

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 13 1984

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Union Meeting House; First Christian Society; 2nd Christian Church, First Society  
and/or common Wolfeboro Centre Community Church (preferred) ✓

2. Location

street & number <sup>NH</sup> Route 109 N/A not for publication

city, town Wolfeboro Centre N/A vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Carroll code 03

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Pew Holders Association of the Wolfeboro Centre Community Church

street & number c/o Arthur Glidden, Route #1 Box 386

city, town Sanbornville N/A vicinity of state New Hampshire 03872

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Carroll County Courthouse/Registry of Deeds

street & number Route 171

city, town Ossipee state New Hampshire 03864

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Union Meeting House is a one story gable-roofed structure of framed construction, standing on a foundation of split granite blocks. Measuring about 39 feet long by 37 feet wide, the structure is oriented with its gable end facing the road and treated as a facade. The walls are clapboarded and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The facade has a central window which is elevated well above the floor of the building and serves to light a reading desk inside. Like all other openings in the building, the front window has flat casings with fillets applied to the outer edges, and plain square corner blocks. The sashes are 12-over-12, and the windows are fitted with four-leaf louvered blinds. Fixed to the wall immediately above the window is a sign bearing the date "1841."

On the side of the window is a doorway with a single-leaf door. Each door has seven flat panels surrounded with grecian ogee mouldings. The doors have casings like those of the front window, and each door is reached by a set of modern concrete steps with welded steel railings.

The side elevations of the building each have three windows identical to that on the facade but placed close to the floor. The sides are given modest Greek Revival character through the presence of a wide water table above the foundation and a deep frieze board beneath the cornice. The cornice is composed of a double cyma crown moulding and an ovolo-and-cyma bed moulding.

The rear elevation has three windows, each with a casing like that of the other windows of the building. The central window is raised well above the level of the floor to light a choir dais in the back of the auditorium.

The interior of the building is a single room, entered directly through the two front doors. Though simple in its appointments, this auditorium is given an interesting character through thoughtful design and careful workmanship. At the front of the room is a dais, lighted from behind by the central window of the building's facade. On this dais is a mahogany-veneered Empire-style reading desk with a swelled front and two free-standing turned corner columns.

On each side of the front dais, aisles lead from the front doors to the back of the building. These aisles provide access to single rows of pews set against the side walls of the building and to a double row of pews in the center of the floor. Though not curved, all pews are set at an angle with the walls of the meeting house forming a simple amphitheater arrangement with the focus on the reading desk. The pews are of the "slip" type, but have hinged and panelled doors enclosing their ends.

At the rear of the auditorium, behind the double row of pews in the center of the room, is a second dais for the choir. This is enclosed by an in-curved front and by ends composed of a double row of painted panels. At each corner of the panelled enclosure is a turned wooden column reflecting the columns on the reading desk. The choir enclosure is lighted by the elevated window in the center of the rear elevation of the building.

The detailing of the auditorium is simple but attractive. Door and window casings are fluted and have plain square corner blocks. The room is wainscoted with wide flat boards to level the window stools. The outer edges of the plaster ceiling are coved. The room is lighted by two-branch iron chandeliers for kerosene lamps.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1841 Builder/Architect unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Union Meeting House, built cooperatively to serve adherents of two religions which were founded within a few miles of Wolfeboro and is an excellent and unaltered example of the type of simple structure which reflected the needs of a small New Hampshire congregation in a period of intense religious activity.

Architecture: The Union Meeting House is one of the least altered and one of the most carefully designed of the religious structures of eastern New Hampshire. It was constructed at a site which was close to the geographical center of its township, and yet was a relatively thinly-settled area. The modest architectural nature of the building reflects the limited means available for its construction and support. The structure cost about \$800.00.

