

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

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

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

**1. Name**

historic Harmony Chapel and Cemetery

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Rhode Island Route 44 (Putnam Pike) not for publication

city, town Harmony, ~~Chepachet~~ vicinity of Hon. Edward P. Beard  
congressional district #2

state Rhode Island code 44 county Providence code 007

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input 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: cemetery

**4. Owner of Property**

name Harmony Cemetery and Chapel Association

street & number c/o Mrs. Theodore Clarke, President, 216 Highland Avenue

city, town Warwick vicinity of state Rhode Island 02886

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Glocester Town Clerk's Office

street & number Main Street

city, town Chepachet state Rhode Island

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Glocester: Preliminary Survey of Historic and Cultural Resources  
has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

city, town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Harmony Chapel and Cemetery are located in the small rural linear village of Harmony in Gloucester, Rhode Island. The Chapel, a small white-painted frame building is set back only about ten feet from the Putnam Pike, now quickly traveled, four-lane Rhode Island Route 44. South of the Chapel, extending in a long rectangle several hundred feet back from the road is the Cemetery, Rhode Island Historical Cemetery Gloucester #35, enclosed by two-and-a-half to three-foot stone walls on the east, south, and west containing approximately one hundred and fifty to two hundred burials.

The Chapel, built probably about 1830, as a schoolhouse, is a very simple one-story gable-roofed clapboarded structure three bays long and two bays deep. The entrance, sheltered by an enclosed late-nineteenth-century portico, but hung with the original door, still retaining its Norfolk latch, is in the central bay on the east flank. Adjacent to it on the south is a small enclosed shelter for wood. A narrow brick chimney stack, built to accommodate a stove, rises just inside the south gable-end wall between the two windows.

The interior is taken up by a single room with a stove at the south, six or eight rows of pews with a central aisle, and a raised dais with two wooden lecterns and two Victorian podiums, with recessed panelled arches, at the north. The church furnishings, though of simple and appropriate late nineteenth-century design, are not original to the Chapel but were acquired from another church in the twentieth century. Walls are plastered as is the coved ceiling. Two iron tie rods have been added running east-west to strengthen the structure.

At the southeast corner of the Chapel is a large ash tree, which was of a good size in 1906. (judging from a postcard post-marked that year). It shelters the northern edge of the cemetery and the chapel in summer and provides a picturesque silhouette at other times of the year.

The cemetery, laid out over a period of years, follows an irregular rectangular grid. The original portion, recorded on a plat drawn in 1878, extends from a point in line with the east flank of the chapel east to the present dry-laid stone wall and includes seventeen separate plots. The 1878 plat shows four "streets" running north to south, named, from east to west, East Avenue (between the wall the the first row of plots), Main Avenue, Central Avenue, and West Avenue (between the last row of plots and the western stone wall, which was moved further west sometime

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

CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

after 1903). Between Main Avenue and Central Avenue are the most conspicuous memorials, a row of five polished marble shafts topped with urns and other funerary symbols. These shafts appear to date from the twentieth-century and include markers for Ellison Tinkham (1825-1907) and his wife Mercy (1819-1878) and William Tinkham (1823-1914). (William and Ellison were among the original Cemetery and Chapel Association incorporators.) Elsewhere the markers include many of the corbeled, round-headed form, typical of the last half of the nineteenth century in rural cemeteries, and a number of less graceful twentieth-century block markers. Most of the plots in this original section of the cemetery were defined by raised cut-granite curbs, but only a few of them remain. All that is visible of the "avenues" are grassy longitudinal depressions.

A plat of the cemetery drawn in 1902 shows the area added about that time: two more rows of lots bounded by West Avenue on the east with Steere Avenue running south just west of the Chapel and Tinkham Avenue parallel to it two plots to the west. This new section included thirty-one additional plots, most bearing early and mid-twentieth-century memorials. It appears that the mortared fieldstone walls along the west and south bounds were built or rebuilt at the time of this expansion.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) social history
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Harmony Chapel and Cemetery are of significance within a local historical context for what they graphically illustrate about the changing social needs in a rural Rhode Island hamlet in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Built as a schoolhouse, probably a public school erected in response to Rhode Island state legislation of 1828 encouraging each town to determine its own school districts and provide a building and teacher for each, Harmony District School is one of the few late Federal Schoolhouses surviving, in recognizable form, in Rhode Island today.<sup>1</sup> Its conversion, sometime prior to 1870, from public school to free chapel, reflects the economic and population decline of rural areas as industry developed elsewhere in the state, and the rise of various independent religious sects and persuasions in the hinterlands. A "free space," by definition, was open to use by any and all Christian denominations, usually on a rotating basis. Such spaces were also used for other public gatherings. This was the case in Harmony as the incorporators made clear: the trustees "shall grant its use for religious meetings or for Sunday School to all sects and denominations alike, for lectures on all proper and moral subjects and for all or any purpose that does not debase the morals of the community."<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly, the Chapel was the scene of a wide range of social gatherings and events in the nineteenth century; it surely served a surprising range of functions in the twentieth century: burial chapel, Sunday Baptist Church, and home of the town library and the village fire department in the 1920's. The Chapel has been, since it was built, a vital if modest civic center for the village.

The cemetery, while not of any particular artistic merit, is of interest, too, for the mirror it holds up to nineteenth-century social history. The concern with more public burials than the traditional family plot could provide was a typical mid-nineteenth century concern and the burial yard here in the hamlet of Harmony was established at least as early as 1857. That an association

<sup>1</sup>Another slightly later Federal style school house (c.1840), in somewhat more altered state but still identifiable, is that at Belleville, North Kingstown.

<sup>2</sup>Act of incorporation, Harmony Cemetery and Chapel Association, April 12, 1878.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Act of incorporation of Harmony Cemetery and Chapel Association April 12, 1878. Harmony Cemetery and Chapel Association Minutes.  
Contact Mrs. Elizabeth Clarke.

see cont. sheet 3.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property a little less than two acres.

Quadrangle name Georgiaville

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

A 

1	9	2	8	4	2	2	0	4	6	4	0	4	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

plat 17, lot 81

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ancelin V. Lynch, National Register Coordinator

organization Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission date March 1980

street & number 150 Benefit Street telephone 401-277-2678

city or town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

## 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 *Fred R. Williamson*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 14, 1980

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

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DATE ENTERED	JUN 25 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

was incorporated "for the purpose of maintaining and preserving the cemetery and chapel"<sup>3</sup> in 1878 was also typical of nineteenth century social structure, reflecting the development of business and industrial "corporations."

For all of these period reflections, Harmony Chapel and Cemetery are valuable to our understanding of local history and worthy of preservation.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

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JUN 25 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET 3

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

Land evidence records, Gloucester Town Clerk's Office, Chepachet.

"'Maggie' Helps Harmony Raise Fire Truck Mortgage,"  
Providence Sunday Journal, December 6, 1925.

Plat map #88, plat map drawer 7 in Gloucester Town  
Clerk's Office. Shows October 5, 1878 plat and  
July 21, 1902 plat of Harmony Cemetery and Chapel.