

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Section number _____ Page _____

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 15000737

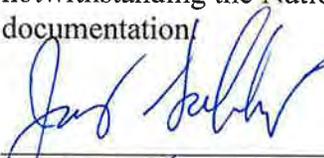
Date Listed: 10/13/2015

Property Name: Community Baptist Church (Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont MPS)

County: Franklin

State: VT

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.



Signature of the Keeper
H

10-13-2015

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Area of Significance

AREA of SIGNIFICANCE: SOCIAL HISTORY is hereby added as an area of significance.
RELIGION is hereby deleted as an area of significance.

The description of the activities and importance of the church to the community reflect more its role as a social institution than its role in significant religious events. The growth and decline, the merging with another congregation, and the eventual demise of the church as a religious institution are typical. It is evident, though, that the church played an important role in the social fabric of the community.

The Vermont State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

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

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

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Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Community Baptist Church and Parsonage

Other names/site number: First Baptist Church

Name of related multiple property listing:

Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2 & 10 Mountain Road

City or town: Montgomery State: VT County: Franklin

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

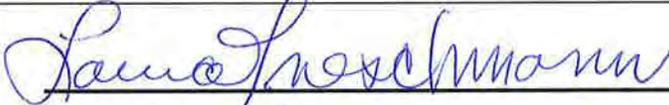
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

	
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>SHPO</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	

Signature of commenting official:	Date

Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

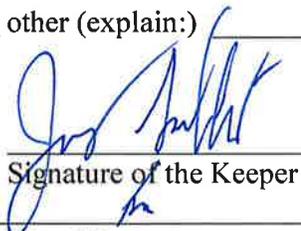
Community Baptist Church and Parsonage
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

10-13-2015
Date of Action

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

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Greek Revival

Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: STONE

Roof: METAL

Walls: WOOD: weatherboard

Other: WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The dominant architectural feature of the small village of Montgomery Center, Vermont, the Community Baptist Church, constructed in 1866, is an excellent example of Greek Revival ecclesial architecture. Immediately adjacent to the Community Baptist Church is the Old Parsonage, built in 1922. The church and parsonage are located on the east side of the intersection of Mountain Road (VT Route 242) with Main Street (VT Route 118) at the central visual axis of the small downtown. Built on a the north bank on the Trout River, the church is a visual focal point for those approaching Montgomery Center from the north or south on Vermont Route 118 and from the west on Vermont Route 242. The two-story, rectangular-massed, three-by-three bay (50' by 36') church is meticulously ordered and in excellent condition. Framed with a common wooden post-and-beam system, the church is sheathed in white clapboard, sheltered by a gabled roof, and rests on a fieldstone foundation. Prominent features include a massive temple-front portico supported by large square Doric columns, stained glass windows, and a square bell tower. The property consists of three acres, with a narrow strip of manicured lawn at the front of the church. Directly to the north a dirt driveway leads to a dirt parking lot at the rear

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of the church (where presumably the church's carriage barn once existed)¹. To the north of the church is the Old Parsonage, a one-and-a-half story house in the Colonial Revival style. It was built on the exact location of the former parsonage; it, due to its related history and age, is a contributing resource. To the east of the Old Parsonage is a spacious lawn and a small, wooden shed in a deteriorated condition. Further east, beyond the lawn and parking lot, is a wooded, hilly area; this makes up the remaining acreage of the property. Today vacant and largely unaltered, the Community Baptist Church in Montgomery was used as a place of worship in the small community until 2011. The church and Old Parsonage retain a high level of historic integrity particularly in regard to their location, design, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship, and association.

Narrative Description

Community Baptist Church, 2 Mountain Road, 1866, Contributing

Exterior:

The Community Baptist Church's elevated primary façade looks westerly down the length of Main Street of the Village of Montgomery Center, Vermont. The church's balanced Greek Revival temple-front portico with a boxed cornice dominates the three-bay elevation, with a single set of stairs leading up to the two main entrances in the left and right bays, separated by a stained glass window in the center bay and sheltered by the full-width projecting portico. The church rests on a mortared, fieldstone rubble foundation with no courses, which is obscured by the porch on the front elevation. As with the rest of the exterior elevations, the façade is sheathed in wooden clapboard, painted white, with paneled vernacular Doric pilasters elaborating the corners. From a concrete sidewalk, concrete stairs on the northwestern bay lead up to the wooden porch of the building (which rests on a concrete foundation), where after several feet, older wooden steps resume the incline to the first floor. Four colossal, battered, vernacular Doric columns, each with a square, paneled shaft and unadorned capital, support the pediment. The porch, which projects 9' out from the face of the building, remains true to the original layout, with its character-defining features intact, except for a post-1986 addition of simple, unobtrusive white wooden railings between the columns on the central and southern-most bays and the placement of a sign reading "Community Church" between the two central columns. By the early 1930s the matching staircase to the southwest doors was removed and a wooden latticework porch surround was put in place. The two main doors at the northwestern and southwestern bays are original to the building; the tall, six-paneled doors are framed by wooden surrounds with classical, paneled pilasters, topped by a pediment lintel. Due to an interior alteration the door in the southwestern bay no longer provides access into the building, but this does not affect the historic integrity and symmetry of the façade. The central bay features a tall, triple-sash stained

¹ In a history of the church from 1888 the following passage was written, which evidences the barn's construction: "March 2, 1873 the labors of our Pastor Rev. J.F. Ferguson closes...during his labors a meeting House-Barn was built." Truman Hurlbut, "History of the First Baptist Church," in *History of the Baptist Church, Montgomery Center, Vt., 1820-1968*, comp. W.R. Branthoover (Montgomery Center, Vt.: W.R. Branthoover, 1968), 9; "Church Minutes," in *Ibid.*, 33, 36; "Plan of Barn," *Ibid.*, 43.

