

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church

other names PG:72-5

2. Location

street & number 8900 Central Avenue not for publication

city or town Landover vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Prince George's code 033 zip code 20785

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

2-1-05
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - Determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper Patrick Andrus Date of Action 3/14/2005

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
2	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	Total

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

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

African American Historic Resources in Prince George's County, Maryland

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

FUNERARY: cemetery

RELIGION: religious facility

FUNERARY: cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 29TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Late Gothic Revival

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD: weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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 pattern of our history.
- B** Property 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)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: African American
 SOCIAL HISTORY
 ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1871-1964

Significant Dates

1871: 1/2 acre of land deeded to Lewis Ridgley for church
 1892: 1 acre of land deeded to church for cemetery
 1921: original church burned, current church constructed

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

African American

Architect/Builder

Unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:
Prince George's County Planning Department

Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church (PG:72-5)
Name of Property

Prince George's County, Maryland
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.26 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8	3 3 9 3 3 6	4 3 0 6 3 3 0	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
2				4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betty Bird, Julie Darsie

Organization Betty Bird & Associates date August 2003

street & number 2607 24th St. NW, Suite 3 telephone (202) 588-9033

city or town Washington, District of Columbia state N/A zip code 20008

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name Methodist Episcopal Church c/o Mildred R. Gray

street & number 10450 Lottsford Road, #4109 telephone (301) 925-7599

city or town Mitchellville state Maryland zip code 20721-2734

Paperwork Reduction 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. 470 *et. seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

PG:72-5
Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Section 7 Page 1

Prince George's County, Maryland
County and State

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church, constructed in 1921, is located on the north side of Central Avenue in the Landover vicinity of Prince George's County, Maryland. The 1-story, 3-bay, wood-frame, church retains its original form and features memorial stained-glass windows with peaked frames. The associated cemetery features hand-carved gravestones with a flower and vine motif. The property occupies a grassy, 1.26-acre site with mature trees and is located in what is now a busy suburban commercial and residential area. Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church was moved from its original location (a few yards to the southeast) to its current location in 1990.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church is located on the north side of Central Avenue, a heavily-traveled, 4-lane road in the Landover vicinity of Prince George's County, Maryland. The surroundings consist of busy suburban shopping centers and residential developments. The property is accessed via Brightseat Road to the north. Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church occupies a grassy, 1.26-acre lot with mature deciduous trees. Stands of trees surround the property on its west, north, and east. The property includes a recent driveway and parking lot on its east, the 1921 church building in its center, and the 1892 cemetery on its west.

Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church is a 1-story, 3-bay, wood-frame church with a front-gable roof. It consists of a 1921 block on the south and a small 1940s extension on the north. The church was moved from its original location (a few yards to the southeast) to its current location in 1990.¹ The corners of the original concrete foundation of the 1921 church remain in place a few yards southwest of the current church. Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church has a 1990 poured concrete foundation, wood drop siding with cornerboards, and a 2002 asphalt-shingle roof with open eaves and fascia boards.² A parged chimney stack rises from the east slope of the roof. The main entry to the church is through a small, front-gable vestibule that projects from the south elevation of the church. The vestibule has double, wood, 5-panel doors with recent hardware. The east and west walls of the vestibule each have a window. The 1921 section of the church has peaked window openings. The double-hung, stained-glass windows date to the 1940s and have diamond and square patterns in red, blue, gold, turquoise, and green. Each window is a memorial to a past member of the church. The 1940s section of the church has flat double-hung windows, some with stained-glass inserts.

The interior of the church was restored after the building was moved in 1990. The interior features an original yellow pine floor, original beadboard wainscoting, window surrounds from 1990, and original oak pews, altar rail, and chairs.³ The pews, altar rail, and chairs feature a pointed-arch, Gothic Revival motif. The upper walls and ceiling are drywall and date to 2002 when the church suffered a fire that destroyed the original plaster. A pastor's study has been partitioned off in the northwest corner of the church. A drywalled chimney stack, where the original wood stove was located, projects from the east wall.

The cemetery, which dates to 1892, occupies the west end of the property. The approximately one-half acre cemetery retains its rural feeling. It has about 20 gravestones arranged in orderly rows and grouped by families. The stones date from the 1910s to the 1940s. Most of the stones are hand-carved. Many feature a carved flower and vine motif.

¹ The church was moved by the State Highway Administration in preparation for the widening of Central Avenue.

² The roof was replaced following a fire in 2002.

³ According to Mildred Ridgley Gray, the pews, altar rail, and chairs were ordered from the Cokesbury Company, a Methodist supplier of church furnishings.

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The cemetery was examined in 1983 by a professional archaeologist in cooperation with the Prince George's County Genealogical Society.⁴ The earliest graves were unmarked, but many have been located and marked with yellow flags.

Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church retains its integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Although the church has been moved, the spatial relationship between the church and cemetery and the interior arrangement of the church are unchanged. The church retains its design and form. With the exception of the church's foundation, interior window surrounds, ceiling, and roof, the original materials and workmanship are intact and unchanged. Despite its suburban surroundings, the property, with its grassy lawn and trees, retains the feeling of a small, rural church. Finally, the church retains its historic associations. It is still owned by its original congregation and continues in use as a church.

