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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

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 an 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 Bethlehem Methodist Church and Cemetery

other names/site number Bethlehem United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number Gholson Road not for publication

city or town Clarksville vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Montgomery code 125 zip code 37043

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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Hays 5/9/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State of 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 the 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): _____

Edson A. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the 6.10.94
National Register Date of Action

Bethlehem Methodist Church and Cemetery
Name of Property

Montgomery Co., TN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility
FUNERARY: cemetery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility
FUNERARY: cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival Influence

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE block
walls Weatherboard
roof ASPHALT shingle
other WOOD

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 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.

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.)

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 file (NPS): N/A

- 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1899-1900 (church)
c. 1840 (cemetery)

Significant Dates

1899-1900
c. 1840

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simpson, Alex F. (builder);
Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 3 acres

Excell 302 NE

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	475120	4035250
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
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 Byname/title James P. Lavery / Claudette Stagerorganization N/A / TN Historical Commission date March 1994street & number 2029 Whitland Drive / 701 Broadway telephone 615/551-8867 615/532-1558city or town Clarksville / Nashville state TN zip code 37043 / 37243**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 Bethlehem United Methodist Church c/o Charles M. Watersstreet & number Gholson Road telephone 615/358-3826city or town Clarksville state TN zip code 37043**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. 470 et seq.).**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Bethlehem Methodist Church and
Cemetery
Montgomery County, TN

Narrative Description

Situated on a three acre parcel on Gholson Road near the McAdoo Creek in the 15th District of Montgomery County, the Bethlehem Methodist Church was constructed in 1899-1900. The one story frame building is sheathed with weatherboards, rests on a concrete block foundation, and has a steeply pitched asphalt shingle gable roof. Two corner steeples, Gothic lancet arch windows, and bargeboard are prominent features on the exterior of the building, while the interior contains intricate woodwork. Adjacent to the church is a cemetery that contains some interesting boxed grave markers.

A solid bargeboard with a quatrefoil and sawn moldings embellishes the east facade of the front gable church. The church boasts two tall square steeples of unequal height. Pyramidal spires capped by finials are located above Gothic lancet arch louvered openings, one of which is for the church bell. A wood belt course separates the louvered openings from the first story level. One-over-one double-hung sashes with simple surrounds flank the central entrance. Originally there were two separate single-leaf entrances where the windows are now located. In 1958 a one story gable roof entrance was constructed with double-leaf doors. The bargeboard in the new entrance mimics the bargeboard in the gable.

Visible from the front of the church is the 1955 wing constructed to house the church's education department. The one story gable roof addition is slightly lower in height than the original church and set back from the building. Two multi-light double-hung sashes flank a single-leaf paneled door in this section of the building.

The north elevation of the original church has three symmetrically placed Gothic lancet arch windows. In 1981 memorial stained glass windows replaced the original plain glass windows. The steeple contains a single one-over-one double-hung sash on the first level and a Gothic lancet arch louvered opening above it. The side of the 1955 addition has two multi-light windows. West of the 1955 addition, there is an entrance to a 1960 classroom addition to the church.

Four multi-light windows are discernible on the rear or west elevation of the church. Two of the windows are located on the 1955 addition and two are located on the 1960 classroom addition.

The south elevation of the 1899-1900 church is identical to the north elevation. Three pairs of multi-light windows are located on the 1960 addition.

Although the church is relatively simple on the exterior, the interior encompasses outstanding

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Section number 7 Page 2 Bethlehem Methodist Church and
Cemetery
Montgomery County, TN

woodwork. A low pitch gable ceiling inside the church is composed of square panels of diagonally lain wood slats. The panels are separated by fluted wood boards that are embellished with bull's-eyes at the corners. This arrangement mimics a coffered ceiling. Between the interior ceiling and exterior roof there is a large crawl space.

The chancel contains the altar situated beneath a blind Gothic arch. A semi-circular area is raised slightly and surrounded by a low turned wood rail. Paneled wainscotting lines the wall in this area and in the remainder of the church. Two single-leaf doors topped by Gothic arches flank the altar. The paneled doors have fluted surrounds and cornice moldings, while the Gothic lancet arch portion is ornamented by a trefoil, dentils, and radiating wood patterns. When the 1960 classroom addition was built, this area was relatively unchanged.