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glass window with identical surrounds to the main doors; all windows have this surround unless otherwise noted. Above, under the overhanging cornice line, a frieze consisting of two wide bands of undecorated trim wraps around the entire building. The boxed cornice features wide, three-part paneled trim in the gable. In the 1890s, Victorian-era stained glass windows replaced the original shuttered glass windows on all elevations of the first floor. Each sash contains one larger pane surrounded by smaller square panes of multi-colored glass. While most of the panes are original, some have been replaced over time. Sympathetic, non-historic lanterns frame the main entrance, while an antique chandelier hangs above.

Cresting the metal roof's gabled peak above the entry portico is a two-tiered, square bell tower. The top tier of the bell tower, where an original 1866 Jones & Co. bell hangs from a metal yoke inside, features rectangular louvered vents centered on each side. Pilasters identical to those on the main body of the church encase white clapboard walls on all four elevations of both tiers of the bell tower. A wide two-part band of trim defines each wall between the pilasters and overhanging eaves. Distinctly, above each vent and stretching between each corner pilaster, a horizontal plank with rectangular, dentil-like cutouts adds refined embellishment to the top tier of the bell tower. A hipped roof with asphalt shingles caps the tower. By 1957, a metal, turned railing that wrapped around the tower roof was removed.

A gabled, moderately pitched, metal roof with historic wood shingles underneath protects the interior. Visible primarily on the southern and northern elevations, the roof does not detract from the historic integrity of the building, as it compatibly retains the gable-shape, while protecting the church's interior with an economical and durable roofing material.

The southerly elevation borders closely the Trout River. Five windows and a basement entrance punctuate its three bays. A wide, wooden water table marks the bottom of the elevation, while the cornice line continues around from the gable underneath the overhanging eaves to define the top, and as with the other elevations, pilasters accentuate the corners. A wooden ramp from the main road (sitting below the main elevation and only visible from the southern elevation) provides access to a screened-in door on the basement level, which is sheltered by a projecting, gabled, metal roof with wooden supports. Installed c. 1987, the ramp and side entry were necessary additions to improve access to the building. The remaining bays on the basement level feature square, twelve-paned glass windows; these appear to be original to the building. In line vertically with the basement windows, three stained glass windows above light the first-floor sanctuary.

The rear of the church features an exterior chimney and modest cornice returns. The rubble foundation is visible on the southeasterly side, due to the sloping hillside into which the foundation was built. Just above the water table, a set of two four-by-four sash windows with a flat wood lintel light the basement. Minor damage resulted in the southeastern window having two panes replaced by one pane at some point. Distinct from the main elevation's gable end, the cornice is elaborated by returns and the gable peak is defined by a triangular fan. Two original twelve-pane windows with simple wooden panel surrounds penetrate the gable. A slightly off-center brick chimney built in 1994 in the location of the original chimney rests on a concrete

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foundation just to the side of the northeastern-most window and pierces the cornice to rise several feet above the roof. Care was taken to replace the chimney with in-kind materials.

The northerly three-bay exterior elevation of the church mirrors its southerly counterpart closely with six windows dominating the wall. Above the water table, three eight-pane rectangular windows with flat lintels light the basement, while three stained glass windows illuminate the sanctuary on the first floor.

Interior:

Basement:

Stairs from the first floor's southwesterly vestibule open up to small antechamber with a bathroom with new finishes to its south. A door on its west opens up to a large community space; a kitchen is partitioned in the northeast corner, with an office space and utility room in the southeast corner. The walls to the west and south have reinforced concrete walls. The community space has concrete floors and a wood-paneled ceiling. The kitchen's interior is lined with gypsum walls and a board ceiling; its exterior walls facing the community room are painted paneled wood. Between the kitchen and the office on the westerly elevation, a door opens up to the exterior. The office space has a carpet floor, gypsum walls, and a board ceiling. The utility room, to the east of the office, has an exposed foundation wall to the east, a concrete floor, and large utility tank. It is likely the basement was opened up for a community space at the same time the southwesterly main door was closed off, probably in the early 1900s; it was updated most recently in the 1980s.

