

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 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 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 Rock M. E. Church

other names Christ Rock United Methodist Church (preferred); D-585

### 2. Location

street & number 2403 Maryland Route 16  not for publication

city or town Cambridge x vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Dorchester code 019 zip code 21613

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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).

Elizabeth Hyde, DSHPO 11-5-13  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maryland Historical Trust  
State or 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 this 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Christ Rock United Methodist Church (D-585)  
Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland  
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		buildings
		sites
		structures
1		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)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY/Vernacular

LATE VICTORIAN/Gothic

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood/Weatherboard

\_\_\_\_\_

roof SYNTHETICS/Asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, D-585  
Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland  
County and State

### 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 pattern of our history.
- B Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- x 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### 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 files (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 # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

#### Period of Significance

1875-1911

#### Significant Dates

1875, c. 1889, 1910-11

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

#### Cultural Affiliation

African-American

#### Architect/Builder

Unknown

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, D-585  
Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 1.5 acres Cambridge, MD USGS quad

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8 Zone	4 0 3 8 9 1 Easting	4 2 6 6 8 0 9 Northing	3			
2				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 Paul Baker Touart, Architectural Historian  
Organization Private Consultant date 4.23.2012  
street & number Cedar Hill, Box 5 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Westover state Maryland zip code 21871

## 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 Friends of Stanley Institute, Inc. Attention: Mr. Herschel Johnson  
street & number P. O. Box 1199 telephone 410-228-6657  
city or town Cambridge state Maryland zip code 21613-5199

**Paperwork Reduction 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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

### Description Summary:

Rock M. E. Church, currently known as Christ Rock United Methodist Church, stands on the south side of the intersection of Maryland Route 16 (Church Creek Road) and Rock Drive, west of Cambridge, Dorchester County, Maryland. The single-story, Gothic Revival frame church, erected in four periods of construction from 1875 to 1911, faces north with the gable roof oriented on a north/south axis. Supported on a brick pier foundation, the exterior is clad with plain weatherboard siding. Rising on the northeast corner of the church is a two-story, pyramidal-roofed entrance tower. The sides of the frame church are marked by a variety of pointed-arch window openings filled with colored glass. A cemetery surrounds the church on a wooded, 1-1/2 acre lot. Restoration of the church was initiated by the Friends of Stanley Institute, Inc. in 2011.

### General Description:

Supported on a brick pier foundation, Christ Rock United Methodist Church is a single-story, three-bay by four-bay frame structure standing at 2403 Maryland Route 16 (Church Creek Road) approximately one mile west of the city limits of Cambridge, Dorchester County, Maryland. Fixed in the northwest corner of the front pier is a marble datestone inscribed, "Rock M. E. Church, Built 1875, Rebuilt 1889-1911." The Gothic Revival frame church is covered with plain weatherboards, and a medium pitched gable roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles.

The original 1875 timber frame church structure, measuring approximately 25' by 30,' is crafted with a combination of hewn and sawn surfaces, visible in the crawl space and within the unfinished attic space above the sanctuary. The hewn sills of the original church, combined with a center summer beam, support floor joists that have a combination of hand hewn and reciprocal sawn sides. The joists measure 2 1/2" by 6." The underside of the flooring boards that span these joists are of random widths with some measuring 10" to 12." The first addition to the 1875 structure, executed around 1889, enlarged the original building to the rear by approximately 6 feet. There are distinct shifts in the sill size and finish as well as the sizes and finishes of the joists and flooring. The joist size is on average 1 3/4" by 8" and have circular saw kerf marks. The flooring that spans these joists is a regular 3" width tongue and groove material. The 1910-11 addition, which extended the church to the south with a Sunday School room on the first floor and a choir loft above, is built with a lighter weight sill, which is sawn on four sides with 1 3/4" by 8" joists supporting random width tongue-and-groove flooring.

The north (main) elevation is an asymmetrical façade with an entrance and bell tower on the northeast corner. On the first floor of the tower, replacement metal raised-panel double

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

doors are fitted within a pointed arch door opening. Fixed above the double doors is a round arched transom. The wall surface above the entrance is marked by a round window with quartered panes of colored glass. Capping the tower is a medium pitched pyramidal roof of asphalt shingles. Trimming the base of the tower is a modest Victorian bracketed cornice. Fixed between the tower and the gable roof of the sanctuary is a shed roofed cricket that diverts water away from collecting in the valley between the tower and main gable roof. The north elevation of the main block is defined by three pointed arch windows filled with colored glass. The larger center window, formerly the location of the main entrance in the 1875 church, is wider and slightly taller than the flanking lancet style windows. The top of the gable-front wall is finished with an extended eave, enclosed soffits, and returns at the lower corners.

The side elevations are defined by pointed arch lancet windows. The windows on the west side elevation are original to the late nineteenth century structure, while the windows on the east side are late twentieth century replacements. A seam in the cornice on each side indicates where the 1889 structure ends and the single-bay 1910-11 addition begins. Single flue brick stove stacks pierce the side walls and rise through small cross gables. On the east side there is a four-panel door as a side entrance that provides access to the Sunday School room, and a two-over-two sash window partially lights the choir loft above. A small square window lights one of the two bathrooms on the first floor.

The south (rear) wall of the 1889 structure was completely covered when the church was extended in 1910-11, and small pointed arch apse windows were reused on the south wall. A round colored glass window the upper gable end was probably also relocated from the back wall or apse of the 1889 structure.

The interior of the church retains a very large percentage of its late nineteenth century architectural fabric intact. The sanctuary is entered through a small vestibule in the tower that is trimmed with a mixture of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century replacement beaded tongue-and-groove wainscoting. Above the wainscoting, the original plaster has been replaced with wallboard. Fixed in the ceiling of the vestibule is a beaded board hatch that provides access to an unfinished tower interior. A pair of late nineteenth-century doors with a heavy ogee panel molding is framed by a bulls-eye block surround. These doors were cut down and reused from a former location. The outer, vertical edges of the doors were rounded so that they would swing on pivots. Evidence of the former hinge locations is clearly visible.

The sanctuary has a balcony at its north end. Two blocks of Victorian pews are divided by a center aisle. Trimming the perimeter of the sanctuary is vertical beaded board tongue-and-groove wainscoting with a plaster wall finish above. Fixed on each side wall is an interior brick stove stack serving Monogram oil-fired space heaters. The north end balcony is supported by

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 7 Page 3

square posts, and a turned baluster staircase rises to the upper level seating. A small tongue-and-groove beaded board door provides access to the storage space underneath the first landing. The altar end of the sanctuary is defined by a semi-circular platform accented by a low, turned baluster railing. There are two tiers to the platform, and the original Victorian pulpit is backed by a decorative set of four beaded tongue-and-groove panels. The upper two panels have diagonally set tongue-and-groove boards. To each side of the pulpit platform are shallow four-panel doors leading to the Sunday School room. Fixed in the southwest corner of the Sunday School room is a narrow staircase leading to the choir loft. The choir loft has an open front marked by decorated posts and a low, turned baluster railing. The Sunday School room on the first floor is a low ceiling room with two mid twentieth century bathrooms located on its east side. Defining the south wall of the Sunday School room are the two pointed arch colored glass windows flanking a center door.