⁴ Elaine Entwisle, Ridgley-Zion United Methodist Church Cemetery, Prince George's County Genealogical Society, 1983.

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Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church
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Section 8 Page 1

Prince George's County, Maryland
County and State

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church is significant for its association with the themes "The end of Reconstruction in Prince George's County, 1872-1896," "*Plessy vs. Ferguson* and the institution of government-sanctioned segregation in Prince George's County, 1896-1916, and "Suburban settlement in Prince George's County: The African American experience, 1896-1964." These themes are set forth in the Multiple Property Documentation for African American Historic Resources in Prince George's County. Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1871, now includes a cemetery begun in 1892 and a church constructed in 1921. The church was the spiritual and social center of the formerly rural African American farming community of Ridgley in the area now generally known as Landover. The property is an outstanding example of the form of a rural, African American church, and its cemetery holds the potential to yield information about traditional African American religious beliefs and practices.

Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church derives its primary significance from its association with the African American community. Although it was moved to a different location within the church property, it remains within its original immediate setting and environment. Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church is one of only a handful of African American church buildings in Prince George's County that retains its original rural form. The church is one of only two remaining community buildings associated with the African American community of Ridgley. (The other is Ridgley School, constructed 1927.) The Church illustrates how rural forms and models persisted even as Prince George's County became increasingly suburban in character.

The period of significance begins in 1871 with the acquisition of the property by the founders of the church and continues through 1964, the end date of the associated theme, "Suburban settlement in Prince George's County: The African American experience, 1896-1964."

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Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church
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Section 8 Page 2

Prince George's County, Maryland
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RESOURCE HISTORY AND HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church was the center of the rural, African American farming community that developed along Central Turnpike (now Central Avenue) after the Civil War. Lewis Ridgley held the first services for the congregation in his home. In January 1871, he and the other trustees of the congregation (Joseph Beall and Richard Cook) acquired one-half acre from Thomas E. and Bettie Berry for "a place of Divine Worship for the use of the Ministry and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church."⁵ Members of the congregation began construction of the church in the spring of 1871, hauling logs from the site to a nearby mill and bartering unneeded logs in exchange for the sawing of lumber. The 1-room, whitewashed building opened the following fall.⁶

In 1892, the trustees (Lewis Ridgley, Samuel Lofton, Lewis Cook, Franklin Douglas, and Frank Johnson) bought an additional acre from Bettie Berry for "Divine Worship and Cemetery." The earliest graves are unmarked; the first hand-carved headstones date to the 1910s.⁷

In 1921, the first Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church burned to the ground. Congregants immediately constructed the current building and bought its furnishings with the proceeds from bake sales, produce stands, and other fundraisers.⁸ During the late 1940s, an addition on the north end of the building provided space for a choir loft and organ as well as a partial basement and central heating system.⁹

Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church was the center of the African American community in the formerly rural Landover area. The first church doubled as a school and meeting hall until construction of Ridgley School ca. 1880. Church social

⁵ Mildred Ridgley Gray, *Like Those Who Dream*, 2. Thomas E. and Bettie Berry were white landowners and former slave holders. Many congregants of Ridgley Church were former slaves or descendants of slaves who worked on the Berry farms (Bianca Floyd in Gray, 15-16).

⁶ Mildred Ridgley Gray, *Like Those Who Dream*, 3.

⁷ Mildred Ridgley Gray, *Like Those Who Dream*, 3-4; Cemetery information compiled by Elaine Entwisle, Prince George's County Genealogical Society, 1983.

⁸ Mildred Ridgley Gray, *Like Those Who Dream*, 4-5.

⁹ Mildred Ridgley Gray, *Like Those Who Dream*, 5.

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activities over the years included Children's Day, Women's Day, Men's Day, gospel singing, camp meetings, and Sunday dinners on the lawn.¹⁰

Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church merged with Seat Pleasant Larger Parish United Methodist Church in 1980. The combined congregation changed its name to Gethsemane United Methodist Church in 1982.

In 1986, plans to widen Central Avenue began. Ridgley Church was originally slated for demolition. After a lengthy battle that involved court hearings and help from local, state, and federal politicians, the State Highway Administration agreed to move the church several yards to the northeast and pay for its restoration. The restored Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church was rededicated in 1990. New Rock Church of Fire, Inc., currently leases the building.

¹⁰ Bianca Floyd in Mildred Ridgley Gray, *Like Those Who Dream*, 16; Gray, 5.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Entwisle, Elaine. Ridgley-Zion United Methodist Church Cemetery. Prince George's County Genealogical Society, 1983. [Prince George's County Planning Department]

Gray, Mildred Ridgley. Like Those Who Dream: A History of Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church, Prince George's County, Maryland. 1990. [Prince George's County Planning Department]

Pearl, Susan G. *African-American Heritage Survey, 1996*. Upper Marlboro, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1996.

Royall, Roderick. Ridgley Church has new site for new life. *Prince George's Journal*. May 5, 1989.

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Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The National Register boundary for Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church is identical to that of Prince George's County Tax Map 67, Lot 99. The boundary encompasses 1.26 acres.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The above-described National Register boundary encompasses what remains of the 1.5 acres deeded to Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church in 1871 and 1892. Approximately 0.25 acre was acquired by the State Highway Administration for widening of Central Avenue.