

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Massachusetts	
COUNTY: Norfolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME	
COMMON: <del>One of the first Jewish Churches in the state - Dec 1842 - 43</del>	
AND/OR HISTORIC: Stone Temple, Church of the Presidents	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 1266 Hancock Street, at its junction with Washington Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Quincy			
STATE Massachusetts	CODE	COUNTY: Norfolk	CODE

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY	
OWNER'S NAME: Reverend Bradford E. Gale, Minister, Congregation of the United First Parish Church, Unitarian	
STREET AND NUMBER: <del>end to street</del> 1306 Hancock Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Quincy 02169	STATE: Massachusetts

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION	
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE: Massachusetts

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS	
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey (2 photos)	
DATE OF SURVEY: 1941 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN: Washington 20540	STATE: D. C.

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

# 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

☒ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed

(Check One)

☒ Altered ☐ Unaltered

(Check One)

☐ Moved ☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

United First Parish Church is a monumentally-scaled, two-story structure constructed of coursed ashlar, with a projecting porch, giant Doric portico, and a two-stage stone tower topped by a wooden open cupola. The walls of the oblong-shaped church are built of Quincy blue granite and the windows in the long north and south side walls are two-stories in height, round headed, and adorned by exterior louvered blinds.

A broad flight of stone steps leads up to the broad pedimented portico, which is supported by four giant monolithic Doric columns that measure 25 feet in height and weigh about 25 tons apiece. This portico, on the west (front) elevation, is in the Greek Revival style, but the plan of the remainder of the church, including the projecting porch, main structure, and tower, is derived from the late Georgian or Federal-Adamesque churches that were built in New England after 1800.

Above the pediment of the portico a stone tower rises in two stages; the first stage, broad and rectangular in shape, is unornamented; the second stage, stepped back and square, is adorned by a clock face on each elevation. The second stage is surmounted by a round wood open cupola with eight columns and a dome.

The wall of the west (front) facade, under the portico, is unadorned, except for a horizontal panel set high in the wall, which extends over the three entrance ways. The three large heavy double-doors, topped by flat lintels, open into the projecting porch, or vestibule. Here three more doors lead into the spacious auditorium which is about 70 feet square and three bays long. The pews on the main floor are separated by two longitudinal aisles and galleries extend around the north, south, and west sides of the room. A fine pulpit of mahogany is located in the center of the east (rear) wall. The dominating and outstanding feature of the interior is the magnificent decorated plaster dome located in the center of the ceiling.

The exterior and interior of the church are unaltered, except for the one-story stone wing that was added to the east elevation in 1889. This addition, however, does not detract or seriously alter the appearance of the original church.

United First Parish Church is in excellent condition, still used for religious services, and is open to visitors.

e (S)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

# SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian    ☐ 16th Century    ☐ 18th Century    ☐ 20th Century  
☐ 15th Century    ☐ 17th Century    ☒ 19th Century

## SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1827-28

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | losophy                                 |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | itarian                                 |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |  |

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed and erected in 1827-28 by the master architect-engineer Alexander Parris, United First Parish Church, also known as the "Stone Temple" and "Church of the Presidents," is probably his masterpiece of church construction in the Greek Revival style. The structure is probably also the finest extant example of a Greek Revival church in New England. Parris' use of granite and monolithic columns in this large-scaled and finely proportioned structure was a relatively early instance and a major demonstration of the monumental possibilities and use of this new building material.

United First Parish Church has been little-altered, inside or out.

## History

The Building committee of First Parish Church, Unitarian, met in the fall of 1826 and selected the noted architect-engineer Alexander Parris, of Boston and Pembroke, to design and supervise the construction of their new church in the Greek Revival style. It was specified that the building was to be constructed of blue granite from the nearby Quincy quarries, that the stone was to be hammered, and the columns were to be monolithic. The cost of construction, except for the four columns, was to be a gift to the congregation from John Quincy Adams, President of the United States.

Construction began in 1827. The monolithic columns used on the portico of this church were not the first quarried and set in place in the United States. Known earlier examples are the U.S. Bank and the Quincy Market (also by Parris) in Boston. However, the four columns of First Parish Church were considerably larger than those on either of these buildings and may well have been the largest in existence when they were set in place. Each column was 23 feet 2 inches long (or 25 feet long with capitals), tapered from 3 feet 6 inches in diameter at the top to 4 feet 2 inches at the bottom, and weighed about 25 tons. Thirty-five yoke of oxen were required to haul each column from the quarry, and each cost \$1,000 set in place. Three of these columns were erected on June 16, 1828 and the fourth one on the following day. The new church was dedicated on November 12, 1828. Total cost of construction was \$30,488.56.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

# 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Baltimore, 1963), 85.

Talbot F. Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York, 1964), 104.

