

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
 Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
 County and State

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	
29	9	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
30	9	Total

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

NA

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC / Secondary Structure

RELIGION / Church

FUNERARY / Cemetery

SOCIAL / Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC / Secondary Structure

RELIGION / Church

FUNERARY / Cemetery

SOCIAL / Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Wood, Concrete

roof: Asphalt

other: _____

Narrative Description

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

(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

The Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District is located in Setauket, New York in the Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County. Located in east central Long Island, the Town of Brookhaven extends across the middle of Long Island from Long Island Sound on the north to the Atlantic Ocean on the south; it is the only town on Long Island that extends to both shores. Due to its geographical and political interconnectedness, the northwest corner of the town, framed by Port Jefferson Harbor and the Smithtown Bay, is often referred to as the Three Villages. This area includes Stony Brook, the Setaukets, Old Field, and Poquott and incorporates both agricultural land and a convoluted northern coastline, with bays, estuaries, and ponds intertwining in a complex pattern with the land. Of the so-called Three Villages, Old Field Village was incorporated 1927. Stony Brook and Setauket remain hamlets. The district is located along a half-mile strip of wooded land along Christian Avenue in Setauket, about one-quarter of a mile east of the Setauket millpond. Glacial moraines extend upward from the north and south sides of Christian Avenue. This landscape visually defines the community and is reflected in the many elongated property lines, which extend up the hillsides. All district buildings are situated within this landscape, most built close to Christian Avenue, and reflect the community's organic growth over time. District settlement was initiated following the establishment of Laurel Hill Cemetery (1815) and, more critically, the Bethel AME Church (1874), when a community of African-American, Native-American, and mixed-race families settled along Christian Avenue during the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. The Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District is approximately 33 acres in size and includes 39 resources. It illustrates the history of a community of color which coalesced around the cemetery and church.

Narrative Description

The Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District includes resources dating from 1815 to 1973. It takes in three public properties (Laurel Hill Cemetery, 1815; Bethel AME Church, 1874, 1909-10; and the Irving Hart American Legion, 1955, 1973), twenty-four individual residences dating from c. 1902 to 1973, eight non-contributing residence (built after 1973), three contributing secondary buildings, one non-contributing secondary building, and five empty lots (two of which have archeological potential). The earliest residences in the community were built by white property owners as rentals. Over time, families of color purchased land in the area and built modest homes. At least three houses were moved from other locations into the district during the period of significance. During the twentieth century, most of the homes in the district were expanded and renovated to accommodate growing families, extended family members moving into the neighborhood, or simply a family's increased means. The houses and public buildings in the district were all constructed by local residents or nearby contractors, including Harry Hart, who built at least three homes here. The district's integrity of location, setting, feeling and association with this historic community of color remain powerful, sustaining a sense of community into the present that remains evident in the community's strong connection to its history and this land. Boundaries were to drawn to include the resources associated with the historic and cultural community of color, which was primarily limited to properties along Christian and Locust Avenue. Although properties along Mud Road, which runs north-south and intersects Christian Avenue at the west end of the district, were once considered part of the community, contemporary changes have obliterated tangible historic associations between the two streets and Mud Road has been excluded from the historic district.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

District buildings are consistently sited a short distance back from the road on gently sloping sites. Some are connected to the road via paved driveways; some have sidewalk steps from their entrances to the road. Most of the district is without paved sidewalks; however, the land in front of the church has a paved sidewalk bordered by formal landscaping (bushes). The land was not extensively cleared for development, and it remains fairly wooded. Typical house lots have grassy lawns and scattered trees. Some have foundation plantings around the house or bushes along the road; however, most of the land is uncultivated. Relatively few lots are fenced in; however, there are one or two scattered fence panels creating private spaces

The built resources within the Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District closely reflect the neighborhood's development over time. Many were initially built as modest homes, or were modest buildings moved to the land. As such, it is typical for them to have received additions or alterations within the period of significance. As the district is primarily significant under the areas of social and ethnic history, the significance of each individual resource is based on its relationship to the history of the district.

The buildings are primarily of wood-frame construction and the majority are one and one-half stories tall. There are a few one- and two-story houses and a few that were raised. The typical early house can be described as a one and one-half story cottage with a side gable roof and a center entrance; however, the more consistent quality shared by almost every house is change over time, as buildings were raised, enlarged, re-sided, received and lost porches, received new windows, and were otherwise adapted and expanded to reflect the increased means and needs of later generations and expanding families. Newer houses have less consistency of form but are typical suburban houses of the period and show similar alterations. The most important character defining feature of the district is the consistency of association with this well-defined community over time.

Building List

The building list includes a brief building description of each building, as well as brief historical information on each resource. Buildings were judged to be contributing if they were constructed during the period of significance, were owned or lived in by a "person of color" as defined in the nomination, associated with the history of and/or the primary families associated with the neighborhood, and were within the district boundary as defined in the nomination. Non-contributing resources are noted; some non-contributing resources are related to community members but postdate the period of significance. The streets are listed in alphabetical order and are listed from west to east by address in numerical order and/or lot number (as both historic and contemporary documents frequently refer to these properties by lot number, this information helps to provide additional clarification).

Christian Avenue

Lot 31. Vacant,

Lot 32. Vacant.

Lot 33. Vacant.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

9 Christian Avenue (Lot 13). Hart-Schleker House, ca. 1970.

Two-story, three-bay by two-bay frame house with large front-gabled section; one-and-a-half story, side-gabled section with dormer on west. Vinyl siding.

Harry and Pearl Hart, core members of the Christian Avenue community, purchased this land in Kalmia Woods from Ward Melville in 1969 and built this house soon after; they retained and rented their previous home at 30C Christian Avenue. After land values rose, they sold the property and moved to houses owned by the Harts elsewhere on Christian Avenue.

11 Christian Avenue (Lot 17). McKenzie House, ca. 1970.

One-story, four-bay by two-bay side-gabled frame house. Engaged porch, attached garage. Vinyl siding.

Rev. Joseph and Margaret McKenzie moved to Christian Avenue in 1958 when he began serving as the pastor of Bethel AME; he held the position for nine years, during the a period of rapid growth at the church. The McKenzies purchased this land in Kalmia Woods from Ward Melville in 1968 and built this home soon after.

15 Christian Avenue (Lot 16), ca. 1985. Non-contributing (outside of period of significance).

One-story, four-bay by two-bay frame ranch house with hipped roof. Central engaged porch, attached garage.

In 1972, Ward Melville sold this land to Sam and Diane Wilson. The Wilsons sold it in 1976 to Horace and Eva Jackson, who built the current house.

Laurel Hill Cemetery (Lot 34), 1815.

Formally established by the Town of Brookhaven in 1815, Laurel Hill Cemetery is the second African and Native-American cemetery in Setauket; it has had a formal relationship with Bethel AME since the late 19th century. The 1.53-acre cemetery is on a hill that slopes steeply upward away from the road; an informal, grassy path climbs the hill. The cemetery is dotted by trees, small shrubs, and headstones laid out in irregular patterns; the earliest remaining stones date from the 1870s.

17 Christian Avenue (Lot 15), ca. 1984 Non-contributing (outside of period of significance).

One-and-a-half story, three-bay by two-bay side-gabled frame house. One-story, side-gabled wing on west. Two front-gabled dormers on façade, wide shed-roofed dormer at rear. Faux shingle siding.

Sherwood Lewis, who grew up on Christian Avenue, purchased this land from Ward Melville in 1977. In 1984, Lewis sold the land to James and Christine Bellino, who built the current residence.

20 Christian Avenue (Lot 28). Frank & Emma Scott House, ca. 1935.

One-story, two-bay by four-bay front-gabled frame house built into the hill. Oldest section has sloping roofline into one-bay by one-bay wing, brick and concrete chimney. Vinyl siding, concrete foundation.

Frank and Emma (née Hart) Scott rented this house from Harold Smith, a local coal dealer, European American, and small-scale developer, during the 1940s. Smith who built the house after purchasing the land in 1932, was known by local residents as the "bank" for people who wished to buy property. The Scotts likely had a land contract arrangement with Smith, who Frank Scott worked for; they became the owners of the property in 1951 and raised 12 children on Christian Avenue. Frank Scott later worked for the Town of Brookhaven Highway Department.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

22 Christian Avenue (Lot 27), ca. 1980. Non-contributing (outside of period of significance).

Two-story, two-bay by two-bay, side-gabled frame house with one-story, side-gabled wing on west elevation. One-story, shed-roofed engaged porch. Vinyl siding.

Subdivided from Frank and Emma Scott's land in 1946 and sold to Viola Adams, this parcel remained vacant for some time. Viola Pruitt and Alma Watkins acquired the property in 1974 and built the current house; it is shown on the 1984 aerial.

23 Christian Avenue (Lot 14). Certain House, ca. 1977. Non-contributing (outside of period of significance).

Two-story, three-bay by two-bay side-gabled frame house with two-bay by two-bay ell. Two garage bays. One-story, shed-roofed porch. Shingle siding.

Dorothy and Rodney Certain purchased this land in Kalmia Woods from Ward Melville in 1975, and built a house on the land soon after. Dorothy moved to Christian Avenue as a girl after her father became pastor of Bethel AME during the 1920s.

28 Christian Avenue (Lot 37). Robert & Audrey Hendrickson House, ca. 1945-47.

One-story, two-bay by two-bay, side-gabled frame cottage. Brick exterior chimney, aluminum siding. One-story, two-bay by three-bay side-gabled building built or moved as an addition ca. 1950.

Robert Hendrickson and Audrey Brewster purchased this lot in 1939; they married and built the house after Robert returned from WWII. In 1932, Audrey became the first person of color to graduate from Port Jefferson High School, worked for the Bulova Watch Company, the Brookhaven's tax assessor's office and the U.S. Post Office. She was active in the American Legion auxiliary, serving for more than 29 years as the poppy chair, fundraised for her church and Mather Hospital, and received an award from the Post Office for her dedicated community service.

30 Christian Avenue (Lot 26). Irving S. Hart American Legion Post 1766, ca. 1951-1973.

Two-story, three-bay by three-bay, front-gabled concrete and frame building; slightly smaller front gabled wing at rear. First floor central entrance flanked by windows, second story picture window. Vinyl siding.

Soon after the Irving S. Hart VFW post was founded in 1951, Rachel Hart Young Midgett donated land at the front of her property for an American Legion building. The men of the community, most of whom were members, worked together, and had completed a one-story structure with a flat roof by 1955. Ward Melville matched the funds raised for its completion with materials and skilled labor to finish the second story with a gable roof in 1973. The building served as a central gathering place and defining institution for the entire community; members participated in the Legion or Ladies Auxiliary, and all community members attended dinners, charitable events, and social functions held at the Legion building.

30A Christian Avenue (Lot 24), ca. 1935.

L-shaped, one-story frame building. Two-bay by three-bay, front-gabled frame building, shingle siding; L two-bay by two-bay frame addition.

Harry Hart originally built this house up the hill at 28 Christian Avenue as a rental property. When Rachel Hart Young sold the land to Robert Hendrickson and Audrey Brewster in 1939, the house was moved to this parcel. As a rental, the house provided additional income to the Hart family as well as a home to members of the Christian Avenue community; Sara Hart Green and Thelma Scott, members of the extended Hart family, both lived in this house for a time.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

30B Christian Avenue (Lot 24), ca. 1955.

One-story, one-bay by three-bay, side-gabled frame house with one-bay by two-bay, side-gabled rear wing. This house was built by Rachel Hart Young's son, Harry Hart, a prolific builder. Hart rented this home to extended family and summer residents.

30C Christian Avenue (Lot 24). Harry Hart House, ca. 1931.

Two-story, L-shaped frame house covered in shingle siding. Roughly two-bay by four-bay. Dormers and small shed additions reflect expansions during the mid-twentieth century.

The oldest house at 30 Christian Avenue, this bungalow may have been built by R.W. Hawkins as a rental property. Rachel Hart Young and her husband William H. Young purchased the property from Hawkins in 1931. They raised their family in the house. Harry Hart, Rachel's son, married neighbor Pearl Lewis; the couple raised their five sons here. Hart, an entrepreneur and jack-of-all trades, expanded the home to suit his growing family and built rental homes elsewhere on his land. In 1969, Harry and Pearl Hart purchased property and built a home at 9 Christian Avenue; Owen and Ouida Crichlow, immigrants from Barbados who were attracted to the Christian Avenue community, were long-term renters at the house.

32 Christian Avenue (Lot 23). Howard & Ethel Lewis House, ca. 1915.

Two buildings: one house, one garage. Two-story, three-bay by six-bay front-gabled frame house; rear two bays side-gabled. First floor engaged porch. Vinyl siding, brick and concrete foundation. Two-story, two-bay by two-bay, ca. 1995 frame garage at rear of property, non-contributing.

Howard and Ethel DuVal Lewis began living on Christian Avenue after their marriage in 1925; his mother, Rebecca Hart Lewis, moved to the area around the same time. Howard and Ethel Lewis started renting this house in the 1930s, purchased it in 1952 and began expanding it soon after to better accommodate themselves and their seven children. Howard, a Hart descendant, worked for the Long Island railroad and had his own wood-cutting business.

33 Christian Avenue (Lot 18). Bethel AME Church 1909-10, with additions.

Church with a series of large, connected additions. One-story, two-bay by five concrete block church. Pointed window in gable, short steeple with pyramidal roof. Rectangular stained glass windows. Two-story, side-gabled attached concrete block parsonage wing dates from original church construction; interior brick chimney. Two-story addition to rear of parsonage, one-story connector, and rear two-story, side-gabled community center were progressively constructed between 1950 and 1979; all are concrete block covered in stucco.

Bethel AME Church purchased this land in 1874, and built a modest building soon after; after over 30 years of service, it was lost to fire in 1909. Efforts to rebuild began immediately; the cornerstone for the new building was laid eight months after the fire. The church was completed in 1910 and remains the community's social, cultural, and spiritual center as well as its physical one. Church activities, including religious services and gatherings, social events, and fundraisers, helped to bind the community together; the Church also connected the community to the network of AME churches across Long Island.

Lot 10. Vacant.

Lot 12. Vacant.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

34 Christian Avenue (Lot 21). Lee House, ca. 1956.

One-story, T-shaped frame ranch house, roughly three-bay by two-bay. Vinyl siding.

In 1956, Ethel Lewis purchased this lot and immediately resold it Herman and Barbara Lee, her daughter and son-in-law; this effectively expanded the family's shared land and allowed for them to remain close together within the community. Barbara and Herman had previously lived in an apartment in Port Jefferson, but needed more room for their growing family and wanted to live in a tighter-knit community. As the Town's Setauket district highway foreman, Herman helped to employ other men of color in the Christian Avenue community.

35 Christian Avenue (Lot 19). Sanford House, ca. 1900.

Two-story, three-bay by two-bay side-gabled frame house. One-story front-gabled entry porch. One-story, shed roofed additions on north and west elevations. Vinyl siding.

Jennie B. Howell purchased this property in 1905 and rented it, as well as other properties, to families of color during the early twentieth century. Harrison and Minnie (nee Hart) Sanford purchased the house in 1925, likely on a land contract. She rented it to family members when traveling as a Pentecostal minister, and lived in the community until her death in 1979.

36 Christian Avenue (Lot 22), 2004. Non-contributing (outside of period of significance).

Two-story, three-bay by two-bay side gabled frame house with one-story garage on west elevation. First story porch, central second story front gable. Vinyl siding.

The early twentieth-century Hawkins-Calvin House was demolished in 2004 for this new house; the project galvanized the community and inspired interest in Christian Avenue's history.

37 Christian Avenue (Lot 1). Keyes House, ca. 1900.

Two-story, three-bay by two-bay, side-gabled frame house. One-story front-gabled entry porch. Frieze band windows under roofline. One-story, side-gabled addition on north elevation. Vinyl siding.

Jennie B. Howell purchased this property in 1905 and rented it, as well as other properties, to families of color during the early twentieth century. Lucy Hart Keyes, Minnie's sister, moved into this house in 1918 and purchased the property in 1920, likely on a land contract. Lucy, a domestic, and her husband William, a caretaker and gardener, kept a large garden and livestock on their land. Lucy was active in Bethel AME church and was respected as an anchor in the community.

40 Christian Avenue (Lot 25). Calvin-Morrison Treadwell House, 1930-35.

One-story, three-bay by two-bay cross-gabled frame house. Central one-story, front-gabled projecting entry bay on façade. Aluminum siding.

This was the first of six houses owned by the Calvin-Morrison-Treadwell family on Christian Avenue (including 36, 40, 42, 43, 45, and 48). Edward G. and Caroline Calvin purchased this parcel in 1930; five years earlier, Edith Davis, Edward's sister, had purchased land across the street. The Calvins moved from Old Field between 1931-1935; the house may have been moved to this property from Port Jefferson.

41 Christian Avenue (Lot 2), 1931-32.

One-and-a-half story, three-bay by two-bay side-gabled frame house. Central front-gabled dormer. One-story, shed-roofed additions on east and north elevations. Aluminum siding. Central chimney.

In 1931, Charles Howell built this house for Isaiah and Bertha Hart; land records suggest that they progressively paid him for the cost of the land and house until 1938 when they became the formal owners.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Hart, a WWI and WWII vet, worked as a cook and mailman and served as the first commander of American Legion post 1766.

42 Christian Avenue (Lot 30). Calvin House, 1947.

Two-story, L-shaped, four-bay by two-bay, side-gabled frame house; one-story hipped roof wing on west elevation. Sections to east added ca. 1978. Vinyl siding.

After Lillian Calvin purchased this lot in 1946, she moved this house from Port Jefferson, where it was being offered for free by Giles Chevrolet on Main Street. Lillian worked as a nurse, raised five children on Christian Avenue, and passed the property down to two more generations of Calvins. Her niece, Barbara Peterson Treadwell, who had grown up at 40 Christian Avenue, inherited the house in 1957; Lillian's son Michael, a police detective, inherited the house in 1977.

43 Christian Avenue (Lot 6). Bristol House, ca. 1930.

One-and-a-half story, three-bay by three-bay side-gabled frame house; engaged enclosed porch. Shed-roofed dormer on façade, brick interior chimney. Shingle siding.

In 1927, Joseph Henry and Ella Bristol purchased this land and built a bungalow soon after. The Bristols worked as a laborer and cook, respectively, and were active in the community. The house was an early center of social activity, as the Bristols often hosted card parties and fundraisers for the church. The house remained in the Bristol family through 1976, when it was sold to Phyllis Urquhart, Edward G. Calvin's niece.

45 Christian Avenue (Lot 7). Bristol-Morrison House, ca. 1930.

Two buildings: house and garage. Two-story, three-bay by two-bay side-gabled frame house. One-story shed-roofed addition on façade. Large shed-roofed dormers on north and south elevations. Aluminum siding. One-story, one-bay by three bay garage, ca. 1950.

Joseph Henry and Ella Bristol purchased this land from Jennie B. Howell in 1926; they built a small home here soon after, which they apparently used as a rental. The Bristol family lived in the house next door, at 43 Christian Avenue. Thomas Morrison, a Florida native who had moved into the community and married into the Calvin family purchased the house in 1947. Morrison worked as a lightweight boxer, tap dancer, and postal worker. The Morrison family sold this house to Bethel AME in 1997; they rent the property to college students.

46 Christian Avenue (Lot 35). David & Mary Eato House, ca. 1917.

Two-story, two-bay by two-bay front gabled frame house over basement built into hill. Shed-roofed dormer on west elevation. Central brick chimney. Wood siding.

R.W. Hawkins purchased this property in 1913 and built this house as a rental soon after. Rev. David and Mary Eato began renting this house from R.W. Hawkins in 1917 when Rev. Eato served as the pastor of Bethel AME Church from 1911 through his death ca. 1928; during his early years, Rev. Eato commuted to the area from his home in Elmhurst. For most of his life, Rev. Eato worked as a laborer to supplement his income as a pastor. Following the death of his first wife, Annie, in 1911, Rev. Eato married Mary Lucinda Baker, a pianist and organist, in 1913; Mary Lucinda was born in South Carolina, educated at Allen University, and had moved to Port Washington in 1901. Mary Lucinda purchased this house in 1928 after Rev. Eato died, becoming one of several female landowners in the neighborhood. In the late 1940s, she divided her property between Edith M. Evans and Kate W. and William H. Griffin, her daughter and son-in-law.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

47 Christian Avenue (Lot 9). Medley-Edwards House, ca. 1940.

One-and-a-half story, three-bay by two-bay side-gabled frame house. Central front-gabled entry bay with faux shingles. Exterior brick chimney. Vinyl siding.

Youman and Margaret Medley purchased this land in 1935 from the Davis family and built a summer home here soon after; Margaret worked as a nurse in New York City. The Edwards family, who had lived in Chicken Hill, attended Bethel AME, and had been renting on Christian Avenue, purchased the home in 1970. Edwards has had as many as forty jobs in his lifetime, including as caddy for Ward Melville and his wife at St. George's golf course, as a gravedigger for Harry Hart, and as a custodian for the Three Village School District.

48 Christian Avenue (Lot 38). Evans-Phillips-Stith House, ca. 1947.

One-story, two-bay by two-bay, hipped roof frame house. Awnings over doors. Vinyl siding.

Mary Eato sold this parcel to Edith Evans, a Calvin descendant who worked in New York City and summered at Christian Avenue, in 1945; Evans built a house soon after. Jennie Phillips, who had grown up in Old Field and worked for the Three Village School District, purchased the property in 1972, after Evans' death.

