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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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Union Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church Complex  
other names/site number Blackwater School, Union Wesley UM Church, Camp Meeting and Cemetery

### 2. Location

street & number Powell Farm Road  not for publication  
city or town Clarksville  vicinity  
state Delaware code DE county Sussex code 005 zip code \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

*Ernest A. Davis* Deputy SHPO 7/24/2014  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

*Jon Edson W. Beall* 9.17.14  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**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.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
7	11	buildings
2	0	sites
1	2	structures
0	1	objects
10	14	<b>Total</b>

**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**

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Education: School  
Religious: Church  
Religious: Camp Meeting Ground  
Funerary: Cemetery

Religious: Church  
Religious: Camp Meeting Ground  
Funerary: Cemetery

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

19<sup>th</sup> Century Frame Vernacular  
Colonial Revival

foundation: Concrete, Brick Piers  
 walls: Brick, drop siding  
 roof: Asphalt shingle  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_



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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

Located near the Sussex County community of Clarksville in Baltimore Hundred, the Union Wesley Methodist Church Complex is a grouping of buildings from the 19th century up to the present that represent the continuing use of this property as a center of religious life and traditions in the African American Community in southern Delaware. The parcel contains the Union Wesley Methodist Church (1959), the Blackwater School (1890), a camp meeting ground (c.1873), and a large cemetery. The church faces Powell Farm Road and is accessed from an entrance drive that also serves as the access to the camp meeting ground. The camp meeting ground is located at the back of the parcel behind a vegetative screen of shrubs that hide it from the road. An elevated wooden structure called a firestand is placed along the road on the way into the camp meeting ground. The camp meeting ground displays a circular plan with a centrally placed large bower (covered but open sided structure for worship) surrounded by the “tents” that serve as residences for the attendees of the two week long annual camp meeting. Church families constructed and maintained their own buildings to inhabit during the annual camp meeting. The earliest surviving buildings are small frame gable roofed two bay wide and two stories tall. Although most were probably built like this, many have been replaced with more modern structures over time. These included singlewide mobile homes in the 1970s and prefabricated buildings in the last ten years. The building that serves as the refectory, or dining hall, is the former Blackwater School (1890). Tall pine trees shade the camp meeting grounds. Surrounding the camp meeting ground on the east and south sides is the cemetery. Marked burials date from the 1870s and continued into the 21st century. The site of the 1880 era church building was located at the rear of the camp ground with the concrete steps and boxwood shrubs marking its former location. The extant church building is located on the site of the former 1922 school built to replace the frame one-room Blackwater School but burned in the 1952 and not rebuilt. Non-contributing buildings include the pastor’s residence, located along Powell Farm Road, and concrete block bathroom facilities constructed in the camp ground in the woods but set back from the meeting ground.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### **The Blackwater School Building**

The Blackwater School building is a one story, gable roofed, two bay wide and three bay long rectangular, frame building with a brick chimney rising from near the ridgeline on the south elevation. The building is simply detailed with drop siding and simple window surrounds. Windows are 2/2 double hung sash. Both the north and south elevations display entry doors and a window but today only the south elevation entry is in use. A single bay wide and deep, shed roofed addition is attached to the western elevation on the north end.

The interior of the building is a single open space with beaded board siding covering the interior walls. The arrangement of tables and cooking equipment indicates the continuing use of the building for a refectory for the camp meeting. A service counter was added to the interior to separate the dining and cooking spaces and appears to date from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

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### **Union Wesley Methodist Church**

The brick, T-shaped Union Wesley Methodist Church has a cross gable roof and displays a simple Colonial Revival style. The narrow portion of the T addresses the street and a narrow, brick, gable roofed open bell tower rises at the intersection of the cross gable on the north elevation and also indicates the main entry to the building.

The interior of the church is divided into two function areas, the sanctuary which occupies the long arm of the T, and smaller rooms across the top. The altar is placed in the northwest end of the space. A recent large social hall was attached to the rear of the church building c. 2005.

### **Union Wesley Camp Meeting Ground**

Accessed by a dirt road, the Union Wesley Camp Meeting Ground is not visible from the main road that passes in front of the church. The dirt road leads from the parking area to the north of the church back through a screen of bushes and trees and into the camp meeting ground beyond. A firestand, a platform upon which to build a fire is placed along the road, recalling the time before electricity when these were in use to light the campground. The first building visible is the red-painted Blackwater School building. A mix of small frame buildings, singlewide trailers and prefabricated buildings are placed in a circle. At the center of the circular open space is the Bower, a gable roofed, open-sided structure constructed of telephone poles and openwork trusses. Oriented on an east-west axis, this structure functions as an open-air worship space with pew benches facing east toward the pulpit platform. Behind the Bower is the site of the former church building on the property which was destroyed by fire in the early 1950s. The concrete block steps remain and the building site is lined with boxwood bushes and a flagpole was placed inside the space. Large, tall pine trees shade the campground and the understory is kept clear.

