

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 7 1983

date entered

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

1. Name

historic ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

and/or common ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2. Location

street & number ^{NH} State Route 63 n/a not for publication

city, town Chesterfield n/a vicinity of

state N.H. code 33 county Cheshire code 005

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
	n/a being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Trustees of Asbury United Methodist Church

street & number --

city, town Chesterfield n/a vicinity of state New Hampshire 03443

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 12 Court Street

city, town Keene state New Hampshire 03431

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NONE has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<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	n/a moved date n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Asbury United Methodist Church is a wood-framed 1½-story structure measuring 42 feet wide by 58 feet deep. Its northwest gable end is treated as the facade. The building has a gable roof covered with slate, and a two-stage belltower placed at the front of the ridge. The building stands on a foundation of concrete and concrete blocks.

Detailing of the facade is intended to suggest a tetrastyle Doric portico. The facade has four wooden pilasters which project about an inch from the plane of the clapboarded wall and support an entablature of flat boards; this extends across the front of the building and along the two sides. The pilasters bear simple capitals with applied fillets to suggest the necking and flat Grecian ovolo mouldings to represent the echinus.

The two outer bays of the facade are pierced by doorways on the first floor and by windows, lighting a gallery, directly above. The doorways have wide, flat casings, corner blocks, and six-panel doors. The windows have flat casings and 8/8 sashes. In the central bay, at the first floor level, is a third window with flat casings and 8/8 sashes. All three windows have louvered blinds.

Across the full width of the facade is a wooden porch with a latticework enclosure below the deck, a wide central flight of steps, and a balustrade with square posts and balusters.

The gable of the facade is separated from the lower wall by the horizontal entablature. The full entablature extends along the raking eaves of the roof and defines a closed triangular pediment. The tympanum of this pediment is clapboarded and is pierced by two square windows with flat casings and louvered blinds.

The lower stage of the two-stage tower is defined by four corner pilasters identical in pattern to those on the lower facade, and by a full entablature which also duplicates that at the eaves of the main roof. The walls of this stage are clapboarded and have no openings. The second stage of the tower is a flat-roofed belfry with four rectangular openings, with paired pilasters at each corner, and with a full entablature identical to that used below. The front and side belfry openings are filled with wooden latticework; the rear opening retains the louvered blind which old photographs show to have been original to all four openings. Atop the belfry is a small modern weathervane.

The side walls of the building are clapboarded and have pilasters at the rear corners to match those at the front. Spaced along each side elevation are three large windows having simple flat casings without corner blocks; these have 20/20 sashes. On the north-east side of the building is a two-leaf door at the front of the basement wall, providing access to a room with windows at irregular intervals along the cellar walls.

The rear (southeast) elevation of the church is covered with painted wooden shingles and has no door or window openings. The raking eaves of the rear elevation are treated with a continuation of the cornice which encircles the rest of the building, but the remainder of the entablature is not carried across the rear elevation. One of the two original brick stove chimneys pierces the northern slope of the roof near the rear wall and serves the modern heating system.

-continued

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Continuation sheet #1 - DESCRIPTION

Item number 7

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Original appearance: Until 1967, the church had a foundation of rough fieldstone. In that year a new basement with walls of concrete below grade and of concrete block above grade was provided without otherwise altering the building.

The tower of the church originally had a third stage which consisted of a plain wooden drum standing upon a tall wooden plinth. The drum had a circular cornice with a Grecian ovolo profile; above this was a small hemispherical dome with a simple wooden weathervane. These features were damaged by a hurricane in 1938 and subsequently deteriorated until the time of their removal in 1962. With the exception of the loss of the upper features of the tower and the construction of the modern foundation walls, the Asbury Church remains essentially in original condition.

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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1844 **Builder/Architect** Oscar C. Coolidge

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Asbury Church is an important example of a local tradition in Greek Revival architecture. A wooden counterpart of several comparable brick churches in the region, the Asbury Church derives from ideas which may have been introduced by Ammi Burnham Young, a local designer who later won national prominence. The church also holds an important place in the religious history of northern New England, being associated with the oldest continuing congregation in the New Hampshire Methodist Annual Conference.

Architecture: The Asbury Church is a well-preserved religious structure which represents an important example in a regional group of Greek Revival buildings. The church was built by contractor Oscar C. Coolidge in 1844 and was intended to be fully "Grecian" in style. A letter from a member of the building committee to Coolidge specified that the building have "no gothic arches or blinds over the windows on the outside" and that "all the mouldings and finish ... be in a plain modern style."

