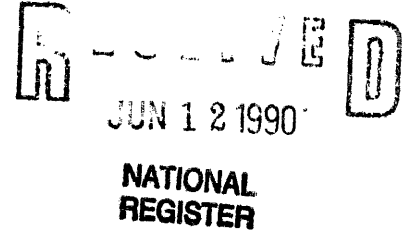


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name: SAXTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

other name/site number: K-5713

2. Location

street & number: Main Street

not for publication: NA

city/town: Bowers, South Murderkill Hundred

vicinity: NA

state: Delaware

county: Kent

code: 001

zip code: 19946

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building(s)

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

=====
4. State/Federal Agency Certification
=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Samuel M. Hoff SHPO May 25, 1990
Signature of certifying official Date

DELAWARE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

INA
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register _____ See continuation sheet.	<u>Patrick Andrews</u>	<u>7/23/90</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register _____ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

for Signature of Keeper Date of Action

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: Religion; religious structure Sub: _____

Current : Religion; religious structure Sub: _____

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification:

Gothic Revival

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation brick roof asphalt shingles
walls board and batten other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1879 _____

Significant Dates : 1893 _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: George Godwin

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

See continuation sheet.

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State historic preservation office

Other state agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other -- Specify Repository: _____

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property: 0.5

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>18</u>	<u>465060</u>	<u>4323120</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

Nominated property is all of that property listed on tax parcel map 114.20 as parcel number 34.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

Nominated property has, since 1893, been associated with the Saxton United Methodist Church.

=====

11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Donald A. Duhadaway, Jr., Historian; Kimberly R. Sebold, Research Assistant

Organization: Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Date: August 30, 1989

Street & Number: 15 The Green Telephone: 1-302-736-5685

City or Town: Dover State: Delaware ZIP: 19901

=====

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page # 1
=====

The Saxton United Methodist Church is located at the southwest corner of Main and Church Streets in Bowers, Delaware. It is situated on an irregularly shaped lot and is bounded on the south and west by property belonging to the Town of Bowers, on the north by Church Street and on the east by Main Street. Bowers, or as it is sometimes called, Bowers Beach, is located on the Delaware Bay between Dover and Milford. It is a small town of 300 people. As Bowers is a sport fishing center, many of its residents are involved in the charter fishing industry.

The church is a long, narrow, one-story, gable-roofed, Gothic-influenced building constructed in 1879, the church measures approximately 40'5" in length by 24'5" in width. The roof is gable-fronted, pitched rather steeply, is trimmed with small moulded box cornice, is pierced by a cement block exterior chimney on the south eave wall, and is covered with asphalt shingles. Topping the roof on the east end is a pyramidal-roofed, asphalt-shingled bell cupola which has modillions and jigsawed bracketing. In addition, a round multi-light, moulded window is above the narthex. The exterior is sheathed with vertical boards over which wide, moulded battens have been laid. On the east gable-end this board-and-batten construction forms a decorative arch pattern at the roofline, on the other sides it is plain.

Projecting out approximately three feet from the west gable-end wall is a 9' wide, gable-roofed apse. On its north and south walls is a one-over-one, double-hung-sash window; a large stained glass window set in a moulded surround is in the west wall. Projecting from the east gable end is a gable-roofed, double-door, narthex measuring approximately 6' deep by 8'4" wide. The doors in this projection are moulded, multi-panelled with horizontally set, tongue-in-groove boards making up the panels. They are surrounded by a moulded pointed-arch architrave. Along each side wall are four evenly spaced, three-over-two, double-hung sash, lancet windows with protruding pointed-arch heads. One of these windows can be found on either side of the northern as well.

The only entrance into the building is through the east end. The interior of the narthex is small, measuring 7'3" wide by 5 1/2' deep. It is trimmed with wainscoting and a moulded chair rail. Opposite the outside doors is a pair of multi-panelled wood doors trimmed with a moulded pointed-arch surround. Above the door is a transom consisting of six painted lights. Beyond these doors lies the long nave which (like the narthex) is trimmed with wainscoting and has a wide moulded chair rail. The Gothic windows already described have moulded surrounds and illuminate the building well. Along north and south walls are eleven rows of simple, curved arm pews engaged in the chair rail (two rows have been removed on the south side to make room for a space heater). In the center of the

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page # 2
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nave are eight rows of similar but large pews. The floor is composed of wide butted boards and display the split down the middle where the church was divided width-wise when it was moved from the west end of the town in 1893.

