NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 8-86)	OMB	No. 1024-0018
United States Department of the Interior National Park Service		
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM		
1. Name of Property		
historic name: <u>BOZRAH CONGREGATIONAL CHUR</u>		
other name/site number: <u>N/A</u>		
2. Location street & number: <u>17 and 23 Bozrah Street</u>		
		N/A
state: <u>CT</u> county: <u>New London</u> code: <u>O</u>	<u>11</u> zi	.p code: <u>06334</u>
3. Classification Ownership of Property: <u>private</u>	=========	
Category of Property: <u>buildings</u>		
Number of Resources within Property:		
Contributing Noncontributing		
2   1   buildings		
Number of contributing resources previously listed Register:	in the M	lational

952

Name of related multiple property listing: <u>N/A</u>

4. State/F	ederal Agency Certification			
As the des of 1986, a request fo standards Historic P set forth	ignated authority under the s amended, I hereby certify r determination of eligibili for registering properties i laces and meets the procedur in 36 CFR Part 60. In my op not meet the National Regist	Nation that t ty mee n the al and inion,	al Historic Preser his <u>X</u> nominatio ts the documentati National Register professional requ the property <u>X</u> teria. <u>See</u> co	vation Act n on of irements meets
Signature	of certifying official		<u>6/21/91</u> Date	
Direc	tor, Connecticut Historical Commis	sion		
	ederal agency and bureau			
	ion, the property meets riteria See continuati			National
Signature	of commenting or other offic	ial	Date	
State or F	ederal agency and bureau			
5. Nationa	l Park Service Certification			
· / -	certify that this property i	s:	Intered In National 1	
deter Nati deter Nati	ed in the National Register See continuation sheet. mined eligible for the onal Register See continuation sheet. mined not eligible for the onal Register ed from the National Register	/ 	Julous Byur	
other	(explain):			
		Jus1	gnature of Keeper	Date of Action
6. Functio	n or Use			
Historic:	RELIGION DOMESTIC		religious structu single dwelling	
Current:	RELIGION DOMESTIC		religious structu single dwelling	re

7. Descript				
	ral Classifi			
<u>Greek Rev</u> Italianat	vival te			
Other Desci	ription: <u>N/</u>	Α		
Materials:		Granite WOOD		ASPHALT BRICK
Describe p sheet.	resent and h	istoric physical	appearance	e. <u>X</u> See continuation
8. Statemer ===================================	nt of Signif ======= official ha	icance	significar	nce of this property in
Applicable	National Re	gister Criteria:	<u>A,C</u>	
Criteria Co	onsideration	s (Exceptions) :	A	
Areas of Si	ignificance:	ARCHITECTURE RELIGION		
Period(s) o	of Significa	nce: <u>1843-1872</u>		
Significant	t Dates:	1843, 1	872	
Significant	t Person(s):	N/A		-

Cultural Affiliation: <u>N/A</u>

Architect/Builder: Lloyd E. Baldwin, builder Nathaniel Rudd, stonework contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. <u>X</u> See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References
<u>X</u> See continuation sheet.
Previous documentation on file (NPS):
<pre>_ 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 #</pre>
Primary Location of Additional Data:
<pre>_ State historic preservation office _ Other state agency _ Federal agency _ Local government _ University _ Other Specify Repository:</pre>
10. Geographical Data
Acreage of Property: <u>approx. 3</u>
UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A <u>18 736380 4604220</u> B <u>18 736320 4604140</u> C D D
See continuation sheet.
Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet. The nominated property includes the parcel known as 17 Bozrah Street and 23 Bozrah Street, shown as Lot 21 on Bozrah Assessor Map 6.
Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet. The boundary includes the historic lot associated with the church as enlarged by the parsonage lot in 1872.
11. Form Prepared By Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator
Name/Title: Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth
Organization: <u>Historic Resource Consultants</u> Date: <u>January 21, 1991</u>
Street & Number: <u>55 Van Dyke Avenue</u> Telephone: <u>203-547-0268</u>
City or Town: <u>Hartford</u> State: <u>CT</u> ZIP: <u>06106</u>

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description Bozrah Congregational Church 7-1 and Parsonage Bozrah, New London County, CT

