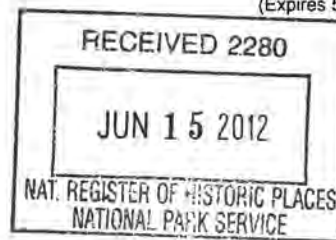


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



453

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Monson Community Church

other names/site number Monson Baptist Church, Monson Congregational Church

2. Location

street & number 19 Greenville Road

N/A

not for publication

city or town Monson

N/A

vicinity

state Maine

code MEcounty Piscataquiscode 021zip code 04464

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide x local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Date

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Name of Property

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5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
2	0	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

None

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION / Religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION / Religious facility

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19TH CENTURY / Greek Revival

LATE VICTORIAN / Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE / Granite

CONCRETE

OTHER: CONCRETE MASONRY UNIT

walls: WOOD / Weatherboard

roof: SLATE

other: GLASS (STAINED)

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Monson Community Church is a unique religious building located in southwestern Piscataquis County in north-central Maine. The building consists of two formerly separate wood frame churches, now joined both physically and organizationally. The former Monson Congregational Church (1861) is a two-story Greek Revival style building with a belfry and spire set upon the front gable ridge. The former Monson Baptist Church (1845) is a one and one-half story gable front building with an entry vestibule and a one story, rectangular addition at the rear. Both buildings exhibit prominent wooden pilasters, wide frieze boards, and tympanum under the gable peaks, and all of the windows are filled with stained glass. The two buildings both face west, and the northwest façade of the Baptist Church has been joined to the southeast corner of the eastern exterior wall of the Congregational Church. The Congregational Church is on its original site, but the Baptist Church was built on nearby Pleasant Street and moved to its current location in 1959. In 1961 the interior of the Congregational Church was subdivided into two floors, with classrooms and meeting spaces on the ground level and an auditorium above. Known officially as the Monson Community Church since 1982, the yoked buildings occupy a prominent position on Greenville Road (State Route 15/6), the main thoroughfare through town. Immediately to the north are located the town-owned Monson Cemetery, the town bandstand and the former Monson Elementary School, while across the street and south of the church are a mixture of 19th and 20th century houses and modest commercial properties. The .69 acre lot is elevated 5 to 6 feet above the road grade and a concrete staircase with iron pipe railings centered on the façade of the former Congregational Church provides access to the level plateau upon which the buildings are sited. A pair of free-standing decorative lamp poles are positioned in front of the Congregational Church and a driveway on the south edge of the property provides access to the Baptist portion of the building. A paved walkway skirts the west and south elevations of the former Congregational Church and connects the front façade of that building with the entry vestibule of the rear building.

Narrative Description*Monson Congregational Church, 1860/1*

The primary elevation of the former Monson Congregational Church consists of three symmetrically arranged bays. At the center of the façade is a pair of tall, narrow stained glass windows set into a single frame. To either side of the windows is an entryway containing a five-panel wooden door topped with a stained glass transom. Both the doors and the windows are set in frames composed of side pilasters and an entablature with projecting cornice. Wider pilasters mark the corners of the clapboarded walls. The slate-covered roof overhangs the plane of the front wall and has a marked frieze on the rake and cornice returns atop the pilaster. Directly above the cornice of the central window is a cast iron lantern affixed to the wall. Above this feature a triangular, stained glass window is set at the center of the tympanum. Two steps lead to the north door, and a low ramp with wooden railing crosses the remainder of the façade and accesses the southern door.

The belfry is centered on the front ridge of the church. The base of the belfry (box) has clapboard siding. The belfry itself is composed of four window-like openings, set in a field of clapboard siding. At the base of each opening a short balustrade with turned balusters stretches from side to side. The corners of the belfry are marked with pilasters that intersect a frieze board under the cornice. The cornice has crown moulding and a pronounced overhang. The roof of the belfry features a modest hip that supports the four sided wooden spire. A large brass weathervane of undetermined design crowns the spire. Inside the belfry is a large cast iron bell, set in an iron yoke adjacent to a wooden wheel. The bell is in working order and is pealed by means of a rope that drops into the front room on the first floor.

As with the façade, the side elevations are decorated with corner pilasters, a prominent frieze and boxed cornice. Although the Congregational church is set on granite cap stones over a partial, field stone foundation, on the north elevation the bottom four feet of the building has been clad in a vertical, metal siding (presumably due to excessive snow accumulation). Both side elevations of the Congregational church features three regularly spaced window bays. Each bay is filled with a tall, narrow, double hung, stained glass window, with opalescent glass, set in flat stock with a flat head casing with a simple cornice. All the windows, including the pair on the façade, feature a standard over-all design with a dedication panel at the base topped with a stylized flower arrangement. Above and behind the flowers the stained glass

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assumes a three-level tracery pattern, which in turn is topped by an oval pane containing a Christian motif (i.e. dove, chalice). The entire scene is set within a double border of rectangular panes that end in an arch at the top of the window. On the south elevation, the projecting vestibule of the former Baptist church overlap, but does not touch, the easternmost window.