Rectangular wood casings surround the Gothic lancet arch stained glass windows. The wall over the wainscotting is the original plaster. Two doors lead into the 1955 addition. The entrance to the sanctuary is divided by an ornamental screen that sits above wood wainscotting. There are two small rooms in this section. The church retains its original rows of twelve pews. Elaborate carved wood trim decorates the sides of the pews. The piano and organ are back to back in front of the left row of pews. Situated behind the piano and organ are four shorter pews that face the congregation. These are for the choir.

The door on the east wall of the sanctuary at the south of the pulpit area leads to a closet; the door at the north leads to a hallway. The fellowship hall is on the south of the hallway and runs the entire length of the hallway. It can be divided into three rooms by folding doors. On the north of the hallway is a walk-in storage closet and two bathrooms, while at the end of the hallway is a kitchen. The door on the north wall of the sanctuary leads to four classrooms.

The church building has experienced some changes over the years. These have not affected the overall integrity of the building. In addition to the two building wings, cathedral lanterns were added in 1976, carpeting was put in around 1987, a new altar and chancel were added in 1989, and a new roof was put on in 1991.

South of the church is a cemetery that contains approximately one hundred graves, including ten boxed or walled graves. These cut stone graves are believed to date from circa 1840. They are raised one to two feet above the ground and covered by cut stone slabs. This type of grave marker was generally used for early nineteenth century graves of wealthier families.

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Section number 8 Page 3 Bethlehem Methodist Church and
Cemetery
Montgomery County, TN

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Bethlehem Methodist Church and Cemetery are being nominated under National Register criteria C for their local significance in architecture. The building is a fine example of a Gothic Revival influenced rural church. The steeples, lancet windows, and finely crafted interior woodwork are important aspects of the design. The adjacent cemetery is a contributing site because it is historically associated with the church. The boxed grave markers are interesting examples of grave monuments.

It is not exactly known when the congregation was first organized. The church was built on land that was granted in 1783 to Revolutionary War veterans. Graves in the adjacent cemetery date back to 1821, however, the first records of the church date only to 1836. The deed for the property mentions land "on which is located Bethlehem Church." This indicates that the church was constructed before the land was deeded to the Methodist Conference. Excerpts from the diary of Willie Bagwell, a church trustee, indicate that in 1843 Sunday School attendance had increased to fifty-eight. On September 22, 1843 he wrote that "Had a protracted meeting at Bethlehem and thirty additions to the church." The diary entry for December 3, 1843 noted that "Went to Bethlehem Church quarterly meeting. Paid \$5.00 quarterage."

The original church building was constructed of log and was located south of the present building. This church building was also used for a meetinghouse and a school. In 1899 the church began construction of a new building. The foreman was a master carpenter named Alex F. Simpson, who lived in the area. The building committee for the new building was made up of A.T. Coke, George Smith, Alex French, W. Smith, and J.P. Smith.

The church was dedicated on June 17, 1900. According to an article in the Daily Leaf-Chronicle (Clarksville) on June 18, 1900, an estimated 1,200 to 1,500 people attended the dedication; approximately 100 of these people came from nearby Clarksville. The paper noted that heavy rains kept many others away. It was proudly declared that "Bethlehem Church is one of the finest country churches in this part of the state. It is beautifully finished, and furnished with comfortable, modern, oak pews and will be a suitable house of worship for its congregation for ~~its congregation~~ for probably sixty years to come." The church was estimated to have cost \$2,500.00 to build. On the day it was dedicated, there was still a \$100.00 indebtedness which was "raised in a few minutes by subscription before the formal ceremonies began."

