

SG-894



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
other names/site number First Congregational Church of Nelson; Nelson United Methodist Church
related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 3333 US Route 20 East N/A not for publication
city or town Cazenovia N/A vicinity
state NY code 36 county Madison code 053 zip code 13035

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Nicholas P. Lynch Deputy SPO 21 FEB 2017
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

for Chris's beautiful
Signature of the Keeper

4/17/17
Date of Action

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: Religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: Religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19th CENTURY: Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE and CONCRETE
walls: WOOD

roof: ASPHALT
other: _____

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church (now, Nelson United Methodist Church) is located in the crossroads hamlet of Nelson on the Great Western/ Cherry Valley Turnpike (now Route 20) in central New York State. The church was built as a Congregational meeting house in 1826 and originally laid out on a simple plan with minimal iconography. It was reconstructed as a Methodist Episcopal church in 1853 and achieved its current layout and overall Greek Revival design (with a few Romanesque elements) in 1877. Little of the style of the simple meeting house remains. The church now features a steeple (with base, bell tower, and spire), entrance pavilion, late 19th century stained-glass windows, two-story rear addition with session room and classrooms, and basement kitchen and dining room for church activities and community roast beef suppers.

Narrative Description

Site

The Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church (now, Nelson United Methodist Church) is situated on a knoll on the north side of the Great Western or Cherry Valley Turnpike (US Route 20) in the crossroads hamlet of Nelson in Madison County in Central New York. The one-story rectangular wood-frame building is just east of the four-way intersection of the turnpike with Nelson Road (north) and Erieville Road (south), and its steeple makes it the tallest building in the hamlet. On three corners of the intersection are early-nineteenth-century commercial buildings and scattered in all four directions are early-to-mid nineteenth century residences, most of which have been altered.

The church sits on a lot of 1 ½ acres. A driveway to the west of the building leads to parking in two lots behind the building. Due to these lots, most people now access the church through the doorway on the west elevation which leads into the session room. On the façade, a two-stage staircase of stone and brick provides access to the sanctuary from US Route 20.

Exterior

The church building consists of two main parts and measures approximately 40 x 80 feet. The original part, dating from 1826, was a rectangular meeting house with a gabled roof, measuring about 40 x 50 feet. In the remodeling of 1853, the building was placed on a new foundation with two classrooms and a conference room in the basement. At the same time, it is likely that the four sides of the building were decorated with some simple Greek Revival details – small paired brackets at the eaves and full-height corner boards with slightly articulated capitals. Twenty-four years later, in 1877, the building was extended to the rear by about 25 feet. Stained glass windows and new exterior trim were installed with simple Romanesque arches over windows and doors. In addition, a projecting pavilion and steeple were added to the front.

As a result, the south-facing façade on US Route 20 has three bays – a single tall, stained-glass window on each side flanking the projecting entry pavilion. All openings are capped by matching segmental arches. The wooden 4-panel entry doors on the pavilion also have a paneled lunette below their cap. Above them is a paired stained glass window with opalescent glass and, at roof level, a multi-stage eight-sided steeple (base, belfry, and spire) crowned with a foliate wooden finial. In the corner between the pavilion and west elevation, an enclosed concrete-block stair provides access to the basement; this addition was added in the mid-1950s when a kitchen

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

and dining room were constructed in the church basement.

Madison County, NY

County and State



Figure 1. Façade of Nelson United Methodist Church from US Route 20, 2016.



Figure 2. Paired brackets and corner boards.



Figure 3. Steeple finial.

The side elevations contain the same tall segmentally arched windows found on the façade. On the east side, there are five windows, whereas, on the west side, there are four windows and a door to the session room behind the sanctuary. The rear elevation of the building has slightly shorter windows on two stories, illustrating the location of the “Ladies’ Parlor” (now divided into classrooms) above the session room.

Interior

The construction of the church is reflected in the two main rooms on the first floor; the 50 x 40 foot sanctuary at the front of the building is part of the original meeting house, and the 25 x 40 foot session room was constructed in 1877. A plan of the ground floor of the building (from the mid-1950s) shows these major divisions and the 9 x 15 foot vestibule:

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

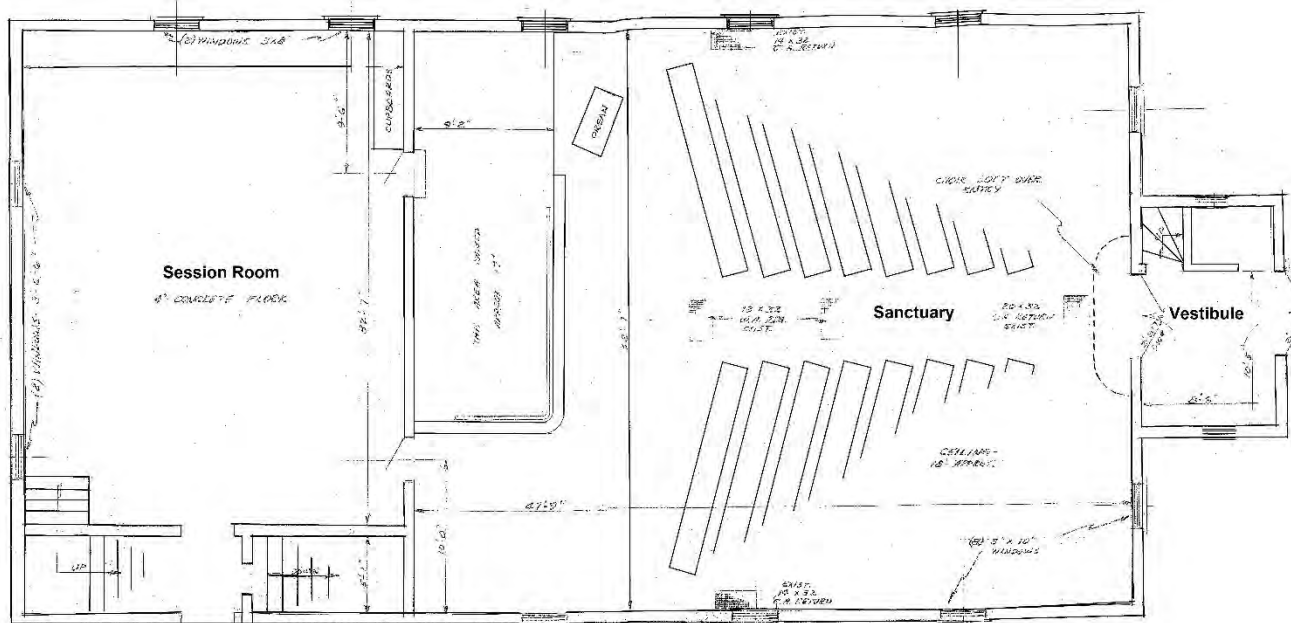


Figure 4. Mid-twentieth century floor plan. (Nelson United Methodist Church)

When church members use the formal entrance from US Route 20, they enter the sanctuary through a vestibule in the entrance pavilion. The east side of the vestibule contains a stairway to the small open choir loft; in addition, there is a small locked closet that once provided a place to pull the tower bell rope along with stairs to a basement furnace room.

The sanctuary itself, is an open two-story space with plaster walls, tall stained-glass windows, and a flat ceiling. The lowest portion of the walls (below the stained-glass windows) is covered with dark, stained wainscot. At the north end of the room is a 17" raised platform with a carpeted kneeler and short wooden balustrade; it normally houses a lectern (temporary removed to the session room) and seats for choir members. Flanking the altar are two doors that provide access to the session room at the back.

Records indicate that there were once side galleries but that they were removed in 1853 when the sanctuary was reoriented to face north; in their place, a new gallery was added to the south. The current open choir loft on the second floor of the entrance pavilion replaced this second gallery in 1877. It is enclosed in the pavilion and overlooks the sanctuary; a hatch in the loft provides access to the steeple.

Eight 3 x 10 foot stained-glass windows (two on the façade and three on each side elevation) were also added to the sanctuary in 1877. The windows have colorful borders around diamond panels of "grisaille," enameled glass with small medallions using Christian iconography. The insets include an Alpha, Omega, sheaf of wheat, dove, grapes, anchor, golden crown, and lamb with banner emblazoned "Agnus Dei." Two similar (but shorter) stained-glass windows in the pavilion – one in the vestibule and the other in the stair – lack iconography.¹ There are additional windows in the rear addition.

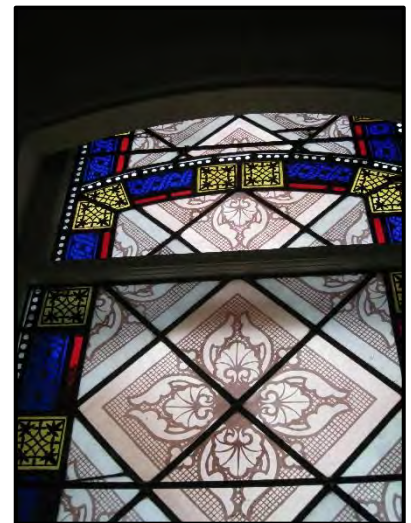
¹ The choir loft also holds a double-width window with opalescent glass – the only window in this style in the church.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State



Figures 5 – 10. Sanctuary stained-glass windows; Figure 10 is located in the session room.