The rear (east) elevation of the Congregational church has an external brick chimney, set just north of center, rising along the wall and through the roof overhang. On the second floor level, to the north of the stack, is a four panel door which opens onto the landing of an iron fire escape and ladder.

The cemetery is immediately adjacent to the former Congregational church, and the cast iron fence at the front of the cemetery ends at a newel post which is just barely not-touching the north wall of the church. The burial grounds actually wrap around the east side of the building and a second post is set within a few feet of the corner where the two buildings are joined. Head stones are arranged, facing west, in rows paralleling the foundation of the Baptist church. The cemetery is owned by the town, not the Church, and it is not known at this time whether any graves had to be relocated when the second building was added in 1959.

As originally designed the Congregational church had two vestibules, each of which provided access to the sanctuary, as well as to stairs to a balcony. The balcony spanned the north end of the building, and its wood floor bisected the stained glass windows on the façade. At present the entire building has been divided into two floors. The upper level, which extends from the edge of the former balcony to the east wall of the building, now functions as a large auditorium. A raised platform stretching between two corner rooms acts as a stage at the east end of the auditorium, and sets of three, wooden, folding chairs (said to have been used as church pews before the two buildings were joined) are positioned facing the stage. Pre-renovation finishes are extant in this room. The coffered ceiling is clad in painted metal with a disk from which a chandelier formerly hung, positioned at the center. The edges of the ceiling feature a Greek key border. The side walls are covered with a 'bubble' texture tin, and at the top of the wall is a tin frieze of urns and arches set below a metal ball-and-dart cornice. The upper half of each stained window is visible on the north, south and west walls.

The first floor was extensively renovated in 1961 to serve as the educational section of the yoked churches. Only the entry vestibules, and the room between the vestibules retain their original painted metal ceilings and plans, but these spaces, as well as some of the exterior walls, also retain painted wainscot below tin walls. At the east end of each vestibule a short set of stairs lead to what had been the building's sanctuary; in the south vestibule these stairs have been converted into a ramp. The southern two thirds of the former sanctuary has been divided into two large classrooms, while on the north side of the building are a smaller meeting room and library, both accessed from a longitudinal hall. At the east end of the hall is another set of stairs/ramp which gain access to a transverse hall which is elevated on what is more than likely the original podium. This back hall also contains a staircase to the basement (one wall of the staircase has a tin finish), and a couple of cupboards. At the south end of the back hall is the connection to the north wall of the Baptist church vestibule.

The new rooms on the first floor are generally characterized by hardwood (maple) floors, sheet-rock partition walls, and hollow core doors. The library and the meeting room on the north side of the building retain a collection of 1960s era furniture, including love seats and lighting fixtures.

Monson Baptist Church, 1845. Alterations c. 1920. Moved 1959.

In terms of architectural details the former Monson Baptist Church shares several features with the former Congregational church: clapboard siding, corner pilasters, boxed cornice, prominent frieze, and stained glass windows. Built in 1845 the building originally had a pedimented façade with full cornice return, a tall central window and two entry doors, and a belfry topped by a spire and four corner spirelets. In 1920 the building was remodeled, and at that time a new two stage tower was built on the façade, with the the belfry repositioned to the top of the tower. The two side entrances were converted into windows and a central entrance was positioned at the base of the tower. When the building was moved to its current site in 1959 the belfry and steeple were removed and a balustrade was positioned on the flat roof of the vestibule. This however must have been problematic as within a few years the roofline of the vestibule was reconfigured so as to take the form of a low, single pitched roof that intersects the lower edge of the back portion of the Congregational church roof.

Overall, the Baptist church is still composed of a projecting center vestibule, long side walls, and a short, but narrower addition (providing a choir loft, office, and storage room) at the east end of the building. In contrast to the Congregational church, the side elevations are only two bays wide, and the building sits on a concrete block foundation. Fronting the paired wooden doors of the entry vestibule is a wide set of stairs with square newel posts and rectangular

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balusters. A stained glass window is located on the façade, to the south of the vestibule, and another, shorter example, is located on the south wall of the vestibule. The north side of the vestibule is obscured by the south wall of the former Congregational church, and the north portion of the façade wall is now attached to the rear wall of the former Congregational church. As such, the window that formerly was on the north side of the façade now illuminates the wall between the sanctuary and the hall that connects the two buildings.

The north and south elevations of the church are two bays wide, with an additional bay in the hopped roof addition (nave or choir) on the eastern wall of the primary building. This addition contains a two-over-two sash window on the north wall, and a stained glass window and exit door and staircase on the south wall. There are no doors or windows on the back wall of addition; however, a gable roof entry positioned against the center of the wall leads to the basement. Several fixed sash windows are positioned within the concrete block foundation on each side of the building.

