

PH0351059

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED AUG 12 1977

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  AND/OR COMMON   
Gracehill Moravian Church (and Cemetery)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER: Saw of Washington on S.W. 8th  
County Road #314  
CITY, TOWN: Washington VICINITY OF: First  
STATE: Iowa COUNTY: Washington CODE: 183

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED church	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED cemetery	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME: Provincial Elders' Conference, Northern Province, Moravian Church  
STREET & NUMBER: 69 West Church Street  
CITY, TOWN: Bethlehem VICINITY OF: STATE: Pennsylvania

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Washington County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER: 210 West Main  
CITY, TOWN: Washington STATE: Iowa

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE:  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_FEDERAL \_\_\_\_STATE \_\_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
CITY, TOWN: STATE:

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR
- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Gracehill Moravian Church is a severely plain, rectangular frame structure, 30' x 50'. Windows of its single story are 12/12 lights in double-hung sash, three on each side of the church. Entrance is gained by a center door with a 4-light transom. The gable roof, which is supported by heavy A-frame trusses, is covered with sheet metal. A bell tower, with two gable-roofed stages and a narrow spire, rises over the entrance. The second stage, or bell chamber, has rectangular, louvred openings on each face.

A basement was dug beneath the church in 1913, enlarged and remodelled in 1954. It houses a furnace and several small rooms for church school classes. The church itself is one roof, the sanctuary, with a panelled front wall and paint on the other walls. These interior alterations, along with carpeting and the removal of a round wooden ornament from the spire, are the only changes which have been made in the original character of the church.

The adjoining cemetery was laid out in 1867 according to a formal plan traditional to the Moravian faith. Four trees, white pine, spruce, Scotch pine, and arborvitae, are planted on the corners of each road- or walk-way intersection. Early graves, which are still evident, were on the "choir system", with men in the northwest and northeast corners, women in the southwest and southeast corners, and within these areas were further divisions, for married people, young people, and babies. Burials after the 1890's are in more common family plots.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES      1867

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

From 1908 until its closing in 1970, the Gracehill Church was the only Moravian church operating in Iowa. Today it is probably the only structure remaining from the missionary and colonizing efforts, which in the 19th century established at least seven Moravian settlements and congregations in the state.

The settlement at Gracehill was begun in 1854 according to methods traditional with Moravians in the United States since the 18th century. A member of a proposed settlement, in this case Amos Miksch, purchased substantial acreages in new areas with funds provided by the Provincial Board of the Moravian Church, headquartered in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. This land was portioned into lots of varying sizes, and was sold on generous terms to colony members, the proceeds going in part to support a minister, as well as for schools and homes for retired missionaries and pastors. Along with these settlement efforts, the Moravian Home Missionary Society established a program of appointing ministers to travel the "provinces" (in this case the midwest) and organize congregations formally among communities, like Gracehill, which had been established with the aid of the Provincial Board. The first such Moravian congregations in Iowa, at Moravia and Richland, were established in 1854. Gracehill was formally organized in 1866, and the church erected the following year. At least four other Moravian congregations were located in Iowa during the 1870's, at Harmony, Newton, Independence and Victor. However, as settlement patterns in the state evolved from pioneer circumstances to market agriculture, "the consolidation of farms into large estates, with a consequent decrease of the rural population, militated against" mission efforts to sustain Moravian communities (Hamilton, p. 483). Lands were gradually sold and churches closed, until by 1908 only Gracehill still operated as a viable Moravian congregation. The last resident minister departed in 1932, but tradition was strong enough to keep the church operating irregularly until 1970.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Burrell, Howard A. History of Washington County, Iowa, I. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1909.  
 Hamilton, J. Taylor. A History of the Church Known as the Moravian Church... Bethlehem, Pa.: Times Publishing Co., 1900.  
 Portrait and Biographical Album of Washington County, Iowa. Chicago: Acme Publishing Co., 1887.  
 Engel, Eugene. Gracehill's 100 Years. (mimeo), 1966.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Church: less than one; Cemetery: approx. 3 (not contiguous)

### UTM REFERENCES

Church			Cemetery		
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	15	598040	4568	15	598200
C			B		

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

S. Eugene Engel, Vice President

ORGANIZATION

Gracehill Moravian Properties Corporation

DATE

July 1976

STREET & NUMBER

R.R. #1

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Brighton

STATE

Iowa

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Adrian D. Anderson*

TITLE Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE 1/19/77

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *[Signature]*  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 8/12/77  
 DATE 8/1/77