

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

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

**NRIS Reference Number:** 99000667

**Date Listed:** 6/14/99

**Property Name:** Fracestown Meetinghouse

**County:** Hillsborough

**State:** NH

**Multiple Name:** N/A

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*fom* Patrick Andrews  
**Signature of the Keeper**

6/14/99  
**Date of Action**

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### Amended Items in Nomination:

This SLR makes a technical amendment to the form. In Section 5 of the form (level of significance) no category was selected. An amendment to the form is made to note that the level of significance is **local**.

This information was confirmed with Christine Fonda of the New Hampshire SHPO.

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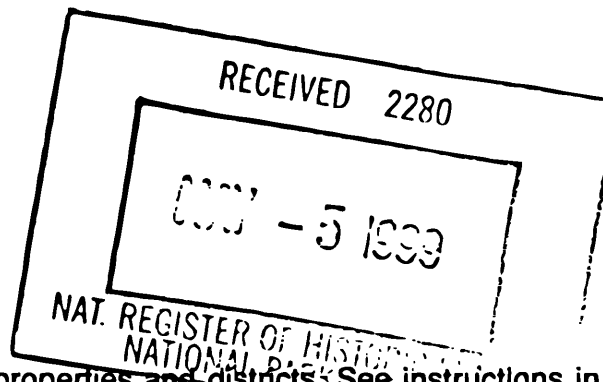
### DISTRIBUTION:

**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



067

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 an 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 Francestown Meetinghouse

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Route 136 N/A  not for publication

city or town Francestown N/A  vicinity

state New Hampshire code NH county Hillsborough code 011 zip code 03043

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Nancy C. Dutton  
Signature of certifying official/Title

April 23, 1999  
Date

NEW HAMPSHIRE  
State of 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 the 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Patrick Andrews

10/14/99

Francestown Meetinghouse  
Name of Property

Hillsborough, County, New Hampshire  
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) meetringhouse		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
(1) building		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**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religious Facility/meetinghouse

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture / auditorium

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th century/Greek Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

walls weatherboard (clapboard)

roof asphalt

other

**Narrative Description**

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

(SEE ATTACHED)

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### 7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The Old Meeting House of Francestown is located on Main Street/ Route 136 on the common in the village of Francestown, New Hampshire. The original meeting house was built in 1801/03; in 1837 it was rotated 90 degrees and rebuilt in the Greek Revival style. This 3 x 4 bay (approximately 48' wide by 78' long with a 22' wide x 10' deep addition on the rear), wood frame building is two stories in height and sits on a granite block foundation. The building is clad with wood clapboards painted white. The front gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A single brick chimney projects from the east front roof slope. The facade is reminiscent of the ancient temples. The cornice continues across the facade to form a pediment in the gable end. The facade is divided into three symmetrical sections by pilasters with Ionic capitals. The pilasters are drawn from the classical order of architecture and appear to support a full entablature. The pilasters and entablature contain all of the classical elements; a base, shaft, capital, architrave, frieze, and cornice. The cornice is detailed with simple molding profiles and dentils. Three entrances are symmetrically placed within each section with rectangular windows, containing 6/6 wood sash, directly above each door. The entrances contain eight panel wood doors surmounted by glass transoms and flanked by Ionic pilasters, again with a full entablature. A semi-elliptical fan is centrally located in the pediment.

The east and west elevations mirror each other. Both have four large, rectangular window containing multi-light wood sash. According to photographs, these window sash were probably installed in the early 20th century. They replaced paired windows visible in the photographs from the late 19th century. The mid-portion of the window is blind - the balcony cuts through this area on the interior. The window surrounds are molded with corner blocks and projecting wood sills. On the back elevation a 22' wide by 10' deep projects from the original building wall. This was added to allow space for the new organ installed c.1945.

The 1801/03 meeting house had end towers. The 1837 tower was replaced in 1855 with the existing wood frame tower and spire. The 1855 tower and spire were built in three parts. The base is a square block covered with wood clapboards and articulated only with flat cornerboards. The 1912 clock is in this portion of the tower. The base and second section of the tower are divided by a projecting cornice detailed with a simple molding and dentils. The second tower section is also square with round arch openings on each elevation. The arches are flanked by pilasters and a molded surround articulated with a keystone at the top of the arch. A balustrade is contained within the lower section of the arched opening. This section of the tower contains the 1855 bell which replaced the original 1808 bell and caused the tower to be built. An octagonal spire rises from this second section. The spire is covered with wood flushboard and is topped by a wood sphere which supports a weathervane.

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### EARLIER APPEARANCE

The meetinghouse, as it was built in 1801-3 was 66 wide on the north and south sides and 48 feet wide on the east and west sides. The front of the building (the long side - 66') faced the south. According to the 1801 plan, a porch was proposed for the east side 14 feet by 14 feet, and a Bellcony was proposed for the west side 15 feet by 15 feet. The front of the building (south side) also had a 10 foot entrance porch which projected 6 feet from the main wall of the building. In 1837, according to historical records, the building was turned 180 degrees and a new front and steeple were built. The builders were Isaac and William Patch. The 1881 New Hampshire Supreme Court decision also confirmed this dramatic building alteration by stating that "in 1837, by agreement of the pew-owners and others interested, said meetinghouse was almost wholly rebuilt." The decision listed the costs:

The value of the pews in the old house was appraised at	\$ 5,059.40
The expense of rebuilding was	\$ 4,951.82
	\$10,011.22

The plans for the 1837 rebuilding are attached. It appears that the 1837 building was built approximately 48 feet wide and 75 feet deep.

On New Year's Day 1854, the old bell purchased in 1808 was cracked by using a new and heavier tongue. A special town meeting held February 15, 1855 "to see if the town would purchase a new bell for the use of the town and Society." Later that year the town voted to purchase a new bell, and sell the old bell, however the new bell was not found satisfactory by the town and the town voted not to accept it. The town wanted a larger and heavier bell with a different tone. The church tower, however, had decayed over the past fifty years of use and was found not strong enough to hold so heavy a bell. After debate on this point, the selectmen deemed it best to rebuild, and a new spire was erected over the summer of 1855. The large bell was hoisted into place in October 1855. In 1867 a chapel was built and located to the east of the meetinghouse (it was destroyed by fire in 1924).