The interior of the former Baptist church is divided into the foyer (in the vestibule) and the sanctuary. The latter space is accessed through a set of double doors and has an acoustic tile ceiling, and painted hardwood floor. Within the sanctuary are three sets of pews consisting of a double set in the center and smaller rows on either side of the two aisles. All of the pews were installed during the remodeling of 1922, and rather than being situated perpendicular to the side walls, they are configured in a slight arcⁱ. The pews are painted white with stained wood upper rails and arm rests, and the end panel of each row is decorated with a carved tracery motif. At the east end of the sanctuary the wall is divided into three sections. In the middle is a recessed nave (choir) with a flat ceiling. This space is elevated at the height of the altar platform, and the back half of the choir is separated from the front by an approximately four feet high wooden paneled wall. Directly in front of this wall is the altar and two low pedestals used as flower stands. The front of the altar platform curves forward of the choir recess. A four panel door is positioned on either side of the nave; the south door provides access to the choir loft and the north door leads to a small corner office. There are two pulpits. Currently a low, natural wood pulpit is positioned on a ramped deck on the floor in front of the platform. A more formal pulpit is located in the southeast corner of the room and can be moved onto the platform if necessary.

The interior of the sanctuary exhibits several Classical Revival features. At each of the front corners of the nave are three pilasters that share a common base plinth. Each pilaster has an articulated capital which supports a fascia, frieze and crown moulding that encircles the room. Another pair of pilasters are located at the far north and south corners of the east wall. Moulded chair rail is also present on all the walls except for that of the nave. Between each of the window bays (both above and below the chair rail), over the doors, and behind the choir ogee-and torus-mouldings have been applied in rectilinear patterns to form large 'panels'. Additional recessed panels mark the front of the platform and the half wall in the choir/nave.

The double-hung wood framed stained glass windows in the former Baptist church were installed during the 1922 renovations. As with the windows on the former Congregational church, these are executed in opalescent art glass and the feature a standard design. In these examples, the defining motif is that of a pair of columns which support an arch with leaded voussoirs that springs from stylized capitals. At the base, between the plinths, is a memorial tablet. To either side a band of opalescent glass follows the interior line of the columns before ending in a small pointed arch. Below the primary arch is a daisy-chain motif. The interior of each chain is filled floral patterns. At the center of the each sash are two rows of leaded tracery.

A full basement is located under the sanctuary and nave and is accessed from the back staircase in the former Congregational church. This space, which was completed in 1971, has pine paneled walls, a concrete floor and drop ceiling. The large space is functionally divided into a conversation area and a dining area, and a long, narrow kitchen, bathroom, and storage area are located against the north wall.

ⁱ The curved pews are similar to the type of pews used in 'auditorium' style church seating, which was popular in churches constructed in the early 20th century.

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1845-1962

Significant Dates

1845, 1860/1, 1922, 1959

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation**Architect/Builder****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 grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance reflects the physical and social development of the Baptist and Congregational Churches in Monson, and continues through to the period when the Baptist Church was relocated and attached to the Congregational Church and the interior of the two buildings renovated.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

As buildings owned and utilized by a religious institution, Criterion Consideration A must be considered. The significance of these properties is derived from the architectural significance demonstrating the distinctive characteristics of a type, manner or period of construction (both individually and together), and for the manner in which they reflect the demographic shifts in the town of Monson, Maine.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Monson Community Church is a unique religious structure that illustrates both physically and organizationally how local houses of worship responded to changing demographic patterns in a small, fairly remote, Maine town. The physical church was formed when two independent congregations, the Congregational Church and the Baptist Church (both with dwindling membership), realized that neither could continue to maintain separate buildings. As such, after years of planning and fundraising, the 1845 Baptist church was moved several blocks and attached to the 1860 Congregational church in 1959. Both buildings feature Greek Revival, and to a lesser extent Italianate, detailing, and while the form of each building remains distinct the union is smooth from a stylistic perspective. Shortly after the move the sanctuary of the Congregational church was divided into two floors, and classrooms, a library and a lounge installed on the first floor and an auditorium and stage created on the second floor. These alterations, as well as a later completion of a basement dining room under the Baptist church, reflects the congregations desire to provide adequate, dedicated space for Sunday School/education – a trend that began in the late 19th century with Akron-plan churches. It also symbolizes the evolving desire to provide for gathering spaces that might be utilized by the larger community. The Monson Community Church is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A, as a property that reflects the evolving social and cultural history of this rural town. It also achieves local significance under Criterion C, for the manner in which, by uniting the two buildings, the congregations were able to develop a modern and progressive building that met the programmatic requirements of both churches. In recognition of the historic and architectural importance of these religious buildings, Criterion Consideration A also applies.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Monson is approximately 13 miles south of Greenville and Moosehead Lake, and 10 miles north of Guilford, in the southwestern portion of Piscataquis County. Located on the shores of Lake Hebron, the town is in the foothills of Maine's western mountains, on an old stage route known as the Moosehead Trail that led from central Maine to Canada. Today, the Appalachian Trail meanders through the town and summer through hikers add to the year round population of 686 (2010).