The cemetery is located to the south of the church in a grove of trees. There are several dozen marble markers, and many of the graves have above-ground concrete covers.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

### Summary Statement of Significance:

Christ Rock United Methodist Church is significant under Criterion C for its architecture, as a representative example of church design endorsed by the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The period of significance, 1875-1911, spans the period during which the church achieved its historic and current form and appearance.

Built in three principal stages, the timber frame, Gothic Revival style structure was erected initially in 1875 with successive modifications in 1889 and 1910-11. All three dates are recorded on a marble datestone fixed in the northwest corner foundation pier. With a confirmed architectural history that begins in 1875, it is one of the oldest surviving post-Civil War African-American churches on the lower Eastern Shore. Waves of modifications, consistent with the over-riding principles and recommendations of the Methodist Episcopal denomination nationally, affected and influenced the space and style changes that transformed the original gable-front frame church building. The sanctuary of this church has experienced only a few alterations since its enlargement and reworking between 1889 and 1911. A balcony, reached by a quarter turn staircase, dominates the north end interior while a raised platform altar, altar furniture and choir loft above are principal features of the south end. The choir loft and Sunday School room below, along with the front corner tower, were part of the modifications to the church during the early twentieth century.

The enlargement and restyling of the church exterior and interior in 1889, as well as the further expansion of the building in 1910-11 with an asymmetrical entrance tower, and rear Sunday School room and choir loft, point to the prominent trends inherent in the Methodist denomination nationally. During the late nineteenth century, the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church published catalogues of architectural plans for churches and parsonages which influenced greatly rural congregations across the Eastern Shore. While the architectural form and decoration of the tower and Gothic arched windows do not repeat exactly pattern-book designs, they easily evoke the intent to follow in the design recommendations espoused by the national leadership. The choir loft and Sunday School room addition speak to the growth and importance of these two congregational functions. The African-American congregations on the Eastern Shore are especially known for the key role that the choir and congregational singing had in their worship services. The property includes a cemetery dating to the period of use, beginning during the post-Civil War years.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

### Resource History and Historic Context:

Christ Rock United Methodist Church stands prominently on the south side of Maryland Route 16 at the intersection of several county roads across the highway from the Stanley Institute, a post-Civil War school building now used as a museum for the history of African-American education in Dorchester County, Maryland. The school and church are closely linked historically as they were established during the decade following the Civil War. Oral traditions within the church membership trace the early formation of a congregation in this community to 1867 when a small building was relocated from the village of Church Creek and jointly used as a school and a chapel.<sup>1</sup> Within five years, a building committee was established to erect a church separate from the school, and in August 1874 a half-acre parcel of the Bellfield tract was transferred by Thomas J. and Francis S. Dail, residents of the Baltimore, to Samuel Harris, Jon Cornish, Elisha Jolly, Lawrence Cornish and Josiah Marine.<sup>2</sup> According to the marble datestone set in the foundation pier, the original section of this church was erected the following year. Also recorded on the datestone are two additional dates and the word, "Rebuilt, 1889 and 1911." Fabric analysis of the structural frame confirms that the 1875 church, a 25' by 30' timber frame structure, survives and is masked by a uniform interior and exterior finishes. The initial single story timber frame church had a center, gable-front entrance and most likely two sash windows on each side. The windows were most likely of multi-pane lights with clear glass. Potentially, the only surviving interior elements of the 1875 church are the turned baluster altar rail and paneled pulpit. The paneled sides of the pulpit are enriched with 1870s ogee panel moldings, and the balusters of the altar rail are executed with turnings typical of post-Civil War stair rail baluster profiles. It is clear the altar rail has been cut and modified several times in its history of use.

In 1889, the original gable-front frame church was enlarged approximately six feet to the south, and stylish Gothic arched, colored glass lancet windows were installed on each lateral wall; three to a side and one on each side of the center entrance. The entire exterior was resheathed with new weatherboards,<sup>3</sup> and new brick piers were installed under the lengthened structure. The cornices were reworked with extended eaves and returns. On the inside of each lateral wall single flue chimney stacks were erected to accommodate stoves. The interior was extensively restyled with vertical beaded board wainscoting, new plaster above the wainscoting. A balcony was stretched across the north end. Centered in the south gable end was a three sided apse that featured small lancet windows on each side of a round arched window.

<sup>1</sup> Christ Rock United Methodist Church, 1875-1900, Memorial Booklet, 1990, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Dorchester County Land Record, FJH 10/93, 12 August 1874., Dorchester County Courthouse, Cambridge, Maryland.

<sup>3</sup> All exposed sections of weatherboarding appear to date from the late nineteenth century rebuilding of the church.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

In 1910-11, the church was enlarged a second time with a Sunday School room and choir loft addition, which necessitated eliminating the three-sided apse that defined the south end. In an effort to repeat popular Gothic architectural traditions embraced by the national Methodist Episcopal Church, a two-story entrance tower was erected on the northeast corner. The construction of the entrance tower made the old center, gable-end entrance obsolete, and it was closed up and converted into a Gothic arched window. The seams in the exterior weatherboards and the shift inside of the type of wainscoting indicate the position of the former entrance.

In its original configuration, a board partition enclosed the balcony staircase, which was modified with the installation of a turned newel post, turned balusters, and a molded handrail during the 1910-11 period of construction. Similar turned work is found in the choir loft, also dating to the same time. The rear addition required the removal of the apse, and the colored glass windows were reused in the south wall of the extended structure. The altar area was reworked with diagonal matched, tongue-and-groove beaded boards that infilled the section formerly occupied by the apse. The altar was raised at that time in a two tiered form. According to the church history, the 1910-11 addition was executed by contractor, R. B. Dixon of Easton.

The church remained the same size until the mid-twentieth century. During the ministry of Reverend Theasdar Murray (1956-1968) a single story concrete block church hall was erected by Alfred Foster and James Opher of Cambridge. It was also during this period that a layer of insulation was applied to the exterior and covered with gray asphalt shingles (since removed). A fire that emanated from the east stove chimney damaged a large section of the roof. Active use of the building as a church ceased during the late 1990s when problems surfaced with the renewal and improvement of the septic system.

