

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 5 1979
DATE ENTERED	FEB 22 1979

**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

Bethel Church

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

NE of Morning Sun, off US 61

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Morning Sun

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Iowa

VICINITY OF

CODE

COUNTY  
Louisa

CODE  
115

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Bethel Cemetery Association, c/o Esther Rickert

STREET & NUMBER

R.R. 2, Box 108

CITY, TOWN

Wapello

STATE

Iowa 52653

VICINITY OF

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Louisa County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Wapello

STATE

Iowa

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                                 RUINS  
 FAIR                                  UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

Bethel Church is a one-room rectangular building of limestone, 23' x 38'4". The side walls are built of uncoursed rubble, the end walls of rubble ashlar. The gable roof is low-pitched, with narrow returned cornices. The sides are divided into five bays. Windows were originally 9/6 double hung sash, now boarded up. Lintels and sills are also stone. The recessed entrance is located in the south end, surmounted by a wide, flat lintel. Suggestion of quoining is found in the corner stones, which are slightly larger than those used for the walls.

The interior of the church is starkly plain, with plastered walls and plank flooring. Altar, pews, and pulpit chairs date from very early in the history of the church.

The church is located in a rural area, surrounded on three sides by a cemetery. An iron fence, placed in 1861, runs along the gravel road which forms the south edge of the church property.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input 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      1855

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bethel Church is principally significant as a well-preserved example of early Iowa vernacular or "folk" architecture. Stone buildings, wherever found in Iowa, are almost always among the oldest remaining structures in any given area. Where limestone (and, in a few areas, sandstone) was locally available, it was a popular building material, until brick could be manufactured locally or "imported", along with milled lumber. Most of these stone structures, whether houses, churches, schools or barns, were of simple straightforward form -- a quality represented in Bethel Church.

The stonework of the church exhibits some variety, from the rubble of the side walls to the carefully cut and dressed slabs of the window lintels and sills, and the suggestion of quoining through the use of larger stones at the corners. The small cornice returns are suggestive of Greek Revival influences.

The significance of the Bethel Church in the history of Methodism in Iowa has not been determined. It is, however, a relic of Iowa frontier religious development, associated with the most prominent Protestant denomination in the state. The church was built in 1855, following the organization of a congregation by the Wapello mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Iowa in 1854. This Mission also included two churches in Wapello, and two other rural mission churches at nearby Concord and Long Creek. The land for the church was donated by Merit Jamison, and the building erected by the congregation under the supervision of stonemason Francis McGraw. Although the church is no longer used regularly, its interior walls and ceiling have been recently repaired. The churchyard is the scene of an annual meeting of the founders' descendants.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Herrick, Bernice Jamison. Edwin Reymer Jamison Family History. -----, Letter to Esther Jamison Rickert, September 19, 1976.
- Swise, Forrest W. The Glory Belongs to our Ancestors. Galesburg, Ill.: Galesburg Post Publishing Co., 1953, pp. 31-32.
- Rickert, Esther Jamison (ed.) "The Bethel Church Story", ms., n.d. (contains excerpts from minutes of the quarterly conference of the Wapello Mission, 1854, 1856, 1861.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1-3/4 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Mediapolis, Iowa

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	5	6	5	2	1	8	10	4	5	5	2	3	3	5
ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

B 

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

C 

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

D 

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

E 

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

F 

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

G 

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

H 

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

1-3/4 acres in NE 1/4 Section 22, Township 73N Range 3W, Louisa County, Iowa.

## 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

M.H. Bowers, National Register Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

January 1979

STREET & NUMBER

26 East Market Street

TELEPHONE

319.353-6949

CITY OR TOWN

Iowa City

STATE

Iowa 52240

# 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Adrian A. Fulkerson*

TITLE

Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

1/29/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

2-22-79

ATTEST:

*Charles H. Starnes*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

WILLIAM H. BRADMAN  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

2-21-79

DATE