At the far west end of the building is where the apse, pulpit, and chancel are located. The chancel is a simple affair, divided from the nave by a curved balustrade of turned balusters and large decorative turned newel posts. The apse is accessed via two steps leading up to it and has an arched ceiling. The pulpit is large, has a moulded top and base, moulded gauge panels, and large brackets on the sides. The building retains almost all of its original materials.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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The Saxton United Methodist Church is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a good example of a Gothic-influenced structure in Central Delaware. Criterion consideration A applies because although the nominated building is a religious structure, its primary importance is derived from its architecture and significance.

On January 27, 1879, the people of School House District #117 near Bowers, Delaware erected a church building committee and decided upon a site to build the Saxton Methodist Church. The building committee then made plans to build the church on a parcel of land, donated by John Saxton, chairman of the building committee, which was located in Saxton's Grove in the west side of the Town of Bowers Beach, Delaware. By the end of 1879, the builders had completed the church and the congregation dedicated it on December 8, 1879. In the following year, church officials hired a sexton at an annual salary of \$10 and equipped the building with a stove, a coal bin and a back house. The congregation received full ownership of the church in August 1885 with their final payment in a bond held by James Wyatt, trustee of the church. Eight years later the congregation voted to relocate the church closer to the center of town. Cut in half width-wise, the church was moved and reconnected on a parcel of land on the corner of Church and Main Streets owned by church members, Alexander and Elizabeth Minner. The Reverends W.L. Murray, Robert Wyatt and S.R. Maxwell conducted the rededication service on December 5, 1893. In the next year, Alexander and Elizabeth Minner deeded the land to the church trustees and their successors for \$75. By the turn of the century, the church had become a stable part of the community with a Board of Trustees that had been appointed for life. The Saxton United Methodist Church is significant for a very important reason. While it follows the basic pattern of other late 19th and early 20th century central Delaware churches, it is one of the few frame churches that has not been altered or destroyed. The Saxton Church follows the pattern favored by rural churches; almost all were frame, one-story, rectangular in plan, gable-roofed, set on piers and plainly decorated. The Gothic style was popular as a decorative motif, but it was not usually as "extravagantly" expressed as it was at this church. The use of the board and pattern siding and the heavily carved windows is not a popular choice together but it does occur on some extant examples. However, the Saxton Church is unusual in that its internal and external appearance is the same, except for the new small chimney, as it was when the church was erected in 1879. Even the moving of the building in 1893, a common Delaware practice, did not alter the appearance of the building, just its location.

The men of the church, however, were not the only members who gave the church stability. In 1916, the female members created the Ladies Aid Society which has benefitted both the church and the community (even into the last decade).

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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The Ladies Aid Society met once a month and elected officers at the first meeting of every year. Most meetings began with musical entertainment from a fellow member, followed by a discussion of church business. For the Ladies Aid Society church business consisted of numerous topics from raising the church's fire insurance coverage, and donating to the pastor's retirement fund to organizing festivals, bazaars and social events.

The next order of business was to decide how much of their profits from the festivals, etc. should be spent and what is should buy. Some examples of what the women did with their money included purchasing the town hall where they held meetings which was adjacent to the church; furnishing the parsonage; hiring painters to paint the church and install electricity; helping pay the pastors' salaries and the Methodist conference dues; and buying a stove and communion sets. On Mother's and Father's Day, the women used some of their money to buy flowers for the mothers in the church and boxes of candy for the fathers as well.

The final event of the Ladies Aid meetings consisted of a report from the sunshine committee which sent flowers and cards to sick members of both the church and the community. On March 10, 1978, the meeting closed in a special way. Each lady donated money to help the Schroon Family whose house had been destroyed by a fire that injured two of the children.

From 1916 to 1978, the Ladies Aid Society continued to meet the needs of the members of Saxton Methodist Church. Ladies comforted families whose loved ones had died, celebrated wedding anniversaries, gave bridal and baby showers and raised money to maintain the church. The organization also maintained the town hall until 1952 when town officials built a new fire house with a community hall. As a result, the Ladies Aid sold the hall adjacent to the church to Linwood Jackson who removed the building. The church officials built a parking lot where the old hall (it was torn down) stood, and the Ladies Aid moved their activities to the new firehouse.

Throughout their history the Ladies Aid Society only underwent several minor changes. In 1944, the members changed the organization's name to the Women's Society of Christian Service. Later members, however, changed its name back to the Ladies Aid Society in 1975.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The Saxton United Methodist Church is located in the Coastal region in Delaware. Its construction in 1879 places it in the period of urbanization in Delaware and its removal to its present location reinforces that idea for at this time the present day town of Bowers began to appear. The church was constructed to fill the religious needs of the growing number of citizens. While the church filled the religious needs the Ladies Aid Society filled some social needs.

The church represents two themes: that of architecture as a good example of a Gothic-influenced building and also that of religion as a spiritual center for the local residents. It represents property type 14, that of a religious structure.