Criteria A: Social History

Monson was settled between 1815 and 1820, and incorporated in 1822. Between incorporation and 1870 the population increased slowly, from 411 to 708 residents, but over the next ten years the population grew from 604 to 827. Another 410 people were recorded in the 1890 census, resulting in a doubling of the population in just twenty years. The reason for the boom was the discovery of the 80 mile long Piscataquis slate belt in 1870, and the rapid opening of multiple quarries. In the 1888 *Gazetteer of Maine* at least four separate slate companies were attributed to Monson, however, the 1882 Piscataquis County Atlas shows nine companies situated on the town's north slate vein and three on the south vein. Over time, at least 16 quarries operated in Monson, some with shafts reaching 900 feet deep. Among the large number of the new residents who came to work in the lucrative slate industry were many Scandinavians. According to the *Third Annual report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics*, in 1889 fifty percent of the workers in the Monson quarries were immigrants from Wales, Sweden (and the Swedish settlements in Aroostook County) as well as from Prince Edward Island, Ireland, French Canada and England. As a result of the slate and population boom, ancillary services, including merchants, professionals, and manufacturers, quickly became established in town to meet the needs of the community and industry, and by the 1880s, the mouth of Hebron Pond, at the center of town, contained a fairly dense commercial and residential district. At the end of the century there were four churches in town: Congregational, Baptist, Lutheran and Methodist.

The peaks of population occurred, as per the census, in 1910 with 1,243 residents followed by 1,181 in 1930.ⁱⁱ From that time on the population began to decrease, hitting a low of 669 people in 1970. After years of consolidation one of the two largest quarries, the Monson-Maine quarry closed in 1943, along with the 8 mile long narrow gauge rail line they operated between the pits and Monson Junction on the Bangor and Piscataquis Railroad.

As noted in the *1999 Downtown Revitalization Plan*, the combination of high quality slate and Scandinavian heritage continue to help define the town and contribute to its distinctiveness as a community. Yet at the same time, five generations now separate the 19th century slate workers and their families from their descendants. Almost six percent of

ⁱⁱ The population dipped to 1,079 in 1920.

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the population still identifies as Swedish, but most, if not all, of the institutions that once catered to the immigrant workers have closed.

The following paragraphs are from the chapter on churches in History of Monson, Maine and detail the fate of two of the town's culturally specific religious buildings.

It was about 1874-75, that the Swedish people began coming to Monson, most of them working in the slate quarries. The Swedish people did not understand the language of this country, and wanting to worship god in their own tongue, they built a Swedish Mission church in 1890. Some of the members of this church were Lutheran, which is the State church of Sweden, and some held other beliefs. There was a break in the organization, and in 1892 the Swedish Methodist Church was built... From that time on the Swedish Mission Church was known as the Swedish Lutheran church. Both churches had Swedish ministers and conducted their services in their native tongue. There were services in these churches for many years. The Saturday night church suppers which were held in the members' homes were very popular. The Swedish Lutheran Church... was sold to the American Legion in 1946 and converted into a Legion Hall...

The Swedish Methodist Church was sold in May of 1947 to the New England District Council of the Assembly of God Churches... the church was destroyed by fire in February, 1982. (French 1997, 30)

After the two Swedish churches closed many of the members joined the Congregational Church on Greenville Road, providing a needed boost to its membership. This church had been formed in 1821. Ten years later the congregation erected its first building, said to have been the "very first church building constructed north of Bangor, between Bangor and the Canadian border" (Church History Sunday Commission 1997, 3). In 1860 that structure burned and a new building for the congregation was erected by the following summer. A short distance away a Baptist church and society was formed in 1827, and its meeting house was erected in 1847. Both congregations maintained healthy membership into the 20th century and supported their own ministers until 1933. Indeed the Baptist Church was prosperous enough in 1922 to undertake an extensive remodeling that included raising the foundation two feet and installing a furnace, building a new tower and steeple, replacing the pews and installing stained glass windows.

However, during the Great Depression things started to change. As recorded in the Monson Congregational Church records on January 28, 1932 it was:

Voted that we as members of the Monson Congregational Church at our annual meeting assembled, are anxious to work in close Christian harmony with the members and constituency of the Baptist Church of Monson and authorize a committee... to work out a plan of federation with a similar committee of the Baptist church such plan to be submitted for our consideration and action at a meeting of our church members called for that purpose ([Records of the Monson Congregational Church] n.d.).

The following year they voted to close the church for an indefinite period starting January 15, 1933, but to continue the Sunday School. In May 1934 the records show that the church then voted to "adopt the articles of union of churches". According to the History of Monson, Maine "Church was held in the summer for six months in the Baptist Church and in the Congregational Church in the winter of the remaining six months" (French 1997, 28). In 1933 the two churches called a joint minister, Rev. Martin Sorensen, a native of Iceland, but they maintained their separate identity and membership roles as Baptists and Congregationalists.