First Floor:

The first floor of the church maintains its original layout, shape, and feel as a religious meeting place, with much of its prominent original details intact. After entering the church through the northwestern main entrance and passing through a small vestibule, the church opens up to the sanctuary, which is rectangular in massing and features a high ceiling. At the east end of the church is the pulpit area, with the orchestra directly opposite it at the west end and nestled between the two original partitions for the historic main entrances. Two rows of fixed, curved, wooden pews with a center aisle and side aisles define the interior space. The easterly wall features two large, square, projecting pilasters in the center, indicating the original location of the pulpit between them. The walls are sheathed in acoustic board panels with wood trim, and wainscoting lines the orchestra. The floor is made of strip maple wood. An original, elaborate, pressed medallion tin ceiling draws the eye upward with its standout, patterned ornamentation in excellent condition. The orchestra and pulpit area were raised on stepped platforms in 1978, and this is likely when the floor and walls were also redone and the pews replaced with that is there presently. Two doors open up from the southwesterly partition: one with clear glass panes on its upper-half leads to the basement, while the other is a simple four-panel wood door (all other doors are identical to this) that leads to a small half-bath and stairs to the second floor and bell tower. A square window with four panes lights the orchestra on the other face of the partition. The main vestibule features similar wall treatments and flooring to the sanctuary; it too has a window facing the orchestra, and a door opening inward. The sanctuary maintains original woodworking, and the doors and all windows are framed with simple dark, wooden surrounds

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capped with a peaked pediment. Historic square air grates remain in place in the center aisle of the church. A highly ornamental Victorian chandelier hangs from the center of the tin ceiling and eight simple, antique, schoolhouse pendant lights are spaced in balanced manner around the ceiling – these were likely put in place when the church was electrified in the early 1900s. On the raised pulpit stage, a podium, cushioned chair with similar curved wood to the pews, altar table, and a historic organ rest.

Second Floor:

Narrow, wooden, unfinished stairs climb from the southwesterly vestibule to the second floor, where a door opens to a small antechamber. This, like the basement, was probably developed in the late 1800s as an additional meeting space. The chamber's floors are made of wooden planks and its walls of plaster on wood lath. On the ceiling nearest the tower some of the lathwork is exposed due to plaster damage. Another door opens into the old meeting hall above the sanctuary, which today is an unfinished storage space. Exposed sawn lumber and plank flooring line the hall; however, the wood beams here have hints of plaster, indicating they may have been once sheathed in plaster. On the easterly wall, two wooden, paneled piers, with cabinetry facing a rustic cross in the center, elaborate the space between two windows and the gable peak's wood vent. Above, the church's wood truss system is exposed with four principle queen trusses, rafters, and purlins viewable. Circular-sawn roof boards and wood shingles are visible past the rafters. On the adjacent side of the antechamber, a small chamber with two doors opens up to a narrow attic space with exposed wood framing.

Old Parsonage, 10 Mountain Road, 1922, Contributing

The Old Parsonage is historically related to the church's role in religious development in the town. The building is in fair condition and architecturally compatible with the Community Baptist Church. Since the mid-twentieth century it has been rented out to tenants.

Exterior:

Built on the site of an older parsonage building in 1922, this vernacular Colonial Revival one-and-a-half story, rectangular-massed house lies adjacent to the Community Baptist Church to the north on 10 Mountain Road. Facing westerly, the house sits close to the street, with a small shed (likely original to the building) and backyard to the rear. Compatible in appearance to the church, the four-by-three bay gable-front building features a broad pediment sheltering a recessed full porch. Resting on a fieldstone rubble foundation with no coursing, the building is clad in white clapboard. Key architectural features, such as the porch, pediment, side dormers, and the bay window on the southern elevation are adorned with distinguishing green, patterned shingles. The roof is sheathed in metal, which also protects the dormers and bay window. A central chimney pierces the roof.

On the main elevation, facing westerly, an open, wooden porch and stairs with a latticework enclosure underneath steps up to the approximately 8' recessed wooden porch that shelters the main entrance in the second bay on the left. Four simple, square wood posts support the wide

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gable, which features a raking cornice and returns elaborated by a plain trim similar to the church. The main entrance and windows are surrounded by a simple wooden frame; this is the same for all other windows. In the northwestern bay, a small square window penetrates the façade, while the main entrance features a non-historic screen door. The southeastern bay is lit by a two-over-two double-hung sash window, likely a later replacement; all windows are identical to this unless otherwise noted. Two centered, adjacent windows cut through the shingles on the gable, illuminating the second floor. A lone one-over-one double-hung sash window, lights the attic.

The southerly elevation is dominated by a three-sided bay window and wide dormer that penetrates the gable roof. The clapboard sheathing is defined by the exposed fieldstone foundation below and the wide two-part band of trim underneath overhanging eaves. Two adjacent windows cut through the bay closest to main façade, while the bay window projects from the central bay. The dormer has three adjacent one-over-one double-hung windows opening up to the second floor.

To the rear, five windows and a door penetrate the elevation. The gable on this side features returns and patterned shingling, similar to the gable front. A wooden staircase with a small porch area leads to a screen door on the southeastern-most bay. Two windows penetrate to the adjacent bays on the first floor. The gable is cut by two windows on the second floor and a smaller attic window.

The northern elevation is nearly identical to the southerly wall; however, instead of a bay window, it has three windows on the first floor. The northeasterly window was boarded over half-way with clapboards for a bathroom; and the central bay features an adjacent pair of windows. A window cuts through the basement foundation below the smaller window, while another nearer the main elevation has been boarded up.

Interior:

The interior of the Old Parsonage has undergone routine updates over time, but the general shape and layout of it is unchanged. The full basement is unfinished with a dirt floor. The interior walls mostly of plaster with wood panel trim, and the floors are hardwood. There are six rooms in the house, with three bedrooms, one kitchen, one full bath, and one half bath.