50 Christian Avenue (Lot 39). Warren Hart House, ca. 1955.

Three buildings: house, two cottages at rear. One-story, three-bay by two-bay side-gabled concrete block house connected to one-bay by two-bay front-gabled garage with a side-gabled one-bay enclosed breezeway; stucco siding. One-story, two-bay by two-bay front-gabled frame cottage; shed-roofed porch on façade. One-story, two-bay by two-bay front-gabled frame cottage; vinyl siding.

Tristie Allen purchased this property in 1940 from Mary Eato, and may be associated with one of the rear cottages. Warren Hart, who purchased the property in 1955, grew up on Christian Avenue and likely built this concrete block house with assistance from his relative Harry Hart. Warren, who worked as a bayman, was known for his knowledge of the sea and quiet, neighborly acts within the community.

52 Christian Avenue (Lot 36). Harry Hart Bungalow, ca. 1935.

One-and-a-half story, two-bay by two-bay front-gabled frame house; shed-roofed dormer windows on east and west. Shed roofed one-bay by two-bay addition on west. Vinyl siding.

This is one of several houses built by Harry Hart to house extended family – his son, Harry Hart Jr., and his family initially lived here – and to serve as rental property, particularly for summer residents. After Harry Hart Jr.'s family moved to Port Jefferson Station, Pearl Hart rented the cottage every summer to woman from Brooklyn, likely a friend or relative. Oral histories indicate that the building originally had a first floor garage and second floor apartment; later, the entire building was converted to living space.

54A Christian Avenue (Lot 36). Young-Hart House, ca. 1920.

Two-story, roughly three-bay by three-bay frame house. Shingle siding. Complex roofline, with primary front gable and a series of shed roofs and one-story shed-roofed additions reflecting mid-20th century additions and expansions.

Originally a smaller cottage owned by Rachel Hart Young Midgett, this building was expanded by her son, Harry Hart, during the mid-twentieth century. This building resembles 30 Christian Avenue, which Harry Hart expanded in a similar fashion. Rachel was among the most important members of the community during the early twentieth century. She regularly hosted card parties and charity events, was active in Bethel AME, hosted the organizational meeting for the American Legion, and started the Hart-Sells family reunion. Rachel worked as a cook and caterer and her husband William Young worked as a butler; both passed on an entrepreneurial drive to their son, Harry Hart, who used the family's land as an asset.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

54B Christian Avenue (Lot 36). Young-Hart House, ca. 1935.

One-and-a-half story, two-bay by three-bay, front gabled frame house. One-story, hipped-roof enclosed porch. Small cornice returns on façade, shed-roofed dormers on east and west. Vinyl siding.

Rachel Hart Young Midgett purchased and moved this house ca. 1950 from Port Jefferson to provide additional family housing and rental property. Pearl Lewis Hart, who was about 10 years old when the building was moved, recalled that it was one of the larger homes moved onto Christian Avenue; due to its size, the house sat on Christian Avenue for several days as the workers determined the bay way to situate it on the lot. Rachel moved to this house from 54A soon after the move.

Hill Street

6 Hill Street (Lot 5), ca. 1998. Non-contributing (outside of period of significance).

Two-story, three-bay by two-bay side-gabled frame house. One-story shed roofed porch. Central front-gable dormer. Attached side-gabled garage wing. Shingle siding.

Lot was part of the original Ward Melville Kalmia Woods land purchase of 1961. In 1982, Barbara Treadwell, relative to the Calvin, Petersen and Morrison families, purchased this land. Barbara Treadwell sold it to Chris and Diane M. Clausen (Grandview Homes Inc.) in 1997.

Locust Avenue

9 Locust Avenue, (Lot 3). Gilbert Green House, ca. 1988. Non-contributing (outside of period of significance).

One-and-a-half story, L-shaped frame house. Roughly two-bay by four bay. Projecting shallow gable dormer on west. Vinyl siding.

Gilbert Green, a member of the extended Hart-Sells family, purchased this land from his uncle Theodore Green in 1988 and built this house soon after.

11 Locust Avenue (Lot 4). Theodore Green House, ca. 1977. Non-contributing (outside of period of significance).

Two-story, three-bay by two-bay side-gabled frame house. One-story, side-gabled wings (one an attached garage) on the east and west elevations. Vinyl siding.

Theodore Green grew up in Chicken Hill, served during World War II, played an active role in the community as a genealogist, historian, and civic leader, and was recognized as a Setalcott chief in 1999. Green purchased this land in Kalmia Woods from Ward Melville in 1977 and built this house soon after.

20 Locust Avenue (Lot 8) Lewis-Edwards House, ca. 1937.

One-and-a-half story, three-bay by three-bay front-gabled frame house. One-story, front-gabled entry porch. Vinyl siding.

Locust Avenue was formally laid out in 1934-35; Harold Smith bought property off of the road soon after. Daniel Lewis grew up on Christian Avenue and made an arrangement with his employer, coal dealer Harold Smith, to buy this land and build a house. Daniel and his wife, Adele, moved in after the house was completed and appear to have paid off the house gradually on a land contract. After Daniel Lewis' death in 1962, Smith transferred the house to Adele. Gregory Edwards, the son of Carlton "Hubbell" Edwards (47 Christian Avenue) purchased the house from Adele Lewis' estate in 1984.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

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.)

Social History

Ethnic History: African-American, Native-American

Period of Significance

1815 – ca. 1973

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

African-American

Native American

Architect/Builder

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.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the district begins in 1815 with the formal establishment of Laurel Hill Cemetery and ends ca. 1973 with the completion of the Irving Hart American Legion building.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The Bethel Christian Avenue stabilized in its current form in the decades following World War II. The last major institutional addition to the district, the first phase of the Irving Hart American Legion, was built in 1951 across from Bethel AME Church. The building's completion ca. 1973 represented the culmination of years of local fundraising and volunteer and paid construction hours and a substantial donation by local philanthropist Ward Melville.

Statement of Significance

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Summary

The Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District is significant under Criterion A in the areas of social and ethnic history as a rare and exceptionally well-documented neighborhood of residences, church, social hall and cemetery that embodies the history of people of mixed Native American and African American background from the early nineteenth century into the current era. In the period after slavery, some free people of color on Long Island formed strong neighborhoods on land near European American dominated communities with whom they shared a symbiotic economic and social relationship. In Setauket, this community formed around the Bethel A.M.E. Church and the Laurel Hill Cemetery on Christian Avenue. This residential enclave, which developed primarily during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was characterized by a multi-generational network of core families, intermarriage among people of Native and African descent, and an infusion of people who moved here from outside this community, often from the South. Residents maintained their community identity through regular social and religious gatherings, vibrant institutions, steady and diversified employment, education in integrated public schools, and a remarkably high rate of home ownership – 62 percent in 1940; all of these factors have contributed to the success and longevity of the community to the present day.

As the last surviving community of this type in this area of Long Island, the district's homes, church, and legion hall reflect its origin as working class neighborhood of nuclear families. The residences themselves are generally of wood frame construction and were built throughout the period of significance but otherwise have few similarities. Some were originally rented; some were constructed by owners, and some were moved to the area by residents. Over time, many have been remodeled and expanded, reflecting their owners' increasing prosperity. They retain integrity of location and setting and are often owned by descendants of the original families. Newer residences are typical suburban homes of the type that any middle class Long Island resident might have constructed in the period. Many residences occupy original lots, retain similar siting and orientation to the street, and sit amidst wooded, uncultivated landscapes. Whether old, altered, moved, or new, these residences generally retain overwhelmingly strong integrity of association and feeling with the Christian Avenue community. The period of significance for the district begins in 1815 with the formal establishment of Laurel Hill Cemetery and ends ca. 1973 with the completion of the Irving Hart American Legion building.

Introduction

On the north shore of Long Island, looking over Conscience Bay, the Three Villages of the Setaukets, Stony Brook, and Old Field is a liminal place, where earth and sea and sky, like interlaced fingers, form a world unto itself. Inhabited by Native Americans for 10,000 years, this was also the earliest area settled by European Americans and African Americans on the north shore of Long Island in 1655.¹ Like the place, the people also lived intertwined lives. Long before the Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District came to be, Native Americans, African Americans, and European Americans created interdependent communities that carried elements of each tradition, distinct but interwoven in complex ways, sometimes reflected in the interdependence between one person and another, sometimes within people themselves.

¹ Silas Wood, *A Sketch of the First Settlement of Long Island and the State of the Country* (1828), 14, 4.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Still, as early as 1672, African Americans were living in Setauket in slavery. By 1790, people of color made up about 15 percent of its population. Freed by 1827 (sometimes earlier), people of color in the Three Village area began to create separate residential areas near European American dominated neighborhoods by the early nineteenth century. Like European Americans, people of color remained tied to traditional lifestyles and rural economies until shipbuilding, the manufacture of rubber boots, and summer tourism became the region's major industries during the late nineteenth century. Urbanization on a large scale never came to the Three Villages. World War I opened new economic opportunities, and some southerners settled in the community as part of the Great Migration. While the creation of the Bethel Christian Avenue community was ultimately an early twentieth-century phenomenon, it was informed by the long history of people of color in the Three Village area, as they moved from slavery into freedom, creating their own places of safety.

In more current times, the built environment reflects the creative efforts of families of color to survive on their own terms in the face of continued economic and social challenges. In creating a space of their own, near European American dominated areas but controlled by people of color, these families followed a pattern common since the end of slavery, a pattern that Andrew Wiese, in *Places of Their Own*, includes in his definition of suburbs. "In contrast to the well-groomed suburbs of the white middle-class," he suggested, "most early black suburbs were unplanned, unregulated, and unpretentious working-class communities." In the early twentieth century, many working class people of color established such suburbs, especially in the South and along a corridor from Philadelphia to the tip of Long Island. Weeksville, which existed on the eastern edge of Brooklyn from the 1830s to the early twentieth century, is a classic early example.² Although Christian Avenue was on the edge of a small village rather than a city, in many respects it also fits this definition.³

Calling the Bethel Christian Avenue community a suburb helps us understand in part why people chose to live here. Strongly rooted in their own mixed heritage history and culture, generations of women and men (including a core group of related families) deliberately created a place of stability, and mutual support, where they could maintain traditional values of family, work, and community as they confronted a rapidly changing world. With easy access to work in Setauket, Old Field, Stony Brook, and Port Jefferson, they could own homes, raise their children, reinforce social networks, and bury those who passed on, even during unsettled times like the Great Depression.⁴

In 1900, 90 percent of African Americans lived in the South, most of them in rural areas. Between 1916 and 1930, a million and a half people of color moved north, most of them to cities. The dominant narrative of African Americans in the early twentieth century focuses on this Great Migration, sometimes called a second emancipation, from southern farms to northern cities. This period was also characterized by organized resistance to white American domination over people of color (through the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Association of Colored Women, Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, and other groups), new economic opportunities that resulted from World War

² The Hunterfly Road Historic District (Kings County, NY), which encompasses an intact section of Weeksville, was listed on the National Register in 2006.

³ Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 17; Judith Wellman, *Brooklyn's Promised Land: Weeksville, A Free Black Community* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

⁴ For identity of the eel spearer, see Allan Nevins and William Halsey Thomas, eds., *The Diary of George Templeton Strong* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), I:xii, quoted in Estelle D. Lockwood, "Saga of the Strong Family," in *William Sidney Mount: Family Friends, and Ideas*, Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan et al, eds. (Three Village Historical Society, 1999), 46; Simira Tobias, conversation with author, March 2016. For further discussion, see section on Hart Family in this essay.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

I, and a renaissance of African American culture, especially in Harlem but also in Chicago and elsewhere.⁵ As Christian Avenue residents coalesced as a community during the first quarter of the twentieth century, its residents were affected by these national movements. But their history in the region begins much earlier.

I. Early history of Setauket/Three Villages

A. Native Americans in the Setauket Area

About 10,000 years ago, people who became known as Setalcotts settled on the north shore of Long Island. They were part of Algonquin language people who dominated New England and eastern Long Island. They lived in small communities surrounded by farm fields. In the Setauket area, Setalcott people lived at several places on what is now Strong's Neck (which they called "island of wild huckleberries"), Old Field (which Setalcotts called "great neck"), both peninsulas on the north shore, and elsewhere near the water. Archaeologists have uncovered two major Native American sites just north of Christian Avenue (outside the district). One, the West Meadow site on Aunt Amy's Creek, was a small village, inhabited 3,000-5,000 years ago. A second, the Fischetti site, about 800 yards east of the village, was used primarily for making stone tools and spear points.⁶ Until recently, white historians generally agreed that most Native people, including the Setalcotts, had disappeared as separate groups by the 1840s, victims of war, disease, and alcohol. Newspapers reported over and over again, from at least 1867 to 1936, that the "last full-blooded Indian on Long Island" had died.⁷

While focusing on "full blooded natives," researchers overlooked the possibility of the survival of native culture and sensibilities through intermarriage between Native people and people of both African and European background. Further, white census takers were less than accurate in affixing racial and ethnic identities and failed to ask what a person's own sense of identity might be. The result was that many people of color listed as black or mulatto were actually Native Americans or mixed race individuals.⁸ Therefore, without accurate historic records, this nomination relies on the fact that many people of color in the district today identify themselves as either Native American or mixed heritage people: Native American, African American, and European American. As John Strong noted, Congress defines as "Indian" "anyone who identifies as an Indian

⁵ For background material on this period, see James R. Grossman, "A Chance to Make Good: 1900-1929" in Robin D.G. Kelley and Earl Lewis, eds., *A History of African Americans* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 345-408.

⁶ William Ritchie, *The Stony Brook Site and Its Relation to Archaic and Transitional Cultures on Long Island* (Albany: State University of New York, 1959); Beverly C. Tyler, "Go back in history at West Meadow Beach," *Village Times Herald*, July 8, 2016, <<http://tbrnewsmedia.com/go-back-in-history-at-west-meadow-beach/>> ; "Archaeology of the Native and African American Community in Setauket, New York." Hofstra University. Summer Archaeology Field School, 2011; William Ritchie, *Archaeology of "Archaeology of the Native and African American Community in Setauket, New York."* Hofstra University. Summer Archaeology Field School, 2011; William Ritchie, *Archaeology of New York State* (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1965), Rear. 1997, 2014. For detailed studies, see John A. Strong, *The Unkechaug Indians of Eastern Long Island: A History* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011); John A. Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006); John A. Strong, *Algonquian Peoples of Long Island* (Ovid: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1997); John A. Strong, *We Are Still Here: The Algonquian Peoples of Long Island Today* (Ovid, New York: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1998).

⁷ Nathaniel Prime, *A History of Long Island, From Its First Settlement by Europeans, to the Year 1845, with Special Reference to Its Ecclesiastical Concerns. In Two Parts. I. Its Physical Features and Civil Affairs. II. Annals of the Several Towns, Relating Chiefly to Ecclesiastical Matters.* (New York: Robert Carter, 1845), 40, 101; Gabriel Furman, *Antiquities of Long Island, to which is added a bibliography by Henry Onderdonk, Jr.*, ed. Fran Moore (New York: J.W. Bouton, 1874), 33.

⁸ Pew Research Center, "Race and Multiracial Americans in the U.S. Census," in *Multiracial in America: Proud, Diverse, and Growing in Numbers* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2015): 19-31.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

and is accepted by an Indian community as a member.” Today, “Indianness” is a factor of self-identification based on shared rituals, family ties, and acceptance among the Indian community.⁹

Many people of color in the Christian Avenue neighborhood trace their ancestry to specific people of Native American background. Levi Phillips, for example, was well known across Long Island as a Native American healer. At least two residents of Christian Avenue, Jennie Phillips Stith and Carleton “Hubbell” Edwards, were great-grandchildren of Levi Phillips. Many others, including Nellie Edwards and the late Ted Green, identified strongly with their Native American heritage. Many Christian Avenue residents have helped promote a resurgence of interest in their Native American background through extensive genealogical work and the sponsorship of pan-Indian gatherings.¹⁰

B. European Americans in the Setauket Area

On April 14, 1655, six white people from the Boston, Massachusetts, purchased a large tract of land in this area from tribes in the region; Silas Wood, one of Long Island’s earliest white historians, noted in 1828 that the “Setauket and Patchogue tribes” sold this land. The new settlers called this area Setauket, a corruption of Setalcott, “land on the mouth of the creek.”¹¹ Over the next several decades, Setalcott leaders sold Old Field, Little Neck (now Strong’s Neck), and other large parcels of land to European settlers. This land was well suited to farming. To provide forage for deer and other game, Native peoples regularly burned the woods. So when European Americans moved into this area, most of the land was clear and easily accessible for both farm fields and pastures.¹²

While English settlers occupied central and eastern Long Island, Dutch people made their base in New York City and Breuckelen on western Long Island. The Setauket area joined the colony of Connecticut in 1661. In 1664, the English took over the entire colony of New Netherlands, incorporating all of Long Island into the new colony of New York. European Americans on central and eastern Long Island retained a strong Yankee culture. In 1841, John Barber and Henry Howe described the residents as “mostly from New England, and the inhabitants have ever retained to a great degree the habits and manners of the Puritans.”¹³ Houses, families, and churches were all of New England origin. Even the town green, meeting space for generations of Setauket citizens, reflected a New England town plan, surrounded by two historic churches. Caroline Church, built in 1729, is the second oldest Episcopal Church still in use in the United States.¹⁴ The Presbyterian Church, constructed in its current form in 1812, reflected the Calvinist tradition of New England.¹⁵

⁹ John Strong, “The Thirteen Tribes of Long Island: The History of a Myth,” *The Hudson Valley Regional Review*, 9:2; John A. Strong, *We Are Still Here! The Algonquian Peoples of Long Island Today* (Empire State Books, 1998).

¹⁰ “Dr. Levi Phillips, One Hundred Years Old,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, October 9, 1909; Interview with Carleton “Hubbell” Edwards, April 21, 2016.

¹¹ Silas Wood, *A Sketch of the First Settlement of Long Island and the State of the Country* (1828), 14, 4.

¹² Mildred H. Gillie, “Old Field,” in *Historical Sketches of Settlements and Communities of North Brookhaven Town, 1655-1955* by Mildred H. Gillie, Kate W. Strong, Margaret S. Davis, and Osborn Shaw (Bellport: U.S. Press, 1955), 25; Richard Mather Bayles, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Suffolk County* (Port Jefferson: The author, 1874), 225.

¹³ John Barber and Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of the State of New York* (1841)

¹⁴ Caroline Church of Brookhaven, “A Brief History of Caroline Church,” Available at <<http://www.carolinechurch.net/welcome/history.shtml>>.

¹⁵ John Barber and Henry Howe, in *Historical Collections of the State of New York* (New York: S. Tuttle, 1846), 533-34; Peter Ross, *A History of Long Island from its Earliest Settlement to the Present*, Vol. I (New York and Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1902), 990; Derek Stadler,

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

During the Revolution, the British occupied most of Long Island. Benjamin Thompson, historian and Setauket resident, noted in 1843 that, "The people of Long Island suffered especial hardships and exactions during the Revolutionary struggle... The Island was the resting-place for the British regiments when not on active duty. They were quartered there for the very great convenience of embarking, when needed, on any expedition, south or north."¹⁶ In Setauket, the British used the Presbyterian Church as their headquarters. Many local residents sympathized with the Patriots, however, and Setauket became the site of one battle and the center of the Culper spy ring.¹⁷

C. African Americans in the Setauket Area

In the colonial period, only about 3 percent of New England's population lived in slavery. In contrast, the colony of New York had the largest enslaved population north of the Mason-Dixon line. Between 12 and 15 percent of colonial New York's population was enslaved.¹⁸ On Long Island, both large landowners and wealthy individuals relied on slaves' agricultural and domestic labor. The largest plantation on Long Island was at Shelter Island, established in 1651 by Nathaniel Sylvester to provide supplies for his brother's plantation in Barbados. Sylvester Manor (NR Listed, 2015) began with 8,000 acres and twenty-four enslaved people. Other major enslavers included Josiah Martin, a sugar merchant, who migrated from Antiqua to Queens, where he created a plantation of six hundred acres in 1767. William Floyd at Mastic Beach on the South Shore also ran his farm with people in slavery. In 1790, fourteen enslaved people and five free people of color lived on the Floyd estate.¹⁹

The first recorded enslaved person in Setauket was Antony, sold in 1672. When William "Tangier" Smith, who built St. George's Manor on what became Strong's Neck, died in February 1704, his estate included thirteen people of color: "two old negroes Toro and Oyon, two negroes Tom and Mary, James negro and Mary Tom's, Titus and Phillis at 40 each, Charles negro 60, Toney at 60, Dick at 50 and Diego at ten."²⁰

"The History of the Three Villages and St. James: With a Modern Chronicle of the Long Island Rail Road's Eastern Port Jefferson Branch,"

<<https://derekstadler.wordpress.com/portfolio-2/collections-photography/suffolk/the-history-of-the-three-villages-and-st-james-with-a-modern-chronicle-of-the-long-island-rail-roads-eastern-port-jefferson-branch/>>.

¹⁶ Benjamin Thompson, 138-9.