By the late 1940s it became increasingly apparent that the religious organizations did not have the membership or resources to maintain two separate buildings. The population continued to decline after the end of the Second World War, and many residents who had invested in stock to support the organization of the Moosehead Woodcrafter manufacturing plant, which went bankrupt in 1947, lost a lot of money. By 1955 Congregational records show that articles of consolidation were being discussed. During 1957 a committee drew up plans for the move and attachment of the Baptist Church, and in June of that year the Baptist membership formally took up the question of moving the building; the seven to seven tie was broken by the vote of the President of the organization, in the affirmative. Through that vote a third entity, the Monson Community Church, was established. The following year the Congregational Society voted to sell their parsonage and add the proceeds for the building fund. In November of 1958 the new foundation was complete, but the move was delayed until the following summer. On August 14, 1960 all the work was completed and the church formally dedicated.

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In *Sacred Spaces: Designing America's Churches*, Gretchen Buggeln says: "in what congregations build and where they build it, they say something about their relationship to the surrounding culture. They also demonstrate what is important in their rituals and beliefs....Intentionally or not, buildings communicate what really matters to their builders" (Buggelen 2004, 25). Although the building was moved it took much longer for the constituent organizations to part with their specific historic identities and doctrine. Before the building was even dedicated the Congregational Church voted to give the Baptist Society to that part of the property on which "their Church building" was located ([Records of the Monson Congregational Church] n.d.). It was not until 1982 that the Monson Community Church was officially incorporated in Maine; in 1986 the Congregational Society of Monson disbanded and ten years later the Baptist Church and Society deeded all their property to the Community Church. Today, the Community Church has a healthy membership, and a house of worship that reflects what really matters: the desire not to lose touch with the community's social and cultural history.

Criterion C: Architecture

The physical joining of the former Baptist and former Congregational churches also offered the congregations a method for improving their non-worship programs. Early in the planning it was apparent that there was no reason to retain two sanctuaries; on the other hand, neither building previously had adequate facilities for Sunday School, committee and study group meetings, reading and research, or celebrations and dinners. Inasmuch as the Baptist Church had been significantly renovated only 35 years earlier, the decision was made to remodel the Congregational Church into classrooms, a vestry and meeting space, and to eventually construct a kitchen and dining hall. By undertaking this ambitious plan (on the heels of moving the Baptist Church) the Monson Community Church was evolving into a more modern type of church, one that was designed to accommodate programs above and beyond regular religious services.

Throughout rural Maine in the 19th century Protestant and Catholic churches were erected to serve small towns or crossroad communities. Regardless of where they were constructed, outside of the larger urban centers these buildings (generally, but not always wood framed) consisted of a sanctuary, an entry, entry hall, or vestibule and possibly a balcony or choir platform. Very few pre-Civil War churches are known to have been built initially with a useable basement – the c. 1860 Baptist Church in Turner is one exception. Sunday school classes were sometimes held in back corners of the sanctuary or hallways, at a parsonage if one existed, or in a few cases in a detached vestry or chapel.

After the Civil War church architecture started to evolve. In the urban areas this occurred in part through evangelical-based outreach missions that came to focus on the poor, the immigrants, or the unsaved. Increasing emphasis was placed on the role of more formal Christian education, and for those churches who had not developed their own Sunday School curriculum organizations such as the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, out of Portland, Maine offered structured religious educational opportunities. In 1872 in Akron, Ohio a new church design was developed. Known as the "Akron plan" it prescribed that religious education classrooms be clustered around a central hall, either in a circular or a square layout. Folding screens or doors allowed for the separation of classes, but also allowed for group participation at opening and closing sessions. The Methodist denomination was a rapid adopter of the Akron plan, and many of the later 19th century Methodist churches added Queen Anne-style turrets and towers or Romanesque arches to their buildings, which also grew increasingly complex in both style and plan. Later in the century 'auditorium' style seating, in which the pews fanned out in a semi-circular amphitheater around the pulpit and platform, became a hallmark of more family-friendly, theatrically oriented, progressive urban churches.

It was not easy for the simple Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival or Italianate churches in rural Maine, to incorporate new spaces for a Sunday School or the Ladies Circle. The options that were most commonly eventually employed involved raising the foundation and installing a basement vestry, or building an addition. Until the 1930s classes did not always coincide with the Sunday morning services, so it was somewhat less important to have a dedicated space for instruction, and many small rural churches did not find it necessary to undertake costly renovations. After the Second World War, however, as populations migrated out of the country and out of the cities to the new suburbs the newly constructed churches were routinely designed with education wings, cooking and eating facilities, parlors, lounges, offices and chapels.