In 1884, the New Hampshire Supreme Court gave ownership of the meetinghouse to "The Independent Congregational Church" and this organization extensively repaired and improved the building soon thereafter (at a cost of \$2,800.00) "making a very desirable house of worship" (Cochrane 1985 p.299). A search of the records available for this building did not uncover the exact nature of the changes made in 1884. A review of the physical building fabric also did not reveal any clear changes which could be traced to 1884. It may be assumed that many of the changes were cosmetic such as new coats of paint, and new curtains and pew cushions which was often done in a church "upgrade." By 1895 the meetinghouse was referred to as the "Unitarian Church."

In 1911, a group of alumni from the Francestown Academy raised \$155.00 for the purchase of a town clock. In 1912, the town voted an additional \$165.00 and the clock was purchased. The clock was installed in the belfry on condition that it be maintained by the town. The 1912 clock and works remain in the spire today.

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In 1944-45 the 1842 organ was removed and replaced by a new organ given by Lew A. Cummings of Manchester, New Hampshire - he was born in Francestown. In 1953 renovations took place under the general chairmanship of Neil Leonard of Boston (summer resident). Approximately \$50,000.00 was raised, the major single contributor to the fund was Cogswell Benefit trust of Manchester. The resulting operation included a new pulpit, organ screen, drapes, pew cushions, carpet and heating system. A portion of the large vestibule was converted into a ladies parlor and another into the minister's study (see plans - attached).

Title to the Old Meetinghouse was transferred from the Unitarian Church to the Old Meeting House of Francestown, Inc. on June 7, 1987 for the price of one dollar. The first annual meeting was held on August 5, 1987. Nine trustees were elected. Their purpose is to direct the corporation that will be responsible for the preservation, restoration, maintenance and management of the Old Meeting House so as to retain the building's historical and architectural integrity.

**Building evolution:**

1801/03	meeting house built.
1808	first bell installed
1821	first source of heat - a stove - was installed in the meetinghouse
1837	meeting house was 'turned' and 'was almost wholly rebuilt' in its present form
1855	new, heavier bell desired by congregation & town - new tower and spire built
1884	building extensively repaired at a cost of \$2,800.00
1912	clock - gift of Francestown Academy alumni - installed
1944-45	1842 organ removed, new organ installed (22'x10' rear addition built)
1950	\$50,000.00 renovation led by Neil Leonard - new pulpit, organ screen, drapes, pew cushions, carpet & heating system. portion of the large vestibule was converted into a ladies parlor and minister's study.
1987	Old Meeting House of Francestown Inc. acquires ownership of the property

**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 a 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.)

(SEE ATTACHED)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1837

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Isaac and William Patch

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

n Fracestown Meetinghouse  
Name of Property

Hillsborough County, New Hampshire  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** .5 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	9
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2	7	0	6	8	5
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4	7	6	3	0	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

4 

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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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Deirdre Brotherson

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date January 1999

street & number 16 K Street telephone 603/226-0760

city or town Concord, state NH zip code 03301

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**Additional Documentation**

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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)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Trustees of the Old Meeting House of Fracestown, Inc.

street & number P.O. Box 213 telephone 603/547-2050

city or town Fracestown state NH zip code 03043

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**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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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### 8. NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Francestown Meeting House is eligible for the national Register under Criterion C (A building form, architectural style, engineering technique, or artistic values based on a stage of physical development, or the use of material or method of construction that shaped the historic identity of an area.) This building is eligible as building built in the typical form of a (1837) meetinghouse of the 19th century. This building is also an excellent example of Greek Revival style architecture.

Greek Revival was the dominant style of American domestic architecture during the interval from about 1830 to 1860. The final years of the 18th century brought an increasing interest in classical buildings to both the United States and western Europe. This was first based on Roman models, but archaeological investigation in the early 19th century emphasized Greece as the Mother of Rome which, in turn, shifted interest to Grecian models. Two additional factors enhanced Greek influence in this country. Greece's involvement in a war for independence (1821-30) aroused much sympathy in the newly independent United States; at the same time, the War of 1812 diminished American affection for British influence, including the still dominant Federal style in domestic architecture. Features of the Greek Revival style include a gable roof with a cornice line emphasized with wide band of trim, most have porches supported by prominent square or rounded columns, typically Doric style; a front door surrounded by narrow, often full length sidelights with a rectangular line of transom lights above. An important enduring legacy of the Greek revival to American domestic architecture is the front-gable buildings. Placing the narrow end of the building on the street enabled more buildings to be built on increasingly crowded streets and city blocks.

The Meetinghouse is an excellent reflection of the Greek Revival style with many of the elements listed above apparent in the building as it exists today. The building is situated with the narrow end of the plan to the street; the front gable roof, cornice, pediment and columns recall the Greek temples on which the style was modeled. The symmetry of the design and the placement of classical features such as Ionic columns which divide the building facade into three equal sections and smaller columns which flank the doors, transoms over the doors, a denticulated cornice with a wide frieze below, the elliptical fan in the pediment, and thin simple window surrounds, all recall the Greek Revival style in its highest form. This is the only Greek Revival style public building in Francestown. The majority of the building fabric on the exterior and interior is original and dates to the 1837 construction period.

