

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1396



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 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 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 Hubbardston Town Common Historic District

other names/site number First Parish Church of Hubbardston, Unitarian; Old Burial Ground

2. Location

street & number Main and Brigham Streets N/A not for publication

city or town Hubbardston N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Worcester code 027 zip code 01452

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Elsa N. Fitzgerald 10.18.00
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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):

Elsa N. Fitzgerald 11/22/00
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Name of Property

Worcester County, MA
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	
1	0	buildings
3	0	sites
2	0	structures
8	7	objects
14	7	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
- SOCIAL: meeting hall
- RECREATION AND CULTURE: monuments
- LANDSCAPE: town common
- FUNERARY: cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- RELIGION: religious facility
- EDUCATION: school (day-care center)
- RECREATION AND CULTURE: monuments
- LANDSCAPE: town common
- FUNERARY: cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- MID-19th CENTURY: Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation BRICK
- walls BRICK
- WOOD: weatherboard
- roof ASPHALT
- other STONE: marble, granite
- BRONZE; WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

7. Description

General Description

The L-shaped 1.19 acre parcel of land that remains from the common land set out for the meetinghouse site at the center of the town of Hubbardston in 1773 is still the location of the community's original church, its oldest burial ground, and a long grassed space that is dotted with monuments and commemorative objects.

Located on a small rise near the east end of the property at the head of the common, the First Parish Church (MHC #26, photo #1) forms a visual anchor for the south part of Hubbardston town center at the intersection of Main Street (MA Route 68), Worcester Road, and Brigham and Elm Streets. Opposite the common and church on the west side of Main Street is a small civic/commercial/residential cluster of buildings, of which the major visual features are the 1874 brick Second Empire/Italianate Public Library (NRIND 1998), with a modern brick school and town offices behind it, and a vacant. Somewhat deteriorated hip-roofed Federal house and its accompanying Greek Revival store. Hillside farms are visible to the southwest on Worcester Road and Elm Street, and, mounting the low rise of Brigham Street opposite the south side of the common and church, as a well-preserved line of stylish Greek Revival houses. North of the common, Main Street extends for 1/3 of a mile to end at Hubbardston's second church, the Evangelical Congregational Church of 1827, which like the First Church, was updated in the 1840s and 1860s. Main Street is lined with minimally altered Federal and Greek Revival houses, a few Queen Anne residences and a handful of small 20th century buildings. On the northeast part of the common is the c. 1773 town cemetery (photo #8), the Old Burial Ground (MHC #800). An open knoll beyond it to the east is the location originally designated for the meetinghouse, part of a seven-acre parcel that was exchanged in 1773 for the 3.5-acre portion of the minister's lot which provided the land for the church.

First Parish Church (MHC #26)

Although it is believed to contain portions of the original 1773 frame of the Hubbardston meetinghouse, the appearance of the First Church of Hubbardston today is largely a result of an 1842 rebuilding in the Greek Revival style, embellished by an 1868-69 update which include a new brick foundation and some late Victorian renovations. The church is a simply-detailed clapboarded, gable-front building with a four-stage steeple (photo #2) – the epitome of the white New England church overlooking a small town common.

Exterior The church is a simple, rectangular one-by-four bay block consisting of a clapboarded

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

sanctuary and full-width vestibule or narthex set upon a high brick basement story which encloses a large vestry, front stair hall/lobby, and a small modern kitchen. The church's Greek Revival exterior is accentuated by the wide flushboarded pediment of its main (west) façade; and by the entablature of boxed cornice with bed molding, crown molding and broad frieze with architrave. The four wide recessed-paneled pilasters of the façade, with molded capitals and devoid of bases, are another emphatic, through simply interpreted Greek Revival motif typical of the early 1840s. The outer two façade pilasters trim the front corners; matching pilasters appear at the rear corners of the building. Long recessed panels are repeated at the window casing of the main story, where they are punctuated by flat blocks at the upper corners. The tall windows of the sanctuary and narthex are composed of three 15-pane sashes, a window-type typical of the Greek Revival period. The windows of the lower brick (vestry) story, which took on its present appearance as part of the renovations of 1868-1869, are 10/15 sash, with 4-inch wide flat, unadorned wooden casings (photo #3). The rear (east) gable end wall of the building is windowless except for the single ground-story 10/15 window in its south portion. In the wall north of the window, a double-leaf door with four recessed panels is set into a flat-board casing. The upper, clapboarded part of the rear wall is unpedimented, and has a modern louvered rectangular vent in the gable peak.

A wide water table rings the building at the juncture between the upper and lower walls. In the lower brick wall below each pilaster is a shallow pier, one brick deep, which helps to visually unify the upper and lower parts of the building. The main center entry of the west façade, which acquired its massive granite doorstone and was altered somewhat during the 1860s remodeling, is recessed into the brick wall. It has a pair of double-leaf doors, each with six recessed panels trimmed with large-scale applied moldings. The entry surround is a handsome classically-derived example with recessed-panel pilasters and frieze that echo those in the main wall above. The opening is surmounted by a triangular pediment, its field embellished with carved foliate decoration on a black background, inscribed in gold with "Erec.d June 1773."

The gabled asphalt shingle roof has lost its two interior rear-wall stove chimneys. When a furnace replaced the heating stoves in 1963, a narrow brick exterior furnace chimney was added against the front part of the north wall. A graceful four-stage steeple, rebuilt after the Hurricane of 1938 as a copy of its Greek Revival predecessor, crowns the front gable end of the roof. Its square, flushboarded base, which has paneled pilasters at the corners, houses the three-sided Roman-numeraled 1898 town clock, designed by Abel Stowell. Both the clock and the 1833 bronze bell that hangs in the second stage of the steeple were formerly mounted on the west end of the original meetinghouse. The belfry, which is embellished with flat corner pilasters and

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

recessed-panel and cornerblock surrounds at each of its four tall rectangular openings, is now fitted with six-pane glass panels on each side. The third stage of the steeple is a decorative block adorned with a series of paneled pilasters, the corner ones angled to create an octagon. The octagonal shape is continued above it in a series of moldings which form the base of the slender, octagonal, flushboard spire. Atop the spire is a gilded openwork weathervane mounted on a slender post fitted with three ball finials.

The exterior appearance of the church today, complete with the weathervane and the inscription on the entry pediment, remains nearly identical to what is shown in all known historic photographs of the building, the earliest of which dates to 1881. Missing, however, are the two rear stove chimneys and the louvered blinds of the windows. Some of the latter are stored in the building.

Interior features. The interior of the First Church, while echoing the simplicity of the exterior, displays somewhat more evidence of the 1860s remodeling, as well as a few later features. The main sanctuary is an approximately 45 x 52' foot space with a curve-front rear balcony (photo #6). The handsome mahogany pulpit, which stands in front of a tall curtained wall recess at the east end, is of the wide platform typical, typical of the 1840s. Four banks of open slip pews fill most of the floor space (photo #5). In typical 19th century fashion, they are divided by two side aisles, and by a long wooden panel that extends down the center of the church. At the wall the outer pews abut a horizontal-board wainscoting. At the aisle, each pew terminates in a recessed panel, topped with a graceful scrolled, varnished armrest. A varnished wood rail finishes the top of the back rests and the wainscoting as well. The backs and ends of the pews are painted white. The church as rebuilt in 1842 continued the precedent set in the earlier meetinghouse of placing pews for the deacon, the traditional "deacon's seats," at the front of the church beside the pulpit. Five rows of these are located in the northeastern corner of the sanctuary, facing south toward the pulpit, and fronted by a mahogany-paneled parapet (photo #4). In the southeast front corner is a small, slightly raised choir loft, enclosed on three sides by a four-foot high early-modern partition wall, paneled on the outside, and with a beaded-board surface on the choir side. Instead of pews, the choir enclosure is furnished with a set of a dozen spindle-backed wooded chairs with woven-reed seats. The chairs are of an increasingly rare type used at the turn of the century in schools and churches – their backs fitted with doweled hymnbook holders, and horizontal racks for more books positioned under the seats. A small mid-20th century electric organ is located at the rear of the choir loft.

At the rear (west) end of the sanctuary, the curve-fronted balcony projects partway into the main

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

space. Its front parapet rests on a recessed-panel wall pilaster at either end; its face is filled with five long horizontal recessed panels. The two banks of balcony pews are curved, and are trimmed in similar manner to those on the main floor. The varnished wood seat of the front balcony pew is built is a long continuous curve from the south to north wall (photo #6). A partition wall across the rear of the balcony has a wainscoting of horizontal boards, and encloses a two-part closet that is sheathed on the interior with horizontal pine boards. Its two doors (the center one is double-leaf), have four recessed panels with slightly raised fields. The single door to the closet is fitted with a Norfolk latch, as are two more doors at the north end of the wall which open onto the stairways to the main floor and to the attic/belfry. The attic and south closet doors retain iron box locks – perhaps two the locks listed in church records as having been purchased during the 1860s renovations.

Both parts of the sanctuary retain their painted pine floorboards. The ceiling and the walls above the wainscoting are plastered. While the paneled and cornerblock surrounds of the windows echo those on the exterior, the two main doorways leading into the sanctuary have the added embellishment of a large keystone-like block in the center. The 1860s interior changes are likely to include the two sanctuary doors, which have recessed panels with applied moldings, as well as the large compound crown molding at the top of the wall, and the architrave or “picture” molding about a foot below it. The huge medallion in the center of the ceiling, about 8 feet in diameter, which now holds a multi-bulb electric light fixture, may date to the same period. A turn-of-the-century octagonal wooden wall clock is mounted on the face of the balcony parapet. Two pieces of furniture at the front of the church date to the Greek Revival period – a pedestal mahogany table in front of the pulpit, and an upholstered mahogany minister’s sofa set into the central wall recess. A later object of note at the southeast front of the church is the octagonal oak baptismal font, which was donated and dedicated to Theodora Estelle Hubbard in 1950.

