

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 Old Bethel Cemetery

other names/site number _____

name of related multiple property listing NA

Location

street & number Christian & Woodfield Avenues

☐ not for publication

city or town Stony Brook

☐ vicinity

state NY code NY county Suffolk code 103 zip code 11733

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

Roger Daniel Mally
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/21/17
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
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:

X 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:)

Kevin Oberndorff
Signature of the Keeper

11/9/17
Date of Action

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Name of Property

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY / Cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY / Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A

walls:

roof:

other:

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Narrative Description

(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 Old Bethel Cemetery is located at the northwest corner of Christian and Woodfield Avenues on the eastern edge of the hamlet of Stony Brook, near the hamlet of Setauket, within the Town of Brookhaven in Suffolk County. Located on east central Long Island, Brookhaven is the only town in Suffolk County that extends from the North Shore to the South Shore. Stony Brook and Setauket are situated on the North Shore on the northwestern edge of the town. Due to its geographical and political interconnectedness, this region, which is framed by Port Jefferson Harbor and the Smithtown Bay and includes Stony Brook, the Setaukets, Old Field, and Poquott, is often referred to as the Three Villages. The relatively low-lying, coastal land features a series of peninsulas and harbors, natural creeks, and wetlands. Particularly north of 25A, the main east-west route along the North Shore, the land in the Setaukets has been developed, primarily over the past hundred years, into upscale suburban residential developments with winding, tree-lined roads. Christian Avenue runs northeast from Stony Brook's village center through a predominantly residential area and bends north just before it reaches Old Bethel Cemetery. A historically African- and Native-American community, known locally as Bethel Christian Avenue, is located approximately three-quarters of a mile past the cemetery, near the end of Christian Avenue.

The cemetery occupies a roughly rectangular .22-acre parcel framed by Woodfield Road to the south and Christian Avenue to the east. A narrow right-of-way with several mature trees abuts the road, extending to the double-rail contemporary wooden fence that runs along the southern and eastern boundaries of the cemetery. The eastern edge of the cemetery is bordered by a fence erected by the neighboring property owner, while the northern edge of the cemetery adjoins a brushy, wooded area. A break in the fence provides access to the cemetery on Christian Avenue. At the recent request of descendants, the Town of Brookhaven has installed signage for the cemetery.

Narrative Description

Angled along Christian Avenue, Old Bethel Cemetery's parcel runs approximately northeast-southwest rather than directly north-south. The layout of the extant stones within the cemetery aligns with the layout of the cemetery. Rows of stones run roughly east-west, but at a slight angle to accommodate for and best use the available land in the parcel. The land is generally flat and grassy, and a small number of relatively young small trees and shrubs stand within the cemetery boundaries.

While a church building did stand on this parcel from ca. 1848 – 1874, no clear evidence of this building remains extant. A plan of the cemetery drawn during the late twentieth century (included in the appendix to this document) indicates the presence of a foundation at the site. It is unclear whether remains were visible and extant at that time, or whether it is drawn into the map to note the known location of the former church. The area marked on the plan remains open. No testing has been completed to confirm this location, or whether archaeological evidence of the church remains.

It is unclear how many individuals are buried in the cemetery, as many of the earliest markers have not survived. Cemetery rosters from the early twentieth century record approximately 34 marked, surviving stones.

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Twenty-six distinguishable stones remain today, but many are illegible due to excessive cracking or wear. (See appendix for these early twentieth-century rosters). The headstones at Old Bethel Cemetery are generally modest marble or granite markers, most of which are rectangular or arched. Most of the stones simply include the name of the deceased and no decoration or minimal decoration. For example, Pierro and Eunice Young's headstone is notable for its delicate carved upper border featuring a central flower and leaf or fern design. More often, stones feature a raised or inset section around the name of the deceased as the only form of decoration. While they are not extravagant, the stones are substantial and reflect the means of Stony Brook's free black community, particularly its community leaders, during the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The largest stone, erected for the Tobias family, may be among the last to be installed. It is a large rectangular stone on which the grandchildren have inscribed the names of their grandparents and eight of their children; the death dates of only three of the eight are inscribed on the stone.

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

Ethnic History

Period of Significance

ca. 1848 – 1934

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

African-American and Native American

Architect/Builder

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the cemetery spans from its establishment ca. 1848 through the last burial in 1934.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

While the nominated property is a cemetery, it is also one of the few remaining, intact sites associated with the nineteenth century history of African- and Native-Americans in Stony Brook.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Old Bethel Cemetery, an African and Native American cemetery established in 1848, is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of social and ethnic history for its association with the early efforts of the African and Native American community in Setauket to establish its own institutions. By the early nineteenth century, a vibrant community of free and enslaved black and mixed race individuals and families had developed in the Three Villages area on the northern side of the Town of Brookhaven. Working as artisans, farmers, tradesmen, and laborers, they played an active role in the local economy, participated in the civic duties required of freeholders, and attended religious services. While enslaved Africans typically attended the churches of their owners and were buried on their land, gradual manumission during the early nineteenth century allowed individual African and Native Americans more freedom to worship and bury their dead as they wished. To help accommodate the community of color, the Town of Brookhaven established a separate "negro burying ground," Laurel Hill Cemetery, in 1815. However, the community was more interested in developing its own churches and cemeteries and established an AME congregation with members from Setauket and Stony Brook by the 1840s. In 1848, David Tobias, Abraham Tobias and Richard Akerley, trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Society of Setauket and Stony Brook, purchased a small parcel on Christian Avenue with a modest building to serve as the group's first church and cemetery. While the congregation chose to rebuild elsewhere after the church was lost to fire in the 1870s, it continued to use the property as a burying ground into the early twentieth century. The Old Bethel Cemetery represents the history of this early congregation and provides insight and information about the social and economic standing of members of the African-American, Native-American, and mixed race community in Brookhaven and serves as important documentation of the familial and social relationships of the community.

Early History of African-Americans in Setauket/Old Field/Stony Brook

In 1652, Nathaniel Sylvester arrived on Long Island with slaves from Barbados. On Shelter Island, he sought to establish a homestead which would supply his Caribbean sugar cane plantations. Sylvester's large-scale and early slave ownership was the exception rather than the rule. The Town of Brookhaven's records first note the sale of a slave in the town in 1672.¹ Eastern Long Island was never reliant upon slave labor to the same extent as colonial Connecticut or New York City. Prominent families in Brookhaven, Long Island that owned enslaved Africans included the Sylvesters, Floyds, Carles, Munfords, Woodhulls, Thompsons, Gardiners, Stronges, Brewsters, and Smiths.² For most of the colonial era, Long Island had a substantial enslaved population. Slave-owning families averaged from two to four slaves, although many well-to-do farmers owned between six and twenty people. While it was not as large as New York City's urban slave population, which was second only to that of Charleston, South Carolina, Long Island's population was 17 percent black in 1771. Nearly all were enslaved.³

Between 1700 and 1790, most of the slaves that were either sold or bequeathed were African, although some were Native Americans, who were more often indentured. Many slaves were brought from the Caribbean to

¹ Town of Brookhaven, *Records of the Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, NY from 1798-1856* (Port Jefferson, NY: Times Steam Job, 1888).