¹⁷ Alexander Rose, *Washington's Spies* (New York: Bantam, 2007); Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger, *George Washington's Secret Six: The Spy Ring that Saved the American Revolution* (Sentinel, reprint 2014); Beverly Tyler, "Setauket Spy Ring Story," Three Village Historical Society, June 20, 2014, online; TURN: Washington's Spies, AMC svideo series, 2014-16.

¹⁸ Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris, *Slavery in New York* (New York: Plenum Press, 2005); Lynda R. Day, *Making a Way to Freedom: A History of African-Americans on Long Island* (Interlaken: Empire State Books, 1997); Edgar MacManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001); Graham Russell Hodges, *Root and Branch: African Americans in New York and East Jersey, 1613-1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Grania Bolton Marcus, "Discovering the African American Experience on Long Island," in *Exploring African-American History on Long Island and Beyond*, ed. Natalie A. Naylor (Hempstead: Hofstra University, Long Island Studies Institute, 1995); Lynda R. Day, *Making a Way to Freedom: A History of African Americans on Long Island* (Empire State Books, 1997).

¹⁹ Mac Griswold, *The Manor: Three Centuries of a Slave Plantation at a Slave Plantation on Long Island* (2013); Katherine Hayes, *Slavery Before Race: Europeans, Africans, and Indians at Long Island's Sylvester Manor Plantation, 1651-1884*; Lynda Day, "William Floyd Estate," *Mapping the African American Past*, <<http://maap.columbia.edu/e/64>>; Spencer Rumsey, "Slavery and Salvation: Long Island's Underground Railroad," *Long Island Press*, February 14, 2014, <<https://www.longislandpress.com/2014/02/04/slavery-and-salvation-l-i-s-underground-railroad/>>.

²⁰ "An Inventory of the Goods and Chattels of Coll. Wm Smith, 1705," copy in Three Village Historical Society.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

As John Strong found, during the French and Indian War, Suffolk County's muster rolls recorded several people of color, called variously "Indian," "Mustee," Mestizo," Mulatto," or "Negro." More systematic information about numbers of people of color in the Town of Brookhaven begins only about 1776; 142 "negroes" (7 percent) lived among 2,031 European Americans in the Town of Brookhaven in 1776. Although many enslaved individuals fought for both the British and Continental forces, the impact of the American Revolution on the 142 people of color in the Setauket area has not been well documented.

Nationally, revolutionary ideals encapsulated in the Declaration of Independence, that "all men are created equal," challenged Americans to reconsider slavery in the new nation. Massachusetts abolished slavery outright. In New York State, the first constitutional convention in 1777 endorsed a resolution that "every human being who breathes the air of the state shall enjoy the privileges of a freeman." But the final decision was less sweeping. In 1799, New York State finally passed a gradual emancipation law. All male children born to enslaved women after July 4, 1799, would become free at age 28 and all female children would become free at age 25. In 1817, this act was amended to include everyone born into slavery before July 4, 1799, to be freed by July 4, 1827.²¹

In the ensuing twenty-eight years, many European Americans in the Setauket area went before the town board and formally granted freedom to enslaved people. Several lived within a mile of Christian Avenue. In 1813, for example, executors of Samuel Thompson's estate manumitted Killis, "lately a slave to Samuel Thompson physician." In 1814, Hannah Woodhull manumitted Tamar, "under the age of forty-five Years and of Sufficient ability to care for and maintain herself." That same year, Thomas Strong manumitted "a certain Negro man, a Slave of his Named Killis," and Theophilus Smith manumitted Sarah. Many others were manumitted in the years until slavery was finally abolished in New York State in 1827.²² Census records show the gradual drop in numbers of enslaved people in the Town of Brookhaven, from a high of 225 in 1800 to none in 1830. At the same time, numbers of free people of color fluctuated. Census records noted 291 free people of color in 1790, 207 in 1800, 327 in 1810, 193 by 1820, and 499 (or perhaps only 259) in 1830. In 1830, 143 people of color lived in independent households, while 116 lived in European American-headed households. In general, during the nineteenth century, the number of people of color in the Town of Brookhaven numbered between 400 and 500 people, with a high of 633 in 1900. However, because the total population of Brookhaven grew from 3,224 in 1790 to 14,592 in 1900, the proportion of people of color fell from 15 percent in 1790 to 4.4 percent in 1900.²³

D. Economy in Setauket Area before 1915

²¹ Edgar MacManus, *History of Negro Slavery in New York* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966).

²² *Town of Brookhaven Records*, vol. 2, 1798-1856 (Port Jefferson: Times Steam Job Print, 1888), 177, 180. For more information, see NY State Manumissions Act of 1788 and the Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery – 1799:
<http://www.longwood.k12.ny.us/community/longwood_journey/information/what_s_new_/list_of_people_in_brookhaven_town_who_agreed_to_se>.

²³ *Historical Population of Long Island Communities, 1790-1890*, compiled and edited by Barbara Shupe (Hauppauge: Long Island Planning Board, 1982) and compilation of manuscript census records, 1790-1940, by Christopher Matthews, his students, and Tanya Warren in Wellman et al, Cultural Resource Study, 44-45 and appendix.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Throughout the colonial period and into the early nineteenth century, people in the Three Village area remained tied closely to land and sea.²⁴ The traditional economy and traditional ways of life created a stable, interconnected community, with new generations living much as their ancestors had lived. Sons and daughters of whatever class, race, or religion worked much as their parents had done, on land or sea, farming and fishing, building ships and houses, and raising their children, generation after generation. Between the Revolution and the Civil War, the U.S. population as a whole doubled every twenty years. But population in the Town of Brookhaven grew much more slowly, from 3,324 in 1790 to 6,095 in 1830 to 9,923 in 1860.²⁵

Such stability led inhabitants of Long Island's north shore to view themselves as conservative. In 1866, Henry Nicoll assessed the people of Suffolk County as having "a distinctive character from the rest of our State." "There is no part of our state where there has been so little change since the old colonial pre-Revolutionary times," he wrote, "or where there are so many communities which have retained the primitive habits and manners, and, may I not add, the simple virtues of their ancestors."²⁶

Such traditional employment characterized people of color as well as those of European American descent. Of the 143 men of color whose occupations were listed in the 1850 census, only one person (a coachman) did not work directly either on farms or on the seas. Eighty were listed simply as laborers. A total of thirty-seven people (25.9 percent) worked explicitly in agriculture, and many listed simply as laborers undoubtedly worked on farms. Twenty-four men (16.9 percent) had work associated with the sea (thirteen seaman, nine boatmen, and two oystermen). Many young women lived with European Americans families and were likely servants.

All that began to change in the mid-nineteenth century. Between 1840 and 1855, Setauket (along with Northport and Port Jefferson) experienced a boom in shipbuilding. People in Setauket built as many as two hundred ships in these years. Many were small coastal vessels, used by local farmers to send farm products—fruits, vegetables, grain, and cordwood—to New York City and New England. As trade and immigration between the U.S. and Europe (and, after 1848, California) expanded, larger ships were needed to transport grain, cotton, and people. Nehemiah Hand, Setauket's most important ship builder, constructed twenty-one ships between 1836 and 1860, building the largest ships in the 1850s. After steel and iron ships became more common, Setauket's wooden shipbuilding industry declined during the late 19th century. However, many still made their living on the water. The 1880 census listed twelve people of color as sailors.²⁷

During the last half of the nineteenth century, the Three Village area became the center of two locally important industries. The first, piano manufacturing, had begun in Stony Brook on a smaller scale in 1823 by Robert and William Nunns. Through their introduction of new technologies and adoption of large-scale production, Robert Nunns, Clark & Co. became very successful. In 1861, Robert Nunns constructed the area's "first real factory" in Setauket to produce pianos on an industrial scale. The factory provided work for

²⁴ John W. Barber and Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of the State of New York* (New York, 1846), 533-34.

²⁵ Federal Census, New York, 1790-1860.

²⁶ Henry Nicoll, "Early History of Suffolk County," Long Island Historical Society, 1866.

²⁷ Richard F. Welch, "The World the Shipbuilders Made: An Entrepreneurial Elite on Nineteenth-Century Long Island," *Long Island Journal* (Fall 1991), 35-44. Sailors listed in the 1880 census, all but two of them living in Port Jefferson, included Jerry Sells from Setauket and Isaac Tobias from East Setauket. In Port Jefferson, sailors of color included Henry Jones, Samuel Sells, Samuel Tobias, Henry Tobias, Charles Tobias, Jeffrey Smith, Washington Phillips, Madison Lewis, Peter Guard, Benjamin Smith, and Jefferson Smith.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

people of color and white laborers alike, just as other industries were beginning to decline. Unfortunately, Nunns went bankrupt in 1867.²⁸ Loss of local jobs, combined with general economic depression beginning in 1873, led to population decline in Setauket. The manufacture of rubber boots replaced the piano factory and sustained Setauket's economy from the mid-1870s until the early twentieth century. In 1876, investors from Trenton, New Jersey, and Connecticut turned the old piano factory into the Long Island Rubber Company, producing 1,400 pairs of rubber boots and shoes every day. In 1880, with 125 workers, one-third of them women, and 12 percent of them African American, the rubber company was Suffolk County's largest employer.²⁹

By 1885, the rubber factory, now called the Smith Company, employed 300 to 400 workers, many of them children, many of them Irish. By the late 1880s, operating first as the Brookhaven Rubber Company, then as the Manhattan Rubber Company, and later as the U.S. Rubber Company, the factory had almost 400 workers, including Jewish immigrants from Russia and Hungary and local people of color, making almost one million pairs of rubber boots and shoes annually. By the early twentieth century, the area near the Setauket Methodist Church, piano factory, and rubber factories became known as Chicken Hill. Their common experiences as workers and their shared needs as neighbors created strong community ties among people from various ethnic and racial backgrounds, including Irish, Germans, Lithuanians, eastern European Jews, and people of color. By 1900, company mergers and factory fires had reduced the workforce to twelve. Setauket's workers reverted to their pre-Civil War profile; about one-fifth of Setauket's employed people were farmers. As historian Marc Stein concluded, "Setauket's rubber companies sustained the village during the last quarter of the nineteenth century... [but] location, mismanagement, and competition doomed Setauket's nineteenth-century foray into manufacturing."³⁰

In 1872, summer people began to come to Setauket in greater numbers. The new Smithtown-Port Jefferson Railroad connected the north shore by land to New York City, and seasonal residents were attracted by the beauty of the sea, the freshness of the air, the woods and huckleberries on the land. Some were middle-class visitors, who brought economic vitality to camps and hotels. Others were wealthy businessmen and lawyers, many based in New York City, who often established summer homes in Old Field.

Initially used for pasturage, farmland, and a common area for soaking flax (now called Flax Pond), Old Field already had a U.S. government lighthouse at Old Field Point in 1823, a shipyard in the 1850s, and regular commercial net fishing and cordwood shipments. During the late 19th century, it became the site of several private homes. Beers's 1873 map noted homes of several families on Old Field Road, including three families of color (Abraham Brewster, Silas Tobias, and S.S. Hart) and several households headed by members of the white Howell family, including relatives of Charles Howell, carpenter, later associated with Christian Avenue.³¹

²⁸ Square Piano Tech, "Robert and William Nunns Robert Nunns, Clark & Co." Available at <<http://www.squarepianotech.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Robert-and-William-Nunns-Bio.pdf>>.

²⁹ Marc J. Stern, "The Social Utility of Failure: Long Island's Rubber Industry and the Setauket *Stetle*, 1876-1911, *Long Island Journal* (Fall 1991). People of color who worked in the rubber factory included, as listed in the 1880 census, Henry G. Satterly, Margaret Titus, Sidney G. Titus, Samuel C. Buffett, and Benjamin Buffett.

³⁰ Marc J. Stern, "The Social Utility of Failure: Long Island's Rubber Industry and the Setauket *Stetle*, 1876-1911, *Long Island Journal* (Fall 1991), 15.

³¹ The 1870 census listed a European American man named Sidney S. Hart in this neighborhood. It is quite possible, however, that this was Selah Strong Hart.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

In 1901-02, newcomers to Old Field formed the Old Field Improvement Association, a group promoting the development of Old Field into a seasonal residential enclave, and began to displace former residents, both whites and people of color. One of their first acts was to build Quaker Path Road in 1903 to better connect the Oceanside community to the Stony Brook Station on the Long Island Railroad. In March 1927, Old Field incorporated as a village. Ward Melville, CEO of the Melville Shoe Company, had, along with his father, been active in the development of Old Field and was among the village's early trustees. A prominent philanthropist, he was active in the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (formed in 1948 "in response to the intense development pressure that radically changed the Long Island landscape after World War II"), the builder of Stony Brook's town center, and a donor of 400 acres of land to form the State University of New York at Stony Brook. In the 1960s, Melville became a major benefactor to the Christian Avenue community.³²

The changing occupational environment affected both whites and people of color. In 1900, occupations for people of color had vastly expanded from the work on farms and sea that had characterized their work fifty years earlier. Of the 183 men, ninety-two (50.1 percent) were day laborers. Only three of these lived with a white family. Thirty-three (18.0 percent) had occupations directly related to agriculture (twenty-eight farm laborers, one farmer, one duck farmer, and three gardeners), down from 25.9 percent in 1850.

Only seven (3.8 percent) worked on the sea (six sailors and one seaman), compared to 16.9 percent in 1850. However, census data tends to flatten the reality of people's working lives. While the census may record an individual's primary occupation, most people of color had a variety of secondary occupations. In particular, many people of color worked as baymen. Working on Long Island Sound between Stony Brook harbor to Mt. Sinai, their knowledge and ability, as Robert Lewis noted, to "read the sea" was legendary and a significant part of their Native identity:

Boatyards from Mt. Sinai to Stony Brook hired these men because of their knowledge. These men taught white boaters how to safely navigate the bays. Most all of the Harts made a substantial portion of their livelihood from lobstering, fishing, and clamming in Long Island Sound and north shore harbors. They took fish and clams to market, and the rest they brought home. A few of these men include Bill Hart, Warren Hart, Waverly Hines, Alfred Stewart, and Harry Hart, Sr.³³

A significant new category of occupations were those associated with horse-drawn transportation. Thirty men of color (16.4 percent) worked directly with horses and horse-drawn transportation (one horse dealer, one horse trainer, ten hostlers, two stable hands, one livery, seven coachmen, seven teamsters, and one driver.) These occupations had not been listed in 1850, and they would become an important base for continued work for people of color in transportation, as horse-drawn wagons became trucks, beginning in the 1920s.

Eleven men of color (6 percent) did household work. Seven of these worked in food preparation (five cooks, one chef, and one kitchen helper). Two were porters, one a "R.R. porter," and one more was listed simply as "Foster hotel," suggesting the growth of tourism and passenger travel to Setauket. Another four did not fit any

³² Mildred H. Gillie, "Old Field," in *Historical Sketches of Settlements and Communities of North Brookhaven Town, 1655-1955* by Mildred H. Gillie, Kate W. Strong, Margaret S. Davis, and Osborn Shaw (Bellport: U.S. Press, 1955), 27; Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, <<http://splia.org/about-us/>>.

³³ Robert Lewis, email, June 18, 2016.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

of these categories: James H. Nichols was the Bethel AME Church pastor, and one person each was a paperhanger, salesman, and fish dealer.

In addition to 183 men whose occupations were listed in the 1900 census, 130 women also had occupations listed outside the home. More than half of the women--seventy-one of them (54.6 percent)--worked in some form of house-related job (fifty-five as servants, domestics, housekeepers, or maid and sixteen as cooks). Twenty-eight worked as laundresses or washerwomen (including four who were listed as "washer + iron"). Twenty-three (21.5 percent) were laborers. Nine worked in some other occupation, including five waitresses, three nurses, and one "expressman."

This work generated enough money for people of color to maintain stable families, and many of them owned their own homes. In 1850, ten men of color in the Town of Brookhaven owned homes, valued from \$20 to \$800. By 1900, fifty people of color owned their homes (thirty-three men and seventeen women), and sixty-nine families rented. Within Brookhaven, Setauket and Port Jefferson were opportunities both for jobs and home ownership. As Christopher Matthews noted, "Setauket and Port Jefferson provided a greater diversity of occupations for people of color and, according to the 1900 Federal Census, a higher likelihood of owning rather than renting a home than other places in Brookhaven."³⁴

II. Beginning of the Christian Avenue community (1815-1910): Laurel Hill Cemetery and Bethel A.M.E. Church

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the area that would become the Christian Avenue neighborhood was a wooded oak-heath forest, with tall oak trees, mountain laurels, rhododendrons, dogwoods, and blueberries everywhere. Portions may have been used as pasture for pigs, cows, or sheep, and the whole area was most likely crisscrossed with paths that remained major access routes into the twentieth century. Although much of the original forest has been destroyed by human habitation or damaged by major twentieth century storms, the wooded landscape remains.³⁵

The first formal record connecting people of color to the Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District came in 1815, when the Town of Brookhaven set aside land on the south side of Christian Avenue for a "negro burying ground . . . called by the name of Laurel Hill." More than a century later, in 1928, Laurel Hill Cemetery was incorporated as a separate not-for-profit organization. It is currently maintained by Bethel A.M.E. Church.³⁶ It is quite possible that the Town of Brookhaven chose Laurel Hill as a burying ground because people of color—both Native American or African American--had already begun to use this area as a cemetery. Many small unmarked stones dot the cemetery. The formal establishment of Laurel Hill Cemetery coincides with the increasing manumission of enslaved people in the 1810s, likely reflecting an emerging self-conscious community of free people of color. Burials increased in the 1870s, and there have been at least 225 total documented burials up to the present.

³⁴ Matthews and McGovern, 27.

³⁵ For more on local geography and plants, see Beverly Tyler, "Lesson Plan: A Walk Through History with Abraham Woodhull," Three Village Historical Society, January 9, 2009, online.

³⁶ Isaac Satterly, Affidavit, April 11, 1853, recorded May 16, 1853, Liber E. See site description by Judith Burgess for extensive details on Laurel Hill cemetery.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Informal religious networks and camp meetings certainly existed among people of color across Long Island. In Setauket, many people of color were also affiliated with the predominantly white American Episcopal and Presbyterian churches. African Americans did not formally begin to establish their own separate congregations in the area until the 1840s. Although there were many African American churches on Long Island which were not affiliated with any larger body, two national denominations predominated: the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

The A.M.E. and A.M.E. Zion Churches have similar and interconnected histories and visions. The A.M.E. church was headquartered in Philadelphia; the denomination was founded and Richard Allen ordained as its first bishop in 1816. Established in 1800 at the John Street Methodist Church in New York City, the A.M.E. Zion Church ordained James Varick as its first bishop in 1822. In many ways, both churches were similar. Both were founded in response to the Methodist Episcopal Church's policy of limiting the roles that could be held by black preachers and leaders and of spatially segregating black parishioners. Both held similar theological views, conducted similar services, and had a governance system of pastors (who led local churches) and bishops (who led regional networks). And both reflected ideals of freedom, equality, and independence that emerged in the late eighteenth century.

By 1845, Long Island had almost equal numbers of A.M.E. and A.M.E. Zion churches. According to historian Nathaniel Prime, there were nine AME churches on Long Island, with 553 members, and ten A.M.E. Zion churches, with 387 members, by the early 1840s. A charismatic young minister named Edward Africanus organized many A.M.E. churches on Long Island before he died in 1853. Among these was Bethel A.M.E. church in Setauket. In 1845, Bethel had twenty-six members.³⁷ By 1848, the congregation purchased land from William H. Bayles along Christian Avenue, near what is now Woodfield Road (six-tenths of a mile southwest of the district), where the congregation established a small church and cemetery.³⁸ By 1874, the church in this location was lost to fire. The congregation chose to maintain this land as a cemetery and rebuild elsewhere.³⁹ The small surviving cemetery at that location is proposed for nomination individually as the Old Bethel Cemetery.

The Bethel A.M.E. congregation picked another site farther east on Christian Avenue (within the historic district) for its new church. Only a few years earlier, on January 3, 1871, the Town of Brookhaven transferred Laurel Hill Cemetery (consisting of an acre, more or less) to the "Trustees of the Bethel Church at Stony Brook" for the sum of six dollars. This deed reaffirmed that the land had been used since 1815 as a Negro burying ground. "It having been used since said period for said purpose—and being still needed by the colored people and being of no value to the Town at large, except for the little wood thereon, it is granted to said Trustees." Building a new church near the cemetery would bring these two community institutions closer together and make it easier for the congregation to use and maintain the cemetery.⁴⁰

³⁷ Nathaniel Prime, *A History of Long Island from Its First Settlement by Europeans to 1845* (New York: Robert Carter, 1845), 6, 129-30, 416; *Christian Recorder*, September 11, 1869.

³⁸ Agreement, January 1, 1848. Thanks to Simira Tobias and Vivian Nicholson-Mueller for sharing this; For a list of people interred here, see Simira Tobias, Vivian Nicholson-Mueller, Keith Nicholson, Joseph Bova, "The History of Old Bethel Cemetery, Stony Brook, New York," unpublished research for a National Register nomination.

³⁹ E. Belcher Hyde, 1902-07, <www.nysl.digitalcollectionsSetauket.USGS.1897-1903.UNH.jpg>; Suffolk County Clerk's Office, Liber 224, pages 528, 523, 552. Thanks to Simira Tobias and Vivien Nicholson for sharing this deed.