Like most mid-19th century New England churches, the First Church has a broad vestibule across the narrow front (west) end of the building. It is not known, however, which parts of that front space date to the 1842 reconstruction, and which to the 1860s renovations. Because records indicate that the building was raised as much as four feet in 1868, it is likely that at least the broad, handsome three-run stair at the south end of the vestibule was rebuilt or reworked at that time. The banister, built of dark natural wood, with a square-dowel balustrade, a large turned newel post at the base and cylindrical newel posts topped with ball finials at the landings, is still in the Greek Revival vein. The stairs themselves were modified in 1923, and the entire hardwood stair and vestibule flooring probably dates to that time. The walls of the upper level of the

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

vestibule have the same type of wainscoting as the church. Its northwest section is occupied by a closet that abuts the curving corner stair to the balcony.

The ground story of the building is the most altered part of the interior. The lower level of the vestibule now has a modern kitchen fitted into its north end, as well as a pair of modern lavatories against the front wall between the entry and stair. The vestry, which fills the space under the sanctuary, retains its six-panel, double-leaf front entry doors and a low stage across the north end. It has otherwise been made over into a modern day care center, with enclosed support posts, dropped ceiling and new wall board.

Attic. The only part of the building where the frame of the building is visible is the open, unfinished attic. The structure over the sanctuary includes a series of four massive king-post trusses, each incorporating double principal rafters. Hefty diagonal braces rise from the lower part of the king posts to each lower rafter, and from lower to upper rafters, where they are pinned into two sets of a c. 10 x 10" purlins which carry the common rafters. There is no ridge beam; the common rafters meet at the ridge with what appear to be bridle joints. Most of the timbers, including the dovetailed and half-dovetailed 6 x 6" ceiling joists for the sanctuary, appear to be vertical-sawn. The roof boards are horizontal. The rear (east) gable-end wall of the building visible in the attic has, instead of a king post, a two-posted, horizontal-top-chord truss. Supporting the supposition that the church was elongated by 16+ feet at the front (west) end is the fact that the first inner west truss is of similar construction to the outer east end wall truss – complete with stud mortises in the upper and lower chords, and nail holes on the outer faces of the posts. In the bay between the west inner truss and the front wall, where the roof timbers are of smaller dimensions, there is much evidence of rebuilding that took place after the hurricane of 1938, and again in 1948, when lightning damaged the front section of the roof.

Hubbardston Common (MHC #910, photograph #7)

Behind and just northeast of the church building, portions of the **fieldstone foundations** of three connected 19th century church horse sheds that backed up to the cemetery's south wall are still visible in the ground (map #4). There is no aboveground trace left of the town's hearse house, however, which was built on the high ground just east of the church in about 1880. A small modern playground for the day care center, ringed with a **chain-link fence** (map #19) now occupies that area.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

The long rectangular portion of the common in front of the church is dotted with scattered deciduous trees. Two lines of young oaks and maples parallel the south edge of the property along Brigham Street and the north edge along an unpaved driveway that extends from Main Street at the northwest corner of the property to the north side of the church. Two mature blue spruce trees in the southwest portion form a counterpoint to the deciduous trees. With the exception of one large sugar maple at the edge of Brigham Street, all the trees appear to date to this century, possibly planted to replace the dying elms which were placed on the common in beautification efforts in the second half of the 19th century. One leg of Brigham Street (formerly the Westminster Road) once branched diagonally northwest across the common in front of the church to Main Street. Today its line is marked by a concrete and asphalt-paved **footpath** (map #7). Another walkway of concrete slabs crosses north to south directly in front of the church, with a short branch extending west to connect with the footpath.

Roughly aligned along the west from of the common, about where a small store was standing in 1870, is a cluster of objects of varying date and significance. The centerpiece of the group is the **Soldier's Monument**, which was erected and dedicated in 1885 (MHC #902, map #8, photo # 7). This square-sectioned, columnar monument of gray and white marble stands about 10' tall on a two-part square base, surrounded by a small raised area created by the addition of gravel fill. The names of Hubbardston's Civil War soldiers are carved on three sides, above the locations of some of the battles in which they took place – Cold Harbor, Port Hudson and New Bern. Above the inscription on the west face of the monument is written "In memory of our fallen heroes." The corners of the main shaft of the monument are carved with cannon barrels. Above a cove cornice at the monument's top is a four-sided, dark-gray pyramid of carved cannonballs, topped by a statue of an eagle.

The monument is flanked by a pair of small bronze **cannon** (MHC #904, map #9), placed there in 1905. Each barrel is set into a low rusticated square granite base. To either side of this central cluster, and slightly closer to the street, are two 3-foot high 20th century vertical-slab granite **war monuments** (map #14 [MHC #903] and 15), each fitted with a rectangular bronze plaque. The northernmost, c. 1920, is dedicated to those who served from Hubbardston in the Spanish-American and First World Wars; the southernmost honors those who served in Word War II. Close to the northeast corner of Main and Brigham Street is an unusual survival of a 19th century wooden **guideboard** (map #10). Though undoubtedly repaired at numerous times, this guideboard, which consists of two signs mounted at right angles to each other on a tall square post topped with a carved urn, appears in several historic photographs dating to the 1890s. The

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

Section number 7 Page 7

raised letters of the signs give mileage to neighboring towns. A **tall flagpole** (map #11) which stands directly behind the Soldiers Monument is apparently the one put up in 1917 and partially replaced in 1949. The final contributing commemorative element on the common is a granite **millstone** (map #12), originally from Prentiss Mill in East Hubbardston, which is set vertically into a concrete base just above Brigham Street, to the south of the church. In addition to two later war memorials, non-contributing elements to the site include a wooden utility pole (map #18) a short distance east of the Monument; a short iron pipe in a concrete slab on the south edge of the common (apparently remaining from the former **town pump** – map #13); and two low freestanding signs near the edge of Main Street – a plain wooden one used by the town (map #17), the other a wood-frame box sign belonging to the church, covered with a transparent panel (map #16).

Old Burial Ground (MHC #800, photo #8)

The northeast arm of the L-shaped Town Common property is occupied by the **Old Burial Ground**; a roughly square plot ringed with low **fieldstone walls** (map #6) and opened c. 1773. The entrance is through an opening in the west portion of the south wall, near the church. A large, modern, wooden sign, painted with the burial ground's alternate name, the Parish Cemetery, stands just to inside the entrance. In the east portion of the south wall is the massive granite-block face of the community receiving tomb, the **town tomb** of 1872 (MHC #906, map #5). Typical of its time, this is an earthen-topped burial chamber, with a simply detailed cast-iron door.

The burial ground includes about 500 stone markers, many of them arranged in long, roughly aligned rows, facing west. Several open areas suggest that many graves may be unmarked. While there is no formal landscaping, three tall trees – two pine and a horse-chestnut – stand in a north-south line at the east end of the cemetery, suggesting that at some time early in this century there may have been a tree-planting campaign here. The remains of several large tree stumps, especially at the west end, also hint at what may have once been considerable tree cover. There are no enclosed family plots, although the tops of several granite curbstones in the west portion indicate that some groups of markers may once have been curbed or fenced.

Typical of a rural New England cemetery that was open from the 1770s through the third quarter of the 19th century, the earlier grave markers are slate, and those erected after c. 1830 are marble. There are two simple marble obelisks dating to the mid 19th century, and one square-sectioned granite monument, approximately five feet tall that was put in place in 1906. While the majority

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

of the markers are in good condition, some of the slates display some spalling, and many of the marbles are somewhat effaced. Several broken stones were mended at an early date with iron bars, several others lie in pieces. While many markers have become somewhat sunken or misaligned with time, several fallen stones that are now lying flat hint at a more serious problem. Some of these are nearly covered with earth; more may be completely covered and no longer visible.

Together the funerary markers in the burial ground form a collection of folk art which spans the period from the Revolution through the Civil War era. The earliest gravestones are a pair of memorials to two sisters, Molley and Sally Grimes, who died two days apart in September 1777 at the ages of two and four. These are small shouldered slates, nearly buried in the ground, decorated with a combination of highly carved schematic designs such as whorls and spirals, as well as winged heads in the upper section. Several markers from the end of the 18th century display winged spirit heads, and a few larger more expensive stones are carved with portrait heads. The large four-foot high slate memorial to the town's first minister, Rev. Nehemiah Parker (d. 1801), is the most well developed of the portrait stones. This is an architectural slate, decorated with incised columns and archway, and a portrait bust with a clerical collar under a willow tree.

Markers dating from 1800 – c. 1840 are typically shouldered slates with shallow, incised decoration, Neoclassical architectural motifs, and the urn and willow images that were nearly ubiquitous in New England at that time. There are a few tree of life designs, and several markers depicting vases with incised flowers. A handful of slates from the 1830s and 40s are signed by members of the Hartwell family of Ashby and Fitchburg. These are all of the architectural type, with textured backgrounds, and the urn and willow in the upper portion. A few display the urn and willow within a circular field. Some Hartwell stones are characterized by a mixture of lettering styles, including block-like letters, cursive writing and an elaborate gothic script. They also display a variety of floral and foliate motifs, including sunflowers and oak leaves.

The later markers in the burial ground tend to be marble, very simply carved, often only with inscriptions and no decoration. Many of these are rectangular, although some are shouldered, with rounded tops; a few have tapered sides and slightly peaked tops.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

**Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.**

Archaeological Description

No prehistoric sites are recorded on the church property or in the general area (within one mile). In general, environmental characteristics of the upland parcel on which the church is located are not well suited for most types of prehistoric sites. The property is located well over 1000 feet from the nearest wetlands, an important locational factor that detracts from the overall prehistoric sensitivity of this location. Given the above information, church construction and known prehistoric settlement for northern Worcester County, a low potential exists for locating prehistoric sites on the church property.

There is a high potential for locating historic archaeological resources on the First Parish Church property. Construction features, artifacts and structural remains may survive from the original construction of the church in ca. 1773 and renovations during the 1840's and 1860's. Occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) might also survive related to the church and its functions. Structural evidence including portions of fieldstone foundations from three interconnected horse sheds is still visible along the cemetery's south wall. Other archaeological evidence related to these outbuildings may also exist. Structural evidence might also survive from the town hearse house, located on high ground east of the church in the 1880's. Unmarked graves may be present in the area along the fieldstone wall separating the nominated property from the cemetery.

(end)

Hubbardston Town Common HD

Name of Property

Worcester County, MA

County and State

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 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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:

American Antiquarian Society

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

RELIGION

SOCIAL HISTORY

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1773-1950

Significant Dates

1773

1842

1869

1885

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Abel Stowell (tower clock)

J.F. Fales (1869 renovations)

Albert Goodspeed (1869 renovations)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.**8. Significance**

The Hubbardston Town Common possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and meets National Register Criteria A and C at the local level. Through the presence of the First Parish Church (formerly the town meetinghouse), the original community burying ground, and the remaining portion of the common land that has been reserved for public use since the founding of the town, the district meets Criterion A for its association with the governmental, religious and social history of Hubbardston for over 125 years. Located at a major intersection in the center of this Worcester County town, this small district was the town's combined civic and social center as well as its primary religious focus from the 1770s through the splitting off of a Calvinist congregation in 1827. After a substantial rebuilding of the original meetinghouse in 1842 added a large ground story vestry/meeting hall, the function of the building was divided between religious services in the sanctuary and use as a community gathering place for the town's social groups and reformist organizations in the vestry, a combined use which continued well into the 20th century. As Hubbardston never built a true town hall, the church was used as a polling place and space for Town Meetings from 1774 through 1931. The resting place of nearly all Hubbardston's first generation of residents, and hundreds more through the middle of the 19th century, the Old Burial Ground is significant for its association with the social and demographic development of the town, and for its representation of the tastes and attitude of its citizens. The open common in front of the church, which developed into a place for public gatherings, also became a commemorative site with the building of the Soldiers monument in 1885. With the addition of other monuments over the years it has continued that function up to the present. Under Criterion C, the church is significant as a well-preserved example of the simply-detailed, well-proportioned Greek Revival ecclesiastical architecture, and for portions of its 1773 frame. The common meets the same criterion for the quality of the Soldiers Monument as commemorative sculpture, and as a manifestation of the 19th and early-20th century village beautification movement. The burial ground qualifies under Criterion C as a collection of regional folk art, some signed by the carver, and as an illustration of colloquial cemetery design of the late 18th through mid 19th century.

The town of Hubbardston, situated on the elevated terrain of north central Worcester County, was one of the later communities in central Massachusetts to be permanently settled. For a full half-century after the 1713 Peace of Utrecht diminished colonists' fears of native attack, its six-mile square area existed only as the thickly-wooded "Northeast Quarter" of Rutland, virtually undeveloped except for a late-1730s roadside inn. The territory was not located on any major

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

**Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.**

Colonial transportation routes, had a minimum of fertile, well-drained soil, and in its forested remoteness was still considered unsafe for settlement through the middle of the 18th century. With the conclusion of the French & Indian wars in the 1760s, however, farming families began to arrive, and, with a population of 150, they achieved district status in 1767. Hubbardston was the last of the districts in northern Worcester County to be formally incorporated. It was named for prominent Bostonian Thomas Hubbard, Treasurer of Harvard College for many years, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, and owner of large amounts of land in the vicinity. According to tradition, in exchange for the honor of naming the district, Hubbard promised to provide the glass for the meetinghouse. He died, however, in 1773, before he could fulfill his promise. It is claimed that one version of the nursery rhyme "Old Mother Hubbard," who found her cupboard bare, has an origin in at least one of Thomas Hubbard's unkept promises, perhaps the one connected to Hubbardston.

Some late 18th century Hubbardston settlers were of Scotch-Irish origin, connected with or descended from a group of Presbyterian Covenanters who had settled in the Rutland area after 1718; there were also a few descendants of Huguenots. Many early residents, especially those with roots in northern Ireland, were strong Calvinists, with beliefs compatible with the prevailing Congregational orthodoxy of the time. Thus, in contrast to many other Massachusetts communities, Hubbardston's early years were relatively unscarred by religious schism. No alternate congregations sprang up within the borders of the town before the early 1800s, although a few settlers may have attended services in adjoining towns.

The town's first minister, Nehemiah Parker (1742-1801) began preaching as a candidate for town minister in 1768. Formally called to the pulpit a year later, he was ordained under a great oak tree on the west part of the common in June, 1770. While the new community could barely afford to build a new meetinghouse as well as pay its minister, Rev. Parker was given a house lot at the town center and a 150-acre "minister's farm" in the southern part of town, on the condition that he remain for seven years.

As early as 1737, a seven-acre lot had been set aside for the meetinghouse on a brad knoll at the center of town. After official district status was obtained, however, the Hubbardston proprietors exchanged that lot, which was set deeply back from what was to become the main street, for a 3 ½ acre portion of the minister's lot. This became the site for the meetinghouse, the town common, and the first burial lot laid out in 1773. (According to tradition, prior to the opening of the cemetery a few unmarked interments had been made on the southwest part of the common.) The first town schoolhouse (since demolished) was built in 1770 on the southwest corner of the part of the lot that is now the Old Burial Ground.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

While the burial ground was laid out at relatively little cost, if Hubbardston had difficulties in paying its minister, its citizens were equally hard-pressed to construct the meetinghouse that was to be the social and civic, as well as the spiritual, center of the community. The original 45 x 45' frame was raised in the spring of 1773, but it was not until the next winter that the floor was laid and the windows built. For nearly a decade the congregation sat on crude seats and worshiped in what was essentially an unfinished building, without paint, ceiling, pulpit or pews. Like other congregations of the time, Hubbardston citizens looked to nearby communities for their models, although their straitened circumstances required that the architectural examples they chose would have to be modest ones. As the Revolution was winding down in 1781, for instance, the Town Meeting modified its decision to build the pulpit "according to the fashion of the pulpit of the old Rutland meeting-house" and voted instead to have it comply with the "rest of the work of the meeting-house," taking the simpler pulpit of the Shrewsbury church as a model (Stowe, 125). Both the sale and building of pews progressed slowly, with the first box-pews built in 1794 to replace some of the temporary rows of seats. Also in 1794, the building was painted for the first time, both inside and out – over twenty years after it was first opened.

Hubbardston gained nominal status as a town in 1775, and obtained full representative privileges in 1786. By the 1790s, Hubbardston, like the region around it, was entering a period of relative prosperity. Agricultural prices were rising, the Revolution and the lean years that had culminated in strong local support for Shays' Rebellion (in which Adam Wheeler, a founder and deacon of the church, was a noted leader), were behind them, and at the turn of the 19th century Hubbardston was the fastest growing town in Worcester County. During this period, taxes produced enough revenue to pay for several improvements to the meetinghouse. Between 1805-1808 the building was enhanced by a belfry at the west end and a porch to the east (1806), a \$400 bell (1805), and by the inevitable town clock, which was commissioned from leading clockmaker Abel Stowell (1808). Beginning in 1799, and continuing for the next two generations, funds were allocated yearly for a singing school, providing the pay for a singing master who led and instructed members of the congregation in the choral techniques of the time.

Rev. Parker's ministry ended in 1800 (he died the following year), and the town's second minister, Rev. David Kendall (1768-1853) was called to the town pulpit in the summer of 1802. He approached the low-paying job with caution, stating in his letter of acceptance that "the stipulation proposed for an annual salary would of itself along be rather inadequate," and that he was confident in receiving the "particular encouragements" that had been promised to him in order to make the position worth his while. These unwritten provisions were apparently not fulfilled, however, and his seven-year ministry was fraught with increasing acrimony between

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

Section number 8 Page 4

pastor and congregation. Even the customary supply of wood for the minister became a source of disagreement, leading Rev. Kendall to preach a pointed sermon from the biblical text, "where no wood is, the fire goeth out." (Stowe, 94) After a lengthy period of negotiation and attempted settlements, he was dismissed in 1809. Kendall later sued the town for the amount pledged to him.

His successor was Samuel Gay (1784-1848), who was ordained in the fall of 1810. Gay's tenure was as stormy as his predecessor's, though for different reasons. By the time he was ordained, growing theological factionalism had arisen in many New England towns, and it reached Hubbardston just after the so-called "Second Great Awakening" had inspired a widespread renewal of interest in religion and revivalism. In the Hubbardston area, evangelical Baptist and Methodist societies were being formed, and Unitarianism challenging traditional Calvinist or "Orthodox" Congregational teachings. Records are somewhat unclear as to the theological beliefs of the more liberal local dissenters, although there are indications that in the 1810s and 1820s most of them were still of the theistic Christian strain of early Unitarianism. They espoused the divinity of Christ, but were turning away from the more affective aspects of Congregationalism, having apparently come to reject the necessity for a conversion experience as a prerequisite for full church membership.

During their ministerial search, some of Mr. Gay's more conservative parishioners had examined him closely for any espousal of Unitarian views, and several considered him too liberal, resulting in a less than unanimous vote to call him to the pulpit. He soon offended others by the "plainness of his speech" (Stowe, 103) and quickly gained a reputation for stern, uncompromising defense of his principles and harsh rebuke of wrongdoing. He was an outspoken opponent of the War of 1812, which pleased many, but alienated others in the town, where strong feelings both for and against the war ran high. Early in his pastorate, 27 families left the parish in protest of his policies on the war. They joined a Baptist congregation in Coldbrook, and several of them successfully petitioned to have their ministerial taxes abated for the years 1813-1814. After the war was over and the dispute had passed, some families returned to the Hubbardston church.