² Patricia and Edward Shillingburg, "Disposition of Slaves on Long Island from 1680 to 1796," 2003, Available at <http://www.shelter-island.org/disposition_slave.html>; New York, Federal Census, 1790.

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New England and Long Island as “seasoned,” meaning that they were familiar with the English language and somewhat immune to European diseases such as smallpox and cholera. On Long Island, as elsewhere, the Native American population had been devastated by disease and war. After the Pequot and King Phillip’s Wars many Native men were killed, enslaved, or banished to Caribbean colonies. Their women and families were left without a means of support. In response to this loss, as well as to the lack of female African slaves, intermarriage between African free and enslaved males and Native American women became common.

Many enslaved men served in the French & Indian and Revolutionary Wars – fighting alongside their free and/or indentured African American and Native brothers – in order to win their freedom and serve their newly formed country. For example, Dr. George Muirson, who lived at St. George Manor in Brookhaven, allowed Cuff, one of his slaves, to fight in the French and Indian War; later evidence suggests that he was freed for his efforts.⁴ Some others were manumitted when their owners escaped to New England after the British took over Long Island in the early years of the Revolution. They maintained the homesteads and, in some circumstances, cared for family left behind, while their owners were exiled. Some were deeded land. Others began to farm land that they were able to buy.

After the Revolutionary War, the New York State legislature attempted to bring an end to slavery. In 1799, New York State passed a bill for the gradual abolition of slavery. According to the law, a master could only retain the services of a slave born after July 4, 1799 until the age twenty-eight for a male and twenty-five for a female. According to the 1800 federal census, 18 percent of all households in Suffolk County owned at least one enslaved African. The law was revised in 1817 to prevent Africans scheduled for emancipation from being sold out of state. By 1825, 98 percent of Suffolk County’s black population was free. The institution formally ended in New York on July 4, 1827.

African-American/Native American Community in Stony Brook during the early nineteenth century

Many Brookhaven enslaved, indentured or free people were fortunately able to maintain close familial ties and customs while keeping their families intact. The Nathaniel Smith, Selah Strong, and Joseph Brewster families, as well as Dr. Thompson and other homesteaders, employed entire families of color that were free, enslaved, or indentured. But, seemingly, those who were aligned with or married into the Native American tribes – the Unkechaugs and Setalcotts – were “subsumed” by these groups. African Americans and their mixed race counterparts were encouraged to adopt the Christian religion. Still, most slavery on Long Island was neither paternalistic nor benign. In his collection of old newspaper clippings, *Long Island and New York in Olden Times*, Henry Underdonk not only describes in detail instances of slave revolts and killings of masters, but also

³ Kathleen G. Velsor, *The Underground Railroad on Long Island* (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2013).

⁴ Dr. George Muirson Diaries (1749-1753; 1755-1758), Strong Collection, Three Village Historical Society, Emma S. Clark Memorial Library; The following can be found in the margin of Dr. Muirson’s Day Book 1749-1753: “Cuf Return from the Campaign 6th March 1761.” Cuff was enslaved on Dr. Muirson’s homestead. Muirson indicates that he returned from the campaign i.e. a battle of the French and Indian War (1754-1763). It cannot be proven that Cuff was freed for his service since there were a few Cuffs noted in pre and post-Revolutionary Brookhaven records. But he may be the “Ould Cuff” noted in the Brookhaven Records of the Poor (5 February 1798). In various records he can be found supported by his son Jacob Cuff and by John Havens who is “keeping Olde Cuff and Tite.”

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the horrific punishments metered out to those who deigned to defy or thought of defying or killed their masters.⁵

When families were separated, the close proximity of Brookhaven homesteads enabled people to more easily travel to see members of their extended family and attend church services and social activities. Fortunately, the journals and records of Dr. Samuel Thompson and his sons, Benjamin Franklin Thompson and Samuel Ludlow Thompson, offer an excellent source of information regarding the lives of the enslaved and free people of Setauket and Old Field. The doctor's journals contain notations about everyday life and labor in post-colonial Setauket, from 1799 through 1808, including a wealth of information regarding the enslaved and free African American and mixed race people whom he owned, employed and welcomed into his home. Dr. Thompson lived in Setauket near many people of color, including men enumerated as both native, black or "mulatto/mustee," and owned land in other localities, including Old Field.

On the Thompson Homestead, at least, it is clear that there was more freedom of movement than in the Caribbean or South Colonies. On March 29, 1800, Dr. Samuel Thompson noted: Sharper (enslaved) "went into Old Field with a load of posts and rails...." On October 20, 1800, he went to New Haven, Connecticut, to buy salt. On December 25, 1800, he noted: "Cuff (enslaved) and Killis go of (sic) with their axes without leave to keep Christmas." On January 4, 1801, nearly a week and a half later, he noted their return at night and mentions no repercussions for having left without permission. On February 10, 1807 he wrote: "RR & Killis keep Shrove Tuesday." On the 12th he noted: "Negroes out without leave." Then on the 14th: "Negroes still keeping holy days." And finally on the 14th "Negroes come home."⁶

A vibrant community of freed black, enslaved black and mixed race people thrived on Eastern Long Island and in Brookhaven, some having merged with its once large Native American communities. Many of these independent free communities of color, or "maroon" communities were part of the Unkechaug/Setauket communities which welcomed African-Americans, whether they were free or "pretending to be free" blacks. Old Field in Setauket may have been one of those "maroon" communities. In addition to acceptance into a safe community, there was another advantage. When enslaved black men married free and indentured Native women, their children were legally free. Some free people of color, such as those with the surnames Brewster, Akerly, Mills, and Strong, were descended from enslaved or formerly enslaved Long Islanders or New Englanders who worked for the various colonial families.

The result of the intermarriage was a vibrant mixed race community which aided the white colonists in establishing and maintaining a thriving farming, fishing, eeling, clamming, ship building and whaling community. These free black and mixed people were musicians, masons, carpenters, butchers, salt makers, butter makers, laundresses, flax workers, seamstresses, spinners and weavers. They worked as labourers and servants, midwives, wet nurses, and caregivers for the children and elderly.⁷ While they are occasionally mentioned in local primary sources, the lives of these people are not well-documented in history books or town

⁵ Henry Onderdonk, *Long Island and New York in Olden Times: Being Newspaper Extracts and Historical Sketches* (Jamaica, Long Island: np, 1851).

⁶ Journals and papers of Dr. Samuel Thompson, Samuel Thompson Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

⁷ Bradley D. Phillipi, and Christopher N. Matthews, "A Counter-Archaeology of Labor and Leisure in Setauket, New York," *World Archaeology* (2017): 1-15.