### **Wesley United Methodist Church Cemetery**

A cemetery fills the remaining sections of the property to the rear and south of the campground. To the rear of the property and behind the site of the earlier church, is the section of the cemetery that contains the oldest burials. A concrete block wall separates the meeting ground from the cemetery, which contains marked and unmarked burials. The larger section of the cemetery, to the south, also contains marked and unmarked burials. The burials are generally laid out in rows and in family groups.

### **The Landscape**

Evidence of the historic land use of the property is evident in the surviving landscape features of the property. In addition to the circulation within the camp ground itself, the property also contains an old road bed that parallels the property along the northern border. The remnants of the dense woodland that covered this site dating back to the early twentieth century and probably earlier survive in the section of the property between the church and the campground and behind the older section of the cemetery. This area behind the cemetery may contain additional burials.

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**Non-Contributing Buildings**

Pastor's Residence- one story, three-bay wide, gable roofed, vinyl sided building with the ridge perpendicular to the street. Placed at the entrance to the property and across the parking lot from the Church. c. 2000.

Storage Building- one-story, gable roofed, metal building with the roof ridge parallel with the street. Located east of the Pastor's Residence. c. 2005.

Concrete Block Bathhouses- one story concrete block bathhouses placed in the wooded area between the church and the campground. c. 1960.

Eight tents that surround the Bower are either single-wide trailers that date from the 1970s or small prefabricated buildings that date to the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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**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 patterns of our history.
- B Property is 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education, Religion, Social History, Ethnic

Heritage: Black

**Period of Significance**

1873-1963

**Significant Dates**

1890, 1952, 1959

**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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

African American

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown



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**Period of Significance (justification)** 1873-1963, the time period when the property was purchased by the congregation until 50 years ago. 1890 is a significant date for the construction of the Blackwater School. 1952 is the year the 1923 duPont era school burned and was not rebuilt. 1959 is the year the cornerstone was laid for the new church building.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)** The property is owned by a religious institution and used for religious purposes. It contains an associated cemetery.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Located in Baltimore Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware near the hamlet of Clarksville, the Union Wesley Methodist Church Complex contains a collection of historic resources and continuing traditions that is one of the most significant in the state of Delaware for understanding and documenting the African American religious traditions in the post Civil War Period. The connection between religion, education and community are well illustrated by this property in a combination that retains significance to community members to the present day. Included on this parcel are the Union Wesley United Methodist Church and cemetery, the Union Wesley Camp Meeting Ground, and Blackwater School, which survived by serving as the refectory for the camp meetings that take place annually on the property during the last week of July and first week of August.

The first school built on the site was constructed by the community under the auspices of the Delaware Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Colored People. Replacing a building destroyed by fire, the nominated Blackwater School was built in 1890, still during the functional era of the Delaware Association and before the state took over the school system in 1891. The Delaware Association was still involved primarily with the education of African American children in Delaware but their primary role was paying teacher salaries and not building construction as they had previously. A survey of surviving buildings relating to African American Education was completed in 2007 and updated in 2013. School buildings from this period have been identified in the communities of: Newark in New Castle County; Harrington, Smyrna, Viola, and Wyoming in Kent County; and, Blackwater and Bridgeville in Sussex County. Of these seven buildings the Blackwater School is the best surviving example in the state because of the high level of integrity this site retains.

The Union Wesley Methodist Church Complex is being nominated under National Register Criterion A with areas of significance being social history and education, significance that survives in the buildings, sites, structures, and objects that represent African American history in southern Delaware from the Post-Civil War era to the present.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Area of Significance, Social History: Wesley Community**

The Union Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church Complex is the spiritual center of a larger community of African Americans that originates in the central part of Sussex County. The community from which the schools present on the property derived their names is called Blackwater. Family names found in the cemetery include Hall, Tunnell, Burton, Welburn, Oliver, Collins, Rickards, Walters, Rogers, Andrews, Tyres, Evans, Derrickson, and Williams. The earliest recorded burial is for Charles E. Hall, dating to 1864 and family plots are still accepting burials today. Descendants of many of those who are buried here return for the annual camp meeting

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held during the last week of July and first of August. Since its establishment, Union Wesley has always been affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church. Community members and families travel from across the state of Delaware, the Delmarva Region and beyond to return to this part of central Sussex County to reunite with family members and renew their faith at the camp meeting every summer. This community was founded on and renewed by the bonds of faith and family.

The 1820 Federal Census indicated there were 228 enslaved people and 125 free African Americans living in Baltimore Hundred along side the white population of 1725 individuals. The Black population represented 17% of the total but this landscape was divided and there was tension between the communities. In 1818 white landholders in Baltimore and adjoining Dagsborough Hundreds sent the following petition to the Delaware Legislature:

“. . . That whereas there is so many acts of felony of pilfering and stealing committed [sic] by the people of colour both bound and free in the Hundreds aforesaid, that the Inhabitants are much distressed in their property such as Poltry of every kind, Sheep, Smoke Houses, and Corn Stacks, [etc.] That for more safety in such property peace and tranquility we your petitioners prays your Humble Body to take the premises into your serious consideration and Enact a Paterole [sic] Law to the entent that such file practices may be done away with if Possible. Authorizing the Justices of the peace in the hundred aforesaid to appoint such persons as he or they may think proper from time to time as Paterolers to travel from place to place to suppress such evil practices in the Hundreds aforesaid. . . .”