It was during this period that the first Town Meeting proposals were made for expanding the burial ground and establishing additional cemeteries in other parts of town. In 1818 a committee was appointed to study the matter, and a small new burying place, later called the Warren Cemetery (MHC #805), was opened on the road to Gardner.

Religious clashes between townspeople who favored Unitarian views and those who held to the

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

**Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.**

traditional Calvinist beliefs that were still rooted in personal sanctification, the experience of conversion, and the Trinity became more frequent in the 1820s. In an unusual reversal, one influential group, which included many of the church leaders, now accused Rev. Gay of being not too liberal, but too conservative and Calvinistic. In defense, 38 families reacted by forming "The First Restoration Society." Ostensibly an alternative religious society that aimed to restore the original Calvinist teachings of the church, its more important purpose appears to have been to remove monetary support for the church, as every citizen was still required by law to pay for the support of some religious society. Several more people joined the Restoration Society over the next four years, but a succession of three Town Meeting votes in 1826 and early 1827 never achieved a large enough majority to dismiss Mr. Gay from his post. The First Restoration Society subsequently disbanded, and most of its members returned to the town church in order to work toward their ends within, rather than outside, the organization. Then, after another Town Meeting vote for dismissal failed, 88 supporters of Mr. Gay organized the First Calvinistic Society of Hubbardston. When Town Meeting took up the matter again a few weeks later, the vote to dismiss Mr. Gay was unanimous. The newly-formed Society, content with his traditional theology, immediately invited him to become their minister, and by the beginning of September, 1827, the town was official divided into two separate congregations. 94 former members of the original church left it to join the Calvinistic Society, and quickly proceeded to build their own meetinghouse at the north end of the town center, at the intersection of Main Street and Gardner Road. Thirty members remained with the town church, at the old location.

The Calvinist society later changed its name to the Evangelical Congregational Church and Society. The town church officially became the First Parish of Hubbardston, and the members who remained there called themselves the First Congregational Society in Hubbardston. In spite of the name, in theology they were becoming increasingly Unitarian, and the church was soon referred to as both the First Parish Church and the Unitarian Church.

In 1828 a vote of the town unanimously called the 23 year old Rev. Abner Dumont Jones to be their minister. Although he would receive five Sabbaths off per year, his \$550 salary was still low, and he resigned in 1832. He was succeeded by the Rev. Ebenezer Robinson, who remained himself only until 1836. During Mr. Robinson's pastorate, the official connection between town and church that had existed since the founding of the colony was ended in Massachusetts. Religious societies henceforth operated as bodies independent of the government, and taxation was no longer available for their support. After the 11th amendment to the Constitution resulted in official disestablishment in 1883, the First Church began soliciting "subscriptions" from its members, although they did not necessarily provide the same amount of funding as before.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

Moreover, the town still owned the land the church stood on, and the dividing line between the rights and obligations of the town and church remained unclear. The aging building, which was still the main community gathering place, and was still used for Town Meetings, was badly in need of repair. The old square meetinghouse design, with its high-box pews, galleries and towering pulpit in the middle of the north side, had gone out of fashion, and there was growing sentiment that religious and secular functions could not, and should not, be served by the same space (Sinnott, 71). In any case, the building offered a less than adequate meeting place for the local civic and social organizations that were beginning to proliferate in the middle of the 19th century. Consequently, thanks to loans, donations and work provided by church leaders, the building was enlarged and rebuilt in 1842, with its secular and religious functions divided between two stories.

Records are unclear as to just how much of the original meetinghouse was retained, although it is believed that enough remains to still qualify it as one of the few surviving 18th century meetinghouse structures in Worcester County. At several church meetings in 1841 various plans were debated, including tearing down the old building, giving back the society's "right in the meetinghouse" to the town in exchange for a new plot of land, selling the building outright, or moving it. Any plan for demolition or alteration was complicated by the necessity of buying back the old pews from their owners, a task which would involve the raising of short-term cash over and above what was necessary for construction costs. At the church's annual meeting in 1842 it was finally decided to "take down the meetinghouse and convert its materials into a new one so far as they will answer for that purpose," and to construct "a new house on the same site or elsewhere on the common." The members of the Building Committee, who appear to have provided most of the initial funds for the project, were given considerable leeway to make decisions and to "view other meetinghouses and procure a plan" (Records of the First Congregational Society of Hubbardston) The new building, which is believed to incorporate most of the frame, at least, of the old meetinghouse, was essentially completed by December 1842 at a cost of \$5105, and was rededicated on December 21.

The new church was built in the prevailing Greek Revival style of the day, and its appearance remains relatively unchanged. Relocated on the common a short distance to the north of its former site, the building was reoriented with a gable-end entrance in a three story narthex or vestibule facing west towards Main Street. The main sanctuary itself remains close to the old 45 x 45' proportions, but consistent with mid 19th century fashion, it is filled with rows of low pews divided by two side aisles, facing a wide platform pulpit located at the narrow east end, opposite

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

the entrance. The rear, curve-fronted balcony, situated at the third level of the vestibule, apparently took on its present appearance in a remodeling later in the century. The window frames were first painted in 1843 and their louvered blinds (no longer in place) were painted the following year. The exterior walls were left unpainted until 1848.

Most important for the church's financial survival, the new building was raised up on a foundation (apparently built of stone block) that was high enough to incorporate a spacious vestry at the ground story. The day after the new church was dedicated, the society's governing body, the Prudential Committee, was authorized to begin renting out the vestry. Over the ensuing decades the vestry, a large open room with seats along three sides, was used by a variety of civic, political, educational and social groups who needed a place to gather, and they in turn provided the church with an important source of income. The most consistent lessee was the town itself, which hired the vestry for Town Meetings and a polling place every year through 1931. Vestry rental records provide significant information about town activities. Those for 1844, for instance, show that the local Lyceum met there before acquiring its own meeting hall, and that by that time a Hubbardston abolition society had been formed. By 1846, local temperance societies were using the space, and a number of individuals were leasing it as well, either on the part of other organizations, or for private social events.

Well before the church was rebuilt, Hubbardston had developed into a thriving agricultural community with an economy bolstered by scattered water-powered industries; and a cluster of stylish residences, inns, stores, and artisans' shops had grown up around the church and town common at the center. Main Street, part of a primary county road, became a well-traveled link in a north-south route between New Hampshire and the markets to the south in Worcester and Providence. As such, it was a stage route and a corridor for the movement of agricultural goods, which from the end of the 18th century had been bringing a continuous stream of wagons, teams, coaches and other activity through the common and past the church.

The period 1810-1850 produced a handsome set of houses around the common, which, together with the 1842 church, still sets the tone for the predominantly Federal/Greek Revival character of the town center today. The owners of many of these stylish houses, in fact, were the First Parish leaders. Abijah Clark, who owned 2 Brigham Road and both 1 and 3 Main Street; Appleton Clark, owner of 1 Barre Road and Augustus Morse of 12 Main Street were all church treasurers; and Moses Phelps at 17 Main Street served as the Clerk. The 7.1 acre Rural Glen Cemetery (MHC #808) on Worcester Road was officially laid out in 1848, the smaller Pine Wood Cemetery

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

(MHC #804) on Barre Road was established by the town about 1850, and the Greenwood Cemetery (MHC #806) in 1855. A tiny local Catholic cemetery, the Catholic Burial Ground on Mill Road (MHC #809) was opened in 1856. Forest Hill Cemetery (MHC #807) on Williams and Hale Roads had been in operation since the late 1830s.

In spite of the rise in population, by the 1850s income from subscriptions, the leasing of the vestry, and the sale of pews was not enough to keep the First Church from again falling into dire financial straits. Soon an economic decline was affecting the community at large. Progress, in the form of regional railroads and the associated industrialization it brought, was passing Hubbardston by, and the traffic and business along Main Street's corridor diminished sharply. The town's population, which had stood at just over 1100 persons in 1800, peaked at just over 1800 in 1850, and then went into a decline. Although the church had managed to keep one minister, Rev. Claudius Bradford, for over five years in the 1840s, the prevailing pattern there was a succession of short-term pastors who stayed for only a year or two, usually resigning because of the low salary, which remained less than \$600 per year through the mid-1850s. A Methodist church was built in 1840 on Main Street midway between the Unitarian and Evangelical churches, and drew off members from both of them. Disagreement over abolitionist issues further divided the First Church and in February 1854 it was agreed to close the building for a few months, or until a vigorous membership campaign could find enough people to defray expenses.

Hubbardston's economy reached a low point with a widespread depression in 1857, then slowly began to revive. In 1861, the church was able to raise \$250 to purchase its first instrument, a harmonium. Around the same time some union services were conducted by a group who rented the sanctuary, thus adding to the society's coffers, which ended the year in the black.

By the mid-1860s it was clear that the stonework of the church's basement story needed substantial repair. After three years of discussions, visits to other churches, and reports by numerous committees, local carpenter-builders Albert Goodspeed and J.F. Fales were engaged to draw up plans to renovate the church. The question of moving the building away from the common was again raised, but in 1867 the congregation decided to "repair the building on the present spot," to put in a new "doorstool," add some windows, update the interior, and raise the building a few feet. The latter change, which appears to have entailed replacing the stone foundation with brick, made for a more commodious meeting hall designed to attract more rental business – a goal which is reflected in officially renaming the vestry the "Church Hall." As for

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

the interior alterations, it is likely that they included the new curved front of the balcony, new interior moldings, and the paint scheme that was still in place early in the 20th century, which included the Lord's Prayer on the wall behind the pulpit and the Beatitudes written in gold around the top of the other walls. Some doors were also installed in 1868; in 1869 \$48.44 more was paid for some "petition" (i.e. partition) doors – possibly including the pair still in place between the vestibule and sanctuary, or perhaps the double-leaf interior doors to the vestry. The renovated church was rededicated on May 5, 1869.