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halls. Most could not read or write to leave behind bibles or family documents as clues into the lives of the people of color of Brookhaven.

When writing about a social event held in his home, Dr. Thompson referred to the guests, independent people of color, as the "black gentry," and it is clear that they held important roles within the community.⁸ In response to concern about future warfare with England, the Town of Setauket required male freeholders to participate in military drills. Abraham Tobias and Silas Tobias Sr., two free black townsmen, were required to drill; both men are listed in The Records of the Town of Brookhaven. They and other free people of color can also be found in lists of men required to "mend fences." Although no evidence has been found that free people of color paid taxes before 1851, they were considered "freeholders" and "citizens" that had a responsibility to the community.⁹ These people led busy, productive but obviously full lives, not unlike their white fellow homestead and business owners.

During the early nineteenth century, people of color typically frequented the same shops, establishments, and doctors in Brookhaven as their white counterparts. The records from these businesses provide a useful chronicle of the daily lives of the people of Brookhaven; people of color were always noted as such, and many were distinguished by their associations. For instance, descriptions like "Emeline, colored" or "Sam, son of Sibb Indian," "Tobias, Conscience Bay" were typical. They bought the same items that we buy today: cloth, food, supplies, and liquor. They also participated in the market as sellers and producers. Dr. Thompson notes that Silas and Frank (Tobias) sold him oysters but he later often buys from white purveyors.¹⁰ Many families of color suffered as a result of competition from new European immigrants or down markets in traditional industries such as shipbuilding and whaling. Over time, it is evident that the free black and native community became more reliant on local commerce to serve their needs. While this reflects a turn away from an earlier self-reliant lifestyle, it also demonstrates greater integration into the community at large.

The Church in the Lives of the People

Church activity was the best opportunity for Indian and African persons to receive an education. Churches focused on community assistance, including aiding the poor, elderly and disabled. The church offered social activities for youth which helped to guide them into adulthood and exposed them to music, art and literature. Local records show attendance of the "colored" in many local churches and Sunday schools. Stony Brook Methodist, Caroline Episcopal, Mt. Sinai Congregational, and First Presbyterian documented many deaths, births, and marriages in the African- and Native-American community. Although people of color were welcome in local white churches, they were obliged to sit in a certain separate section and relegated to the periphery of church activities. Many in the community never felt entirely welcome and knew that their own church was the only place where people of color could express themselves without the scrutiny of owners or employers.

⁸ Journals and Papers of Dr. Samuel Thompson, op cit.

⁹ Valuation of the Ratable Estate Belonging to Brookhaven Anno 1683, Copy of Tax list of the Town of Brookhaven for the year 1775, Brookhaven Estimate of Real and Personal Estates for the year 1785, and Brookhaven Estimate of Real and Personal Estates for the year 1799. Available at the Office of the Brookhaven Town Historian, Farmingville, Long Island.

¹⁰ Journals and Papers of Dr. Samuel Thompson, op cit.

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After the passage of the Gradual Emancipation Act of 1799, slave owners were required to arrange for the education of their to-be emancipated workers. On December 16, 1800, Dr. Thompson wrote, "Franklin and Simon go to school to Mr. Stansbrough."¹¹ Simon was a favored slave boy; Franklin was Dr. Thompson's son. While the edict was meant to help former slaves succeed, it was primarily to teach them "God's words." The church loomed large in the lives of the people of color of Brookhaven.

On July 20, 1800, Dr. Thompson noted that "the black man Paul [Reverend Paul Cuffee] preaches two sermons in Meeting House to large assembly. They make a contribution for him." Obviously Cuffee was well respected and welcomed to preach in white-led churches, such as the Setauket First Presbyterian Church. While active participation in services was rarer, people of color were welcome in these same churches and, to a limited extent, their burial grounds.

Sharper, Dr. Thompson's childhood friend who had been enslaved by Dr. Thompson's grandfather and parents, attended services at the Presbyterian Church with the Thompson Family. Sharper was welcomed there, in part because Dr. Thompson was a respected and generous sponsor of the church and the pastor. However, Sharper was not baptized into the church until late in his life, on November 27, 1807.¹² He died nearly a year later, on September 14, 1808. When Sharper was buried the following day, likely at the Thompson Family Cemetery, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church presided over the ceremony. Thompson recorded that "Pastor Green attends makes a prayer and gives an exhortation to the spectators both white and black. Both black and white attend the funeral."¹³ Although Sharper went to services at the church, it is telling that a record of his baptism, death and burial was noted only by Dr. Thompson and not recorded in the church ledger.¹⁴

Enslaved individuals were usually buried on the slaveholder's homestead or in segregated burial grounds at the homesteader's expense. At times, burials became the responsibility of the Town of Brookhaven. Numerous entries in the Brookhaven Records of the Poor show the money paid to individuals to construct caskets and bury those individuals who had no family or means. On December 2, 1799, money was paid to Col. Brewster for Benjamin Jones for "Winding sheet to Bury Dinah Squaw \$3 (or pounds)."¹⁵ There were also numerous costs paid to others for various services, including digging a grave:

January 5, 1800: Tite has died and "Captain Havens is allotted 4.44 for cost of funeral."

February 4, 1806: "To Meritt S Woodhull Esqr for expences (sic) of a Coffin for David Negro."¹⁶

Burials of manumitted and indigent people of color and those who owned no land became a pressing problem for the town of Brookhaven. Concern about the limited burial options available for people of color grew during the early nineteenth century. In 1815, in response to the town's urging, Isaac Satterley and Benjamin Franklin Thompson donated land and established Laurel Hill Cemetery, a "Negro Burial Ground," in a hilly and unused area of Setauket. This cemetery provided additional space where indigent freed and enslaved blacks could be

¹¹ Journals and Papers of Dr. Samuel Thompson, op cit.

¹² Journals and Papers of Dr. Samuel Thompson, op cit.

¹³ Journals and Papers of Dr. Samuel Thompson, op cit.

¹⁴ U.S. Presbyterian Church Records, 1701-1970. Church Registers, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Accessed on Ancestry.com.

¹⁵ Brookhaven Records of the Poor. Available at the Office of the Brookhaven Town Historian, Farmingville, Long Island.

¹⁶ Brookhaven Records of the Poor. Available at the Office of the Brookhaven Town Historian, Farmingville, Long Island.

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buried. While Laurel Hill Cemetery provided a dedicated space for African- and Native-American families to bury their dead, the community wanted to develop its own institutions, including churches and cemeteries.

Dr. Thompson's journals may provide an early mention of a dedicated meeting place for people of color in Stony Brook. On Sunday, May 4, 1800, he noted that "Franklin [his son] and Sharper [enslaved] go to meeting [at the Presbyterian Church]. Robbin [a black farmhand] goes to Stony Brook."¹⁷ It is unclear which Robbin Dr. Thompson is referring to; there were four Robbins working on Dr. Thompson's homestead in this period: Long Robbin (enslaved), Short Robbin (indentured) and his son Little Robbin (free), and Robbin Ruggles. Robbin may have been attending a camp meeting or meeting of the nascent AME Church in Stony Brook. "Lil" Robbin later became a minister of the Stony Brook Bethel AME Church and is likely buried in Old Bethel Cemetery. Robbin Ruggles, was the father of Lucretia Ruggles Tobias who, along with her husband David Tobias, is buried in the Old Bethel Cemetery.

