

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

Survey No. BA 357
Magi No. 0303575708
DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Asbury United Methodist Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 11501 Philadelphia Road ___ not for publication
city, town Loreley vicinity of Councilmanic District 5
congressional district 2
state Maryland county Baltimore County

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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 checked="" 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 Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church c/o Sedonia Johnson
street & number 11501 Philadelphia Road telephone no.: 410-679-6818
city, town White Marsh state and zip code MD 21162

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Courts Building WPC 278:537
liber
street & number 401 Bosley Avenue TBS 1739:542
folio
city, town Towson MD state MD 21204

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust Inventory
date December 8, 1971 federal state county local
depository for survey records 100 Community Place
city, town Crownsville state MD 21032

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

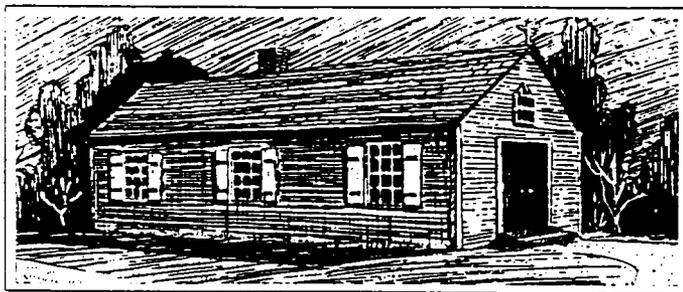
original site
 moved date of move _____

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

SUMMARY

Asbury United Methodist Church is an excellent example of a country Chapel built in frame early in the 20th century at a location that Already had about 80 years of history. There is a remarkable spacious Cemetery in a setting that for the moment remains somewhat rural.

Asbury United Methodist Church is a replacement structure of an older log place of worship that could have dated from the 1830s. The church is reached from Philadelphia Road by a long curving driveway. At the moment, the church backs up to woods, fields, and spacious suburban houses of early 20th century vintage. There is a very large cemetery with some well made grave markers dating from the 19th century. The church is frame and was originally covered with clapboard, built in 1913, but is now clad in white aluminum siding. The nave of the church is three bays deep, with lancet windows. The door is set in a centrally located vestibule, which is in turn flanked by lancet windows. The interior has a cozy atmosphere with good natural woodwork of its period, carpeting, fine old benches. The church faces toward the east, toward the graveyard, rather than to the Philadelphia Road. Other useful space was added at the rear. In 1945 a kitchen was added, and in 1947 a social hall, which were ready for consecration by 1949. Central heating was added in 1956 and restrooms in 1974. The aluminum cladding was added in 1970. There have been several programs of painting and decorating the interior, usually done by the members themselves. If the starter structure was architect designed, there is no record of it.



The old log church survived as a social hall until 1939.

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CHURCH

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Asbury United Methodist Church (recent photo)

m a r g i n

m a r g i n

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1913 **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.

SUMMARY

Asbury United Methodist Church is the meeting place of a congregation tracing its roots to about 1830, located on the historic road that led to Philadelphia. This building replaced a log structure that was itself several times expanded. This is a pleasant country church building with a rich cultural tradition; its founding families apparently stemmed from the work forces of the many iron furnaces and forges of the 18th Century that operated on the nearby rivers.

Asbury United Methodist Church traces its congregation back to 1830. There is a "Colored Meeting House" clearly shown on J. C. Sidney and P. J. Browne's 1850 map of Baltimore City and County. An alternate name for this church is the Forge Asbury Methodist Church, which reflects the iron industry that flourished in this neighborhood from the mid-1700s to about 1859. Most of the ironworks were listed in J. Thomas Scharf's *History of Baltimore City and County* in 1881 (on page 925). It is conceivable that the African American families in this neighborhood stem from the slaves and employees of the ironworks villages where the bulk of the labor was done by black people. Within a mile or two were the White Marsh Furnace at Cowenton Avenue and the B. & O. Railroad, Ridgely's Forge and the Gunpowder Furnace at Philadelphia Road and Great Gunpowder Falls, Stephen Onion's Furnaces at Philadelphia Road and Little Gunpowder Falls, and the Patterson Iron Works or Joppa Mills at the B. & O. crossing of Great Gunpowder Falls in the present State park property. This place of worship was called "Ford's Asbury" in the records of the circuit in 1872-1873, the name "Ford's" being a corruption of "Forge." The name of "Ford's Asbury" is still attached to the lodge hall on Philadelphia Road opposite the terminus of Allender Road. Many of the trustees of this church were members of the Brown family, and a traditional place name for a nearby settlement on Bradshaw Road is "Browntown," still not picked up in the street atlases although a cluster of Brown family houses appeared on that road as long ago as the 1877 Hopkins atlas.