The approach undertaken by the Monson Community Church can be seen as a way to accommodate more formally structured religious education, as well as increase social functions, within the church building. Based on a state-wide photographic study of churches in Maine erected from the 18th to the early 20th century, the Monson Community Church is the only known example that provided for increased programming by physically joining two historic churches. This effort preserved much of the integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and association of the separate churches

MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Name of Property

PISCATAQUIS COUNTY, MAINE

County and State

while establishing an ingenious plan for ensuring the church and its programs continued to be relevant through the second half of the twentieth century.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

""Monson" and "Monson Village." In *The Old Maps of Piscataquis County, Maine in 1882*. Fryeburg, Maine: Saco Valley Printing, 1989.

[Maine Central Railroad]. "Monson The Switzerland of Maine." Maine Central Railroad, 1888.

"[Records of the Monson Congregational Church]." Monson, Maine: Manuscript volume, n.d. Original volume located at the Monson Community Church, Monson, Maine

Bangor Daily New. "Monson Church Old Home Sunday to Mark Milestone in Building." August 15-16, 1959: 8.

Buggelen, Gretchen. "Sacred Spaces: Designing America's Churches." *The Christian Century* (Gale Group) 121, no. 12 (2004).

Bunting, William. *A Days' Work, Part II*. Gardiner, Maine: Tilsbury House Publishing, 2000.

Church History Sunday Commission. "Monson, Maine Church History Sunday." Monson, Maine: Monson Community Church, 1997.

French, Althea Haggstrom, Jeanne Brown Reed and Julie Sargent Anderston. *Monson, Maine History 1822 - 1997*. Newport, ME: Kelly-Smith Printing & Paper, 1997.

Mohr, Paula. ""Jeanne Halgren Kilde. When church Became Theatre: The Transformation of Evangelical Architecture and Worship in Nineteenth-Century America."" *Winterthur Portfolio* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2002).

Ron Harriman Associates, prepared for the Town of Monson. "Monson Downtown Revitalization Plan." Copy on file at the Monson Town Office, Monson, Maine, 1999.

Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine. Augusta: Burleigh & Flynt, Printers to the State, 1890.

Varney, George J. *A Gazetteer of the State of Maine*. Boston: B.B. Russell, 1882.

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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
 Name of repository: _____

MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Name of Property

PISCATAQUIS COUNTY, MAINE

County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property** 69/100 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 19 460654 5014778
Zone Easting Northing

3 Zone Easting Northing

2 Zone Easting Northing

4 Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of the property are described by the Town of Monson Tax Map number 21, lot 10.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This small lot contains all of the land associated with the church since the buildings were joined in 1959.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christi A. Mitchell

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission

date 18 April 2012

street & number 55 Capitol Street

telephone (207) 287-2132 x 2

city or town August

state Maine

zip code 04333-0065

e-mail christi.mitchell@maine.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Name of Property

PISCATAQUIS COUNTY, MAINE

County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Monson Community Church

City or Vicinity: Monson

County: Piscataquis **State:** Maine

Photographer: Christi A. Mitchell

Date Photographed: February 20, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 9. ME_PISCATAQUIS COUNTY_MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH_0001.TIF
Monson Community Church, facing south. Former Congregational Church in front; former Baptist Church at rear.
- 2 of 9. ME_PISCATAQUIS COUNTY_MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH_0002.TIF
Monson Community Church, facing east. Former Congregational Church at left; former Baptist Church at right.
- 3 of 9. ME_PISCATAQUIS COUNTY_MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH_0003.TIF
Monson Community Church, facing east. Former Baptist Church façade and south elevation.
- 4 of 9. ME_PISCATAQUIS COUNTY_MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH_0004.TIF
Interior, Monson Community Church, facing east. Sanctuary located in former Baptist Church.
- 5 of 9. ME_PISCATAQUIS COUNTY_MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH_0005.TIF
Interior, Monson Community Church, facing west. Sanctuary located in former Baptist Church. Note blocked window at right.
- 6 of 9. ME_PISCATAQUIS COUNTY_MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH_0006.TIF
Interior, Monson Community Church, facing east. Second floor auditorium, formerly upper half of Congregational Church sanctuary.
- 7 of 9. ME_PISCATAQUIS COUNTY_MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH_0007.TIF
Interior, Monson Community Church, facing northeast. First floor library located in former Congregational Church.
- 8 of 9. ME_PISCATAQUIS COUNTY_MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH_0008.TIF
Interior, Monson Community Church, facing southwest. Basement dining hall and kitchen, under former Baptist Church.
- 9 of 9. ME_PISCATAQUIS COUNTY_MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH_0009.TIF
Interior, Monson Community Church, facing northwest. First floor classroom, located in former Congregational Church.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