The early nineteenth century records of the early Bethel Church have not been found. They may have been lost in a fire, or perhaps they were not kept, due to the congregation's small size and the lack of a permanent AME preacher. Rites may have been celebrated in other churches or privately. For example, the Reverend Green, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, officiated the marriage of Robbin Ruggles (a Thompson worker and a member of the Mt. Sinai Congregationalist Church) to Charity Smith on the Smith homestead in Sherawog. A day earlier, the "pre-nuptial party" was held on the Thompson homestead. Dr. Thompson refers to his guests as Brookhaven's "black gentry." Yet, the event does not appear in any official church ledgers.

Early Establishment of African American Churches in Brookhaven

Contrary to the prevailing perception of the times, African and Indians had never been bereft of spirituality and worshipped in their traditional ways, usually close to Nature whenever possible. Spiritual meetings were held, including by white settlers, long before any churches were built and formal activities were documented. In spite of initial resistance to conversion, many people of color saw distinct benefits in adopting some form of "approved" religious practice in order to find greater acceptance and more educational opportunities for the community.

Methodism originated within the 18th-century Church of England and became a separate denomination after the death of its founder, John Wesley. The movement spread throughout the British Empire, the United States, and beyond because of vigorous missionary work; today the denomination claims approximately 80 million adherents worldwide. The Methodist Episcopal Church evolved on Long Island later than the more conservative churches of the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Congregationalists. Early Methodists were drawn from all levels of society, including the aristocracy, but the Methodist preachers also carried their message to laborers and criminals and others who tended to be left outside organized religion at that time.

In Britain, the Methodist Episcopal Church made many converts in the early decades of the developing working class (1760–1820). In the United States, it became the religion of many slaves. While Methodists vacillated on the issue of slavery, they employed African and Native Americans as "exhorters" when they experienced a shortage of qualified ministers. Exhorting, unlike preaching, was a private and informal

¹⁷ Journals and Papers of Dr. Samuel Thompson, op cit.

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gathering of groups during which an exhorter would relate personal stories with a moral in order to motivate listeners. Exhorters, like pastors, had to be licensed by the Methodist leadership. George White (1764–1836), an early African-American exhorter, traveled to Long Island in 1794 to convert people of color:

I left New York and proceeded to Long Island where I went from village to village, exhorting the people to seek the Lord, for I soon found there was but little religion among them, which, though it gave me much sorrow, enhanced me the more in urging them to seek it, not only by argument, but by giving them a narrative of my own experience, in the love of God. But to do justice to the inhabitants of this island, even those who appear to be destitute of religion, are nevertheless generous and kind.¹⁸

Later in his narrative, he makes another observation:

After the rest and refreshment necessary from so long a journey, I again visited the brethren upon Long-Island, where I renewed my labours with much success. The people here who had formerly been very unstable from the many reproofs they had received, were now willing to unite with the children of God. After preaching at a place called, little Neck...a person of a different sentiment from the Methodists, came to me and said you have given us all to the devil (meaning his own denomination). After some time he became pacified, and he with others of his own persuasion, invited me to preach among them at a place several miles distant from this, for which I gave them an appointment, and two weeks after preached to them...the meeting was solemn and conducted with great order. The congregation was principally composed of Africans and Indians. And I began a glorious revival of religion among this people, with whom I have since enjoyed many happy seasons of Christian intercourse and fellowship.¹⁹

Unfortunately, the Methodist Episcopalian Church (MEC) failed to institutionalize equality within the church. Free blacks later formed the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) and African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) denominations, which emerged in 1787 and 1800, respectively, in response to the mainstream Methodists' weak position on slavery and discriminatory practices within the church. Not only slaves and free blacks deliberately left the MEC over the question of social equality. After he was denied ordination in 1829, the Pequot exhorter and prayer leader William Apess made his stand with these words: "Now, if we have his spirit, as we profess to have, we shall most certainly want the indigent of all classes made comfortable..." Apess was one of the first to the disparity between Methodist doctrine and its discipline, or "course of conduct," in *A Son of the Forest* (1829).²⁰

Old Bethel Cemetery & the Bethel AME Church

Oral histories suggest that the first AME congregation in the Stony Brook area was established around 1815. No records of this congregation have been found, and it is likely that it lacked a central meeting place.²¹ By the mid-1840s, the congregation remained small; in his *History of Long Island* (1845), Prime notes that Bethel AME Church had 26 members and that an AME Church in Stony Brook had seven members. Brookhaven's community of color longed for a fellowship more established and regular than the occasional outdoor meetings

¹⁸ George White and John Jea, *Black Itinerants of the Gospel: The narratives of John Jea and George White*, ed. Graham Russell Hodges (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ William Apess, *A Son of the Forest and Other Writings*, ed. Barry O'Connell (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).

²¹ Bob Keeler, "A Crusade to Praise—from Campground Meetings to the rise of the African Episcopal Church", *Newsday.com*, 2007.

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and gatherings in private homes visited by itinerant pastors of various denominations. With this goal in mind, David Tobias, Abraham Tobias, and Richard Akerley established and became trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Society of Setauket and Stony Brook.

On behalf of their neighbors and friends, a consortium of free and recently freed men and women of color, the three men began searching for an appropriate location for a church. While it is unclear whether the society represented two congregations, one in Setauket and one in Stony Brook, or whether they were one congregation spread over the area, Christian Avenue offered a relatively central location for the members. In 1848, they entered into a land indenture with fellow Stony Brook townsman, William Bayles, for 1/3 an acre of rocky land upon which a small structure was located for the sum of \$24.00.²² Soon after, Bayles followed up with a written contract for the trustees to build a fence to separate his land from the church property. The existence of this nascent church is confirmed by an 1848 map of Brookhaven on which can be found "Bethel Chapel"; no cemetery is noted.²³

A building marked as the Bethel Chapel is shown on the 1858 town map. Seventeen years later, on October 12, 1865, in the aftermath of the Civil War, trustees Robert Mills, Jacob Tobias, and David Tobias (Abraham Tobias had died in 1856) purchased an adjacent 1/10 acre from Amy Bayles. By this time, the land around the church had become an active site of internment, worship and gatherings.

By 1874, however, the small church building on the property had been lost to fire. Rather than rebuilding on the small site, community members decided to build a new and larger church further south, across from the existing Laurel Hill Cemetery, at Christian Avenue and Locust Street.²⁴ Charles Jones, Adam Brewster, and Joseph Tiebout, trustees of the Bethel AME church, bought the new site, 1/2 acre more or less, on May 8, 1874 from Robert Jaynes and Mary, his wife, for \$60.00.²⁵ The site of the original church was afterwards used solely as a cemetery and became known as the "Old Bethel" cemetery, which is the subject of this nomination.