The Bozrah Congregational Church (Photographs 1 and 2) is a whitepainted Greek Revival-style meetinghouse situated on a knoll overlooking Bozrah Street (Connecticut Route 163) and Fitchville Pond. The setting is a rural, wooded area of widely scattered buildings. Completed in 1843, the church presents a narrow side to the road, where the gable is treated as a pediment. The building's corners are finished with paneled pilasters, above which runs a simple entablature unembellished except for bold cornice moldings and a band of dentils separating the architrave and frieze. Similar pilasters divide the facade or east elevation into three bays, with two entrances flanking a center window. Each entry has a modern raised-panel door enframed by a crosset-shaped surround made up of a series of moldings, some of which are reproductions of the original. The building's side and rear elevations are clapboarded, with flush boards covering the entire facade. Side elevations have two tiers of five windows. Windows have plain-board frames, old if not original six-over-six sash, and modern metal storm windows.

A small tower located on the front or east end of the gable roof is made up of three stages: a base with a molded cornice similar to that on the main part of the building; a belfry stage in which plain paired pilasters flank a large rectangular louvered opening, above which is a reduced-scale version of the building's cornice; and a dome surmounted by a wrought-iron weathervane in the form of a large arrow. Although the weathervane is original, the copper-colored dome is a fiberglass replacement. Inside the belfry is large bronze bell.

At the rear of the building two small brick chimneys emerge from the roof. The exterior chimney on the north side represents a 20th-century addition.

The church rests on a granite ashlar foundation built with its exposed courses alternately laid flat and on end (Photograph 3). The stonework is visible for almost the entire basement story on the south side of the church, which like the north yard is paved for parking. Granite steps lead up to the entrances in the front of the church.

The interior of the building (Photographs 4 and 5), which is still in use for religious services, is simply furnished and largely original. The area immediately inside the doors is a vestibule; enclosed stairs on either side lead to the gallery. The rest of the interior is devoted to the auditorium. The white-painted pews are arranged with

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Bozrah Congregational Church and Parsonage Bozrah, New London County, CT 7-2

side aisles creating a wide center section and narrower rows of side pews. The pews are original and have paneled sides and curving maple arms; the original paneled doors are currently stored in the gallery. The view to the front of the church is entirely unobstructed: the gallery, which extends around three sides, is supported by iron rods from large king-post roof trusses in the attic. The seating in the gallery consists of two rows of fixed wooden benches.

The church's interior woodwork and finishes are very simple and mostly original. There is a dado or wainscot of plain joined boards. Interior doors have four raised panels and, with few exceptions, their original iron latches with turned pulls (Photograph 6). The west or pulpit end of the church has been somewhat altered, with the area under the galleries partitioned into small rooms and a low raised platform which appears to extend somewhat further forward than did the original. A Victorian-period desk now serves as the pulpit.

Some 300 feet to the south of the church is the parsonage (Photographs 1 and 7), built in 1872. It is a 2 1/2-story frame building with short cross-gable wings; currently aluminum siding covers its clapboarded exterior. The parsonage's Victorian origins are evident in its round-arched stairway window, bracketed cornice, and entry porch on large scroll brackets. A small modern garage associated with the parsonage is counted as a noncontributing building.

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance	Bozrah Congregational Church	8-1
	and Parsonage	
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#### <u>Summary</u>

Bozrah's Congregational meetinghouse is significant primarily as a well-preserved example of early 19th-century New England church architecture (Criterion C). Although properties used for religious purposes are ordinarily not considered eligible for the National Register, the architectural distinction of the Bozrah Congregational Church qualifies it for inclusion (Criteria Consideration A). Moreover, the property has significance for its role in accommodating important community institutions: not only was the church the house of worship for the town's Congregationalist majority, but also it served as the place where town meetings were held until 1947, when Bozrah built a separate town hall (Criterion A). As a longstanding, integral part of the historic church property, the Parsonage contributes to its significance.

# Architectural Significance

Like most meetinghouses built in the 1830s and 1840s, the Bozrah church drew upon the Greek Revival style for its architectural embellishment. The Classical cornice and entablature, flush boarding in imitation of masonry, dentils, pilasters, and treatment of the gable as a pediment are all typical Greek Revival features found in both the institutional and domestic architecture of the period; they reflect an interest in the architecture and institutions of ancient Greece. The use of such features in this building had no particular religious significance other than to indicate that, like contemporary courthouses and academies, the meetinghouse was an important community building deserving of extra stylistic attention. In fact, the real significance of these Greek Revival-style meetinghouses is that they represent the final stage of plain-style church architecture, in which houses of worship had little to distinguish them from buildings built for secular purposes.<sup>1</sup> With its plain rectilinear form, Greek Revival details, and simply finished interior, the Bozrah Congregational Church epitomizes the antebellum New England church structure.

