

P.G. #87B-33

1866, 1906, ca.1961

John Wesley Methodist Church Site and Cemetery  
22919 Christ Church Road, Aquasco, Md.  
Priv/Occ/Relig/Unexposed

The old John Wesley Church (1906) was a simple frame building, 20' x 40', with belfry and bell. All that remains of it is the bell, which hangs in a simple trellis just west of the present church. The new church (1960's) is a gable-roofed stuccoed building with entrance through double metal doors in the north gable end; a smaller gable-roofed addition has been built onto the rear (south), extending to the east and forming an ell. There is a large cemetery to the west, with many stones from the period after 1906.

In 1866, James Gray, a literate freedman, purchased a two-acre parcel of land just southwest of Woodville from George Morton, a prominent White landowner of the Aquasco District. Within two months, Gray conveyed the land to himself and four other Black trustees, with the purpose of erecting a house of worship for the Methodist Episcopal Church. By 1873, G.T. Pinckney was preaching at the new chapel. The Freedmen's Bureau erected a school on the grounds of the church, and James Gray and two other church trustees served as trustees of the school. The church had come to be known as John Wesley by the turn of the century; in 1906, a new frame chapel was built to replace the original. The present church was built ca. 1961, and within a decade its congregation merged with that of the deteriorating St. Thomas Church (Baden). The combined congregation worships at John Wesley Church, now known as Christ United Methodist Church. Although nothing remains of the first two chapels at this location, the site with its cemetery is significant because it represents one of the earliest churches established by freedmen immediately following the Civil War.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church

and/or common Christ United Methodist Church

## 2. Location

street & number 22919 Christ Church Road \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Aquasco \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 4

state Maryland county P.G.

## 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 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"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Trustees of Christ United Methodist Church

street & number 22919 Christ Church Road telephone no.:

city, town Aquasco state and zip code Maryland

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. P. G. Co. Courthouse liber FS #3

street & number Main Street folio 674

city, town Upper Marlboro state Md.

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title NONE

date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. P.G. 87B-33

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The church which stands today was built in the early 1960's and contains no part of the original John Wesley Church. It is a gable-roofed stuccoed building, with entrance through double metal doors in the north gable end. There is a narrow casement window on each side of the double doors, and four similar windows on each of the east and west facades. A smaller gable roofed addition has been built onto the rear (south) of the church building, extending to the east and forming an ell.

The old John Wesley Church was built in 1906, and stood immediately west of the present church, now part of the graveyard. It was a simple frame meeting-house type building 20' x 40', with a belfry and a bell (cast by McShane of Baltimore in 1892). All that remains now of this older church is the bell, which hangs from its own simple trellis just west of the present church.

Along the west edge of the church lot is a cemetery with many stones from the period after 1906.

## 8. Significance

Survey No. P.G. 87B-33

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 type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History

Specific dates 1866, 1906, 1961 Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or

Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

In 1866, James Gray, a literate freedman, purchased a two-acre parcel of land just southwest of Woodville from George Morton, a prominent White landowner of the Aquasco District. Within two months, Gray conveyed this land to himself and four other Black trustees, with the understanding that they were to erect a house of worship for members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>1</sup> It is not certain just when the church was built, but minutes of the Washington Conference of (Black) Methodist Churches indicate that it was standing in 1873, and that G. T. Pinckney was the preacher.<sup>2</sup>

It is virtually certain that there was a school operating at this church as early as 1868; Freedmen's Bureau papers indicate a school finished in this year, although its exact location (in Woodville) is not specified. The fact, however, that the three trustees of the school, including James Gray, were at the same time trustees of the new Black Methodist Church certainly suggests that there was a strong connection between the school and the new church.<sup>3</sup>

At least by the period of Rev. A. H. Tilghman's tenure, (1901 - 1905) the church was known as John Wesley Church, and plans were being made for the construction of a new church building. This new building, a plain frame meeting-house type structure, 20' x 40', with belfry, was dedicated in November 1906.