Whether or not the alleged activities actually occurred in large numbers as indicated in the petition, white landowners were concerned about the movement and action of the African American population in their vicinity both free and enslaved. While action on this specific petition was not recorded, the state legislature did over the next 40 years enact more and more restrictive measures limiting the movements and restrict assembly of the free people of color in Delaware. For example, in 1832 the Delaware Legislature passed a law that restricted the ownership of guns by free Blacks, prohibited assembly after 10 PM, and denied non-resident Blacks the opportunity to preach.

Here at Blackwater, community tradition indicates that religious meetings were held on the nominated property beginning in 1844. This tradition describes that people gathered with wagons arranged in a circle so a quick exit could be made if needed. Church meetings and Bible study were also conducted in homes prior to the Civil War. At the end of the War, the Methodist Episcopal Church encouraged the formation of separate conferences for African American congregations. The Delaware Conference included all the churches from as far east as Bridgeton and Salem in southern New Jersey, to the north as far as Philadelphia, and including all of Delaware and the Maryland Eastern Shore. Under the leadership of Bishop E.S. Janes of Philadelphia, clergy from across the region met at changing venues across the region to discuss the progress of their work and ministry. And the minutes from the 1864 meeting indicate the presence of the African American religious establishment in the Methodist Episcopal Church did not begin then. A well-established hierarchy of ranked clergy and committees was evident at the first meeting. The list of charges and circuits includes Milton, Delaware in the Choptank Circuit Region, the closest community named near the Blackwater community. There were five churches in the Milton Circuit and it is possible that the congregation at Blackwater was one of those.

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It is clear that large numbers of African Americans stayed with the Methodist Episcopal Church through the Civil War period and the greater Blackwater Community was no exception. It wasn't until the 1880s that a disagreement about who could preach led to the formation of the Antioch African Methodist Episcopal Church (extant) in nearby Frankford, Delaware and its affiliation with the independent Methodist denomination of Richard Allen.

The original section of the nominated property was purchased from Mr. Miers Steel in 1873 and the church and school buildings were constructed soon after that. The Delaware Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church promoted the construction of new church buildings through fundraising efforts of the Church Extension Committee which raised funds for this purpose among those communities able to construct church buildings to help out those less fortunate. Help with the school came from the Delaware Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Colored People. A community effort, the Delaware Association may have provided some construction expertise but the major contribution by the group was the location and payment of teachers.

The church building was placed at the eastern side of the property, set well off the road and was within the circle of the camp meeting. The building was oriented so the altar was at the east end of the building and a tower welcomed congregants at the front end. The first burials in the cemetery were located behind the church. On the western side of the open area, opposite the church, was the old Blackwater School. Like the many schools built in communities of color across the state, this building is the result of community initiative and value of education. This message was reinforced from the pulpit as well as the Annual Delaware Methodist Episcopal Conference Committee on Education reported on and passed resolutions requesting pastors take a message of the importance of education to their congregations every year from its establishment in 1864. The minutes of the annual conferences provide detail about various communities and the pastors who served them. The Blackwater community is referred to as Clarksville, for the nearby town, but does not regularly appear in the minutes until 1909 when Joshua J. Rogers is cited as serving this community as a lay preacher. In 1928, retired pastor G.B. Coleman is listed as the pastor for Clarksville and the congregation was noted as having 47 members. The next minister, Brother R.A.F. Graham came to Clarksville in 1929. He had joined the ministry in 1919 and this was his seventh assignment. His report to the conference in 1930 illustrated the effect of the beginnings of the Great Depression on the Blackwater community. "Clarksville has also been greatly weakened by the migration of her membership north. Those remaining have been loyal to both the pastor and the benevolent causes." That year Brother Graham led the connection of the Clarksville congregation with that in Selbyville and these two churches remained linked into the 1960s. Local preachers continued to participate and be recognized in the conference minutes. In 1933, George P. Rogers was cited as the local preacher in Clarksville and the two congregations had a total of 117 members that year. Pastor W.E. Hilton was served the Clarksville/Selbyville Charge from 1934 until 1936 when F. Donald Jones was appointed to Clarksville as his first assignment. The next year he was replaced by Pastor W.W. Brown who stayed until 1955. In 1956 when Pastor George W. Taylor came to Clarksville, the combined membership of the Clarksville/Selbyville Charge was 278. District minutes started to name women associated with the various committees and positions at the church. In 1959, Mrs. Shirley Sturgis and Mrs. Cary Collins were listed as certified lay speakers and Mrs. Louis Hall was the superintendent of the church school. Pastor G.W. Taylor's report described the construction of the new brick church, replacing the former frame church building that had been destroyed by fire in January 1957: "The people at Clarksville have erected a beautiful church building. It is a credit to the people of the charge and the conference." Unfortunately, there is no mention of any architect or builder in the conference minutes. Pastor

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Taylor remained at Clarksville into the mid-1960s. This series of conference minutes ended in 1965 when the charges and local churches were transferred to the Peninsula Conference of the United Methodist Church.

