

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

# 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 Harpswell Meeting House

AND/OR COMMON Same

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER State Rt. 123, 9 miles of Brunswick — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Harpswell Center — VICINITY OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

## 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 type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Town of Harpswell

STREET & NUMBER Harpswell Meeting House

CITY, TOWN Harpswell Center — VICINITY OF STATE Maine

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. County Clerk Cumberland County

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN STATE Maine

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE HABS 13 sheets of Drawings, 8 photos, 2 data pages

DATE 1937  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress/Prints and Photographs Division

CITY, TOWN Washington STATE D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built 1757-1759, probably by a man called Elisha Eaton, the Harpswell Meeting House is a 2-1/2 story clapboarded gable-roofed structure which is typical of a New England building form used a late as the nineteenth century. The linearity of the stark clapboard exterior is enhanced by the many-paned sash windows (12 over 12). The building is rectangular, but nearly square, as were most Meetinghouses. The exterior stairhall at Harpswell is a not unusual feature of the type.

The long axis does not feature, as one might expect, the pulpit at one extremity. Rather, the main entrance is through the shorter axis, and leads us directly into the pulpit on the opposite wall. The nave-like interior, with its flat ceiling here, somewhat different from some of the more exciting exposed ceilings of meetinghouses elsewhere, features a three-sided gallery, an aspect almost universally present in meetinghouses.

The panelled soffits and the sounding board around the pulpit, are also typical. Most of the pews of the Harpswell Meeting House have been removed, and the building has not been used for regular religious purposes since 1844. The building, although begun 1757, was still incomplete in 1774, and finished completely shortly thereafter. It measures 40 ft. 6 in. by 35 ft. 7 in. The meetinghouse is located in a graveyard, wherein are buried, among others, Elisha Eaton (1702-1764) and Samuel Eaton (1736-1822), who between them, led the parish as Pastors, for its' first 62 years.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input 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

1757-59

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

(Elishu Eaton?)

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The simple, clapboard, two-story frame Harpswell Meeting House is an excellent and little altered example of a typical small New England Colonial church. It is also the earliest remaining example in Maine of a building form that persisted in that area long after the seventeenth century social structure which bred it.

### History

The construction of a meeting house was begun in 1757, at what is now Harpswell Center and for some reason was a long time being completed. Elisha Eaton, eldest son of the Reverend Elisha Eaton, made sashes and frames for the edifice and during his frequent sojourns in Harpswell, helped with the actual construction. The Reverend Mr. Eaton served as the parish pastor until his death on April 22, 1764. He was succeeded by his son Samuel who was ordained the following October. The building was used both as a church and town meeting hall from 1757 to 1844. The town took over the building in 1856, after it had been vacant for a period of 14 years. The building has been used ever since that date as a town meeting place.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/4

UTM REFERENCES

A 

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4	2	0	5	6	0
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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Harpswell Meeting House is bounded on the east by the right-of-way of State Rt. 123 (about 15 feet east of the building), on the south by a dirt road about 50 feet south of the building, which runs perpendicular to the state highway, and on the west and north by the old stone wall of the cemetery which still remains in its original place. The area of the landmark is approximately 1/4 acre, and no structures contribute to the national significance of the landmark other than the Meeting House itself.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James Dillon, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey - National Park Service

DATE

9/7/76

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

(202) 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D.C.

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

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

TITLE

LOCAL  
Landmark Nov 27, 1968

Designated 1966 (Public Law 89-665). I  
hereby certify that it has been evaluated according to the  
criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Boundary Certified  
*George J. Ramsey*

DATE June 30, 1978

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

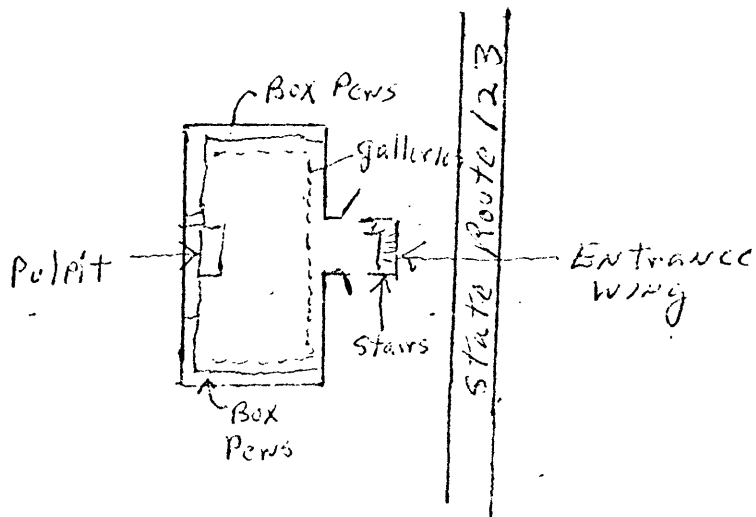
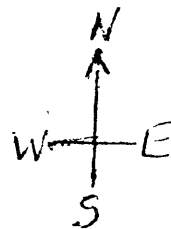
ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11/24/78

DATE



← Harpswell Center  
Just South of  
Structure

Sketch Floor Plan  
of  
Meeting House  
Harpswell Center,  
Maine

C.W Swell 10/20/61