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This church property is labeled as "Asbury M.E. Ch." On the 11th District map in G. M. Hopkins' 1877 *Atlas of Baltimore County Maryland*. The same access road used today seems to appear in that atlas.

The church grounds are comprised of at least three parcels. Four deeds were listed in the 1982 Parcel Owners Index Book, but two of the entries were errors. The church and "charge" programs of the 1970s mention an early donation of land from the Allender family, the deed for which has not been found, although the County Historian in November 1999 searched the "Al" pages of the Grantor Index from 1798 to 1850 at the Clarence Mitchell Court House in Baltimore City, finding many Allender family deeds concerning other properties; he also searched the "Tract Indexes" for the land grants on which this chapel might stand. The other two parcels can be accounted for in Towson land records. In 1904, Frederick N. Josenhans and his wife Catherine Josenhans sold one acre to a number of persons acting as trustees. The members named in this deed were: Albert Brown, Oscar Berry, Augusta Brown, Nelson Boone, James Couplin, Zepheniah Brown, William H. Hackett, William H. Smith, and William H. Underwood, Trustees of Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church of Baltimore County. This parcel was on the west boundary of the property already owned by the church. (1) Possibly, the group had never formed a corporation.

Another parcel of only four-tenths acres was acquired in 1949 from Frank R. and Madeline H. Hammond. This parcel probably cost about \$500 judging from the revenue stamps on the deed. It adjoined the graveyard and constituted four-tenths of an acre. This time the trustees named were William Herbert Brown, Harry Dorsey Brown, William Harry Clarke, Charles Robert Williams, Benjamin Couplin, James Parker Brown, and Moses Lewis Gwynn, Jr. (2) At the same time, the same trustees conveyed a one-acre lot to the corporate entity, Trustees of Asbury Methodist Church on instructions from the local church conference. (3) The nationwide Methodist denomination dropped the word "Episcopal" from its name in 1939, when they merged with Methodist Protestants; then in 1968, following a merger with United Brethern church bodies, all of the churches were called "United Methodist."

The church body is of course much older than the name of Loreley that has become the designation of the neighborhood. Loreley was a planned suburb that would be within walking distance of a passenger station on the B. & O. Railroad's Philadelphia extension, ideal for commuting to Baltimore. The first prospectus for this development appeared in the *Baltimore American* of October 12, 1890. The name of the subdivision is apparently straight out of German literature, somewhat appropriately applied to the rock-strewn river valley where the railroad crosses.

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A good history of the congregation appears in a 1974 anniversary program. There is a complete list of pastors from 1851. In addition, Matthew Johnson, the church historian, has collected oral history in recent years. The earliest church was of log and it stood until 1939. Some historian of that time took its measurements and could account for two additions made to the basic structure. There is even a believable sketch in the anniversary program of 1974. (4) In the 1979 anniversary brochure there is a statement by historian Mosel L. Gwynn, Jr., reading as follows:

The Asbury physical beginning was housed in a 20 foot by 24 foot log and mortar building. Bro. Harry Clark, as a boy, helped and watched his grandfather and others add a small pulpit section to one end and later a 16 foot by 20 foot to the other end of the original log structure. (5)

Robert Zahner, Sr. and son Robert Zahner, Jr., in 1975, working on the Baltimore County Historical Society's inscription project, copied the text of 61 cemetery markers on the property. The congregation has furnished the LPC with that list.

Asbury has been affiliated in the regional conferences with many church bodies founded by white people ever since 1866. This was a "preaching station" of the Great Falls Circuit from 1866 until 1872—that circuit extended over much of Harford County and reached as far as the town of Hereford in Baltimore County. Then in 1872, after splitting up the old circuit, Asbury, or Ford's Asbury was served by the Gunpowder Circuit.

The present church building was constructed in 1913. A kitchen wing was added and then in 1947 a social hall was built to link sanctuary and kitchen, all completed by 1949. In 1956, rest rooms were added, and a central heating plant in 1974. The last round of improvements were guided by the Rev. George Gwynn.

Asbury was among the first structures suggested to the Maryland Historical Trust Inventory and was on the District 11 list prepared by the late Matilda C. Lacey of Perry Hall, an active farmer and friend of the Gwynn family. In 1979, a brochure was published celebrating the first anniversary of forming the Chase Charge, which included the traditionally African American churches, of John Wesley at Magnolia, Asbury at Loreley, and Little Sharp Street Church at Chase.

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NOTES:

1. Baltimore County Deeds, NBM 278:537.
2. Baltimore County Deeds, TBS 1739:542.
3. Baltimore County Deeds, TBS 1745:505.
4. "Souvenir Book Commemorating the First Anniversary of the Chase Charge," n.p., 1979.
5. "Souvenir Book," n.p., 1979.

