

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Inventory No: | ABI.900 |
| Historic Name: | First Meetinghouse Marker |
| Common Name: | |
| Address: | 325 Washington St |
| City/Town: | Abington |
| Village/Neighborhood: | Abington Center |
| Local No: | 37, 903 |
| Year Constructed: | 1940 |
| Architect(s): | |
| Architectural Style(s): | |
| Use(s): | Other Governmental or Civic; Other Religious |
| Significance: | Community Planning; Religion; Social History |
| Area(s): | ABI.B: Washington Street Area |
| Designation(s): | |
| Building Materials(s): | |



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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Section A FEB 13 1979

AREA [B]

900 903

FORM C - MONUMENTS
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

Town ABINGTON, MA No. 37
Street (in front of) 325 Washington Street AB1.900

STATUE
BUST
MARKER
RELIGIOUS SHRINE
GROUP COMPOSITION

MONUMENT
FOUNTAIN
MILESTONE
BOUNDARY MARKER

Name First Meetinghouse marker
Placed by Historical Society of
~~Original Owner~~ Old Abington

Present Owner _____

Monument has historical connection with the following themes: (See also reverse side)

Date Constructed 1940

Date Dedicated _____

Agriculture
Architecture
Art/Sculpture
Education
Literature
Music
Government

Commerce/Industry
Science/Invention
Travel/Communication
Military Affairs
Indians
Development of Town/City
Religion/Philosophy

Source of Date on plaque

Designer or Sculptor _____

Individual or group responsible for monument if other than owner _____

CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved* Altered _____

IMPORTANCE of monument to area: Great Moderate None _____

MONUMENT endangered by: nothing other than possible vandalism

LOCATION OF INSCRIPTION: Plaque on wall, house, post; base of monument; other stone

ENTIRE INSCRIPTION on monument: _____

see description on back of form

DESCRIPTION**

Foundation: Pedestal Base None Material stone

Material: Bronze Stone Marble Granite Wood Other plaque

Setting (surroundings) on verge between sidewalk and street curb

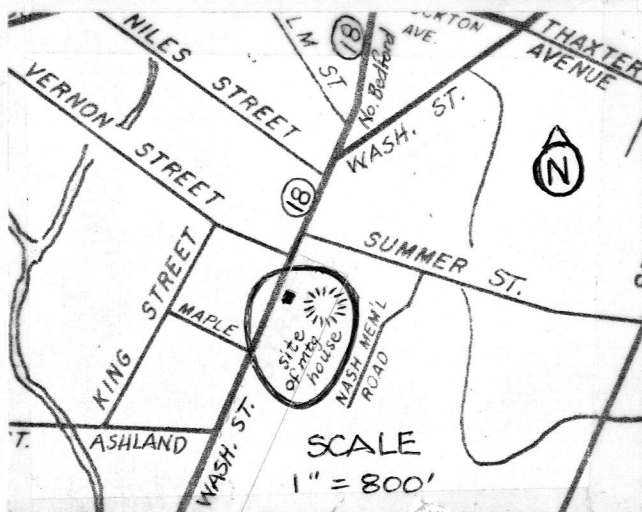
Size (approximate) plaque ca. 18" x 12"

Indicate location of monument on map below

Recorder Leola M. Jobert, chm

For Abington Historical Commission
(Name of Organization)

Photo 37 Date Received _____



RECEIVED

FEB 16 1979

* If the monument has been moved, indicate the original location on the reverse side.

** Describe the monument on the reverse side.

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER AND/OR DESIGN OF MONUMENT

(see below)

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF MONUMENT. (Refer to the theme circled on front of form. What happened? Who was important? Comment)

A bronze plaque attached to a stone near the sidewalk and curb in front of 325 Washington Street marks the vicinity of Old Abington's first meetinghouse and burying ground, and the home of the first minister. It was put there in 1940 by the then-new Historical Society of Old Abington. It states:

NEAR THIS SITE
WAS ERECTED THE FIRST
MEETING-HOUSE IN ABINGTON
1712

Erected by the
Historical Society of Old Abington
1940

Actually, the tiny meetinghouse, with the residence alongside had been built in 1710 (Cyrus Nash, D-II:17 & D-VII:22), before the local settlers were accepted by the General Court of Massachusetts Bay Colony as a town in 1712. Jacob Nash, a housewright from Weymouth had put up both buildings in the summer of 1710 after Elder William Pratt had agreed to settle here and head an interim religious society.

The community, which had been seeking a "learned and orthodox Minister" since
(continued)

REFERENCE: (Where was this information obtained? What book, records, etc.)

CYRUS NASH papers. Transcription of diaries and journals of crippled, unofficial historian (1780-1850, fl.1804-1849). In Archives of Historical Society of Old Abington, Dyer Memorial Library building, 30 Centre Avenue, Abington
HOBART, AARON. An Historical Sketch of Abington. BOSTON: Samuel N. Dickinson, 1839.
176p no index Copy in Dyer Memorial Library, 30 Centre Avenue, Abington
MASSACHUSETTS BAY, COLONY OF. Court Orders. Reprinted by Order of the Legislature, 1854.
Copies in large research libraries
Plymouth County Deeds. In Registry building, Plymouth, MA

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Community: ABINGTON, MA | Form No: 37 |
| Property Name: First Meetinghouse | |

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

(Historic Description, continued):

being ordered to do so (Massachusetts Court Orders VIII:215; Nov 1706) as a pre-requisite to becoming a town, had contracted with Elder Pratt to live in their midst and act as unofficial minister for the time being.

Finally, a "learned and orthodox Minister" was located. He was young Rev. Samuel Browne of Newbury, who had graduated from Harvard in 1709. He was interviewed by the leaders of the local settlement in 1710 (reference two Plymouth County Deeds 12:152, which he witnessed), accepted the call, and came to Abington in December 1711. The 60-acre farm including the dwelling house was transferred to him on 4 March 1712/3 (Plymouth County Deeds 15:116) as part of the inducement included in the contract.

In the footnote states:

Note, before y^e Signing & Sealing
hereof that there is reserved half an acre of Land about y^e
Meeting House for Conveniency,
there being half an acre of Land
added to s^d Tract of Land else-
where.

The land reserved for conveniency was the burying ground. It was the first public cemetery in the entire Old Township and served until other burial places began to be established in other parts of the old town. The gravestones which still remained here first began to be moved to the Forefathers Lot in Mt. Vernon Cemetery in the 1850's and 1880's (see #815 and 816 in this inventory). Some of the stones which had been merely pushed aside about 1900 when the first tee of a 9-hole golf course was constructed here, were transported later to the Forefathers Lot at the instigation of the then-John Pulling Chapter, D.A.R. And as late as 1976, the broken gravestone of James and Tamar Nash (1771) was discovered in the deep brambles here and turned over to the Abington Historical Commission who hope to have it mended and also set up in the Forefathers Lot in Mt. Vernon Cemetery.

Although the original meetinghouse had been abandoned in 1751, and the half-acre plot, together with the old church building had been transferred back to Woodbridge Browne, son of the first minister, some families continued to bury their dead here.

The tiny ancient meetinghouse was described by Aaron Hobart (p.61) as:

...a small unpainted quaker-like building, without steeple, tower, or bell, fitted up inside with benches...and with galleries projecting on the sides so near the pulpit, that in the language of my informant "a contribution box could be reached from one to the other."

Judge Hobart's informant was Cyrus Nash (reference G-VIII:24).

(over for photo No.37)

MHC INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MHC Inventory scanning project, 2008-2013

MACRIS No. AB1.900