While the population that built and used the meeting house was small, religious activity in the region was strong. The building was erected cooperatively by members of two churches, the Free-Will Baptists and the Christians. Both sects were of local origin. The Free-Will Baptist Church had been founded in 1780 in New Durham, twelve miles from Wolfeboro Cntr, while the Christian Church had its origins in Portsmouth, forty miles from Wolfeboro Cntr. in 1803. The dedication of the Union Meeting House was attended by fourteen ministers; the dedicatory sermon was preached by Elder Mark Fernald (1784–1852), a leading itinerant preacher of the Christian sect.<sup>2</sup>

The architecture of the building is conservative, combining the traditional feeling of the Federal style with a few details that reveal the current Greek Revival style. Yet despite the modest nature of the meeting house, its builders evinced a thoughtfulness in its design, echoing the columns of the reading desk in those of the choir enclosure, slanting the pews for better visibility and audibility, and coving the ceiling of the auditorium. One unusual feature of the building is the location of the reading desk in the front of the structure, between the two doors. The "reversed" seating plan is occasionally seen in meeting houses of the region, especially among the Free-Will Baptists. It appears to have been relatively commonplace in the early nineteenth century, particularly in northern New England, but quickly passed out of favor and often disappeared during the remodellings of the meeting houses.<sup>3</sup> The retention of the "reversed" seating plan in the Union Meeting House is another aspect of the original nature of that building.

### Footnotes:

1. Rev. G.A. Burgess and Rev. J.T. Ward, Free Baptist Encyclopedia (Chicago: Free Baptist Encyclopedia Company, 1889), pp. 557–561; William Gerald McLoughlin, New England Dissent, 1630–1833, 2 Vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), II, pp. 745–752
2. Mark Fernald, Life of Elder Mark Fernald, Written by Himself (Newburyport, Mass.: Geo. Moore Payne and D.P. Pike, 1852), p. 320
3. Edmund W. Sinnott, Meetinghouse & Church in Early New England (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), p. 102.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Record Book-Second Christian Church; pp 1-14

History of Wolfeboro, Benjamin Parker (published 1901, revised 1974) pp 35, 240, 309, 316-319, 329, 334, and 471.

Life of Elder Mark Fernald; self-written journal, pub. 1852, pp 47, 289-290 -continued-

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/3 acre

Quadrangle name Wolfeboro, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

A 

1	9	3	2	4	8	5	0	4	8	3	1	6	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundaries of the nominated property are indicated in black on the attached sketch map. (Town Tax map #16, lot #7, block #4). These boundaries include all the property historically and currently associated with the Church.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
state	N/A	code	county	code

state	N/A	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title A. Frances Knight Daniels

organization Pew Holders Association  
Wolfeboro Centre Community Church

date August 9, 1983

street & number R.D. #1 Clark Road

telephone (603) 569-2131

city or town Wolfeboro

state New Hampshire 03894

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development  
title New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer

date JAN 26 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

3/15/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation sheet #1 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Item number 9

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-Continued-

Unpublished Papers: Old Tales of "The Centre" Retold (written for the 95th. Anniversary of the Church-1936).

"Elder John F. Chamberlain" (August 1837-March 1919) by Helen B. Stevenson (Grand-daughter of Joseph Stevenson). Written Aug. 1946 for dedication of a plaque in memory of John F. Chamberlain- Preacher.

Unpublished paper: "Fragmentary Items About Two Former Post Offices at Wolfeboro Centre, New Hampshire and Their Post Masters", by J. Estelle & Henry J. Stevenson (Granite State News-Jan.27, 1961).

Interview with Mrs. Ida Pineo (1906-- ) North Main Street, Wolfeboro, N.H. 03894 ( A well- known historian in Wolfeboro, NH).