⁴⁰ *Records of the Town of Brookhaven (1856-1886)*, Suffolk County, NY, (Port Jefferson, NY: Times Stream Print, 1893) p. 441; also Liber 1067, page 393, Recorded April 19, 1923. Thanks to Judith Burgess for finding this material and for writing the site description of Laurel Hill

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

On May 8, 1874, three trustees (Charles Jones, Adam Brewster, and Joseph Tiebout) paid sixty dollars on behalf of the "A. Methodist E. Bethel Church" to Robert M. Jayne and Mary Jayne for a site across the road, just west of Laurel Hill Cemetery, on the corner of Christian Avenue and Locust Street. They bought half an acre on a "three cornered piece of land," "bounded on the north by a road running from Setauket to Oldfield, on the west by land of Benjamin Brewster, and on the south and east by the Stony Brook Road."⁴¹ This became the site of a new Bethel A.M.E. Church, constructed shortly afterward. The Rev. Edward B. Thompson likely supervised construction. In January 1874, the church sent out a public appeal asking for help financing the church's construction. At that time, \$400 of the \$1,000 needed had already been raised by the church. The building was completed soon after.⁴²

Neither the 1896 nor the 1902 maps by E. Belcher Hyde, or the 1897-1903 United States Geological Survey map, showed a building on the site of the current church. Nevertheless, the *Christian Recorder* (the official AME newspaper) implied in 1887 that a church building of some size had already been constructed, noting that Brother T.C. Johnson at Setauket, has "a neat church out of debt and capable of accommodating one hundred and fifty persons," with double the earlier membership.⁴³

On the night of February 19, 1909, the 1874 Bethel A.M.E. church was "reduced to ashes" by a fire probably caused by a new stove. The building was insured, and the congregation rebuilt it immediately. Just eight months after the fire, on Sunday afternoon, October 17, 1909, the church held a ceremony to lay the cornerstone. Trustees Hannah E. Hart, Allison L. Seaman, William S. Sells, James H. Calvin, and James H. Lewis secured a mortgage for \$1,100 from Tinker National Bank, East Setauket. James Calvin, Ellison Seaman, and William S. Sells served as a building committee for a new church. William B. Sells, then church clerk, presented "documents of the church." The pastor's wife, Mrs. Harper, deposited several documents for the cornerstone. At the same time, trustees formally incorporated the church as The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Setauket, Long Island.⁴⁴ Completed in 1910, the church was a small front-gabled rock-face concrete block structure, much less prone to fire than wood, with a center entrance and one window on each side, and a wing devoted to the parsonage. A small steeple was later added with a cross on top.⁴⁵

Cemetery for Judith Wellman, Robert Lewis, Judith Burgess, Christopher Matthews, and Karen Martin, "Cultural Resource Survey of Sites Relating to the Native American-African American Community in the Three Village Area (the Setaukets, Stony Brook, and Old Field), with a focus on Bethel- Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill, Town of Brookhaven Historic District (Setauket: Higher Ground Inter-cultural and Heritage Association, 2016).

⁴¹ Deed, Robert M. Jayne and Mary Jayne to Trustees of A. Methodist E. Church, May 8, 1874, Suffolk County Clerk's Office, Liber 209, page 54; Robert Lewis and Theodore Green, "From Campground to Higher Ground." *145th Anniversary Celebration, History Presentation, 1993, Bethel A.M.E. Church, Setauket, New York.* 1993, 2.

⁴² "Historical Scraps, arranged by the Pastor," typewritten manuscript, n.d., Three Village Historical Society.

⁴³ *Christian Recorder*, May 19, 1887; E. Belcher Hyde, *Map of Long Island Based upon Recent U.S. Coast Surveys*, 1896, <<http://www.geographicus.com/P/AntiqueMap/CentralEasternLongIsland-hyde>>.

⁴⁴ *Port Jefferson Echo*, October 16, 1909; "Honor Rev. Sells at Testimonial," clipping from Ethel Lewis, newspaper not identified, September 4, 1959; Robert Lewis and Theodore Green, 1993 and 2010; Robert E. and Theodore A. Green, "From Campground to Higher Ground." *145th Anniversary Celebration, History Presentation, 1993, Bethel A.M.E. Church, Setauket, New York.* 1993. Thanks to Judith Burgess for finding the incorporation papers, recorded February 15, 1910, Liber 6, page 309, Suffolk County Clerk's Office.

⁴⁵ "Historical Scraps, arranged by the Pastor," typewritten manuscript, n.d., Three Village Historical Society.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Bethel A.M.E. Church became the anchor not only for an emerging Christian Avenue community but also for people of color all along the north shore in the Three Village and Port Jefferson area. As Robert Lewis noted in 1993, at the church's 145th anniversary celebration, the story of Bethel A.M.E. Church

is the true story of how the blending of black Africans and Native Americans met to lessen their common fears, to dissolve the prejudices against them and then march on to secure and promote their special qualities In a large way, the blend of Native Indian and Negro people was defined and enhanced in the image of their church world that they created.⁴⁶

That image was shaped and sustained by the spiritual power of a Christian tradition, a hierarchical church structure, and regular social activities. Shared values and shared experiences bound this church community together. Structurally, Bethel AME Church was organized in a clear hierarchy, with bishops overseeing a whole region, pastors who generally rotated regularly from one church to another, and members who played important roles within the church: trustees; stewards and stewardesses; organists, choir director, and singers; Sunday School teachers; organizers of social activities; cooks for harvest dinners. Bethel AME Church also performed an important social function, binding the community together by shared values and regular gatherings for worship, fellowship, and fund-raising among local church members, between Bethel AME and the larger local community, and as part of an extended network of A.M.E. churches across Long Island.

III. Growth of the Christian Avenue Community (1900-1920): Bethel A.M.E. Church and the Hart Family

European Americans and people of color in Setauket typically lived in small, relatively racially diverse communities during the colonial period and early nineteenth century. In 1776, all people of color in Brookhaven counted in municipal or census records lived in households headed by white people; most, if not all, were enslaved. After the American Revolution, as more people of color were freed or obtained economic independence, they began to move into separate households. By 1790, thirteen households were headed by people of color. Still, almost half (49.4 percent) of the total number of households included people of color, suggesting that many people, both free and enslaved, still lived in households headed by whites.⁴⁷ As more free people of color began to form their own households, those who worked for European American families established homes nearby, while others moved geographically away and created new communities away from European American homes and neighborhoods. As archaeologists Christopher Matthews and Alison McGovern documented in detail, a "multi-racial community during the colonial period shifted to one that was highly racially segregated by the 20th century."⁴⁸

The Bethel Christian Avenue neighborhood was one result of that increasing residential segregation. Both push and pull factors influenced this change. On the one hand, Christian Avenue residents found themselves displaced from nearby neighborhoods. In the early twentieth century, Old Field, north of Christian Avenue, became dominated by wealthy white residents. Several families of color were displaced, including the Calvin

⁴⁶ Robert E. Lewis, Robert E. and Theodore A. Green, "From Campground to Higher Ground." *145th Anniversary Celebration, History Presentation, 1993, Bethel A.M.E. Church, Setauket, New York.* 1993.

⁴⁷ Matthews and McGovern, 22-26.

⁴⁸ Matthews and McGovern, 22-26.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

and Phillips families, as well as the white Howell family. Some of those who lived on Christian Avenue most likely worked for households in Old Field, taking a walking path that extended from 20 Locust Avenue at the corner of Christian Avenue along Mud Road. Two Hart sisters—Hannah and Julia—continued to live in Old Field but were part of the Christian Avenue community.⁴⁹

Other Christian Avenue families moved from Main Street in Setauket, Port Jefferson, Chicken Hill, and Stony Brook. Jacob and Hannah Hart's children, raised at Lake and Main Streets in Setauket (east of Christian Avenue), moved to Christian Avenue. The Hendricksons, Hines, Greens, and others once lived in Port Jefferson ("colored town"), two miles east of Setauket, a major center of shipping and shipbuilding. Some families moved from Chicken Hill, a mixed heritage neighborhood of people of color and European immigrants in Setauket, reflecting the growth of rubber manufacturing after 1870. A few families of color also moved from Stony Brook, two to three miles west of Setauket (where the Phillips and other families once lived). Whether they were involuntarily displaced from these neighborhoods or drawn to Christian Avenue by the allure of land ownership and a chance to create a community of shared values, linked by family ties, remains a question.

Pull factors attracted many residents to Christian Avenue, as they struggled, in Andrew Wiese's term, to create "places of their own," whether that was a home they owned, economic subsistence (with gardens and fishing to augment work for wages), or a sense of community, "a place of social comfort and cultural affirmation, if not racial pride, a 'safe space' in which to nurture families and educate children, a symbol of resistance to white supremacy and a foundation for politics."⁵⁰ For all of these reasons, as Wiese suggested, "African Americans not only shaped and defended residential neighborhoods, but they often produced them from the ground up." Such was the case with Christian Avenue.⁵¹

After its construction in 1874, Bethel A.M.E. Church joined Laurel Hill Cemetery as a magnet for attracting people of color to Christian Avenue. Shortly after completion of the new church, several families of color moved into the current Bethel Christian Avenue neighborhood. By 1920, a clear community of people of color, many of whom owned their own homes, had been established.

Until about 1920, the land around Laurel Hill cemetery and Bethel A.M.E. Church remained in the hands of European American families who had owned it for generations. In the early 19th century, the Biggs-Tobey-Mills-Jayne family (white) owned most of the land along both north and south sides of this section of Christian Avenue.⁵² North of Christian Avenue, the Jayne family retained ownership of land east of what became Locust Avenue into the 20th century, with the exception of the triangular piece of land which they had sold to Bethel

⁴⁹ Throughout this draft, an effort has been made to clearly describe racial ethnicities to the extent of our historical knowledge, particularly in terms of their relevance to this narrative. To that end, and for the sake of clarity and readability, we have noted when an individual is of European-American heritage or white. If an ethnic background is not noted, the individual described is a person of color.

⁵⁰ Wiese, *Places of their Own*, 6, 8.

⁵¹ Wiese, 6; Matthews and McGovern (2015).

⁵² For details of early land transactions, see Cultural Resource Survey, pp. 22-24. This discussion is a summary of that material. This summary of land transactions is based on chain of title research done by Sy Robbins for the Three Village Historical Society, and on deed searches, some on file at the TVHS and others done by Robert Lewis and Judith Wellman, with help from Sharon Pullen, Archivist, Suffolk County.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

AME Church in 1874. In 1902, the Jayne family sold the rest of their land on the north side east of Locust Avenue to the Smith family, European Americans who simply held the land.⁵³

The earliest homes built along Christian Avenue were located in two general areas: on the north side of the street and west of Locust Avenue, and south of Christian Avenue and west of Laurel Hill Cemetery; early deeds referred to this second area as the "Hill Lot Land." Before the early twentieth century, this whole area on both sides of the road was associated with the European American Brewster-Howell family. When William F. Brewster died in 1880, he left this land to his widow, Almira Brewster. When Almira Brewster remarried in 1905, she left this land to her three daughters. Jennie Brewster Howell kept the land on the north side of Christian Avenue, just west of Locust Avenue, while her sister, Frederica Brewster Fallon, received the land south of Christian Avenue. After her mother's death in 1910, Frederica Fallon sold her land to Richard W. Hawkins and his wife, Carrie Hawkins, who lived in Huntington. Hawkins was a real estate developer, lawyer, and later Suffolk County judge.

The Brewster, Hawkins, and Howell families—all white—had lived for generations in the Setauket area. The Howell sisters most likely grew up in the Brewster-Howell house, built c. 1750, on Main Street, just half a mile from the Christian Avenue neighborhood. In 1900, Jennie Brewster married Charles Howell. Sometime before 1920, they moved to Old Field Road, north of Christian Avenue. By 1940, they had moved back to the village of Setauket, most likely to Jennie's childhood home on Main Street.

Lands owned by Jennie Brewster Howell and Richard W. and Carrie Hawkins became the core of the Christian Avenue neighborhood. The Howell family built three small houses on the north side of Christian Avenue by 1902. These three houses may have been built by or for William F. and Almira Brewster after 1877; alternately, they may have been built by Charles Howell, a carpenter, after his marriage to Jennie Brewster Howell in 1900.⁵⁴ By 1915-17, one of these houses was gone, either moved or burned.⁵⁵ While it is unclear who initially rented these homes, by the late 1910s, they were most likely rented to people of color.

In 1915-17, as indicated on the detailed E. Belcher Hyde map, three more houses stood across Christian Avenue, on the south side of the street, on land owned by R.W. and Carrie Hawkins (white), at 32, 44, and 46 Christian Avenue (32 and 44 extant).⁵⁶ One of these (46 Christian Avenue) was marked "David Eato"; the others were on a large lot labeled simply "R.W.Hawkins et al." After 1915, the Hawkins family rented these to people of color. David Eato is the first person of color named on local maps of the area. The Rev. David Eato, pastor of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church from 1911-1925, was a renter at the time, perhaps with a land contract to purchase. His wife, Mary Lucinda Baker Eato, was a South Carolina native, a graduate of Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina, and a singer, pianist, and organist. She and her five daughters from an earlier marriage moved to Port Washington in 1901. Sometime after the New York State census was taken in 1915, David and Mary Eato moved from North Hempstead, Nassau County, to Christian Avenue. In 1920, according to the census, the Eatos rented their house; David Eato died in 1925. Three years later, in

⁵³ Sarah Smith Seydel inherited this land in 1926. In 1957 the land went to Bertha L. Fries who sold it in 1961 to Ward Melville. After 1968, Melville began to sell lots here to people of color associated with Bethel A.M.E. Church.

⁵⁴ Federal Census, New York, 1910, 1920, 1930

⁵⁵ The house lost probably just west of the house purchased in the 1920s by Lucy Hart Keyes, at 37 Christian Avenue.

⁵⁶ Throughout the draft, properties are referred to by address unless they are specifically described as lots or given lot numbers. The map showing contributing and non-contributing properties shows addresses, while a separate map shows lot numbers.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

1928, Mary Baker Eato purchased this house and two lots from Richard W. and Carrie D. Hawkins. It remained standing, with some remodeling, into the 21st century (no longer extant).⁵⁷

By 1920, both Jennie B. Howell and the Hawkins family began to sell their land along Christian Avenue to people of color. We do not know whether the Brewster-Howell and Hawkins families explicitly decided to help create a community of landowners who were people of color or simply had an interest in selling their land. Circumstantial evidence suggests that, in some cases, they may have had personal relationships with early Christian Avenue residents. In 1920, Charles Howell was working as a boss carpenter in the shipyard, where he almost certainly worked with black carpenters and laborers. Lucy Hart Keyes's husband, William, had a job in a shipyard during World War I, which enabled them to buy their house at 37 Christian Avenue. Harrison Sanford, who was married to Lucy's sister, Minnie, also worked in a shipyard; the couple bought the house next door to Lucy Hart Keyes (35 Christian Avenue). Keyes and Hart likely become acquainted with Howell while working in the shipyard and learned of the potential to purchase this land on Christian Avenue.⁵⁸

By 1920, a cluster of four families and one single woman, all of color (the Hart-Burton-Hart, Eato, Hart-Lewis, and Hart-Keyes-Hart families, and Kate Scott) had developed around Bethel A.M.E. Church along with the Eato home. These five households occupied the three houses owned by R.W. and Carrie Hawkins on the south side and the two remaining houses owned by Jennie B. Howell on the north side of Christian Avenue. With the exception of the Eato family, all were associated with Jacob Hart (1852-1931) or his brother, Seleh Strong Hart (1861-1913), and were either grandchildren or great-grandchildren of Rachel Tobias Hart and William Henry Hart. Seventeen of the twenty-one residents of the Christian Avenue neighborhood in 1920 were either direct descendants (twelve) of William H. Hart and Rachel Tobias Hart or in-laws (five).

Hannah E. Taylor (1856-1921) was born enslaved in Virginia and sent north by her father about 1870. She attended Bethel A.M.E. Church, where she likely met Jacob Hart; they married in 1875. In 1888, they purchased a house about one-quarter of a mile east of the Christian Avenue neighborhood, at the corner of Main and Lake Streets (outside of the district). The Harts had twelve children: Rebecca E. Hart (1877-1955), Hannah E. Hart (1880-), Jacob Hart (1882-) James Hart (1885-), Julia May Hart (1888-1952), Martha Hart (1890-), Selah B. Hart (1891-1936), Anna Hart (1894-), Minnie E. Hart (1897-1979), Lucy Agnes Hart (1899-1994), Daniel Hart, and Ernest L. Hart (1904-1978).⁵⁹ Of their eight children, six of them (all but Selah B. Hart and Daniel Hart, who moved to New York City and Brooklyn, respectively) became part of the Christian Avenue neighborhood. Four of them (Rebecca, Minnie, Lucy, and Ernest) moved to homes within the Christian Avenue district, and two more (Hannah and Julia) lived nearby on Mud Road (excluded from the district due to loss of integrity).⁶⁰

⁵⁷For details about all of these families and their homes, see Judith Wellman et al, "Cultural Resource Survey of Sites Relating to the Native American-African American Community in the Three Village Area (the Setaukets, Stony Brook, and Old Field), with a focus on Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill, Town of Brookhaven Historic District," Sponsored by Higher Ground Inter-cultural and Heritage Association, 2016.

⁵⁸ Lucy Keyes, interview with Glenda Dickerson, 1987, Three Village Historical Society, *Historian* (May 1988), 6; U.S. census, 1920.

⁵⁹ "Excavations at the Jacob and Hannah Hart Site in Setauket," *Newsletter Suffolk County Archaeological Association* 39:1 (Winter 2013); Christopher Matthews et al, *Archaeological Investigation of Jacob & Hannah Hart Homestead Site, Setauket, Suffolk County, New York* (Hofstra University, Center for Public Archaeology, 2011). For more on the Hart family, see site description for Jacob and Hannah Hart House.

⁶⁰ Probate record for Hannah Hart, Suffolk County Surrogate's Office; Rebecca Hart married James Lewis and lived on Christian Avenue. Hannah married William Smith Sells, an associate minister of Bethel AME Church and a Grand Master of the Masonic Order. In 1910, they lived on Crane's Neck Road. Julia married first William Smith and then Clifford Weir. She lived in a house still standing on Old

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Jacob Hart's younger brother, Selah Brewster Strong Hart, married Martha Sells.⁶¹ The couple had at least ten (and perhaps eleven) children. Census records suggest that all but two of these children, along with several grandchildren and great-grand-children (descendants of Emma Lucy Hart and Frank Scott, Rachel E. Hart Young-Midgett, and Sarah Hart Green), lived at one time or another on Christian Avenue.⁶²

IV. Growth of the Christian Avenue Community, 1920-1940: Calvin Family and others

The period from 1920 to 1940 saw the growth of the Christian Avenue neighborhood. In 1920, a cluster of five households of color had emerged around Bethel A.M.E. church. By 1930, the Christian Avenue community had grown to include the church and nine families (plus two more on nearby Mud Road, outside of the district). By 1940, thirteen families lived on Christian Avenue plus four more families on Mud Road. Six families were associated with members of the extended Hart family, six were related to the Calvin family, and the Bristol family remained a continuing presence. During this period, these families and new homeowners on Christian Avenue began to coalesce into a strong community. They worked to create a place of their own, a safe space, where they owned their homes, enjoyed relative economic security, educated their children, and supported each other.⁶³

In 1920, all the families in the district were listed in the census as renting their homes. But beginning about 1920, people of color began to buy their property on Christian Avenue. As Lucy Hart Keyes remembered,

I've been in that white house ever since 1920... I paid \$900. I paid \$100 down... The only how I could do that, the First World War was on. They had a shipyard down in Port Jefferson and my husband worked at the shipyard and he made fairly good money... I was able to save maybe a couple of hundred dollars.⁶⁴

How did Christian Avenue families accumulate enough money to buy property at a time (before the establishment of the Federal Housing Administration) when mortgages weren't commonly used and hard to get, especially for people of color? Perhaps Lucy Hart Keyes and her neighbors used land contracts; these allowed owners to sell their land for an agreed upon price and buyers to use it immediately. Typically, buyers made regular, agreed-upon payments to the seller, much like a mortgage, and also paid taxes on the property; however, the sellers would retain formal title until the whole price was paid. When mortgages were difficult to

Field Road. Minnie Hart married Harrison Sanford and became one of the earliest landowners on Christian Avenue, with a deed dated 1925. Lucy Hart married William Keyes and bought a house next door to her sister Minnie. Her deed was also dated 1925. After his father died in 1931, Ernest Hart lived elsewhere before he moved to a small structure behind Minnie Hart Sanford's house.

⁶¹ Martha Sells (or Sills), was born about 1871 in Port Jefferson to Jeremiah Sells (a sailor and Civil War veteran) and Martha Rodgers Sells.