- o The building retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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### HISTORY:

Early in New Hampshire history, this area was known to hunters and explorers long before its formal settlement on account of its 'beautiful meadows.' These open, green, grassy meadows were like oases of beauty in the dense forests. The grass crop in this area immediately attracted attention of early settlers. Soon men came up from the lower towns in the summer, harvested the grass and made stacks of hay in the dry places. Then, with rude shelters for lodging, they drove up cattle in the fall and wintered them on the hay. Some adventurous young fellows staying in camp till spring, occupying their time in tending the stock and fire, and in hunting sable along the streams and larger game upon the hills. This process soon led to the permanent settlement of this town now called Francestown. The first actual settlement was made by a Scotch man named John Carson, around 1760. The spot on which Carson settled, and much of the east part of Francestown, was then a part of New Boston and was called the "New Boston Addition" (1751). When New Boston was incorporated, in 1763, this "Addition" was incorporated with it as part of New Boston. Accordingly, John Carson, was one of the first Board of Selectmen of New Boston. The following year (1764) the town of New Boston chose John Carson chairman of a 'Comite to Looke for a miniester, or miniesters, in order that we may have Some preaching.'" Men living in the 'Addition' continued to be appointed to various offices for the whole town (Cochrane 1885 p.297).

The leading New Boston men must have known from the first that the union was only temporary, as they voted (in 1763) that the 'New Addition Shall have their part of preaching amongst themselves During their Stay with the old town as a pearish.'" Hence, in 1764 New Boston built their meeting house near the center of their town, and quietly waited until the population of the 'Addition' might be large enough for a division. Accordingly, a petition was presented to the legislature in 1771 asking that the 'New Boston Addition' and a part of Society Land adjoining, be incorporated into a town. This petition was successful and the town of Francestown was incorporated June 8, 1772. It received its name from Frances, wife of Governor Wentworth, and was written "Frances' Town" in the old records (Cochrane 1885 p.298).

The first religious organization in town is thought to have been a Presbyterian Church organized about 1772. At that time a majority of the population were Scotch Presbyterians. The meetings were held in various houses and barns. A specific building was not devoted to worship at this time and records of this organization were either not kept or lost. A second church organization in Francestown was the Congregational Church, organized in January, 1773. There was no council, but Rev. Samuel Cotton of Litchfield and Rev. Daniel Wilkins of Amherst came here by request, and having drawn up a brief and sufficient covenant, it was signed by twelve men. They then declared these twelve to be a "regular Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ." They then made "choice of David Lewis as their Moderator & Clerk to take the care of their Church papers & make all needful Records Until they had the Gospel Settled among them." But no book of records was kept as far as anyone can tell (Cochrane 1995 p.228, 229).

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According to Cochrane, the English part of the people in Francestown called the Presbyterians the "Scotch Society" and the Scotch people called the Congregational body the "English Society." Apparently, even though they had differing beliefs, there never was much bitterness between these two groups. This ideal is confirmed by the fact that a town meeting, held July 5, 1773, was convened for the purpose of calling a minister, by common consent. An Article was submitted to public vote, namely "To see If the town will a gree to Settel a menester agreabel to the Presbyterans Rules or to the Congregational rules." And it was "voted to Settle a minister a Cording to the Presbyterans rules." After this time several ministers were called by the town but many also decided to decline the town's offer. Late in the year 1789 Mr. Moses Bradford came to Francestown and preached at a few meetings. A town meeting was held January 11, 1790 to see if the town would vote a "call to Settle in the Gospel Ministry Either a Presbyterian or Congregational, to be at his Option." Mr. Bradford accepted and decided to follow the Congregational order; and the Presbyterians, true to their agreement, joined in settling and supporting him. The town also supported Mr. Bradford and during its regular public meeting called the minister, and fixed his salary; and he was paid out of the town treasury like any town officer (Cochrane 1995 p. 230).

Mr. Bradford enjoyed a long and healthy relationship with the people of Francestown until the spring of 1825 when difficulties arose on account of the apparent decay of the pastor's mental power. As the years crept up on him, his mind weakened under the pressure, and he became dull and repetitious. Hence more and more dissatisfaction grew, and many folks talked loudly of refusing him further money from the town. The Legislature had passed the "Toleration Act" (1819), setting all persons free from compulsory taxation for the support of any minister. But since Mr. Bradford had served them well, few had taken advantage of the Law up to this point. In 1826 however, opposition manifested itself openly and "The First Calvinistic Congregational Society" was formed. The Society consisted of 63 men and they openly protested against being taxed for Mr. Bradford's support. Town meetings were held to discuss options and by January 1827 the town council decided that the ministry of Mr. Bradford should cease (Concrane 1895 p. 240-41).

After Mr. Bradford left the position many other men took the position throughout the 19th century. Mr. Austin Richards of Plainfield, Massachusetts was pastor from 1827-1836. Rev. Nathaniel S. Folsom was installed as his successor from 1836-1838. Rev. James R. Davenport was the next pastor from 1839-1842. Rev. Jonathan McGee was installed in 1843 - 1850. Rev. Lathrop Taylor of Springfield, Vermont accepted the position from 1851-1857. Rev. Charles Cutler accepted the position in 1857 but resigned in 1866 due to ill health. After the resignation of Rev. Cutler, the church was without a settled minister for eight years. In 1873 Rev. Henry F. Campbell became minister but in 1875 the church voted to have that pastoral relationship dissolved. However, The Union Congregational Society refused to concur with the church in giving the 'Notice required in the terms of his settlement' (Concrane 1895 p. 242).

At a church meeting in 1875, the church voted to call a Mutual Council and to refer their difficulties

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with Rev. Campbell to them for advice. After much discussion, it was then agreed by both parties to dissolve the pastors relationship. But after his dismissal, Mr. Campbell remained and preached as before, a small minority of the church adhering to him and claiming to be the Congregational Church of Francestown. The 'Society' also adhered to Mr. Campbell. And thus two meetings began to be held; Mr. Campbell and his followers in one meeting, and the church followers in the other. A law-suit was then begun by the Society to determine which of these should hold the communion service, or in fact, which was the Congregational Church of Francestown; the Supreme Court of New Hampshire decided that the majority, which had secured the dismissal of Mr. Campbell in the regular way, was the church and could hold the property of said church." On the other hand, a law-suit was instituted by the church, to determine which party should hold the church building, and the court decided that "the building being the 'Society's' property the 'Society' could, as before, continue to hold it. Hence the "church" was left without a house of worship, a legal technicality taking them from the sanctuary where they and their fathers had worshipped. Consequently, the part which the Supreme Court had declared to be "the church" held meetings for a time in a variety of other places until the Spring of 1883 when steps were taken toward building a new house of worship. A new house of worship was dedicated July 1, 1884. That church still stands to the northwest of the meetinghouse.

