requested in July 1851 that they be allowed to hold a meeting on the first day at Creek Meeting and fifth day in Lincoln. This was approved. In 1852, it became a preparative meeting.

In 1871, the Creek Meeting House was remodeled by constructing a seven foot addition to its front to form an entrance hall. The sawn framing was lighter and thinner than the heavy posts making up the original structure. Evidence of this can be seen by comparing the depth of the window reveals in the entry hall to those in the meeting room. Although this work did not provide extra space for worship, it did add a formal entry and place for hanging outer wraps. Also about this same time, the present pews, platform, and likely some of the woodwork were added to the original meeting room.

When Ferrisburg Quarterly meetings were held here after the remodeling, the building still was not large enough to accommodate the crowds who came from Ferrisburg, Bristol, Lincoln, Monkton, and other neighboring towns. On these occasions, the northeast window was removed and a door propped up as a platform for the ministers so they could speak to both those inside and outside the building.

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In 1881, the name of this meeting was changed from Lincoln to South Starksboro Preparative Meeting, the name it has retained since that time.

Some time during the 1890s, the present cast iron stove, kerosene lamps, and flooring were installed, and the woodwork grained (the last modern improvements made to the building). Other changes also occurred in the service. Music, long banned from worship services, was introduced, and an Esty organ (still being used) was installed. The traditional unprogrammed services where people spoke when the spirit moved them were gradually replaced by services conducted by a minister. The last resident minister, Lavinus K. Painter, who also conducted other services and Sunday schools in the region, left the South Starksboro Friends Meeting house about 1923.

Several Quakers who continued to live in the South Starksboro area kept their Sunday School active until the 1960s, and held services whenever a preacher was available. In 1975, the South Starksboro Preparative Meeting was transferred from the New York Yearly Meeting (to which it had belonged because all Vermont meetings had their root in the Danby meeting, which was set off by the meeting in Saratoga, New York) to the New England Yearly Meeting and within that the North West Quarterly Meeting. During the 1970s, meetings were held during the warmer months. Since that time, unprogrammed services have been held on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

The meeting house in design is restrained but dignified and well-proportioned. Rectangular in shape, it is embellished on the exterior only by plain wide boards at the corners and around the windows and doorway. Although the scale of the plain surrounds is large, it provides the proper balance between the large amounts of wall surface, tautly covered by narrowly spaced clapboards, and the relatively few but amply sized window and door openings.

An excellent example of a Quaker meeting house, its design reflects the religious philosophies of the Society of Friends. Of all the Quaker meeting houses built in Vermont during the nineteenth century, this one in South Starksboro, its present appearance dating from the 1871 remodeling, is the oldest. It is also the only one remaining which has been in continuous and sole use by Quakers since its construction. The meeting house in Monkton, built in 1878 and later altered with the addition of a drive through front porch, is the only other one still in use although it was united with the Methodist congregation in the 1940s. Other meeting houses in the state have since been torn down or converted to other uses.

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The South Starksboro Friends Meeting House stands as a remarkable survivor. Its physical setting has remained virtually unchanged over the years, being surrounded by farmlands and woods with the c. 1810 home of David Morrison, where the first Quaker meetings were held in South Starksboro, still its closest neighbor several hundred yards to the north. In appearance, it looks much as it did in the late nineteenth century, retaining most of its interior furnishings from that time and having resisted improvements of electricity, plumbing, and modern heating. And its membership has remained steadfast, services having been held here continuously since 1826.

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Verbal boundary description and justification (cont.)

The original property, bought in 1826, was one and a half acres in size. In 1831, members of this meeting were ordered to sell one acre of land, keeping the half acre parcel of land that remains today. Vol. 3 of Deeds, p. 416 (April 25, 1826), Vol. 4, p. 306 (January 26, 1832), and Vol. 4, p. 311 (May 4, 1832), Town of Starksboro Land Records. The nominated property, one half acre in size, is the parcel of land that remains after one acre of the original one and a half acre lot was sold in 1832.