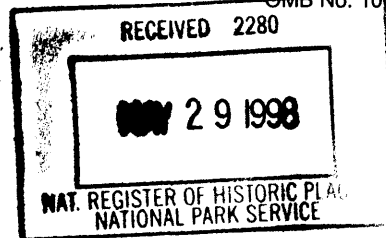


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



721

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Middle Intervale Meeting House and Common

other names/site number Center Meeting House

2. Location

street & number 757 Intervale Road N/A not for publication

city or town Bethel vicinity

state Maine code ME county Oxford code 017 zip code 04217

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Eileen J. Sturtevant 5/19/98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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 for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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): _____

Edson H. Beal 6/26/98
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
 private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
 building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
<u>1</u>		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
Religion/Religious Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
Recreation & Culture/Museum
Religion/Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation Stone/Granite
walls Wood/Weatherboard
roof Asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1816

1825

1857

Significant Dates

1816

1825

1857

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Middle Intervale Meeting House & Common
Name of Property

Oxford, Maine
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 2

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	9	3	5	7	8	9	0	4	9	2	4	7	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

2

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

4

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date April, 1998

street & number 55 Capitol Street, 65 State House Station telephone 207/287-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333-0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

MIDDLE INTERVALE MEETING HOUSE & COMMON

OXFORD, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

The Middle Intervale Meeting House is a Greek Revival style wooden frame building that is sheathed in clapboards. It rests on a granite block foundation and has a squat tower adorned with spirelets at each corner. The building's present appearance is the result of two substantial mid-nineteenth century remodelings of a meeting house that was built on the site in 1816.

Facing south, the symmetrically composed front elevation contains a pair of widely spaced doorways whose wide four-panel doors are framed by Greek Revival style surrounds. Paneled corner pilasters rise to short gable end returns featuring a frieze of medium width. The frieze is continued below the raking cornice of the front gable and along the side elevations. A wooden entrance platform and ramp spans the elevation, and steps are located on axis with each of the entries. The tower is sheathed in clapboards and has narrow corner boards, a shallow pyramidal roof, and a broad overhanging cornice.

The three-bay side elevations are comprised of a trio of nine-over-nine double hung sash windows with wide flat surrounds. Paneled pilasters decorate the northeast and southeast corners of the side walls. There are no windows on the rear elevation.

Inside, the front doors open into a vestibule from which a pair of six-panel wood grained doors provide access to the nave. An enclosed stair located at the east end of the vestibule leads to the gallery (which is now closed in). The nave contains four groups of Federal period boxed pews including a large double set in the center that is separated from the side groups by aisles. Of note is the fact that the floor level in the pews is elevated several inches above that of the aisles. The fourth is located at the southeast corner adjacent to the slightly raised platform containing the pulpit and related furniture. A monumental Greek Revival style entablature supported by pilasters dominates the center third of the nave end wall where it acts as a backdrop for the pulpit and flanking chairs. The nave has a coved ceiling, and its windows and doors are framed by modest flat surrounds.

Although no written descriptions exist of the original 1816 building, structural evidence suggests that it was originally constructed along the lines of a traditional eighteenth century meeting house. It appears to have had a double row of windows on the front and side elevations as well as an exterior staircase to the gallery that was located between the existing double entries. About 1825 the meeting house underwent its first alteration when the two tiers of windows were replaced on each side with four longer, larger windows, and the boxed pews were installed. The exterior stairs were apparently retained at this time, as were the facade windows. Finally, in 1857 the building was given its present Greek Revival style appearance including the front entrances, window and door trim, interior vestibule and gallery stairs, new windows on the side elevations (three on each side), and the present tower base with spirelets. Wooden shutters were also installed on the windows, but they were subsequently removed.

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Continuation Sheet

MIDDLE INTERVALE MEETING HOUSE & COMMON

OXFORD, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 3

The timber roof framing of the building is striking, particularly the trio of large timber king post trusses that feature a double brace of timbers under the purlins. This framing is heavily braced.

The meeting house is located at the northeast corner of the Town Common, an open area of about two acres comprised of rough turf. A driveway enters the Common near the southwest corner and extends in a diagonal path to the meeting house. The cemetery located to the east of the building is not presently associated with the Middle Intervale Meeting House and Common.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****MIDDLE INTERVALE MEETING HOUSE & COMMON****OXFORD, MAINE****Section number 8 Page 2**

Originally constructed in 1816 and subsequently remodeled about 1825 and again in 1857, the Middle Intervale Meeting House is a wooden frame building with Greek Revival stylistic features. In both form and detailing, the meeting house is representative of early to mid-nineteenth century religious building as erected in numerous small Maine communities. It stands at the northeast corner of the Common, an open area of about two acres originally set aside as a public training ground for the local militia. The building is eligible for nomination to the Register under criterion C and criteria consideration A.

