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HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Spring Valley Christian Church Site

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Spring Valley Road N/A not for publication

city or town Hardwick Township vicinity

state New Jersey code 034 county Warren code 041 zip code 07825

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

9/18/97

Spring Valley Christian Church
Name of Property

Warren County, NJ
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
1	0	sites
		structures
		objects
2	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
Funerary/cemetery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use
Funerary/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Stone/stucco

roof

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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:

and used for

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Period of Significance

1840-1870

Significant Dates

1840-1841

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Library of George Sobin Jr.,
Little York, Hunterdon Co., NJ

Spring Valley Christian Church Site
Name of Property

Warren County, NJ
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .86 acre

Flatbrookville NJ-PA Quad

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	I 8	5 0 5 0 6 0	4 5 3 9 1 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roberta J. Scheflen

organization Hardwick Twp. Historical Society date February 1997

street & number 118 Main Street telephone 908 479-1964

city or town Bloomsbury state NJ zip code 08804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Hardwick Township Historical Society

street & number Spring Valley Rd., Box 722 telephone N/A

city or town Blairstown state NJ zip code 07825

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Spring Valley Christian Church Site

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DESCRIPTION

- Ph. A-1 The 155 year-old Spring Valley Christian Church ruin is located in Hardwick Township, Warren
A-2 County. It is beautifully situated on a small hill with a group of old cedar trees leading up the path
Ph. 1 from the road to the front of the building. A cemetery is situated on both sides of the pathway. The
setting is rural and intriguing and has stirred the imagination of local residents as well as many who
pass by.

The land itself remains about the same as it always was. A schoolhouse built in 1902, no longer in use as a school, is adjacent to the property. It is presently used by the Township Board of Education for their quarterly meetings. On the other side of the church property is a private home built in recent times. Across the road from the church is a farm property with buildings set back at least 100 feet from the thoroughfare.

Spring Valley Road is completely residential except for the Township Municipal building and a restaurant also set back from the road. During the period when the church was functioning the church stood by itself. Members of the congregation arrived for services via horse and wagon or buggy. It is said by local people that the horses were tethered across the road from the church. An iron fence once surrounded the property but it was apparently destroyed and a second fence consisting of wooden rails was built but this too was destroyed.

Exterior

- Ph. 1,2 In 1841 a church building, 34 feet by 56 feet, was constructed of native limestone and covered with
3,5 stucco by local craftsmen. The ceiling was 19 feet high. There were three six-foot windows on each side of the structure and two six-foot windows in the front wall, facing south, and in the back wall, facing north. The frames were crafted of wood with clear panes of glass which were sectioned horizontally in thirds and shuttered. Near the roof line two quadrant windows were also crafted of wood. They are located in the front of the building and two were in the rear. The roof was shingled.

No corner stone is present. Entry to the church was through a Greek Revival entrance centered in the south facade. It probably resembled the entrance of the Christian church in Johnsonburg (see accompanying photo).

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Interior

- Ph. 4 We base our description of the interior on a *Christian* church of similar design which is located in nearby historic Johnsonburg and considered to be the "mother" church of the *Spring Valley Christian Church* and the *Christian* churches which existed in Hope, Vienna and Baleville. The privately-owned Johnsonburg church is still intact but deteriorating. Some evidence of the interior still remains on the walls of the Spring Valley church but the timber components have largely disappeared. White plaster can be seen here and there. As in some of the other local *Christian* churches there may have been wainscoting, stained a dark walnut, on the lower interior walls with white plaster above.
- Ph. 5 The interior of the Spring Valley church contained a vestibule running to the east and west. There is evidence of a stone stairway in the southeast corner of the building which led up to an end balcony which overhung the rear of the sanctuary. In the vestibule was a library of books and materials used in the Sunday School.
- Ph. 4 Seating in the sanctuary consisted of groupings of 3 or 4 wooden folding chairs attached to each other and arranged on both sides of a center aisle. There appears to have been a step up from the floor to the pulpit area and there is evidence that a shelf was attached to the center of the wall behind the pulpit area. A railing may have been around the pulpit and altar area. Elder Clough stated in the *Christian Palladium* that the church could hold 300-400 people.

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

SIGNIFICANCE

The Spring Valley Christian Church site is one of the few remaining places that conveys the significance of the *Christian Connection*, an important religious "denomination" that was especially strong in northwestern New Jersey where it filled a niche neglected by most of the established churches in the 19th century. The *Connection* occupies a special position among religious groups. It was the first purely American religious denomination not affiliated with any church of European origin, antedating Mormonism, for example, by a number of years. In northwestern new Jersey the influence of the *Christian Connection*, extended from 1824 to the 20th century. The property meets Criteria A and Criteria Consideration A through its local significance in religious history.