A few years later, in 1914, the then trustees of John Wesley (most of them descendants of the original trustees) purchased a lot on the southeast edge of Woodville on which they constructed their parsonage.<sup>4</sup>

The new (present) church at John Wesley Church was built circa 1961, and within a decade its congregation merged with that of the deteriorating St. Thomas Church, Baden. The combined congregation which worships at John Wesley Church,

is now known as Christ United Methodist Church. The old road on which the church is located, so long known as John Wesley Church Road, has officially been changed to Christ Church Road.<sup>5</sup>

Although nothing remains of the original church and school at this location, the site (with the surviving cemetery) is significant, because it represents one of the earliest churches established by freedmen immediately following the Civil War.

## NOTES:

1. P.G. Co. Deeds FS #3:673,674
2. Minutes of the Washington Conference of Methodist Churches, 1873
3. Board of School Commissioners, Journal Vol. I, p. 69
4. P. G. Deeds #91:37
5. Conversations with Rev. Pearlana Woolridge of Christ U. M. Church, September 1982 and May 1983



Prince Georges - 87B- 33  
Christ Church (John Wesley U.M. Church)  
Christ Church Rd.  
Aguasco, MD 20608

1884, 1906, 1961

Access:Public

Christ Church (John Wesley U.M. Church) is  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile down  
Christ Church Rd. from that road's junction with Rte.381.  
It is on the west side of the road and faces north. The  
congregation dates to 1884, the present church was erected  
on this site in 1906 and rebuilt in 1961. There was a black  
school here in the later part of the nineteenth century.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Christ U.M. Church (John Wesley M.E. Church)  
 AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Christ Church Rd.

CITY, TOWN Aquasco CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Fourth  
 VICINITY OF  
 STATE Maryland COUNTY Prince Georges

**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 PROCESS	<input checked="" 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 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, Christ U.M. Church Telephone #: 888-1363  
 C/O Rev. R. Owen Johnson  
 STREET & NUMBER Rt., 3 Box 536  
 CITY, TOWN Brandywine VICINITY OF STATE, zip code MD, 20613

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Prince Georges Co. Courthouse Liber #: JW B 7  
 Folio #: 304  
 STREET & NUMBER  
 CITY, TOWN Upper Marlboro STATE Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE N/A  
 DATE  
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
 CITY, TOWN STATE  
 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR
- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

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

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

Christ Church(John Wesley UM Church) is 1/4 mile down Christ Church Road from that road's junction with MD. Rte. 331. It is on the west side of the road and faces north. The church that stands on this property is not the original church. All that remains of that building is its bell. The bell is suspended from a pipe trellis and was cast by Mc Shane and Co. of Baltimore in 1892. The first church was called Christ Church and the second church was known as John Wesley. John Wesley was erected on this site in 1906 and rebuilt in 1961. The present church is again known as Christ Church (Methodist). The church is stucco it measures 26' across the front facade and is 30 ft. indepth. An addition has been added at the rear of the church (Sunday School, Hall, etc.) forming an el. This addition is 30' across and 26' in depth. Both sections of the structure are gable-roofed (North-South). The Church has 2 5' casement windows in the front facade(clear glass). They flank the double metal doors that serve as an entrance. There are 4 of these identical casement windows on the west side of the building and 4 more on the east side.

**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 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 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 type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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 1884-1906-1961

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This congregation dates to 1884. The site is significant because there was once a black school here (19th century). The buildings have been altered and added to many times. Old Christ Church at one time housed a white congregation, but it passed into the hands of black Methodists in 1884.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**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 &amp; NUMBER