The furnishings of the church are relatively simple. The walnut pews have mismatched numbers, which may indicate that they came from another church. There is also a carved wooden armchair for visitations by church authorities. Both date to the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

On the north end of the building, behind the sanctuary, is the two-story addition added in 1877; it includes an open session room on the first floor and three small classrooms on the second floor (constructed out of the original “Ladies’ Parlor.”) In the side entrance are two wide, six-panel, “cross and bible” doors. Based on their style, these may be the original front doors of the 1826 building moved to an area of lesser importance during the last set of renovations. The plain plaster walls of the session room are painted, and two sets of cupboards (for choir robes and church paraphernalia) are built into two corners. A single fluted metal column provides support for the second floor. There are four stained-glass windows – one-over-one double-hung sash that resemble the windows in the sanctuary, but without the religious medallions. The windows on the east are as tall as the sanctuary windows and originally provided light to the second floor (now blocked); those on the north are tiered and only 3 x 6 feet. The exterior door on the west (leading to the parking lots) has a stained-glass transom.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State

The session room sits on a stone foundation and lacks a basement. However, the space under the sanctuary was used as a conference and class rooms from 1853 to 1877, abandoned when the rear addition was added in 1877 (and apparently filled), and re-excavated in 1954. A utility room, kitchen, dining room, and bathrooms are now located in the basement, where the congregation meets after services and to prepare community roast beef dinners. The interior stair to this basement is concrete; in 2016, a stair lift was added to improve access to the dining room. An enclosed exterior stair exits to the façade at the corner between the west elevation and entrance pavilion.

Integrity

The Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church retains excellent integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling to its reconstruction in 1877. Electricity was added to the building in 1927, and lighting fixtures subsequently added (and replaced) throughout the building. The basement kitchen and dining room were installed in the mid-twentieth century, along with two fire-proof exits through the session room and front of the building. The frescos added in 1877 have been painted over or removed, but the stained glass windows were restored around 2015.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison 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.

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.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Period of Significance

1826-1877

Architect/Builder

Joseph C. Smith (Builder, 1853 remodeling)

Orrin P. Ferry (Builder, 1877 remodeling)

Significant Dates

1826, 1853, 1877

Period of Significance (justification): Construction of the building in 1826 as a Congregational meeting house, through mid-nineteenth-century remodeling of the church to serve a Methodist congregation, and addition of the steeple and session room in 1877.

Criteria Considerations: The Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church (now, United Methodist Church) derives its primary significance from its historic importance within its community and from its religious architecture and art.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church (now, United Methodist Church) is significant under Criteria A and C as an example of an early-nineteenth-century religious building constructed during the first period of European-American settlement of Central New York, facilitated by the construction of the Great Western (or Cherry Valley) Turnpike shortly after 1800. The church is located in the hamlet of Nelson Flats (now known as Nelson), one of many crossroads settlements that dotted the turnpike during its heyday before the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. Although the Erie Canal robbed the Great Western Turnpike of most of its commercial traffic, the turnpike continued to connect the small crossroads hamlets with one another and many of the roads that ran north from the turnpike connected these hamlets with the canal, several miles to the north. In part because of that, the Great Western Turnpike and some of the hamlets retained their commercial viability well into the late nineteenth century. The transformation of the building from Congregationalist meeting house to Methodist church also represents the evolution of community institutions in the late nineteenth century as residents acquired wealth and were able to invest in denominational churches. The building itself illustrates the progression of architectural style and denominational influence through the nineteenth century, as it was constructed in the late 1820s as a Congregational church, enlarged and remodeled when it became a Methodist church in 1853, and enlarged and remodeled once again in 1877. It retains its late-nineteenth-century appearance to this day.

Developmental history/additional historic context information

In 2002, the Town of Nelson and the Erieville-Nelson Heritage Society undertook a Comprehensive Historic Resources Survey of the hamlet of Nelson and environs, funded in part by the New York State Council on the Arts and administered by the Preservation League of New York State. The information on the history of Nelson in this nomination is taken from the "Brief History of the Study Area" contained in that survey. In addition, the Nelson United Methodist Church retains a variety of original documents pertaining to the history of the institution, and they provided significant primary-source information for this nomination as well.

The following is taken verbatim from the "Brief History:"

The hamlet of Nelson lies in the northern part of the town of Nelson...designated Township No. 1 in the Twenty Towns of the Chenango Purchase. These townships were platted on land formerly held by the Oneida Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy, land which New York State acquired through a series of treaties from the Oneida. Some of these treaties were illegal under federal law as the state was not a nation enabled to conduct such business, but the state was eager to acquire a corridor to develop a canal connecting the interior with the Mohawk-Hudson drainages to retain trade within the state. The natural flow of waterways from the interior, a high plateau, tended [south] to Pennsylvania (Delaware Bay and Philadelphia), Maryland (Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore), and [north to] Canada (Lakes Erie and Ontario and the St. Lawrence River), all disadvantageous destinations for New York State commerce.

The land was first opened for sale and settlement in the early 1790s, and Township No. 1 was patented to Alexander Webster on June 4, 1793, and purchased later that year by Col. John Lincklaen. Lincklaen, a primary landholder in the Holland Land Patent, placed the township in his Road Township Purchase, which he assembled to build a route to his patent further west. The state chartered the Lincklaen State Road in 1792, and it passed a little further north of the route taken by US 20 (The Great Western Turnpike) through the town of Nelson today. Shortly afterward, a Vermont company represented by Jedediah Jackson and Joseph Yaw purchased land in the northwest part of the township, and over the next two years, twenty-six families, mainly from Pownal, Vermont, moved to Jackson and Yaw's purchase as well as other parts of the town. In 1806, Madison County was set aside from Chenango County, and a year later, on April 7, 1807, the meeting organizing Nelson as a separate town (earlier part of Cazenovia), named for the British admiral, was held at Rufus Weaver's farm near the corner of the Erieville Road and the more southerly of the two state roads laid out

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State

in the area in the post-Revolutionary era. This intersection was known historically as Nelson Center.

Nelson's rapid settlement followed a pattern repeated in numerous communities across central New York State and the Southern Tier from the close of the American Revolution in 1783 through the early 1800s. The earliest route in this part of the town was the Lincklaen State Road [and] a hamlet called Argos was located at or northeast of the present-day hamlet of Nelson along the earlier road. The 1818 Eddy Map shows Argos. The Third Great Western Turnpike, running from Cherry Valley to Manlius and chartered in 1803, was reputedly constructed a little south of the old state road [but] probably not available for travel until about 1811. The hamlet of Nelson, called Nelson Flats in the mid-nineteenth century, developed along the new road, probably before 1820....

...Nelson's position on the turnpike made it a logical location for a small service community to grow. The new road connected the region with Albany and the Hudson River navigation, and, for the first two decades of the nineteenth century, was the main commercial route in the region. At least one tavern, probably two, developed early on in the hamlet [and] additional taverns stood at the top of the ridges east and west of the hamlet. All four of these buildings still stand.

Spafford's Gazetteer for the State of New-York for 1824 reported the shift away from turnpike commerce to the Erie Canal, stating "[Nelson] has turnpikes across the north and south parts, leading east and west, but the new roads all point to the Canal, 16 miles to the north of its centre." ...The Gazetteer noted that Nelson as a whole was good agricultural land, better suited to grazing rather than grain growing, and that its millseats [were] few. East of the four corners of Nelson, however, a millseat on the Chittenango Creek apparently developed early on [and] was mapped in the 1827 and 1839 Burr maps of New York State. In other parts of the town, Jeremiah Clark built a saw mill before 1800 and Oliver Pool established a grist mill about 1800. These presumably helped the town of Nelson to develop as its own community, independent of services found in Cazenovia, or further afield in Utica.

Gordon's Gazetteer for the State of New-York for 1836 noted that the post village of Nelson Flats had both Universalist and Methodist churches, two stores, a tavern, and six dwellings. This record appears to define the hamlet's geography very narrowly, as it appears that the mill further east of the Chittenango Creek (on Burnel Road) was probably operating at this time. Gordon listed town populations for censuses from 1820 through 1835, with the last showing an appreciable drop from 2445 in 1830 to 2231 in 1835. The peak recorded in 1830 remains the highest to date more than 170 years later. Disturnell's Gazetteer for 1842 describes the hamlet of Nelson as containing about 225 inhabitants, 35 dwellings, two churches, one tavern, and one store. The considerable increase in dwellings may be partly due to a different boundary drawn by this gazetteer's compiler, but it probably also takes into account an actual increase in the number of dwellings. Nelson's built environment includes a number of houses built in the Greek Revival style popular at the time. Thus, while the town's overall population fell, the hamlet continued to grow into the 1840s. French's Gazetteer for 1860 noted that Nelson Flats had two churches and 146 inhabitants, suggesting that by this period, the hamlet, too, had a declining population. Without definite boundaries, however, it is difficult to know for sure when the decline set in within the hamlet. A few years later, Hough's Gazetteer (1872) estimated the hamlet population at 200. What is certain is that Nelson, or Nelson Flats, was never very large, never encompassing more than about 200 inhabitants, two churches, a tavern or two and a store or two during the historic period.