In 2011 the Friends of Stanley Institute undertook a program of restoration to reuse the church as a public historic site and museum.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

## Major Bibliographical References:

*Christ Rock United Methodist Church, 1875-1990*, "History of Christ Rock United Methodist Church," pp. 10-12, 1990.

Private files of Christ Rock United Methodist Church, on site in church filing cabinet.

Touart, Paul Baker. Historic Structures Report for Christ Rock United Methodist Church, 1.2010.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

## Geographical Data

### Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is shown as Parcel 140 on Dorchester County Tax Map 41, and recorded among the Land Records of Dorchester County in Liber 00851, folio 00210.

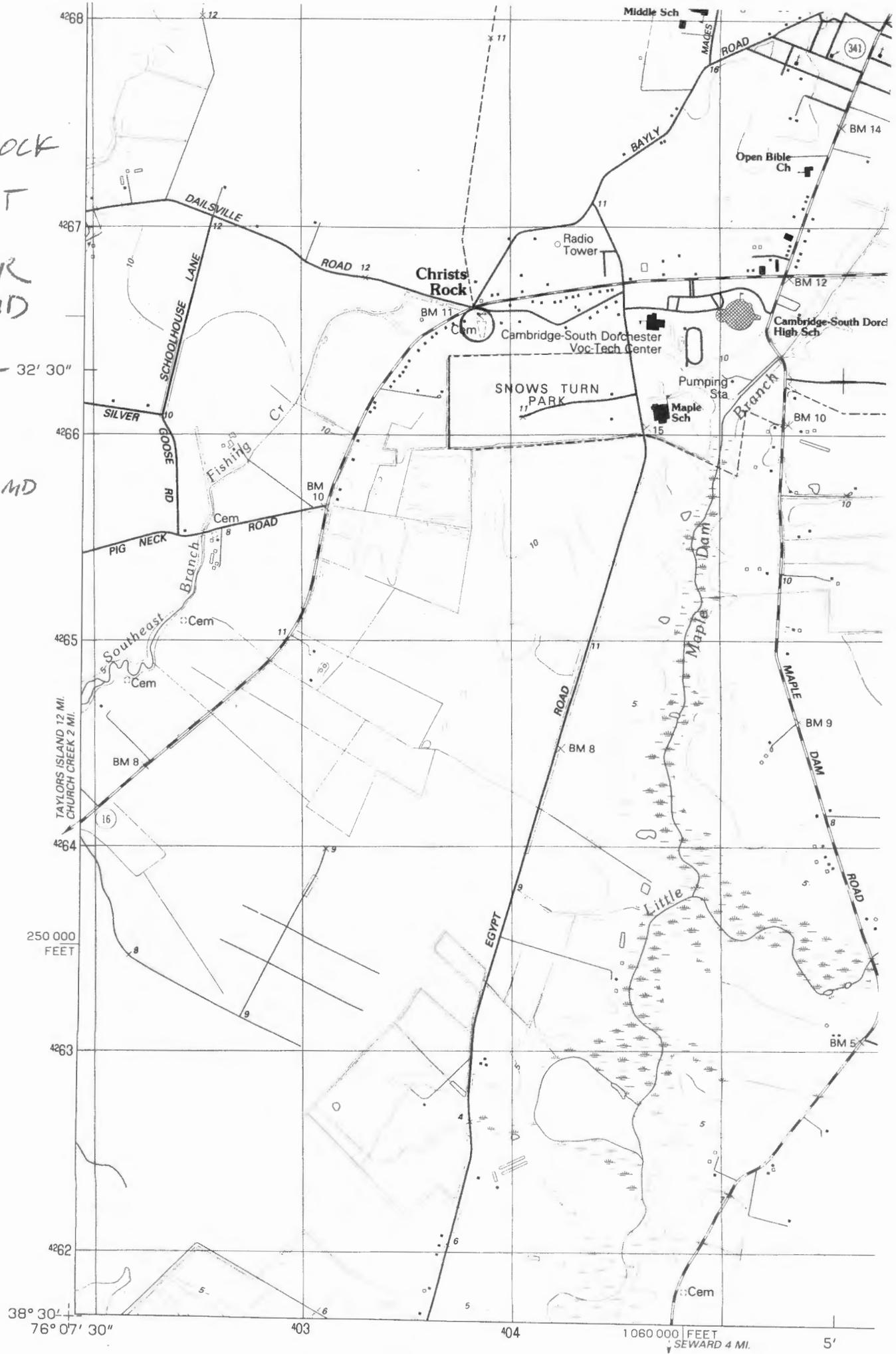
### Boundary Justification:

The nominated property, approximately 1.5 acres, comprises the entire parcel historically associated with the property, encompassing the church building and cemetery within a setting of mature trees.

D-585  
CHRIST ROCK  
UNITED  
METHODIST  
CHURCH  
DORCHESTER  
COUNTY, MD

8-403891-32' 30"  
4266809

CAMBRIDGE, MD  
QUAD





D-585

CITRIST ROCK UNITED METH. CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE VIC, DORCHESTER CO, MA.

NORTHEAST ELEVATION

2/2012, PAUL TOWERS, PHOTOGRAPHER

1 OF 10



D-585

CITRUS ROCK UNITED METHOD CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE VIL., DONCASTON Cr., MD.

NO. 111 ELEVATION

2/2012, PAUL TOWNSEND, PITTTSBURGH

2 of 10



D-505

CHAIR ROCK UNITED METH. CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE VIC, DORCHESTER Co., MD.

SOUTHWEST ELEVATION VIEW

STANLEY INSTITUTE IN BRASS  
GROUND

2/2012, PAUL TOWNSEND, PITTSO.

30K 10

ROCK M. E. CHURCH  
BUILT 1875  
REBUILT  
1889 — 1911

D-585

Cross Row United Meth. Church  
Cambridge vic., Dorchester G. M.P.

MARBLE DATESTONE

2/2012, Paul Tourant, Pitts. V.

4 of 10



D-585

CHRIST ROCK UNITED METHODIST  
CONGREGATION

CAMBRIDGE VIC., DORCHESTER CO., MASS.

SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

2/2012, PAUL TOWANT, PHOTO.

5 OF 10



D-585  
CHRIST ROCK UNITED Meth. Church  
CAMBRIDGE VIC., DORCHESTER Co., MD

~~CEMETERY~~  
2/2012, PAUL TOAST, PITUIT.

6 OF 10



D-585

CHRIST ROCK UNITED METH. CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE VT., DORCHESTER CO. MD.

SANCTUARY - INCLUDING BALCONY  
2/2012, PAUL TOURANT, PITUITV.

7 OF 10



P-585

CITIZEN ROCK UNITED METHOD CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE VIC, DORCHESTER Co, MD.

SANCTUARY - on the 4th CITIZEN LUFT  
2/2012, PAUL TOURT, PITTSV.

