

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUL 10 1976  
DATE ENTERED JUL 9 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC ~~AND/OR COMMON~~ BLACKWATER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER On the south side of Del. Route 54,  
at its intersection with Del. Route 846  
CITY, TOWN Clarksville, Del. VICINITY OF One  
STATE Delaware CODE 10 COUNTY Sussex CODE 003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Sussex Trust Co., Trustee  
STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN Laurel VICINITY OF STATE Delaware

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Sussex County Court House  
STREET & NUMBER The Circle  
CITY, TOWN Georgetown STATE Delaware

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Survey of Delaware Historic Sites & Buildings, Number S-179  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Hall of Records  
CITY, TOWN Dover STATE Delaware

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Blackwater Presbyterian Church is a frame chapel, oriented roughly north-south, with a south entry. Over-all dimensions are 35 feet by 30 feet. There are two windows on both the east and west sides. In the south elevation, there is one window above the double doors.

On the west side, the building is sheathed in clapboards, which are beaded on their lower edges and feathered to form lap joints on their ends. Such clapboards, no more than five feet long, generally were made of cypress. Above and below the two windows on the west side are patches of new clapboarding, indicating that taller windows once were here.

The windowless north wall is sheathed in smooth, square-edged clapboards similar to the ones on the south elevation. The east wall clapboards are rougher, and exhibit circular saw marks.

Exterior trim on all four side windows consists of a beaded casing trimmed with an ovolo. Greek mouldings of simple style trim the insides of these windows; the corner blocks are formed from mitred sections of mouldings. There are shutters on the windows.

The portico on the south doorway is supported by a bracket in Victorian style, with carpenter gothic trim in the pediment, which is repeated above the south window.

Inside, the church displays the various periods of its construction and use. On the north wall is a marble plaque with the date of construction, 1767, and the date of rebuilding, 1893. The gallery, which runs along the south end of the church, is supported by four posts with lambs-tongue chamfers. In the southeast corner of the church is a stairway to the gallery, with a closet below it.

The pews are simple, apparently locally made, of indeterminate but early age. Two ornate Victorian stoves provide heat, being vented through chimneys in the centers of the east and west walls. The ceiling is made of beaded, natural-finish, pine, tongue-in-groove boards. The chancel is a raised platform on the north end, faced with the same tongue-in-groove boards that are found in the ceiling. A pulpit, of walnut and cherry, stands on the front edge of this platform. Music is provided by a pump organ.

Oil lamps are mounted around the edge of the church, and tin candle sconces are attached to the gallery posts.

The present floor is wide pine boards, but legend states that there is a brick floor below.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Blackwater Presbyterian Church, built in 1767, is the oldest Presbyterian church building in southern Delaware. Its first pastor was Charles Tennent, son of a famous Presbyterian family. On its west wall, the church preserves a significant specimen of early Delaware cypress clapboard sheathing.

During 1763, the pulpit of Buckingham Presbyterian Church in Berlin, Maryland, was filled by Charles Tennent, whose father had founded the "Log College," predecessor of Princeton. On his evangelizing tours, Tennent visited Baltimore Hundred and helped to start Blackwater Church. The Presbytery of Lewes minutes indicate that the Blackwater Church was accepted into the Presbytery on May 3, 1763. The first elders were Joseph Miller, Ebenezer Evans, John Evans, William Tunnell, John Aydelotte, Thomas Harnig, and Thomas Wingate.

Tennent conducted services in members' homes at Blackwater on alternate Sundays until the church building was erected. Until 1840, Blackwater and Buckingham continued to be affiliated. In 1856, some members withdrew to form the present Ocean View Presbyterian Church. Others later broke away to form the church at Frankford.

After 1856, Blackwater declined. The two daughter churches, in more populous areas, gained membership and vitality. At the Presbytery meeting in October 1921, the congregational organization was abolished and the Frankford church was designated trustee of the property.

The Tunnells, one of the founding families of the church, have held their annual reunions in the building since 1927. Through their efforts, a brick wall has been built around the churchyard, a new roof has been installed, and the grounds have been maintained. Maintenance is provided through a trust agreement with the Sussex Trust Company of Laurel.

