

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: West Virginia
COUNTY: Monroe
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE DEC 31 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
* Rehoboth Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Rehoboth M.E. Church, South--"Old Rehoboth"

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
2 miles east of Union, off State Route #3

CITY OR TOWN: Union CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Second

STATE: West Virginia CODE: 54 COUNTY: Monroe CODE: 063

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input 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) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
The Methodist Historical Society of the West Virginia Conference

STREET AND NUMBER:
General Conference Headquarters

CITY OR TOWN: Charleston STATE: West Virginia CODE: 54

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Office of the County Clerk of Monroe County

STREET AND NUMBER:
County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Union STATE: West Virginia CODE: 54

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

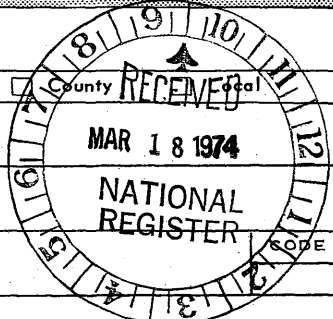
TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: West Virginia

COUNTY: Monroe

ENTRY NUMBER: DEC 31 1974

DATE: DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located in the center of a depression in limestone table and called a "sink," this small structure is made of medium size logs hewn on the inside only. The logs are diamond-shaped on the ends for a length of about eighteen inches to receive the next log above. The walls to the eaves are thirteen logs high.

The building's only door is in the middle of the south side. It is forty inches wide but only sixty-five inches high. There is one window on the east end. It is behind the pulpit and gives a bit of light for reading. Another, larger window is high on the north side of the church. It is three feet square. No provision is shown to have been made for heat, and light was sacrificed to give added protection from possible Indian raids.

The inside floor space is 21 feet by 30 feet. A deep gallery extends around three sides of the interior at the height of the door.

A pulpit of rough-hewn walnut and poplar boards stands high against the east wall. It is high off the floor to provide the preacher with a good view of the worshippers in the balcony.

Some of the backless truncheon benches used by the early congregations of Rehoboth are still in place. They are split logs with legs bored into the unhewn side. They have the darkness of age and the smoothness of much use. The whole of the little sanctuary seems to glow on a sunny day in the soft light from the two small windows and the open door.

A cemetery surrounds Rehoboth on each side in close proximity to the building. There are stones which mark the graves of many of those who gave the land, built the church, and first worshipped in it. Most markers date from the 18th and 19th centuries. Trees have grown up around the building, some to great size, to replace the ones which were cut down to prevent the Indians from hiding behind them.

Through the years the building received repairs, new roofs like the original board and shingled one. Later, a roof with more slant and better shingles was built. Presently, Rehoboth is well protected from the weather by a tin-roofed shed which covers the entire structure. The Commission of Archives and History of the United Methodist Church is making plans to replace this shelter with another which will give a better view of Old Rehoboth.

The church lot is well kept. The site is attractive and inviting. A caretaker lives nearby who gives aid, as needed, to visitors who are asked to sign a register.

An all weather gravel drive with a parking lot gives access from State Route No. 3 to the Rehoboth site.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1786**

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Rehoboth: "For now the Lord has made a broad place (Rehoboth) for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." --Genesis 26:22.

The Christmas Conference held in Baltimore in 1784 founded the Methodist Society in America and appointed Francis Asbury to be the Society's first Bishop. In that same year, a regular Methodist Society was formed on the western frontier in what was known locally as the "Sinks" of Greenbrier County (now Monroe County).

Meetings of the Society were in cabin homes and in the few widely scattered school houses. Preachers were seldom present because of the hardships of travel to such a remote community.

Early in 1785, Edward Keenan, a Catholic, wrote Bishop Asbury to send a regular preacher. A young man, newly ordained, William Phœbus answered the call and, thus, became the first full-time Methodist minister to the first Society in the region.

Under the leadership of Brother Phœbus, the Society soon outgrew their cabin meeting places. A meetinghouse was an urgent need. In 1785 or 1786, a cabin church was raised in a location well chosen to afford protection from Indian attack, a "broad place" made free of hiding places for the Indians.

A short time later, Edward Keenan, now converted to Methodism, gave a deed to the land where the Rehoboth Church was built and where it still stands:

"...in the County of Greenbrier and the State of Virginia. . . unto William Scarborough, Daniel McMullen, James Christy, and Alexander House. . .in the just sum of fifty pounds of good and lawful money in the state aforesaid. . .I have therefore set my hand and seal this ninth day of February in the year of our Lord 1787, . . .for as long as grass grows and water flows."

