

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Six Principle Baptist Church

AND/OR COMMON

Stony Lane Baptist Church/Old Baptist Meeting House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

85 Old Baptist Road, south of Stony Lane

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

North Kingstown

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

2 - Rep. Edward Beard

STATE

Rhode Island 02850

CODE

44

COUNTY

Washington

CODE

009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

 DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

 IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

 OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

 YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO

PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Six Principle Baptist Church

STREET & NUMBER

85 Old Baptist Road

CITY, TOWN

North Kingstown

STATE

Rhode Island 02850

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

80 Boston Neck Road

CITY, TOWN

North Kingstown

STATE

Rhode Island 02850

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

North Kingstown, Rhode Island, Statewide Preservation Report W-NK-1

DATE

1977-1978

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Six Principle Baptist Church, also known as the Stony Lane Baptist Church and the Old Baptist Meeting House, stands on Old Baptist Road a little south of its intersection with Stony Lane, in a somewhat elevated rural area of North Kingstown, northwest of the village of Wickford. This small one-room house of worship -- only twenty-six by thirty-eight feet -- was rebuilt in the Greek Revival style in 1842, but its original core is said to date from between 1703 and 1710. References in eighteenth-century letters and deeds support this early date, although no physical exploration of the underlying fabric of the building has been undertaken to corroborate it.

Of timber construction, the church is a one-storey, gable-roofed, clapboarded building with a central front entrance located on the east gable end. Windows, two on each long side, have twelve-over-twelve sash; two smaller and shorter windows are placed high at the west end. Within recent years a cement-walled basement has been inserted in place of the original low, stone foundation, and there has also been made a very shallow gabled extension across the west end containing a lavatory and a stair to the new basement. This extension has been kept architecturally compatible with, and subordinate to, the older structure: it is narrower and lower, and within it are still seen the original exterior clapboarding and high windows of the meetinghouse's rear elevation.

Exterior trim is kept to a minimum: there are plain panelled corner pilasters; a flat fascia-board runs beneath the eaves; and the side windows, set high so that this fascia runs directly across their tops, have very plain enframements with only a slim suggestion of moulding at their outer edges. The main doorway has flat, unfluted Doric pilasters supporting a frieze board with a simple flat "cornice" member topping it; the door itself has two tall vertical panels -- typical of the Greek Revival style in use when the building required renovation.

The meeting-house is set close to the roadway on a slightly raised site nearly completely surrounded by dry-laid stone walls which function in part as retaining-walls; beside and behind it are cemetery areas which have large old trees, lilac bushes and orderly rows and groupings of very plain stone grave markers, some of which have weathered, in two hundred years or more, to mere stubs in the grass.

Internally, the church is exceedingly plain. The main door opens, with no vestibule, directly into the meeting-room, which has wide-board flooring (now with some carpeting) and horizontal wainscoting with plastered walls above. The walls, now white, have no moulding where they meet the ceiling, whose form since 1842, and perhaps before, is that of a very shallow barrel-vault. Two rows of high-sided box pews without

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doors are separated by a central aisle which runs from the entrance to the open preaching area which takes up, approximately, the western third of the floor space; here, two more side pews face each other, and against the rear wall there is a one-step-high platform to accommodate a lectern and chairs. The eighteenth-century "wineglass" pulpit is said to have been removed during the 1842 renovation. Windows have flat, undecorated board enframements, and all woodwork is painted white except for the narrow capping to the sides and backs of the pews, which is painted the colour of cherry-wood. The only decorative features are relatively late additions; they include a c. 1870s brass gas chandelier (now electrified) which lights the preaching area, and some handsome, high-backed, red-upholstered, Gothic Revival chairs, brought from another and now defunct meeting-house, which stand on the platform behind an oak lectern.

The present appearance of the building is not indicative of its considerable age, since nearly all that is visible dates from 1842. The apparently original twelve-over-twelve sash of the high rear windows, however, suggest the structure's early beginnings. The same type of sash in the side windows appear to be fairly modern copy-replacements. Because the walls are several inches thick, it is thought that the eighteenth century cornerposts are concealed within them, covered with nineteenth century lathe and plaster.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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 between 1703 and 1710, BUILDER/ARCHITECT
remodelled 1842

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Six Principle Baptist Church, with its stone walls, sheltering trees, and cemetery, is a picturesque and by no means unimportant piece of Rhode Island architecture and local history. It is interesting historically for its associations with the third oldest Baptist congregation in Rhode Island (founded after those at Providence and Newport, and one of the oldest in the United States) and architecturally as an early eighteenth century structure heavily reworked in the nineteenth century.