The church is currently being repaired by the Colonel Armwell Long Chapter, DAR. In the course of repairs, the date 1860 was found scratched in the plaster, apparently while the plaster was wet. A painted stencil design was found during the same repair work.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Rose, Harold Wickliffe, The Colonial Houses of Worship in America, (N.Y.: Hastings House, Pub.), 1963.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY one

UTM REFERENCES

A	118	485810	426611610	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The churchyard is enclosed by a brick wall on all four sides. This enclosure marks the limits of the area nominated.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Edward F. Heite, Historic Registrar

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

Hall of Records

TELEPHONE

678-4564

CITY OR TOWN

Dover

STATE

Delaware

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

*Lauren Heite*

TITLE: Director, Div. of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE 1/12/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ACTIVE

*John L. ...*  
*Charles ...*

DATE

5/9/76

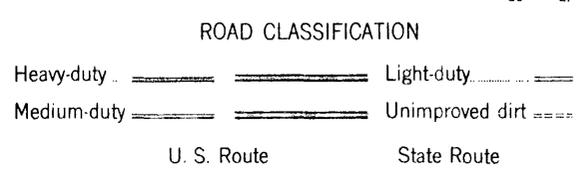
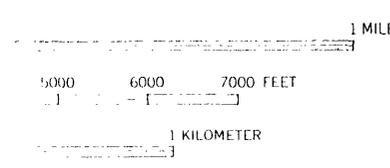
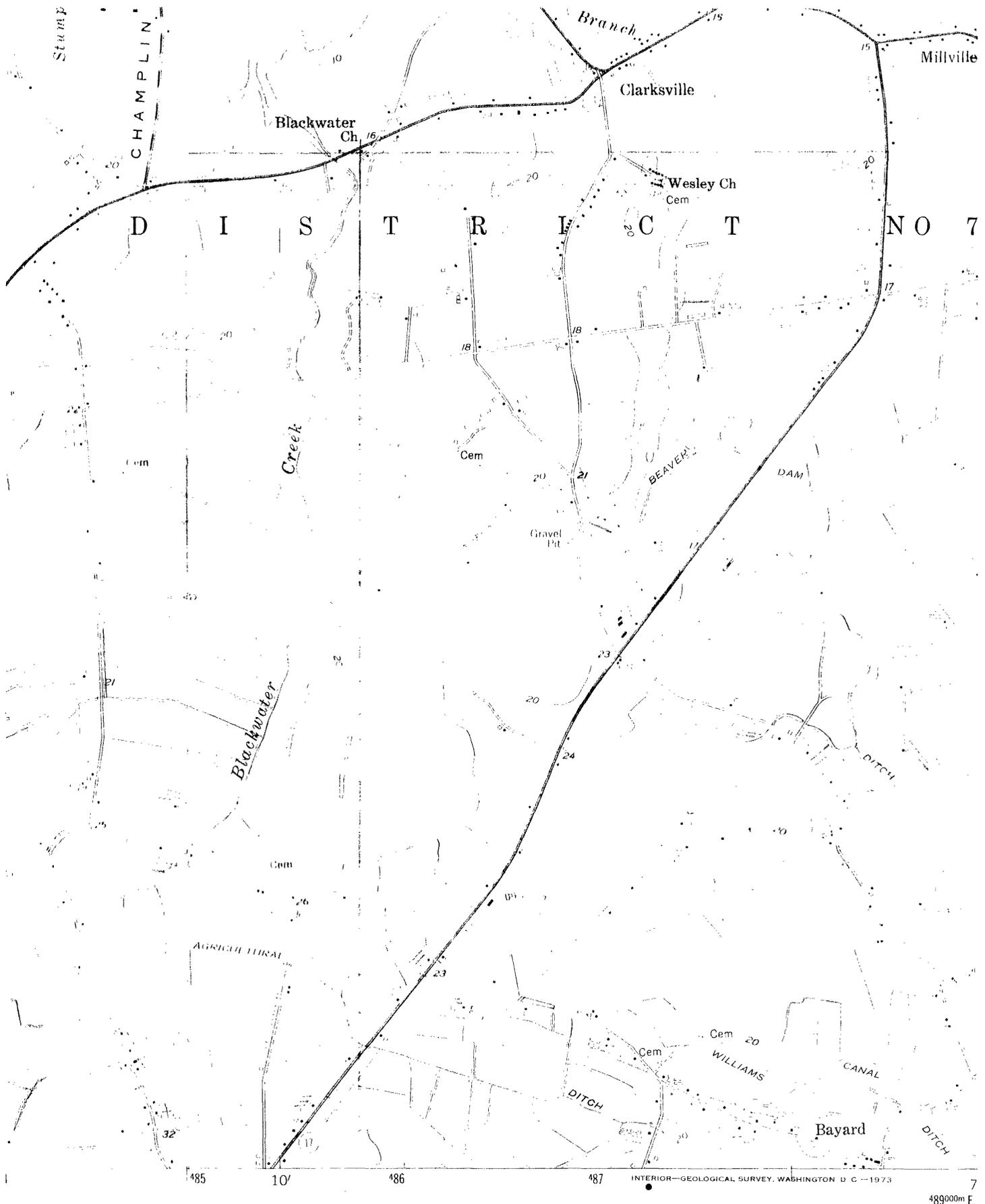
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

6-25-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

FBR for WJM 7/8/76



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 K ORCHARD



FRANKFORD, DEL.

N 3830--W 7507.5/7.5