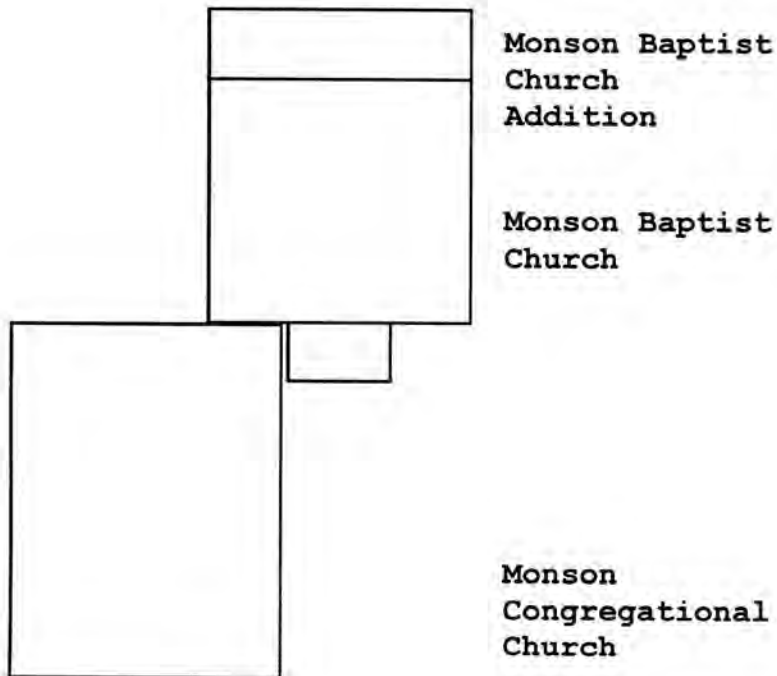
Name of Property MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH

County and State PISCATAQUIS COUNTY, MAINE

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number _____

Page _____



Monson Community
Church, Combined
Plan

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Monson Community Church
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MAINE, Piscataquis

DATE RECEIVED: 6/15/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/13/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/30/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/01/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000453

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 7/30/12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

2 churches moved together in 1959 to save
the congregation - creating one community
church. Significant social history & architecture.
Bos. 1845-1962

RECOM./CRITERIA AC

REVIEWER W. D. C.

DISCIPLINE W. D. C.

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 7/30/12

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the
nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



