

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Item number N-1258

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INVENTORY FORM: WHITE CLAY CREEK HUNDRED MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA

from the mid-eighteenth century, however, the majority date from the erection of this building (mid-nineteenth century) to the present. A stuccoed stone wall surrounds the cemetery.

E. Justification of Boundaries:

The Head of Christiana United Presbyterian Church property is bounded on the north and west by modern residential development, on the east by the James Steel House (#4) property and on the south by Church Road. The property lines of the nominated legal parcels which contain the Church and cemetery were chosen as the nomination boundaries largely to preserve the relationship of Church and cemetery and to exclude modern intrusions.

F. Significance:

The Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church is significant as a stylistic type, since it is closely related to two other churches in the vicinity, and it is also important in being the oldest church of any denomination in White Clay Creek Hundred. It is being nominated to the National Register on the basis of criterion C, as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. It should be noted that this Church is being nominated as an exception to the usual ineligibility of properties owned and used by religious organizations because its significance is primarily architectural.

Established in 1708 for members of a Scotch-Irish settlement located in the western part of White Clay Creek Hundred, its first structure constructed of log was replaced by a brick meeting house in 1750. The present Church, built in 1859, is located on the site of the 1750 structure which burned in 1858.

Architecturally, Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church is very similar to both the White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church (NR 1973) and Red Lion Methodist Church (CRS No. N-5084) which were also built during the 1850's. All three are constructed of brick in rectangular, gable front plans with pedimented gables and oblong windows. White Clay Creek Presbyterian is the plainest of the three, it not having the brick pilasters and raised basement like the other two. It is, however, significant that three such similar churches should be built in close proximity within a short time span. This is indicative of how almost standardized the oblong, center-aisle plan had become in rural areas by the middle of the nineteenth century, and how easily influenced neighboring congregations were.

Scotch-Irish settlers and members of the Presbyterian congregation at New Castle who lived in the extreme western portion of White Clay Creek Hundred,

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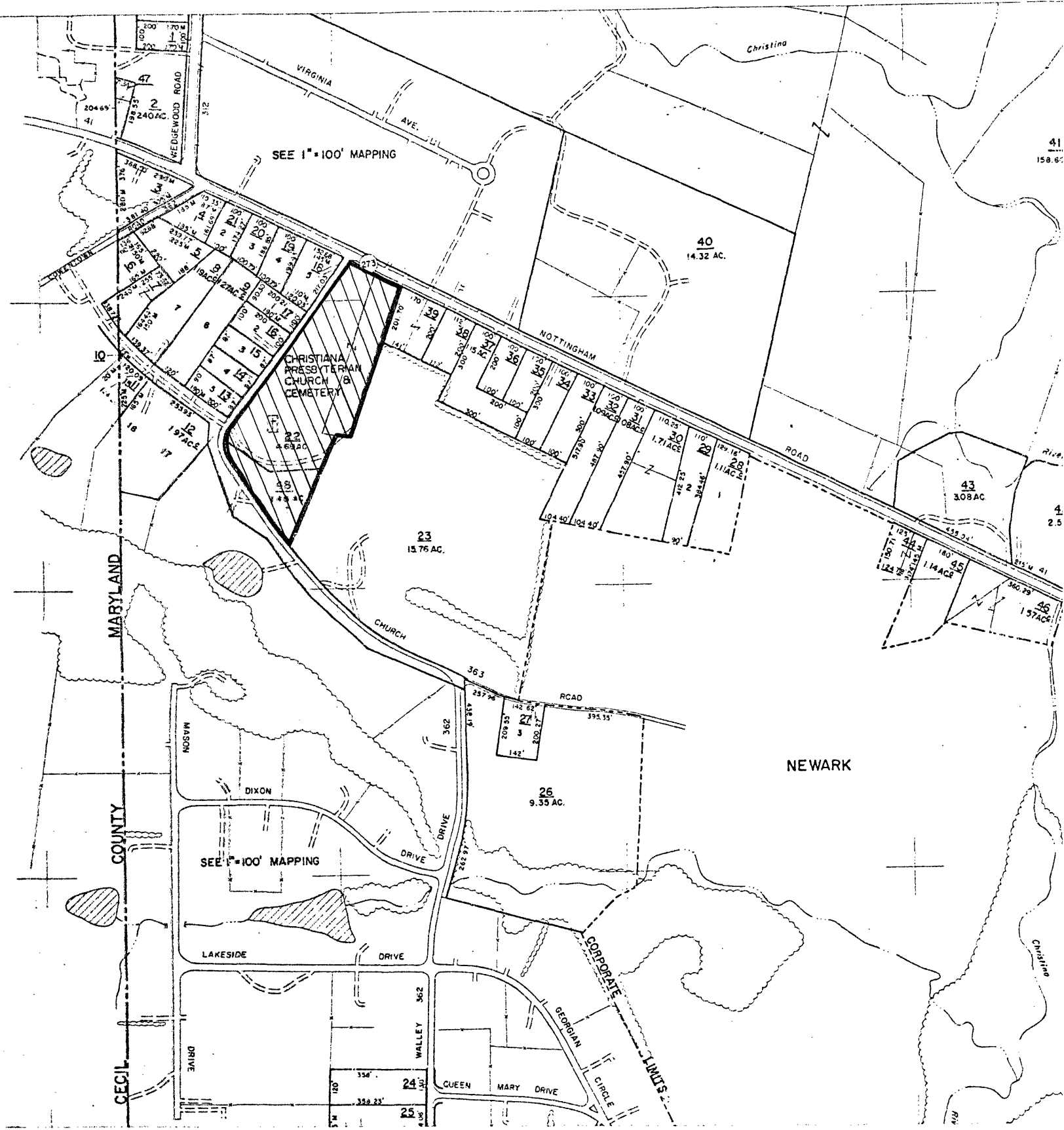
INVENTORY FORM: WHITE CLAY CREEK HUNDRED MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA

petitioned in 1708, "...to have the ordinances of the Gospel administered with more convenience and nearness to the place of their abode..." In response to this petition, the minister at New Castle was directed to preach to this "congregation" on alternate Sundays, thus the Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church, so-called because of its location next to the spring which is said to be the source of the Christiana Creek, was founded. Pleased by the response, the congregation built a log structure for their place of worship, which stood in what is now the "old" section of the cemetery.

In 1713, Reverend George Gillespie, born and educated in Glasgow, Scotland, became the first regular pastor of this Church, a position he held for 46 years. It was during Reverend Gillespie's pastorate that a more permanent Church was built. James Steel leased two acres of his land to the Church elders, and on this ground a brick meeting house was erected in 1750. Serving as a place of worship for 108 years, the meeting house was consumed by fire in 1858. The present structure, built on the site of the Church building which replaced the original log structure in 1750, was completed and dedicated in 1859.

Level of Significance:

The level of significance claimed for the Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church is local since its sphere of influence is limited to the immediate vicinity.



SKETCH MAP



7. Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church (N-1258)
 New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1982
 Map No. 9-13, Parcels 22 and 48
 Scale 1 inch = 400 feet