8 04 10



D.595

CITRUS ROW UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH

CAMBRIDGE VIC. DORCHESTER  
Co., MD.

BALCONY - STAIRCASE

2/2012, PAUL TOUANT,

PITTSBURGH

9 OF 10



D-585

CITRUS ROCK UNITED METHOD. CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE, VIC., DORCHESTER Co., MA.

Sunday School room with  
STAIR TO CITRUS CHURCH IN  
BACKGROUND

2/2012; PAUL TOUANT, PHOTO.

10 OF 10

D-585  
Christ Rock United Methodist Church  
Cambridge vicinity  
1875, 1889, 1911 and later  
Private

Christ Rock United Methodist Church stands prominently on the south side of MD Route 16 southwest of Cambridge across the highway from the Stanley Institute. (D-43) The two institutions are closely linked historically as they were established during the decade following the end of the Civil War. Oral traditions within the church membership trace the early formation of a congregation in this community around 1867 when a small building was relocated from Church Creek and used jointly as a school and a chapel. Within five years, a building committee was established to erect a church separate from the school, and in August 1874, a half-acre parcel of the Bellfield tract was transferred from Thomas J. and Francis S. Dail, residents of the City of Baltimore, to church trustees, Samuel Harris, John Cornish, Elisha Jolly, Lawrence Cornish, and Josiah Marine. According to the marble datestone set in the current foundation, the original church was erected the following year in 1875. Also recorded on the datestone are two additional dates, 1889 and 1911. The two later dates, given the architectural character of the structure, probably relate to the replacement of the 1875 structure in 1889 with modifications including the corner entrance tower and rear addition prior to the end date of 1911. During the mid twentieth century ministry of Reverend Theasdar Murray (1956-1968) the concrete block church hall was erected by Alfred Foster and James Opher of Cambridge. It was also during this time that a layer of insulation was applied to the exterior after which it was covered with asphalt shingles. The sanctuary of Christ Rock church has experienced few alterations since the late nineteenth century and

includes a raised altar with original ceremonial furnishings. At the north end of the sanctuary is a late nineteenth century balcony reached by a quarter turn staircase fixed in the northwest corner.

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, originally a Methodist Episcopal congregation, has served this neighborhood of African-American residents close to a century and a half, and the church as well as the Stanley Institute are the only principal structures surviving as tangible landmarks of this community that formed during the post Civil War years.

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-585

## 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Rock M. E. Church  
 other Christ Rock United Methodist Church

## 2. Location

street and number 2403 Rock Drive  not for publication  
 city, town Cambridge  vicinity  
 county Dorchester

## 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Trustees of Christ Rock United Methodist Church  
 street and number Box 165 telephone 410-228-6657  
 city, town Cambridge state MD zip code 21613

## 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber WLR 4 folio 121  
 city, town Cambridge tax map 41 tax parcel 140 tax ID number 174888

## 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District  
 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
 Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
 Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
 Recorded by HABS/HAER  
 Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<u>1</u> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

**Number of Contributing Resources  
previously listed in the Inventory**  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

Inventory No. D-585

### Condition

excellent       deteriorated  
 good             ruins  
 fair               altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Rock M. E. Church, currently known as Christ Rock United Methodist Church, stands on the south side of the intersection of MD Route 16, (Church Creek Road) and Rock Drive, west of Cambridge, Dorchester County, Maryland. The single-story, Gothic Revival frame church, erected in 1889, faces north with the gable roof oriented on a north/south axis. Supported on a brick pier foundation, the exterior is clad with a layer of asphalt shingles over plain weatherboard siding. Rising on the northeast corner of the church is a two-story, pyramidal roofed entrance tower. Accompanying the church on the half-acre lot is a nineteenth and twentieth century cemetery.

Supported on a brick pier foundation, Rock M. E. Church is a single-story, three-bay by four-bay frame structure located at 2403 Rock Drive approximately one-mile west of Cambridge, Dorchester County, Maryland. Fixed in the corner of the northwest front pier is a marble datestone inscribed "Rock M. E. Church, Built 1875, Rebuilt 1889-1911." The Gothic Revival frame church is covered with a layer of asphalt shingles over the original plain weatherboards, and a medium pitched gable roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles as well.

The north (main) elevation is an asymmetrical façade with a corner entrance and bell tower rising on the northeast corner. Piercing the first floor are replacement double doors fitted within a pointed arch door frame that incorporates a semi-circular transom. The wall surface above the entrance is marked by a round window with quartered panes of colored glass. Capping the tower is a medium pyramidal roof of asphalt shingles. Trimming the base of the roof is a Victorian bracketed cornice. Fixed between the tower and the gable roof is a shed roofed cricket that diverts water away from the tower. The north elevation of the church is defined by three pointed arch windows filled with colored glass. The larger center window is wider and slightly taller than the flanking lancet style windows. The top of the gable-front wall is finished with an extended eave, enclosed soffits, and returns at the bottom corner.

The side elevations are defined by pointed arch lancet windows as well. A seam in the cornice indicates the original 1875 church was three bays across while a single bay addition enlarged the structure to the south during the early twentieth century. Single flue brick stove stacks pierce the side walls. The rear wall of the original church is covered by the early twentieth century addition, which has a segmental arched window in the gable end. Attached to the back of the church is a mid twentieth century concrete block addition that serves as a church hall.

The interior has survived with a large percentage of its late nineteenth century architectural fabric intact. The sanctuary is entered through a small vestibule trimmed with a mixture of late nineteenth and early twentieth century replacement beaded tongue-and-groove board wainscoting. Above the wainscoting, the original plaster has been replaced with wallboard. Fixed in the ceiling of the vestibule is a beaded board hatch access door providing access to the tower. A pair of late nineteenth-century folding doors with heavy ogee panel moldings is framed by a bulls-eye block surround.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-585

Name Christ Rock United Methodist Church  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 7 Page 1

---

The sanctuary has a balcony fixed at its north end, while two blocks of Victorian pews are divided by a center aisle and side aisles. Trimming the perimeter of the sanctuary is vertical beaded tongue-and-groove board wainscoting with wallboard above it. Fixed on each side wall is an interior brick stove chimney serving space heaters. The north end of the sanctuary features a balcony supported by square posts. A turned baluster handrail anchored by a turned newel post is supported by turned balusters as well. The quarter turn staircase rises to a sloped floor balcony. Access under the staircase is provided through a small board-and-batten door.