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1866

1922

Significant Dates

1866

1922

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Community Baptist Church is being nominated under the Multiple Property Listing (MPL): *Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont; Historic Context – Religious Trends, 1615-1950*. Built in 1866 in the Greek Revival style, the Community Baptist Church meets the registration requirements for the property type of “church.” It is eligible for listing under Criterion A: Religion, for its contributions to the history of religious development in the town of Montgomery. Constructed by the first Baptist community in town of Montgomery, the church was built at the height of the town’s development as a mill and agricultural town. Through the years, it reflected and significantly contributed to the religious trends in the community by serving as the central meeting place in the town, by its development of numerous social welfare organizations, and as the location for a significant merging with the Congregationalists in 1922. It is also eligible for listing under Criterion C: Architecture. With its gabled monumental portico and refined details, including its square Doric vernacular columns and pilasters and its prominent tiered, square bell tower, the church embodies the Greek Revival architectural style. A new parsonage building (today known as the Old Parsonage) was built in 1922 to better house a pastor. The period of significance spans from 1866, the year the church was built, to 1922, the year the Old Parsonage was built as well as the year the Congregationalist church merged with the First Baptist Church. Further, the church meets Criteria Consideration A because it derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction and historical importance. Dominant in its location with its prominent, ordered architecture, the Community Baptist Church is locally significant and has been a defining feature of the townscape since it was constructed in 1866.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Religion

*“Your church was the very first church in town.
With only ten members it was started in 1820.
Therefore its history is very long and of renown,
With many and varied incidents a-plenty.”²*

The Community Baptist Church is locally significant under Criterion A for its contributions to shaping the religious history of the community of Montgomery. The Community Baptist Church, from its very inception to the end of its period of significance in 1922 is significant in its contributions to the religious history of the local community. From Montgomery’s rise in industry, wealth, and population in the mid-1800s to the town’s decline in population and rise in communal spirit in the 1920s, the church was a prominent and telling aspect of the community,

² An extract from a poem written by Montgomery citizen Irene Scott in 1945 about the Baptist congregation. Irene Scott, “Reminiscence,” in *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town*, W.R. Branthoover and Sara Taylor (Montgomery, Vt.: Montgomery Historical Society, 2001), 101.

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integral to the story of the religious development and trends in Montgomery, and representative of religious trends in Vermont as described in the MPL.

Located in the northeast quadrant of Franklin County, Montgomery was chartered in 1780. Development was slow through the start of the 1800s, but with the rise of the mill industry and agriculture, particularly through Merino sheep and dairy farming, lumber and saw mills, butter tubs and bobbin factories, the town's population began to increase in the 1840s and the nineteenth century from thence on was the greatest period of prosperity and growth in the town.³ Integral to the growth of the town and to the upkeep of the townspeople's morale was religion, as churches were one of the few places of gathering and community in rural Vermont towns. As the MPL indicates, most Vermont towns in the nineteenth century had at least one church, if not more, for various Protestant denominations; Montgomery was no exception to this. One of four early religious groups (all Protestant denominations) in the Town of Montgomery, the Baptist Church, known then as the First Baptist Church, was the first church organized in Montgomery Center by a small but dedicated membership of ten in 1820. It was the third church organized in the town, following the Episcopalians and Congregationalists.

Early on, as with the other churches in Montgomery and throughout Vermont, the First Baptist Church's membership lacked a permanent meeting place and gathered where they could. Growth in numbers was slow for the church, and by 1830 its congregation was a mere twenty-three. Lean years continued until 1839, when a resolution and "revival in God's work" brought another ten members to the church. Illustrative of religious trends in Vermont and beyond, religious revivalism instilled a new fervor in the Baptist populace in the town. As with many Vermont churches, in 1840, the First Baptist Church fell in line with the Millerites, a radical group that declared a judgment day would occur in 1843.⁴ The Millerites were led by farmer and Baptist lay preacher William Miller, who published and promoted his ideals in the *Vermont Telegraph*, a Baptist newspaper published in Brandon, Vermont. Disagreement over Miller's teachings led to the break-up of the First Baptist Church. A few years later, in 1846, a new Baptist congregation formed in the town. This congregation continued to meet where they could with sporadic membership growth until the 1860s, when membership rose as a result of a drastic increase in population and industry in the community.

*"A number have been added by the Baptism and the letter; the Church begins to feel that they need a house of worship of their own and consequently Oct. 1865 appointed a building committee consisting of the Pastor and the Deacons of the Church."*⁵

Forty-six years after the First Baptists formed their congregation, the Baptists finally felt it was the right time to build a church. This length between the congregation's formulation and its church construction was not unusual in the town, and in fact demonstrates a local religious trend – the Episcopalians took sixteen years to build a church, the Congregationalists thirty-nine, and

³ W.R. Branthoover and Sara Taylor, *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town* (Montgomery, Vt.: Montgomery Historical Society, 2001), 20, 31.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