With a refurbished church building, a revitalized and expanded membership, and a community that was eager to regroup after the Civil War, in the 1870s and 1880s several changes were made in both the church practices and on the town common around it. The expanding liberal policies of the church during this period, some of them inspired by regional Unitarian assemblies, are illustrated by the reduction of Sabbath services from two to one in 1870, and by the extension of full voting privileges to female church members in 1872. Although by 1870 a line of horse sheds had been built just north of the church and a tree-planting campaign was beautifying Main Street, the common in front of the church remained a wide open thoroughfare, alternately muddy or dusty, depending on the weather conditions. The townwide Ladies' Soldiers' Aid Society, which had been active during the war, continued fundraising for several years afterward until nearly \$300 had been accumulated for a monument to Hubbardston's Civil War soldiers. The town voted \$800 toward the monument in 1865, but new expenses for building a county road, along with disagreements over whether a memorial hall – or perhaps a memorial room in a new Town Hall – would be preferable to a monument, delayed its construction for many years. The question of building a Town Hall was somewhat settled by Jonas Clark's gift to the Public Library (built in 1874 and given to the town a decade later – NRIND 1998), which incorporated a small meeting room and space for town offices. For many more decades, however, the town continued to rent the Church Hall for Town Meetings and a polling place, and the nearby **Soldiers' Monument** (MHC #902) was finally erected on the common in 1885. Elm trees had already been planted on the common several years earlier, and when the monument was built the area around it was landscaped into a more park-like setting. The lower section of Brigham Street was divided into two branches to accommodate the newly-delineated grassy triangle on which the monument stood. (The angled portion of Brigham Street, which passed between the church and the monument is today reflected in the paved walkway that bisects the common from Main to Brigham Street – map #7).

At the turn of the 20th century, the three churches at Hubbardston Center were still the focus of

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

many of their parishioners' social, as well as spiritual, lives, and all of them had enthusiastic active congregations. In 1900 each church was supported and sustained by a womens' association, energized by a young persons' club, and had a well-attended Sunday School. Only the First Parish Church, however, had the advantage of being located on the primary outdoor gathering space in the town, where it had begun to hold functions by the end of the 19th century. In 1895 a Social Union Alliance was formed with 94 members, to raise funds and organize social events for the church. The following year it sponsored its first midsummer fair, the forerunner of the popular Nonesuch Street Fair, which was held on the common through the 1950s. Over the years the proceeds raised were put to several purposes, including mission work, the minister's salary, the purchase of a piano in 1897 and the acquisition of the church parsonage at 8 Brigham Street in 1913. The First Parish Female Benevolent Society and the Sabbath School had both existed since 1838. In 1912 the town-wide Men's Club of Hubbardston was organized as an offshoot of an informal men's group which for years had gathered after church suppers to listen to invited speakers and lecturers. Two church youth organizations were formed in the early 1900s: the Lend a Hand group, which raised funds and made sale items, and in the 1920s the Young People's Religious Union. In the 1940s the Theodora Estelle Hubbard Society of American Unitarian Youth was founded as a social group, and named after a longtime Sunday School superintendent, the wife of the Rev. Horace R. Hubbard, who served as minister from 1913 through 1939.

In spite of the stability provided by the Hubbards, and the presence of a small group of dedicated members, the First Church struggled financially in the 20th century, as did the Congregational and Methodist parishes. The town was still a sparsely-populated rural community. Population dropped to 1,000 people in 1915, and with the additions of two turn-of-the-century ecumenical chapels on the outskirts of town, and a 1917 Lutheran church just over the border with Templeton, the congregations of all three center churches remained small. Although the century had opened auspiciously for the First Church, and there was a surplus in the treasury in 1902, by 1906, the minister of that time, Rev. Joseph Seaton, noted that the church was "constantly losing older members by death and many younger ones by removal. It is always a question as to how long the church as an organization will survive." (Records of the First Congregational Church in Hubbardston, 1906). Toward the end of the Great Depression, services were suspended for several months of the year, and when the Rev. Hubbard regretfully tendered his resignation in 1938, he predicted that preaching would be "held in the future only occasionally." (Ibid, 1938) A brief experiment in hiring a community minister to serve all three churches at the town center was undertaken between 1937 and 1941, with the Methodist minister selected to conduct the services,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

but Congregationalists complained that he was remiss in visiting their sick, and the Unitarians were generally anti-consolidation in the first place (Sullivan, 75). The First Church had no settled minister between 1939-1949, and its congregation continued to dwindle. As historian Leo Sullivan put it, there was not a vacant pew in the church in the 1880s, while in the 1940s the congregation could fit all in one pew. (Sullivan, 92)

Ironically, the proliferation of the social and service groups that strengthened interpersonal bonds within each church congregation in the 20th century may have helped to perpetuate longstanding town-wide social divisions, which had tended to form along religious lines. The presence of in-house groups had an inhibiting effect on the development of community-wide social organizations, of which Hubbardston developed relatively few (Ibid, 73). Unification of the Congregational and Unitarian parishes was attempted again in 1973 as the combined Federated Church of Hubbardston, although there was much disagreement over both the choice of minister and the use of the two buildings. The Evangelical Congregational Church withdrew from the agreement in 1977. The next year the bylaws of the Federated Church were revised, and its congregation, consisting primarily of Unitarians and a few dissident Congregationalists, continued to hold services in the First Parish Church as it does today. The building is still overseen by the First Church as the First Parish Church of Hubbardston (Unitarian), which leases the sanctuary to the Federated Church, and rents the vestry to a daycare center.

In recent years the people of Hubbardston have increasingly shown their support for preservation of the town's historic resources, funding a town-wide historic properties survey in 1994-95, and matching a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant for the Hubbardston Library in 1998. The Hubbardston Historical Society operates a popular local museum in the library building, and the town has an active Historical Commission, which recently sponsored National Register nominations for both the library and the Samuel Gay House, and is presently surveying the town's historic mill sites. Placing the Town Common, the Old Burial Ground, and the First Church on the National Register is an important complement to those efforts, and will contribute much to local pride and awareness of the town's considerable collection of historic resources.

Archaeological Significance

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to provide important information on the religious, economic and social history of Hubbardston from the 18th through 20th centuries. Archaeological resources may help document architectural details of the original

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 12

**Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.**

meetinghouse and their orientation on the site. Construction features, artifacts and structural remains can help document the extent to which the 1773 structure was incorporated into the existing building. Additional documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing can also help locate outbuildings and occupational related features associated with the history of church land use on the site. Structural, artifact and feature evidence associated with the horse sheds can contribute information relating to horse/wagon transportation technologies. Similar archaeological evidence associated with the hearse shed may contribute information relating to the use of mortuary vehicles and customs. Detailed analysis of the contents from occupational related structures can provide significant information about activities conducted at the church and its parishioners. Information from unmarked graves can also be important by delineating the accurate boundaries of the cemetery and providing information relating to indigent members of the community. Paupers and unknown persons were often buried in peripheral areas of cemeteries or beyond the official cemetery boundary.

(end)

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Name of Property

Worcester County, MA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.19 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 18	746100	4706640	3.		
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
2.			4.		
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
_ 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 Anne M. Forbes, Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, MHC National Register Director
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date October 2000
street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Hubbardston / Federated Church of Hubbardston
street & number 7A Main Street / 2 Main Street telephone 978-928-5735 / 978-928-5822
city or town Hubbardston state MA zip code 01452-0206

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 the 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

Section number 9 Page 1

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

- Ahlstrom, Sydney E. A Religious History of the American People. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.
- Benes, Peter, ed. New England Meeting House and Church: 1630-1850. Boston: Boston University/Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, 1979.
- Bennett, William. "Hubbardston," in History of Worcester County, Massachusetts, Vol. I. Boston: C.F. Jewett & Co., 1879.
- Brooke, John L. The Heart of the Commonwealth: Society and Political Culture in Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1713-1861. New York: Cambridge U.P., 1989.
- Hubbardston in Words and Pictures. n.d. c. 1913
- Hubbardston, Massachusetts Illustrated. Gardner: Gardner News Co., 1899.
- Hurd, D. Hamilton, ed. History of Worcester County, Massachusetts. Vol. 2. Philadelphia: J.W. Lewis & Co., 1889.
- Manual of Hubbardston Congregational Church. 1885
- Shelley, Frederick. Early American Tower Clocks. Columbia, PA: National Association Of Watch and Clock Collectors, 1998.
- Sinnott, Edmund. Meetinghouse and Church in Early New England. New York: Bonanza, 1963.
- Stowe, John M. History of the Town of Hubbardston. Hubbardston: The Committee, 1881.
- Sullivan, Leo J. History of the Town of Hubbardston: 1881-1976. Hubbardston Historical Commission. Westford, MA: Courier Co., 1993.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 2

**Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.**

MAPS AND ATLASES

Assessors Map. Town of Hubbardston, 1998.

Fagan, L. "Map of the Town of Hubbardston." Philadelphia: R. Clark, 1855.

Beers, F.W. "Atlas of Worcester County, Massachusetts." New York: F.W. Beers, 1870.

Richards, L.J. "Atlas of Worcester County, Massachusetts." Springfield: L.J. Richards, 1898.

CHURCH DOCUMENTS (at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA)

Nehemiah Parker's Record Book, 1770-1823.

Records of the First Congregational Church in Hubbardston, Massachusetts, 1829-1960s.
(Includes parish meeting reports, 1835-1873, and records of the Prudential
Committee, 1834-1853).

Records of the Treasurer of the First Congregational Church in Hubbardston, MA. 1834-1933.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Ceccacci, Susan. "Samuel Gay House." National Register nomination, 1997.