What began as a circle of wagons formalized into the traditional camp meeting ground popular in the Methodist worship of both African American and Euro-American Methodist congregations. Four camp meeting grounds survive in the state, three in active use. The Bethel Camp outside of the town of Laurel in Sussex County, retains original camp buildings but no longer is associated with a church and the camp serves a residential function. The nomination for Carey's Camp (NR 1972), a Euro-American Methodist Camp in Phillips Hill in Western Sussex County, describes the camp meeting genesis and phenomenon:

Camp meetings are among the oldest institutions in the Methodist Church, dating to the era when itinerant ministers preached in the open air to large congregations who sometimes travelled long distances to hear services that often lasted several days. Such bush meetings were held under temporary shelters made of boughs lashed together. As the bush meetings became institutionalized annual affairs, camp meeting grounds were established....

Carey's Camp, established in 1886, is still in use and the annual event draws a large crowd. The central open-air structure for worship service at Carey's Camp is called a tabernacle. The two camp grounds associated with African American congregations are the Antioch AME Church Camp Ground in Frankford, Sussex County, and the Union Wesley Camp Ground, the subject of this nomination. The central structure is called a Bower at Union Wesley and Antioch. In addition to the tents and the Bower, buildings with other functions are present including a Confectionary and a Boarding Tent. These buildings are the focus of food sales to worshipers and attendees. At Union Wesley, the Blackwater School building serves as the Boarding Tent and has been modified from its original layout accordingly.

#### **Area of Significance: Education: African American Education in Delaware**

In Delaware, the education of African Americans has been a subject of philanthropic interest since the early 19th century. The African School Society was founded in 1809 to support the education of African American children. Based in Wilmington and predominately funded by the Quaker community, the society operated separate schools for boys. Girls' education was supported by an independent organization called the Female African School Society, run by Quaker women. By the end of the Civil War, there were five schools across the state for African Americans: two in Wilmington, and one each in Newport, and Odessa, in New Castle County and in Camden in Kent County, Delaware.

With the end of the Civil War, much of the aid and relief to the newly freed population was focused on the former Confederate states. Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia and Kentucky, as border states did not qualify for much of this attention and the philanthropic community stepped in to assist. In 1862, A philanthropic organization based in New York was focused on aiding the newly freed population. The American Freedman's Union Commission published a monthly journal called The American Freedman that reported on activities to chart the progress for the establishment schools for the newly free across the South. Organizations in other states were set up to support the same work and in collaboration with the American Freedman's Union Commission. In this region, Maryland led the way with the establishment of the Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Colored People of Maryland. The 1866 Delaware Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church passed a closing resolution that praised their efforts:



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Resolved 6th, that we regard with profound gratitude to Almighty God, the efforts of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Intellectual Improvement of the Colored People of Maryland, who for nearly two centuries have been kept in the lowest depths of ignorance and degradation. But Maryland, by her own act, had said to her bondsmen, "Go Free!" (for which she will stand renounced on the pages of this nations history, and generations yet unborn will rise up to call her blessed.)

On the 9th of January 1865, that association opened the first free school in Law's building, corner of Calvert and Saratoga Street, Baltimore; and in November, 1865 in the city and counties, her public schools numbered in pupils 2314 persons, who are struggling night and day to un-lease the bond of ignorance and gain the inestimable blessing of education. For the efforts of this noble Association we tender our hearty appreciation and thanks, praying that the larges prosperity may attend its promoters, and the blessed work in which it is engaged.

There was interest in Delaware in this work as well and the Maryland Association leader, Francis King, was asked to come to Delaware to speak to a group mostly of the Quaker and Methodist men, about establishing a similar organization here. The Delaware Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Colored People [hereafter the Delaware Association] was founded in 1866 after hearing Mr. King. The African School Society remained in existence but instead of acting independently, became a major sponsor of the Delaware Association and provided funds and their school building on Orange Street in Wilmington (non-extant) to support a Normal School. A Branch Office of the American Freedman's Union Commission was established in Wilmington with Reverend John G. Furey noted as Secretary. In an article titled "The Delaware Association," Thomas Kimber, President of the Delaware Association, wrote to J. Miller McKim, the Corresponding Secretary of the American Freedman's Union Commission to let him know that the Board of the Delaware Association adopted the Constitution of the American Freedman's Union Commission, formalizing the connection between the missions of the organization. The article went on to describe the roles each would play:

It is our earnest desire to extend to them . . . our good wishes by our good works. The Delaware Association cannot raise much money. It can secure the cooperation of the colored people. It can obtain school-houses and board; but it looks to us to help them to teachers. . . . [we] have promised them six teachers for the coming year. We want to double the number . . . The colored people are clamorous for instruction.

A list of schools in Delaware published with an article on progress in this state in the April 1868 issue of the American Freedman listed schools and their sponsoring organizations from across the state. Of the twenty-two identified, six were credited to the sponsorship by the New York Branch of the American Freedman's Union: Two in Wilmington, and one each in Dover, Milford, New Castle and Camden. The Delaware Association sustained the remaining sixteen and the Sussex County schools in this early list include: Laurel, Seaford, Georgetown, Milton, and Lewes.