Although some of the detailing of the Asbury Church may have derived from the later books of Asher Benjamin, the broader Greek Revival architectural tradition of southwestern New Hampshire probably had its origins in the early work of local architect Ammi Burnham Young (1798-1874), who later achieved national prominence. Several features of the wooden Asbury Church were prefigured in the region by brick buildings, including the Richmond, N.H., Community Church (1838), some thirteen miles distant. Among the features shared by the Asbury Church, the Richmond Church, and other church and academic buildings in the region are the pilasters of the facade and the square towers with their simple Doric detailing.

The tradition of brick detailing in the Greek Revival style had its beginning in the Connecticut River Valley of New Hampshire about 1828, when Young, a native of Lebanon, New Hampshire, was employed to design Wentworth and Thornton Halls at Dartmouth College in Hanover. The Grecian detailing of these academic buildings quickly passed to such churches as those at Richmond, Plainfield (1839, with a second church in 1840), and Cornish Center (1841-2). These buildings, all brick structures, in turn suggested both pilaster and tower detailing to the builder of the wooden Asbury Church. The Asbury Church is, however, one of very few wooden churches in the region to follow closely the detailing of the masonry prototypes of the Connecticut River Valley. Church records indicate that the building was constructed of local materials by local workmen; it thus represents an indigenous response to stylistic ideas which were being manifested on a national scale at the period of its construction.

Religion: The religious Society which built the Asbury United Methodist Church was one of the earliest in northern New England; the church building is regarded as the "mother church of Methodism in New Hampshire." Methodism was introduced into New England in 1789 by Jesse Lee, who preached at Chesterfield as early as 1793. Another preacher, Philip Embury, continued missionary work in Chesterfield, and by 1795 the local congregation had grown to 68 members and had become the first organized Methodist society in New Hampshire. In 1796 the first circuit in the state was formed under the name of the "Chesterfield Circuit", and since that time Methodist preaching has been continuous in

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet #3

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/7th of an acre

Quadrangle name Keene, NH-VT

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A	1 8	7 0 6 5 5 5	4 7 5 1 2 9 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: Tax map #12B, parcel # B-3. The nominated property includes the entire parcel associated with the church. There is no other property associated with it.

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
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state	n/a	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol J. Waseleski, Director of Historic Register Project

organization Asbury United Methodist Church date May 10, 1983

street & number PO Box 13 telephone 603-363-8196

city or town Spofford state New Hampshire 03462

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.

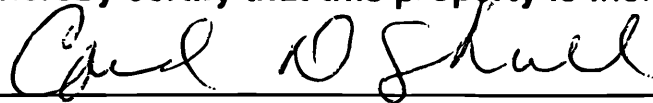
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development

title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date OCT 9 1983

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



date 12-21-83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet #2 - SIGNIFICANCE

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the town. On May 11, 1966, the American Association of Methodist Historical Societies and the New Hampshire Annual Conference of the Methodist Church celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Methodist movement in America by issuing a document "to recognize, honor and declare the church (at Chesterfield) to be the oldest continuing congregation in the New Hampshire Annual Conference." Services were held in private homes, schoolhouses, and churches belonging to other sects until the present structure was built in 1844.

¹Letter, Henry C. Clarke to Oscar C. Coolidge, March 26, 1844, archives of the Asbury United Methodist Church.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

Continuation sheet #3 - REFERENCES

Item number 9

Page 1

Collection of Vanetta Emery, Church Street, Spofford, NH 03462:

February 29, 1844: Copy of church building committee report

March 25, 1844: Copy of contract to build the church between W.R. Platts, builder & Oscar C. Coolidge, Rufus Harvey and Joseph Clarke, members of the church building committee.

Collection of Asbury United Methodist Church, Route 63, Chesterfield, NH 03443

March 17, 1844 Letter from D.B. Farr to Oscar C. Coolidge (copy)

March 20, 1844 Copy of letter from D F. Dott to Oscar C. Coolidge

March 26, 1844 Copy of letter from Henry C. Clarke to Oscar C. Coolidge

Document presented to Asbury United Methodist Church by the American

Association of Methodist Historical Societies and The New Hampshire

Annual Conference, May 1969; Photocopy enclosed. Document located in the rear of the church sanctuary.

Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1980 edition.

Keene Sentinel Newspaper, April 4, 1972 (Office of newspaper located on Main Street, Keene, New Hampshire 03431.)

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Continuation sheet #4 - SKETCH MAP

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ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Chesterfield, N.H.

Scale: 1" = 30'