20 Dean Street

TELEPHONE

269-2893

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

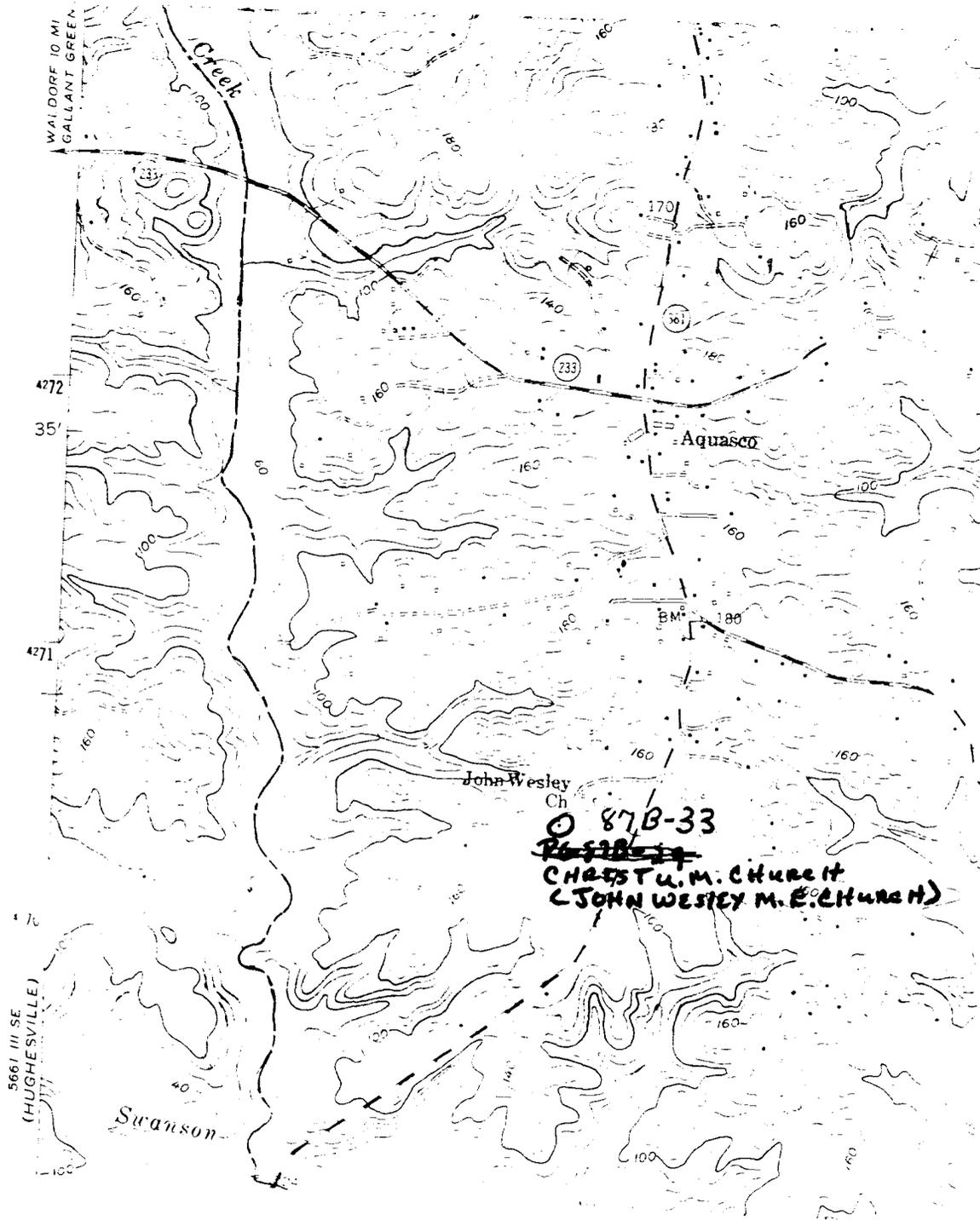
STATE

Maryland

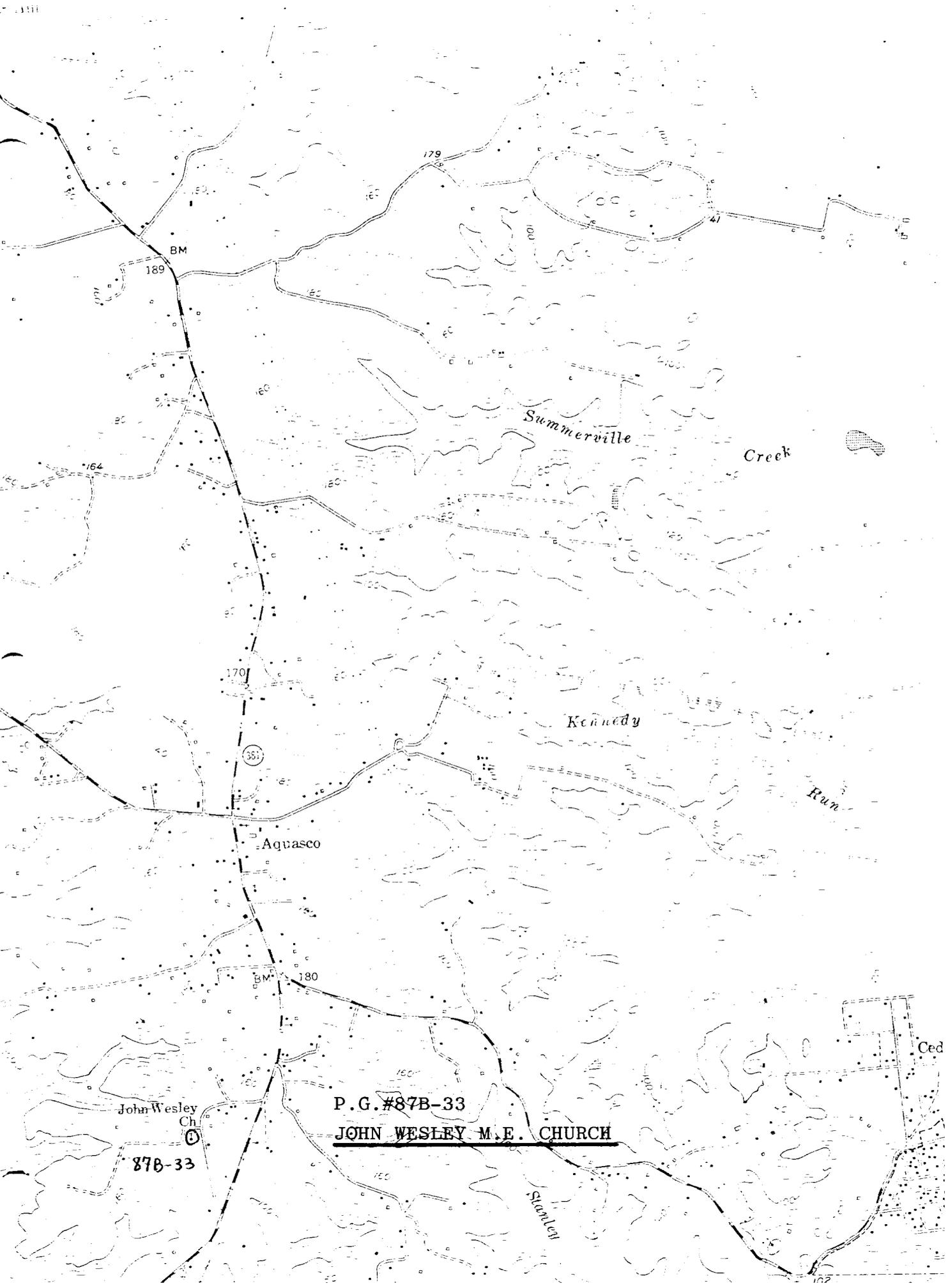
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

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



BENEDICT



BM

189

179

164

170

351

Aquasco

BM

180

John Wesley Ch

ⓐ

87B-33

P.G.#87B-33

JOHN WESLEY M.E. CHURCH

Summerville

Creek

Kennedy

Run

Ced

Stanley



P. G. #87B-33

John Wesley Methodist Church  
Prince George's County, Md.  
Susan G. Pearl  
October 1982  
North elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



P. G. #87B-33

John Wesley Cemetery  
Prince George's County, Md.  
Susan G. Pearl  
May 1983  
View to West  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



*P.G.: 87B-33*

Christ United Methodist Church ~~PG07B29~~  
Aquasco, Prince George's County, MD  
Michael Hosford

Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD  
North elevation  
1/81



P. G.: 87B-33  
Christ United Methodist Church ~~PG87B29~~  
Aquasco, Prince George's County, MD  
Michael Hosford

Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD  
Northwest elevation  
1/81