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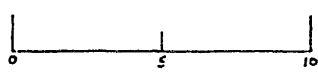
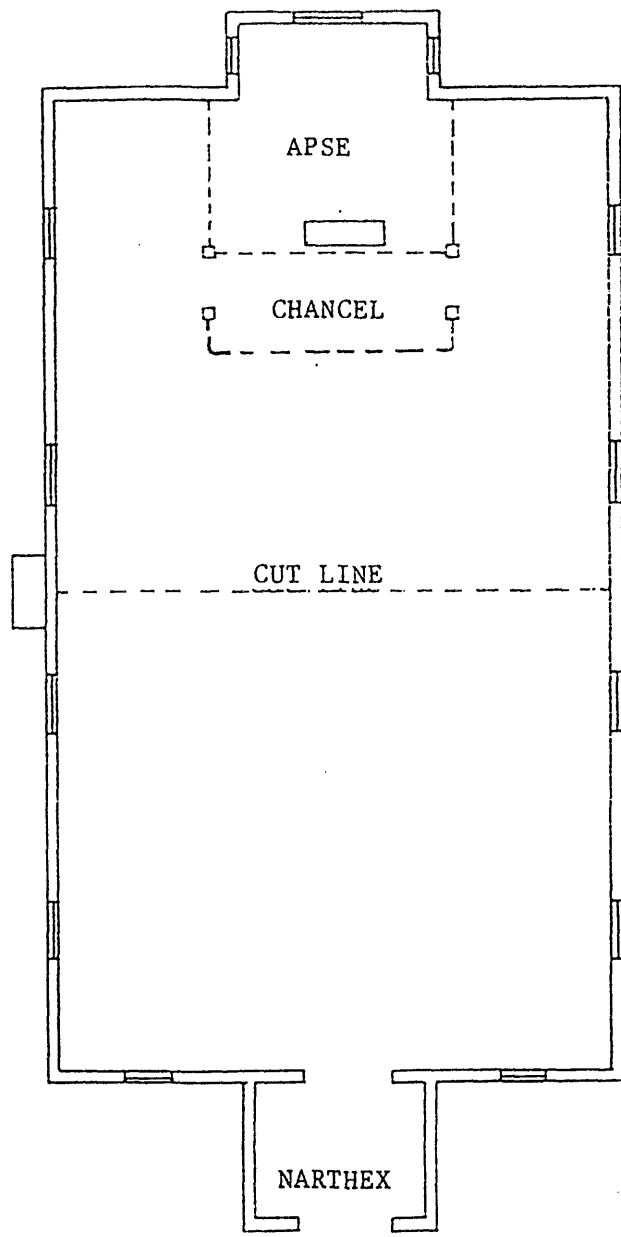
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page # 1
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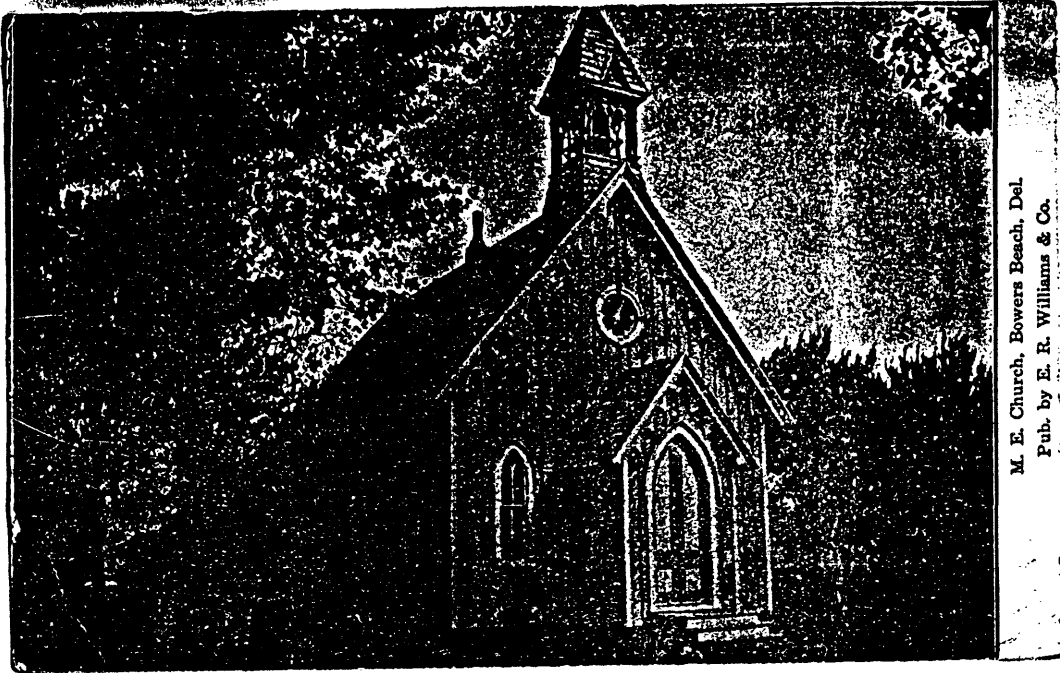
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Saxton Methodist Church
Kent County
Bowers, Delaware