....The earliest map showing the hamlet at or near the location of the present day hamlet of Nelson is the Eddy map of 1818. This shows the hamlet of Argos, at or near the site of today's hamlet. The Burr maps of 1827 and 1839 show the crossroads hamlet of Nelson. The 1853 Map of Madison County does not provide a detailed map of the hamlet, but notes a hotel at the northeast corner and dwellings, without owners' names, flanking both sides of the east-west route. The 1859 Gillette Map of Madison County also shows the hotel, in addition to the Methodist Episcopal Church [the subject of this nomination] on its current site east of the four corners and

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State

James's grocery and Covell's store west of the four corners. Other businesses mapped east of the four corners include a shoe shop, a cooper's shop, a blacksmith's shop, and beyond the detail map, a sawmill on Burnel Road. The business directory further lists J. Donaldson, Dealer in General Merchandise; E.G. Hughes, Carpenter and Joiner, and two physicians/surgeons. The number of dwellings in the hamlet roughly matches the stated number in French's Gazetteer for 1860. It should be noted that the 1859 Gillette map appears to have neglected to map properties in the northwest quadrant of the hamlet. The 1853 map shows buildings on those sites, and the existing buildings generally appear to predate 1859. The 1875 Beers Atlas of Madison County is similar to the 1859 Gillette map in density. By 1875, the Free Methodists had a meeting house at the west end of the hamlet and Gaige & Richards had opened a cheese factory on Nelson Road.

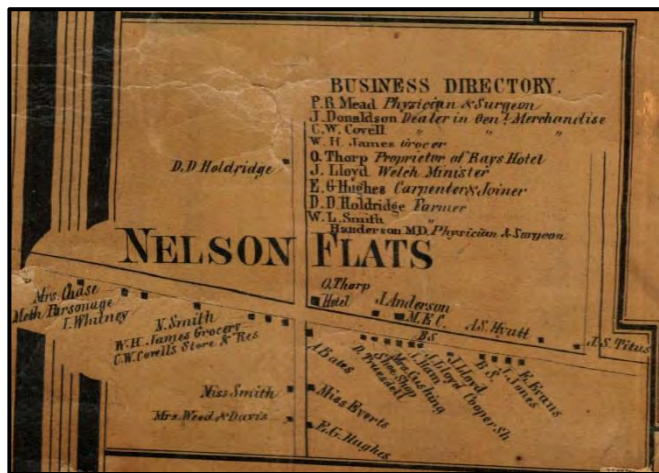


Figure 11. Detail from John E. Gillette, Gillette's Map of Madison Co., New York (Philadelphia: Jno. E. Gillette, 1859).

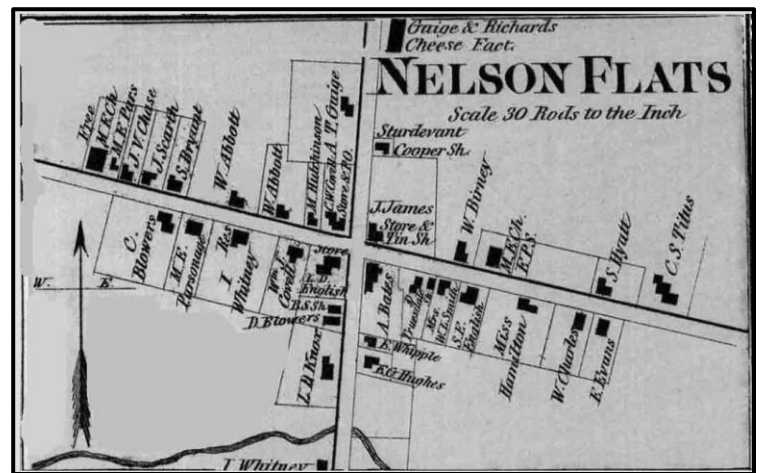


Figure 12. Detail from D. G. Beers, Atlas of Madison County, New York (Philadelphia: Pomeroy, Whitman & Co., 1875).

While businesses like blacksmiths and cooper shops listed in directories served a local clientele, the cheese factory reflected the predominance of dairy farming from the mid-nineteenth century on. As early as 1824, Nelson's land was described as better for grazing than grain growing. Hops also played a significant role in the region in the mid-century, though Nelson's "cold hills" may have been less conducive to this crop than other parts of the county. Within the survey area, there are no hops-related buildings [but] dairying remained an important part of the local economy into the mid-twentieth century. The cheese factory, which passed through several owners, remained in operation until 1950, when it burned. Allison Gage built the factory to manufacture patterns. W.R. Richards converted it to a cheese factory six years later in 1876. In 1890, Edgar Beebe turned it back into a pattern works for a decade. By 1900, Duane Husted operated it as a cheese factory.² In 1943, it employed 35 men on two shifts, but by the time it burned in 1950, it was at about half its production. Some properties within the hamlet and the larger survey area retain buildings and property configurations illustrating dairy farming's prominence from the mid-1800s until recently.....

The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries brought agricultural decline for the entire central New York State area. In the face of decline, the grange tried to improve the lot of farmers nationwide. The local grange hall was opened in 1914, when the local organization purchased [a] building and moved it around the corner....³

Nelson's location on the Great Western Turnpike, designated US Route 20 in the post-World War I era, probably helped this hamlet retain a commercial viability not found in some other communities. According to an undated "History of Argos," the road was macadamized between Morrisville and Cazenovia in 1914-1915. This was replaced with concrete a decade later. The roadway was widened to four lanes passing through the

² According to the 1905 New York State Census, the correct name is Duane Histed.

³ According to New York State Grange Records, the Nelson Grange was organized twice - initially in 1889 and, again, in 1912.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State

hamlet and divided on either side of it in 1948-1949. This last episode considerably altered the feeling of the hamlet. Where earlier pictures show deep setbacks in front of the houses and mature shade trees, the hamlet has a much more exposed appearance today.... Some services like grocers and hotels [have been] replaced by antiques shops. On the western side of the hamlet, businesses housed in later twentieth-century single-story commercial and light industrial buildings create a small strip of development markedly different from the earlier hamlet of houses interspersed with small, locally oriented businesses. This tendency in commercial/industrial development is paralleled by housing development of the past quarter century or so. While the hamlet, which was fairly densely settled by the 1870s, retains virtually all of its historic configuration, some outlying areas, including Erieville and Thomas roads, once running through open farmland, have been subdivided using a suburban tract model (lots vary from approximately one to five acres). These properties appear to be mainly occupied by people working in Cazenovia or...Syracuse, further diminishing the desire for locally available services. The Methodist congregation, which continues to meet in the church east of the main intersection in Nelson, and the historical society are among the last vestiges of community activity within the hamlet.”⁴

Criterion A: Social History and Religion

*First Congregationalist Society in Nelson*⁵

Although European-American settlement in the Nelson area began before 1800, no formal house of worship existed in the hamlet for more than 25 years. However, many of the new residents wanted to reproduce the strong, religiously bound communities where they had been born:

*Nelson early became most exemplary in her zeal to promote the cause of religion, which is, no doubt, the foundation of all that sobriety and conservatism which has ever characterized this people. As early as the year 1800, many of these children of puritanical New England felt the want of a leader to institute an organized band of followers of Christ, to resist the insidious approaches of sin and folly, which was making its way into the new settlement. In the absence of religious service, the Sabbath was fast degenerating into a day of visiting, amusement and recreation.*⁶

On February 15, 1825, a group of men met at the school house in Nelson Flats and decided to incorporate as the First Congregationalist Society in Nelson. Five weeks later, they unanimously agreed to purchase land for a meeting house and pattern the building after the nearby Fenner Baptist Church (built 1821, NR listed 2001). Money was to be raised by subscription – one-quarter cash and three-quarters “good merchantable produce or meat stock” or lumber.⁷

On May 14, 1825, the trustees of the society agreed to buy a site from Luther Smith (10 by 8 rods) and Archibald Bates (2 by 8 rods), paying in “Meeting House Stock.” The deed was signed by Jeremiah Whipple (for the society), Smith, and Bates on November 1, 1825 and filed at the Madison County Clerk’s Office May 3, 1826. Over the course of the year, the meeting house was constructed on a knoll just east of Nelson Four Corners, The trustees accepted the new building on December 9, 1826, and pews were sold on December 14, with any surplus intended to furnish the building or for use by the society. The meeting house was dedicated on January 11, 1827.

