

*J.F.F.
R.D.*

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JUN 17 1980

date entered 8 1980

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

1. Name

historic LEMPSTER MEETING HOUSE (Union Hall) See Letter dated 10-14-81
and/or common UNION HALL

2. Location

street & number Lempster Street — not for publication
city, town Lempster — vicinity of congressional district Second
state New Hampshire code 33 county Sullivan code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Grange

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Lempster
street & number
city, town Lempster — vicinity of state New Hampshire 03606

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cheshire County Courthouse, Registry of Deeds
street & number 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 type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>1822</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lempster Meeting House was built in 1794 on a hilltop about a mile from its present location. In its original form the meeting house was rectangular in form (40' x 50') and had twin stairwell porches at either gabled end, providing access to the galleries. Within, the structure was a single large audience room open to the roof. On the ground floor were approximately 52 box pews; in the galleries were benches and approximately 20 box pews. A pulpit and canopy were located midway between the gallery and ground floor. The gallery breastwork, pulpit, canopy, and pulpit window casing were robin's egg blue. The original entrance is directly opposite the arched pulpit window (now covered from view within). This entrance has a five paneled double door with moulded cornice and plain pilasters, and is flanked by three six-over-six sash windows on either side; there are seven six-over-six windows above. On the opposite (north)side are six six-over-six windows on each floor and the pulpit window between the floors. The building conforms to the standard five-bay 18th century meeting house frame design and has a post height of 24 feet. The hand-hewn pine timbers (11" x 14") used for sills, plates, posts and beams are mortised, tenoned and pegged.

In 1822, the meeting house was moved to its present location. A bell tower was added on the western gabled end; the tower is 12' square, 100' in overall height and is surmounted by a belfry, cupola spire and weathervane. A Revere Bell hung in 1824 and recast in 1844 is still in place. In the tower are three six-over-six windows, two paneled doors with transoms, pilasters and cornice mouldings. One of these doors now serves as the main entrance. The tower stairway leads to the belfry. The present assembly hall has wainscoting and boxed corner posts. The second floor was added at the level of the original gallery.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates Built 1794; 1822 **Builder/Architect** James Bingham, Elijah Frink

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Lempster Meeting House is one of approximately 40 18th Century meetinghouses surviving in New Hampshire; it is a unique social and architectural manifestation of the union of Church and State in New England. Architecturally it belongs in a class of the rural twin porch style, (such as the survivals at Rockingham VT. (1787) and Fremont, NH.(1800)), whose dispersal is limited to a small area of New England consisting of the Central Massachusetts and the southern New Hampshire uplands. Built at town expense in 1794, the Lempster Meeting House served joint ecclesiastical and secular functions until the legal separation of church and state. In 1822 it was moved approximately one mile so that it would lie on the recently built 2nd New Hampshire turnpike. Thereafter, it reverted to town use and was shared by the Silver Mountain Grange (since 1897), town library, a high school academy (1835) and the Lempster Dramatic Union (since 1854). Although, no longer a religious meeting place, it became a multi-purpose building and remains so to this day.

The Lempster Meeting House is an unspoiled architectural and cultural statement of community life in early New England as it existed in the South-Central Uplands of New Hampshire in the late 18th Century.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property APPROX. 1 acre

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Lowell Mtn. NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A	1 8	7 2 6 5 0 0	4 7 9 0 9 2 5
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
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D			
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E			
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F			
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G			
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H			
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Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code
NONE			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Russell H. Sanborn (1976) Revised by James R. Cotton-Pres., Lempster Hist. Soc.
Peter Benes-Dir., Dublin Seminar for New England Folklore.

organization Lempster Bicentennial Committee date September 1979

street & number Lempster Street telephone 863-1653

city or town Lempster state New Hampshire 03606

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

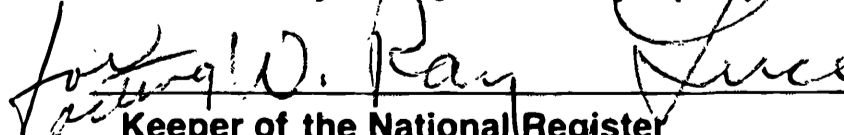
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Commissioner, Dept. Resources and Economic Development date May 23, 1980
NH State Historic Preservation Officer

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

 date 9/8/80
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest:  date 8.22.80

Chief of Registration

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED JUN 17 1980

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Major Bibliographical References ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Lempster, NH Bicentennial Report (1967), Walter M. Beckwith, Springfield, MA

Granite Monthly, "Glimpses of Lod Lempster", August, 1907, H.H. Metcalf

Granite Monthly, "Lempster's 150th Anniversary", Sept.-Oct. 1917, H.H. Metcalf

Old-Time New England, "Twin Porch vs. Single Stairwell: Two examples of cluster Diffusion in Rural Meetinghouse Architecture;" Vol. 69 No. 34 Winter - Spring 1979, Peter Benes

Cited in Meetinghouses and Churches in Early New England, Edmund W. Sinnott, New York 1963

Colonial Meetinghouse of New Hampshire, Eva Speare, Littleton, NH 1938

Window casing from Lempster Meetinghouse was included in New England Meetinghouse and Church: 1630 - 1850, Peter Benes and Phillip D. Zimmerman, and was exhibited at the Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, NH (May - July 1979) Sponsored by Boston University, Currier Gallery, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife and National Endowment of the Humanities.

Interviews: Edward & Mary McCullough, Arlene Allen (1975, Lempster) and Walter Beckwith (1974).