Elise Lathrop, Old New England Churches (Rutland, Vt. 1938), 31-32.

Massachusetts, A Guide to Its Places and People (American Guide Series) (Boston, 1937), 340.

# 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		42 ° 15 ' 04 "	71 ° 00 ' 13 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

2 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

# 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION Division of History, Office of Archeology and  
Historic Preservation, National Park Service

DATE

6/11/70

STREET AND NUMBER:

801 - 19th Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:

Washington

STATE

D. C.

CODE

# 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

# NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

United First Parish Church

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Massachusetts	
COUNTY	
Norfolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. Significance: (1)

On April 1, 1828 the bodies of President John Adams and his wife, Abigail, were placed in their tombs in the crypt, which is located in the basement under the vestibule, of the church. On December 10, 1852, the mortal remains of President John Quincy Adams and his wife, Louisa Catherine, were also buried in their tombs in the same crypt.

The only exterior alteration to the church was made in 1889, when the present one-story, five-sided stone wing was added to the east or rear elevation of the original church.

In 1959 the First Parish Church (Unitarian) in Quincy and the Wollaston Unitarian Society united as the United First Parish Church (Unitarian) in Quincy. In 1961-64 approximately \$30,000 was expended in repairing the tower and cupola and/also in putting the structure generally into good condition.

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

*(Continuation Sheet)*

STATE		Massachusetts
COUNTY		Norfolk
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	

*(Number all entries)*

9. Major Bibliographical References: United First Parish Church.

Edmund W. Sinnott, Meeting House & Church in Early New England (New York, Toronto, and London, 1963), 26, 136.

**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS**

1. STATE Massachusetts	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. Theme XX - Architecture (Part II, 1783-1880).
3. NAME(S) OF SITE United First Parish Church, Unitarian (Stone Temple) Church of the Presidents	4. APPROX. ACREAGE .2 acres
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) 1266 Hancock St., at its junction with Washington Street, Quincy, Norfolk County.	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) Congregation, of the Unitarian Church, Rev. Bradford E. Gale, Minister, Quincy 02169.	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

Designed by Alexander Parrish and erected in 1828, the United First Parish Church, also known as the "Stone Temple" and "Church of the Presidents," is an outstanding and little altered example of a Greek Revival church.

The large two-story structure was designed and constructed in the Greek Revival style by Alexander Parrish (1780-1852), a leading Boston architect. Built of Quincy granite, all but the four columns on the portico were a gift of President John Adams. Total cost of construction was \$30,488.56.

The oblong-shaped building has the form of a Greek temple. A broad flight of stone steps lead up to the great pediment<sup>ed</sup> portico, which is supported by four giant monolithic granite Doric columns that measure 25 feet in height and weigh about 25 tons apiece. Above the pediment rises a large square stone clock tower, which in turn is surmounted by an open cupola with eight columns. The long sides of the structure each have three round arch windows that rise two stories in height. Under the entrance portico three large double doors, topped by flat stone lintels, lead into the projecting stone tower and to the interior, which is dominated by a magnificent dome. The plan of the spacious auditorium, however, otherwise follows the design of the Georgian churches built in New England during the last half of the 18th century. Thus the interior is a simple rectangular mass with two longitudinal aisles separating the pews; the fine mahogany pulpit is located in the center of a short side, opposite to the entrance door, and the other three walls have galleries at the second story level.

The one-story five-sided stone wing at the rear of the original church was added in 1889, but does not detract or seriously alter the appearance of the main building.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Elise Lathrop, Old New England Churches (Rutland, Vermont, 1938), 31-32 ;  
Massachusetts, A Guide to its Places and People (American Guide Series) (Boston, 1937), 340. Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York, 1964).

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

Historic American Building Survey: Stone Temple (Church of the Presidents, 1828) (2 photos, 1941), 1266 Hancock Street.