Now that the ecclesiastical history of Francestown has been outlined, it may be easier to follow the development of the buildings which housed these religious activities. In 1774, two years after the incorporation of Francestown as a town, the people began to think about erecting a meetinghouse. At the town meeting of 1775, twelve pounds was voted to pay the cost of raising a meeting house. The first meeting house was raised June 8, 1775, and was barely covered during the year. In 1776 the town accepted the frame of the meeting house. A frame was all it had until 1788 as they were unable to finish the meetinghouse due to the poverty and hardship of the war. In 1787 the town voted to finish the meetinghouse and sell the pews in order to raise funds to do so. At the March meeting of 1795 the committee to finish the meeting house made their final report and settlement. And then, in September of that very year, an article came before the town to enlarge their meetinghouse. The Article was voted down, but it reflected the wants and the ambitions of a growing community. At the next annual meeting (1796) a proposition was made to take the balance left from the sale of pews for the purpose of purchasing a bell for the use of the town to be located in the meetinghouse. They voted not to buy a bell but to convert the money left from the pews in order to build a new meetinghouse 45 feet by 60 feet in size (Concrane 1895 p.146). However in May of that same year another vote was taken and the matter was postponed.

At the opening of the new century, in August of 1800, the town did vote again to build a new meetinghouse. The town chose a committee to draw up a plan and estimate the cost. They voted to refund to the present pewholders the original cost of their old pews, or if they should purchase a pew in the new meetinghouse, the original cost of their old pew would be credited to them in payment of their new pew. In September 1800 the town voted to build the meetinghouse 66 feet by 48 feet. The

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pews were all sold before the building was built -this served as witness to the popularity of the idea. (see plan of 1801/03 meeting house attached). At the annual meeting (March 1801) the town voted that there shall be a 'Cubelo' on the 'Bellcony' of the new meetinghouse. They also agreed that the new meetinghouse should stand six feet to the south of the porch of the old meetinghouse. The raising of the meetinghouse was planned for June 24, 1801. A crowd was expected for that day so the town graciously voted to "treat with Liquor the Spectators" (Cochrane 1895 p.156). At a town meeting in November 1801, they voted to use the inside of the old meetinghouse, as far as possible, in finishing the new house. And at a meeting December 27, 1802 they voted to paint the whole of the inside of the meetinghouse, including the pews. The meetinghouse was finished in 1803 and at the March meeting they chose their Moderator (Samuel Bell) in the old house and the adjourned to the new one. The cost of the building was reported to be \$5,274.24. The old meetinghouse was advertised for sale in April of 1803. The frame was taken down and the timber was said to have been used in building the barn on the farm of J.S. Follansbee in the south part of town. In 1808 a bell was purchased and lifted into place where it hung until 1855.

In Merrill's Gazetteer of New Hampshire, published in 1817, there is a sketch of Francestown, which offers a view of the town at that time. "Exclusive of the ordinary proportion of other mechanical businesses, there are here four large tanneries, a manufactory of musical instruments, and one of earthenware. The compact part of the town consists of about 25 dwelling-houses, with a handsome meetinghouse, several stores, &c. There are also 7 school-houses. A mail stage passes through Francestown twice a week to and from Boston."

A stove was installed in the meetinghouse in 1821. This is the first time the meetinghouse was heated since it was built! In 1833 the town voted to sell at auction the right of the town in the meetinghouse, sheds common and all the surroundings "reserving the use of the house for Town-meeting and the Bell for town purposes as heretofore used, on condition that the Town shall keep the outside of the house and the tower and bell with its tackle, in good and complete repair" (Cochrane 1895 p.180). "The property was sold at auction to the "Union Congregational Society," represented by its committee, William Bixby, Alexander Wilson and Titus Brown. The price paid was one hundred dollars. All of this was ratified by the town at the March meeting of 1834. The town stayed true to their responsibilities, in 1837 a town committee was appointed to examine the belfry and exterior of the meeting house and make necessary repairs.

By 1885 the town had grown and changed in many ways. In contrast to the description of the town written in 1817, Rev. W.R. Cochrane wrote a new description of the town as it appeared in 1885: The population of Francestown in 1880 was 937. In this town the water-power is small, and the people are chiefly engaged in agricultural pursuits. It is a good farming town, and, with good, neat buildings and well-cultivated land, has a general appearance of thrift and success. There is much attractive scenery, and the town furnished a large variety of views from mountain to interval. The centre of the town (its only village) is a beautiful country village of about one hundred families. Its princi-

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pal street is broad, well-shaded and about half a mile long, having on either side many substantial residences, and some venerable with time, though in neat repair. This village contains a hotel, library building, school-house, two churches, academy, two stores, two banks, carpenter's shop, blacksmith-shop, harness-shop, milliner's apartment, two physicans, etc. Near the Main Street is a cabinet factory of considerable business. Also below, and on a branch street, is Mill Village, so called, which is so near as to be conveniently reckoned as a part of the chief village. It has a blacksmith shop, saw-mill and about fifteen families. Francestown village is high and conspicuous from afar, and is justly an occasion of pride to the people of the town."

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9. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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- Schott, John R. *France's Town: A History of Francestown, NH*. Francestown, NH, 1972.
- Historic Resource Survey with survey forms conducted by Greg Thulander, 1990.
- Merkle, John W., AIA. *Francestown Conservation and Maintenance Study for the Church, Town Hall & Carriage Sheds*. 1983.
- TMS Architects. *Francestown Meetinghouse Investigative Report of Building Conditions*. 1993.