⁴ Jessie Ravage, “Comprehensive Historic Resources Survey of the Hamlet of Nelson and Environs” [New York State Council on the Arts/ Preservation League of New York State Report]. Town of Nelson and Erieville-Nelson Heritage Society, 2002.

⁵ Much of the information in this section comes from “A Brief History of the United Methodist Church Building,” a manuscript from the 1833-1983 Sesquicentennial of the Methodist congregation, and from source materials submitted by M. Fay Lyon, Nelson Town Co-Historian and Church Historian.

⁶ Luna M. Hammond, *History of Madison County, State of New York* (Syracuse: Truair, Smith, & Co., 1872), 629.

⁷ Mary Davis Zucco and Mrs. William M. Fraser, “The Records of the First Congregational Church and Society in Nelson Flatts, County of Madison, State of New York, February 1825 – February 1849” [Manuscript, n.d.].

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Madison County, NY

Name of Property

County and State

Universalist preacher, the Rev. Nathaniel Stacy, preached in the building and described its use as a “union church”:

During the year 1826, the inhabitants of Nelson Flats, town of Nelson, Madison County, without distinction of sect, united and built a meeting-house, and finished it off in good style, which they mutually agreed should be free for all denominations, without any other restriction than, that no denomination should make appointments in it to interfere with the regular appointments of another. They got their house completed and ready for occupancy early in the spring of 1827, and in April of that year applied to me to hold a meeting in it. I complied with the request and entered into an engagement to preach with them once a month for a year. This was the first engagement for regular preaching in the house.

A spirit of universal liberality seemed to prevail; and the inhabitants, without distinction of sectarian opinion, generally turned out to meeting and filled the house; and a spirit of inquiry was soon awakened...⁸

The trustees decided to buy a bell for the meeting house from Elias Brush – exchanged for “one unsold pew at thirty-five dollars” – on September 5, 1828, but the purchase was delayed until 1833, when a 700 pound bell from L. Aspinwall of Albany was installed, along with a yoke and ringing mechanism.

As other denominations formed congregations in Nelson, use of the First Congregational Church was shared with these groups. However, by the late 1840s, conflict between denominational members grew, and the structure fell into disrepair and disuse – so much so that it does not appear as a religious building in Gurdon Evans’s 1853 *Topographical Map of Madison County, New York*. Minutes of a Trustees’ Meeting in 1848 show that the church was offered for sale at that time, but no proposals were received. The trustees created a committee to approach local Methodists – who had organized in 1833 and were worshipping in another church – but nothing happened for another five years.

On February 25, 1853, the remaining trustees and stockholders petitioned the county judge for permission to sell the building:

Your petitioners, inhabitants of the Town of Nelson in said County & Stockholders of a certain religious Society in said Town, known & designated by its corporate name as the “First Congregational Society of Nelson” respectfully represent that the said Society is at present composed of Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Universalists, and Congregationalists. That owing to disagreement of religious views and forms of worship among themselves, and other causes the meeting house belonging to said Society has been allowed to run into dilapidation and for many years there has been a suspension of the Stated preaching of the gospel in it, and the said Church edifice is now entirely unused for any religious purposes whatever. Your petitioners believing that should said Meeting House and the land on which it stands be offered for sale, it would be purchased by some one of the denominations above referred to with a view to its exclusive use by such denomination, therefore respectfully petition that by an order of Court the present Board of Trustees of said Society consisting of Nathaniel Chase, Abel Bennett, and John S. Titus be authorized pursuant to reasonable notice to be specified in such order, to sell the said Meeting House and the land on which it stands belonging to said Society, and to divide the proceeds of such sale, after paying all debts against the same, among the present Stockholders thereof, according to their respective interests....⁹

⁸ Nathaniel Stacy, *Memoirs of the Life of Nathaniel Stacy, Preacher of the Gospel of Universal Grace* (Columbus, PA: Abner Vedder, 1850), 339-340.

⁹ First Congregational Society of Nelson, “Petition to County Judge for order to sell Meeting House & Lot on which it stands” (February 25, 1853, filed March 4, 1877), Madison County, New York, Madison County Clerk’s Office, Wampsville, NY.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

The trustees, Luther Smith (as the original grantor), and twenty-three stockholders (including two women) signed the petition, which was granted March 4th by the Hon. Sidney T. Holmes.

In less than two weeks, after posting notice of the intended sale in “at least six different public & conspicuous places” around Nelson, the trustees sold the meeting house at public auction. The high bidder was the First Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Nelson for \$445. The deed was signed on April 13, 1853.¹⁰

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Two months later, on May 10, 1855, Joseph C. Smith of Nelson was contracted to repair and reconstruct the church for Methodist worship for \$1,050.¹¹ The contract with Smith lays out a long list of tasks and is accompanied by a list of estimates. First, a sluice in front of the building was to be covered with cedar timber over hemlock planks to safely divert water and allow session members to cross to the church. Second, the church was to be moved onto a new basement, which would hold two classrooms and a conference room. Third, the pulpit was moved from front to rear; side and rear galleries taken down; a new gallery added to the front; pews turned to face the pulpit; and a new altar added to the sanctuary. This reoriented the direction of prayer to the north. Fourth, general repairs attended to the deterioration of the building; these included plastering walls, papering, carpeting, trimmings, blinds, new stoves, addition of stove pipe and lanterns, and more. The basement (mason work, moving the church, and interior finishing) was the largest expense – seemingly over \$300 when the tasks are broken down. Other large expenses included painting (outside, inside, and blinds) for \$120 and inside joiner work for \$110.

It is not clear from the contract if the building already sat on a full foundation or if one were added, since the payment terms specified that one half the sum would be paid when the church was “placed and permanently fixed upon a new basement” and the remainder when the rest of the work was finished. It is also unclear if the church was moved back from the road to sit more prominently on its knoll, just that Smith would “move and repair” the church. The simple Greek Revival brackets and cornerboards are thought to date to Smith’s renovation – but may be later. In the estimates accompanying the contract, there is also a reference to repairing the belfry but this belfry is not the present spire. The building was rededicated as a Methodist Church on September 9, 1853.

The Methodist congregation thrived during the 1850s. Madison County was an active center for abolition, and renowned abolitionist Gerrit Smith of Peterboro lived about eight miles northeast of Nelson. One church member, Federal Dana, was a “trustworthy agent” of Smith and social activist. In 1838, he signed an antislavery petition in Fenner; in 1839, he took fugitive Harriet Powell to Cape Vincent, where she crossed to Ontario; in 1840, he was a delegate to the National Anti-slavery Nominating Convention; and in 1856, he served on the Kansas County Committee, which supported the Free Soil movement.¹² Another member was William Anderson, a fugitive slave from Maryland who farmed near Dana’s home. William’s brother had successfully escaped to Worcester, MA, in 1846, and William tried to follow him two years later. He was recaptured but fled again, this time successfully – first to Philadelphia, and then to Madison County. He participated in the 1850 Cazenovia Fugitive Slave Law Convention organized by Gerrit Smith and Frederick Douglass to protest the proposed Fugitive Slave Law; more than 2000 people attended, 50 of them fugitives like Anderson.¹³

¹⁰ Deed of Sale from Trustees of the First Congregational Society of Nelson to First Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Nelson, April 13, 1853 (filed July 6, 1877), Madison County, New York, *liber* 140, page 291, Madison County Clerk’s Office, Wampsville, NY.

¹¹ Draft Agreement between Joseph C. Smith of Nelson and the Trustees of the First Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Nelson, May 10, 1855 [Manuscript].

¹² “Federal Dana Commemorative Site,” *Madison County Freedom Trail Guide* [brochure] (Wampsville, NY: Madison County Freedom Trail Commission, n.d.)

¹³ “William Anderson Commemorative Site,” *Madison County Freedom Trail Guide*.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

In 1877, the church was remodeled once again, this time adding a 25-foot two-story extension to the rear of the sanctuary and a full spire. The work was done by carpenter Orrin P. Ferry of New Woodstock, who had been born in Nelson.¹⁴ The church vacated its building in May and moved to the small chapel where the congregation had worshipped before 1853.¹⁵

The renovation was quite extensive, but apparently even more changes had been planned – it seems that there were plans to put the church on a new lot. A newspaper story commented that, “They have let down the old church and will put up twenty-six feet on back of it; have given up moving it across the road.”¹⁶ The first floor of the addition became a “session room” for the congregation, and the second floor, a “Ladies’ Parlor.” (Apparently this extra space allowed the congregation to vacate the basement.) An August newspaper story noted that, “The outside is nearly covered, and the skeleton of a tower looming up, crowns the whole.”¹⁷ The multi-stage steeple and projecting two-story vestibule gave the church its present-day appearance and made it the tallest and most visible building in the hamlet.