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the Methodists around twenty years.⁶ Where were they to build the church, however? The Congregationalists had already built their church in 1841 near the top of Main Street in Montgomery Center. As with many other rural religious denominations in Vermont, the Baptists wanted to build in a prominent location. Therefore, the building committee sought and secured a deal with Otis L. Kelton, who appears to have been a member of their congregation. Kelton, a prominent agriculturalist and grist mill owner, owned five hundred acres that stretched across the western end of Montgomery Center.⁷ The deed was signed in September of 1866 and, within a few months, the church was built squarely on the central axis of the growing town in the most fashionable and dominant style of period: Greek Revival.⁸ Within the next few years (by 1873), a carriage barn, no longer standing, was built for parishioners.⁹ Where today's Old Parsonage stands, it is probable that an older "dwelling house thereon" of Kelton's was designated the parsonage building, as noted in the church records.¹⁰ While there is no clear evidence, it is highly likely that church was built by a local master builder, considering the short timeframe between the deed signing, construction, and dedication. With the growing number of lumber, manufactured clapboard, and saw mills in Montgomery, it is also likely the wood for the church was cut and milled locally.¹¹ The church was dedicated on January 31, 1867.¹² The church construction represents both a significant time in Montgomery Center's development, as well as an important moment in the history of religion in the town. Built in the clean, stately Greek Revival style, right in the center of the village, the church defined the congregation's commitment to the community and its faith.

As Wilbur Branthoover and Sara Taylor in their history of Montgomery so concisely state: "Life in the isolated rural towns of Vermont, particularly in the long months of winter, was often lonely. The church served as the most important meeting place in the nineteenth century."¹³ Indeed, in the years following the church's construction through to the early 1900s, the church became a dominate community and religious fixture for a variety of reasons. Reflecting social trends toward participation in a religious community in rural Montgomery, the church's populace continued to grow steadily, as well as its relative wealth; this is demonstrated by the installation of electric lights in the church at the turn of the 20th century.¹⁴ It was also in such a central location that it became a natural place to congregate, and not only for religious purposes. For example, the Montgomery chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic formed in 1886 and held its first annual Memorial Day ceremony for the whole town in 1887, ending in front of the Community Baptist Church. After the ceremony, the church would host a meal for the community and, on at least one documented occasion, the church was the location for the

⁶ Branthoover and Taylor, *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town*, 58.

⁷ Hiram Carleton, *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Vermont* (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1903), <http://books.google.com/books?id=EmbLSJZgij4C>, 624.

⁸ "Church Minutes," in *History of the Baptist Church, Montgomery Center, Vt., 1820-1968*, comp. W.R. Branthoover (Montgomery Center, Vt.: W.R. Branthoover, 1968), 14.

⁹ Truman Hurlbut, "History of the First Baptist Church," in *Ibid.*, 9; "Church Minutes," in *Ibid.*, 33, 36; "Plan of Barn," in *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁰ "Church Minutes," in *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹ Branthoover and Taylor, *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town*, 29-30.

¹² "Dedication and Ordination," *Vermont Transcript*, February 8, 1867, 2.

¹³ Branthoover and Taylor, *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town*, 63.

¹⁴ "Church Minutes," in *History of the Baptist Church, Montgomery Center, Vt., 1820-1968*, 24.

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veterans to be photographed after the parade.¹⁵ In another example of its use as a secular space, starting in 1925 the church rented its second floor meeting hall to the Independent Order of Catholic Foresters for a period of three years.¹⁶

In the early 1920s Montgomery's population began decline, due to a sluggish economy caused by the closure of several local mills. By the 1940s the population numbered close to 700 people, down from 1,876 in 1900.¹⁷ This population decrease correlated directly with a decline in religious communities in the town, as evidenced by the initial talks in 1913 of folding the dwindling Congregationalist population into the First Baptist Church. It would be another nine years, however, until the Baptists "united with Congregational friends" in 1922. Marking this move was the construction of a new parsonage building (today known as the "Old Parsonage") for the sum of \$4,800.¹⁸ Indicative of a successful transition, from the 1920s to the 1940s church membership flourished to as high as 111.¹⁹ This merging marked a prominent moment in the religious history of the town: the beginning of the decline of multiple Protestant denominations in Montgomery. It was now the only Protestant church in Montgomery Center; with the Methodists in the village of Montgomery, it was one of only two Protestant churches left in the town by the end of the 1920s.

As noted in the MPL, a common religious trend in Vermont communities was the development of societies and organizations, such as relief missions, to provide assistance to their parishioners and the community. From the 1920s on, the church was doing just that and with distinctive prominence in Montgomery Center. Of particular significance, the church was the only religious organization in Montgomery to organize scout groups. In 1923, a Boy Scout troop was organized by the Baptist Church, and in 1933, a Girl Scout troop was organized. In 1925, the church had both an active Ladies Aid Society and a recently created Missionary Society. A year later, a Christian Endeavor Society was founded.²⁰ In the late 1920s a well-attended Young People's Association formed. The church was active in the community, reflecting a time that, despite declining population and industry, there was strong social commitment in the town on the behalf of the church. This dedication to the community is further emphasized with the changing of the name of the church between 1930 and 1931 from the First Baptist Church to the Community Baptist Church.²¹ Like many churches of the period, the Community Baptist Church sought to strengthen community ties and grow its congregation.