The Spring Valley Christian Church which was active from 1840 to 1870 is a classic example of a free-standing country church complete with graveyard. There are few *Christian* church buildings surviving, all others being in private hands, made into homes or converted to some other use. The church ruin and its graveyard are important historic artifacts existing in Hardwick Township, Warren County. It was the only church built in this section of Hardwick Township.¹ It is unique in that it was not located in a village as so many churches were at that time. Architecturally, it is an example of native craftsmanship. If preserved beyond further deterioration it can serve to illustrate the techniques and skills employed in its construction. The site is also a place of interest to people who pass by. The cemetery attracts many who are looking for traces of their ancestors, and the property has been used for at least one wedding.

¹Frelinghuysen Township had a number of churches but it was separated from Hardwick Township in 1848. The closest church to Hardwick residents was in Blairstown. The Spring Valley Christian Church was the only church in Hardwick available and convenient to Hardwick residents.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Events leading up to the birth of the *Christian Connection*

The traditional church in Europe was challenged greatly by the Protestant Reformation. The medieval ideas held for so long, the infallibility of the Pope, the discipline expected from his adherents, the wealth and power of the church and the corruption of the clergy led thinking people to ask questions about the power of the church and their faith. The publication of Wyclif's translation of the Bible and much later the King James version allowed people to read the teachings of the Bible rather than having to rely on what they were told by the clergy. It was a time when people were becoming exposed to science and art. New ideas and new ways of conducting business were taking hold. In England especially there were those who chose to think independently and who appreciated individualism rather than restraint. Religion was a primary focus of change as it affected people personally and kept them in thrall. The beginnings of the Protestant faith were planted. Various views were put forth by such leaders of the Protestant movement as Hus, Luther and Calvin on the Continent and the Puritans in England. Most of them proposed to simplify faith. They looked to the Bible for guidance, they expected high morality and austerity. They disapproved of war. Communion was to be celebrated not as a sacrifice but as a remembrance. Since the Bible did not say anything about infant baptism, it was thought by some that it should be for adults only and by immersion. Many conflicts existed among the newly-organized sects but there was intolerance from the established religion in western European countries which was for the most part Roman Catholic and existing governments looked upon them with impatience and anxiety. The monarchs did not want their power usurped as they believed they ruled by divine right. John Hus in Bohemia was a Catholic priest who denounced the evils of the established church. He became a martyr but his ideas spread to nearby Hungary, Transylvania, and Switzerland. His ideas formed the basis of belief for the Anabaptists. This sect was extremely disliked by the other movements. Luther in Germany attempted to correct the abuses within the established church but found it impractical. He organized a new system but kept some of the traditional forms of worship. Calvin in Switzerland disagreeing with Luther set up his strict theological organization which stated that God's will was supreme and that some men were destined for salvation while others were damned. Educated individuals would govern and the masses were to obey. Lutherans and Calvinists were thus separated from the Roman church. In England, the Protestants were influenced by those on the mainland. Calvinism was introduced in Scotland in the form of Presbyterianism. The state church of England still existed but there were those who wanted to improve the corruption of this church by educating the clergy and by establishing parishes to provide a system of administration. Pomp and ceremony were objectionable as they did nothing to assure man's salvation. The Puritans were the instigators for this reform.

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They were not very dissimilar to the Presbyterians. Another faction of the Puritans, known as the Separatists, wanted independent congregations with no higher authority than the parish system. These two groups had little success. Some of the Puritans decided to move to Holland and the Rhineland to practice their beliefs. Then finally America, even though under English rule, beckoned as a safe harbor and, as is well-known, the Puritans began to colonize the Massachusetts Bay area and Connecticut. The Puritans thus dominated the New England religious scene. At about the same time the Baptists, (Anabaptists) in Holland realized that they might also find a haven in America and decided to make the crossing. They made sure not to cause any conflict and eventually settled in Rhode Island to establish their own communities. Splinter groups moved on to New Hampshire and Vermont. The Baptists as with the other movements were also divided among themselves. There were the General Baptists, the Particular Baptists, and the Free Will Baptists. They differed in their beliefs of predestination, salvation through belief in Christ and the laying on of hands. Most were determined not to believe in anything that could not be found in the Bible. They paved the way for the *Christians*.

During the period, 1730-1750, the Great Awakening took place. It occurred first in Pennsylvania and New Jersey as a revival, a back-to-God movement urged on by the Dutch Reformed and the Presbyterians. In New England it was the Presbyterians, Baptist and the congregationalists who participated. Evangelists traveled around the countryside preaching to not only the educated and affluent but to the common man so that all would become enlightened and assured of salvation. By 1800 New England was no longer a stronghold for the Puritans. There were other denominations such as such as Quakers, Episcopalians, Methodists, Shakers and Unitarians. Most all retained their rigid doctrines and did not give any consideration to those who thought otherwise. However, mutual agreement was reached on the point that there was no room for personal interpretation of the Bible by the individual or local congregation. Still, it can be said that some men of this time appreciated individualism rather than restraint. There was still this old desire not to be controlled by the clergy or have the government interfere with the conduct of their churches. The time was ripe for the birth of the *Christian Connection*.