The dedication ceremonies actually began on Saturday, June 16, 1900 when presiding elder, Reverend P.A. Sowell, preached two sermons. Reverend Sowell was "master of ceremonies"

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Section number 8 Page 4 Bethlehem Methodist Church and
Cemetery
Montgomery County, TN

for the Sunday celebration, which began at 11:00 a.m. Professor Henry Spence of Nashville came to lead the congregational singing. Bishop H.C. Morrison of Louisville gave a sermon, as did a Dr. Matthew of McKendree Church in Nashville. A dinner of barbecued mutton and hogs was served on the grounds.

Reverend T.W. Noland was the pastor of Bethlehem Methodist Church when it was dedicated. The church was part of the Asbury Circuit. He was scheduled to hold services every second and fourth Sunday. The church's Sunday School was soon to be reorganized in the new building. Charter members of the church included Jacob Ramey, Albert French, Alex French, James Smith, Gustavus Coker, Dempsey Majors, George Powers, Jake Logan, John Rhinehardt, Jerry Wall, and Mrs. Corine Williams. Descendants of some of the original members are members of the church today.

There are seven other churches listed in the National Register from Montgomery County. Six of the churches are part of a thematic nomination "Nineteenth Century Churches in Clarksville" (NR 1982). Five of these brick churches were constructed between 1873 and 1889; one church was built in 1831. They all have Gothic Revival features including tall spires, steep roofs, and the use of contrasting materials for embellishments. None of these churches resemble the Bethlehem Methodist Church. White Chapel (NR 6/26/86), situated in the small community of Rossvie, was constructed in 1866. The one story frame church shares the characteristic of being minimally ornamented on the exterior and richly decorated on the interior. Around 1897, White Chapel's interior was changed to include an elaborate raised wood chancel, carved pew, and fleur-de-lis designs.

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Cemetery
Montgomery County, TN

Major Bibliographical References

- Alley, Ann Evans. "Bethlehem United Methodist Church Roster of Members." The Montgomery County Genealogical Journal (September 1971): pp. 32-36. The
- Carter, Cullen T. History of Methodist Churches and Institutions in Middle Tennessee 1787-1956. Nashville: The Parthenon Press, 1956.
- Cullom, J.W. Pastoral Sketches. Nashville: Publishing House of the ME Church South, Smith and Lamar, Agents, 1907.
- Daily Leaf-Chronicle. (Clarksville). 18 June 1900, p. 7.
- Darnell, Anita Whitfield; Jones, Mary Lewis Roe; Alley, Ann Evans; and Hogan, Cleo G. Cemetery Records of Montgomery County, Tennessee Volume 1. 1968.
- Marks, Louise H. "History of Bethlehem Church 1836-1962." 17 June 1962.

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Section number 10 Page 6 Bethlehem Methodist Church and
Cemetery
Montgomery County, TN

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property contains all of parcel 48 on tax map 103, Montgomery County, Tennessee.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property contains all the land currently associated with the church. The tax map is prepared by the Tennessee State Board of Equalization for rural areas. In the past, the Tennessee Historical Commission has used this scale map and found that the 1" = 400' scale meets our needs. No other scale map is available for this property.

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Section number photos Page 7 Bethlehem Methodist Church and
Cemetery
Montgomery County, TN

Photographs

Bethlehem Methodist Church and Cemetery
Gholson Road
Montgomery County, Tennessee
Photos by: James P. Lavery
Date: August 1993
Negs: Tennessee Historical Commission

Facing west, east facade
#1 of 15

Facing north, south elevation
#2 of 15

Facing northwest, south elevation
#3 of 15

Facing northeast, south elevation
#4 of 15

Facing east, west elevation
#5 of 15

Facing southwest, north elevation
#6 of 15

Facing east, graves
#7 of 15

Facing west, graves
#8 of 15

Interior detail of sanctuary, pulpit area
#9 of 15

Interior detail of sanctuary ceiling
#10 of 15

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Section number photos Page 8 Bethlehem Methodist Church and
Cemetery
Montgomery County, TN