⁶² Selah Hart and Martha Hart's children included (Christian Avenue residents in **bold**): **William B. Hart** (1894-) lived on Christian Avenue in 1920 with mother Martha Sells Burton; **Irving S. Hart** (1895-1943) m. Alice Foulke (1908-1952) lived on Christian Avenue in 1920 with mother Martha Sells Burton; **Emma Lucy Hart** (1897-) m. Frank Scott and moved to 20 Christian Avenue by 1940s; Jennie S. Hart (1895); **Rachel E. Hart** (1898-1977) m. William Young (1893-1943) and then August Midgett (1900-1985) bought a house on Christian Avenue in 1928; **Isaiah Hart** (1900-1983) built a house in 1931 at 41 Christian Avenue; **Theodore Hart** (1902-) lived on Christian Avenue 1920 with mother Martha Sells Burton; **Everett Hart** (1907-) lived on Christian Avenue 1920 with mother Martha Sells Burton; **Sarah Ann (Sadie) Hart** (1908-1999) m. Joseph Green (1903-), lived on Christian Avenue 1920 with mother Martha Sells Burton. Family tradition suggests that Sarah later lived at 30A Christian Avenue, in a small cottage built by nephew Harry Hart; Leon (c. 1910-). **Harry Hansen Hart** (1915-), Rachel's son, also lived in Christian Avenue in 1920 with his grandmother Martha Sells Burton. He later married Pearl M. Lewis (1924-2016) and became one of Christian Avenue's most prolific builders.

⁶³ Wiese, *Places of their Own*, 6, 8.

⁶⁴ Lucy Keyes, interview with Glenda Dickerson, 1987, Three Village Historical Society, *Historian* (May 1988), 6.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

obtain through banks or other third party lenders, private land contracts allowed many people to buy property, making payments toward the purchase price instead of rent.⁶⁵

From 1925 to 1928, deeds and census records suggest that the following families of color purchased lots along Christian Avenue:

- 1925. Lucy Hart Keyes, daughter of Jacob and Hannah Hart, purchased lot 1 (37 Christian Avenue, extant) from Jennie B. Howell, with an extant house. Lucy and her husband, William, moved to this house from the Dolan estate in Old Field in 1918. Keyes bought this house in 1920, with a down payment she saved from her husband's job in a Port Jefferson shipyard during World War I. It is likely she and her sister, Minnie Hart Sanford, purchased their houses on a land contract. In 1925, Lucy was 25 and Minnie was 28.
- 1925. Minnie Hart Sanford, daughter of Jacob and Hannah Hart, purchased lots 7, 9, and 10 with an extant house (35 Christian Avenue, extant) from Jennie B. Howell. After she bought her Christian Avenue house in 1925, Minnie Sanford apparently rented the house to relatives, including her sister, Rebecca Hart Lewis. Minnie Sanford became a Pentecostal minister and traveled extensively until moving back to Christian Avenue in her later years.
- 1925. Alvin H. and Edith Calvin Davis bought 47 Christian Avenue from Jennie B. Howell. While they owned this land, census records show they lived on Old Field Road through at least 1940. It appears that they never built a house at this location before selling it in 1935.
- 1926. Joseph Henry Bristol bought a lot at 45 Christian Avenue from Jennie B. Howell.
- 1927. John Henry Bristol (likely also Joseph Henry Bristol) and Ella Bristol bought the lot 43 Christian Avenue from Jennie B. Howell and built a house soon after (extant).
- 1928. Mary L. Eato bought land and house at 46 Christian Avenue (extant) from Richard W. & Carrie D. Hawkins.
- 1928. Rachel Hart Young and William Young bought land from Richard and Carrie Hawkins and moved a house to 54 Christian Avenue (extant, 54A Christian Avenue).

The 1930 census listed nine families of color on Christian Avenue and two more nearby on Mud Road. At least six of these eleven families were members of the extended Jacob Hart-Selah Hart family. One member of the Calvin family (Edith Calvin Davis) owned a lot here by 1930. Two more families (Eato and Douglas) had come to Christian Avenue as leaders of Bethel A.M.E. church.

Six of the eleven families on Christian Avenue included people born in a southern state (William Douglas born in Maryland, Mary Eato and Helen Bristol born in South Carolina, Martha Phillips born in Mississippi, and

⁶⁵ For this National Register nomination, we did not research mortgage records, but these would be well worth reviewing for further information.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Helen Thomas and William Smith born in Virginia) or Jamaica (George Thomas and his eight children). In addition, Edith DuVal Lewis's mother was from Virginia.

All of the male heads of households were employed. There were six laborers, three men with specific jobs for private families (William Smith as gardener, William H. Young as butler, and William Keyes as caretaker), one trucker (Howard Lewis), and one minister (William Douglas). Women with occupations outside the home included two cooks in a private family (Rachel Hart Young and Helen Bristol) and two laundresses (Martha J. Phillips and Julia Hart Smith).

Of these eleven families, six of them (55 percent) either owned their own homes or were in the process of buying them. Lucy Hart Young and William Keyes, Mary Eato, Rachel Hart Young and William Young, Henry Seaman, and Henry J. Bristol and Ella Bristol owned their homes outright. One more (Howard and Ethel Lewis) may have been buying their home on a land contract. The Lewises would receive a formal deed for their house in the 1950s. Five families rented their homes, paying between eight and twenty dollars a month; three families rented homes on Christian Avenue, probably from other families of color (George and Helen Thomas, James and Rebecca Lewis, and Edward and Martha Philips), and two more on Mud Road (Julia Smith and William Smith and Hannah Hart Sells and William Sells). By 1940, deeds and census records suggest that as many as eight of the thirteen Christian Avenue families (62 percent) either owned their own homes or were in the process of buying them (Howard and Ethel Lewis and perhaps also Daniel and Adele Lewis and Frank and Lucy Scott were most likely buying their homes.) Five families rented.

Calvin Family

Although members of the Hart family dominated the Christian Avenue neighborhood in the 1920s, members of the extended Calvin family also began to buy land on Christian Avenue by 1925. As they built or moved homes to the area, they moved to Christian Avenue from Old Field. The Calvin family's experience offers a good illustration of chain migration, as one family member moved and then provided a base for other family members to move and establish homes nearby. By the 1940s, they had created a cluster of six Calvin homes (36, 40, 42, 43, 45, and 48 Christian Avenue; all but 36 Christian Avenue remain extant).

All these Calvin family members were descendants of Adam Brewster and Catharine Brewster, whose daughter, Tabitha Brewster, married James H. Calvin shortly after 1880.⁶⁶ Like many families on Christian Avenue, the Calvins trace their roots both to Native American and African American ancestors. Family tradition suggests that Tabitha Brewster Calvin was Native American.⁶⁷ Adam and Catharine Brewster raised their family on Old Field Road, across the street from Silas Tobias and down the road from Selah Strong Hart. Adam worked as a laborer, Catherine managed the household, and Tabitha worked as a laundress.⁶⁸ Adam Brewster died December 23, 1885 and was buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery near his mother, Rachel Brewster (d. July 10, 1879).⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Tabitha is pronounced with an accent on the second syllable and a long "i"

⁶⁷ Idamae [Calvin] Glass and Michael Calvin, interview Friday, June 17th, 2011, with Bill Keating & Desiree Palma with Robert Lewis, ALTC Co-Director.

⁶⁸ Federal Census, New York, 1870-1880; 1873 Beers map.

⁶⁹ Find-a-Grave Index. Rachael Brewster's death date of July 10, 1879, listed on her gravestone, does not correlate with her listing in the 1880 census. ,

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

James H. Calvin, the first known Calvin in Setauket, was born in Florida in May 1848. Family lore suggests that he may have come to Setauket to work at the Old Field lighthouse; census records list him as a farm laborer until 1910, when he was a janitor (perhaps for the Old Field lighthouse) and was described (incorrectly) as a white man who owned his own home.⁷⁰ During the 1880s, after the death of his first wife, James H. Calvin married his neighbor, Tabitha Brewster. By 1900, when the couple had been married for 25 years, they had seven living children.⁷¹

After James's death during the early 1910s, Tabitha stayed in her home in Old Field and remained a strong part of the community there. While Samuel, her 39-year-old son, was living with her in 1920, her other children had established homes for themselves. Her son Edward G., a chauffeur for a private family, and daughter-in-law, Caroline Calvin, both age 21, owned a home next door, where they lived with their two children, Jeanette and Edward. Charles H. Howell and wife, Jennie B. Howell (white), who owned land on Christian Avenue, lived with their two children on the other side of Edward G. and Caroline's home.⁷²

In 1925, Edith Calvin Davis, Tabitha's daughter, and Alvin Davis purchased vacant land at 47 Christian Avenue; they were the first members of the Calvins to buy property in the neighborhood. However, they continued to live on Old Field Road, as they were unable to mobilize the resources to build a home; they sold the property in 1935.⁷³ In 1930, Edward G. and Caroline Calvin bought their property at 40 Christian Avenue from Louise Brinkama. After building a home, they moved to Christian Avenue between 1931 and 1935. The 1940 census reports that their home was valued at \$4,000.⁷⁴ By that time, Edward had retired from more physical labor and was earning an income as a "wage or salary worker in government work."

The Calvin house (40 Christian Avenue) was the first of six houses owned by the extended Calvin family along Christian Avenue (including 36, 40, 42, 48, 43, and 45). With 40 Christian Avenue as their center, Calvin-Morrison-Treadwell family members (Edith Calvin Davis; the children of Edward G. Calvin and Caroline Calvin: Edward A., Michael, and Jeannette Calvin Peterson Morrison; and spouses and children of these children) lived in these houses, often for four and five generations. Grandchildren Idamae Calvin Morrison Glass, Michael Calvin, and Barbara Peterson Treadwell were the third generation of Calvins to live here (at 40, 42, and 48). Sharon Treadwell, daughter of Barbara Peterson Morrison, and Michael Calvin's daughters Michelle DeCastillo and Marsha Settles (living at 32, 37, and 40 Christian Avenue) are the fourth generation. Their children are the fifth generation. This area became, as neighbor Robert Lewis remembered, "like a Calvin, Treadwell, Morrison compound."

As the Calvin family became more settled on Christian Avenue, extended family members from different areas were attracted to the neighborhood. Idamae Calvin, the daughter of Jeanette Calvin Peterson Morrison and Thomas Morrison Sr., grew up in New York City. When her parents both began working full-time during World

⁷⁰ Information about the Calvin family is based on census records, grave indexes, and a genealogy constructed by Michele Wallace on Ancestry.com. For further details, see Historic Context, Cultural Resource Survey, 61-65.

⁷¹ Federal Census, New York, 1900.

⁷² Federal Census, New York, 1920.

⁷³ In 1930, Edith Calvin Davis was 44 years old. Her husband Alvin H. Davis, born in South Carolina, was 58. They owned a home worth \$3000. Edith's mother Tabitha, age 75, lived with them. So did Richard M. Turner, age 21, Alvin's nephew, born in North Carolina.

⁷⁴ Federal Census, New York, 1940.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

War II, they sent her to Setauket to live with her grandparents.⁷⁵ In 1947, Idamae's parents moved to the neighborhood and bought the house across the street at 45 Christian Avenue. After his discharge from the Army in 1945, Edward A. Calvin moved his wife, Lillian, and young son, Michael, back to Setauket. They lived with Idamae and her grandparents at 40 Christian Avenue until they were able to buy the lot next door (42 Christian Avenue) in Lillian's name and move a house onto it. Around the same time, Barbara Peterson Treadwell, Idamae Calvin's half-sister, married James Treadwell and moved to 42 Christian Avenue. The Treadwells and their daughter, Sharon Treadwell, also lived at 40 Christian Avenue. James Treadwell's brother, Robert Treadwell, lived at 36 Christian Avenue (no longer extant) for many years.

Ida Mae Glass stayed on Christian Avenue for the rest of her life and acquired her family's home in 1978. She was a very successful hairdresser, often working for Bryant Funeral Home in Setauket. She was also an active community member. In 1987, she became the first person of color elected as president of the Suffolk County American Legion Hall. She was a member of the American Legion Ladies' Auxiliary for fifty years, working with the Irving Hart American Legion for 37 years.⁷⁶

Other Families on Christian Avenue

While many of the early members of the Christian Avenue community were from the extended Hart and Calvin families, the area did attract other African and Native American individuals and families. Generally, they were the spouses of Hart or Calvin descendants, often born in the South; A.M.E. ministers and their families; or people of mixed-heritage who felt at home in the community and/or had friends or relatives there.

Members of the Christian Avenue community typically married people from outside the area. Bethel A.M.E. Church provided connections through the wider regional and national church network and helped people meet potential spouses from other parts of Long Island, New York City, or southern states. Social activities at Camp Upton, a WWI Embarkation Camp in Yaphank, where Rachel Hart Young Midgett met her husband, provided another way to meet people from outside the community.

Many Christian Avenue people met spouses from outside the community, especially from the South, through church activities or military activity. Virginia-born people included William Smith, who married Julia Hart; Rosa DuVal, who married the Rev. Robert DuVal; and Bertha Hart, who married Isaiah Hart. Several people came from South Carolina, including Lucille Calvin, who married Edward A. Calvin; the Rev. Joseph McKenzie and Margaret McKenzie; Mary L. Eato, who married the Rev. David Eato; and Ella Bristol, who married Joseph Henry Bristol. James Calvin, father of Edward G. Calvin, came from Florida and married Tabitha Brewster; Thomas Morrison Sr., who married Jeannette Calvin, was also born in Florida. Martha J. Combs, who was born in Mississippi, married Edward W. Phillips; her daughter, Jennie Phillips Stith, moved to Christian Avenue. Edna Phillips, who married English-born Arthur Phillips and lived on Christian Avenue in 1940, was born in Louisiana.

⁷⁵ Information here and in the following paragraphs comes from Idamae [Calvin] Glass and Michael Calvin, interview Friday, June 17th, 2011, with Bill Keating & Desiree Palma with Robert Lewis, ALTC Co-Director.

⁷⁶ Idamae [Calvin] Glass and Michael Calvin, interview Friday, June 17th, 2011, with Bill Keating & Desiree Palma with Robert Lewis, ALTC Co-Director.; Carleton Edwards, April 21, 2016.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

The pastors brought to serve the Bethel AME Church often lived on Christian Avenue, and at least two of them stayed permanently. The Rev. David Eato and Mary L. Eato owned a house at 46 Christian Avenue and the Rev. Joseph McKenzie and Margaret McKenzie built a house at 11 Christian Avenue. Ethel DuVal, daughter of the Rev. Robert E. DuVal, married Howard Lewis and lived for the rest of her life on Christian Avenue.

Other migrants to Christian Avenue included people who simply felt at home there. Carleton and Nellie Edwards moved to the community in 1958, for example, after the Chicken Hill neighborhood began to disperse. James Edwards, who came to the neighborhood in 1977, remembered that when he first arrived, "it was Harts and Sells, Harts and Sells. I was the new kid on the block." Employed as a teacher, he moved to Christian Avenue to rent an apartment. Some of the new arrivals who intermarried with local people were of Native descent, including Nellie Edwards, the Treadwell family, and Paul Eleazar (husband of Thelma Scott).

Beginning in the mid-1920s, the Bristol family became an important presence on Christian Avenue. Joseph Henry Bristol, also known as Henry Bristol, was the son of Angeline Woodhull Bristol and David Bristol. The Oakes-Woodhull household shared a dwelling in Old Field with Rachel and Jacob Tobias, both age 41, their eight children, and Rachel's mother, Eunice Smith, age 58, and sister, Alice Smith, age 42. The Oakes-Woodhull-Tobias families lived three houses away from Silas and Emeline Tobias, whose home was on the shore of Conscience Bay.

During the late nineteenth century, family members engaged in a variety of occupations. For example, David Bristol typically worked as a farm laborer, while his sons, Henry and Isaac, worked as sailors. Angeline and her mother, Rosanna, supported the family income by washing. Angeline maintained her home on Main Street in Setauket (not in the district) working as a washerwoman until her death in the early 1920s.⁷⁷ After returning from World War I, Henry Bristol lived with his mother in Setauket. After her death, he married Ella, a woman born in South Carolina, and sold his mother's home. Using these funds, the couple was able to purchase lots at 43 and 45 Christian Avenue in 1926 and 1927. By 1930, they were living on Christian Avenue in one home and renting the other to Edward and Martha Phillips.⁷⁸

Christian Avenue during the 1930s

In the 1930s, the country experienced the Great Depression. As historian Cheryl Lynn Greenberg noted, 38 percent of African Americans nationally received some form of public assistance in 1930.⁷⁹ That was not true for Christian Avenue residents. Through their well-established family networks, economic strategies that provided a diversified income, and access to land, Christian Avenue continued to be a vital and growing community. While the Scott family worked for the Works Progress Administration, most people survived through a combination of paid work outside the community (often in construction or domestic service), a subsistence economy based on products from the sea and local gardens, and a sustaining network of support from families and church.

⁷⁷ David Bristol may have died, or he and Angeline may have separated. A David Bristol regularly appeared in census records, living in households that did not include Angeline, until 1918, when a David Bristol was admitted to the almshouse in Port Jefferson. Records in Ancestry.com.

⁷⁸ Federal Census, New York, 1930.

⁷⁹ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *To Ask for an Equal Chance: African Americans in the Great Depression* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009).

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Between 1930 and 1940, four Hart-related families moved to Christian Avenue or purchased land there, and Edward Calvin joined his sister Edith Davis as a Christian Avenue land owner:

- 1930. Edward G. Calvin purchased lot 5 (40 Christian Avenue) from Louise Brinkama, a German American who had bought this land in 1921. The house (extant) may have been moved from Port Jefferson ca. 1935.
- 1931. William H. and Rachel E. Young purchased lot 9 (30 Christian Avenue, extant) from Carrie D. Hawkins.
- 1931. Isaiah and Bertha Hart laid the foundation in December for a house at 41 Christian Avenue (extant, perhaps built by Charles Howell); they received a deed in 1938. Local people remember Isaiah Hart as a seasonal resident; the house may have been a rental property.
- 1932. Harold Smith bought lot 11 (20 Christian Avenue, extant) from Carrie D. Hawkins. By 1940, Frank and Emma Scott they began living here; they received a deed in 1951.
- 1939. Rachel E. Young sold the south part of lot 99 to Robert Hendrickson and Audrey Brewster.

In 1940, the census listed thirteen families who lived on Christian Avenue (all people of color except for Myron and Mildred Young, listed as white, who may have been related to William Young, a man of color married to Rachel Hart Young. Four families of color lived nearby on Mud Road (not in the district), for a total of seventeen families with sixty-four residents.⁸⁰ This community was remarkably stable. Of the sixty-four people who made up the Christian Avenue neighborhood in 1940, only seven of them had lived somewhere else in 1935. The seven included Lucille and Shirley Calvin, who had moved from New York City; Edith O. Sells and Muriel O. Keyes (perhaps sisters), who had moved from Amityville, Suffolk County; and the three members of the Hendrickson family, who had moved from Port Jefferson.

All adult men and many women were employed. Of the nineteen employed men, one was a professional (minister); one (William Young, listed as white) was a fuel oil dealer; four worked in trucking (helper on a truck in the coal business, truck driver in coal, truck driver, chauffer in the sand and gravel industry); three men worked in agriculture as gardeners (gardening for a private estate, gardener for a private family, gardener), ten people worked in some form of construction. Five women worked outside their own homes, two in housework for private people, one as a waitress in a private estate, and two in general housework.

Certain patterns emerged in these occupations. Ten men, more than half the employed male workers, worked in construction. Three Christian Avenue residents (William Young, Henry Bristol, and Daniel Lewis) worked distributing fuel, either oil or coal. Harold Smith, coal dealer, bought at least two properties in this neighborhood, which he sold to Frank Scott and Daniel Lewis. Four men worked in trucking and may have owned their own

⁸⁰ This count may not be accurate, since it does not include Rachel Hart Young or Isaiah Hart, both of whom owned houses on Christian Avenue. This census was also taken from two different directions, if census order is an indication. Christian Avenue residents appeared both on page 18 and pages 20-21, with residents in other areas listed in between.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

trucks and worked as independent entrepreneurs. Two (Frank Scott and his eldest son, Wilbur) worked in the federally funded Works Progress Administration. Of the total of twenty-four employed workers, both men and women, eight (one-third), including all five women plus three male gardeners, worked in domestic service.

In addition to paid employment, many families kept extensive gardens. Lucy Hart Keyes remembered that her father, Jacob Hart, “had a garden, and he always had raised his own potatoes, cabbage, yellow turnips, a lot of white beans, and then we had what you call samp.” Lucy Keyes called this “a Long Island dish, everybody ate it.” “You make it kinda moist,” said Lucy Keyes. “The samp kinda swells up. You make it outa corn. You cook it about three hours—three hours and a half. You put a big piece of meat into it—pork or ham, anything you have. And then you parboil the beans and put them right in there. Oh! I tell you it’s a meal fit for a king.”⁸¹

Everyone also had access to seafood (especially fish, mussels, clams, and eels). While none of those who lived along Christian Avenue listed their primary occupations as related to the sea, several people were skilled baymen. Robert Lewis remembered that Irving Hart Sr., Wilbur Scott, Alfred Stewart, and Bill Hart often collected mussels and clams at what was locally known as the “colored beach,” where people of color would hold clambakes at the end of the now demolished Strong’s Neck Bridge. Robert Lewis also remembered that Warren Hart was a bayman, and the Stewart family in Old Field (whose daughter Adele married Daniel Lewis and moved to Christian Avenue) “were very strong seafarers. They had businesses on the water.” Neighbor Eugene Cockshutt remembered, “Harry Hart’s father [probably grandfather, Jacob Hart] was a clam digger and a seaman.” Jacob Hart’s obituary in 1931 noted that he had once been “following the sea for a time.”⁸²

By adopting creative strategies that allowed for diversified income, six Christian Avenue families were able to own their own homes. In addition, three more families (Howard and Ethel Lewis, Daniel and Adele Lewis, and Frank and Lucy Scott) were in the process of buying their homes. Five families rented homes on Christian Avenue (some of them from Harry Hart, who had built cottages on his mother’s land at 30 Christian Avenue), and three more rented on Mud Road.