Hepler, Margaret. "History of Hubbardston: the Evolution of a Townscape," 1995

_____. "First Parish Unitarian Church" (MHC form B, 1995)

_____. "Hubbardston Center" (MHC form A, 1995)

Massachusetts Historical Commission. *Hubbardston Reconnaissance Survey Report*, 1984.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9/10 Page 3/1

**Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.**

Historic and Archaeological Resources of Central Massachusetts, 1985.

Town of Hubbardston

Annual Report of the Town Officers, 1861- present

Account books, c. 1800-1830

(end)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of this nomination include the entire parcel (#28, map #8A) which includes the First Parish Church, Old Burial Ground and the remaining portion of the Hubbardston Town Common at the corner of Main and Brigham Streets.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries encompass the surviving portion of the common land at the center of the Town of Hubbardston that was set off for the construction of the town church and the establishment of the community's first burial ground in the early 1770s. The common retains the primary commemorative site for the community, and is marked by three war monuments, two cannon, a restored 19th century "guideboard," a relocated mill stone, the remnants of the town pump, and two modern signs – one for the church, the other for the community. In the future, the district could be expanded to include many more properties in the town center, which is a well-preserved civic and residential village comprised primarily of wood-frame buildings of the late 18th through late 19th centuries.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number photos Page

**Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.**

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photos 1-8 are 8 x 10", photos 9-21 are 3 ½ x 5"

All photographs taken by Anne Forbes, negatives in possession of photographer

Photographs 1-7 taken December, 1998; photos 8-14 and 20-21 taken July 2000; photos 15-19 taken January 1999.

1. First Church (1773/1842) and Town Common, looking E
2. First Church: west and south facades, looking NE
3. First Church: north and west facades, looking E
4. First Church: south elevation, looking N
5. First Church: sanctuary, looking NE
6. First Church: sanctuary, looking W
7. First Church: balcony, looking N
8. Old Burial Ground: looking SW
9. First Church: rear (east) elevation, looking W
10. First Church: main entry, west façade
11. First Church: pulpit
12. First Church: choir loft, with chairs
13. First Church: minister's sofa
14. First church: narthex (vestibule), second level
15. Town Common: cannon and Soldiers Monument, looking SE
16. Town Common: looking SE from Main Street
17. Town Common: will millstone, looking NW
18. Guideboard: SW corner of Town Common, looking NW
19. Town tomb, 1872
20. Old Burial Ground: looking NE
21. Old Burial Ground: Eunice Bolton Stone, 1784

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Hubbardston Town Common HD
Hubbardston (Worcester), Mass.

Section number _____ Page _____

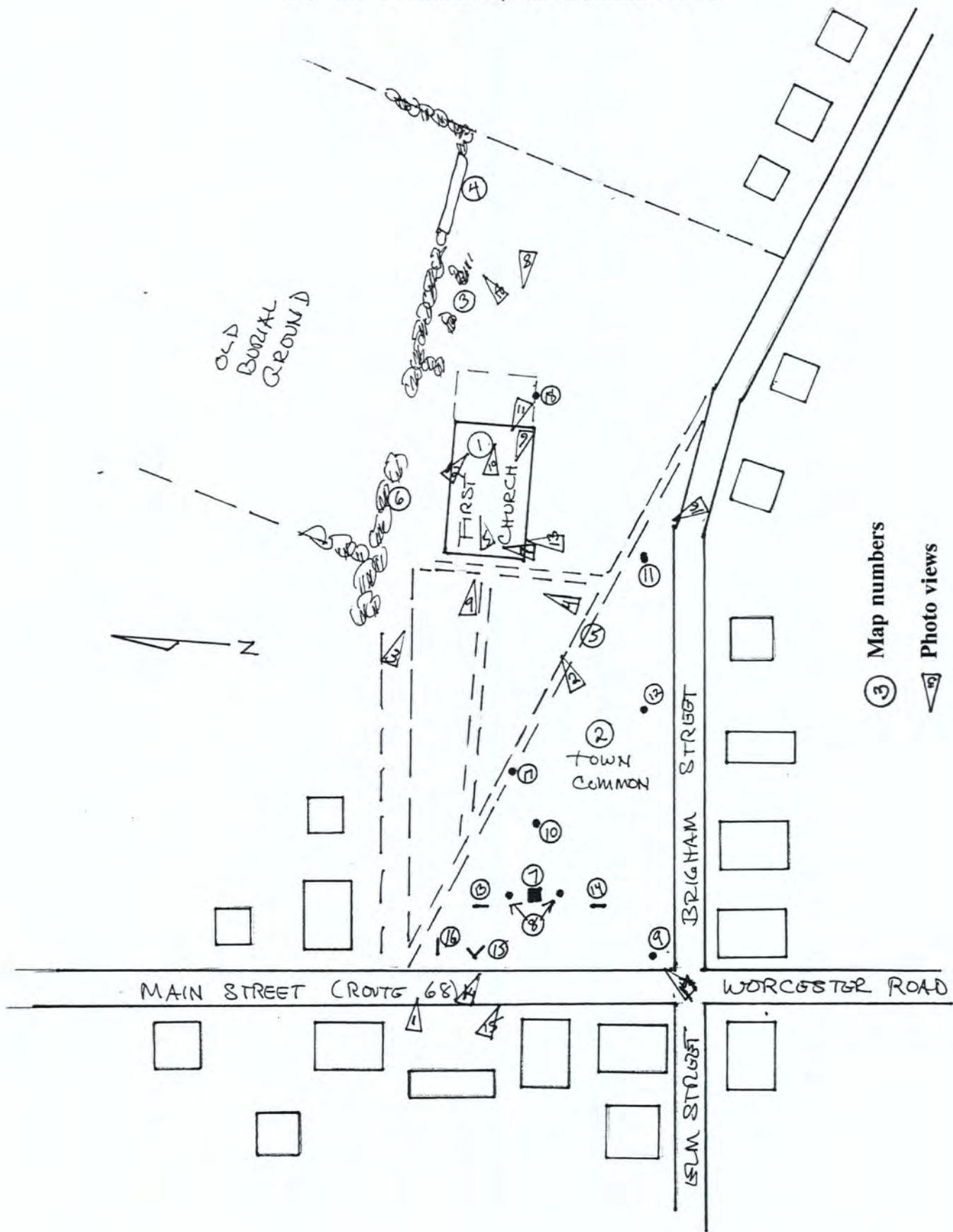
DISTRICT DATA SHEET

C= CONTRIBUTING NC= NON-CONTRIBUTING B= BUILDING SI= SITE ST= STRUCTURE O=OBJECT

MAP #	MHC#	NAME OR DESCRIPTION	DATE	STATUS	TYPE
1	910	Hubbardston Town Common	c. 1773	C	SI
2	26	First Parish Church of Hubb.	1773/1842	C	B
3	800	Old Burial Ground	late 18 th C.	C	SI
4		Partial foundations horse sheds	19 th C.	C	SI
5	906	Town tomb	1872	C	SI
6		Fieldstone wall	18 th , 19 th C.	C	O
7		Line of lower Brigham St.	19 th C.	C	SI
8	902	Soldiers Monument	1885	C	O
9	904	Pair of bronze cannon	late 19 th C.	C (2)	O
10		Guideboard	19 th C.	C	O
11		Flagpole	early 20 th C.	C	O
12		Prentiss Mill millstone	18 th -19 th C.	C	O
13		Base of former town pump	20 th C.	NC	O
14	903	Spanish Amer./WWI monument	c. 1920	C	O
15		World War II monument	mid-20 th C.	NC	O
16		Church sign	mid-20 th C.	NC	O
17		Community sign	mid-20 th C.	NC	O
18		light pole	mid-20 th C.	NC	O
19		metal playground fence	late-20 th C.	NC	O
20		Cemetery sign	20 th C.	NC	O

TOTAL RESOURCE COUNT	CONTRIBUTING	NON-CONTRIBUTING
Buildings	1	0
Sites	3	0
Structures	2	0
Objects	8	7
Total	14	7

FIRST PARISH CHURCH and TOWN COMMON, HUBBARDSTON



③ Map numbers

△ Photo views

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Hubbardston Town Common Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 10/25/00 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/06/00
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/22/00 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/09/00
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 00001396

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: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 11/22/00 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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