Interior detail of sanctuary windows
#11 of 15

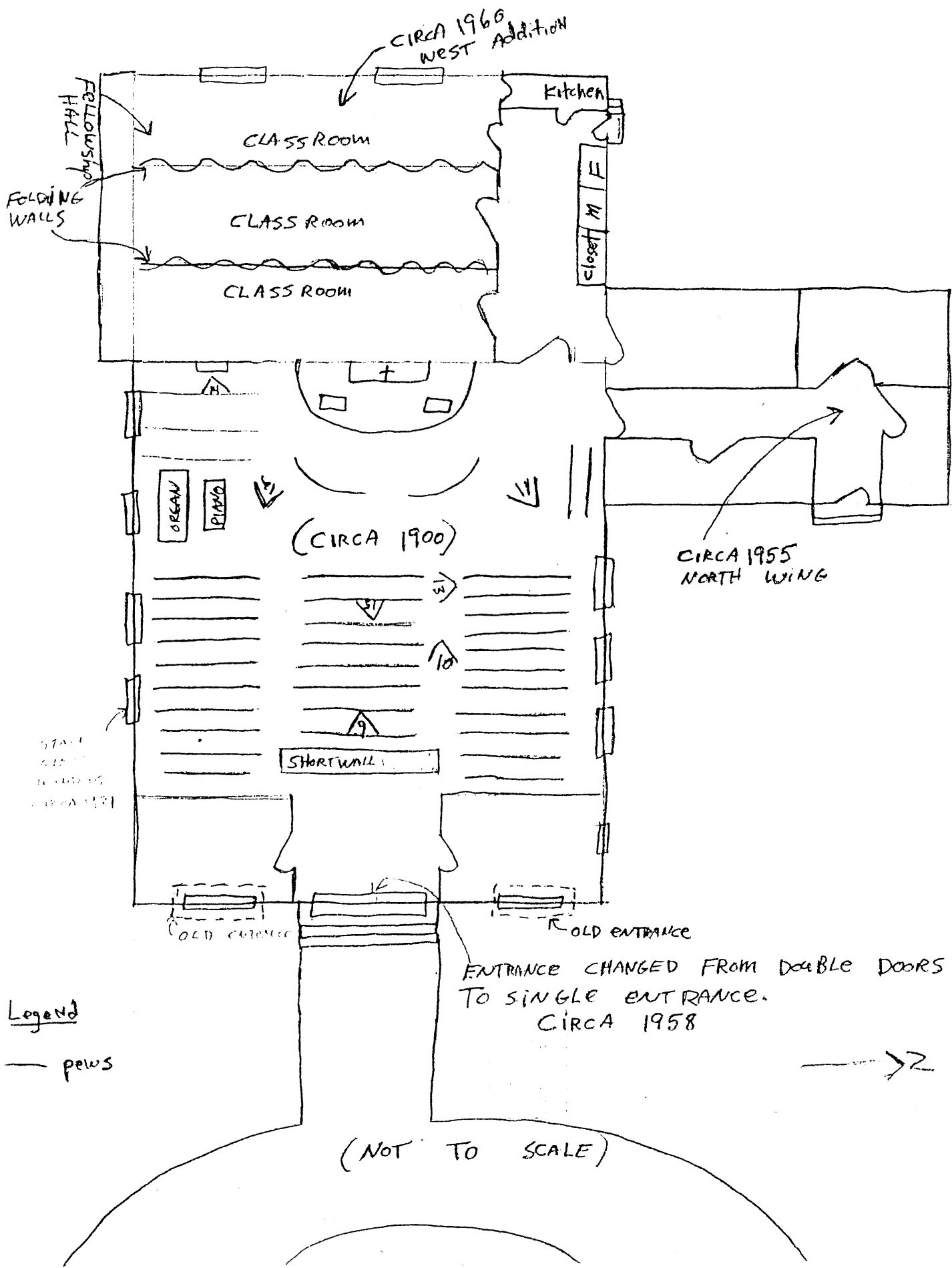
Interior detail of sanctuary windows
#12 of 15