Several people on Christian Avenue also owned trucks or automobiles for both work and transportation. Building on the tradition of working in transportation, beginning in the late nineteenth century with horses, several Christian Avenue people had gasoline-powered cars and trucks. Harry Hart, Howard Lewis, and probably others owned their own trucks. Others owned cars, including Jacob Hart, whose name was listed in the *County Review* on June 24, 1926, for buying a Ford touring car. Henry Bristol owned a Model A Ford, and Minnie Sanford owned first a 1934 Ford and then a 1957 Ford.⁸³

V. Christian Avenue, 1940-1973: Stability and Prosperity

World War II had a defining effect on Christian Avenue families, as many sons fought overseas, including Edward A. Calvin, Harry Hart, Isaiah Hart, and James Treadwell. In the 1940s and 1950s, the second and third generation of Hart and Calvin families moved to the neighborhood. During this relatively prosperous post-War

⁸¹ Lucy Hart Keyes, interview with Glenda Dickerson, 1987, Three Village Historical Society, *Historian* (May 1988), 5.

⁸² Robert Lewis, “A Sequel to 1993 Bethel AME Church 145th Anniversary:

Campground to Higher Ground,” June 12, 2010; Robert Lewis, interview with Judith Wellman, April 20, 2016; Eugene Cockshutt, interview with Christopher Matthews, 2013.

⁸³ “New Car Owners in Suffolk,” *County Review*, June 24, 1926; Eugene Cochsett, interview with Christopher Matthews, 2013.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

period, residents built or moved nine new residences to Christian Avenue, often on land subdivided from their parents (extant homes include 9, 11, 28, 30B, 34, 42, 47, 48, and 50 Christian Avenue). They also built the Irving Hart American Legion hall.

The 1950s also saw major changes in community access to water and energy. Before the mid-1950s, Christian Avenue residents obtained water through private and community wells, cisterns, springs, and water pumps. For light, they used kerosene lamps. For heat, they relied on wood and coal. About 1951-52, electricity became available. Robert Lewis remembered that, before that, “we used kerosene lamps. We still have tons of them. They give me the willies. Don’t remind me of trimming lamp chimneys and smelling kerosene.” City water came to Christian Avenue about 1955.

The Hart and Calvin families, in particular, built new homes for family members. Hart family members built at least three new homes (9 30B, and 50 Christian Avenue, all extant). Sometime after 1955, Harry Hart built a rental cottage at 30B Christian Avenue. A new small house, now known as the Warren Hart house, stood on land subdivided from property once owned by Mary Eato (50 Christian Avenue). This house may have built in the early 1940s or after Warren Hart purchased the property in 1955. Herman Lee (perhaps with the help of Harry Hart), built a new house at 34 Christian Avenue, on land subdivided from parents and in-laws Howard Hart Lewis and Ethel DuVal Lewis.

The Calvin family added three houses, building one (48 Christian Avenue) and moving two to Christian Avenue (36 and 42 Christian Avenue; the former has been demolished), to make six Calvin family homes in all. In 1946, the Evans-Phillips-Stith family built a home at 48 Christian Avenue on land that Mary Eato sold to Edith M. Evans (probably a member of the Calvin family and perhaps also one of Mary L. Eato’s step-children). After Edith Evans died, the land went to Julius Stith and Jennie Phillips Stith.

They also moved two houses near Edward G. Calvin and Caroline Calvin’s parental home. One was moved from Mud Road and Quaker Path in Old Field to 36 Christian Avenue after 1946. Probably built originally in the 1840s, it was the birthplace of Jennie Phillips.⁸⁴ This house became the home of Lucille Calvin (former wife of Edward A. Calvin, son of Edward G. Calvin) and daughter Shirley. It was demolished in 2004.

In 1946, Lillian Calvin (second wife of Edward A. Calvin) bought the vacant lot at 42 Christian Avenue.⁸⁵ The Calvins moved a house from Giles Chevrolet on Main St. in Port Jefferson to 42 Christian Avenue, where she and her husband lived with their son, Michael. Carlton “Hubbell” Edwards recalls that Giles Chevrolet had said, “anybody who wants that house can have it,’ so Mr. Calvin had the land, and they moved it. So that house is a Port Jefferson house.”⁸⁶ With the addition of these three houses, Calvin family members now owned six houses on Christian Avenue (40, 42, 48, 43, 45, and 47).

Along with Rachel Hart Young Midgett’s house, moved after 1928 to 54B Christian Avenue, these Calvin houses at 36 and 42 Christian Avenue represent the ingenuity of residents who took older homes and moved

⁸⁴ It has been sometimes mistakenly called the Hawkins house

⁸⁵ A house, once the home of Rebecca and James Lewis and then of the Thomas family, burned there between 1943 and 1946. It may have stood on the current site of 42 Christian Avenue, or it may have been on the now empty wooded lot between 42 and 46 Christian Avenue.

⁸⁶ Carlton “Hubbell” Edwards, interview with Judith Wellman, April 21, 22, 2016.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

them rather than building new. This practice was supported by a larger regional tradition of house-moving, as well as postwar increase in residential and commercial development that often resulted in moving or demolishing earlier homes located on the property. As Carlton “Hubbell” Edwards noted, “They used to move houses left and right around here. When I was growing up, it was funny, when I started working for the school district, the DeHarts were the big movers. They were house movers.”⁸⁷

In 1961, Ward Melville (CEO of Thom McAn shoes, planner and developer for the village of Stony Brook, donor of land for Stony Brook University, and a founder of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities) bought undeveloped land on the north side of Christian Avenue, east of Bethel A.M.E. Church.⁸⁸ This area is locally known as Kalmia Woods (named after *kalmia latifolia*, mountain laurel). In the late 1950s, rental houses in the Chicken Hill area of East Setauket were being sold for commercial development, and people of color were forced to move. Ethel DuVal Lewis wrote a letter to Ward and Dorothy Melville, asking for their help. Melville contributed to repairing and re-building the church. Inspired by Ethel Lewis and Carolyn Moore, he also purchased Kalmia Woods to preserve it from outside development and to resell it at reasonable prices to church members. Robert Lewis remembered, “It was my mother, Caroline Moore, and a couple of other people who convinced Ward Melville to intervene on behalf of the community... I remember seeing Dorothy Melville and my mother sitting together in our back yard talking over the situation.”⁸⁹

From 1968 to 1982, Melville or his estate sold six lots (3, 4, 5, 15, 17, and 13) to people of color, beginning with a sale of 11 Christian Avenue to the Rev. McKenzie, pastor of Bethel AME Church, in 1968.⁹⁰ Two of these houses, the Hart-Schleker House (9 Christian Avenue) and the McKenzie House (11 Christian Avenue) were built about 1970. The remainder postdate the period of significance, but retain a connection to this significant development history.

Specific employment data for the period after 1940 is difficult to synthesize, as census records are not available and because community members continued to work at several different jobs. Ida Calvin Glass remembered, for example, that her Florida-born father, Thomas Morrison Sr., “was a light weight boxer to make money, a tap dancer, got into the post office, and did a number of things to feed his family.” Carleton “Hubbell” Edwards estimated that he had as many as forty jobs in his lifetime, beginning as a caddy for Ward Melville and his wife at St. George’s golf course, then working as a gravedigger for Harry Hart, and finally spending most of his career as a custodian in the Athletic Department of the Three Village School District. Many people had similar experiences.⁹¹

Three notable occupational trends, beginning in the 1920s and increasingly important after 1940, affected Christian Avenue residents. First was the growth of occupations related to roads, railroads, and trucking. These built on the tradition of people of color who had worked extensively with horses and horse-drawn transportation in 1900. Edward G. Calvin is a good example. In 1910, he had been listed as a coachman working with horse-drawn vehicles. By 1920, he was a chauffeur, working with automobiles. Howard Lewis

⁸⁷ This may have been Harold DeHart, born about 1892, with an occupation listed in the 1930 census as a house carpenter.

⁸⁸ In 1902, the Jayne family sold the rest of their land on the north side to the Smith family. Sarah Smith Seydel inherited this land in 1926. In 1957 the land went to Bertha L. Fries who sold it in 1961 to Ward Melville. Sy Robbins, chain of title search, Three Village Historical Society.

⁸⁹ Robert Lewis, email, June 19, 2016.

⁹⁰ Please see the map section for a map showing lot numbers.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

worked as a chauffeur in trucking. Harry Hart and Isaiah Hart both worked in gas stations. Everett Hart worked as a helper in trucking, while his brother, Irving, worked as a laborer on a state road.

Neighbors Frank Scott and William Hart both worked as laborers on town roads. Many of them worked for Harold Smith delivering first wood and then coal, and Smith became a key figure in helping Christian Avenue employees (including Daniel Lewis and Frank Scott) buy their homes. Howard Lewis, Harry Hart, and probably several others owned their own trucks. Howard Lewis worked in delivering wood, developing a unique saw for the back of his truck, as well as working as a brakeman on the railroad. Harry Hart developed his own trucking and heavy equipment business, hiring many local people. Finally, many people worked for the Town of Brookhaven highway department.

A second development was in construction. By the 1940s, Harry Hart became one of the neighborhood's leading entrepreneurs. He worked as a gravedigger all over Suffolk County and then began to service septic tanks, build foundations, and manufacture concrete blocks. He also added extensively to existing homes on his mother's property (54 Christian Avenue) or built new homes for rent or sale (30A and 30B Christian Avenue, as perhaps also the Hendrickson home at 28 Christian Avenue and the Warren Hart house at 50 Christian Avenue). Ted Green also worked in construction.

Neighbors remember Harry Hart as "very smart." Carlton "Hubbell" Edwards recalled that there "wasn't much he couldn't do, electrical work, mechanic . . . He used to do a little bit of everything." Eugene Cockschutt, a schoolmate, remembered, "Harry worked awful hard at an awful lot of jobs." He was, remembered Jim Edwards, "a jack of all trades."⁹² Harry Hart got his start digging big holes, first graves, then septic tanks, and finally foundations. He built hundreds of cesspools and several septic tanks. Pearl Hart, Harry Hart's wife, recalled, "he was the major grave digger in Suffolk County for about twenty-five years. Every church from here to Sag Harbor has probably got some graves that he dug." As a mason, Pearl Hart noted, Harry Hart "did most of the cellars at Old Field South."⁹³

Harry Hart's entrepreneurship was facilitated by his early ownership of trucks. Eugene Cockschutt recalled that Harry Hart "had heavy equipment, and it all cost money in those days. He dug for about six cemeteries, all hand dug. Plus he worked on various farms, and he worked on their tractors when they had tractors, sometimes horses... He did heavy construction, and there weren't many people doing it." Pearl Hart remembered that "all winter long" Harry Hart would work with trucks, loading sand and taking it all around the town. Harry Hart's entrepreneurship extended to other businesses, as well. He owned a restaurant and social hall on the site of the current Exxon station at top of Chicken Hill, and he had a band there every Saturday night. It was, remembered Eugene Cochschutt, "a very nice place."

Harry Hart also turned the old schoolhouse on Chicken Hill into a factory to make concrete blocks. Many of the foundations and some of the homes on Christian Avenue (such as Warren Hart's home) most likely were constructed from concrete blocks that Hart made. Hart's entrepreneurial efforts provided work for many local people. Carlton "Hubbell" Edwards worked first as a golf caddy and then began digging graves with Harry

⁹¹ Interviews with Ida Calvin Glass and Carleton "Hubbell" Edwards.

⁹² Interviews with Eugene Cochschutt, with Christopher Matthews, 2013; and with Judith Wellman and Robert Lewis, April 21, 2016; Carlton "Hubbell" Edwards, April 21, 2016; Jim Edwards, April 22, 2016..

⁹³ Robert Lewis and Pearl Hart, interview with Christopher Matthews and Barbara Lewis, 2010.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Hart. "It made employment for us young people," he remembered. Robert Lewis noted that Harry Hart often contracted with the Town of Brookhaven Highway Department to plow and sand Setauket's roads during the winter. "While still in high school," Robert Lewis remembered, "I stood on the back of Harry's truck, learning from Everett Hart Sr., and Eugene Hart how to swing the shovel. In those days, sanding the roads was done by shoveling sand by hand."⁹⁴ Harry Hart also used his own land to make money. He built cottages both at 30 Christian Avenue and at his mother's home (later his own) at 54 Christian Avenue. He rented these to extended family members, summer residents, and college students.

Finally, many Christian Avenue people (now second, third or fourth generation residents) found steady work in the public sector. They often worked in schools, hospitals, or local government departments. Most especially, the Town of Brookhaven Highway Department hired many people of color to build, maintain, and repair roads, especially after Herman Lee became superintendent of the local district. The Three Village School District also offered employment to key people related to Christian Avenue, including Carleton "Hubbell" Edwards and Violet Sells. Lillian Calvin became a nurse in Kings Park or Northport. Her son, Michael, became a police detective. Audrey Hendrickson worked for the U.S. postal service.

The whole community built a new American Legion Hall at 26 Christian Avenue on land sold to them in 1951 by Rachel Hart Young Midgett. The Irving Hart American Legion was the third institution to be established in the Christian Avenue area. By 1955, the men of the community had worked together to build a large first floor room with a flat roof.⁹⁵ People of color in the Three Village area had a long tradition of participating in military service, from the French and Indian Wars through the Korean War in the twentieth century. As Carleton "Hubbell" Edwards has documented, at least ninety-nine people from the Christian Avenue area served in the military. Many lie buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery.

The community worked hard to raise money to finish the building. About 1973, Ward Melville matched their funds with materials and skilled labor to finish the second story with a gable roof. By 1975, the building was completed and the legion occupied the building. As Carleton "Hubbell" Edwards remembered:

I joined the Legion in 1953, and we built the bottom part of the Legion hall in 1955 with a flat roof. And then in 1973, the top was finished. So it took us from 1955 to 1973 to raise enough to match Minuse and Melville, who said, "You raise enough money and we'll get you the rest." Trucks pulled up with all the lumber on it, plus he sent his top carpenter Irving Carpenter to help supervise and do the work. And we finished it. Took us a little more than a year to complete it. We may have started that before '73, because we were in it in 1975. We raised a couple thousand dollars, and then they put in the rest of it. We had to put in the interior, lighting, plumbing, and interior finishing.⁹⁶

The Town of Brookhaven later funded elevators, an upgraded electrical system, and handicapped bathrooms. The town also gives \$500 annually to the legion and its Ladies' Auxiliary. Legion members installed a new kitchen in 2016.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Robert Lewis, email to author, June 7, 2016.

⁹⁵ "All the men in the community helped to build the Legion Hall," remembered Carlton "Hubbell" Edwards. Carlton "Hubbell" Edwards, interview April 21, 2016 with Judith Wellman.

⁹⁶ Carlton "Hubbell" Edwards, interview April 21, 2016 with Judith Wellman.

⁹⁷ Carlton "Hubbell" Edwards, interview June 22, 2011, Ariel Flajnik, Tami Longjohn, and ALTC Co-Director Judith Burgess. Robert Lewis, April 19, 2016; Carlton "Hubbell" Edwards, interview April 21, 2016 with Judith Wellman.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Construction of the Irving Hart American Legion created a new, secular public space for men in the Christian Avenue neighborhood and for women in the women's auxiliary, created originally by thirty-two women. Legion members engaged in educational work (such as programs at the Legion Hall and Flag Day in schools), charitable work (such as the sale of poppies to support veterans and help for veterans in hospitals), and social and commemorative activities (suppers in the hall, participation in the July 4 parade).

The American Legion Hall and houses built and renovated after World War II reflect the relative prosperity and occupational stability of Christian Avenue's residents. They used their incomes to support home ownership and continued improvements. In particular, Harry Hart, son of Rachel Hart Midgett, built or expanded homes on his own and his mother's properties at 30 and 54 Christian Avenue. He may also have built homes at 28 and 52 Christian Avenue.

Through these community institutions, Christian Avenue residents regularly came together, strengthening ties both among themselves and within a network of similar organizations throughout Suffolk County and New York State. Locally, in addition to regular meetings at church and Legion Hall, Christian Avenue neighbors held regular card parties in various homes to raise money for community activities. Through both the Bethel A.M.E. Church and the Irving Hart American Legion, they were also connected to the world beyond their neighborhood. Christian Avenue residents played key roles in church and legion organizations in Suffolk County and New York State; some met spouses from outside of the region through their participation in these groups. Finally, both the Irving Hart American Legion and the Bethel AME Church offered opportunities for leadership positions. People who worked for pay in relatively low-status positions might well become trustees, elders, and Sunday School teachers in the church or leaders in the American Legion. In such positions, they were well-respected community leaders, with status and authority.

IV. Bethel Christian Avenue Community, 1973-2017

From 1973 forward, Christian Avenue residents continued to build homes in the Kalmia Woods area. Families built new houses in the late 1970s and 1980s at 9, 11, 13, and 23 Christian Avenue, 6 Hill Street, and 11 Locust Avenue. From 1975-79, Melville (and later his estate) sold or donated lots 10, 12, and 14 to Bethel AME Church. The church now uses this land for a fellowship hall (1950-1979), additions to the parsonage (1950), and parking lot.⁹⁸ Economically, families in the neighborhood continued to prosper. Many renovated or remodeled existing homes, including those at 20 Locust Avenue (ca. 1937, expanded ca. 1960) and 32 Christian Avenue (ca. 1915, expanded ca. 1952).

However, the Christian Avenue community has also faced major stresses during the last half of the twentieth century. In particular, rapid population growth in the Three Village area has threatened its cohesion. In 2000, the population of the Town of Brookhaven was ten times what it had been in 1950 (448,248 in 2000 compared to 44,200 in 1950). Between 1997 and 2008, the population in the Three Village area increased by 15.7 percent. Setauket and East Setauket's population grew, however, by 22.2 percent, from 13,580-16,595. By 1997, almost half the land in the Three Village area was in residential use. Between 1985 and 1997, one-third of the vacant land disappeared. Development pressure grew, especially in areas not designated as historic

⁹⁸ In 1975, Rodney and Dorothy Certain bought Lot 9. Sherwood Lewis bought lot 8 in 1977, while Theodore and Ella Green bought Lot 1 (9 Locust Avenue). In 1982, Barbara Treadwell bought Hill Street lots 3, 4), and Pearl and Harry Hart bought 9 Christian Avenue.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

districts or conservation areas.⁹⁹ The desirability of Christian Avenue as a residential area attracted attention from developers. Rising taxes, zoning regulations and the movement of young people away from their historic roots threatened neighborhood stability. By 2015, eight of the homes within the local district were owned by people from outside of the community.

The community has responded with a renewed focus on its culture and history. Outside awareness of the historic nature of this neighborhood increased at least as early as 1987-8, when Stony Brook University Professor Glenda Dickerson, with public history students and community members, documented the Christian Avenue neighborhood. Co-sponsored by the Three Village Historical Society and the Theater Department at the State University at Stony Brook, Professor Dickerson's project collected oral histories, documents, and artifacts. She created a multi-media presentation based on William Sidney Mount's *Eel Spearing at Setauket*, featuring descendants of Rachel Tobias Holland Hart, one of the women likely depicted in the painting. Community members remembered this as a "big event." As Judith Burgess noted, "For the first time in Setauket, the African and Native American community gained high and positive visibility."¹⁰⁰

In the 1990s, community residents, led by Robert E. Lewis and Theodore Green, began to focus on their own history. In 1993, Lewis and Green published "From Campground to Higher Ground," as part of the *145th Anniversary Celebration, History Presentation, 1993, Bethel A.M.E. Church, Setauket, New York*, with a sequel in 2010 and another essay by Robert Lewis in 2015. In 1999, Theodore A. Green published "The Hart-Sells Connection," in *William Sydney Mount: Family, Friends, and Ideas: Essays by Members of the William Sydney Mount Project* (Setauket, NY: Three Village Historical Society, 1999, 63-67).¹⁰¹

In 2004, spurred by the demolition of the Hawkins-Calvin house at 36 Christian Avenue, Robert Lewis, James Edwards, Theodore Green, and Roy Scott, all local residents, started the Bethel Christian Avenue Laurel Hill Historic District Committee. In August 2006, the committee formed the 501c3 Higher Ground Inter-Cultural and Heritage Association to promote the recognition and preservation of the east Christian Avenue neighborhood and to protect it from onslaughts by developers. Robert Lewis, president, noted, "Between 2000 and 2005, the tactics of gentrification were becoming onerous and vicious. . . .Real estate agencies thought that low income blacks made for easy targets."¹⁰²

Higher Ground Inter-cultural and Heritage Association has been the driving force behind all subsequent efforts to preserve the Bethel Christian Avenue area. In 2004, joined by Charla Bolton, Preservation Advocate for the

⁹⁹ *Historical Population of Long Island Communities, 1790-1890, Compiled and edited by Barbara Shupe, Project Director (Hauptpage: Long Island Planning Board, 1982)*; "Table I: Three Village Central School District Area Population Change 1997-2008," Conservation Strategy Working Group, *Three Village Conservation Strategy 2030* (Setauket: Three Village Community Trust, 2010), 9; *Three Village Hamlet Study 1997: A Citizens' Blueprint for our Future* (Setauket: Three Village Hamlet Study Task Force), 33-34.