Back to basics - the Bible

After the American Revolution, a reform movement arose spontaneously in three areas in the new American union. The first group arose among the Methodist clergy in North Carolina and Virginia in 1794 led by James O'Kelly. They rejected the authority of the Methodist bishops and the Methodist creed and declared the Bible as their sole authority. A similar movement sprang up among the Baptists of New England a few years after, and yet another similar revolt began among the

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Presbyterians of Tennessee and Kentucky in 1804. Thus within a decade there were three independent movements with the common aim of throwing off the restraints of arbitrary doctrines imposed by the orthodox denominations. It will be noted that none of these movements owed anything to European influence. They were purely native American in origin. Each quickly became evangelical in purpose and invested most of their energy in preaching and spreading their message of a free gospel. It was inevitable that within a few years they became aware of each other, and recognizing that their convictions were virtually identical, they were drawn together into a voluntary association. They regarded denominational names as divisive, and believed that their only proper name should be "*Christian*." Since they rejected any form of authority higher than the local church, their fellowship always remained informal and voluntary, and they adopted the designation of *Christian Connection* as an identifying label.

Principals of the *Christian Connection*

The *Christians* agreed on only a few principles since it was their position that the individual was invested with the freedom to exercise his own judgment in almost all matters. One fundamental agreement was that they rejected all man-made creeds; a second, was that the Bible was the only sufficient guide to faith; and a third that the individual had the right and duty to interpret scripture for himself. Their only test of membership was evidence of good character, and they practiced open communion which was contrary to the closed communion prevalent in almost all other churches of the day. Milo T. Morrill, the author of a history of the *Christians*, stated that they never received due credit for their part in exalting the Bible to popular study. Baptism began by immersion and then later sprinkling was approved and both methods were practiced.

A noteworthy difference of the *Christians* from the organized religion of the day was their attitude toward women as preachers. Since they recognized no biblical injunction against women preaching, they welcomed women among them as evangelists. In the period before the Civil War, upward of 70 women were active among the ranks of *Christian* preachers. Although the *Christians* did not go so far as to ordain women in the early days, they were the first to provide regularly for their ordination. They began shortly after the Civil War and by the end of the century they had more ordained women among their ministers than all other religious groups in the United States combined.

The *Connection* at no time during its existence possessed what might be termed an organized structure or a central headquarters. The movement was held together by its system of voluntary conferences, but mainly by its network of publications. It was said of them that they had not bishops, but editors! They claimed the world's first religious newspaper, the *Herald of Gospel Liberty* which first appeared in 1808 and remained continuously in publication until the merger with the Congre-

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gationalists in 1930, with an occasional change of name. During the early years, the movement supported as many as five periodicals at a time, each with a different focus. Thus, the *Christian Palladium*, published between 1830 and 1860, was primarily concerned with affairs in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and it is the primary source for the history of the movement in those states during that period. By 1868, however, the advantages of centralized publishing had become so persuasive that the Christians consolidated their efforts into the Christian Publishing Association and a publishing house was built in Dayton, Ohio. The regional periodicals were united under the masthead of the original name, *The Herald of Gospel Liberty* and it remained the "spokesman" for the next fifty years. The publishing house in Dayton became the de facto headquarters of the *Connection*.¹

Their system of conferences, a voluntary grouping of geographically-related churches usually met annually in northwestern New Jersey during the month of May for mutual consultation and support. Thus, in New Jersey, a conference called the *New Jersey Christian Conference* was organized in 1830, only six years after the first *Christian* preacher entered the state.

At one time or another over the next 100 years, forty-six churches were members of the New Jersey Conference, most of them located north of Trenton in the Delaware River Valley in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The various congregations vied with each other to host the conference. The delegates usually stayed three or four days, sat through lengthy meetings, sermons and prayers, and then went back to their local churches with first-hand accounts of the proceedings. At times they could report on fresh ministerial prospects. The Spring Valley Christian Church was the host in 1845.

Fearful of how the public schools were secularizing education, the *Christian* churches also established Sunday Schools although their curricula consisted primarily of memorizing and reciting Bible passages. During the 1820's they added singing to the regular classes to offset boredom. There was competition among the churches in their communities for members so that when one church established a Sunday School the others followed. Finally, publications became available for the Sunday Schools with appropriate content. In 1850 the *Christians* introduced *The Youth's Penny Gazette* and then came *The Children's Friend*. The *Sunday School Herald* followed in 1865. The Spring Valley Christian Church had a Sunday School which met in the balcony. In 1855 it served 27 pupils and boasted a library of 200 volumes which was located in the foyer of the building. The *Connection* advocated that all member churches establish not only Sunday Schools but Bible Schools and Ladies Aid Societies. A Foreign Missionary Department was established in 1885 and plans

¹Library of George Sobin Jr.