10. PHOTOGRAPHS <u>1111-1111</u> ATTACHED: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION Excellent	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Church	13. DATE OF VISIT Sept. 20, 1967
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) <u>Charles W. Snell</u>	15. TITLE Historian	16. DATE Jan. 19, 1968	

\* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

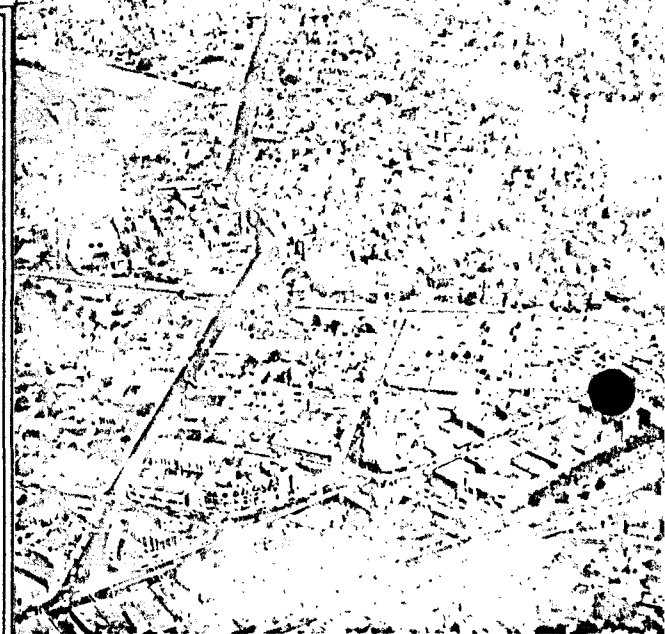
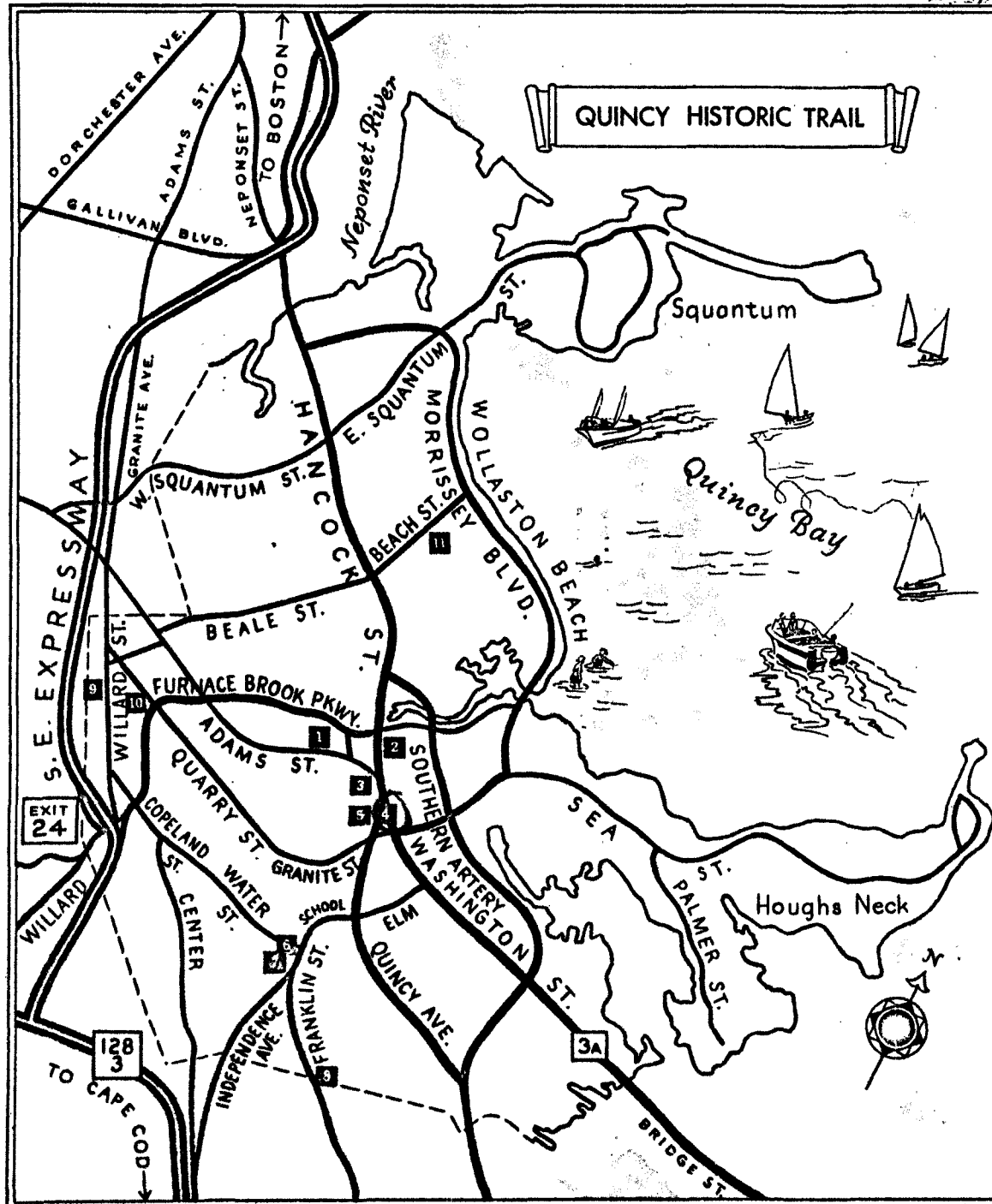
Page 2.

STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
Massachusetts	United First Parish Church, Unitarian (Stone Temple)/ (Church of the Presidents)

Condition

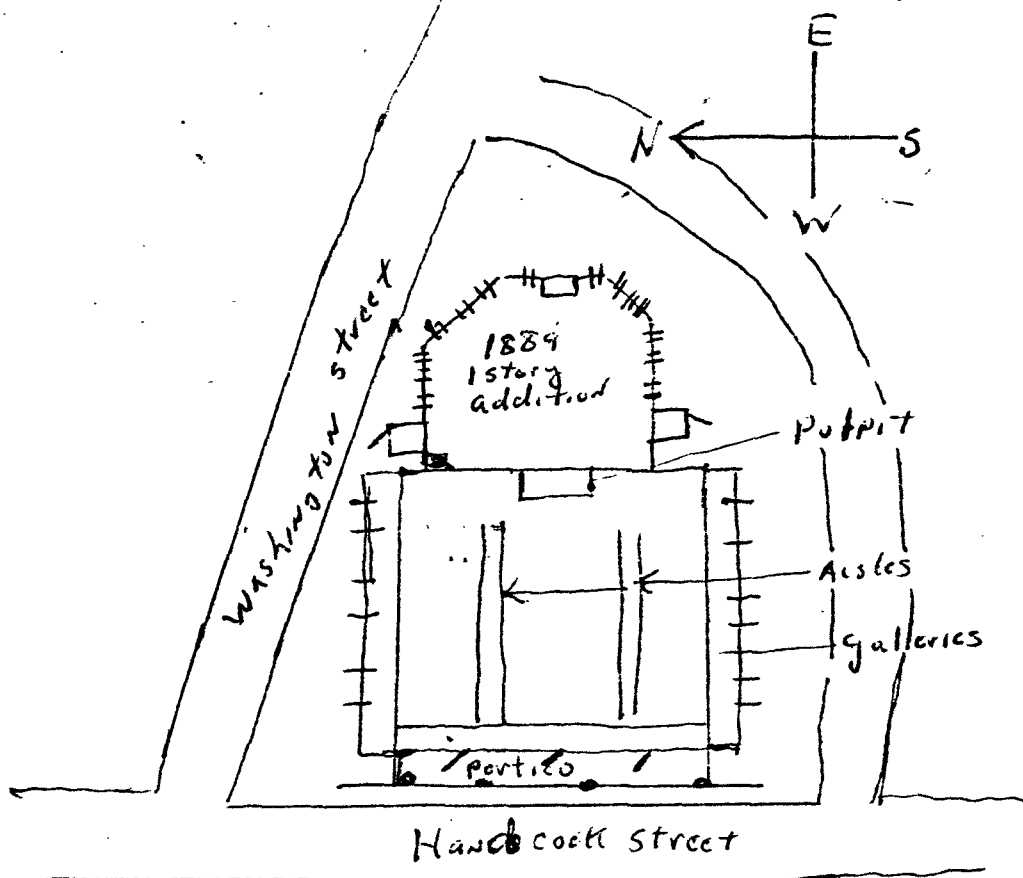
The unaltered structure is maintained in excellent condition, is still used as an active church, and is open to visitors. The tombs of Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams, and also those of their wives, are located in the basement of the tower of this church.