The altar end of the sanctuary is defined by a semi-circular altar framed by a low turned baluster altar rail. There are two tiers to the altar, and the original Victorian pulpit is backed by a decorative set of four beaded tongue-and-groove panels. The upper two panels have diagonally set tongue-and-groove boards. To each side of the altar are shallow four-panel doors leading to a back room that is contained within the late nineteenth century extension. One of the doors has a reverse side retained late nineteenth century grained. The door also retains its Victorian case lock. Fixed in the southeast corner is a narrow staircase leading to a choir loft situated above the altar. The choir loft has an open front marked by decorated posts and a low turned baluster railing. The original plaster survives in the choir loft, although there are several serious cracks and some failed pieces. The first floor of the extension is a low ceiling remodeled space with two bathrooms located in the east side. Defining the south wall are a pair of pointed arch colored glass windows that flank a centered doorway leading to the church hall. The pointed arch windows, fitted with some colored glass panes, were evidently reused from a former apse prior to the extension of the church during the late nineteenth century.

The cemetery is located southeast of the church is a grove of mature hardwoods. There are several score marble markers, many of which have above ground concrete covers. There surely are as many unmarked burials as well.



**Maryland Historical Trust**  
**Maryland Inventory of**  
**Historic Properties Form**

Inventory No. D-585

Name Rock M. E. Church  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 1

---

CHAIN-OF-TITLE  
2403 Rock Drive  
Cambridge, Maryland 21613

WLR 4/121

Josiah Marine, Surviving Trustee

to

9.23.1911

Trustees of Rock Methodist Episcopal Church

....all of that lot, tract, piece or parcel of land situated, lying and being in Cambridge Election District, in Dorchester County, Maryland, being part of a tract of land called "Bellfield," or by whatever name or names the same may be known or called, containing one half acre of land, more or less, and being the same and identical land that is particularly described in the hereinbefore mentioned deed from Thomas J. Dail and wife to the said Josiah Marine and others

FJH 10/93

Thomas J. Dail and wife Francis S. Dail, City of Baltimore

to

8.12.1874

Samuel Harris, John Cornish, Elisha Jolly, Lawrence Cornish, Josiah Marine

\$15.00 all that lot of ground and being part of a tract of land called Bellfield, or by whatever names the same may be called lying and being in the County last aforesaid and Election District of said County number seven.....containing one half of an acre of land as laid down In trust as aforesaid that the said premises shall be used, kept and maintained and disposed of as a place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

---

Inventory No. D-585

Christ Rock United Methodist Church, Anniversary booklet, 1875-1990, 1990.  
Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse.  
Personal Interview with Herschel Johnson, 7.3.08

---

## 10. Geographical Data

---

Acreage of surveyed property 1.5 acres  
Acreage of historical setting 1.5 acres  
Quadrangle name Cambridge, Maryland 1988      Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

---

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

---

## 11. Form Prepared by

---

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian		
organization	Chesapeake Country Heritage & Preservation	date	7/3/2008
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