The Bureau of Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, a federal government agency, was also interested in assisting with the construction of schools for African American children in Delaware. The Freedman's Bureau was able to provide building material to from the dismantling of military field hospitals for the construction of a few schools in Delaware. In April of 1867, Assistant Freedman's Bureau Commissioner, Bvt. Major General Edward M. Gregory, came to Delaware and encountered opposition to the education of African Americans in

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Kent and Sussex County but the presence of the General made an impression. The American Freedman reported:

In his recent tour in Delaware, Gen. Gregory met with much opposition. Meetings were held at Dover, Milford, and Seaford. The opposition has since much decreased. . . . Ten estimates from Delaware are now on file for the construction of school-houses, the lumber for which is being forwarded.

The first school constructed using this material was located on Slaughter Street in Dover, the state capital. The Delaware Association hired staff to assist communities across the state with school construction. Samuel Woolman, an employee of the society, traveled on the Delaware Railroad, tools in hand, to assist with the construction new school buildings. The Delaware Railroad provided free passage for Mr. Woolman as their contribution to the cause. In an account to the Freedman's Bureau in 1869, Rev. William Aiken reported his observations of the construction of a school in Newport, New Castle County, Delaware and his respect for the community that insured a school was constructed:

A striking instance of self-denial and energy in getting up a school may be seen in our little neighboring town of Newport. Here a neat and convenient building has been erected, almost entirely by one colored man. Much of the material, an in other cases was furnished by the bureau, and the work was under the efficient superintendence and continued encouragement of Mr. Woolman, but probably the building would never have had an existence but for the persistent endeavors of John Turner, whose name may be worthily put on record. I found this man on the day of my visit (whom I remembered often to have seen on our market days, with his little store of vegetables for sale,) at work putting down the teacher's platform, himself the only workman in the building; and I was informed that all the carpenter work had been done by his own hands, unskilled as they were. The schoolhouse is a monument of this quiet and very modest man's devotion to the good of his people, in a community where he stands very much alone.

Education was a priority of the African American community and these communities participated in the identifying the location for the schools and most communities chose to place the school buildings on property next to the community church, reinforcing the deep connection between community and faith. Once a school was constructed, the Delaware Association would provide a qualified teacher and pay their salary, but contribution from the communities was expected as well. In 1867, the American Freedman, described the expected contribution: "All the teachers whom we sustain in Maryland and Delaware (13), are provided with board by the colored people." Of the first six teachers brought to Delaware through the assistance of the American Freedman's Union Commission, two were African American men, Joseph H. Rogers who was assigned to the Dover school and Charles Evans who was assigned to Milford. A letter dated January 30, 1868 from Mr. Rogers to Rev. Furey, actuary of the Delaware Branch of the American Freedman's Union Commission was published in the American Freeman:

Sir: We are favored this month with an increase that alone is equal to the entire membership of last month. Of the 61 now in attendance, ten come a distance of four miles, three a distance of seven miles. . . . We also have all the large pupils of the Friends School, formerly held at Cowgill's Corner, (building now in ashes). We have only been able to hold evening school two weeks, the revival meeting being in progress; but, as it has now ceased, a fair attendance may reasonably be expected.

Joseph H. Rogers, Teacher. Dover, Kent Co. Delaware.

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By 1869, enthusiasm and funds were diminishing to the central philanthropic organizations and the communities were relying more and more on their own initiative to construct buildings. The poverty of the newly freed people struck Reverend William Aikman, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, and member of the board of the Delaware Association. His observations were cataloged in a report to the Freedman's Bureau:

While we have found apathy, a want of true conviction of the desirableness of education and an unwillingness to make self denial necessary to secure it for their children, it would be a miracle were it not so, yet no one could visit these people in their own homes see their poverty, and at the same time know what they have done and are doing for themselves without emotion. . . . I am sure if the story of the erection of all these school houses, the payment of tuition, and the exertions made to clothe children for attendance, could all be told, it would be found that out of their deep poverty these people have done well and even nobly.

The Delaware Association functioned as the primary oversight for schools for Delaware's children of color until 1897 when the State of Delaware took over all the schools under the State Board of Education. The Actuary at the time was Henry C. Conrad and he presided over the closing down of the organization. In the end, the remaining assets of Delaware Association were turned over to the African School Society who continued as an organization until 1909.