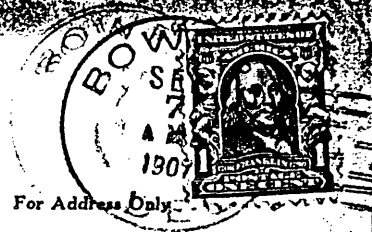


SAXTON METHODIST CHURCH, BOWERS, DE



M. E. Church, Bowers Beach, Del.
Pub. by E. R. Williams & Co.

Post Card



This Space May Be Used for Correspondence

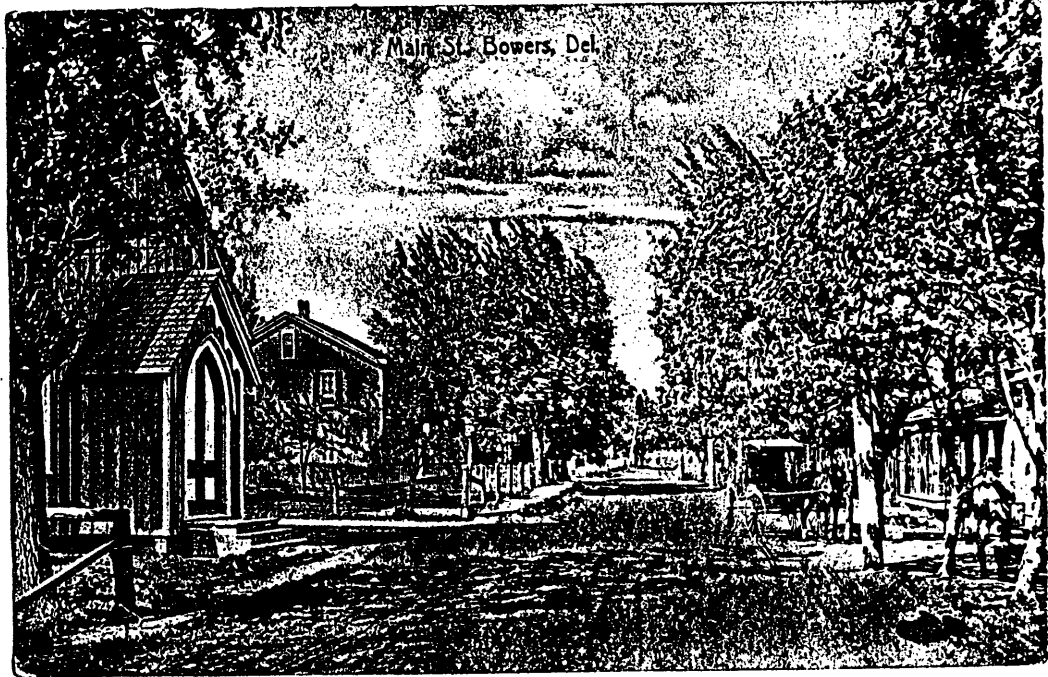
For Address Only

*Coming home
today. Have had
a splendid time.
Bessie.*

*Mrs Lydia A. Fisher
3929 Baltimore Ave
Phila Pa.*

9/4/07

SAXTON METHODIST CHURCH, BOWERS, DE



Published by Clara J. Dikes, Bowers Beach, Del. Made in Germany

Friday morning,
Dear sister

MESSAGE

Am having a nice
time and a rest.
The place is much
nicer than when I
was here before. We
have a nice big room
three windows, and it
is very cool also. The
boat Thiderica went up
yesterday, and that was
so soon for her. so,
cannot tell when we will
be home. All are well.
Your sister, Alice.

Post Card 17.50

ADDRESS

SEP 11 PM 1924
DEL.

U.S. POSTAGE
ONE CENT

Mrs. Charles Cleveland
Roundale
Chester Co. Pa.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90001070

Date Listed: 7/23/90

Saxton United Methodist Church
Property Name

Kent
County

DE
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Patrick Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

7/23/90
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

There is a technical omission on the form. Because the church building was moved during its Period of Significance, Criteria Consideration B (for moved properties) should have been indicated as applying to this property. The nomination form is now officially amended to include Criteria Consideration B.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)