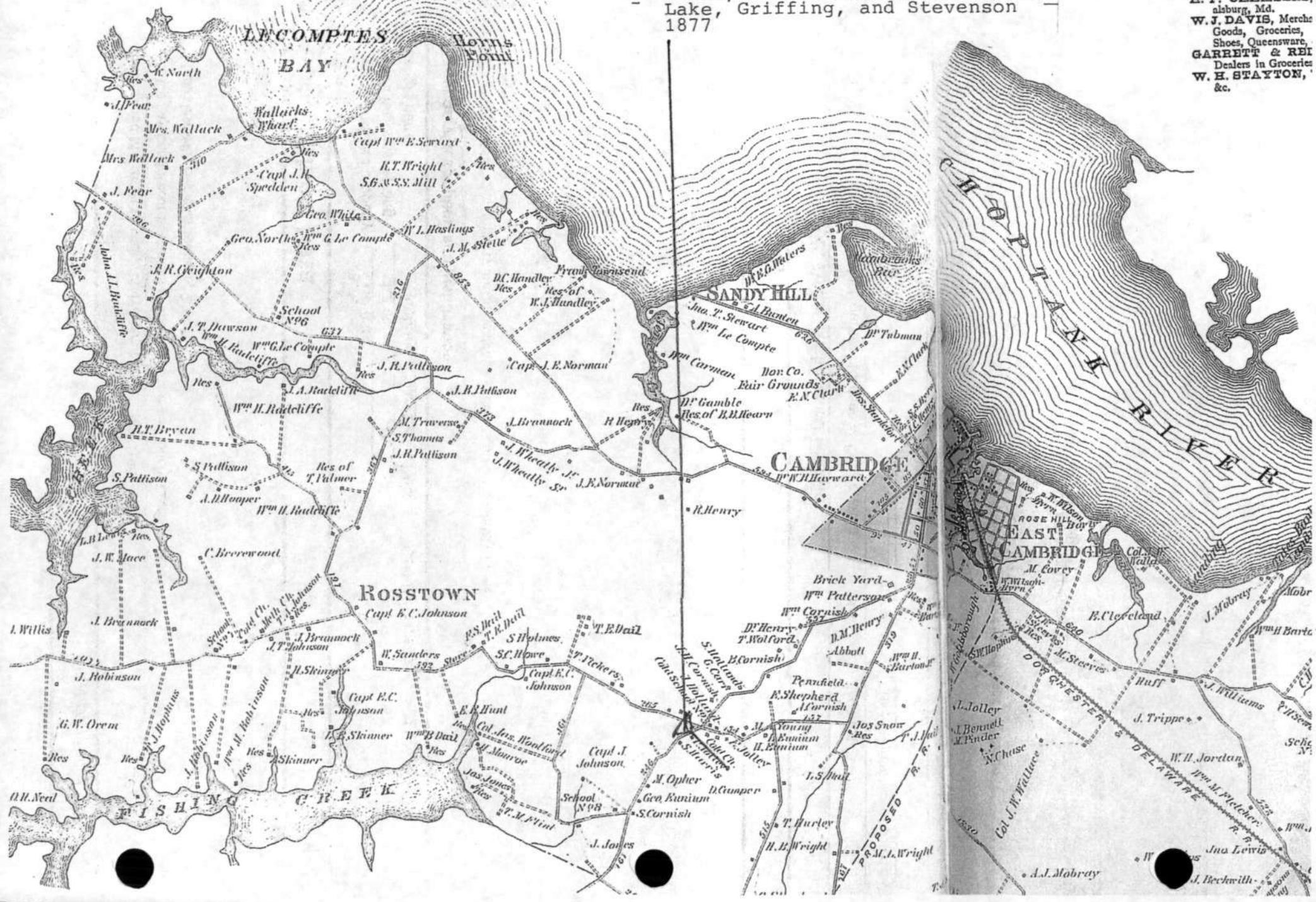
---

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

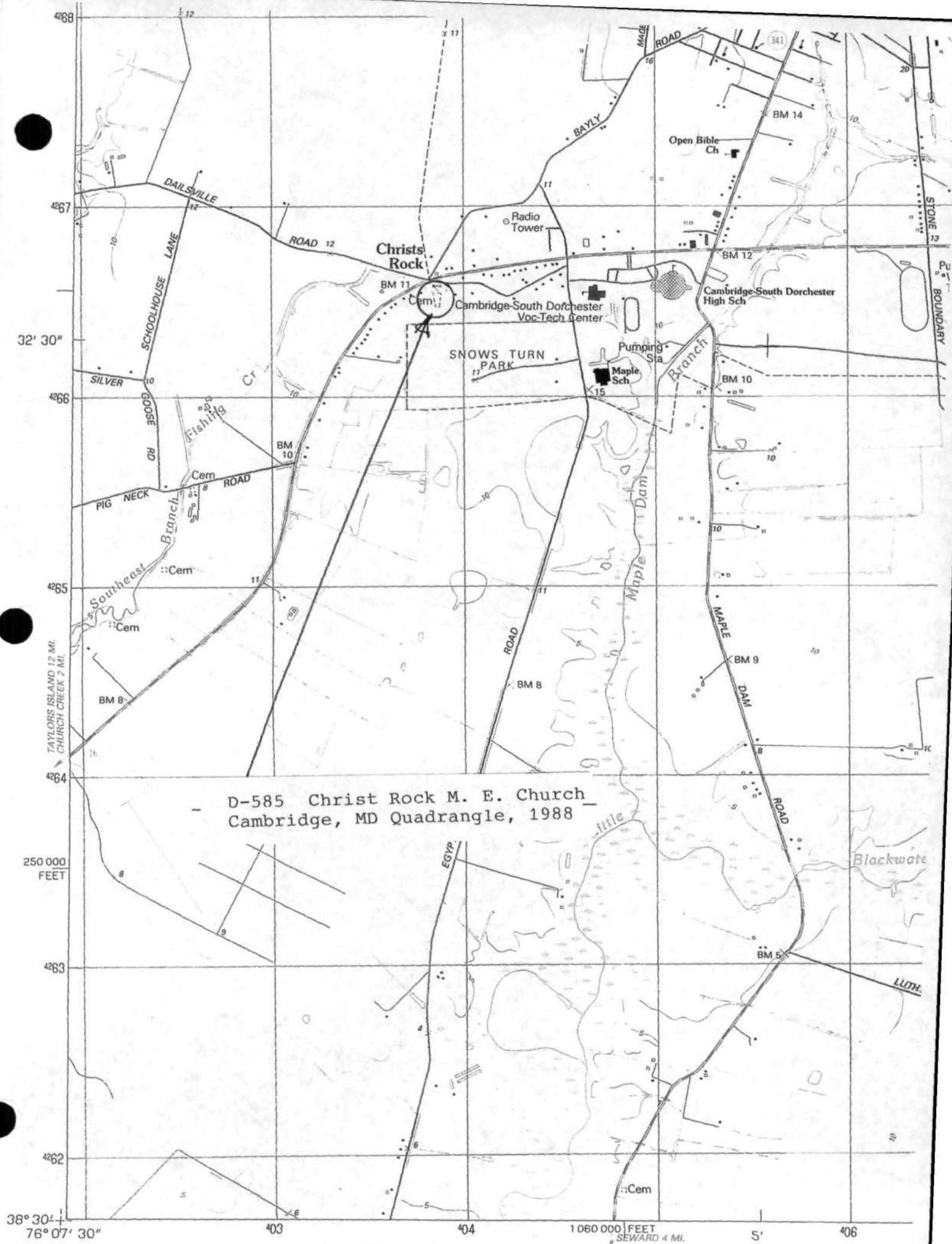
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:            Maryland Historical Trust  
                          DHCD/DHCP  
                          100 Community Place  
                          Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
                          410-514-7600

D-585, Christ Rock M. E. Church  
 Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson  
 1877



... Road House." You  
 the only first class Ho  
 E. H. SMITH, Prop  
 House." Head quar  
 JOSEPH T. DAVIS,  
 Dealer in Hard and  
 Boxes.  
 H. F. CHAMBERS,  
 alsburg, Md.  
 W. J. DAVIS, Merch  
 Goods, Groceries,  
 Shoes, Queensware,  
 GARRETT & REI  
 Dealers in Groceries  
 W. H. STAYTON,  
 &c.



D-585 Christ Rock M. E. Church  
 Cambridge, MD Quadrangle, 1988

38° 30' 1" 76° 07' 30" 403 404 1060 000 FEET SEWARD 4 MI. 5' 406

TAYLORS ISLAND 12 MI.  
 CHURCH CREEK 2 MI.

32' 30"

4268  
 4267  
 4266  
 4265  
 4264  
 4263  
 4262



D-585

CHRIST ROCK M.E. CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE VIC., DORCHESTER CO., MD.