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# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

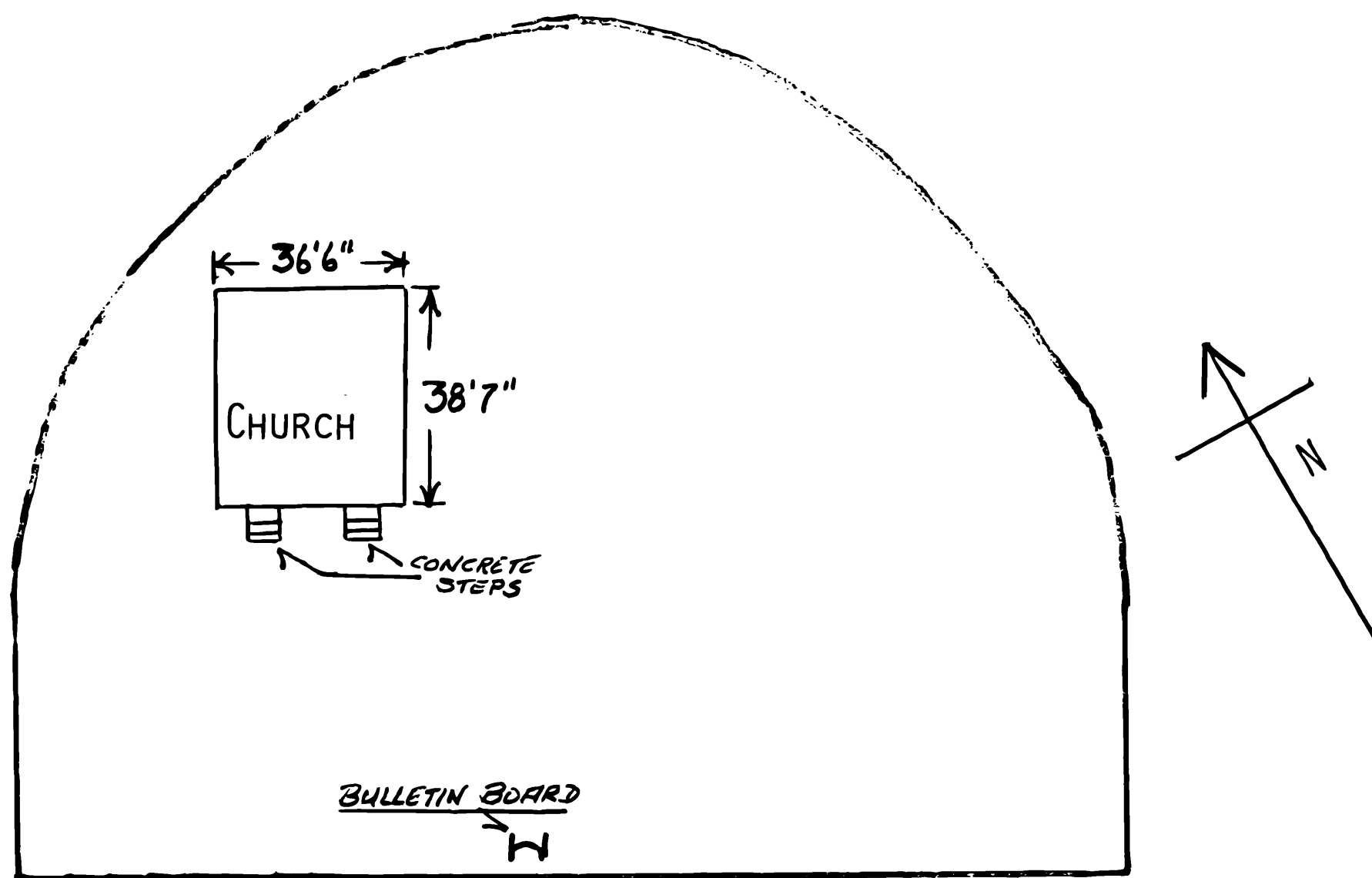
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date entered

Continuation sheet #2 SKETCH MAP

Item number 10

Page 2

WOLFEBORO CENTER  
COMMUNITY CHURCH



N.H. ROUTE 109 (FARM ROAD)

TO SANBORNVILLE

SCALE: 1/4" = 10' APPROX.