

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED AUG 3 1979  
DATE ENTERED OCT 5 1979

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

SECOND RINDGE MEETING HOUSE, HORSESHEDS, <sup>and</sup> OLD CEMETERY

AND/OR COMMON

TOWN HALL-CHURCH

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Route US 202, Rindge Common, Rindge Center  NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Rindge

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

Second

STATE

New Hampshire

CODE  
33

COUNTY  
Cheshire

CODE  
005

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Town of Rindge

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rindge

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Hampshire 03461

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cheshire County Registry of Deeds, Cheshire County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

12 Court Street

CITY, TOWN

Keene

STATE

New Hampshire 03431

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

NA

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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

In 1794 the Town of Rindge voted to raze the old Meeting House which in the course of 30 years had grown inadequate, and to build a new one on its approximate site. Most of the money for the building was raised through the sale of pews. The contract was awarded to David and William Barker of Rindge. Work was completed in 1796, and the building dedicated on January 11, 1797.

As constructed, the Second Meeting House was one of the largest of the country meeting houses. The rectangular frame building was sited on a knoll in the center of the village. The main entrance was on the south side, and there were two tiers of windows on each of the four sides. Within the building the east half was the church, the west half, the Meeting House. Balconies, comprising the original second floor, overlooked the space below. (Sinnott conjectures that the building may have been a "three decker", with two galleries, based on the present window arrangement in the west wall.)

The original bell tower projected from the west wall; it was square in plan and its height above the eaves equalled the distance from the eaves to the ground. There were four windows above the door in the west face of the tower. A balustrade at the top of the tower surrounded the eight columns which housed the bell and supported the eight-sided steeple.

In the intervening years the old building has undergone alterations and renovations. These are as follows:

1839 A second floor was incorporated into the building to accommodate the sanctuary of the Church. The front of the building was extended to encompass the bell tower, the additional space providing foyers and access stairs to the new second floor. The steeple was remodelled and lowered 12 feet, because the fire pumper then available could not reach the original height. Apparently, at that time the seven original windows on each long side of the second floor were replaced by four larger windows on each side.

1871 The installation of a pipe organ necessitated the building of an addition at the eastern end of the building. On the first floor, the addition became a stage; on the second, it housed the organ. Money for this project financed by the Church was raised by the Ladies Vestry Association.

1947-48 Central heating and plumbing were installed.

1951-52 After the ceiling of the sanctuary fell, a domed, reinforced ceiling and new lighting were installed.

1956 The upper and lower lobbies were renovated.

1958-59 Renovation and refurnishing of the sanctuary was undertaken.

1961 The first floor was renovated.

(See Continuation Sheet 1)

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DESCRIPTION (Continued)

One of the Bicentennial projects which Rindge has undertaken is the redecoration of the Town Hall portion of the Meeting House. This will involve painting, installing electric sconces, refinishing the floor, and installing a fabric curtain on the stage. Work on this project is underway.

The cemetery lies on rugged, rolling terrain immediately north of the Meeting House building and extending east beyond it some 100 yards. It has been so located since the original Meeting House was erected in 1764. It contains the graves of many of the earliest settlers and of veterans of the Revolution. Another Bicentennial project is to repair the gravestones and level and seed the oldest portion of the cemetery so that appropriate care can be more readily provided.

Originally two sets of horse sheds serviced the Meeting House. One set, on the west edge of the cemetery, has disappeared. Those along the south boundary of the cemetery remain in fair condition. Separate plans for their restoration are underway.

# 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 checked="" 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/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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1794-1796

BUILDER/ARCHITECT David and William Barker

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Rindge Meeting House bears the distinction of having served the purpose for which it was built for almost 180 years. The building stands as a monument to the adaptability of democracy. Built in a time when church and government were inexorably intertwined, it has lived and adjusted to a time in which the separation of government and church is considered one of the cardinal principles of democracy.

Originally the proprietors of the town assumed full responsibility for the encouragement of religious pursuits. Until 1819 residents of the town, regardless of denomination and belief, were considered members of the parish. Town taxes paid the salary of the minister. As has been pointed out, three-quarters of the original cost of the building was raised through the sale of "pues."

Growing protests stemming from differing religious beliefs resulted in the granting of exemptions from that portion of the town taxes which went to pay the salary of the minister. In 1819, when there were some 25 such exemptions, the Toleration Act prescribed that church membership and support would henceforth be voluntary. Accordingly, the Church Society was set up on March 30, 1820. The present arrangement with the town as owner and the Church Society as tenant on a lease agreement began.

The building is a prime example of simple, functional, colonial architecture, achieving grace through line and proportion rather than through ornateness. The cemetery and remaining horse shed are integral parts of the Meeting House complex and should be considered with it.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of the Town of Rindge, New Hampshire, 1736-1884. Ezra S. Stearns.  
(Boston: Press of George H. Ellis, 1875).

Meeting House and Church in Early New England. Edmund W. Sinnott.  
(New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1963).

(See Continuation Sheet 2)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 acres

Tax Office Records: Map #28; Lot 19

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	8
7	4
4	7
0	0

4	7
3	7
1	6
0	

B 




C 




D 




VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION From the intersection of Payson Hill Road and School St. at Rindge Common, north following the trace of Payson Hill Road, 500 feet. ENE 70', S 70', E 170', SSE 335', approximately S 140' to School Street, thence W along the trace of School Street 390' to the point of origin. The property lies on the boundary of two USGS survey map sheets: Winchendon Quadrangle of Massachusetts at the scale 1:24,000 and the Monadnock Quadrangle of NH at the scale 1:62,500. Because of the divergence in scale and the large scale of the NH map, these sheets are not useful in plotting the bounds of the property. State maps have been substituted to show clearly the bounds.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David R. Crocker, President

ORGANIZATION

Rindge Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

DATE

TELEPHONE

603-899-5288

CITY OR TOWN

Rindge

STATE

New Hampshire 03461

## 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

TITLE Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development  
NH State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 1-23-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Carol Skell*

DATE 10-5-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE 10-4-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2 ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Continued)

American Guide Series: New Hampshire: A Guide to the Granite State. Federal Writers Project, W.P.A., (Cambridge: Houghton-Mifflin, Riverside Press: 1938).

"The First Congregational Church and Society 1765-1965". (Available through the Rindge Historical Society).