Tradition says that Bishop Asbury preached the dedication sermon. The story is that he stood in the doorway to speak to a crowd larger than the church would hold. At Rehoboth, the Bishop did hold sessions of the Greenbrier Conference in 1792, 1793, and 1796.

Other early giants of Methodism to visit Rehoboth were:

Peter Cartwright, Hardy circuit rider who carried "the faith" westward,

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Asbury, Francis, Journal of Reverend Francis Asbury. 3 vols. New York: Lane and Scott, 1852. (II, 196).

Clark, Elmer T., et. al., eds. The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury. 3 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958. (I, 575, 645, 714, 759; II, 88; III, 141).

Kibler, J.L. A Historical Sketch of Rehoboth M.E. Church, South. Methodist Shrine edition. Glenville, W.Va.: n.p., 1960.

Sherwood, Lawrence. "Rehoboth Church." West Virginia State Magazine, V (Aug. 1954), 12, 66-69.

. "The Ten National Shrines of Methodism. Glenville, W.Va."

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

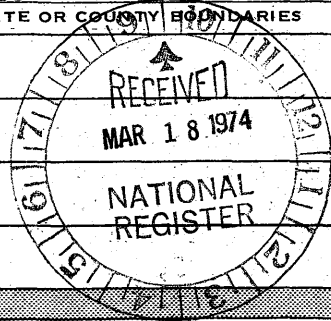
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		37 ° 35' 24 "	80° 30 ' 24 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

17/54356
4160250
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **3/4 Acre**

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



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Colonel C.E. Turley, Field Agent**

ORGANIZATION: **West Virginia Antiquities Commission** DATE: **October 31, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Old Mountainlair, West Virginia University**

CITY OR TOWN: **Morgantown** STATE: **West Virginia** CODE: **54**

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: Leonard M. Davis
Leonard M. Davis

Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: March 12, 1974

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

AK Warlessen
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 12/31/74

ATTEST:
Ronald M. Beerburg
Actg. Keeper of The National Register

Date: 12/31/74

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Monroe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 31 1974

(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

starting churches in Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois by 1832, was at Rehoboth on occasion.

Jessie Lee, who introduced Methodism into New England and preached his first sermon in Boston under an elm tree, for no church group would permit him to its sanctuary, visited this sanctuary early in its existence.

Freeborn Garrison, John Tunnell, and Francis Poythress were others who preached in this little wilderness meetinghouse, possibly the oldest Protestant church building west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The Centennial celebration of the founding of this Methodist Society was held at Rehoboth on July 20, 1884. Hundreds of people were present to hear the principal address given by the Reverend J.L. Kibler. In an historical sketch, he reviewed the history of Old Rehoboth, the events and her people for the past one hundred years.

A Methodist Shrine Edition of Reverend Kibler's address was published in pamphlet form in 1960, by Lawrence Sherwood of Glenville, West Virginia. The closing paragraph was as follows:

"Here, the now glorified Bishop Asbury, lifted up his voice in the wilderness, and sent out through this country an influence and a power, which is felt even today in more than a thousand hearts. My own heart catches the fire, and my own eyes see the light which he kindled in younder old church."

By the action of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in 1960, Rehoboth Church was designated one of ten Methodist Shrines in America. One of a very few remaining log churches, Rehoboth's rough-hewn sturdiness and simplicity of style are attributes of the frontier atmosphere in which the needs for such a structure were met. The building is impressive for its contrast to grand design and ornamentation of another period.



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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Monroe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 31 1974

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Rehoboth Church has not been altered in size or mode of construction over the years. A new roof has had to be placed at various times and minor repairs made, but nothing of major proportions has been required. A plaque over the door states that the structure was "restored" in 1927, and the protective shed was built over the church (it is neither connected to nor does it touch Rehoboth). This roof is of hand-riven oak boards held in place by poles. A few logs have been replaced and the gallery has received minor repairs, but care has been taken to insure that all work closely matches what has existed since the 1780s. All in all, Rehoboth Church is as nearly original as can be expected for its age.

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

Although conclusive documentary evidence that the Rehoboth Church near Union, Monroe County, West Virginia, was constructed in 1786 has not been located, it is the date traditionally given and can be fairly well substantiated. A deed of August 30, 1954, transferring the property, states that one Edward Keenan conveyed to the trustees of Rehoboth a tract of five acres of land on which the church stood in 1787, and a note of conveyance of the same date confirms the year and has a further notation penciled in giving the month as February. John Smith, an early circuit rider in the Greenbrier District of the Methodist Church, notes in his diary that he preached at Rehoboth Church on July 31, 1787. The building had to have been constructed before the end of July 1787, therefore, and the probability of its erection in 1786 is not unlikely.