The Baptist body responsible for its construction, the Six Principle Baptist Church in North Kingstown, can be traced back to about 1664. Roger Williams, credited with the siting and development of the present city of Providence and with its early religious activity, is believed to have had a close connection with the origins of this congregation. Although a legal resident of Providence, Williams also kept a trading post in North Kingstown which he had on lease from Richard Smith of Cocumscussoc (a property already entered on the National Register of Historic Places). From his trading post Williams carried on Christian proselytizing and trade with the native Indian inhabitants and with the steadily increasing number of white settlers as well, who were beginning to form an agricultural community in the area about the middle of the seventeenth century. These settlers, doubtless with Williams' advice and blessing, formed the North Kingstown Baptist congregation about 1664. At first they had neither a meeting house nor a pastor of their own.

It appears that they travelled to hear Roger Williams' words at or near Cocumscussoc on the coast. By 1666, however, the needs of the Baptists on the west side of Narragansett Bay induced Elder Thomas Baker to leave Newport and take charge of the North Kingstown congregation. The congregation apparently continued, for some years, to use Cocumscussoc for their gatherings.

The first mention of a building for the Six Principle Baptist group was in a deed of 1703. On August 12th of that year North Kingstown resident Alexander Huling conveyed to representatives of the church "for love and good will . . . half an acre of land to make use of for building a meeting house for the worship and service of God."

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(Huling, who died in 1725, and many of his descendants are buried in the cemetery surrounding the church.) North Kingstown records of 1709 mention a "way to be laid out to the meeting house," presumably already standing, and there are further references to such a building in a variety of letters and papers in 1747, 1750, 1769, and 1773. A letter of 1750, found among the Exeter Baptist Church records, mentions the congregation and the meeting house of "about forty years ago." Minutes recorded by the North Kingstown church secretary in 1773 state that the building stood in need of repairs at that time; these repairs were authorized but not completed, apparently, until 1788. By 1842, the building again stood in need of repair and underwent a major remodelling which included exterior re-facing and interior replastering and refinishing, which account for the building's present appearance.

The question of whether or not the findings of some future analysis of the church's underlying structure will dovetail with documentary evidence and strong oral tradition to substantiate an early eighteenth century date for the building, is, to some extent, not of primary importance. The building as it stands has architectural and historical value as a simple, vernacular, mid-nineteenth-century church building. It still retains its nineteenth century physical integrity and visual setting and it occupies the lot originally deeded to the congregation in 1703. If, as seems likely, an eighteenth century skeleton and provenance for the building can be proved on a structural basis at some point in the future, so much the better. Till then, the Stony Lane Baptist Church stands in quiet testimony to an era in North Kingstown's history when the intersection of Stony Lane and Old Baptist Road was a religious focal point for the agricultural community surrounding it, a period of at least one hundred and fifty years, from 1703 until after the middle of the nineteenth century.

If, over all these years, the building itself has had its vicissitudes, so also has the congregation, which began to diminish during the latter half of the nineteenth century. There was, at last, no regular pastor, and services were held only intermittently, directed by pastors who came from neighboring villages. In the autumn of 1886 a six-week revival meeting was held at the old building, and occasional gatherings took place there in the first decades of the present century. During this time of abeyance, fortunately, the meeting house did receive necessary repair and painting.

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Regularly scheduled services had ceased altogether by about 1915, and it was not until 1947 that an annual service was begun. These annual autumn meetings continued until 1958, when the efforts of Deacons Pierre Bonard and Earle Brown succeeded in gathering enough of local congregation to make feasible weekly Sunday services and to require, in 1959, yet another renovation of the old church building. Since then, the meeting house has had continued use for worship and other gatherings. Its congregation today is an active one which takes pride in its building and its history, so closely interwoven with the settlement of North Kingstown and neighboring East Greenwich and with that of Roger Williams and the colony and state of Rhode Island as a whole.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Huling, Mary Kenyon: The Six Principle Baptist Church of North Kingstown, R.I. N. p., n.d. Typewritten ms. of 13 pp.; the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission possessing a copy.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 9	21 9, 21 3, 4, 0	4, 6 0, 7 1 3 6, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Verbal boundary: plat 124 lot 15
Fronting east on Old Baptist Road for about 150 feet; the same dimension for the rear (west) measurement. About 75 feet east-west on either side.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Richard B. Harrington, Consultant; Ancelin V. Lynch

ORGANIZATION

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission December, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

Old State House, 150 Benefit Street

TELEPHONE

401-277-2678

CITY OR TOWN

Providence,

STATE

Rhode Island

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

June 30, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER