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were made for colleges to encourage improved education for the clergy.

The Christian Connection in New Jersey

From their three points of origin in the South, the Midwest, and New England, the *Christians* spread their message not by organized or institutional means, but by the efforts of individual evangelists choosing their own agenda. Thus, preachers from New England initially worked their way westward through New York State and even worked their way through Canada before their attention was drawn to New Jersey. It was not until 1824 that the first *Christian* preaching was heard in northern New Jersey and it was carried there by an outstanding woman evangelist, Abigail Roberts.

Originally a Quaker, Abigail had been preaching among the *Christians* for nearly ten years in the Hudson River Valley when she became attracted by the possibilities presented by the neglected fields of New Jersey. She entered Sussex County from New York State in 1824 and over the next several years extended her labors to include Warren and Hunterdon Counties. Her methods were typical of evangelists of her day, consisting primarily of extended camp meetings in cooperation with many other preachers (the *Christians* called them elders) but for which she was the chief attraction. The novelty of a woman preacher was a powerful lure.

By 1830 Abigail was devoting all her time to her mission in New Jersey, and although she was overtaken by ill health not long after, she retained her interest in the welfare of the *Christian* movement in New Jersey until her death in 1841. It was not her intention to establish churches by her preaching (she was intent on converting sinners) even though such was the result of her labors. At least a dozen churches in northwest New Jersey owed their origin to the seeds she planted. The accompanying map displays at a glance the extent of her influence. Interested residents of Hardwick Township attended the *Christian* church in Johnsonburg which was the "mother" church of the area. While Abigail never preached in the *Spring Valley Christian Church* many of the members certainly had gone to hear her preaching in nearby Johnsonburg and were thus inspired to build their own house of worship.

The *Christian Connection* throughout its history was almost exclusively rural in character. It's preachers for the most part had but a rudimentary education. Perhaps by feelings of inadequacy, they hesitated to invade the cities and urban areas, and confined their efforts to rural areas and even what might better be termed "wilderness". They were prepared for the spartan support that the backwoods offered and contended with hardship that the learned clergy of the orthodox sects were quite unwilling to accept. Thus, the *Christians* filled a niche in the American religious scene that few

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other denominations cared to serve.

The ranks of the Christians were populated by men and women who in retrospect seem to have been immune to discouragement. Like the Methodists of this period, the elders traveled by horseback over treacherous roads in all kinds of weather and for small financial reward. Many of them found it necessary to supplement their incomes by working at other occupations to support their families. However, they founded churches by the hundreds in places to which no other religious group would give a second glance. These churches suffered appalling mortality rates, yet the Christians pressed on with unflinching zeal to spread their message of a free gospel.

The Spring Valley Christian Church 1840-1870

The *Christians* located their churches primarily in villages and centers of even less population than would qualify as a village. The Spring Valley Christian Church was archetypical in that it was not located near any large center of population. It was a true country church, probably one of the purest examples of its class. It is the only church that has ever existed in Hardwick Township after the separation from Frelinghuysen. The sparse population of the area never tempted any other denomination to expend the effort there.

In 1840 a piece of land was conveyed by Baltis J. Keen and Abraham Keen to the trustees of the church by a deed dated June 12, 1840. The trustees were Messrs. Baltis Keen, Robert M. Teel, Martin Vass, John B. Konkle and Charles Wintermute Jr., all Hardwick residents. The deed stipulated that the land be used for the church and for no other use.

In 1841 Simon Clough, an elder assigned to the Johnsonburg charge, reported the following in the "*The Christian Palladium*":

Johnsonburgh, N.J. April 14, 1841

"Our friends at Hardwick, (Spring Valley) six miles north by west from Johnsonburgh, and another of my preaching stations, have also commenced a house. This house is built of stone, and is 34 feet by 56, and 19 feet ceiling with an end gallery; and when completed will seat from three to four hundred persons. The walls of this house are up, and it will be shortly inclosed."

Simon Clough (1793-1844) was a "powerful preacher, a prolific writer, and a tireless traveler". He founded churches in New Jersey and inspired people in Hardwick to build their own church and

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establish an independent congregation. He thus became the founding pastor of the Spring Valley Christian Church. Ill health forced him to give up his work in 1842 before the church structure was completed but the building was opened before his death in 1844.

The township did not have a cemetery and there was a need for one. What better place could there have been than the land surrounding the church? It was designated for this purpose. It possesses a significance beyond an ordinary graveyard as it is the only cemetery that preserves any kind of memorial to the people who once lived within the border of the township. The last funeral and burial took place in the 1870's. There may be graves behind the church building where some of the poorer residents were buried by the Overseers of the Poor. This has been reported but there is no proof as the church records have been lost and any gravestones disappeared long ago.¹

The Final Fate of The Spring Valley Christian Church and the *Christian Connection*

It was in 1839 that the *Christians* in Hardwick decided on a church of their own. As a functioning church the Spring Valley Christian Church existed for less than 35 years before it fell victim to demographic forces beyond its control. In 1848 a new township, Frelinghuysen, was set off from Hardwick. This diminished the population of Hardwick by over 1,000 people. When the church was built the population was 1,957. The *Christians* could not foresee that the population was to continue in a decline until the end of the century. In 1855 Horace Greeley wrote an article in which he advised young men to "turn your face to the great West and there build up a home and fortune." His advice was taken not only by young men but by whole families. After the Civil War changes of a social nature such as immigration, rapid industrialization and the secularization of society took their toll in the agricultural communities.

After the separation of Frelinghuysen from Hardwick and the movement of people, the 1870 census showed the population of Hardwick to number only 638. Church membership never reached 50 at its highest and so did not actually reach its potential. The church structure was built to hold at least 300 people. The membership could not support even a part-time ministry or provide minimal maintenance for the church building. With the passing of the generations and the departure of some of the founding families, the memory of the church faded almost to the point of oblivion.

Despite the lack of financial support and membership participation the church was served by a series of eight ministers. This group included some of the leading lights among the *Christians* of the 19th century. Such elders as Nicholas Summerbell, Benjamin Summerbell, Simon Clough and C.A. Beck

¹A former mayor of the township, Arthur Dickison, recalls this fact.

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were recognized as famous *Christian* preachers in their day.

These dedicated men were usually assigned to a circuit of two or more churches, preaching at one church in the morning and another in the evening. Sometimes the churches had services on alternate Sundays. When there was no preaching the congregations held prayer meetings. Church members provided meals and overnight accommodations for the preacher when needed. The usual fare was a "chicken dinner", something a farmer had readily available.

Although the history of the church has virtually vanished from local memory, it has been possible to retrieve it in considerable detail since much has been preserved in the surviving publications of the *Christian Connection*, their periodicals and the writings of its ministers.

The fate of the *Christian Connection* has a happier ending. It remained on the American religious scene for more than 130 years, retaining its rural character and its liberal philosophy to the end. Numerically, it remained remarkably static at about 1,000 churches and 100,000 adherents located mostly in the eastern states. In 1930, owing to mutual compatibility, it united with the Congregational Church to form the Congregational Christian Church which later (1959) joined with the Evangelical and Reformed Churches to form the present United Church of Christ.

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Hardwick Township Tax Map, Warren County, shows the Spring Valley Christian Church Site as #10 on the map. It is labeled as "Exempted Hardwick Cemetery". A cemetery surrounds the east, west and south walls of the church ruin. A small piece of land in the rear of the church was used for an outhouse which no longer exists. Another part of this land may have been used in times past to bury the indigent by the Overseers of the Poor. This is not substantiated. It is noted that the dimensions of the tax map do not conform to the property survey or the description in the deed. The survey and the deed dimensions do agree. The Town Engineer states that the date of the tax map is 1962.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Spring Valley Christian Church site is situated on the north side of Spring Valley Road in Hardwick Township. It is a rectangle measuring 132 feet on the northwest, 264 feet on the west, 132 feet on the south, and 264 feet on the northeast. Total square footage is 34,848 or .86 of an acre. Measurements include the location of the church building. Nominated area conforms to the church deed.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs were taken by Roberta Scheflen, 118 Main St., Bloomsbury, NJ who holds the negatives.

A-1 Overall view of Spring Valley Christian Church site.

Picture taken August 1996. Property view taken from Spring Valley Road facing northwest.

A-2 Close up view of entrance to Spring Valley Christian Church site.

Picture taken February 1997. Camera facing northwest.

1. Front of structure facing to the south showing entrance and two side windows and the two quadrant windows at the roof line. August 1996.
2. East side wall with evidence of three windows. August 1996.
3. West side wall showing placement of windows. August 1996.
4. Interior facing toward location of altar and pulpit area showing plaster remaining on stonework and quadrant windows at roof line. August 1996.
5. Interior facing toward the front door showing the two windows, door and evidence of stairs which led to balcony. August 1996.

Packet of slides in black and white labeled. August 1996.

- A. 100 year-old schoolhouse adjacent to the Spring Valley Christian Church site.
- B. Overall view of Christian Church site.
- C. Fascade of Spring Valley Christian Church.
- D. West wall of Spring Valley Christian Church.
- E. Entry of Spring Valley Christian Church.

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MAPS.