The next phase of school construction happened under the philanthropic largess of industrialist Pierre S. duPont. Mr. duPont offered to rebuild all Delaware's school buildings if the state legislature would revamp the curriculum. The legislature declined the offer so Mr. duPont created the Services Citizens of Delaware, an organization that set out to rebuild all schools for African American children in the state of Delaware. In addition, schools were built in some of the poorest sections of the state for white children as well. These new buildings were constructed in the 1920s, culminating in the construction of Howard High School (NHL) in Wilmington in 1929. The siting of these new school buildings tended to follow the same pattern as the Delaware Association schools, locating near churches. These schools were built to be community centers as well. Many of the smallest and most remote Delaware Association Schools were closed at this time and the children were sent to consolidated schools. Architecturally distinctive in the Colonial Revival style, the duPont school buildings were built by the nationally prominent New Jersey architectural firm of Guilbert and Betelle, who were renown for their scientific approach to the design of school buildings. Eighty-eight school buildings were constructed across the state of Delaware during this program. Rural schools were generally built of frame construction and one or two rooms in size while urban or town schools were larger and generally of masonry construction. These four-room and larger schools were built in Smyrna, Dover, Bridgeville, Seaford, Laurel, and Lewes. These schools were designated by their district number with the letter C, indicating "colored school." These buildings formed the basis of the state-sponsored segregated education system in Delaware. African American teachers taught African American children into the 1960s when forced integration came to rural Delaware.

Delaware played an important role in the Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, KS. Supreme Court Case in 1953 that segregation of students in public schools violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, because separate facilities are inherently unequal. The Delaware Courts had supported integration in two northern Delaware communities of Hockessin and Claymont, both in New Castle County. The two cases that set the stage for integrating Delaware's elementary and high schools were Bulah v. Gebhardt and Belton v. Gebhardt. These two Delaware cases supported integration and were sent to the Supreme Court and heard with the other four cases that became the Brown Decision. The plaintiff's attorney in both cases, Louis L. Redding, was Delaware's first African American attorney and he worked with legal counsel for National Association for

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the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Thurgood Marshall who went on to become the first African American Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

A 2013 architectural survey of DuPont school buildings done by students at Delaware State University indicates that of the eighty-eight constructed, over fifty still survive in some form. Many of these buildings continued to function as community centers or as church halls. Some remained as schools for their communities, surviving integration, like the Richard Allen School in Georgetown in Sussex County, or Howard High School in Wilmington.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

Blackwater School #207C was one of the duPont schools that did not survive. It closed in 1952 after a fire. Blackwater's children were sent to school in the nearby community of Frankford. In 1957 construction began on the Colonial Revival Style Union Wesley Church Building which was placed near the site of the 1922 school.

Time Period: 1880 – 1940  
Geographic Zone: Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp  
Historic Period Theme(s): Religion & Education

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Alvord, J. W. Seventh Semi-Annual Report on Schools for Freedmen, January 1, 1869. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1869. P. 18. Accessed through the Samuel May Anti-Slavery Pamphlet Collection on line through the Cornell University Library on the web at: (Accessed through the Samuel May Anti-Slavery Pamphlet Collection, on line from the library website of Cornell University: [www.library.cornell.edu/mayantislavery/](http://www.library.cornell.edu/mayantislavery/))

The American Freedman, New York: Volumes 2-3, March 1867-February 1869. (Accessed through the Samuel May Anti-Slavery Pamphlet Collection, on line from the library website of Cornell University: [www.library.cornell.edu/mayantislavery/](http://www.library.cornell.edu/mayantislavery/))

Drew, Martin, et al. History of the Blackwater Colored School, Clarksville, Delaware. NP: The Donning Publishers. 2010

Essah, Patience. A House Divided: Slavery and Emancipation in Delaware, 1638-1865. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press. 1996

Minutes of the Delaware Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Minute Books 1864-1965. Accessed at the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture, at Salisbury University, Salisbury, MD.

National Register Nominations: Carey's Camp (NR 1972), Blackwater Presbyterian Church (NR 1976), Howard High School (NHL 2006)



Union Wesley Methodist Church Complex  
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**Previous documentation on file (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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: Delaware State University

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): S02461

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 8.37 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>487332.4085</u>	<u>4266281.7369</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is bounded on the west by Powell Farm Road, on the north, east and south by adjoining property lines.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is all the property historically associated with the Union Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church Complex.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Robin Krawitz, Director of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation  
organization Delaware State University date 12/1/2011 - 3/31/2014  
street & number 1200 N. DuPont Highway telephone 302-322-7900  
city or town Dover state DE zip code 19901  
e-mail rkrawitz@desu.edu

Union Wesley Methodist Church Complex  
Name of Property

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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**Photographs:**

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Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Union Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church Complex

City or Vicinity: Clarksville

County: Sussex County State: DE

Photographer: Robin L. Krawitz

Date Photographed: March 31, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 1 of 19  | Facing E, west elevation of the church and setting from Powell Farm Road   |
| 2 of 19  | Facing SE, west elevation and south elevation of church, including the rear meeting hall addition                |
| 3 of 19  | Facing NE, west and south elevations of the church including rear meeting hall                                   |
| 4 of 19  | Facing N, rear elevation of church (E elevation), and connector to the rear meeting hall                         |
| 5 of 19  | Facing E, overview of the Camp Meeting Ground  |
| 6 of 19  | Facing E, overview of Camp Meeting Ground: Firestand, Blackwater School (N and W Elevations), Bower and Cottages |
| 7 of 19  | Facing S, north Elevation (rear) and west elevation of the Blackwater School                                     |
| 8 of 19  | Facing E, west elevation of the Blackwater School  |
| 9 of 19  | Facing N, façade (South Elevation), the Blackwater School Building   |
| 10 of 19 | Facing W, east elevation, Blackwater School Building   |
| 11 of 19 | Facing NW, confectionary (modern) on left and Hall Cottage, South elevation                                      |
| 12 of 19 | Facing NW, north side of Camp Meeting Ground and rear (east elevation) of the Bower                              |
| 13 of 19 | Facing SW, overview South Side of the Camp Meeting Ground  |
| 14 of 19 | Facing E, site of the first church building, located along the east side of the Camp Meeting Ground              |
| 15 of 19 | Facing NW, south elevation of the Bower  |
| 16 of 19 | Facing SE, early burials in the cemetery section located to the east of the camp meeting ground                  |
| 17 of 19 | Facing SE, eastern end of the main section of the cemetery   |
| 18 of 19 | Facing S, central area of the main section of the cemetery   |
| 19 of 19 | Facing SW, western edge of the main section of the cemetery  |