Interior detail of sanctuary pew
#13 of 15

Interior detail of wood trim
#14 of 15

Interior detail, front of church
#15 of 15

BETHLEHEM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Legend

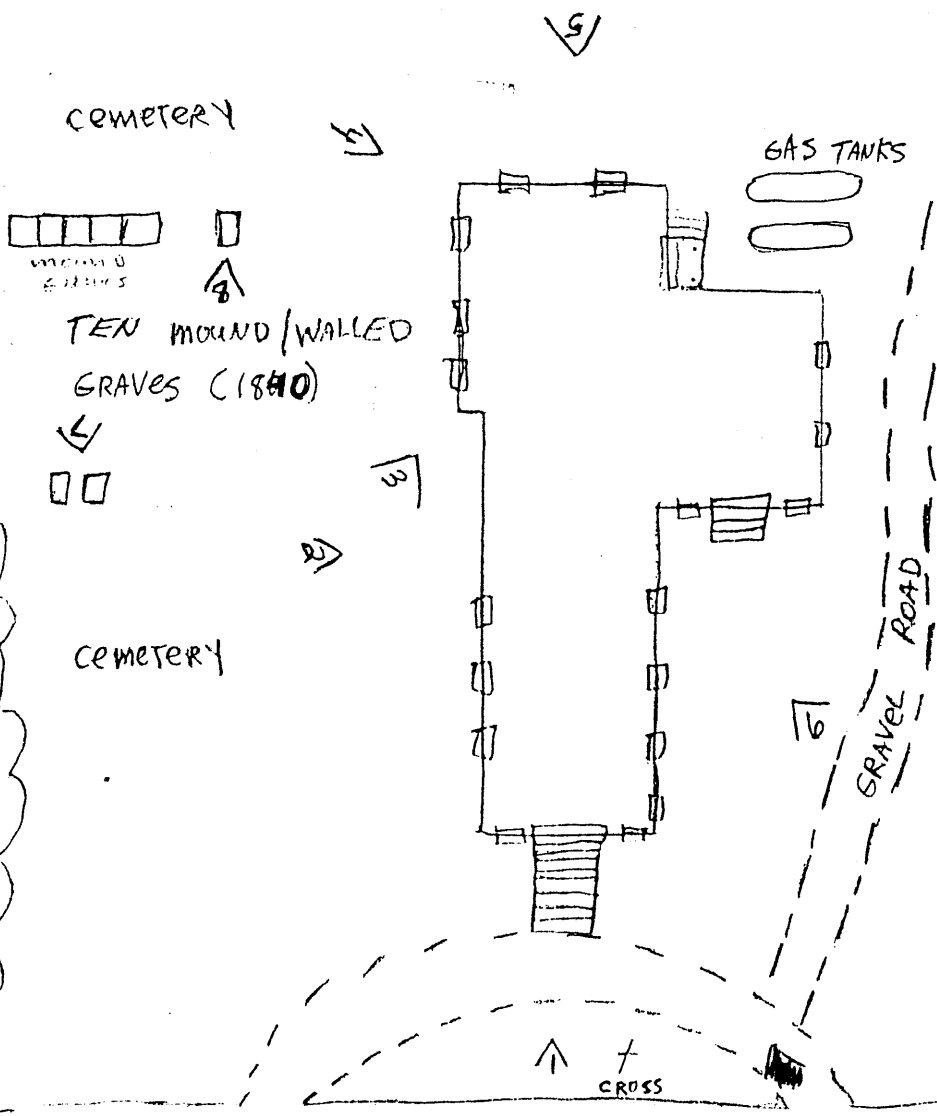
— pews

(NOT TO SCALE)

ENTRANCE CHANGED FROM DOUBLE DOORS TO SINGLE ENTRANCE. CIRCA 1958

→ 2

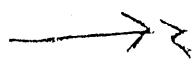
CIRCA 1900 CHURCH BUILDING
WITH ADDITIONS.