1. Department of the Interior Geological Survey
Flatbrookville Quadrangle, New Jersey-Pennsylvania
7.5 Minute Series (Topographic)
- ✕ 2. Location Map - Present Hardwick Township
3. Tax Map (portion) of Hardwick Township
4. Survey Map of Spring Valley Christian Church Site

Historic Maps:

5. Map of Northwestern New Jersey showing location of Christian Churches
in the New Jersey Christian Conference, including Brooklyn, the
Delaware Valley and the West New Jersey Christian Conference.
Taken from Harrington's book, *The Carversville Christian Church ..*
6. County Atlas of Warren Co., N.J. by F.W. Beers 1874
Hardwick



NJ - Warren County
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MRS. ABIGAIL ROBERTS

Abigail Roberts

1791 - 1841

First preacher of the Christian Connection to enter northern New Jersey (1824). Within a year she was preaching extensively in the Hardwick area of Warren County, leading to the organization of the Johnsonburg Christian Church in 1826. The Johnsonburg congregation included members from a wide surrounding area, including Hardwick, Hope and Vienna - each of whom established an independent church by the early 1840's.



NJ - Warren Co.

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Church Site

Simon Clough

1793 - 1844

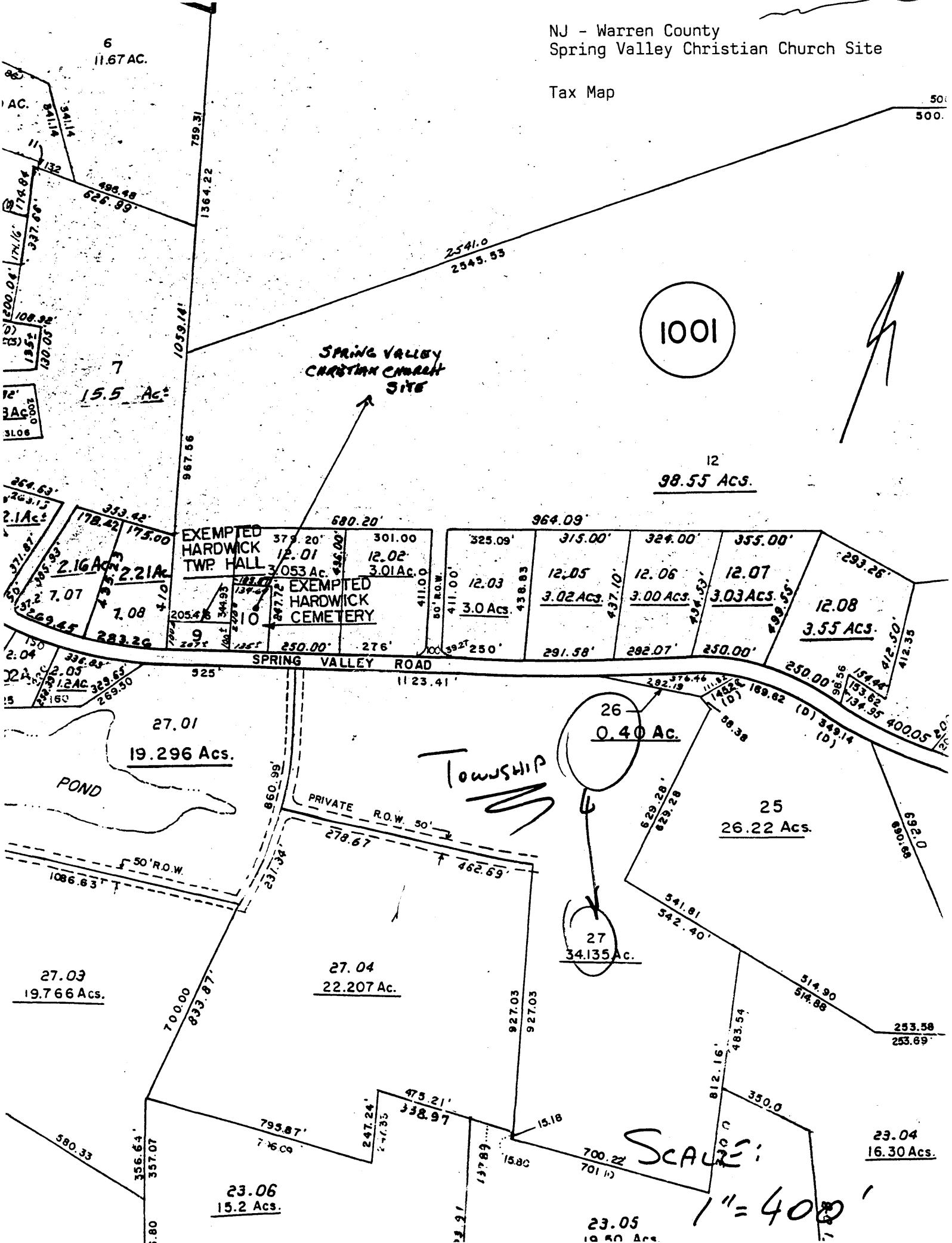
One of the most interesting characters among the early leaders of the "Christian Connection". Clough was a powerful preacher, a prolific writer and a tireless traveler. He established the First Christian Church of New York City in 1824 and remained its pastor until 1833, meanwhile aiding extensively in founding churches in New Jersey, especially in company with Abigail Roberts.