NORTHEAST ELEVATION

7/08. PAUL TOWN, PITTSBURGH

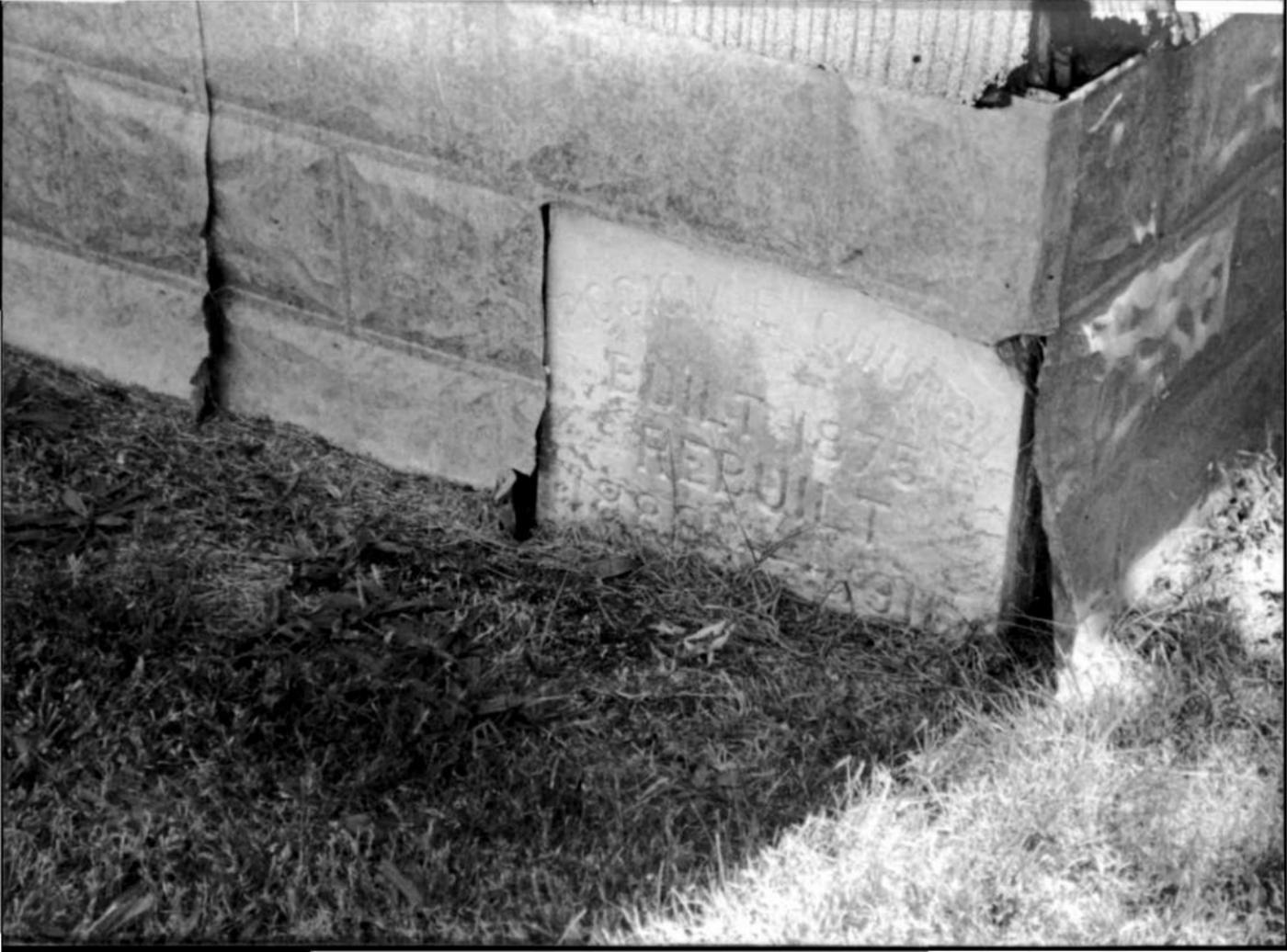
NEZ. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST



D-585

CHRIST ROOM M. E. CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE VII, DORCHESTER CO., MD.  
SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

7/08. PAUL TOWNS, PHOTOGRAPHER  
N.E. / M.D. HISTORICAL TRUST



1875  
RECUINT

D-585

Citrist Rock Mr. E. Conner

CAMBRIAGE VIC., DORCHESTER CO., MD.

DATESTONE - BUILT 1875, REBUILT 1889-1911

7/08. PAUL TOWANT, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEZ. / MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

Dorchester - 585  
Rock ME Church  
Rock Drive  
Cambridge, MD, 21613

1875, 1889, 1911

Access: Public

Rock ME Church stands 20' from the south side of Rock Drive across from Stanley Institute. Stanley Institute was once known as Rock Elementary School. At church stood on this site before 1875. The present structure was built in 1875 and rebuilt in 1889 and 1911. The church is located in a black community that grew up around the church after the Civil War.

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Christ Rock ME Church

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER Rock Drive

CITY, TOWN Cambridge

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT First

STATE Maryland

COUNTY Dorchester

**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 checked="" 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 Trustees, Rock ME Church

Telephone #: N/A

STREET &amp; NUMBER Rock Drive

CITY, TOWN Cambridge

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code MD, 21613

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Dorchester Co. Court House

Liber #: CL 26

Folio #: 399

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Cambridge

STATE Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE N/A

DATE

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

D-585

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
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>1875</u>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Rock ME Church stands 20' from the south side of Rock Drive across from Stanley Institute. The building was erected in 1875, rebuilt in 1889 and 1911. The building is 46' across the front facade and 80' in depth. The building is gable ended (North-South) with an entrance tower on the north-east corner of the building making the structure appear Italianate. The building faces North. It has two steps (concrete) that lead to double metal doors. There is a circular window half-way up the tower with 4 panes of colored glass. The tower is square with a spike atop. There is frontispiece cathedral window in the front facade (12') with 9 panes of colored glass. The window is flanked by 2 lancet windows (12') 4-over-4 with colored glass panes. There are 4 lancet windows (8') 4-over-4 (colored-glass) on the west side of the building and four more identical windows on the east side of the building. The structure is covered with grey asbestos shingles and has a composite shingle roof. An addition has been added on the south end to serve as a hall.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

D-585

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 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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 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 1875-1889-1911

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This site has been significant to the black history of the region for many years. Stanley Institute (the oldest community school in Dorchester County is located on the property) stands across from Rock ME Church and was known as Rock Elementary School. It was placed at this location in 1867. A small church stood on this site before 1875. Rock is an old black congregation but not as old as Waugh ME Church which was founded by freemen in 1826. This church is located in a black community that grew around the church after the Civil War.

D-585

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	COUNTY
STATE	COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