While many members of the community chose to bury near the new church, at Laurel Hill Cemetery, Bethel AME Church remained the steward for the Old Bethel Cemetery. While burials slowed, Old Bethel Cemetery did remain in use into the twentieth century. In 1924, the church's board of trustees pronounced that "No grave shall be opened in the cemeteries of Bethel AME of Setauket without consulting the Board of Trustees. Members of the church shall pay a fee of \$5.00; non-members a fee of \$10.00." The trustees at the time were: William Smith Sells (1891-1956), son of John D. Sells and Martha Rodgers; Silas Seaman (1894-1927), son of Emma Jane Tobias and Andrew Seaman, grandson of Silas Tobias and Emma Ruggles.; Edward Calvin (1888-1957), son of James H. Calvin and Tabitha Brewster; and John H. Lewis (1874-1938) husband of Rebecca Hart.

²² Agreement, January 1, 1848, Copy on file at the Three Village Historical Society; Historical Scraps Arranged by the Pastor, Bethel AME archives; Nathaniel S Prime, *A History of Long Island From its First Settlement by Europeans to The Year 1845* (New York: (np), 1845).

²³ 1848 Brookhaven town map, Brookhaven Town Historian's Office, Farmingville, Long Island New York.

²⁴ The new church and Laurel Hill Cemetery are included in the Bethel Christian Ave Historic District.

²⁵ 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

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The Old Bethel Cemetery remained in use at least into the 1930s. Emma J. (Tobias) Reed, the daughter of Charles A. Tobias and Hanna Young and the granddaughter of Abraham, died in 1924; her funeral was held in her Port Jefferson home, and she was buried in the Old Bethel Cemetery. Charles Ruggles Tobias, great-grandson of Abraham, may have been the last Tobias to be buried there, in 1931. His services were held at the Port Jefferson AME church, but he was buried at the Old Bethel Cemetery.

Notable Families Associated with and Individuals Buried in the Old Bethel Cemetery

Although it is a relatively modest site, the Old Bethel Cemetery documents and honors the lives of members of the black, Native American, and mixed race community in Brookhaven who had survived the slave trade, the Revolutionary war, and the Civil War. Free and freed individuals, they were farmers, seamen, laborers and servants living and working alongside the influential families of the area while dealing with the discrimination and racism endemic to the period. While not all of the burials within the cemetery are known, the stones that remain serve as important documentation of the lives of these individuals and families during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Tobias Family

While the Tobias surname can be traced back to the eighteenth century in Brookhaven, the oldest records offer no evidence verifying enslavement or indenture. Local lore suggests that the Tobias family was of Indian origin and migrated from the south side of Long Island together; census records confirm that they were born in New York. The earliest census document Silas (1769-1839), Abraham (1768-1856), and Isaac (1770-?), who were likely brothers. Jacob (1803-1869) and David (1810-1867) who were either sons or nephews of the older Tobias men. Abraham, Jacob and David Tobias were all signers of the deed purchasing the land for the Old Bethel Cemetery.

These Tobias brothers were identified as free and worked in the early nineteenth century primarily as seamen, boatman or in other maritime occupations during the height of shipbuilding in the area. Later, as they acquired land and had families, they were farmers. As far as we can conclude from the records, like most laborers, they were not literate. It was property, occupation, and character that elevated several of these brothers to positions of leadership in this diverse community.

Little is known about Abraham Tobias, who died in 1856. A deed of sale to Abraham Tobias from Silas Tobias dated 15 September 1823 for a half-acre and dwelling house on west side of Conscience Bay, suggests a father-son relationship.²⁶ Silas Tobias' death at age 70 is noted in the Setauket First Presbyterian Church record on February 20, 1839; his burial place is unknown.

Charles Tobias, one of Abraham's sons, married Hannah Youngs and worked as a seaman until 1880. They owned property according to 1865 NY census and had 11 children: Charles Ruggles (1850-1931), Henry S. (1851-1942), Walter (1853-1870), Emma J. (1853-1924), Hannah A. (1855-1939), Julia (1858-1921), Henrietta (1861-1882), Martha (1863-1863), Alice (1866-1876), and infant twins (1870-1870). Charles and Hannah both

²⁶ "Deed of Sale from Silas Tobias to Abraham Tobias" 15 Sept 1823 (recorded 5 May 1835), Suffolk County, NY, Deed Liber V, p.104, County Clerk's Office, Riverhead, NY.

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rest in the old Bethel Cemetery alongside their children, with the exception of Walter, who died at age 19 while working as a waiter in Manhattan and was buried in Brooklyn in 1870.

Rachel Tobias, Abraham's daughter, married William H. Hart. They had six children together: William Jr. (b. 1853), David T. (1854-1855), Jacob (1857-1931), Anna A. (b. 1859), Selah B. (1861) and Isaiah (b. 1869). She died in 1915 in Brookhaven, New York, having lived a long life of 85 years. While her burial site is unknown, one of her children, David, who died before his first birthday, has a marker at Bethel Cemetery.

The oldest marked internment in Bethel Cemetery is for Pierro Young (1781-1834), Eunice Young's (1788-1863) husband. Pierro was enslaved by Mills Brewster and manumitted in 1828. He died on April 10, 1832, in Brookhaven, New York, at the age of 51.²⁷ It appears that his original marker was later replaced with a new marker on the gravesite by their grandchildren as "Grandfather," and "Grandmother" is inscribed on one side. The reverse of the stone is inscribed "Their children: Rachel, Tama, Nellie, Annie, Hannah, and Janie."

In 1821, Thomas Strong reported Eunice's four daughters (all were still enslaved) to the Brookhaven Town Clerk as legally required: Rachel born 22 August 1805, Tamar born 25 September 1807, Cealia born 15 January 1810, and Ellen or Nell born 23 October 1815.²⁸ Eunice was manumitted by Thomas S. Strong in 1823 when she was 35 years old.²⁹ According to the laws of Gradual Manumission, the daughters remained in servitude and would not follow their parents into freedom until they reached age twenty-five.

Rachael, the eldest of Eunice's daughters, married Jacob Tobias, the early trustee of the Bethel AME Church. In 1832, Jacob and Rachel held a mortgage for a "homestead farm situate in Setauket...bounded northerly by...Laurel Hill...containing by estimate 2 acres."³⁰ In 1865, Jacob, then 66 years old, was quoted in the *Brooklyn Eagle* defending an itinerant AME pastor whose performance the central conference had deemed "unacceptable." At the time, Jacob served as a chairman for the Bethel congregation. Upon his death in 1869, the AME newspaper eulogized him: "In Setauket, L.I., Brother Jacob Tobias, in the 70th year of his age. He was one of the first fruits of Africanus' labors on Long Island. The Church has lost a wise counselor, and the community a staunch friend and Christian. Geo. A. Mills, Pastor. One by one the old heroes are dropping off."³¹ Jacob is buried at the Old Bethel Cemetery with his wife, Rachael.