He returned for some years to his native New England, but late in 1839 came back to resume laboring in the Johnsonburg area, and in a short time inspired the people in both Hardwick and Hope to build their own church and establish independent congregations. In this manner he became the founding pastor of the Spring Valley Christian Church.

Unfortunately, ill health forced him to give up his work in 1842, before the church structure was completed, but the building was opened before his untimely death in 1844.

NJ - Warren County
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Tax Map



1001



SCALE:
1" = 400'

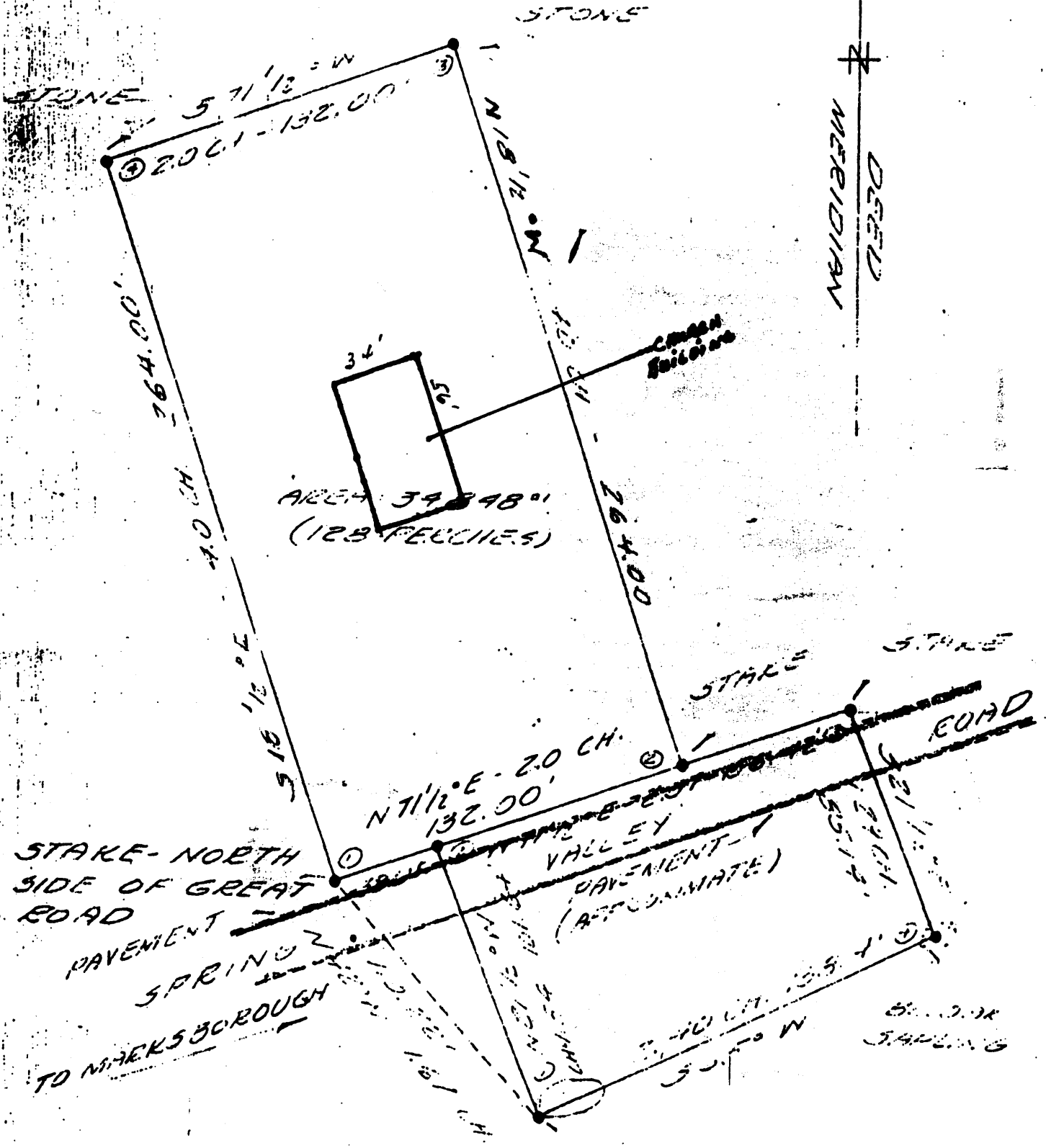
BALTES J. KEEN & ABRAHAM KEEN

NJ - Warren County
Spring Valley Christian Church
Site

TRUSTEES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Survey of Property #4

DATED - JUNE 12, 1940
REC. OCT. 25, 1943
BOOK 22 OF DEEDS, PG. 261



AREA: 34,948⁰¹
(128 PERCHES)