Hillsborough County:

- *Bibliographical Review ... containing life sketches of leading citizens of Cheshire and Hillsborough Counties, NH*. Boston: Bibliographical Review Publishing, 1897.
- Dodge, Jacob Richards. *A Glimpse of the Businesses and Resources of 31 Towns in Hillsborough County*, 1853.
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Maps:

- 1892 *The old maps of Hillsborough County, NH in 1892*.
- 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1867-1950.  
- July 1924, 1 sheet

10a. VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see map):

Boundaries of the nominated property are indicated by the heavy dashed line on the attached sketch map.

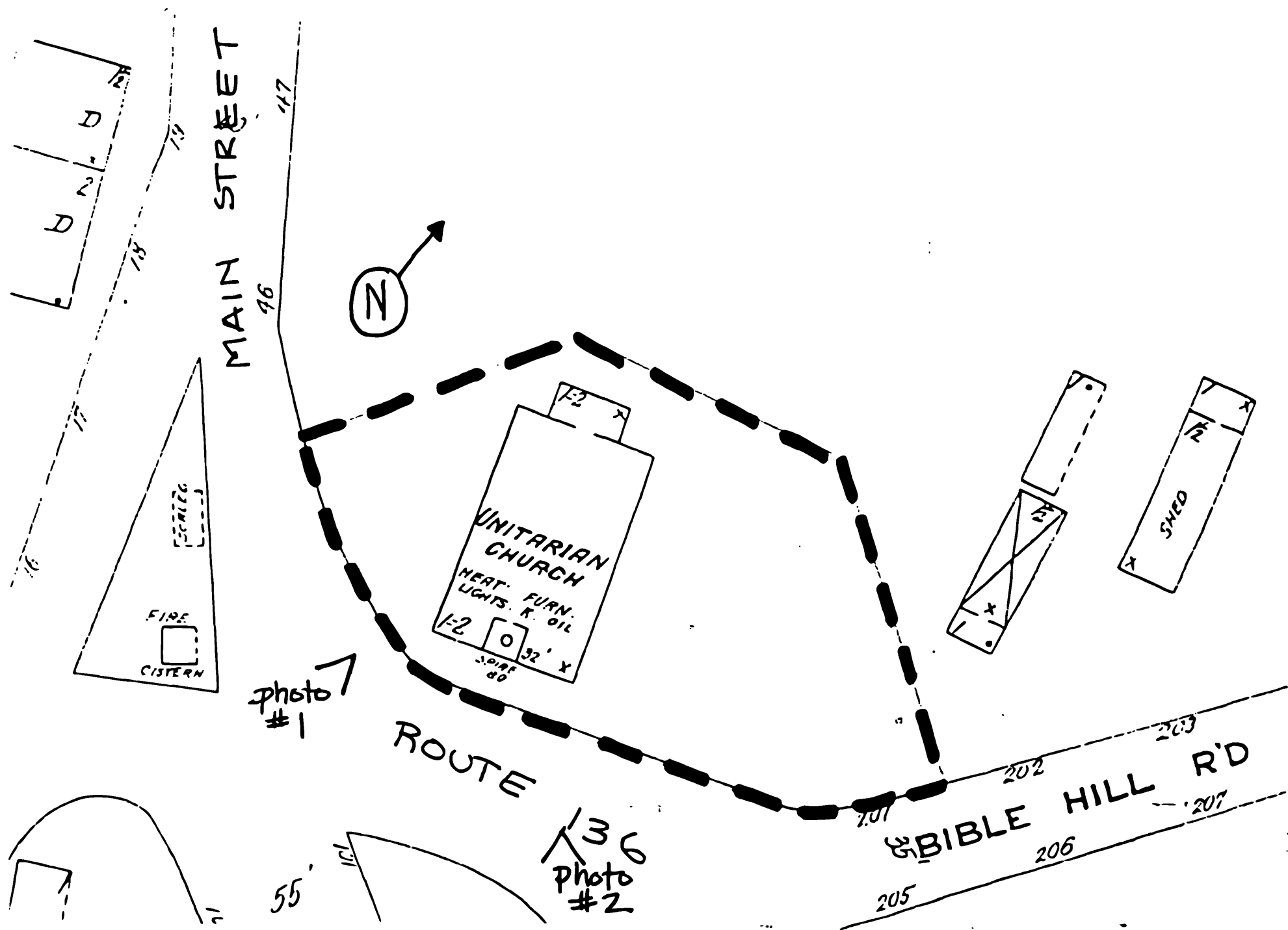
10b. BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundary selected for this property is the current lot on which the building sits. This lot has been associated with the property since it was constructed in 1837.

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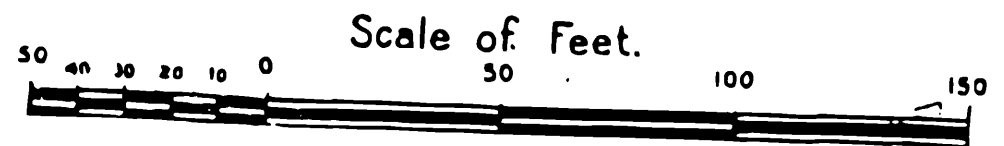
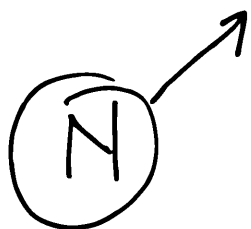
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## SKETCH MAP