#### Historical Context

The formation of a Congregational society among families settled in present-day Bozrah preceded the incorporation of the town, which occurred in 1786. In 1737 the New Concord Ecclesiastical Society was formed as a separate parish within the Town of Norwich. As the

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established religion of Connecticut, Congregational societies were supported by public taxes and performed some governmental functions such as supervision of the schools. Although actual church attendance fluctuated, the Congregationalists enjoyed the formal allegiance of the great majority of residents in most parts of Connecticut throughout the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries. Even after disestablishment by the Constitution of 1818, the Congregational church remained a dominant institution within many Connecticut towns.

Such was the case with Bozrah. As was common, the town contributed toward the cost of the new meetinghouse because the structure would accommodate town meetings, a function it served for more than 100 years. In the case of this meetinghouse, the Town of Bozrah contributed \$400 for the use of the basement. Although there were at one time smaller Congregational societies in the mill villages of Fitchville and Gilman, and a Baptist church in Fitchville after 1887, the Bozrah Congregational Church was both a religious and social center for most of Bozrah's residents. In addition to religious services, the church sponsored various missionary, fellowship, and Ladies Aid activities, including relief work during World War II.

The building was started in January 1843 after two years of controversy over whether a new meetinghouse would be built or the old one repaired. Although the steps and stoves were not yet installed, the church was sufficiently complete by August to hold meetings there, with the formal dedication held in October. The stonework was laid by a local mason, Nathaniel Rudd, and the building was constructed by Willimantic contractor Lloyd E. Baldwin, who described himself as a "Master Builder."<sup>2</sup> Church members were evidently pleased with Baldwin's work; on December 4, 1843, they voted to thank him "for faithful performance and neatness of workmanship . . . and also for the unanimity which prevailed."<sup>3</sup>

Although built thirty years later, the adjacent parsonage contributes to the significance of the property because of its long association with the church as a functional part of the complex, the residence of its minister. There had been an earlier parsonage, but it was sold in 1858 to Rev. Nathan Hunt, the church's minister. The present parsonage was built in 1872 on property donated for the purpose by Clarissa Haughton.

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Significance	Bozrah Congregational Church	8-3
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#### NOTES

- Many Federal-period meetinghouses included elaborate steeples, but most of their decorative treatment had no specifically religious meaning. In the 1850s, Connecticut Congregationalists started building distinctly church-like meetinghouses, usually in a Gothic Revival or Italianate style.
- 2. Windham County Business Directory (West Killingly, 1861).
- 3. Bozrah Congregational Church, Records, manuscript, vol. 2, Connecticut State Library.

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Bibliography	Bozrah Congregational Church	9-1
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	Bozrah, New London County, CT	

- Bozrah Congregational Church. Records. Manuscript, Connecticut State Library.
- Hurd, D. Hamilton. <u>History of New London County, Connecticut</u>. New York, 1882.
- <u>Two Hundredth Anniversary, Town of Bozrah, Connecticut's 86th</u> <u>Town</u>. Bozrah, 1986.
- U.S. Works Progress Administration. Census of Old Buildings. Connecticut. Manuscript and photograph, c.1935. Connecticut State Library.

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Photograph captions	Bozrah Congregational Church	Photos-1
	and Parsonage	
	Bozrah, New London County, CT	

#### All photographs:

 Bozrah Congregational Church
Bozrah, New London County, CT
Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
January, 1991
Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission Hartford, CT

## Captions:

East (facade) and north elevations, parsonage in background, camera facing southwest Photograph 1 of 7

West (rear) and south elevations, camera facing northeast Photograph 2 of 7

Detail of stonework, south elevation, camera facing north Photograph 3 of 7

Interior, auditorium, view toward pulpit, camera facing northwest Photograph 4 of 7

Interior, auditorium, view from gallery toward back of church, camera facing southeast Photograph 5 of 7

Detail of door to gallery, vestibule, camera facing north Photograph 6 of 7

Parsonage south of church, camera facing west Photograph 7 of 7