The interior of the church also changed significantly. The “plain style” of early to mid-nineteenth-century Protestant worship was abandoned for more ornate decoration and woodwork, typical of the late-nineteenth century Methodist church. Henry C. Allewelt of Syracuse added frescos in the sanctuary, and a ‘Mr. Dodge of Cazenovia’ did the painting.¹⁸ Late in October, another newspaper article detailed the current state of construction:

*Work on the M. E. Church is progressing favorably. The outside work has been completed long since, and the inside is well filled with scaffolding for the convenience of the workmen. The frescoing, some of it completed, and some of it in progress, shows already the beauties that will greet the eye when the edifice is completed. The finished wainscoting, and the display of seat frames, give evidence that the wood work will correspond with the other inside work, already mentioned. The entrance to the church will be by steps from the outside, thus discarding the advantage in winter afforded by the old church of having steps under cover. A small gallery takes the place of the old spacious galleries that occupied the old church of former days. In the rear is a conference room for social gatherings of various kinds. The church and society are to be congratulated on the beauty and convenience of the edifice they hope soon to enjoy.*¹⁹

Stained glass windows seem also to have been installed at this time, with a slight arch that probably mandated the addition of the Romanesque-style segmental arches to the exterior trim.²⁰ These windows strongly resemble those on nearby Fenner Baptist Church (NR listed, 01NR01828) which was also remodeled in 1877 (and had been the original model for the 1826 meeting house) and on the nearby Methodist Episcopal Church in Erieville.

The church was rededicated on November 22, 1877, with a full day of sermons and fundraising. A morning

¹⁴ “New Woodstock,” *Cazenovia Republican*, March 29, 1877, 3.

¹⁵ “Nelson Flats,” *Cazenovia Republican*, May 17, 1877, 3; “Churches in the Town,” *A Bicentennial Tribute* (Issue 2) (Town of Nelson, 2007).

¹⁶ “Nelson Center,” *Cazenovia Republican*, May 17, 1877, 3.

¹⁷ “Nelson Flats,” *Cazenovia Republican*, August 2, 1877, 3. This “covering” of the building opens the possibility that all the trim dates to 1877.

¹⁸ “Nelson Flats,” *Cazenovia Republican*, October 4, 1877, 3.

¹⁹ “Nelson Flats,” *Cazenovia Republican*, October 18, 1877, 3.

²⁰ Don Henry of Sullivan Studios in Chittenango, NY, thinks that these “stencil” or grisaille windows may have been made in Utica where, over the course of the nineteenth century, at least 13 glass studios are listed in city directories. Three are listed in the 1877 Utica Directory: Davis’s Utica Stained Glass Works, George R. Duckett, and Herbert W. Lewis. Davis advertised in at least one Methodist publication in the 1890s. However, the work of none of these firms has been identified.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State

sermon was preached by the Rev. E. C. Curtis of Syracuse University, followed by a subscription drive: “Mr. Curtiss [sic] was in pleasant humor, and was very felicitous in his remarks, jokes, and witticisms, encouraging the subscriptions.” More than one thousand dollars was raised, cancelling most of the debt. In the evening, the Rev. William R. Cobb spoke about Christ and raised another one hundred dollars to pay surplus expenses. Once the money was raised, the building was “dedicated to the worship of God, according to the forms of the Church.”²¹

The successful completion of its building program seems to have reinvigorated the Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church. At Christmas, the Sunday school gave a festival; Santa Claus made an appearance “with a package of books, just brought from the city, for distribution as prizes among the scholars”; and a student scholar outwitted the adults by quoting Bible verses to ensure that he and the other children ate first.²² In early 1878, there were newspaper reports of “religious meetings” and temperance lectures at the church.²³ Given that the Fenner Baptist Church reconstruction was driven by a local revival, it could be that similar concerns about alcohol and faith similarly motivated the Methodists of Nelson to rebuild and improve their social spaces.



Figure 13. Grange Sunday at Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church. (Erieville-Nelson Heritage Society)

Subsequently, the Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church served as a meeting place for the Nelson Grange, the Dairyman’s League, and the Masons. A large shed behind the building sheltered members’ carriages and wagons.

In 1913, the parsonage (which had been in the hamlet) moved to Erieville and one pastor served the two Methodist Churches in Erieville and Nelson. In 1955, the basement was once again reopened, and a dining room, kitchen, and new entrance added, along with a new stair to the second floor of the addition. In 1964, a new parsonage was built next to the Nelson church and the pastor moved back to Nelson (while continuing to serve both congregations.) In 1968, the Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church merged with

the Evangelical United Brethren Church, leading to its current name as the Nelson United Methodist Church. In 1993, the parish expanded to include three churches – Cazenovia, Erieville, and Nelson – and, in 2003, Erieville left the parish (and closed in 2016). In 2009, the 1964 parsonage was sold and, the following year, the church bought additional land at the back for parking and drilled a new well.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church began as a “union church” – owned by the local Congregationalist society but available to all denominations in the area and open to a variety of itinerant preachers. As such, it avoided design elements that would privilege one denomination over another or interfere with another denomination’s form of worship. In practice, this meant that the design and decoration of the 1827 meeting house must have been extremely simple. The building remains a simple rectangle, with its gable end facing south to the Cherry Valley Turnpike. Two outer doors appear to have led into separate vestibules for men and women, with the two “cross and bible doors” (now transplanted to the session room entrance) leading into the sanctuary. Between the doors was a high pulpit, probably with a large window above.²⁴ Galleries on the sides and rear (north) were accessed by stairs and created a two-tiered space, with benches or box pews on the ground

²¹ “Nelson Flats,” *Cazenovia Republican*, November 29, 1877, 3.

²² “Nelson Flats,” *Cazenovia Republican*, December 27, 1877, 3.

²³ “Nelson Flats,” *Cazenovia Republican*, February 14, 1878, 3; “Madison County Lodge I.O. of G.T.,” *Cazenovia Republican*, March 28, 1878, 3.

²⁴ Sally E. Svenson, *Adirondack Churches: A History of Design and Building* (Keeseville, NY: Adirondack Architectural Heritage, 2006), 36.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State

floor. There must have been some sort of belfry to hold the Aspinwall bell, but there was no front pavilion or tall spire. The side windows were probably plain glass, either tall (as they are now) or short and divided by the galleries.

Given that most of the early settlers of Nelson came from Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, the design of the hamlet's Congregational meeting house was unsurprising. Meeting house style grew out of seventeenth-century New England religious traditions established by the Puritans, who rejected the forms of the Anglican "established church" and focused on the "Proclamation and Enforcement of God's Word, as revealed in Scripture." Thus the pulpit became the center of the worship space – not an altar – and long sermons took up most of the service. Anything that reduced the congregation's ability to focus on the Word of God was distracting, unnecessary, and possibly immoral. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Puritanism had evolved into Congregationalism and begun to moderate its theology. Strictures eased further after the Revolution, and meeting houses became more a bit more "church-like," their exteriors incorporating some classical elements from the prevailing Federal style.²⁵

Rural construction practices also ensured that most Protestant churches looked similar. At the second meeting of the First Congregational Church and Society in Nelson Flatts [sic], the trustees resolved "that the house shall be similar to that in Fenner near Mr. Cooks..."²⁶ (The Fenner Baptist Church, built five years before, is thought to have incorporated aspects of the Federal style popularized by Asher Benjamin in his 1797 *Country Builder's Assistant*.)²⁷ As happened throughout rural New York,

*The building committee's instruction to replicate a nearby church building was not an architectural escape. Before it became common practice to work with plans drawn by an architect, contracts often made reference to a nearby structure as a model, a method of planning rooted in medieval building agreements. Builders were expected to have the necessary skills to determine correct proportions and the requisite aesthetic sensibility to choose among modes of detailing – an expectation generally met.*²⁸

By the middle of the century, church design was changing. Greek Revival design had become the architectural norm, and denominational styles emerged, especially among Methodists, Episcopalians, and Catholics. In 1853, when the Nelson Methodist congregation bought the building from the First Congregationalist Society, it changed the old meeting house to meet Methodist standards. The sanctuary and pulpit were reoriented to the north; an altar added; the side galleries removed; and a basement constructed with a conference room and two classrooms for study of the Bible. The decoration of the main sanctuary remained relatively simple; an estimate attached to Joseph C. Smith's contract notes inside joiner work and carpets but no stained glass windows or elaborate painting. But the denomination as a whole was moving away from Wesley's rule that chapels be "built plain and decent" and that congregations enforce gender segregation.

*In 1852 the Methodist requirement [for gender segregation] was dropped, at least among northern members of the denomination, but the tradition persisted to some degree in practice and in architectural expression, often by the provision of two separate entryways, each leading to a side aisle, and a central rail dividing benches or pews in the middle of the church.*²⁹

Steeple were still considered wasteful – though bells were now more accepted than at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But two features were considered essential – dedicated classrooms and a separate space away from the sanctuary for prayer meetings and social gatherings. Many rural Methodist churches lacked

²⁵ Svenson, 32-34.