[What little is known about the history of this religious building is contained in the following paragraph written by Randall Bennett and published in his *Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture* (1984).]

Originally a two-and-a-half story meetinghouse with a tower and tall spire on the south gabled end, the Middle Intervale Meetinghouse was constructed in 1816 by the local Methodists and Baptists with financial assistance from the town. Used for town meetings for many years, and referred to as the "Union Church" or "Center Meetinghouse," the structure may have been patterned after a Baptist meetinghouse (1803) at Paris Hill Village. Around 1825, a major remodeling took place, at which time the upper portion of the tower was removed and the original double row of small-paned windows was replaced by the present oversized ones. In 1857, the Baptists assumed complete control of the building and carried out the Greek Revival stylistic alterations seen today. The pair of entrance doorways have heavy entablatures which match in scale the paneled corner pilasters and bold cornice moldings. The interior boasts an interesting combination of Federal and Greek Revival elements.

The Middle Intervale Meeting House is part of a large group of architecturally related mid-nineteenth religious buildings erected in rural areas of the state. The buildings that comprise the general grouping can be further subdivided into three subsets: 1) churches with towers crowned by spires; 2) churches without spires; and 3) churches without towers. Common characteristics shared by all of these buildings include their rectangular gable front orientations (often with a pediment), their plans (generally containing vestibules under galleries or adjacent to a raised platform), and an unmistakable Greek Revival style form that is conveyed not only by the general massing, but also by detailing such as corner pilasters and a broad entablature. These classical details are frequently combined with Gothic Revival features such as lancet arches above windows and belfry openings or in paneled pilasters, drip moldings over doors and windows, and towers with crenelation or spirelets. In some of the earliest members of the group, Federal style elements may even appear (St. John's Episcopal Church in Dresden, N. R. 6/14/91). The Middle Intervale Meeting House belongs to the subset of towered buildings that lack spires, in this case its low single stage having been ornamented with corner spirelets. As was the case for several other early meeting houses that were extensively remodeled in the mid nineteenth century (Harrington, Readfield, Sedgewick), the Greek Revival was the architectural fashion of choice for the alterations undertaken on the Middle Intervale Meeting House.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

MIDDLE INTERVALE MEETING HOUSE & COMMON

OXFORD, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

The Middle Intervale Meeting House is located on a parcel of land representing the remainder of the original Common lot that was not developed as a cemetery. A recent survey of Maine's designed public landscapes reveals that Commons like this one in Bethel were the first such public green spaces created in the state. These Commons had several distinguishing characteristics: 1) they were typically associated with the Congregational (or first) meeting house; 2) they were relatively small, but centrally located; and 3) they may have been leveled for the purposes of public gatherings, but were not otherwise improved until the late nineteenth century -- if at all. The Common associated with the Middle Intervale Meeting House -- which was laid out in 1816 at the time of the construction of the original meeting house -- appears to have all of these features. In addition, like many such places in rural areas that lay outside of village centers, it was not subsequently improved later in the century, although at some point a schoolhouse (no longer extant) was built at its southwest corner. Among the Common's intended uses was as a training ground for the local militia, although it is not certain how long this was continued. A brick powder house constructed diagonally across the road from the Common is a reflection on this purpose.

Use of the meeting house for religious purposes declined in the twentieth century and the congregation that had maintained the building dissolved. In 1978 the Middle Intervale Meeting House Society was organized for the express purpose of preserving the church. The Society was incorporated the following year and took possession of the building, which it subsequently restored. Today, the meeting house is host to a variety of events including weddings, the occasional religious service, and a very successful annual quilt show that raises money for the endowment.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

MIDDLE INTERVALE MEETING HOUSE & COMMON

OXFORD, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

Bibliography

Bennett, Randall H. *Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture*. Bethel, Maine: Oxford County Historic Resource Survey. 1984.

Lapham, William Berry. *History of the Town of Bethel, Maine*. Somersworth, New Hampshire: New England History Press in collaboration with the Bethel Historical Society, 1981. Reprint of the 1891 edition.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

MIDDLE INTERVALE MEETING HOUSE & COMMON

OXFORD, MAINE

Section number 10 Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property of about two acres occupies the Town of Bethel tax map 18, lot 46.

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the entire historic rural lot containing the Middle Intervale Meeting House and its related Common.