

RECEIVED

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

MAY 23 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Union Church

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Route 123

N/A not for publication

city, town North Harpswell,

N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Cumberland

code 005 zip code 04079

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Eileen L. Phillipsworth, S.H.P.O.  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

5/16/88  
Date

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

Patrick Andrews

6/28/88

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

---

**6. Function or Use**

---

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religious/Religious Structure

---

---

---

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religious/Religious Structure

---

---

---

---

**7. Description**

---

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

---

---

---

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite

---

walls Wood/Weatherboard

---

roof Asphalt

---

other 

---

---

---

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Union Church is a rectangular frame building whose modest but nevertheless handsome proportions are overwhelmingly Greek Revival in character mixed with Gothic Revival detailing. Sheathed in weatherboards, the church rests on a granite foundation and features a pediment on the three-bay facade.

Facing west, the front elevation is symmetrically arranged with a broad central entrance, flanking twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash windows and paired corner pilasters whose shafts rise to the pediment. The entrance features a pair of ten-panel doors surmounted by a wide entablature and framed by paneled pilasters that have lancet arches in the capitals. Symmetrically molded surrounds with corner blocks surround the windows, each of which has a single wooden blind. The corner pilasters are detailed in a similar fashion to those on the doorway except that a pair of arches meet to form a Y-tracery pattern.

Both the north and south side elevations are divided into three equal bays, each of which contains a single twelve-over-twelve window. Their surrounds are identical to those on the front and they retain a pair of blinds. The rear wall has no openings. A single flue stack rises through the southeast corner of the roof.

Inside, the church is virtually unaltered. A vestibule extends across the width of the nave endwall which is punctuated by a pair of doors. At the south end of the vestibule is a stair that leads to a gallery whose parapet wall is paneled. The nave itself is organized around a pair of aisles that separate the space into three principal sections of pews with each pew accessible by small paneled doors. Two additional ranks of pews are set perpendicular to the main group and at either side of the sanctuary. The sanctuary contains a darkly stained lectern and short side parapets. Late nineteenth century kerosene chandeliers are suspended from the coved plaster ceiling. Molded surrounds embrace the windows and doors.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1841

Significant Dates

1841

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Thought to have been constructed in 1841 as a meeting house for the community of North Harpswell, the Union Church is a little altered frame building that blends Greek Revival and Gothic Revival style details. Its nomination to the National Register is made under criterion C and criteria consideration A as a religious property whose significance derives from the building's architectural distinction.

The early history of the Church has left few documents that shed light on its founding. One record indicates that on December 25, 1840, thirty persons signed an agreement in which they pledged to subscribe to pews if a meeting house containing forty pews was built. Although no recorded deed indicates the transfer of the lot on which the church stands, tradition holds that the building was erected here in 1841./1 There is no known reference to the religious denomination, if any, that the congregation originally adopted. However, on April 20, 1844, a Universalist Society was organized in Harpswell and apparently began to use the building for its services./2 By the mid-1870s the Universalists ceased to be active and the building was utilized for afternoon services by the Centre Congregationalist Society. this arrangement is believed to have been maintained until the early 1920s when the North Harpswell building was closed. It remained mostly vacant until 1969 when its restoration was assumed by the Harpswell Garden Club. This organization continues to oversee its preservation and occasional summer use.

North Harpswell's Union Church is an important and virtually intact example of a towerless rural Maine religious building. Its clearly stated Greek Revival form in which Gothic Revival style details are utilized places the church within a group of similar property types that date to the 1840s and can be found scattered across the countryside. However, few of these exhibit the delicate sense of proportion and composition of the facade evident here. The coupled pilasters with their Y-tracery is particularly distinguished. The use of this detail, in fact, is typical of the work of Anthony Coombs Raymond (1798-1879), although no documentation has as yet been uncovered to indicate his involvement in the design of this building. Raymond was quite active in

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Raymond, Anthony Coombs, Architect file, Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

Wheeler, George A. and Henry W. History of Brunswick, Topsham and Harpswell, Maine. Boston, 1875.

See continuation sheet

**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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than 1

**UTM References**

A 

1	9
---	---

4	2	2	2	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

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

  
 Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--

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

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

B 

--	--

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

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

  
 Zone Easting Northing

D 

--	--

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

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

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property of less than one acre occupies the Town of Harpswell tax map R-3, lot 37.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary embraces the lot historically associated with the Union Church.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian  
 organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date April, 1988  
 street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/289-2132  
 city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

---

the Brunswick-Bath region, perhaps his most notable achievement being Bath's Winter Street Church of 1843 (N.R. 7/27/71, incorporated into the Bath Historic District, N.R. 5/17/73).<sup>/3</sup> This remarkable edifice presents Raymond's talents at their full height while harboring details that had been refined on earlier work. Whomever its architect may have been, Union Church clearly reflects the significant architectural expression that many of Maine's rural congregations, despite their small size, achieved through their buildings during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Endnotes

- /1. A synopsis of the known historical facts about the Church is contained in a letter from Boyd L. Bailey, Esq. to Mr. William N. Locke, dated October 31, 1979, a copy of which is on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta. The existence of the "meeting house lot" is first made reference to in a deed made on November 28, 1848, between Andrew, David and Samuel Dunning and Simeon Curtis. See Cumberland County Deeds, Book 223, Page 521.
- /2. George A. and Henry W. Wheeler, History of Brunswick, Topsham and Harpswell, Maine (Boston, 1875), p. 450.
- /3. For further information on Raymond's career, see the Anthony Coombs Raymond architect file, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

---

Union Church  
North Harpswell  
Cumberland County, Maine  
Amendment to Section #8  
Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian  
May 14, 1992

**Paragraph 2** of the statement of significance states that restoration of the church began in 1969. It has recently been brought to our attention that this project actually commenced in 1950.