²⁶ Zucco and Fraser.

²⁷ William E. Krattinger, *Fenner Baptist Church National Register Nomination*, 2001.

²⁸ Svenson, 53.

²⁹ Svenson, 56.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State

permanent preachers and depended on itinerants. These itinerants (like the Rev. Nathaniel Stacy) cultivated church members who they felt could become able preachers or lay leaders on their own.³⁰ As a result, congregations became self-reliant and maintained their cohesion by meeting regularly for education, debate, mutual prayer, and fun. But these activities required additional space within the church. Hence, the reconstruction of the basement.

Raised basements were actually a distinctively Methodist building element in the denomination's rural churches. The idea of stacking the sanctuary above a ground floor makes sense in cities where land prices are high, but, as Sally Svenson notes for Adirondack churches:

...the consistent pattern of tall sanctuary above church-related support space at ground level appears to have been a peculiarly Methodist vernacular adaptation in rural settings. The motivation for this practice was probably a combination of the perceived economies in labor costs and materials when building in a compact form, lower heating expense, and a desire to be in keeping with current Methodist conventions. The arrangement, which was tantamount to three stories in many buildings [due to the use of galleries], combined with the denominational penchant for plainness, accentuated the barn-like character of these churches when set in an open landscape.³¹

Most of these “two-story churches” look more like the Nelson Welsh Congregational Church (built 1876, NR listed, 1993); it is built into a hillside so that the sides and back of the building open onto ground level. However, the style was common throughout rural New York State from the 1830s to the 1870s; at least one other church (in Clintonville) was modified by setting it on a new foundation with a ground floor.³² The style ebbed by the 1880s, due to concerns about fire, ventilation, and access by elderly church members. Existing “two-story” churches began to be modified with new elevated lobbies or the removal of the intervening floor. Neither option was practical for the Nelson congregation in 1877, when they again remodeled their church, so they added a rear addition with space for education and sociability in a new session room and “Ladies’ Parlor.” Then, or somewhat later, they filled in the basement.

The 1877 work done by Orrin P. Ferry also added a projecting pavilion with a single entrance at the front of the church; a new spire; stained glass windows; new pews; and frescos. Women and men now entered the building together and sat together; the tower signaled the importance of the church within the hamlet; and the windows, pews, and frescos made the church less “plain” (but still “decent”) and more clearly dedicated to worship and the Word of God. Methodist publications in this period, like the *Minutes of the Northern New York Conference*, encouraged the decoration of churches and contained advertisements from stained-glass artists and interior decorators. Henry C. Allewelt, who was identified as painting the Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church frescos in the 1877 *Cazenovia Republican*, was advertising in the *Minutes* fifteen years later, along with Charles P. Davis’ Sons, of the Utica Stained Glass Works (a possible candidate for the windows.)³³

Interestingly, the exterior woodwork, with the pervasive use of segmented arches over the windows and doors, was also updated – or completely replaced. What appears to have been a mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival building now shows elements of Romanesque Revival architecture. The Fenner Baptist Church – the original model for the Nelson Congregationalist meeting house – was also remodeled in 1877 and uses similar woodwork. It too added a tower, but in the Second Empire style. Otherwise, the two nearby churches show strong similarities, inside and out.

³⁰ Stacy, 340. Stacy records the conversion of a skeptical young man from zealous opposition to doctrinal advocacy and activity within the Nelson congregation; his early account reflects common practice among rural Protestant churches in New York State.

³¹ Svenson, 58.

³² Svenson, 60.

³³ Earlier copies of the *Minutes* were not available to check if he advertised in 1877.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State



Figure 14. Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church, early twentieth century. (Church Historian M. Fay Lyon)
NOTE: Wagon sheds behind church.

Conclusion

The Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church (now, Nelson United Methodist Church) remains an important part of the hamlet of Nelson, Madison County, New York. It achieved its current appearance in 1877 and retains high integrity. Although the church's numbers have dwindled, it still serves as a place of worship and a gathering place for the residents of Nelson and beyond. It adds to the religious life of its congregation; its Roast Beef Suppers are locally famous; and its position as the largest public building in the hamlet helps define the community along US Route 20. In addition, its history as a Congregational meeting house and "union church" reflects the first fifty years of settlement in Madison County, and its transformation into a Methodist Church (and subsequent renovation) reflects doctrinal elements of the denomination and evolving religious architecture and worship practices.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Madison County, NY

County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Allen, Leonard L. *History of New York State Grange*. Watertown, NY: Hungerford-Holbrook Co., 1934.

Beers, D. G. *Atlas of Madison County, New York*. Philadelphia: Pomeroy, Whitman & Co., 1875.

"A Brief History of the United Methodist Church Building" [manuscript from the 1833-1983 Sesquicentennial of the Nelson Methodist Episcopal Methodist congregation]. [Obtained from Church Historian M. Fay Lyon.]

"Churches in the Town." A Bicentennial Tribute (Issue 2). Town of Nelson, 2007. [Available from <http://erieville-nelson.dyndns.org/>]

Deed of Sale from Trustees of the First Congregational Society of Nelson to First Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Nelson, April 13, 1853 (filed July 6, 1877). Madison County, New York, liber 140, page 291, Madison County Clerk's Office, Wampsville, NY.

Draft Agreement between Joseph C. Smith of Nelson and the Trustees of the First Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Nelson, May 10, 1855. [Manuscript]. [Obtained from Church Historian M. Fay Lyon.]

Evans, Gurdon. *Topographical Map of Madison County, New York*. Philadelphia: Anthony D. Byles, 1853.

First Congregational Society of Nelson. "Petition to County Judge for order to sell Meeting House & Lot on which it stands" (February 25, 1853, filed March 4, 1877). Madison County, New York, Madison County Clerk's Office, Wampsville, NY.

Gillette, John E. *Gillette's Map of Madison Co., New York*. Philadelphia: Jno. E. Gillette, 1859.

Hammond, Luna M. *History of Madison County, State of New York*. Syracuse: Truair, Smith, & Co., 1872.

Krattinger, William E. *Fenner Baptist Church* [National Register Nomination, 01NR01828]. Waterford, NY: NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, 2001. [Available through CRIS (NYS Cultural Resource Information System) at <http://nysparks.com/shpo/online-tools/>]

Madison County Freedom Trail Guide [brochure]. Wampsville, NY: Madison County Freedom Trail Commission, n.d.

Minutes of the Twenty-first Session, Northern New York Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church. New York: [The Conference] 1893.

New York State Census, 1905.

Ravage, Jessie. "Comprehensive Historic Resources Survey of the Hamlet of Nelson and Environs" [New York State Council on the Arts/ Preservation League of New York State Report]. Town of Nelson and Erieville-Nelson Heritage Society, 2002.

Stacy, Nathaniel. *Memoirs of the Life of Nathaniel Stacy, Preacher of the Gospel of Universal Grace*. Columbus, PA: Abner Vedder, 1850.

Svenson, Sally E. *Adirondack Churches: A History of Design and Building*. Keeseville, NY: Adirondack Architectural Heritage, 2006.

Trustees' Meeting Minutes, 1848. [Information obtained from Church Historian M. Fay Lyon.]

Utica, New York, City Directory, 1877. [Available online from Ancestry. com]

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

Zucco, Mary Davis, and Mrs. William M. Fraser. "The Records of the First Congregational Church and Society in Nelson Flatts, County of Madison, State of New York, February 1825 – February 1849" [Manuscript, n.d.]. [Obtained from Church Historian M. Fay Lyon.]

Newspapers

Cazenovia Republican

Sources

Erieville-Nelson Heritage Society.

Don Henry, Stained Glass Restorator, Sullivan Studios, Chittenango, NY.