¹⁰⁰ *Historian*, Three Village Historical Society (May 1988); Beverly C. Tyler, "Early Christian Avenue Play Looks Back," *Village Times Herald*, March 18, 2016; Judith Burgess, "A Long Time Coming: Project Presentation, Emma Clark Library, Setauket, October 2, 2012; *New York Times*, June 19, 1988, quoted in Burgess.

¹⁰¹ Robert E. and Theodore A. Green. "From Campground to Higher Ground," *145th Anniversary Celebration, History Presentation, 1993, Bethel A.M.E. Church, Setauket, New York*. 1993; Robert E. Lewis and Theodore A. Green. "A Sequel to 1993 Bethel AME Church 145th Anniversary: From Campground to Higher Ground" (June 12, 2010); Robert E. Lewis, "Promoting Clear Understanding of History's Essence, Higher Ground Inter-Cultural and Heritage Association" (2015); Theodore A. Green, "The Hart-Sells Connection," in *William Sydney Mount: Family, Friends, and Ideas: Essays by Members of the William Sydney Mount Project*. Setauket, NY: Three Village Historical Society (1999), 63-67.

¹⁰² Robert Lewis, email to Judith Wellman, June 20, 2016.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities; the Rev. Gregory Leonard, pastor of Bethel AME Church; and Dr. Floris Cash, this group petitioned the Town of Brookhaven to create the Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill (BCALH) Local Historic District. On June 21, 2005, the town created this district. The designation of the Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill Historic District generated not only local publicity but also articles in the *New York Times*.¹⁰³

Between 2006 and 2016, Higher Ground Inter-Cultural and Heritage Association conducted several research projects relating to Christian Avenue, using oral histories, documentary research, and archaeological investigations. In 2009, Higher Ground initiated a collaborative project with Professor Christopher Matthews, an archaeologist at Hofstra University (later at Montclair State University), and Judith Burgess, anthropologist and oral historian. Called "A Long Time Coming," this project brought together community members with Matthews, his students, and Burgess, who organized a community-based oral history project, to research several sites and families relating to this mixed heritage community, using archaeology, documents, and oral histories. In 2009, based on research from Higher Ground, the Town of Brookhaven declared Bethel AME church a local historic landmark. In 2012, Judith Burgess gave a report on the progress of "A Long Time Coming" at the Emma Clark Library in Setauket. In 2013, Robert Lewis, Christopher Matthews, and Judith Burgess published a photo essay in *Long Island History Journal*.¹⁰⁴

At the same time, many residents of Christian Avenue began to explore their Native American roots. Theodore Green prepared a huge genealogical chart and with others began to organize annual Pow-Wows, developing links between local people and other Native people across Long Island and the nation. In 2010, the event included representatives from the Unkechaug, Taino, and Aztec peoples. Helen Hart-of-Morning Star-Sells, event coordinator, noted, "We're all one family from different tribes." Our goal is to educate the public. We are proud of who we are, and we want to pass on our knowledge."¹⁰⁵ These efforts continued with the formation of a Setalcott council and efforts to gain state recognition for the Setalcott people. The Three Village Historical Society initiated educational programs and walking tours of many local historic sites, including Native American areas in the West Meadow area. In 2015, the Three Village Historical Society developed an exhibit on Chicken Hill, an area of mixed heritage European, Native, African, and Jewish residents, for which it received an award from the American Association of State and Local History.¹⁰⁶

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¹⁰⁵ Tara Lamberti, "Setalcott Nation Pow Wow Celebrates Native American Culture," *Three Village Patch*, July 11, 2010, <<http://patch.com/new-york/threevillage/setalcott-nation-pow-wow-celebrates-native-american-culture>>.

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Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

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- Tyler, Beverly C. "Setauket and Brookhaven History Through the Murals of Vance Locke."
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<<http://tbrnewsmedia.com/tag/beverly-c-tyler/>>.
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- Vincitorio, Gaetano L. "The Revolutionary War and Its Aftermath in Suffolk County, Long Island." *Long Island Historical Journal*. 7:1 (September 1994), 68-85.
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- Ward Melville: The Man, His Dream, and His Legacy*. Video. Stony Brook: Ward Melville Heritage Organization, [1999].
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- Wood, Silas. *A Sketch of the First Settlement of the Several Towns on Long Island; with Their Political Condition, to the End of the American Revolution*. 2nd ed. Brooklyn, NY: Alden Spooner, 1828. Internet Archive.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Wortis, Helen. "Blacks on Long Island: Population Growth in the Colonial Period," *Journal of Long Island History* 9 (1974)

Yaeger, Edna Howell. "The Big Duck." *Long Island Forum*. 35:7 (1972), 142-147.

National Register Nominations:

East Setauket: Brewster House; Sherwood-Jayne House

Miller Place: Samuel Hopkins House

Port Jefferson: Bayles Shipyard, First National Bank of Port Jefferson, Port Jefferson Village Historic District

Setauket: Caroline Church and Cemetery, Frank Melville Memorial Park, Setauket Presbyterian Church and Burial Ground, Thompson House

Stony Brook: Gamecock Cottage, Hawkins Homestead, Nathaniel Longbotham House, Stony Brook Grist Mill; St. James Chapel; William Sidney Mount House, West Meadow Beach Historic District

Wading River: Tuthill-Lapham House, Benjamin King Woodhull House

Wainscott: Thomas Strong House

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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 32.45 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>658346</u> Easting	<u>4534145</u> Northing	3	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>657922</u> Easting	<u>4533808</u> Northing
2	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>658419</u> Easting	<u>4533929</u> Northing	4	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>657866</u> Easting	<u>4534108</u> Northing

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

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is drawn to incorporate the core of the Christian Avenue community, which is centered on Bethel AME Church, Laurel Hill Cemetery, and the Irving Hart American Legion Building. While the community historically extended west to Mud Road, no resources associated with the community during the period of significance remain; the eastern boundary is drawn to include the remaining resources on Christian Avenue. The northern boundary is drawn to reflect the parcels of land that were purchased in 1961 by Ward Melville for sale to members of the community. As these parcels were sold slowly, and homes were not often built until after the period of significance, these lots are noted as non-contributing. However, they have been included in the district due to the importance of Melville's involvement in the community, the efforts of community members to engage his assistance, and the impact these Kalmia Woods lots had on the development of the community during the twentieth century. The eastern boundary is drawn to incorporate the extent of historic house lots associated with the community, as well as three parcels next to Laurel Hill Cemetery which have historically remained vacant. The southern boundary is defined by the rear lots of parcels, which climb up a hill that marked the visual and cultural edge of the community.

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District

Town of Setauket,
Suffolk County, NY



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 650 1,300 2,600 Feet



Bethel Christian Ave. HD



Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District

Town of Setauket,
Suffolk County, NY



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Bethel Christian Ave. HD



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

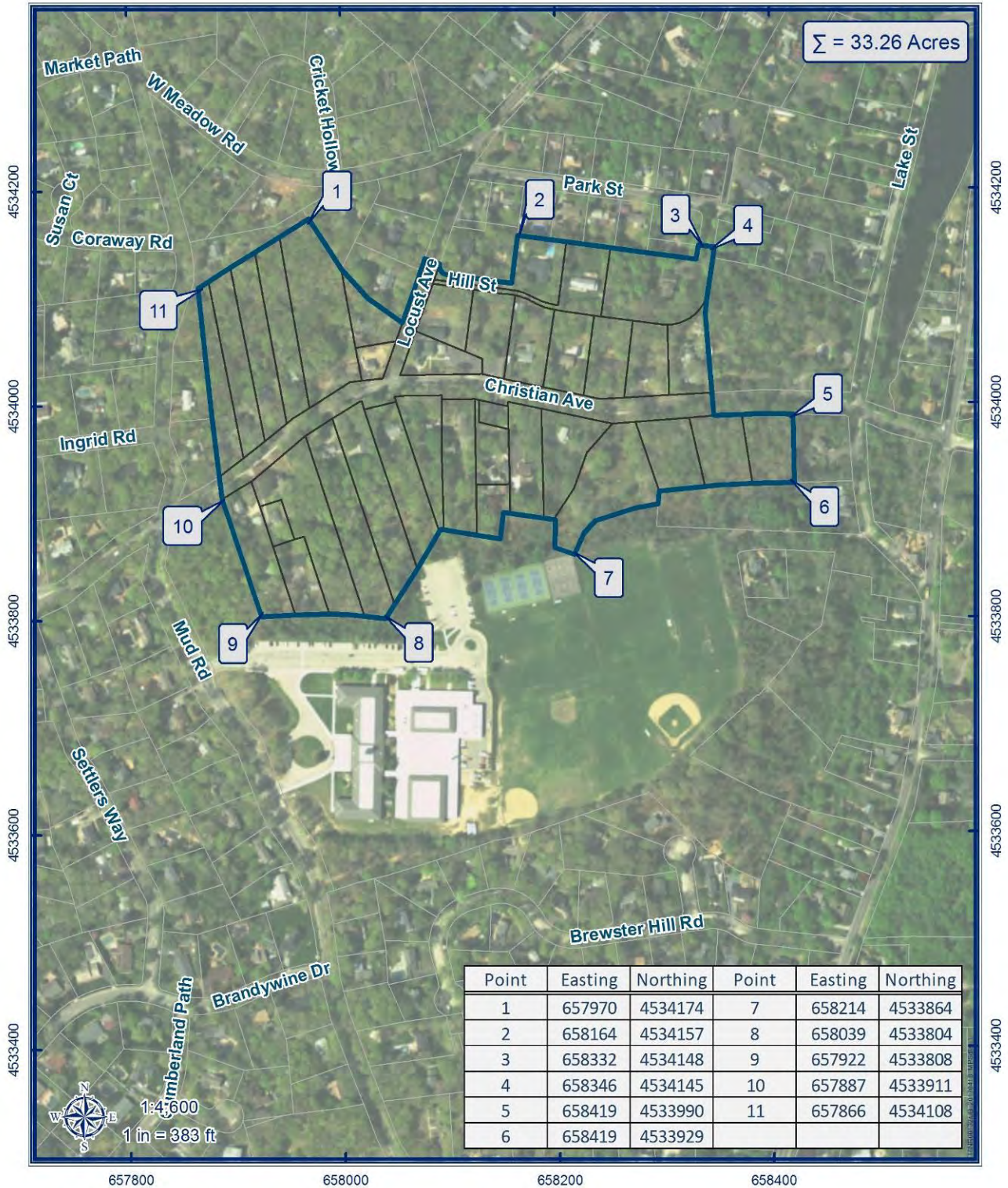
Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
 Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
 County and State

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District

Town of Setauket,
 Suffolk County, NY

Σ = 33.26 Acres



Point	Easting	Northing	Point	Easting	Northing
1	657970	4534174	7	658214	4533864
2	658164	4534157	8	658039	4533804
3	658332	4534148	9	657922	4533808
4	658346	4534145	10	657887	4533911
5	658419	4533990	11	657866	4534108
6	658419	4533929			

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983
 Units: Meter



Bethel Christian Ave. HD



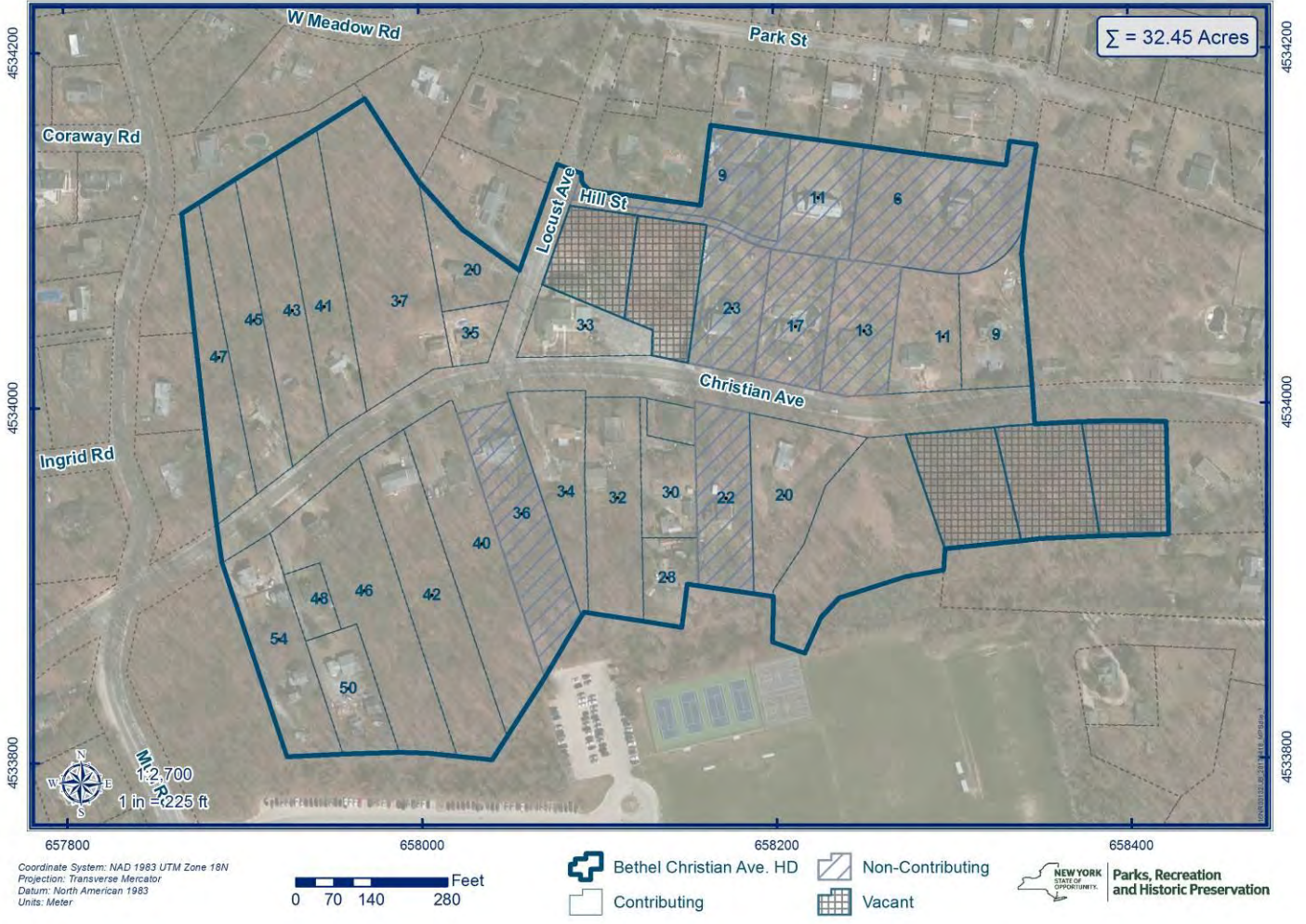
Parks, Recreation
 and Historic Preservation

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
 Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
 County and State

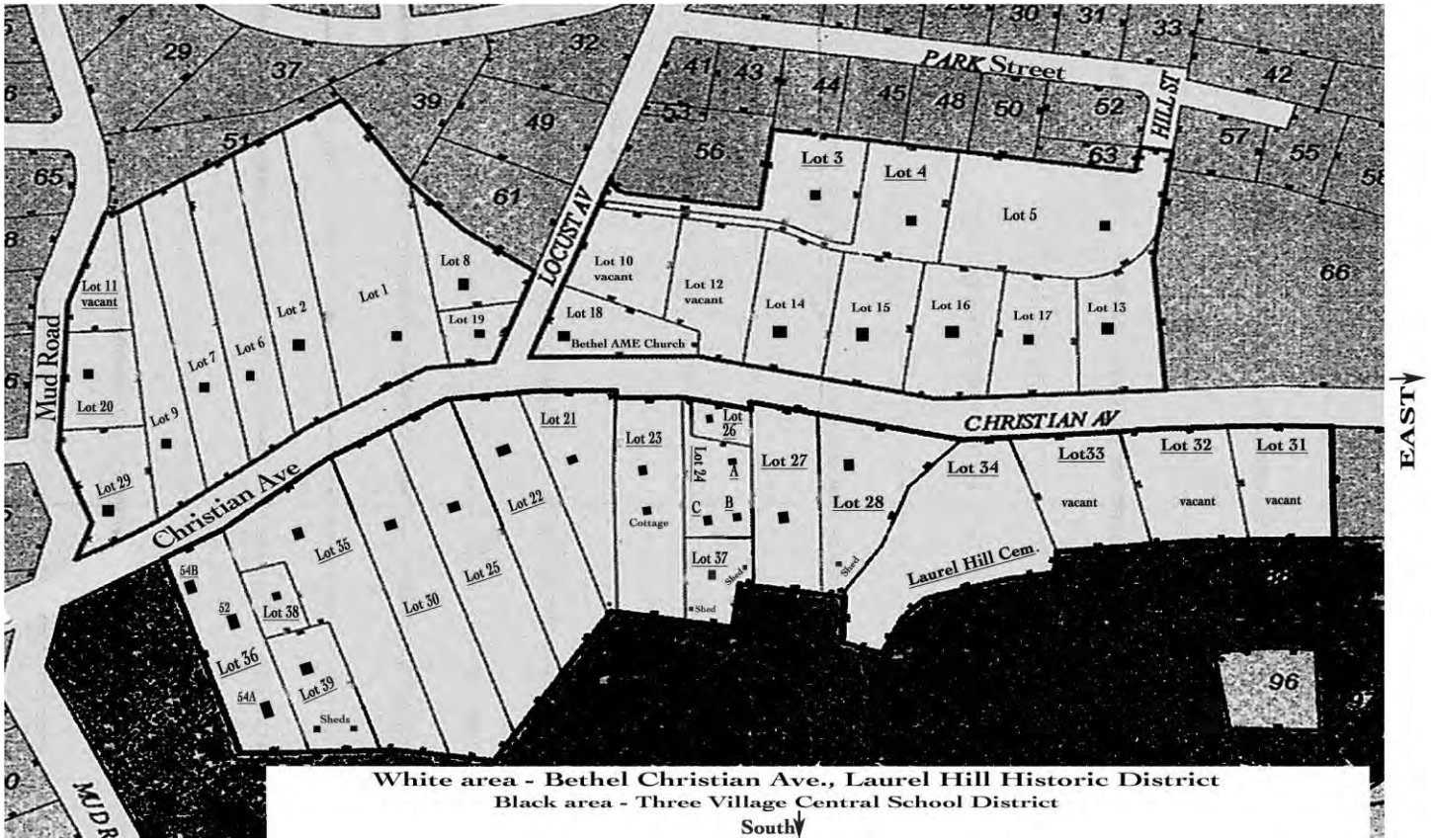
Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District

Town of Setauket,
 Suffolk County, NY



Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

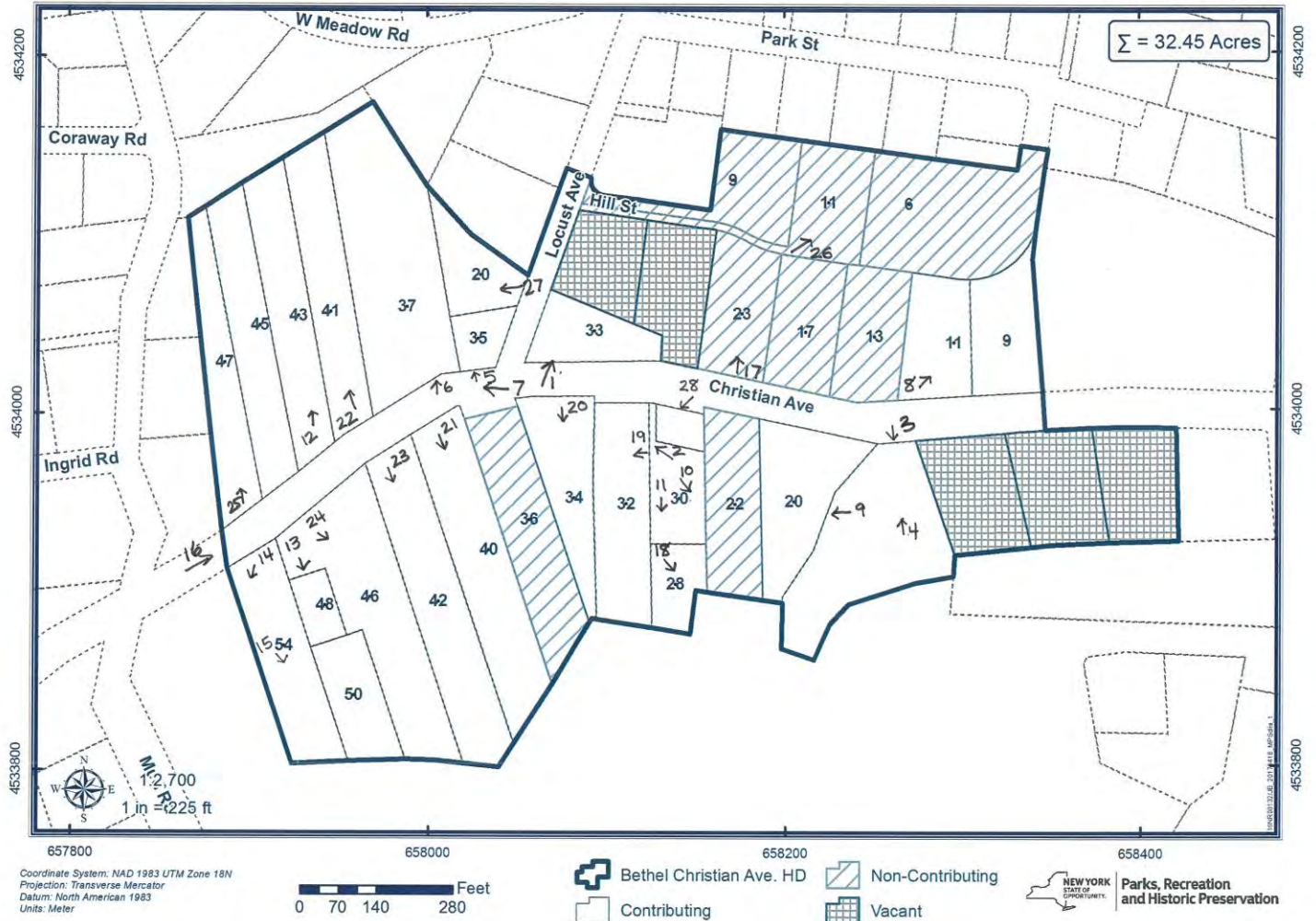


Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
 Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
 County and State

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District

Town of Setauket,
 Suffolk, County, NY



Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith Wellman, with Robert Lewis, Judith Burgess, Christopher Matthews, and Karen Martin (edited by Jennifer Betsworth and Kathleen LaFrank, NY SHPO)

organization Higher Ground Inter-Cultural and Heritage Association date August 2017

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

e-mail _____

Additional Documentation

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.)