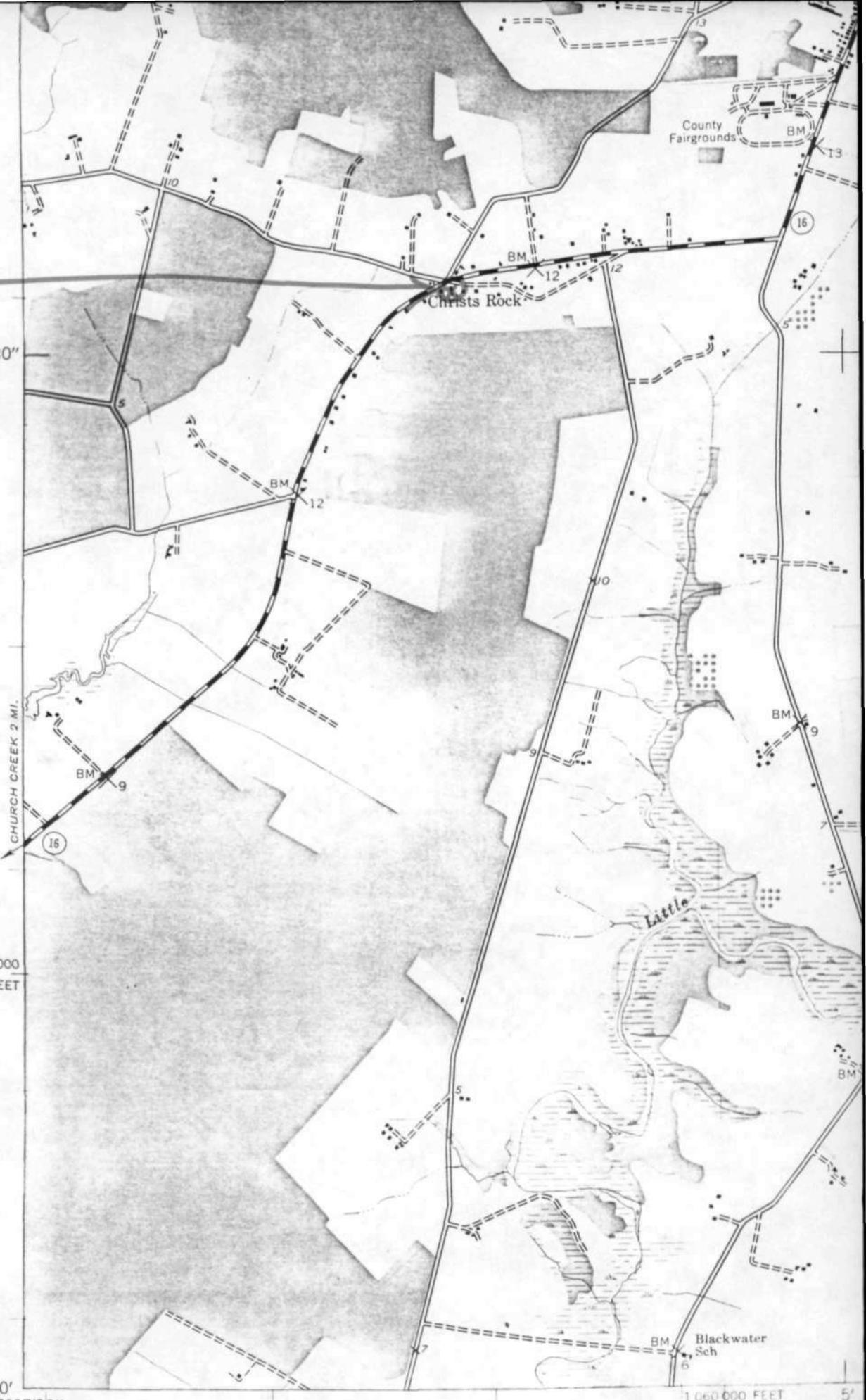
NAME / TITLE	James W. Clark, Historic Sites Surveyor	
ORGANIZATION	Maryland Commission on Afro-American History & Culture	DATE
STREET & NUMBER	20 Dean Street	TELEPHONE
CITY OR TOWN	Annapolis	STATE
		Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

D-585  
Christ Rock  
M.E. Church



250 000  
FEET

38°30'  
76°07'30"

1 060 000 FEET

GOLDEN HILL

Mapped by the Army Map Service  
Published for civil use by the Geological Survey  
Control by USC&GS

Cambridge Quad

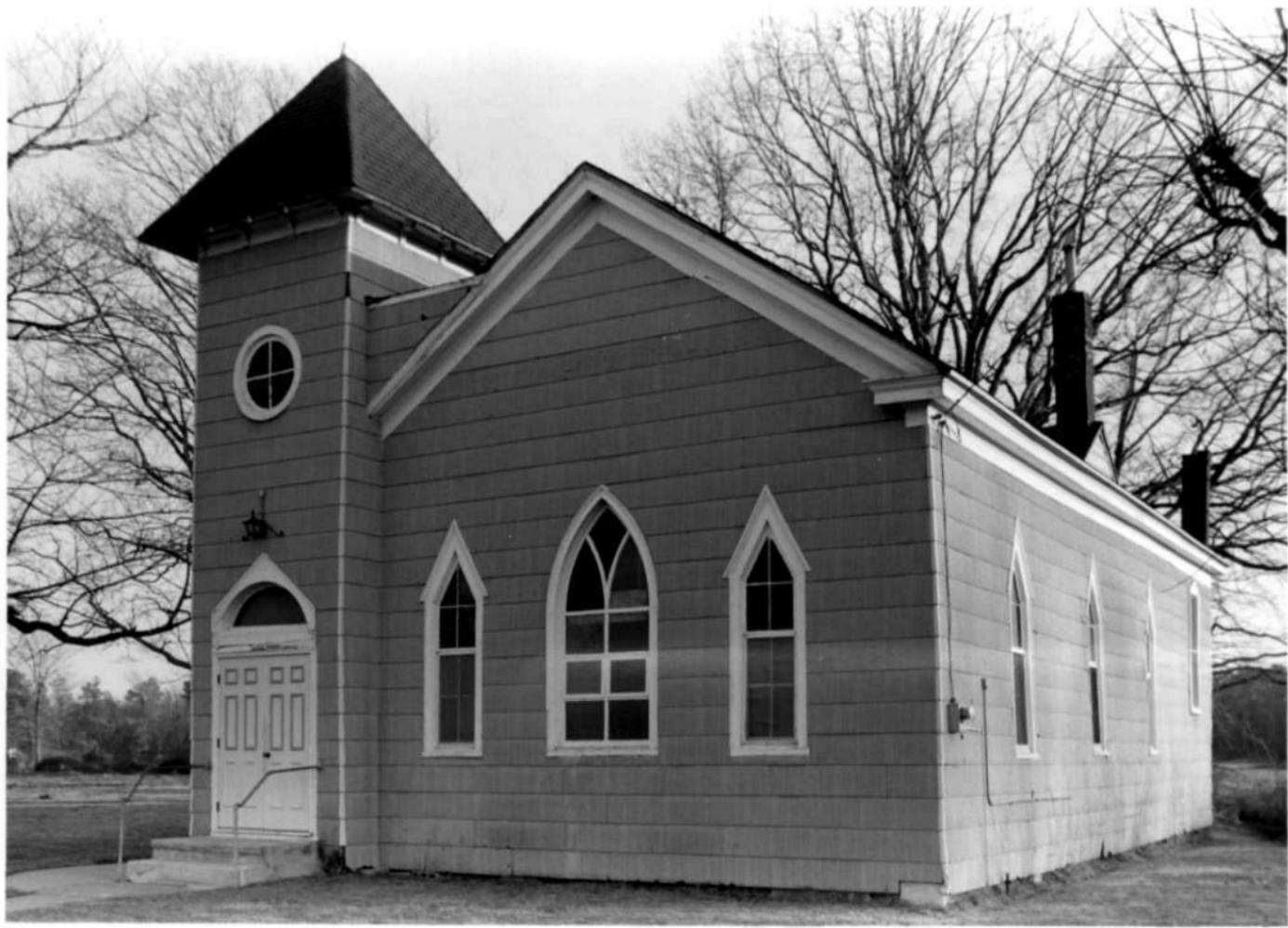


585

47%

Christ Rock Methodist Episcopal Church  
Cambridge, Dorchester County, MD D-585  
Michael Hosford

Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis ID  
North elevation  
2/81



Christ Rock Methodist Episcopal Church  
Cambridge, Dorchester County, MD D-585  
Michael Hosford

Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD  
Northwest elevation  
2/81