

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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NATIONAL REGISTER, HISTORY
EDUCATION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1205

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, mark "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 (Former) Free Will Baptist Church

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Northeast Corner of Junction of High Street and Highland Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Milo N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Piscataquis code 021 zip code 04463

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.)

[Signature] Date 9/1/00
Signature of certifying official/Title

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): _____

[Signature] Date of Action 10/12/00
Signature of the Keeper

(Former) Free Will Baptist Church
Name of Property

Piscataquis, Maine
County and State

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	
_____	_____	_____ buildings
_____	_____	_____ sites
_____	_____	_____ structures
_____	_____	_____ objects
_____	_____	_____ 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 and Culture/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century

Late Victorian

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Wood/Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other Corner Tower

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

Period of Significance

1853

c. 1890

Significant Dates

1853

c. 1890

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:

(Former) Free Will Baptist Church
Name of Property

Piscataquis, Maine
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less Than 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>11</u> <u>9</u>	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>5</u>	3	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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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 _____
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

(FORMER) FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

PISCATAQUIS, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

The (former) Free Will Baptist Church is a gable roofed, wood frame building that is sheathed in clapboards. Its traditional rectangular form and modest Greek Revival style has been modified -- probably at the turn-of-the-century -- by the addition of a two-stage corner bell tower and entrance porch. The building is located in a residential neighborhood of Milo village.

Facing southwest (for the ease of description the facade is referred to as the south elevation), the front elevation is comprised of two distinct blocks: the gabled main section and the projecting tower which is appended to the southwest corner. The gabled block contains a large rectangular center opening that frames four Queen Anne style sash, the upper pair of which are longer than the lower ones. This window is surmounted by a projecting hood, above which is a round arched louver. The raking cornice abruptly ends at the tower on the west and a short gable end return on the east side. A narrow corner board at the southeast corner rises to the return. A hip roofed entrance porch that is supported by a single post and is ornamented with sawn brackets spans the wall between the large central window and the east side of the tower. The south side of the tower contains a single double hung Queen Anne window on each story of the lower stage. This lower stage is capped by a skirt-roof which surrounds the base of the belfry. The belfry contains louvered openings below round arched panels on each of its four sides. The tower is crowned by a pyramidal tower with a flared base.

The west elevation of the nave contains two large asymmetrically spaced windows, each of which is comprised of two pair of double hung Queen Anne sash. A single window is also located at the midpoint of the tower wall. Three windows similar to those on the west side are symmetrically located on the east elevation. There are no openings on the rear (north) elevation, although a brick flue rises through the midpoint of the wall.

The interior of the church appears to have undergone very little alteration since its c.1900 remodeling. At that time, the entrance was shifted to the tower where a first floor vestibule contains the stairs leading to the gallery and French doors that open into a small, irregular room from which access is gained to the sanctuary and a meeting room at the southeast corner. The sanctuary, which is presently used as museum space, has ornamental tin sheathing on its walls and in a coffered pattern on the bowed ceiling. A three-tier raised platform marks the original location of the pulpit/alter, and the upper tier is framed by simple pilasters. The partition that separates the back third of the nave from the front part contains a four-leaf folding door, behind which is a classroom. At the gallery level, there are three large paneled doors.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

(FORMER) FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

PISCATAQUIS, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

Constructed in 1853 and remodeled about 1890, the (former) Free Will Baptist Church is the oldest religious building in Milo. The modest wood frame church was privately built by William Owen, who partially recovered his expenses through the sale of pews. It is eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion C for its local architectural significance. Criteria Consideration A also applies by virtue of its historic religious use.

According to local historians, Milo's first organized religious denomination was the Free Will Baptist Society, which was formed in 1827. In 1840, a separate Baptist Church was founded, and sometime thereafter the two groups began to discuss the feasibility of constructing a meeting house. Land on which to erect the church was presented to the Baptists by Stephen Snow, but as described in the following account, the construction of the building proved to be far more difficult.

[The following history of the construction of the Free Will Baptist Church is adapted from an article that appeared in the September 1, 1923, edition of the *Bangor Daily News* under the caption "How Milo's First Church Was Born."]