Photographs:

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: Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District

City or Vicinity: Setauket

County: Suffolk State: NY

Photographer: Robert E. Lewis

Date Photographed: 2016-2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0001
33 Christian Avenue, Bethel AME Church (Lot 18), facing northwest

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0002
Christian Avenue and Bethel AME Church, facing west

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0003
Laurel Hill Cemetery (Lot 34), facing south

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0004
Laurel Hill Cemetery (Lot 34), facing south

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0005

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

35 Christian Avenue (Lot 19), facing north

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0006
37 Christian Avenue (Lot 1), facing north

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0007
Christian Avenue, facing west

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0008
11 Christian Avenue (Lot 17), facing northeast

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0009
20 Christian Avenue (Lot 28). Wide view showing house and edge of Laurel Hill Cemetery, facing west

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0010
30B Christian Avenue (Lot 24), facing southeast

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0011
30C Christian Avenue (Lot 24), facing south

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0012
43 Christian Avenue (Lot 6), facing northeast

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0013
48 Christian Avenue (Lot 38), facing southeast

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0014
54 Christian Avenue (Lot 36), facing southwest

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0015
54A Christian Avenue (Lot 36), facing southeast

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0016
Christian Avenue, facing east

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0017
23 Christian Avenue (Lot 14), facing north

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0018
28 Christian Avenue (Lot 37), facing southeast

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0019
32 Christian Avenue (Lot 23), facing west

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0020
34 Christian Avenue (Lot 21), facing south

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0021
40 Christian Avenue (Lot 25), facing south

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0022
41 Christian Avenue (Lot 2), facing northwest

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0023
42 Christian Avenue (Lot 30), facing southeast

Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0024
46 Christian Avenue (Lot 35), facing east

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0025
47 Christian Avenue (Lot 9), facing northwest

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0026
11 Locust Avenue (Lot 4), facing northeast

NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0027
20 Locust Avenue (Lot 8), facing west


NY_Suffolk Co_Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District_0028
24 Christian Avenue, Irving Hart American Legion (Lot 26), facing south

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.







LAUREL HILL
CEMETERY

LAUREL
HILL
CEMETERY







37













































AMERICAN LEGION
ST. THOMAS TOWN
IRVING WARD
POST 1768

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 9/25/2017 Date of Pending List: 10/26/2017 Date of 16th Day: 11/13/2017 Date of 45th Day: 11/9/2017 Date of Weekly List: 11/9/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 11/9/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

June 29, 2017

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

Please accept my letter of support for the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association's effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

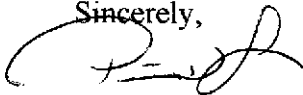
The Bethel Christian Avenue, Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because of its racial blend of Native and African-American families who settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago.

Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and still are living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket, NY. I am a descendant of "those early families" who provided a stable and safe environment for me from birth through my young adult years. I now reside, with my family, in Rhode Island but I with my wife and our adult children return home regularly as we recognize the significance of our heritage.

A nomination will be recognition that small communities are historically significant. They are such because of their longevity, inhabited by indigenous, culturally significant, living families, such as the BCALH historic district, are historic treasures, and should be considered State and National historic sites.

Thank you for accepting my letter of support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter D. Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "L".

Peter D. Lee, LICSW

JUDITH A. BURGESS

EDUCATION WORKS CONSULTING

539 Rockland Street • Westbury, NY 11590 • Phone 516-333-5474

educationworks@msn.com

July 27, 2017

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188
Email: Jennifer.betsworth@parks.ny.gov

Dear Ms. Betsworth:

Re: Letter in support of the Bethel Christian-Avenue Laurel Hill (BCALH) Historic District's nomination to the New York and National Registers of Historic Places

Nestled among the trees and shrubbery on a short stretch of Christian Avenue in Setauket, New York, are a few simple homes, and the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, the American Legion Post 1766, as well as an old cemetery called Laurel Hill – this is the BCALH historic district. As someone who grew-up in New York City, thinking that important places in time and history had to include elaborate buildings and landscapes, this is a significantly different group of sites with a compelling American story behind them. The simplicity of the place belies the effort and the persistence it took for a long line of Native and African American people to forge relationships that would help them create “places of their own.”

This nomination for historic site recognition, comes after many years of sifting through the historical record for pertinent clues, collecting and analyzing the data, and crafting a historical account that knits together pieces from archival records, oral histories, family genealogies, census data, maps, deeds and more, to create the narrative we have today. It is a significant American story about Native and African American people who emerge from slavery and subordination, to become property owners.

The Laurel Hill cemetery site, which goes back to 1815, marks the earliest evidence of Native and African American people on Christian Avenue. The acquisition of the cemetery followed in 1871, and the establishment of the AME church, which was located close-by, followed in 1874. These two sites, which they purchased, formed the anchor that continued to bring Native and African American people to Christian Avenue. Subsequently, a pattern of property ownership on parcels of land close to these anchor institutions followed as these people sought, through various relationships, to have their own homes, and social institution.

Continued.../p.2

July 27, 2017
Jennifer Betsworth
Page 2

The effort to uncover the history of this Native and African American community is an equally remarkable story. Robert Lewis and the Higher Ground Intercultural and Heritage Association have been undaunted in their efforts. I joined him in 2010 as an anthropologist and oral historian to begin one phase of the research, and worked along with the archaeologist, Christopher Matthews. Then, in 2015, we renewed our research efforts under the leadership of historian, Judith Wellman, who was the principal investigator and writer of the Cultural Resource Survey. Robert Lewis drew from the old Sam Cook song to aptly name the research effort: *"It's been a long time coming!"* But now, I believe, it is an important historical narrative that shines new light on the American experience, and the sites warrant the recognition as historically significant.

I strongly support this application for nomination to the New York and National Registers.

Sincerely,

Judith Burgess

Judith A. Burgess
Principal, Education Works Consulting



July 5, 2017

Dear Jennifer Betsworth—

We are writing you today in support of the Higher Ground IC & Heritage Association's proposal for a nomination to receive National Register of Historic Sites designation. The Long Island Museum strongly supports this group's effort to preserve, maintain, and honor its important and thoroughly unique heritage. This intact eastern Christian Avenue neighborhood in Setauket provided the basis for an African American and Native American community which has lived, worked, and worshipped in the area for over 300 years. The Bethel-AME Setauket Church provides one important vessel of this history, as one of the longest active congregations in regional African American history (since 1848).

Recent archaeological studies by Hofstra University and exhibition projects by the Three Village Historical Society have unearthed extensive additional evidence supporting Higher Ground's preservation advocacy. And the Long Island Museum's own collection of 19th century paintings by prominent American artist William Sidney Mount (1807-1868) also provide documentation of the longstanding nature of this community. It is our responsibility to ensure this historic community's continuing preservation efforts and we believe the National Register listing provides the next natural step.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important effort,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Watson".

Neil Watson
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joshua Ruff".

Joshua Ruff
Director of Collections & Interpretation



SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LONG ISLAND ANTIQUITIES

Understanding, Celebrating and Preserving Long Island's Cultural Heritage

September 1, 2017

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Educator
Darren St. George
*Education & Public
Programs Director*
Betsy Terrizzi
Office Manager

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
Attn: Jennifer Betsworth

Re: **Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill Historic District**
Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Betsworth and Members of the New York State Board for Historic Preservation:

As the regional advocate for historic preservation on Long Island, the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (SPLIA) is pleased to submit this letter supporting the nomination to list the Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill Historic District on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Settled by African Americans and Native Americans during the early 1800s, the Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill Historic District is one of Long Island's most deeply rooted and dynamic communities of color. Unfortunately, historic districts like this one are sorely underrepresented, partially because their materiality is complicated by periods of decline and the effects of socioeconomic marginalization. Nevertheless, the structures, landscape, and archaeological remains located within this neighborhood powerfully link local experiences of social struggle and community resilience to regional and national histories of exclusion and disparity, while also resonating with contemporary social justice movements across America.

Among the many stories to be told here, Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill reflects the vital role African Methodist Episcopal Churches played on Long Island, as well as the challenges that confronted people of color before and after the abolition of slavery. Moreover, the district's historic properties speak to early practices of African-American homeownership on Long Island during the Jim Crow Era, a topic that merits further study and attention.

In recognition of the neighborhood's significance, and in response to calls from residents to protect the community's historic resources from real estate development, Brookhaven's Town Board unanimously approved the local designation of the Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill Historic District in 2005. Despite some inappropriate building treatments due to real estate speculation and other economic pressures, the neighborhood's significance remains as profound as ever. Listing on the National and State Registers would complement the district's local designation with opportunities for tax credits and other incentives to encourage successful rehabilitation of the area's historic structures.

Many thanks for your consideration of SPLIA's comments in reviewing the nomination of Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill Historic District, which deserves to be recognized and celebrated as a significant part of our shared heritage.

With sincere regards,

Sarah Kautz,
Preservation Director

SPLIA

161 Main Street, P.O. Box 148, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724
Tel: 631-692-4664 Fax: 631-692-5265 info@splia.org www.splia.org

Betsworth, Jennifer (PARKS)

From: Christopher Matthews <cmatthew65@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 10:43 AM
To: Betsworth, Jennifer (PARKS)
Cc: Robert E. Lewis; Dr. Judith A. Burgess; historicalnewyork@me.com
Subject: Letter of support for BCALH in Setauket

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.



MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY

June 13, 2017

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

Dear Jennifer,

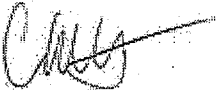
I am writing to express my very strong support for the nomination of the Bethel-Christian Avenue-Laurel Hill historic district in Setauket, NY to the Registry of New York State historic sites and National Register of Historic Places. You are already aware of the excellent cultural resources report prepared by Judith Wellman, which shows the amazing breadth and depth of the community's history in Setauket. I only add a few additional comments here.

I have been working in collaboration with Higher Ground Intercultural and Heritage Association since 2009 through a project entitled 'A Long Time Coming.' Our work has documented the history of the community through archaeology, historical documents, and oral history, much of which is reproduced in the cultural resources survey. This research establishes that the historic district community are the descendants of former residents of Setauket of Native American, African American, and European American ancestry dating to the early colonial period. So, while the community has always been part of Setauket's population, they, like many other communities of color across the country, are poorly represented in local and regional historical narratives. The national register nomination will build on Higher Ground's

extraordinary efforts over the last 15 years to redress this problem and give the community a historical platform and status in their ongoing fight against displacement. Moreover, the nomination will recognize the independent efforts of the contemporary community to document their history. Working outside of traditional historical societies and narratives, the community's self-defined story provides a new vantage point on local, state, and national history that can be a model for nonwhite communities across the United States.

As a member of the team who prepared the cultural resources survey, I am grateful for your support of our effort to gain national register status for the BCALH district. I very much hope you will continue to be a positive voice for the community as the review continues.

Sincerely,



Christopher N. Matthews
Professor of Anthropology
Montclair State University
matthewsc@montclair.edu
(973) 655-3063



Town of Brookhaven Long Island

Edward P. Romaine, Supervisor

August 7, 2017



Ms. Jennifer Betsworth, Historic Preservation Specialist
New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation, Peebles Island
PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

RE: Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District
Suffolk County, Town of Brookhaven, Setauket, NY

Dear Jennifer:

At its next meeting on September 14, 2017, the New York State Board for Historic Preservation will consider the above referenced District for inclusion on the New York State and National Registers.

This District represents a multi-century historical perspective of both the African-American and Native-American culture in northern Brookhaven Township. In addition to the residential properties, the Bethel AME Church, the American Legion Hall, and the Laurel Hill Cemetery are rich components of the area's religious and social historic fabric. The preservation of this community is tantamount to respecting and acknowledging the continuing existence of this historic area.

Please consider this Letter of Support our endorsement of the nomination of the Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District to the New York State and National Registers.

Sincerely,


Edward P. Romaine, Supervisor



Valerie M. Cartright, District One Council Representative


Barbara M. Russell, Town Historian

Office of the Supervisor

One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-9100 • Fax (631) 451-6677

www.brookhaven.org

Printed on recycled paper



THREE VILLAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"PRESERVING OUR COMMUNITY'S SHARED HERITAGE"

June 2, 2017

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division of Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188



Dear Jennifer,

The Board of Trustees of the Three Village Historical Society unanimously support the nomination of the BCALH Historic District to the Historic Sites Registries of both the State and National Parks Services.

This community represents both the African American and the Native American cultures in Northern Brookhaven Town. It is located in Setauket NY, part of the Three Villages. As a Society, we try to be as representative as possible of all cultural groups within our area. The Bethel Christian Avenue Community includes the Bethel AME Church, the American Legion Hall, and the Laurel Hill Cemetery, in addition to many residences. This designation is desirable to give the history of the community the recognition it deserves.

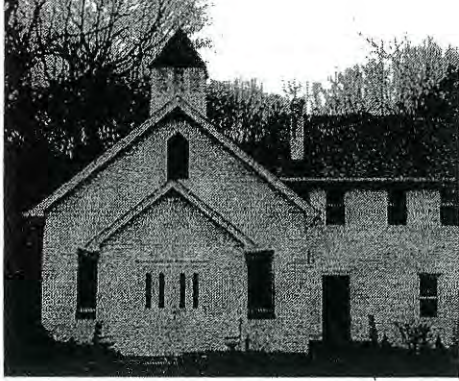
Sincerely,

Stephen Healy
President, Board of Trustees
Three Village Historical Society

93 NORTH COUNTRY ROAD, SETAUKET, NY 11733 • PHONE 631-751-3730 FAX 631-751-3936

MAILING ADDRESS: PO BOX 76, EAST SETAUKET, NY 11733-0076

E-MAIL: info@tvhs.org WEB SITE: www.tvhs.org



Bethel AME Church
33 Christian Ave/P.O.2117
Setauket, NY 11733

Telephone/Fax 631 751-4140

Rev. Gregory L. Leonard-Pastor

Rev. Henrietta S. Fullard- Presiding Elder

Rev. Gregory G.M. Ingram- Presiding Prelate

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

June 3, 2017
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because a racial blend of Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket, NY. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

A nomination will be recognition that small communities historically significant because of their longevity, inhabited by indigenous, culturally significant, living families, such as the BCALH historic district, are historic treasures, and should be considered State and National historic sites.

Sincerely,

Rev Gregory L. Leonard
Signature

Pastor Bethel AME Church
Professional affiliations

Civic

Membership



Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

5-18-17

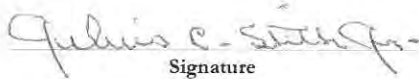
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

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Sincerely,



Signature

Professional affiliations

Civic



Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

19 May 2017
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,

James R. Edwards
Signature



Professional affiliations

Trustee Bethel AME Church
VP ^{Civic} Higher Ground

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

5/18/2017
Date



Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,

Artemetec Miller
Signature

Retired H.S. of Ed. Teacher
Professional affiliations
Notary for Suffolk County
Civic

Paralegal
Lifetime Member NAACP
35 yr. member of Bethel Hill M. E. Church
Served on the Trustee Bd, Missionary President
Scholarship Chairman, Book Chairman

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

5/20/17
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,

Sharon Glass
Signature

Past County President Suffolk County ALA.
Professional affiliations

Civic



Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically significant because descendants of Native and African American families that began nearly two hundred years ago in Setauket NY, are still living on east Christian Avenue. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

A nomination will be recognition that small communities historically significant because of their longevity, and represented by indigenous, culturally significant, living families, such as in the BCALH historic district, should be considered State and National historic sites.

Sincerely,



Signature

Professional affiliations



Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically significant because descendants of Native and African American families that began nearly two hundred years ago in Setauket NY, are still living on east Christian Avenue. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,


Signature


Professional affiliations

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

May 25, 2017
Date

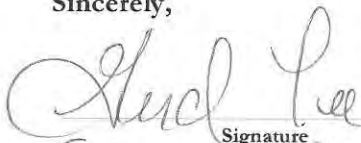


Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

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Sincerely,


Signature
(GERALD LEE)

MEMBER, Higher Ground IC. and Heritage Assoc.
Professional affiliations

Civic

- Raised on Christian Ave.
- My father built the house in 1954
- I inherited his house in 2011.
- This area that I live in - BCALH - is truly a historic treasure.

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

May 31, 2017
Date



Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because a racial blend of Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket, NY. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,

Pauline Carbo
Signature

Professional affiliations

Civic

Bethel A.M.E. Church member
Membership

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188




5/30/2017
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,


Signature
IRWIN M. BEST

MD, FACS
Professional affiliations

BCALH member
Civic

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

5/30/17

Date

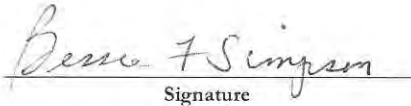


Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

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Sincerely,


Signature

Professional affiliations

Civic

Membership

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188



May 30, 2017
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,

Alexandra of Mary's for Sell
Signature

Chairperson Setauket Union
Professional affiliations

Civic

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

5/30/2017

Date



Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because a racial blend of Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket, NY. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,

Cynthia R. Shepherd

Signature

Professional affiliations

Civic

Bethel AME Church

Membership

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

5/28/17
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because a racial blend of Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket, NY. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,

Frank C. Leonard
Signature

Professional affiliations

Civic

Bethel A.M.E church
Membership





Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

June 8, 2017
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,

This precious community must be recognized and its story told to future New York generations!

Janet Hanson
Signature

retired

Professional affiliations

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook
Civic

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

May 30, 2017
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because a racial blend of Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket, NY. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,

Monique J. Ramos
Signature

Professional affiliations

Civic

Bethel A.M.E. Setauket member
Membership



Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188




6/1/2017
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because a racial blend of Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket, NY. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,


Signature

Alpha Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.
Professional affiliations

Bethel AME Church member
Civic
Membership

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

May 31, 2017
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

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Sincerely,

M. Ramos
Signature
(Marissa A. Ramos)

Professional affiliations

Civic
Bethel AME Setauket Church member
Membership



Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

05/31/2017

Date



Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

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Sincerely,

Signature

Professional affiliations

Civic
Bethel Ave Setauket Member

Membership

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

July 3, 2017
Date



Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

The Bethel Christian Ave., Laurel Hill Historic District is historically and culturally significant because Native American and African families settled in Setauket nearly two hundred years ago. Remarkably, the descendants of those early families managed to survive, and are still living on east Christian Avenue, Setauket. I write this letter to state that I support the Higher Ground IC. & Heritage Association effort to nominate the BCALH Historic District, to the Registry of New York State historic sites, and National Parks Historic Sites Registry.

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Sincerely,

Asa Kellu
Signature

VRC, NYSES
Professional affiliations

member Bethel AME Setauket
Civic

Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188



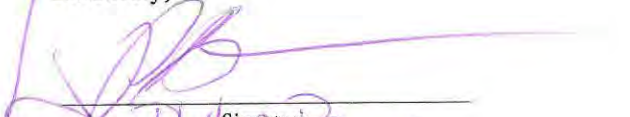
6/27/17
Date

Dear Jennifer Betsworth,

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Sincerely,



Signature
Philip Ramos
(AME)
Member of Bethel Setauket Church

Professional affiliations

Civic

Membership



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



22 September 2017

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following twelve nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral, New York County
Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District, Suffolk County
Old Bethel Cemetery, Suffolk County
Spear and Company Factory, Queens County
Saugerties and New York Steamboat Company Warehouses, Ulster County
Lefferts Manor Historic District (Boundary Increase), Kings County
Ellis Squires Jr, House, Suffolk County
William A. Farnum Boathouse, Suffolk County
Warren-Benham House, Ontario County
Oswego & Syracuse Railroad Freight House, Oswego County
Forest Hill Cemetery, Oneida County
Caffe Cino, New York County

Please note that the last nomination, Caff  Cino, is the fourth of five nominations submitted under our Underrepresented Communities grant for LGBT sites in New York City. The fifth is scheduled for review at our next board meeting in December.

In addition, I am also enclosing a CD with better photos of the Charles and Anna Bates House, Suffolk County, as requested. Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office