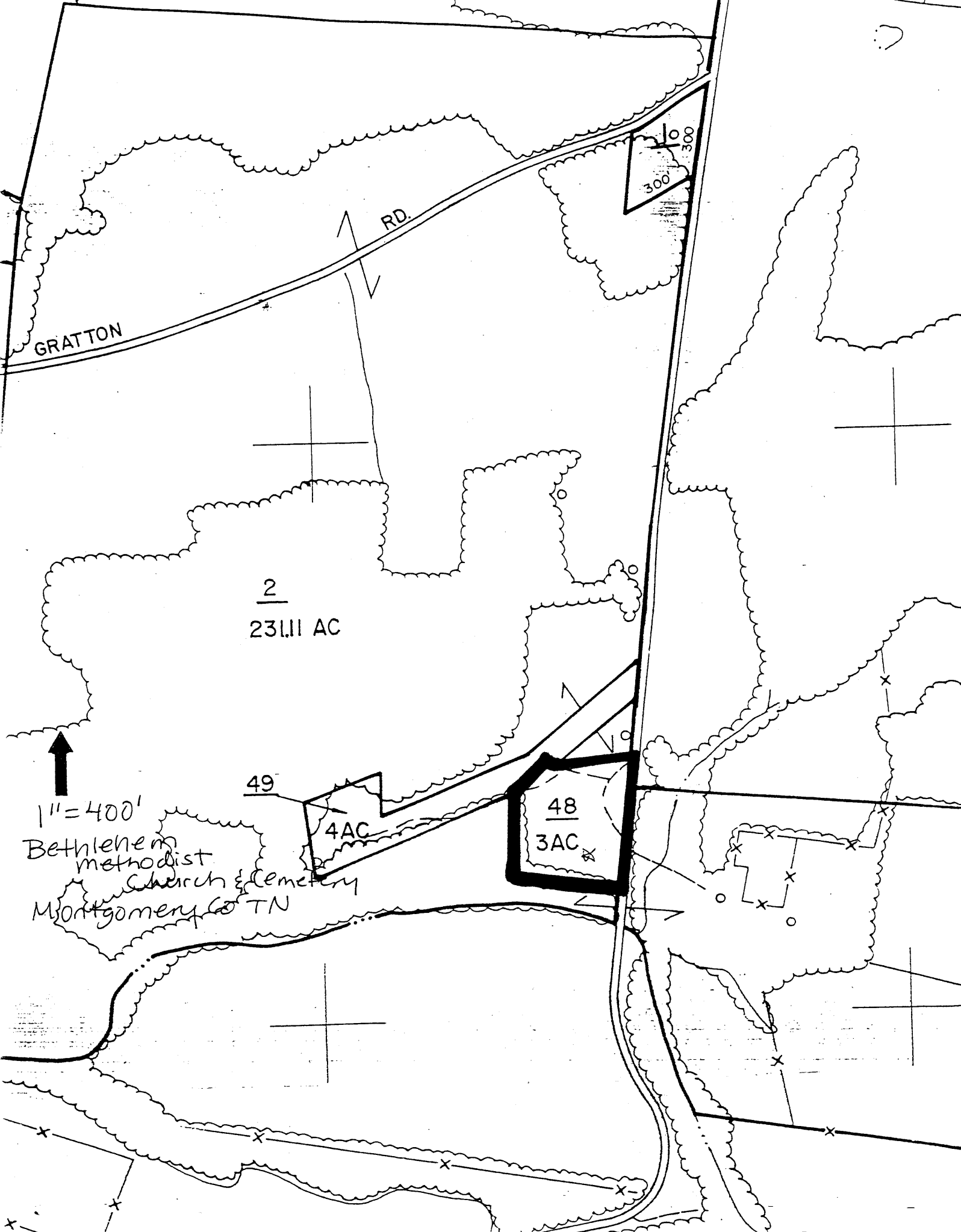


Gholson ROAD

(NOT TO SCALE)

BETHLEHEM UNITED
METHODISTS CHURCH





GRATTON

RD.

2
231.11 AC

49
4 AC

48
3 AC

300
300

↑
1" = 400'

Bethlehem
Methodist
Church & Cemetery
Montgomery Co TN

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: BOUNDARY DECREASE

PROPERTY NAME: Bethlehem Methodist Church and Cemetery

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TENNESSEE, Montgomery

DATE RECEIVED: 2/19/10 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/05/10
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 94000576

NOMINATOR: STATE

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

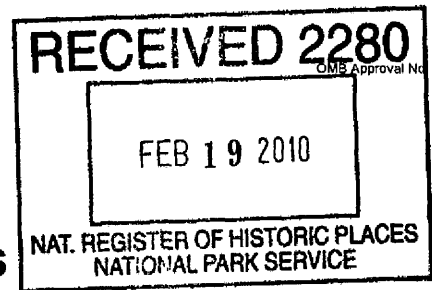
 ACCEPT RETURN REJECT DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept
REVIEWER Elson Beall DISCIPLINE History
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 3-31-16

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.