*"For old Times Sake' this party was called.
But the future is before you with its challenge.
Loss of members and societies have all be recalled.*

¹⁵ Branthoover and Taylor, *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town*, 65.

¹⁶ "Church Minutes," in *History of the Baptist Church, Montgomery Center, Vt., 1820-1968*, 38.

¹⁷ Branthoover and Taylor, *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town*, 95.

¹⁸ "Church Minutes," in *History of the Baptist Church, Montgomery Center, Vt., 1820-1968*, 38.

¹⁹ Community Baptist Church, "Church Records and Minutes" (church records, Montgomery Center, Vt., 1920-1964).

²⁰ "Church Minutes," in *History of the Baptist Church, Montgomery Center, Vt., 1820-1968*, 37-40.

²¹ Community Baptist Church, "Church Records and Minutes" (1930-1931).

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But this does not mean defeat—only change.”²²

From the 1940s to 1964, the Community Baptist Church continued its social and religious mission with enthusiasm in the community, despite ever declining numbers. The Ladies Aid Society, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts continued to be active in the community. It was again a time of decline for church membership, however. In 1944 the Community Baptist Church joined with the Montgomery Methodist Church, Richford Methodist Church, and the East Berkshire Center Church to form the Green Mountain Parish to share expenses for pastors.²³ By the 1960s, numbers averaged less than twenty.²⁴ It was around this time that the church began renting out the Old Parsonage to tenants, as a source of income. The Community Baptist Church was not alone in this, however, as the Methodist Church in Montgomery Village and the Catholic Church in Montgomery Center were also suffering decreasing membership, and the Episcopal Church in the Village had long ago stopped services.²⁵ As was the religious trend for churches throughout Vermont, the increasing secularization of the town and diminishing population contributed to this decline.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Community Baptist Church offers a prime example of Greek Revival architecture in Montgomery Center. A simple description in the local newspaper hinted at the finished construction of the church: “The church is a neat and substantial structure and cost about four thousand dollars.”²⁶ Indeed, the church was that at a most basic level: a neat and orderly sizable building. It stands out prominently with its clean lines and fine craftsmanship at its pivotal central location in the rural community of Montgomery Center.

According to the MPL for this property type, the Greek Revival style was highly popular in Vermont from the 1830s to 1870s. The widespread architectural style flourished largely due to the circulation of builder’s handbooks that particularly embraced the style, such as Asher Benjamin’s *Practice of Architecture* and *The Builder’s Guide*. The Community Baptist Church is an excellent example of the vernacular embrace of the style, built in the year of 1866 and most likely by a local master builder. The builder must have closely studied the architectural style for ecclesial structures to produce the edifice with such skill and attention to order and plain detail in the fashion Benjamin emphasized in church architecture: “While, therefore, we aim at elegance in the columns, pilasters, entablatures, ceilings, windows, and doors, let it be a grave and simple elegance.”²⁷ It should be noted that the 1855 Baptist church in the nearby town of Johnson, Vermont, exhibits many of the same characteristics as this building, most notably the projecting portico supported by four massive square piers. Like the Community Baptist church, these piers are articulated with narrow panels that taper from the base to a square, molded cap. It is possible that the same local craftsman built both structures.

²² Irene Scott, “Reminiscence,” in *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town*, 101.

²³ Branthoover and Taylor, *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town*, 100.

²⁴ Community Baptist Church, “Church Records and Minutes” (1960-1965).

²⁵ Branthoover and Taylor, *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town*, 120.

²⁶ “Dedication and Ordination,” *Vermont Transcript*, February 8, 1867, 2.

²⁷ Asher Benjamin, *Practice of Architecture* (Boston: Benjamin, and Carter, Hendee & Co., 1833), <http://books.google.com/books?id=jPEEAAAAYAAJ>, 100.

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Further evidencing its architectural significance, the Community Baptist Church embodies many of the defining features of Greek Revival ecclesial architecture in Vermont as outlined in the MPL, from its framing system to its massing, right down to its interior details. With its balanced temple front and rectangular massing, topped with a frontal four-sided, two-tiered bell tower with a hipped roof (containing the original 1866 bell), supported by post-and-beam wood framing, the church maintains a defining Greek Revival shape and presence. As a vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival style, its monumental portico is supported by four wooden, paneled, square, Doric vernacular columns; this form is repeated in the corner pilasters on the church, bell tower, and window and door surrounds on the exterior. Interestingly, the church features a closed pediment on the front (west) elevation and an open pediment with returns on the rear (east) elevation, demonstrating two popular Greek Revival pediment styles. As is characteristic of this style of church, the building is clad in white clapboard, while the gable of the portico is elaborated by wide bands of trim inside and a wide frieze of two bands of trim underneath the cornice line that wraps around the church. Further Greek Revival details on the exterior include the two main doors and windows capped by peaked wooden lintels.