Francestown Meetinghouse  
Francestown, NH



Copyright 1924 by the Sanborn Map Co

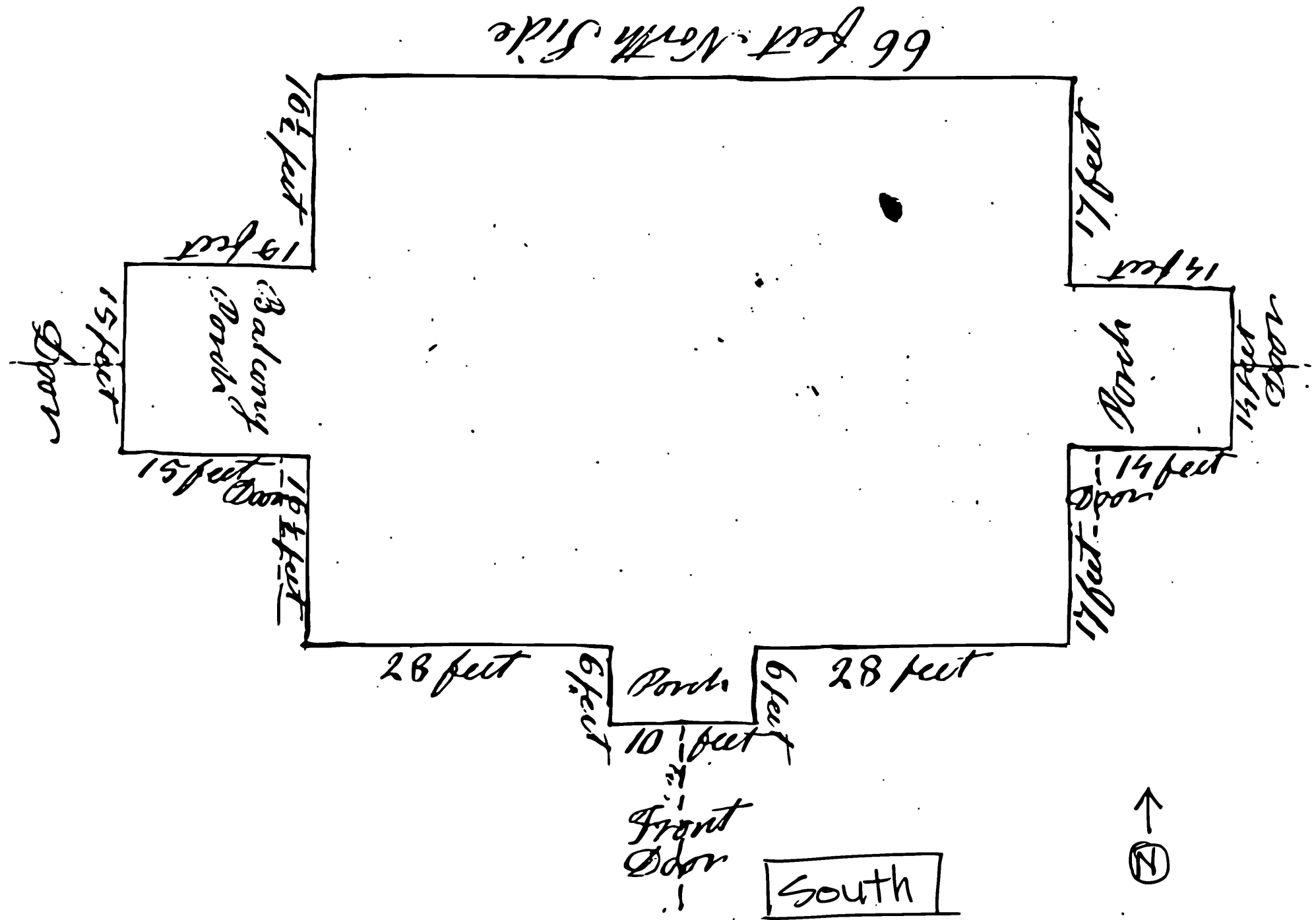
Boundaries



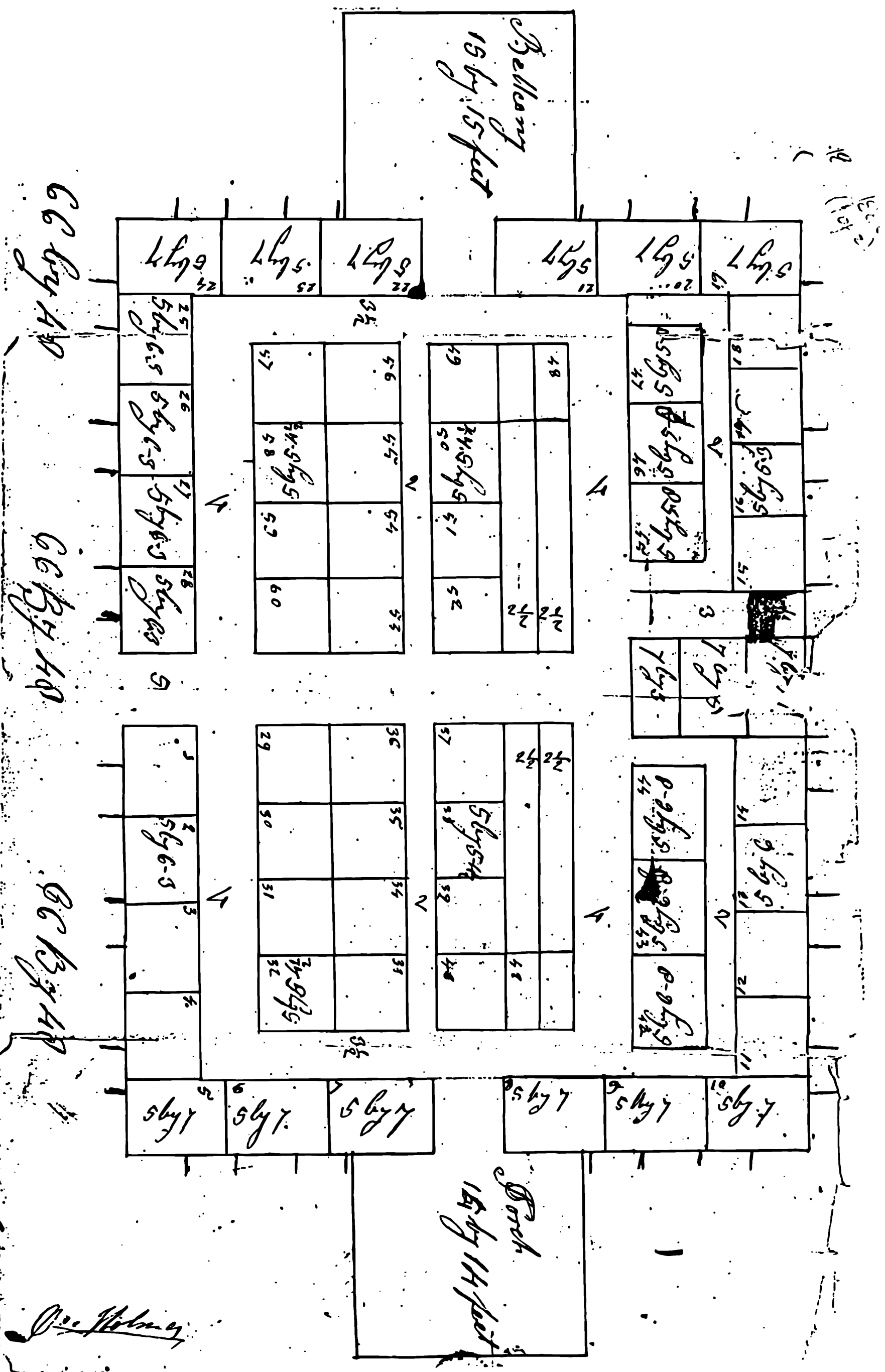