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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number N/A Page 1

Bethlehem Methodist Church and Cemetery (boundary decrease and additional information)
Montgomery County, TN

Bethlehem Methodist Church and Cemetery were originally listed in the National Register on June 10, 1994. Unfortunately the church was destroyed in a fire in July, 2009. Although the church was destroyed the adjacent cemetery was not altered and retains a high level of integrity. This additional information serves to reduce the boundary to include the cemetery and exclude the site of the church. The church plans to rebuild on this site.

It is unknown when the church was first organized. The church was built on land that was granted in 1783 to Revolutionary War veterans. Graves in the cemetery date back to 1821; however the first records of the church date only to 1836. The deed for the property mentions land "on which is located Bethlehem Church." This indicates that a church was constructed before the land was deeded to the Methodist Conference.

Bethlehem Cemetery includes over 100 graves, including ten stone walled (boxed) graves. These boxed or walled graves are believed to date from the 1840s. They are raised one to two feet above the ground and are covered by cut stone slabs. This type of grave marker was generally used for early nineteenth century graves of wealthier families. There are only a few other such type graves in Montgomery County but they are all on private property and are not as accessible to the public as those at Bethlehem. Those at Bethlehem are located directly off Gholson Road where visitors can park and walk easily to the cemetery.

Box tombs reached the height of their popularity during the first half of the nineteenth century. Usually box tombs were constructed of brick or stone and were placed over individual burials. The box tombs at Bethlehem Methodist Church Cemetery are unusual in that several box tombs were built together to cover a series of burials. The cemetery contains a series of approximately six box tombs that were built together. This arrangement of box tombs is the only known example of its kind in the county.

The remainder of the cemetery contains stones ranging from the mid nineteenth century to the late twentieth century, and the majority of the stones date to the early twentieth century or before. Most of the markers are fairly simple and are composed of granite or limestone. An inventory of stones in the cemetery recorded in the 1990s listed 149 names, however there are more burials marked by fieldstones or whose markers were illegible.

Some information regarding the box tombs in the cemetery are found in the records of Wiley Bagwell. Drury Bagwell arrived in Montgomery County in 1817 and attended Bethlehem Church as did his son Wiley. Wiley, born 1800, died 1877, kept a diary and in this diary he records many events concerning Bethlehem Church. The diary is dated May 9, 1841 to June 30, 1846 with occasional entries to November 19, 1870. Drury Bagwell died in Oct 1841. Drury's sister was Kischer Bagwell Stamper. Among the diary entries are:

Nov 1842 "Fair and warm plowing Willis came to wall grave hauling rock recd of ??? McCauley an execution against ?? Frazier \$ 36.25 paid cost on execution against ?? Woodon \$ 3.50." Pg 63

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Section number N/A Page 2

Bethlehem Methodist Church and Cemetery (boundary
decrease and additional information)
Montgomery County, TN

November 1842 "November clear and warm plowing sent to Crotzers Mill finished walling fathers grave paid Willis \$ 2.50." Page 63

October 1844 "commenced hauling rock to wall Aunt Stampers grave." Page 133

October 1844 "Fair wind high hauling rock to wall grave." Page 133

October 1844 "Cloudy some rain this morning went to Bethlehem Church last night Br Brewer preached text Ephesians 2nd chapter, 19th verse plowing Willis and Phil walling grave. ?? my fattening hogs 24 killed and hog weight 115 lbs removing old corn out of my crib paid Willis \$2 for walling grave" Page 133

December 1844 "Brought out tombstone for Aunt Stampers grave." Page 139

December 1844 "Willis fixing tombstone on Aunt Stampers grave" Page 140

January 1845 "Went to Bethlehem Bro ?? (can't read) preached Aunt Stampers and sister Marys funeral, text Isaiah 51st chapter, sixth verse." Page 144