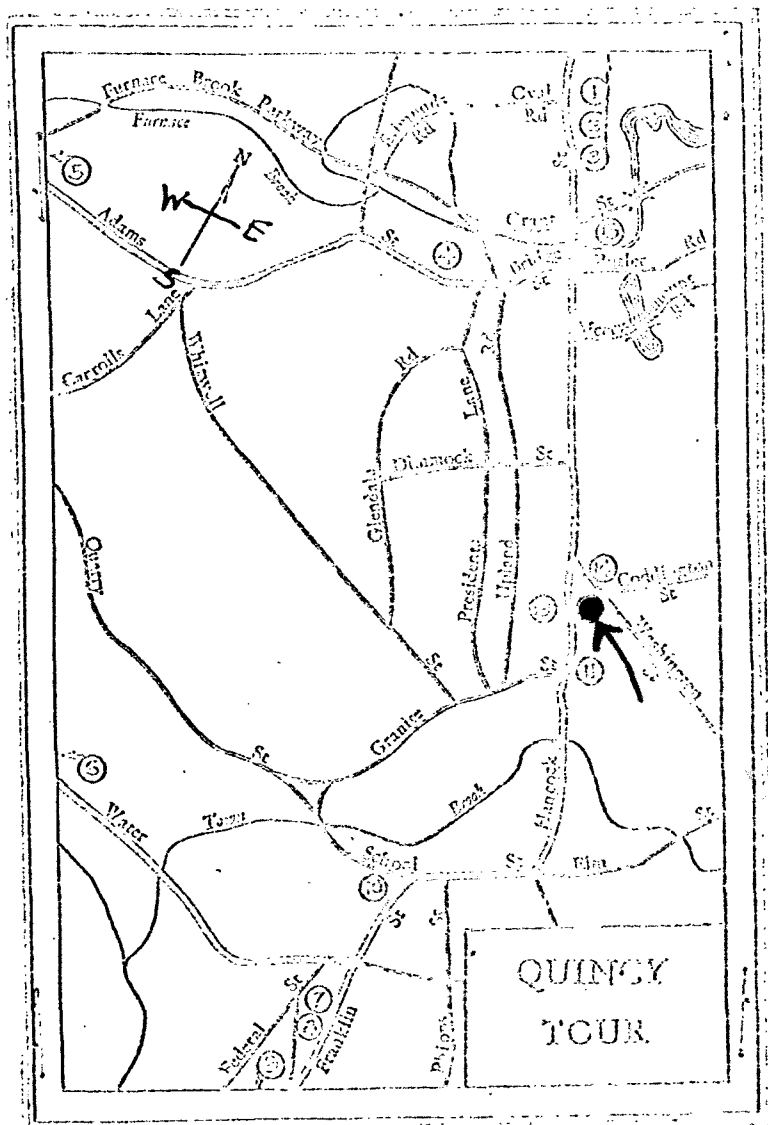


Visit these points of interest  
on the QUINCY HISTORIC TRAIL

- 1** Adams National Historic Site  
Adams Street
- 2** Dorothy Quincy Homestead  
Butler Road
- 3** Adams Academy  
Adams Street
- 4** First Parish Church, Adams Crypt  
Quincy Center
- 5** Quincy City Hall  
Hancock Street, Quincy Center
- 6** John Adams Birthplace  
Franklin Street
- 7** John Quincy Adams Birthplace  
Franklin Street
- 8** Abigail Adams Cairn  
Franklin Street
- 9** First Commercial Railroad  
(To be restored to original condition.)  
West Quincy
- 10** First Ironworks 1644  
West Quincy
- 11** Col. Josiah Quincy House  
Muirhead Street, Wollaston



Sketch plan of the  
Stone Temple or  
United First Parish Church, 1828,  
Quincy, Mass.



#### QUINCY MAP INDEX

- |                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Adams and Son                | 9. Abigail Adams Stone Column     |
| 2. Squaw Rock                   | 10. Robert Burns Statue           |
| 3. Colonel Josiah Quincy House  | 11. Granite Trust Building        |
| 4. Vassal-Adams Mansion         | 12. Stone Temple                  |
| 5. Granite Quarry               | 13. Old Cemetery                  |
| 6. Co-operative Market          | 14. Crane Memorial Public Library |
| 7. John Adams Birthplace        | 15. Dorothy Quincy Mansion        |
| 8. John Quincy Adams Birthplace |                                   |



270 4443 Stone Temple--United First Parish Church,  
Unitarian, 1828 South side (left) and east (rear)  
elevation. One-story section added to rear in 1889.  
Quincy, Mass.

N.P.S. Photo, 1967



268 4441 Stone Temple--United First Parish Church,  
Unitarian, West (front) elevation  
Quincy, Mass.

N.P.S. Photo, 1967







269 4442 Stone Temple-United First Parish Church, Unitarian, 1828  
West (front) elevation and south side (right)  
Quincy, Mass.

N.P.S. Photo, 1967



271 4444 Stone Temple--United First Parish Church,  
Unitarian, 1828  
North side (right) and east (rear) elevations.  
One-story section added to rear in 1889.

N.P.S. Photo, 1967