ABRAHAM LEPORT & WF.
TO
ROBERT M TEEL ET ALS
TRUSTEES OF THE CHRISTIAN
CHURCH OF HARDWICK. - VOL V - 21 OF DEEDS, PG. 560
MAY 25, 1840 (DATED) - RECORDED APRIL 6, 1843.
AREA - 19,579 SQ. FT. = 54.6 PERCHES - (DEED 19 IN ESCROW)

AHLERS ASSOCIATES

Consulting Engineers — Surveyors — Planners
250 Vail Road, Parsippany, New Jersey 07054

THOMAS H. AHLERS

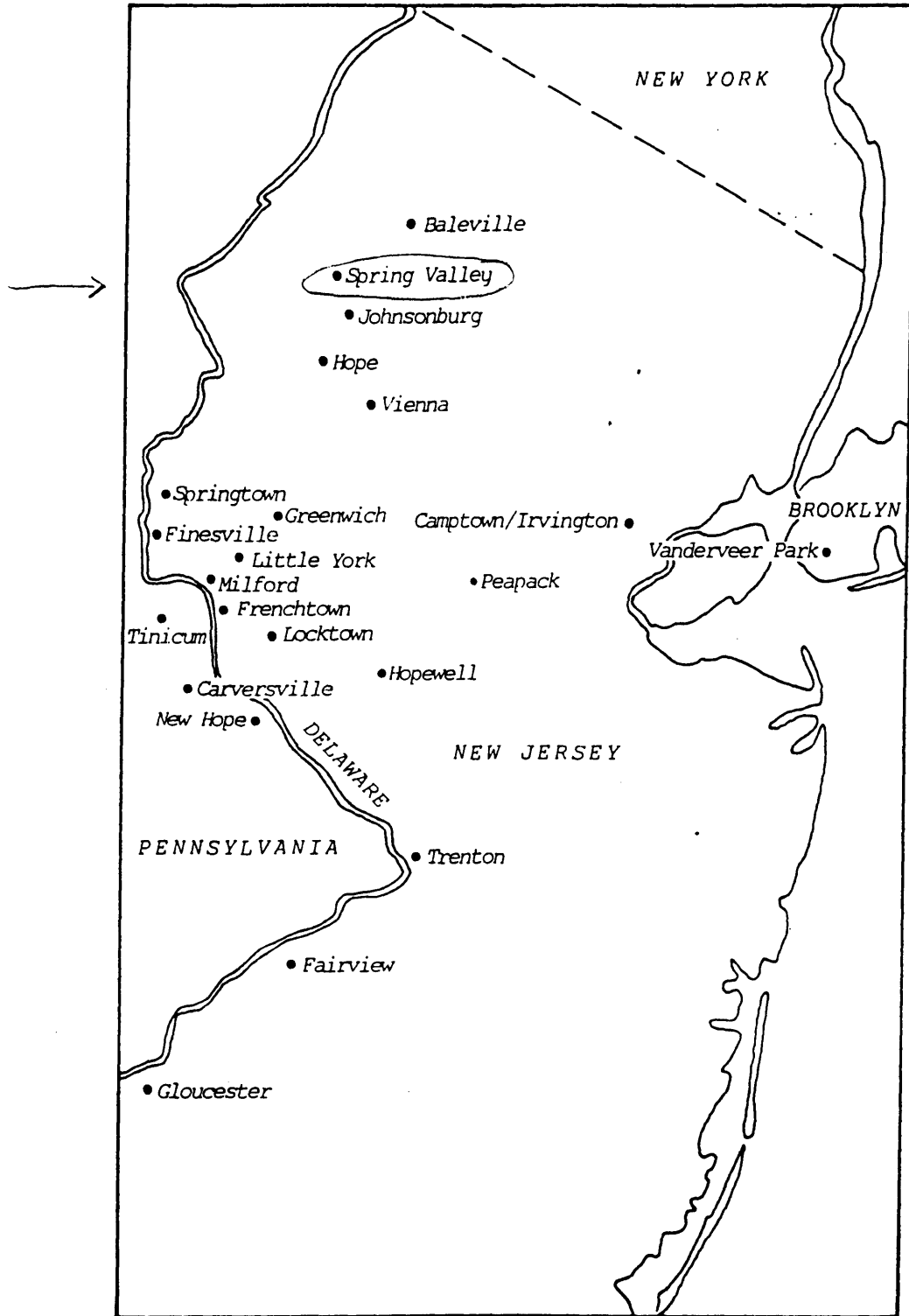
N.J. LICENSED P.E. & L.S. NO. 8132
N.J. PROFESSIONAL PLANNER NO. 117
PENNA. REGISTERED SURVEYOR NO. 13636-E

DATE - 7-10-80

SCALE - 1" = 50'

NJ - Warren County
Spring Valley Christian Church

#5



Christian Churches in the "Christian Connection"
located in northern New Jersey

HARDWICK

Scale 200 Rods to the inch.

From County Atlas of Warren NJ
by F. W. Beers
1874



PAUL
FRELINGHUY
Scale 30 Rods