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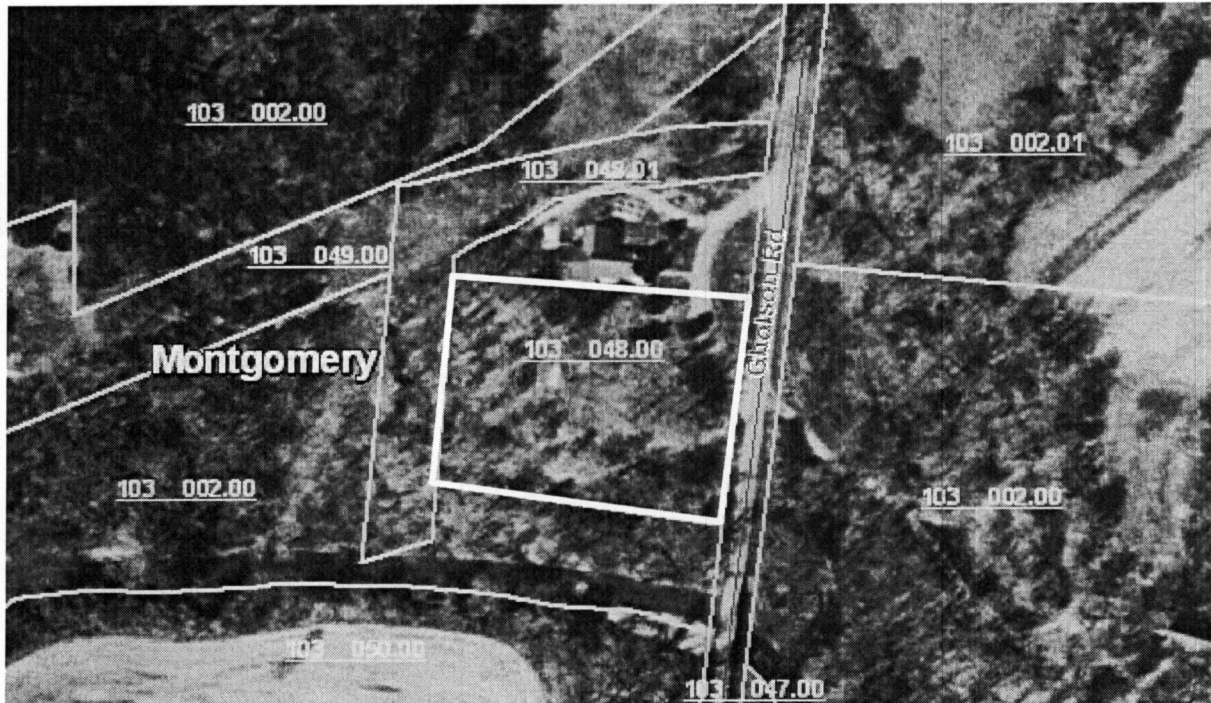
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number N/A Page 3

Bethlehem Methodist Church and Cemetery (boundary decrease and additional information)
Montgomery County, TN

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

As a result of the boundary decrease the National register boundary will follow the east, west, and south boundary lines of parcel 048.00 on tax map 103. The north boundary line is an imaginary line that begins 275 feet north of the southeast corner of the parcel. The line then runs due west to the west boundary line. This boundary includes the full extent of the historic cemetery.



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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number N/A Page 4
_____ _____ _____

Bethlehem Methodist Church and Cemetery (boundary decrease and additional information)
Montgomery County, TN

Bethlehem Church and Cemetery (boundary decrease and additional information)
Photographs 1-5

Photographs taken by Brian Beadles
Photographs taken August 2009.

Bethlehem Church Cemetery, photographer facing south.
1 of 5

Remains of Bethlehem Church, photographer facing west.
2 of 5

Box tombs, photographer facing south.
3 of 5

Box tombs, photographer facing north.
4 of 5

Box tombs, photographer facing southwest.
5 of 5