Union Wesley Methodist Church Complex  
Name of Property

Sussex County, Delaware  
County and State

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**Property Owner:**

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

---

name Union Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church c/o The Reverend Rory Russell  
street & number P.O. Box 137 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Dover state DE zip code 19901

**Paperwork Reduction Act 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. 460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

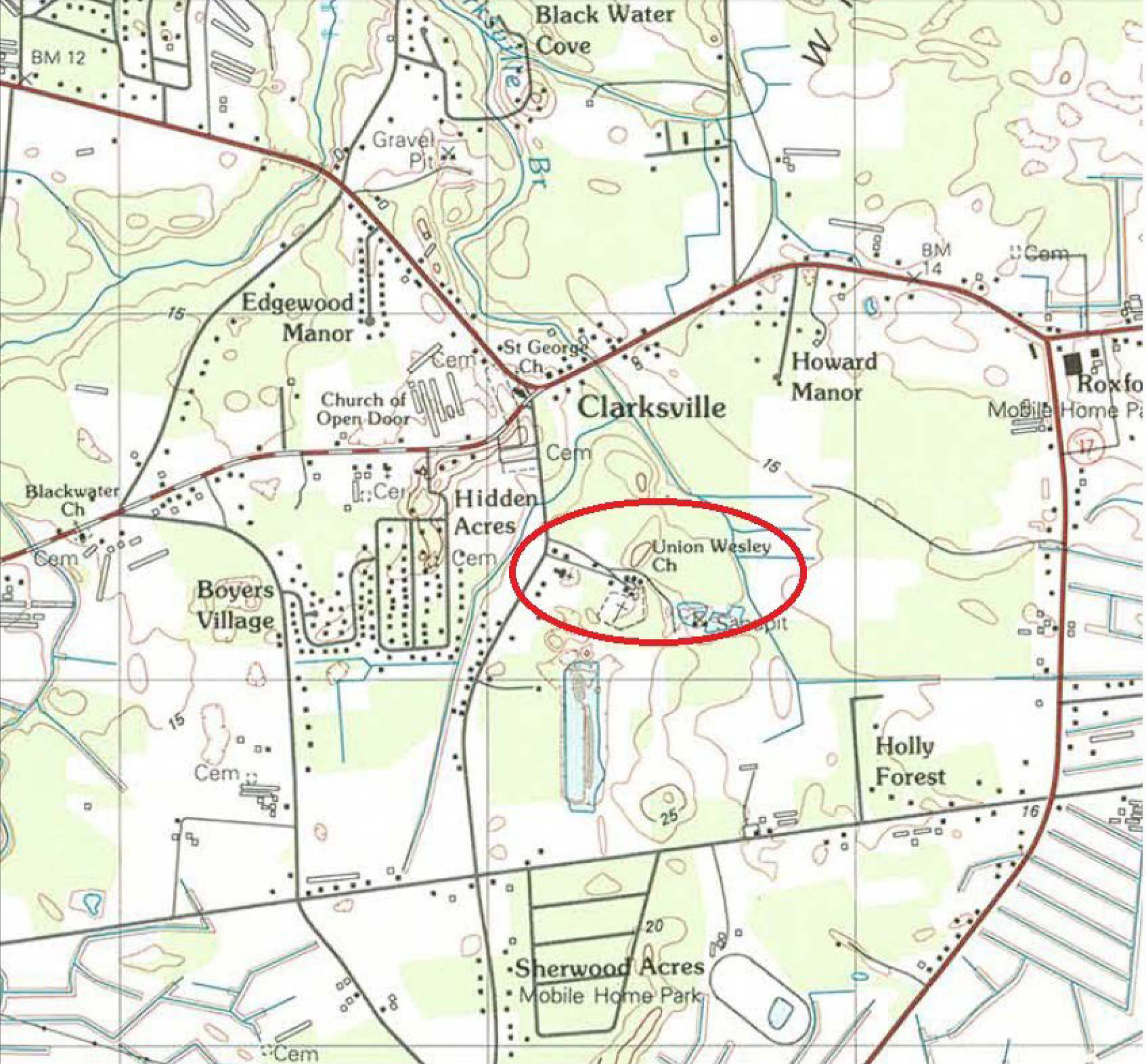
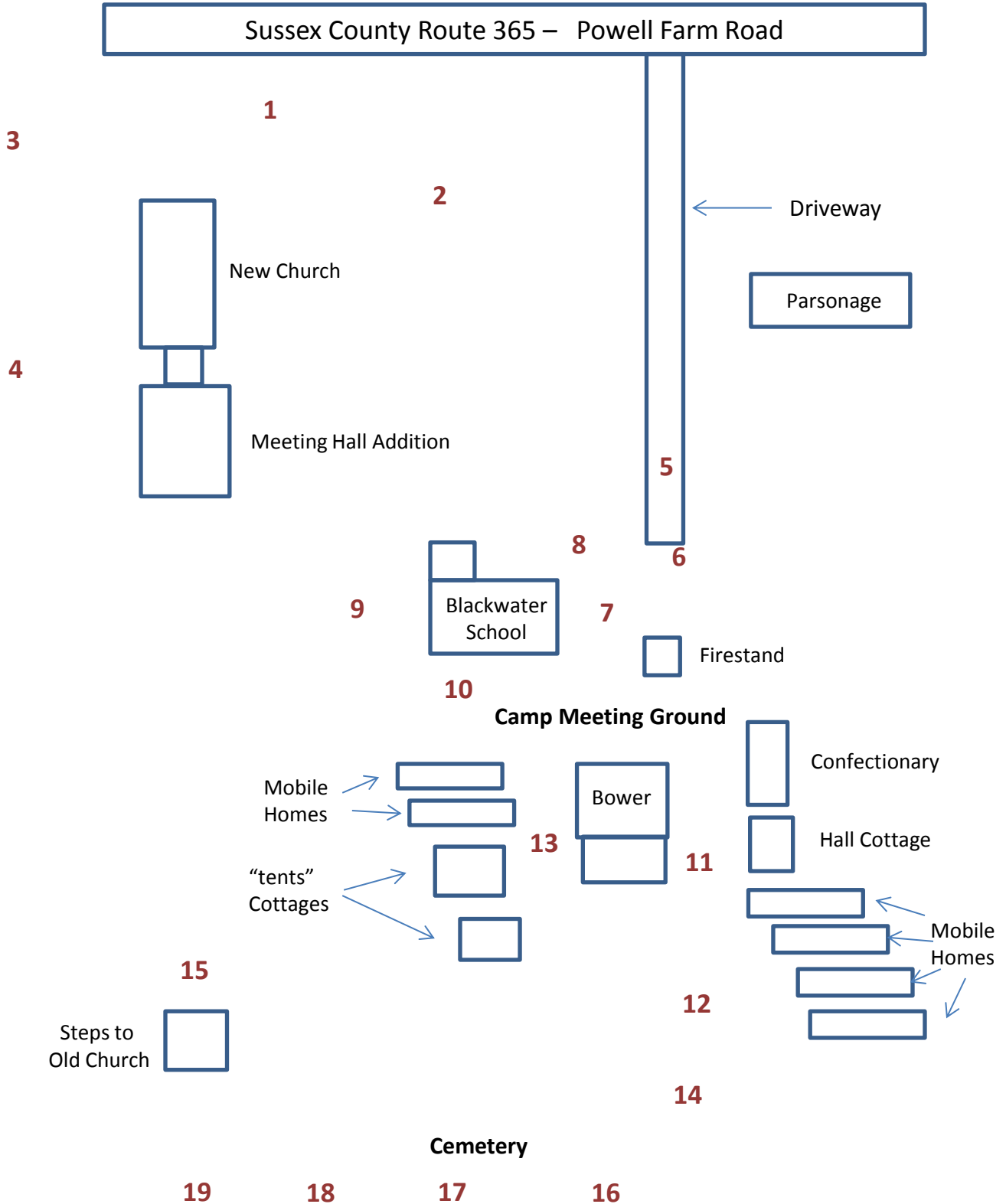




Photo Key  
Union Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church Complex  
Sussex County, Delaware



Not drawn to scale





UNION WESLEY

10:0 AM WORSHIP

9:00 AM SUNDAYSCHOOL

REV. D RORY RUSSELL PASTOR

















PRIVATE  
PROPERTY













PRIVATE  
PROPERTY















































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Union Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church Complex

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DELAWARE, Sussex

DATE RECEIVED: 8/01/14      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/22/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/08/14      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/17/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000617

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    9.17.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

State of Delaware  
Historical and Cultural Affairs

21 The Green  
Dover, DE 19901-3611

Phone: (302) 736.7400

Fax: (302) 739.5660

July 24, 2014



Carol Shull, Keeper  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye Street, N.W. (2280)  
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mrs. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

- Union Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church Complex, Clarksville Vicinity, Sussex County, DE

If there are any questions regarding this document, please contact Madeline E. Dunn, National Register Coordinator-Historian for the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office by phone at (302) 736-7417 or by e-mail at [madeline.dunn@state.de.us](mailto:madeline.dunn@state.de.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gwenyth A. Davis".

Gwenyth A. Davis, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
Delaware State Historic Preservation Office

Enclosures