①

HUBBARDSTON, MA
Worcester Co., MA

FIRST CHURCH, looking northeast
- West + South facades



2

HUBBARDSTON

Worcester County, MA

First Church

- looking east

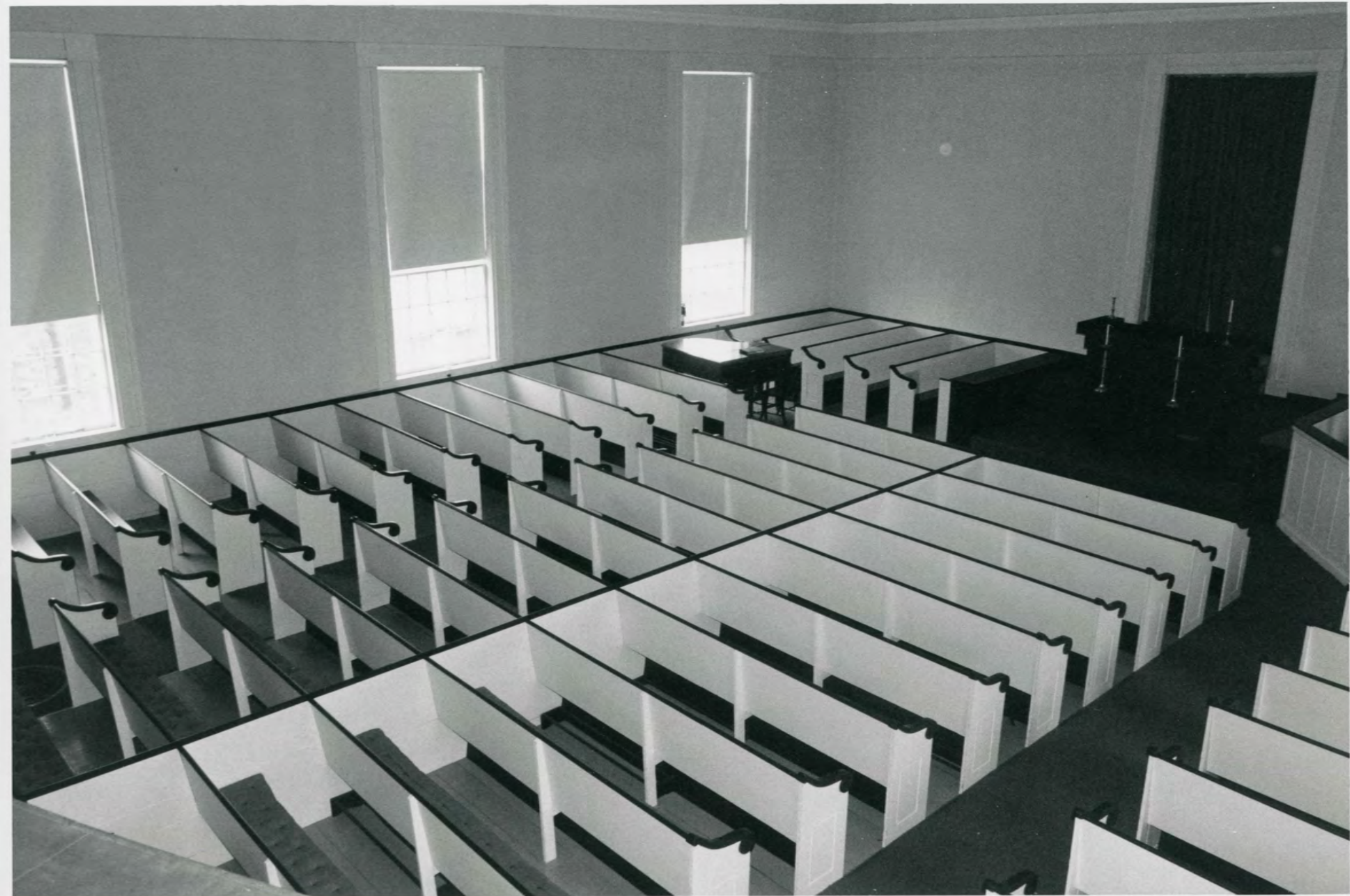


③

HUBBARDSTON, MA

Worcester Co., MA

First Church, looking north



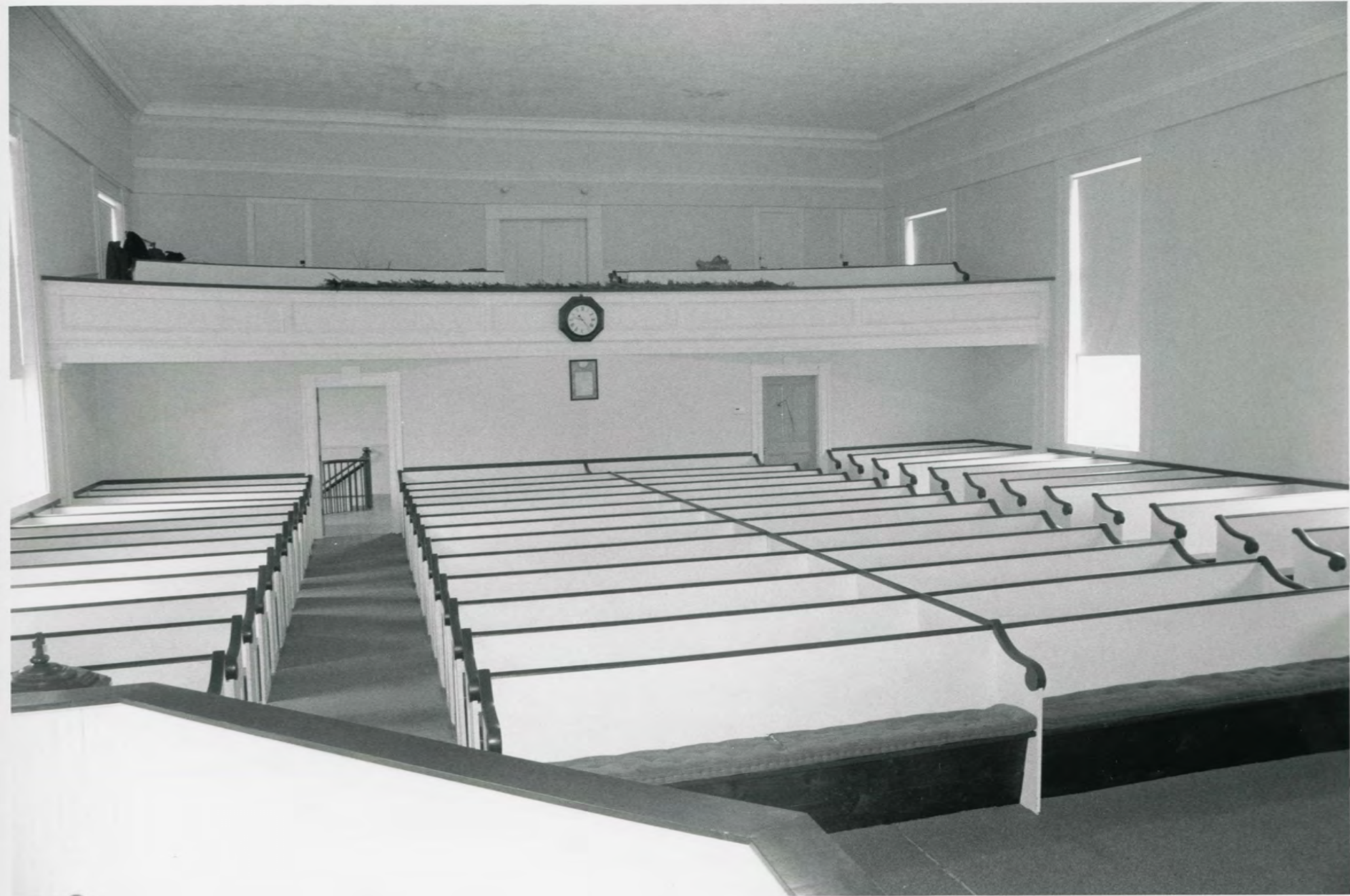
④

HUBBARDSTON, MA

Worcester Co., MA

FIRST CHURCH =

- Sanctuary, looking NE



5

HUBBARDSTON, MA
Worcester Co., MA

FIRST CHURCH
- Sanctuary, looking west



6

HUBBARDSTON, MA
Worcester Co., MA

FIRST CHURCH
balcony, looking N



⑦

HUBBARDSTON, MA
WORCESTER CO., MA

First Church and Common
- looking east



⑧ HUBBARDSTON, MA

HUBBARDSTON TOWN COMMON

- view southwest

OLD BURIAL GROUND

- view southwest



8

HUBBARDSTON, MA
WORCESTER CO.

FIRST CHURCH

- near elevation, looking west

1970111 11-1



9.

HUBBARDSTON, MT
WORCESTER CO

FIRST CHURCH:
387 0111 W-1

main entry, w. facade



10

HUBBARDSTON, MA.

WORCESTER CO.

FIRST CHURCH:

- pulpit

5480111 11



11

HUBBARDSTON, MA.

WORCESTER CO.

FIRST
CHURCH:

-Choir loft and chairs

5480111 1 N



12

HUBBARDSTON, MA
WORCESTER CO.

348011111

minister's sofa



(13)

HUBBARDSTON, MA

Worcester Co.

FIRST
CHURCH:

Narther, second level,
looking north

3480111 1 1





①5 HUBBARDSTON, MA
WORCESTER CO.

town common, looking SE
from Main St.

1-11-1902



(16)

HUBBARDSTON, MA
WORCESTER CO

Town Common, with millstone,
Looking NW

11105

MAIN ST
BRIGHAM ST

PRINCETON 7 MLS
BOSTON 53 
WORCESTER 20 MLS

OAKHAM 10 M 
BARRE 7 M

①7 HUBBARDSTON, MA -

TOWN COMMON:

Guideboard,

SW corner of

Common,

Looking NE





PILGRIM
METEOR
(CIRCA) 1773

HUBBARDSTON, MA

HUBBARDSTON TOWN COMMON

OLD BURIAL GROUND

- view northeast



In Memory of
Mr^s Eunice Bolton
the Da^ug^{ht}er of
Mr William Bolton
and Mr^s Mary his wife
who Died Feb^r 25th 1854
Aged 19 Years
and Seven Weeks
Deceased at Bolton Mass
S^{on} of Mr J. S. Smith

HUBBARDSTON, MA

HUBBARDSTON TOWN
COMMON :