Jacob and Rachael had five sons. One son, Abraham Y. Tobias, affectionately known as "Uncle Vet" in his later years, served in the Civil War, was injured but returned home. It is believed that he served as deacon for Bethel AME starting at the age of 15.³² Their other sons were David (1830-?), Samuel (1835-1870), Silas (1839-1864) and Isaac (1844-1921), who was likely named after his Smithtown uncle. The church advertised a fund raiser in October of 1884 to be hosted by Abraham Tobias in his Setauket home. Abraham is buried in the Old Bethel Cemetery. David Tobias, a church trustee in 1865, is buried at Old Bethel Cemetery with his wife, Lucretia Ruggles.

²⁷ Records and ledgers of the First Presbyterian Church of Setauket, Long Island, Three Village Historical Society.

²⁸ Town of Brookhaven, *Records*, 83.

²⁹ Town of Brookhaven, *Records*, 248.

³⁰ "Mortgage from Jacob and Rachel Tobias to Thomas S. Strong", 1 March 1832, Suffolk County, NY, Mortgage Liber 29, p.125, County Clerk's Office, Riverhead, NY.

³¹ Obituary, Jacob Tobias. *Christian Recorder* (AME), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 11, 1869. Available at <https://archive.org/details/christianrecordephil_4a>.

³² "Town Gives 2 Cemeteries Special Status," *Newsday*, February 7, 1994.

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Richard Akerly

Richard Akerly was born in New York about 1783 and spent his childhood enslaved to Samuel L. Thompson. He was indentured by the Overseers of the Poor at age 18 to Samuel L. Thompson. He apparently escaped – in 1833, county constables were authorized to apprehend and place him in the custody of Samuel L. Thompson. Richard Akerly's wife, Rose(anna) was manumitted by Thomas S. Strong on Nov. 6, 1816. He and Roseanna had two children: a daughter who died at a young age, and Henry Akerly, who worked as a boatman. None of the family is enumerated in the census after 1850, and no burial records have been found.

The Ruggles Family

Robbin Ruggles (b. 1775), who is frequently noted in Dr. Samuel Thompson's journals as his worker, "RR," and, "Nathaniel Smith's black girl" were married on the Thompson homestead in 1807. They had 7 children; the second oldest and most influential of the children was Lucretia Ruggles, who married David Tobias in 1800.

The Ruggles family belonged to the Mt Sinai Congregational Church. In 1848, Lucretia, along with 21 other church members, two-thirds of them widows of Revolutionary War veterans, petitioned to establish a Congregationalist Church in Port Jefferson. She died in 1854 at age 40 and is buried beside her husband, one of the early Bethel trustees, in Bethel Cemetery. Her stone is inscribed: "Lucretia, wife of David Tobias."

Another sister, Emeline Ruggles, her husband, Silas B. Tobias, and possibly a sibling, Albert Ruggles, are likely buried in Old Bethel Cemetery, but no stones remain to confirm this. The gravestone for Emeline's infant grandchild, Lucy Howard, who died in 1867, remains extant. Emeline's son, Benjamin S. Tobias (1847-1913), had his funeral services at Bethel AME but is buried at Laurel Hill Cemetery, as is his wife, Susan White (1845-1913). They were married in Caroline Church in 1869. After living most of their over 40 years of marriage in Brooklyn, they returned to Brookhaven after Benjamin retired from his work as a stove jobber, three years before they both died.

The Phillips Family

Levi "Doc" Phillips was a very well-liked and influential citizen and property owner in Smithtown. He learned herbalism in the Native American tradition from his mother and offered medical treatment to the black, white, and Native communities. His first wife was a Nissequogue woman and his second wife, Sarah A. E. Ruggles, was the widow of Richard B. Ruggles. Their infant son, Samuel S. Phillips, died and was buried in Old Bethel Cemetery in 1870. Richard's brother, David Ruggles, was a "notorious" New York City abolitionist who famously hid and helped Frederick Douglass when he first arrived in the city. Levi was known to walk to Phillipse Manor in Westchester County on a regular basis. The legend is that these long trips were connected with the Underground Railroad. Considering his obvious tie to David Ruggles, the story may be true.

AME Veterans

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African Methodist Episcopal Churches were active in the recruitment of Union soldiers, as it was important to them to demonstrate that people of color were willing to join the battle against slavery and the disfranchisement of free blacks. Frederick Douglass made a special appeal at the Bridge Street AME church in Brooklyn.

On January 14, 1864, Abraham (Abram) Y. Tobias, son of Jacob and Rachael, enlisted in the military for three years as a private. Within a month, he was promoted to corporal. The 26th US Colored Infantry was organized at Riker's Island, New York Harbor, February 27, 1864. Joseph Tiebout and Adam Brewster, also Bethel AME trustees, served in the same USCT 26th Regiment with Abraham Tobias. Several other Tobias men also fought in the war. Charles Tobias, age 35, registered for the Civil War draft in Port Jefferson and served in the United States Colored Troops (USCT) 3rd Regiment, Co C. Samuel Tobias joined the USCT at age 22 and was imprisoned, wounded, and died in 1861. Silas Tobias enlisted in the US Navy on March 23, 1863. He is described as 25 year old Negro born in Setauket, New York, and 5'6" tall. Silas did not return home. There are other records not proven but possible enlistments of other Tobias family members in the USCT—Jacob T. Tobias, 27 (Draft and registration). Washington Phillips, grandson of David Tobias (5th Regiment, Co K) and Andrew Seaman, (29 Regiment, Conn Volunteers, Co H), grandson of Silas B Tobias and Emeline Ruggles.³³

Later History of the Old Bethel Cemetery

The Bethel AME Church, built on Christian Avenue in 1874 (rebuilt in 1909), became the center of the community of color in Setauket. Along with the adjacent Laurel Hill Cemetery, it is at the core of the Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District, which has also been proposed for National Register listing. The Old Bethel Cemetery remained the property of Bethel AME Church until the town of Brookhaven declared it legally abandoned during the twentieth century due to lack of maintenance. Due to repeated vandalism and extreme weather, it fell into further disuse and disrepair. Some of the tombstones were toppled, trees felled and boundaries blurred. A clean-up by a local Boy Scout troop resulted in the likely loss of traditional grave goods such as rocks and shells, which are typical of both African and Native memorial traditions, from the cemetery. While a local non-profit group was formed to address maintenance of the cemetery during the last quarter of the twentieth century, the group is effectively defunct.