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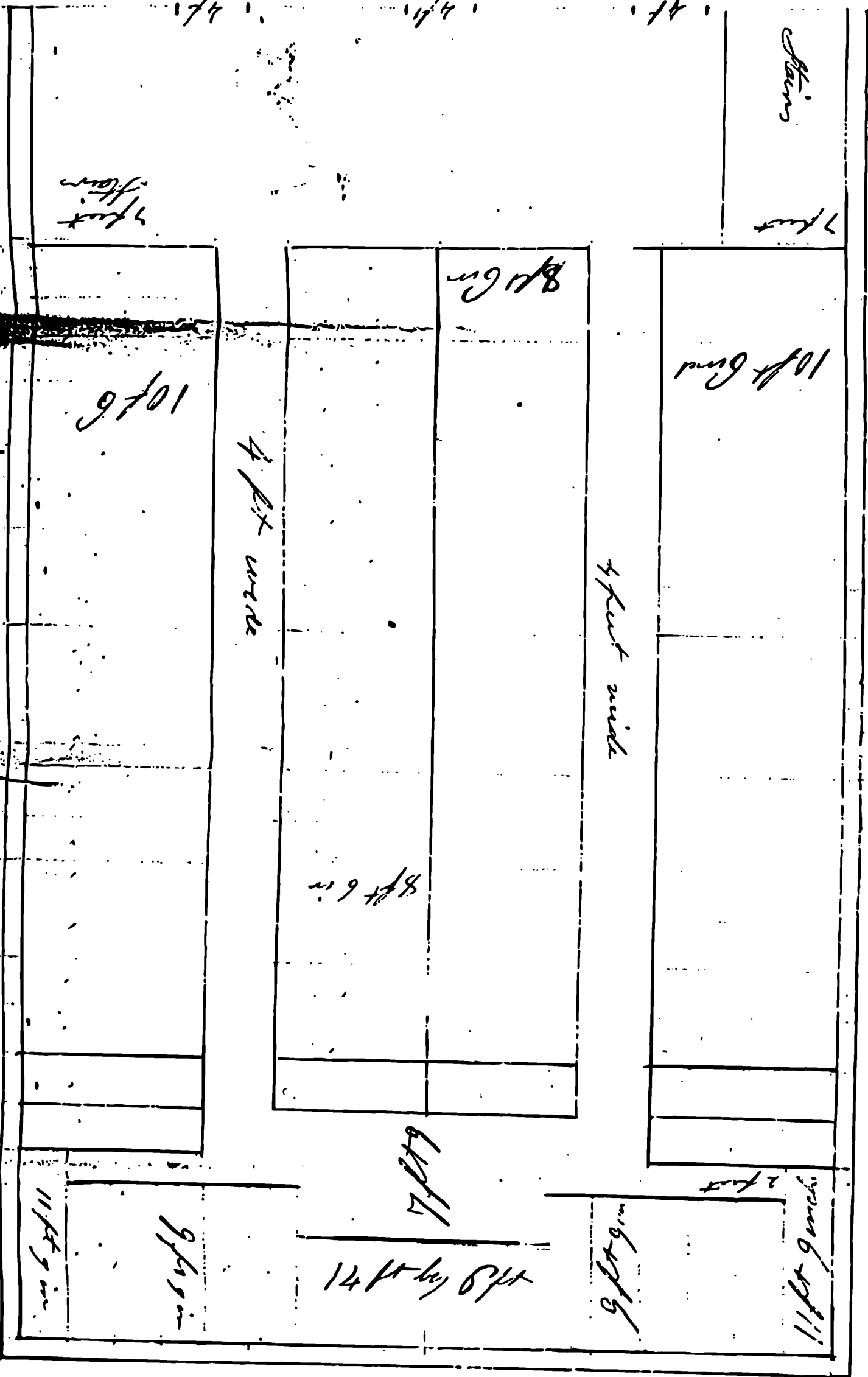
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Plan of 1801/03 Meetinghouse



$1/2'' = 4'$



76'