There is no more heroic nor impressive incident connected with the early history of Milo than the building of the town's first church by William Owen, who was one of the town's earlier settlers. Church building is generally a cooperative affair. All sorts of devices are employed for raising the requisite funds and in cases of the smaller and poorer communities, assistance of wealthier church organizations is commonly sought and secured.

Nothing of this kind preceded the erection of Milo's first meeting house. There were no circles, no fairs, no solicitations either at home or abroad, Mr. Owen (who was a tanner and farmer by trade) had no assistance of this sort, he simply went ahead and built his church, which he saw the community so greatly needed, and he took a chance on being reimbursed in part or in whole by what his fellow citizens would do after the structure had been erected.

In 1850, thirty years after Maine had been made a state and 27 years after the town's incorporation, Milo was a town of nearly a thousand inhabitants and many of the present inhabitants can recollect when it was no larger. But it had no church in 1850 and there was no present prospect of one. A majority of the citizens realized the need of a place of worship, but they could arrive at no concrete plan for getting busy and building one. Many meetings were held and the question discussed, but that was the end. The lot on the hill which had been reserved as a church site when the town was incorporated, was a village common and no more.

According to family tradition, Owen made the decision to build a church for the community, with the expectation that he would be reimbursed by the sale of pews. He began to collect his material for the new building. It took him a year to complete this part of the job. Then he set out to build. He hired two men to help him and he paid them as he would, had he been building a house for himself.

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Continuation Sheet

(FORMER) FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

PISCATAQUIS, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

Mr. Owen was a Baptist, and a Baptist preacher was the first to be employed by the town. Later, Deacon Joe Blaisdell came to Milo and was chiefly instrumental in organizing the Free Will Baptist society, which shared the privileges of the church building for a number of years. The rather unusual arrangement was made for the Baptist minister to preach one Sunday and the Free Baptist the next.

In his history of Milo, Lloyd J. Treworgy states that the Free Will Baptists shared the church building with the Baptists until 1888 when the Baptist congregation erected their own church on Pleasant Street. The two Baptist congregations remained separate until 1913 when they formed the United Baptist Church, at which time the old church building was vacated. Sometime thereafter, the church was obtained by the Christian Scientists, who subsequently sold it in 1953 to St. Joseph's Episcopal Church. In 1996, the building was purchased by the Milo Historical Society which presently uses it for a museum of local history.

Historic maps show that sometime between 1882 and 1900 the Free Will Baptists altered their building with the addition of a corner entrance tower, thereby achieving a more fashionable appearance that resembled the Baptist Church. It is also likely that the interior finish was changed at this time and the large front window installed. As a result of this remodeling, the (former) Free Will Baptist Church reflects two architecturally significant episodes: 1) the original modest vernacular Greek Revival style building with its rectangular form and gabled front facade; and 2) the late nineteenth century remodeling that updated the exterior and interior appearance of the early building. The form of the original building is not unlike churches erected in many small Maine towns in the mid nineteenth century, most of which exhibit Greek Revival style characteristics to a greater or lesser degree. A distinct subset of these church buildings were constructed with towers, but relatively few had corner towers added to them. These historic features have been carefully preserved in the building's subsequent use by other denominations and finally in its conversion to a museum.

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Continuation Sheet

(FORMER) FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

PISCATAQUIS, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

Bibliography

“How Milo’s First Church was Born.” *Bangor Daily News*, September 1, 1923.

Treworgy, Lloyd J. *The Milo Story, Vol. II*. Milo, ME: Town of Milo, 1988.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

(FORMER) FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

PISCATAQUIS, MAINE

Section number 10 Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies the Town of Milo tax map 15, lot 8.

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the entire village lot that is historically associated with the (former) Free Will Baptist Church.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

(FORMER) FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

PISCATAQUIS CO., ME

Section number _____ Page _____

PHOTOGRAPHS

1 of 2

Allen Monroe

July, 2000

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

View from S

2 of 2

Allen Monroe

July, 2000

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Interior view toward pulpit