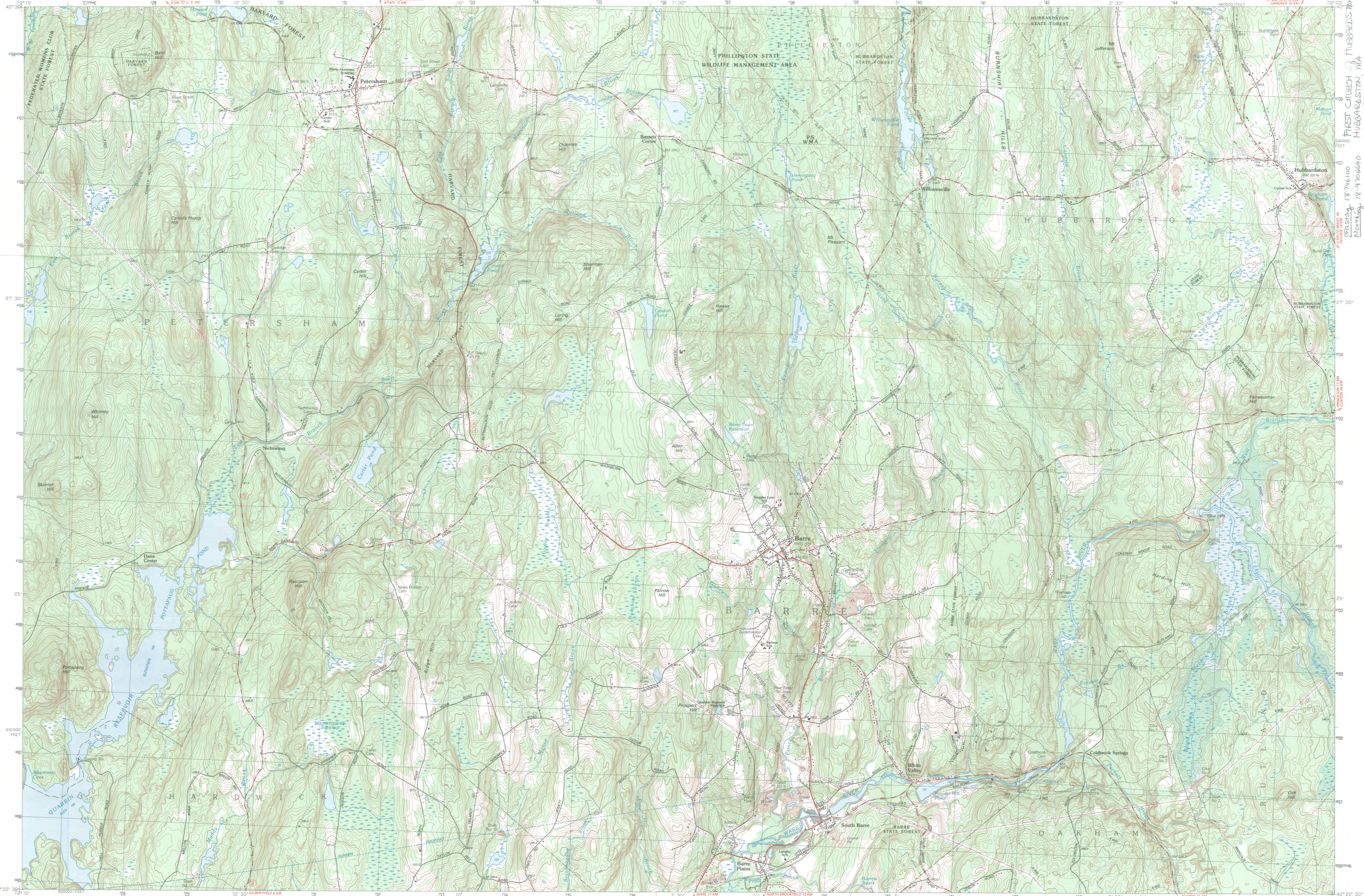
OLD BURIAL GROUND -
Eunice Bolton Stone
(1784)

Missing Core Documentation

Property Name	County, State	Reference Number
Hubbardston Town Common Historic District	Worcester County, Massachusetts	00001396

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

- Nomination Form
- Photographs (missing #19)
- USGS Map



Barre MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric topographic map



7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names



Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works
 Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies
 Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1980. Field checked 1981. Map edited 1988
 Supersedes Barre and Petersham 1:25,000-scale maps dated 1969
 Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 18
 Universal Transverse Mercator
 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone
 1927 North American Datum
 To place on the projected North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 5 meters south and 39 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
 There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations on this map

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
 CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
 OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS	
Meters	Feet	1983	1984	1	2
1	3.2808	10° 00'	10° 00'	1	2
2	6.5617	10° 01'	10° 01'	3	4
3	9.8425	10° 02'	10° 02'	5	6
4	13.1234	10° 03'	10° 03'	7	8
5	16.4043	10° 04'	10° 04'		
6	19.6852	10° 05'	10° 05'		
7	22.9660	10° 06'	10° 06'		
8	26.2469	10° 07'	10° 07'		
9	29.5278	10° 08'	10° 08'		
10	32.8086	10° 09'	10° 09'		

To convert meters to feet: multiply by 3.2808
 To convert feet to meters: multiply by 0.3048

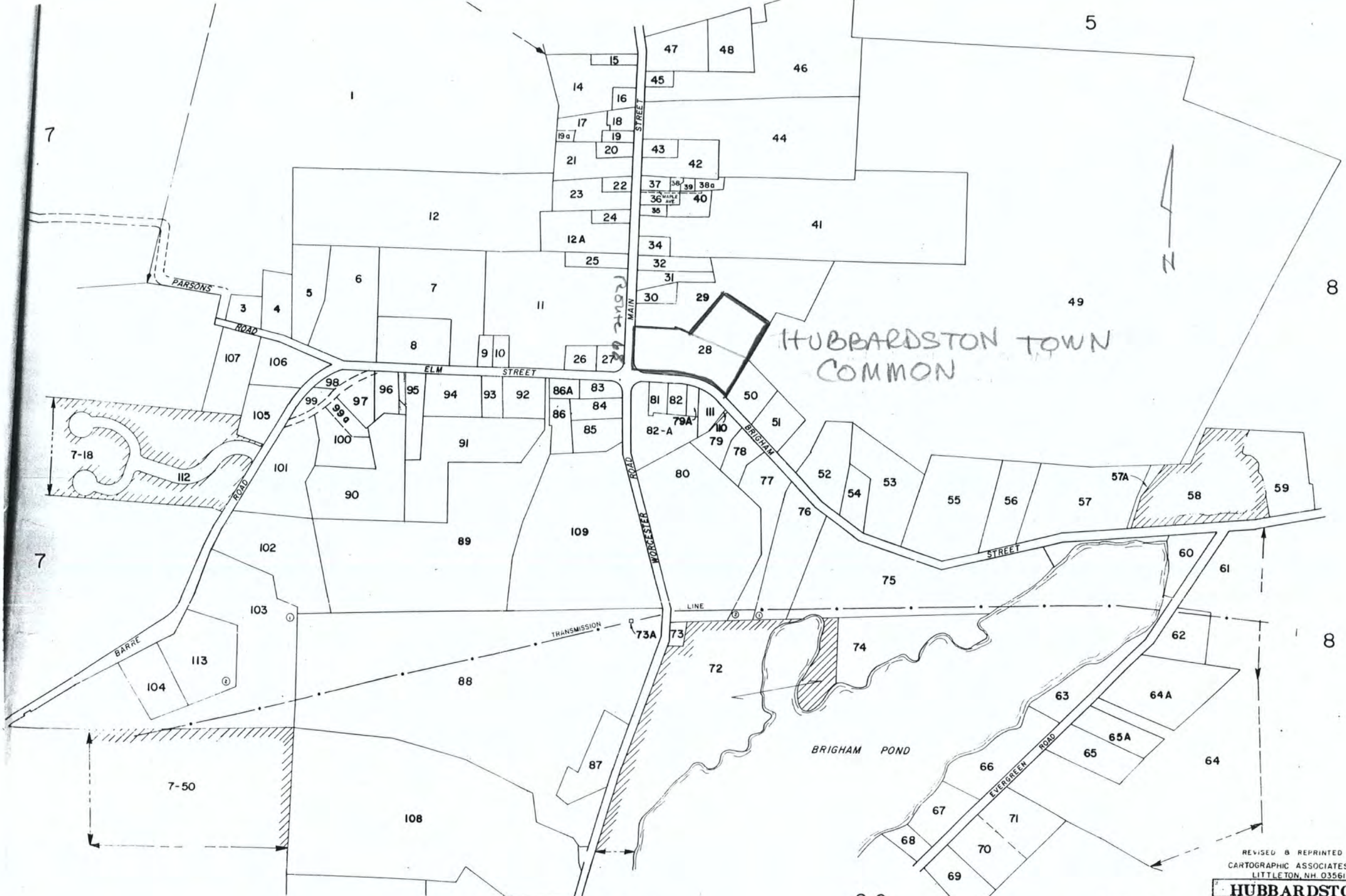
UTM grid convergence (GCM) and false easting (FE) at center of map
 Diagram is approximate



Topographic Map Symbols

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Unimproved road, trail
- Route marker: Interstate, U. S., State
- Railroad: standard gage, narrow gage
- Bridge, drawbridge
- Footbridge, overpass, underpass
- Build-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
- House, barn, church, school, large structure
- Boundary:
 - National, with monument
 - State
 - County, parish
 - Civil township, precinct, district
 - Incorporated city, village, town
 - National or State reservation, small park
 - Land grant with monument, fossil section corner
 - U. S. public lands survey: range, township, section
 - Range, township, section line: location approximate
 - Fence or field line
 - Power transmission line, located tower
 - Dam, dam with lock
 - Cemetery, grave
 - Campground, picnic area; U. S. location monument
 - Windmill; water well; spring
 - Miner shaft; prospect; pit or cave
 - Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation
 - Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
 - Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate
 - Disturbed surface: strip mine, lava, sand
 - Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream
 - Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small
 - Swamp; marsh
 - Submerged mark; land subject to overwash; sandbar
 - Woodland; scattered trees
 - Scrub; mangrove
 - Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request



HUBBARDSTON TOWN
COMMON

NOTE
This Map is Not Intended
For Use in Conveyancing

Revised To
January 1, 1997

REVISED & REPRINTED BY
CARTOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATES, INC.
LITTLETON, NH 03561

HUBBARDSTON	
PLAT	SHEET
1102	8-A
1" = 200'	

8-C

8

8

5

7

7

HUBBARDSTON
TOWN COMMON



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 17, 2000

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Hubbardston Town Common HD, Hubbardston, (Worcester), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Kenneth Green, Hubbardston Historical Commission
Rev. Susie Phoenix, First Parish Church
Dennis O'Donnell, Chair, Hubbardston Board of Selectmen
Anne M. Forbes, Preservation Consultant
Edward Barker, Chair, Planning Board