More recently, the Old Bethel Cemetery has been cared for by a group of concerned community members, spearheaded by Carlton "Hubbell" Edwards. A military veteran, he took it upon himself to honor Corporal Abraham Tobias every Memorial Day and also to keep watch over the cemetery. Recently, descendants Vivian Nicholson and Simira Tobias have worked with the Three Village Historical Society and Higher Ground to restore and maintain the cemetery and with The Town of Brookhaven to install signage. It is still considered sacred ground by the African- and Native-American descendants of its founders, who are committed to the site's preservation and maintenance.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

³³ Military Records database, Ancestry.com.

Old Bethel Cemetery

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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): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .23 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 567213 4533210
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

2
Zone Easting Northing

4
Zone Easting 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.)

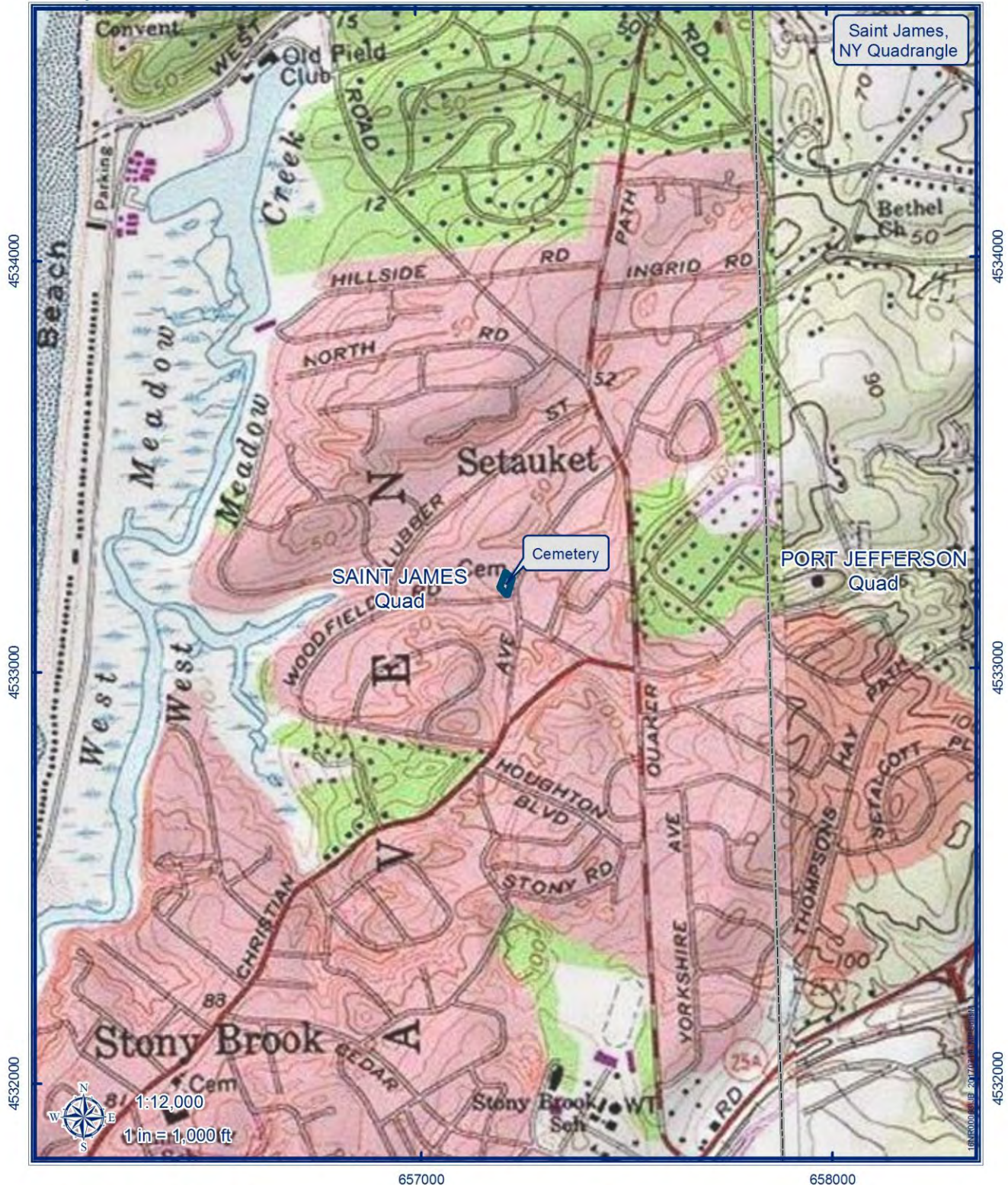
The boundary was drawn to include the parcel historically associated with the Old Bethel Cemetery.

Old Bethel Cemetery
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Old Bethel Cemetery
Stony Brook, Suffolk Co., NY

Christian & Woodfield Avenues
Stony Brook, NY 11790



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

0 380 760 1,520 Feet



Old Bethel Cemetery
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

Old Bethel Cemetery
Stony Brook, Suffolk Co., NY

Christian & Woodfield Avenues
Stony Brook, NY 11790



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



Cemetery



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY
Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

Old Bethel Cemetery
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Vivian Nicholson-Mueller and Simira Tobias, edited by Jennifer Betsworth (NY SHPO)
organization _____ 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: Old Bethel Cemetery

City or Vicinity: Setauket

County: Suffolk County State: New York

Photographer: Jennifer Betsworth

Date Photographed: May 2, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

NY_Suffolk Co_Old Bethel Cemetery_0001
Cemetery, facing south

NY_Suffolk Co_Old Bethel Cemetery_0002
Cemetery, facing north

NY_Suffolk Co_Old Bethel Cemetery_0003
Cemetery, facing southwest

NY_Suffolk Co_Old Bethel Cemetery_0004
Cemetery, facing northeast

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.

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Appendix: Old Bethel Cemetery Internments

Note: this list is taken from a cemetery roster created during the mid-twentieth century. The original list notes that several gravestones and monuments were illegible due to damage, cracking, or wear.

1. Ida E. Davis, daughter of Alfred and Mary
Died Oct. 10, 1860, 3 months old
2. Alfred J. Davis, son of Alfred and Mary
Died Oct. 8, 1851, 4 days old
3. John Smith
Died Sept. 28, 1852, 61 years old
4. J.S.
5. P.S.
6. Alice S. Tobias, daughter of Charles and Hannah
7. Pierro Young, grandfather
Died 1834
8. Eunice Young, grandmother
Died 1863
9. Children –
Nellie, Annie, Hannah, Janie, Rachel, Tama
10. Aurelia Russell, wife of William J.
Died Feb. 9, 1874, age 38
11. Sarah Julia Oakes, daughter of Jeremiah and Jane
Died Mar. 8, 1855, 13 years old
12. Priscilla Sturtevant
Died Nov. 30, 1850, 12 years old
13. Lucy Howard
Died Dec. 12, 1867, 8 months 14 days old
14. Jane Tobias
Died Aug. 15, 1886, 80 years old
15. S.S.H.S – (see the Smith Children in list below)
16. Henrietta Tobias
17. Tobias –
Charles 1827-1884
Hannah 1828-1908
Alice 1866-1876
Henrietta 1861-1881
Martha 1863-1863
Charles R. 1850-1850
Henry S. 1852-1852
Etta J.
Hannah A.
Julia
Martha 1863-1863
18. Infants 1870-1870
19. Alice Tooker
Died Dec. 28, 1887
20. Huldah Ann Brown
Died Feb. 17, 1875
21. John Brown