“The interior of the church would have a chaste and correct appearance, if without galleries,” wrote Asher Benjamin in his *Practice of Architecture*.²⁸ This church strongly adheres to that sentiment with its simple, unadorned one-story, rectangular sanctuary. The interior is unchanged in its open shape and feel, with a pulpit area at the rear of the church, the orchestra on the west wall with two vestibules lining it on the sides. As defined in the MPL, the church maintains much of a characteristic Greek Revival church interior features. The pulpit area is framed by square wall pilasters, and the windows and doors of the sanctuary feature Greek Revival wooden surrounds and peaked lintels. The original ceiling, certainly the most elaborate of the interior details, is representative of the Greek Revival church style with its pressed-metal medallions. While the pews have been replaced, they are arranged in two fixed rows facing the pulpit as they were historically, and are of a curved wooden style that identifies closely with what the church’s original Greek Revival pews may have looked like.

The church maintains much of its historic architectural integrity, with, as outlined above, a good deal of its original historic fabric and features intact, enough so that it is a strong representative today of the Greek Revival ecclesial style in Vermont and certainly in Montgomery. It is important, however, to note that there have been changes to the church over time, many of them representative of common themes in church architecture and history as defined in the MPL. This includes a 1890s replacement of the original clear glass windows with stained glass windows; this was a common alteration to earlier churches in the late nineteenth century in Vermont, and thus makes it a fine example of this historical trend. In addition, the front porch was partially enclosed by simple, compatible wooden posts and landscaping below replaced the original stairs; while altering its historic appearance, these reversible changes do not detract significantly from its distinguishing, strong Greek Revival temple façade. As well, an access ramp was added to the southern elevation; as it sits below the main elevation and was a necessary addition for access, it does not detract from its architectural significance.

²⁸ Ibid., 100.

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Regarding alternations to the interior, the church has undergone some changes, none of which detract from the building's historic integrity, but should be noted. These include the replacement over time of wall and floor sheathing in the sanctuary – church records note on numerous occasions the need for replacements from wear and tear. The current walls of acoustic tile and floors of wood are plain and sympathetic to the church's architectural style. As well, there was an addition of a kitchen and community space in the basement and the creation of the meeting hall on the second floor—these follow a common trend in Vermont ecclesial architecture, as noted in the MPL, as churches moved to add additional community spaces to their buildings. These changes help tell the story of the church while not detracting from its architectural significance as the definitive specimen of Greek Revival architecture in Montgomery Center.

Recent Years:

Until 2011 the church was used by a Baptist congregation; however, at long last, the Baptist membership declined to such an extent that services stopped after 145 years of continuous use. Today, the Montgomery Town Association, an organization made up of local community members, has assumed the task of rehabilitating the Community Baptist Church. They hope to rejuvenate the church possibly as a community space and welcoming center, continuing the Community Baptist Church's long role as both a local architectural landmark and a defining edifice in the telling of the town's religious evolution and history.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Scott, Irene. “Reminiscence.” In *Montgomery, Vermont: The History of a Town*, W.R. Branthoover and Sara Taylor, 100-101. Montgomery, Vt.: Montgomery Historical Society, 2001.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. “Historic Architecture and Patterns of Town Development.” Preliminary draft, Montpelier, Vt., 1990.

Maps:

Beers, F.W., *Atlas of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.* New York: F.W. Beers and Company, 1871.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Montgomery Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 4.7 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 44.87730 Longitude: -72.60773
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

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Or
UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of the Community Baptist Church are the perimeter property lines of its parcel id number: 242.001x, as outlined by the Montgomery Town Office.

Below, the boundary lines as described in the Church Deed in Book 2, p. 342, Land Records, Montgomery Center:

“Beginning on the North side of the Brook below my mill at the point where the shore of the stream intersects the highway at low water mark—thence Northward on the line of the highway about eight rods to the line between my land and Charles C. Martins, thence Eastwardly on said line between my land and Charles C. Martin to the brook aforesaid above my mills—thence following the North shore of said brook at low water mark downward to the place of beginning containing about three acres, be the same more or less, having a dwelling house thereon.”

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries selected are the historic boundaries as outlined in the deed and town records; all boundaries are associated with the Community Baptist Church’s history.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Karyn Norwood
organization: _____
street & number: 567 Saint Paul Street
city or town: Burlington state: Vermont zip code: 05401
e-mail knorwood@uvm.edu
telephone: 207-907-0770
date: 8/27/2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Name of Property: Community Baptist Church