M. Fay Lyon, Nelson Town Co-Historian and Nelson United Methodist Church Historian, Nelson NY.

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): _____

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .42
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18N 436761E 4751928N
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

2
Zone Easting Northing

4
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

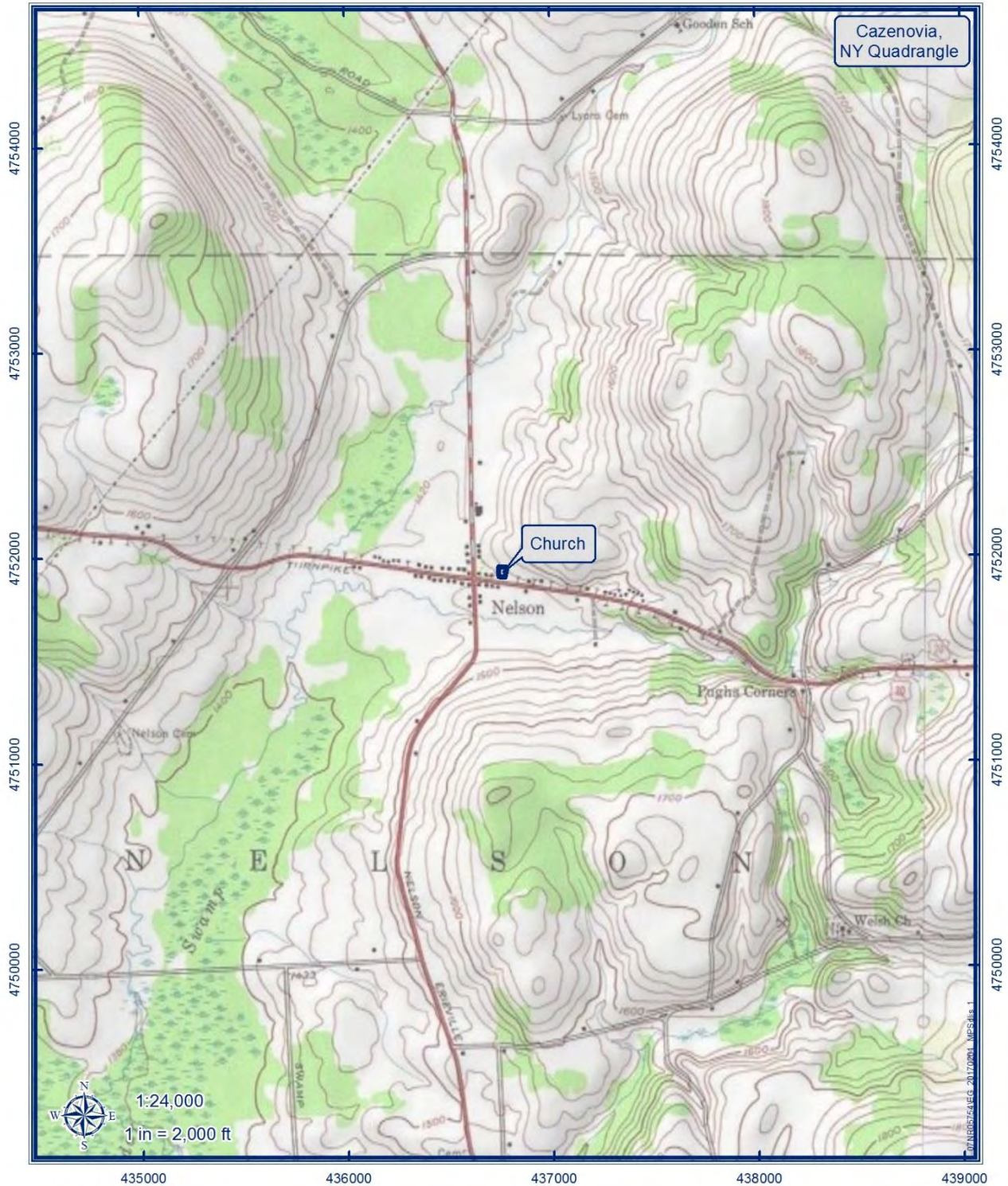
The boundary encompasses most of the lot currently associated with the nominated building and historically associated with the building. It excludes a rectory built for the church in 1964 and sold in 2009, because the rectory is outside the period of significance, 1826-1877. The current lot also excludes a small strip of land at the back of the historic lot acquired in 2010 for parking.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Nelson, Madison Co., NY

3333 US Route 20 East
Cazenovia, NY 13035



Cazenovia,
NY Quadrangle

Church

Nelson

Pughs Corners

Weish Ch.

1:24,000
1 in = 2,000 ft

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

0 750 1,500 3,000 Feet



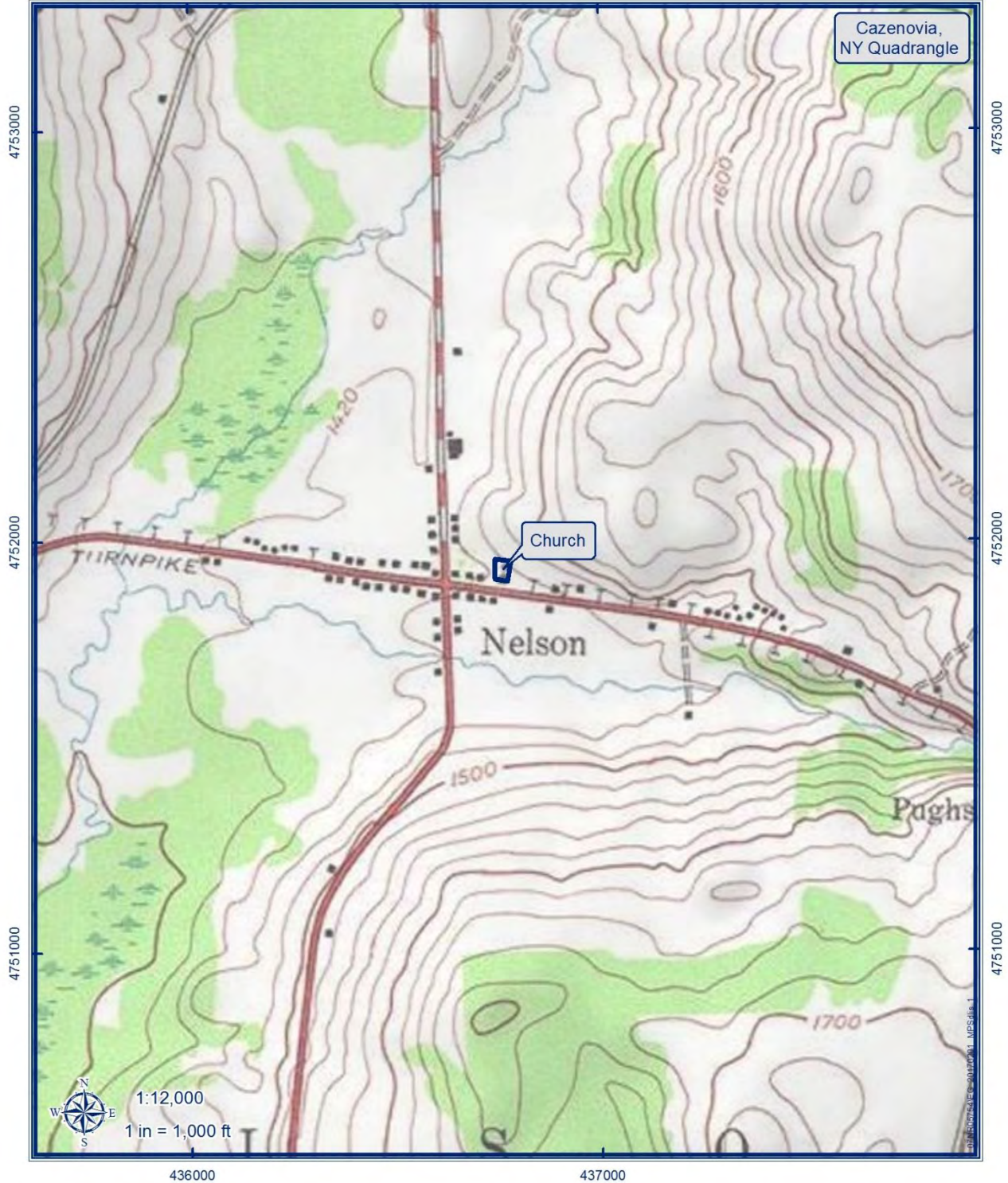
Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Nelson, Madison Co., NY