MON SON COMMUNITY CHURCH; PISCATAQUIS CO., ME



MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH; PISCATAQUIS CO., ME

20F9



MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH; PISCATAQUIS CO., ME



MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH; PISCATAQUIS CO., ME

40F9



MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH; PISCATAQUIS CO., ME



MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH; PISCATAQUIS CO., ME



MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH; PISCATAQUIS CO., ME

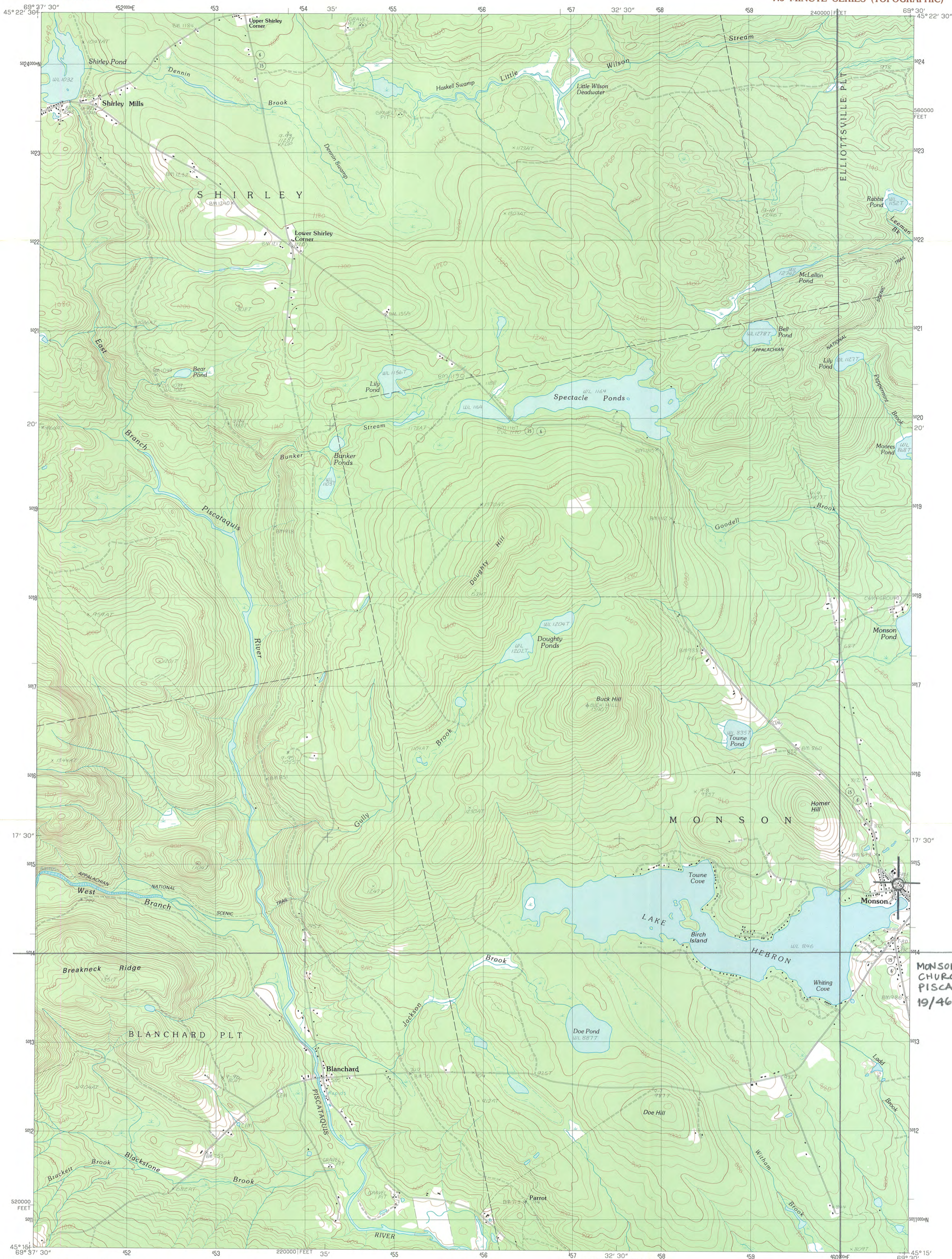
70F9



MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH ; PISCATAQUIS CO., ME

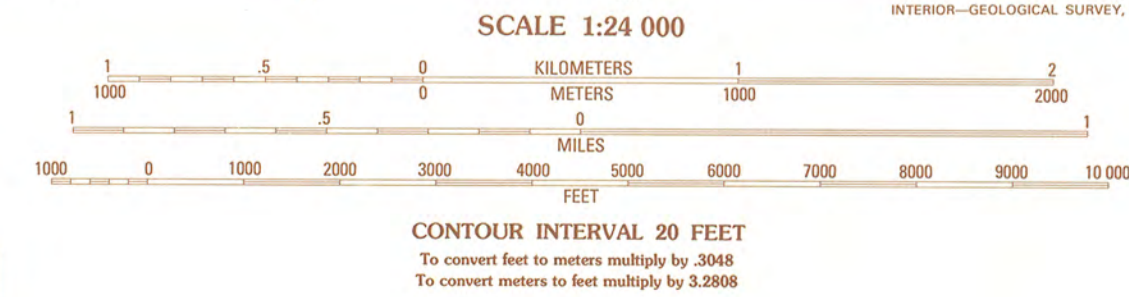


MONSON COMMUNITY CHURCH; PISCATAQUIS CO., ME 9 of 9



PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
CONTROL BY USGS AND NOS/NOAA
COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 1985
FIELD CHECKED 1987. MAP EDITED
PROJECTION TRANSVERSE MERCATOR
GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR MAINE, EAST ZONE
10,000-FOOT STATE GRID TICKS
UTM GRID DECLINATION 0°24' WEST
1989 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION 18°30' WEST
VERTICAL DATUM NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
HORIZONTAL DATUM 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM
To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983,
move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks
(2 meters south and 42 meters west)
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of any
Federal or State reservations shown on this map
No distinction made between houses, barns, and other buildings

PROVISIONAL MAP
Produced from original
manuscript drawings. Infor-
mation shown as of date of
photography.



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3	1 Big Squaw Pond
			2 Greenville
			3 Barren Mtn. West
4		5	4 Bald Mtn. Pond
			5 Monson East
			6 Foster Ridge
6	7	8	7 Whetstone Pond
			8 Guilford

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

ROAD LEGEND

Improved Road
Unimproved Road
Trail
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

MONSON WEST, MAINE
PROVISIONAL EDITION 1989

45069-C5-TF-024

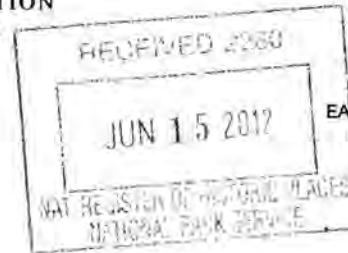
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

MONSON COMMUNITY
CHURCH
PISCATAQUIS CO., ME
19/460654/501477B



PAUL R. LEPAGE
GOVERNOR

MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
55 CAPITOL STREET
65 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333



EARLE G. SHETTLEWORTH, JR.
DIRECTOR

11 June 2012

Keeper of the National Register
National Park Service 2280
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW,
Washington D.C. 20005

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed please find three (3) new National Register nominations for properties located in the State of Maine:

Colonial Inn, York County
Monson Community Church, Piscataquis County
The Grand, Hancock County

With regard to The Grand, in Ellsworth, Maine, please note that the Commission received a notarized objection from one of the three (3) owners of record. Inasmuch as one objection out of three owners does not constitute 51% of the owners, we are proceeding with the nomination of this property to the National Register. A copy of the objection is enclosed for your records.

If you have any questions relating to these nomination, please do not hesitate to contact me at (207) 787-2132 x 2.

Sincerely,

Christi A. Mitchell
Architectural Historian

Enc.