Location: Montgomery Center, Franklin County, Vermont

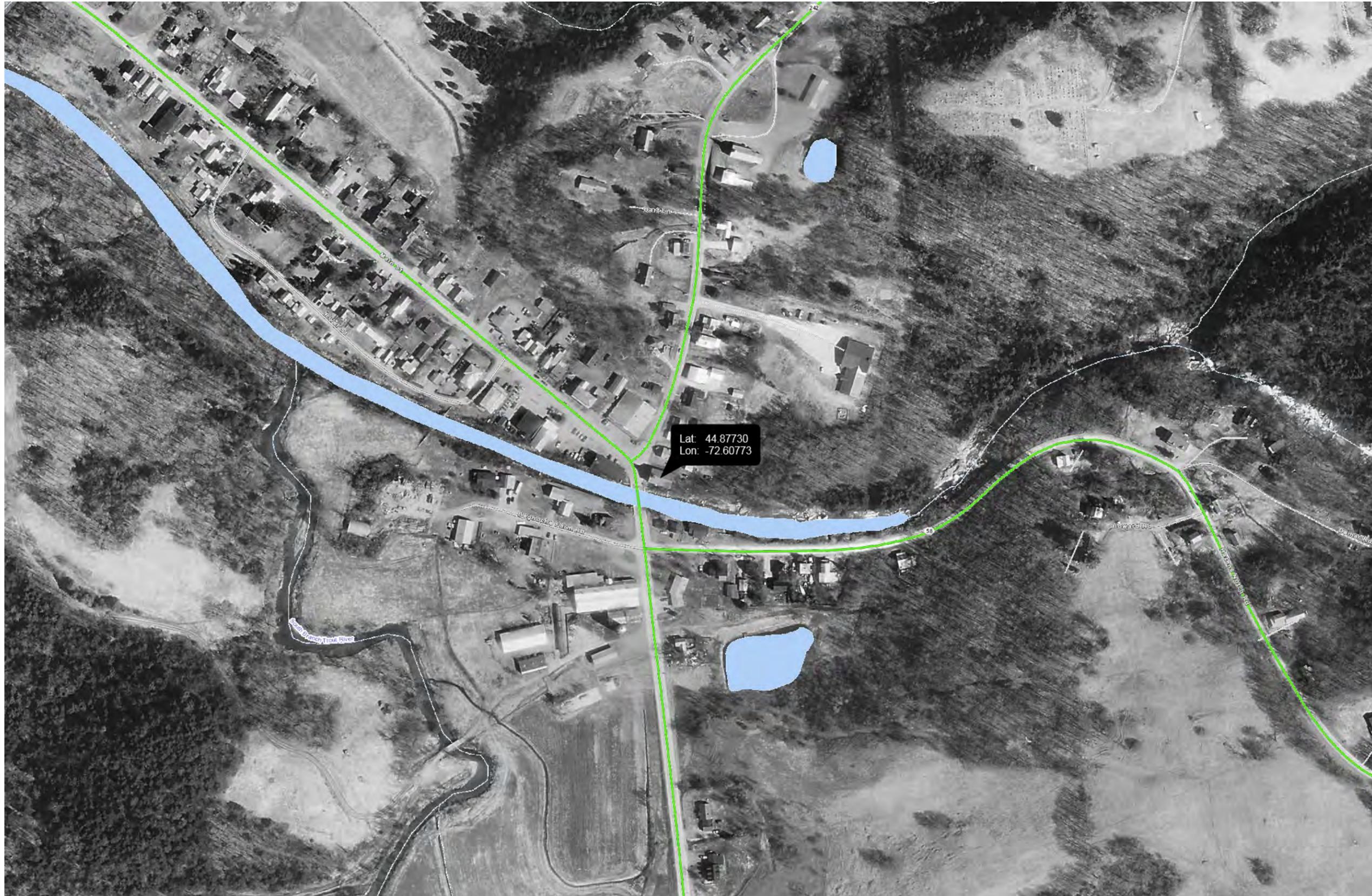
Photograph Number	Description	Date	Credit
1 of 14	Community Baptist Church, looking southeasterly	c. 1900	Courtesy: Montgomery Historical Society
2 of 14	Front porch of Community Baptist Church, looking easterly	1889	Courtesy: Montgomery Historical Society
3 of 14	Community Baptist Church and Old Parsonage (under construction), looking easterly	1921	Courtesy: Montgomery Historical Society
4 of 14	Community Baptist Church, looking easterly	7/21/2014	Karyn Norwood
5 of 14	Community Baptist Church, looking southeasterly	7/21/2014	Karyn Norwood
6 of 14	Community Baptist Church and Old Parsonage main elevations, looking easterly	7/21/2014	Karyn Norwood
7 of 14	Rear of Community Baptist Church and Old Parsonage, looking southwesterly	7/21/2014	Karyn Norwood
8 of 14	Community Baptist Church southerly elevation, looking northerly	5/6/2014	Karyn Norwood
9 of 14	Community Baptist Church rear elevation, looking westerly	5/6/2014	Karyn Norwood
10 of 14	Close-up of bell tower, looking southeasterly	7/21/2014	Karyn Norwood
11 of 14	Sanctuary, looking northeasterly	7/21/2014	Karyn Norwood
12 of 14	Sanctuary, looking southwesterly	7/21/2014	Karyn Norwood
13 of 14	Second floor meeting hall, looking easterly	7/21/2014	Karyn Norwood
14 of 14	Old Parsonage, looking northeasterly	7/21/2014	Karyn Norwood

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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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



LEGEND

- Airports
- Rail Lines
- Town Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Buildings
- Village Boundaries

1:3,160

August 24, 2015



0.10 0 0.05 0.10 Miles

NOTES

This map was created with the VT Interactive Map Viewer.

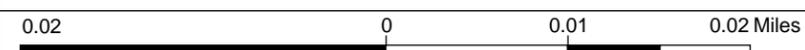


LEGEND

- Airports
- Rail Lines
- Town Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Buildings
- Village Boundaries

1: 790

August 24, 2015



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THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

NOTES
This map was created with the VT Interactive Map Viewer.





Funeral Service of
Fred Foster. June 15-1921.

101
S.J.F.





COMMUNITY
CHURCH

EAST
58
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COMMUNITY
CHURCH





















Funeral Service of
Fred Foster. June 15, 1921.

Thos
S.J.F.





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