3333 US Route 20 East
Cazenovia, NY 13035



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



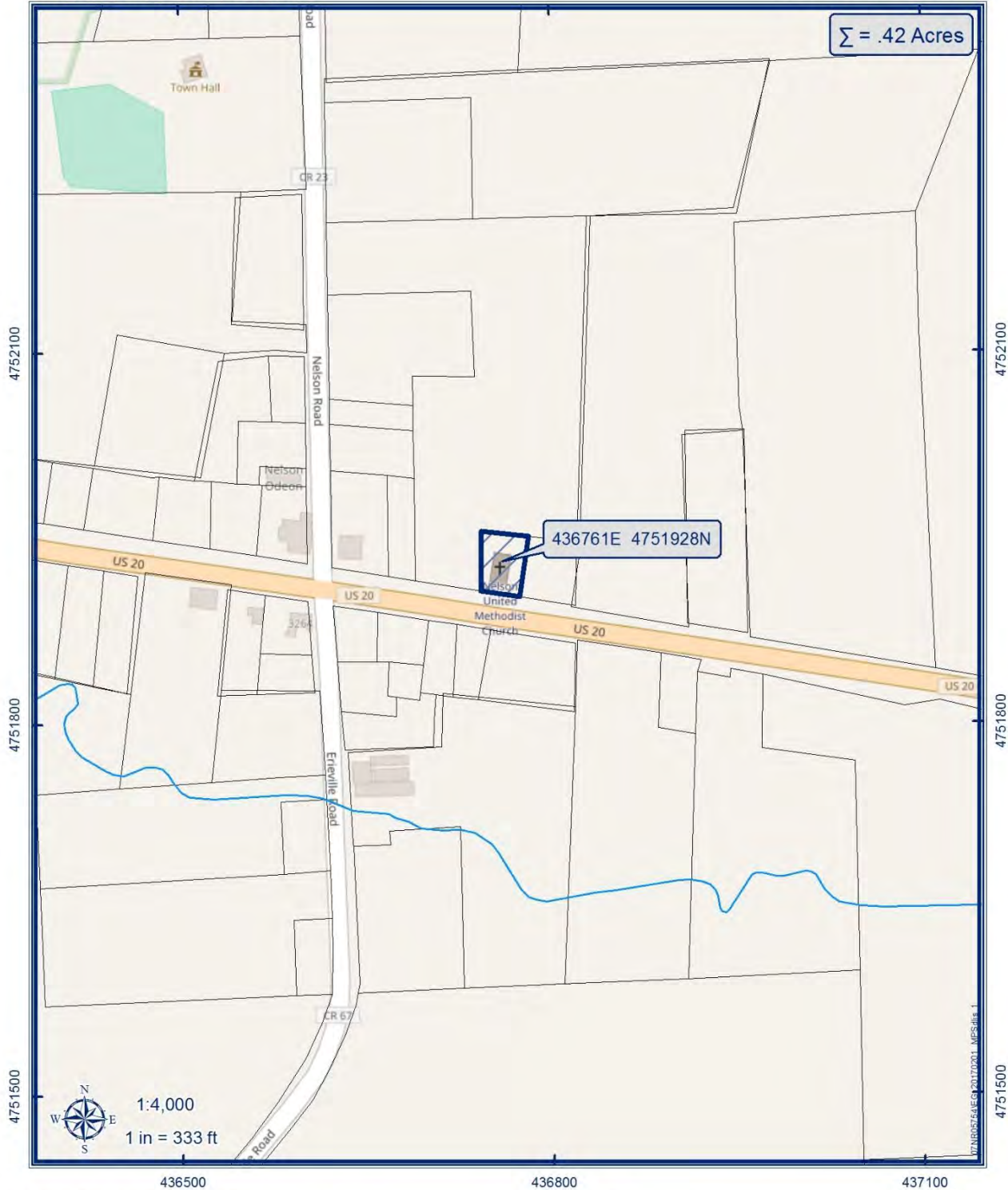
Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Nelson, Madison Co., NY

3333 US Route 20 East
Cazenovia, NY 13035



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



Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Nelson, Madison Co., NY

3333 US Route 20 East
Cazenovia, NY 13035



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



Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Madison County, NY
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Emilie W. Gould (Historic Preservation Program Analyst) from information provided by Anthony Opalka, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation, and M. Fay Lyon, Nelson Town Co-Historian and Nelson United Methodist Church Historian, Nelson NY.

organization NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation date December 28, 2016

street & number PO Box 189 telephone 518-268-2201

city or town Waterford state NY state NY

e-mail Emilie.Gould@parks.ny.gov

Photographs:

Name of Property: Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church (now, Nelson United Methodist Church)

City or Vicinity: Nelson

County: Madison

State: NY

Photographer: Emilie W. Gould

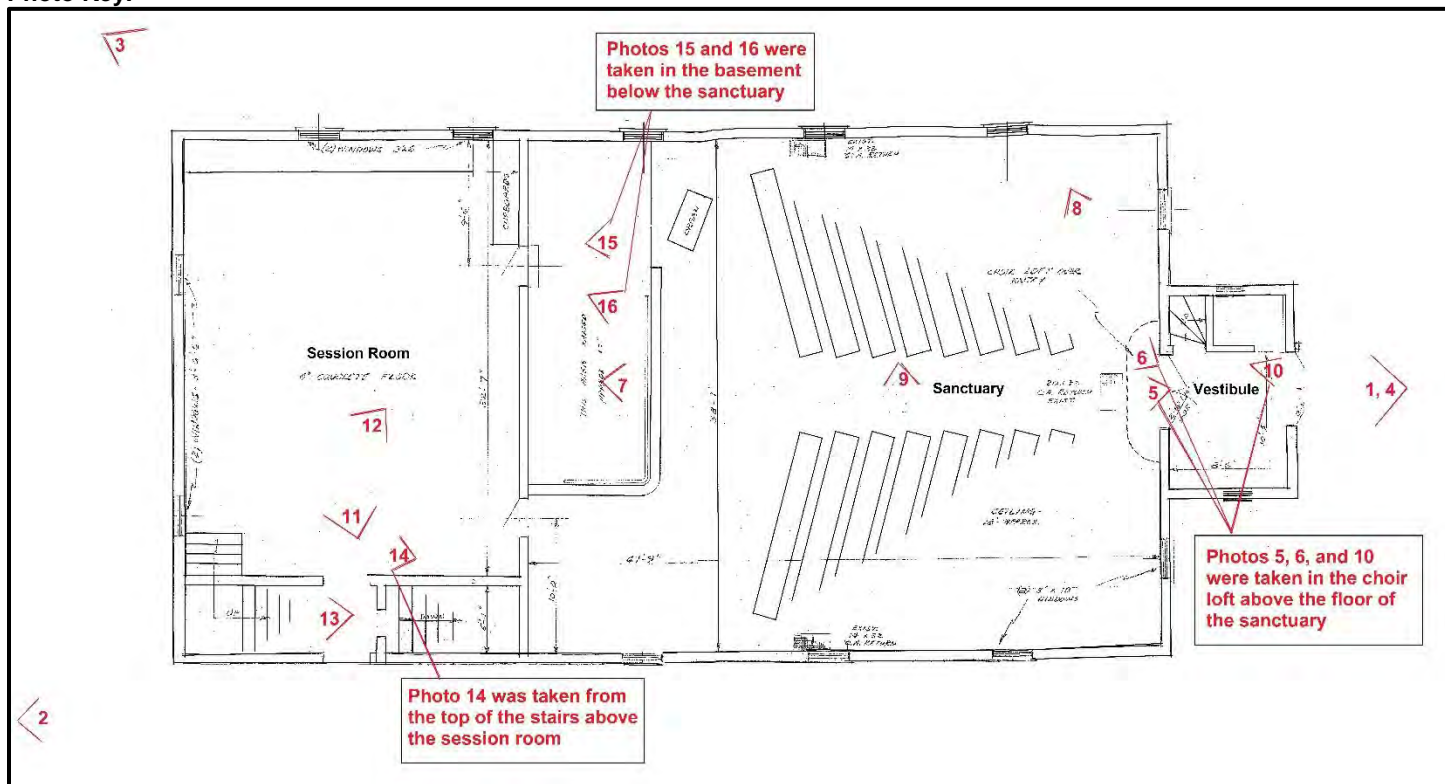
Date Photographed: December 12, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 16. Façade, facing south, from Route 20.
- 2 of 16. North and west elevations.
- 3 of 16. East elevation.
- 4 of 16. Detail, entrance on façade, facing south.
- 5 of 16. Sanctuary, from choir loft, facing north.
- 6 of 16. Sanctuary, east side, from choir loft.
- 7 of 16. Choir loft, from altar platform, facing south.
- 8 of 16. Choir loft, from east side of sanctuary.
- 9 of 16. Sanctuary pews.
- 10 of 16. Opalescent glass windows, choir loft.
- 11 of 16. Session room, from west entrance, first floor, rear addition.
- 12 of 16. Session room with door from west entrance and stair to second floor.
- 13 of 16. "Cross and bible" door in west entrance.
- 14 of 16. Classrooms, second floor, rear addition.
- 15 of 16. Kitchen, basement level below sanctuary, facing south.
- 16 of 16. Dining room, basement level below sanctuary, facing south.

Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of Property
Photo Key:

Madison County, NY
County and State



Property Owner: _____

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state NY zip code _____

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.









3333

Nelson United
Methodist Church
Sunday School 11:15-am
Worship Service 11:15-am

2





GLORY
TO
GOD
IN THE
HIGHEST

WATCH
PREPARE
REJOICE
BEHOLD







FIRE
EXIT
↓





36

13





VE
S
ONLY
DEC
Revere Series
Group

The Nelson Sunday School Visits the Warden's Rest Animal Shelter

Jay Davies
Athlete R.W.
"Woman of the Century"



GAZ CARES
STUDENT







God Answers Prayer



A white poster with text, possibly a list or schedule, mounted on the wall.





HUSKY
DRAWSTRING
OUTDOOR & YARD
BAGS & TUBS
70
GALLON
34 GALLON



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: Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 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.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



24 February 2017

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

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

Lincoln Park, Albany County
Bleecker Stadium and Swinburn Park, Albany County
Dollar Island Camp, Hamilton County
Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church, Madison County

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