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- Died May 11, 1868
22. Silas Smith
Died Feb. 19, 1864
23. Rachel Tobias
Died July 8, 1866
24. Jacob Tobias
Died Aug. 6, 1869
25. Lucretia Tobias
Died Oct. 6, 1854
26. Abraham Tobias
Died Dec. 23, 1898

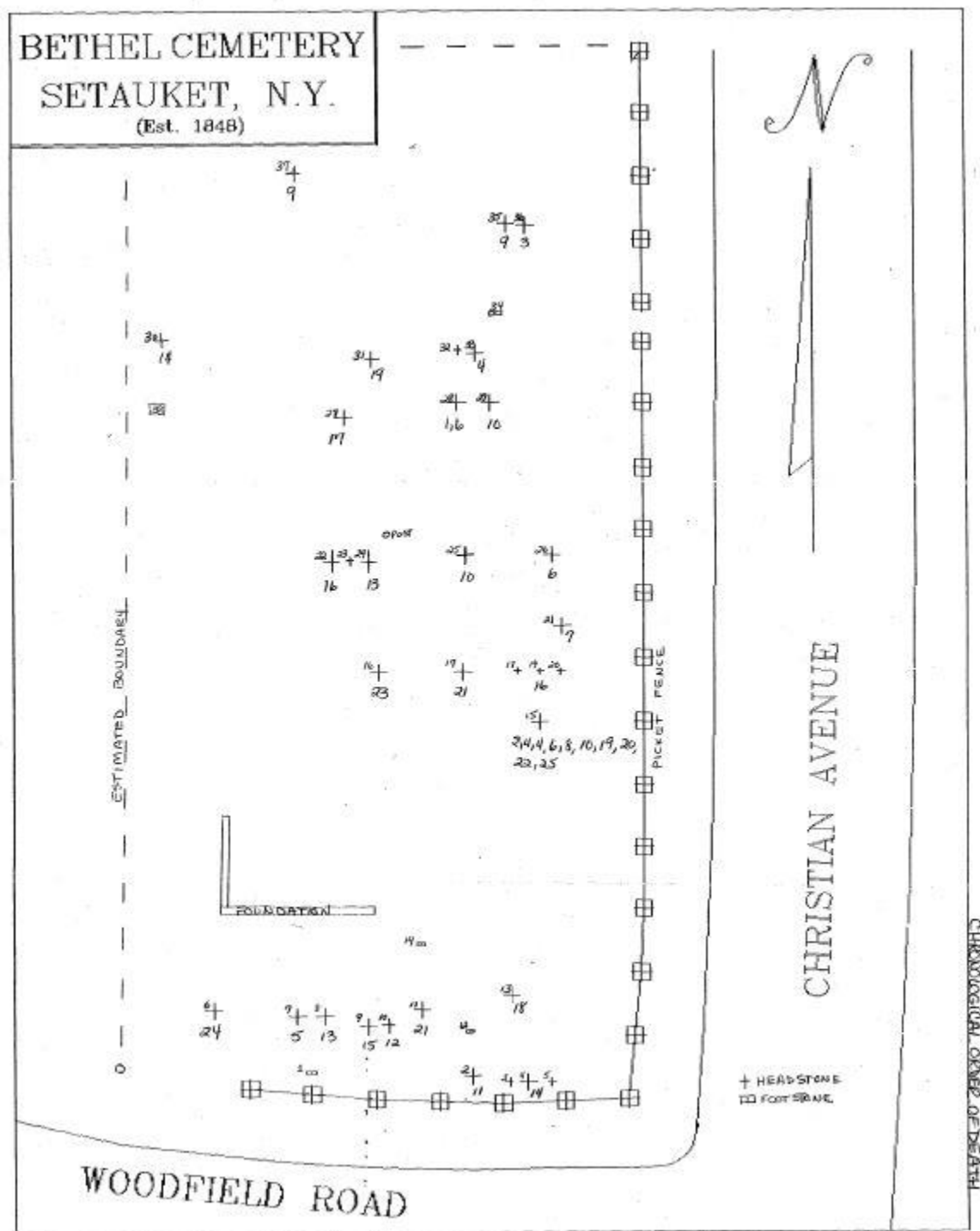
Additional internments are listed on the 1938 A.H. Meigs roster.³⁴

1. Bristol Annie Bristol, died November 20, 1934, ae 55 years 20 days (by the O.B. Davis, mortician, PJ)
2. Hart David T. son of Wm. H. & Rachel L. Hart died Feb. 21, 1855, ae 10 mos 14 ds.
3. Oakes Jane A., wife of Jeremiah Oakes, died Sept. 10, 1863, ae 63 yrs
4. Robinson Hannah A., wife of Charles Robinson, died Feb. 16, 1868, AE 44 yrs.
So softly death succeeded life in her.
She did but dream of heaven and she was there.
5. Sells Martha Ann (cement block, no dates) (*Martha Ann Rogers wife of Jeremiah Sells*)
6. Smith In memory of John Smith, died Sept. 28, 1852, aged 81 years
Silas, died March 28, 1859, ae 4 months and
Harriet, died April 7, 1855, ae 14 days
Children of Silas & Julia Ann Smith. (See "SSHS" in list above).
7. Davis Mary Jane, wife of Alfred Davis, died June 25, 1850, aged 34 years.
8. Phillips Samuel son of Levi & Sarah A. Phillips, born 1870, AE 9mos.

³⁴Suffolk County Cemeteries, Edited by Alice H Meigs, Vol IV, Long Island Collection, Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica Queens, 1938. While the document was originally titled "Old Field Cemetery Near Old Field Light," this is noted as an error on the document and corrected to read "AME Cemetery Christian & Woodfield."

Old Bethel Cemetery
Name of Property

Suffolk County, NY
County and State







1827 CHARLES C. TOLSON
1828 HAYWARD ANNIS WIFE 1805
THEIR CHILDREN
1866 ALICE S. 1876
1861 HELENETTA L. 188
1862 ESTHER 1866
1850 CHARLES P.
1862 HENRY S.
1853 EDWARD
1855 FANNY
1857

TOLSON





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination	
Property Name:	Old Bethel Cemetery	
Multiple Name:		
State & County:	NEW YORK, Suffolk	

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

Reference number:	SG100001810
Nominator:	State
Reason For Review:	

 X Accept Return Reject 11/9/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	
Recommendation/ Criteria	

Reviewer	<u>Alexis Abernathy</u>	Discipline	<u>Historian</u>
Telephone	<u>(202)354-2236</u>	Date	<u> </u>

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

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, Caffè 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