1537

1837

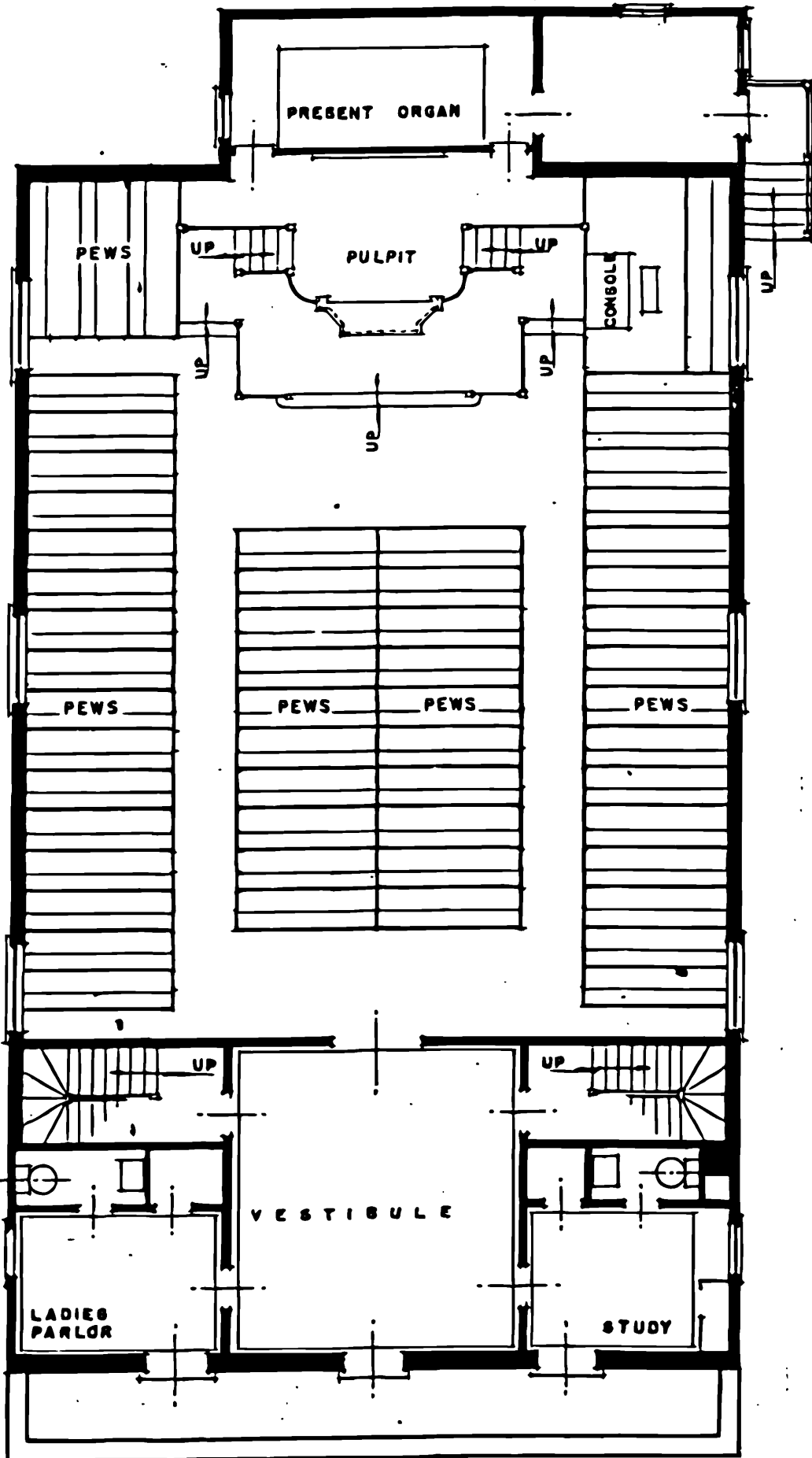


On this plan there is 474 1/2 feet of new seats including singing pew

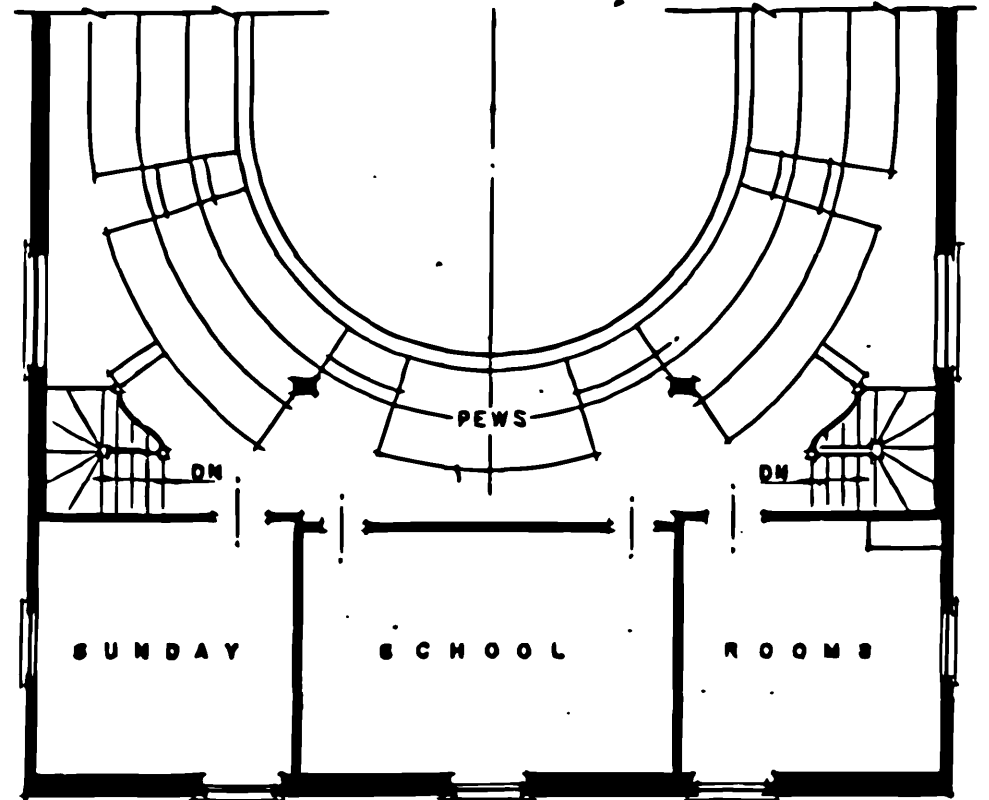
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN



BALCONY PLAN

plan of c. 1950  
Renovations  
(1/4" = 4')