

The Williamsville Historical Society is a non-profit organization incorporated March 10, 1981.

The purpose of the society is to preserve the historical, religious, education and community-oriented programs, activities, structures, and property, which reflect life in Kent and Sussex County Delaware.

The chapel is now available for weddings, christenings and tours by appointment. You may contact us at 302-422-6849.

If you would like to make a contribution or become a member of the Williamsville Historical Society, our mailing address is: Griffith Chapel, 7603 Hidden Meadow Lane, Greenwood, DE 19950. Please make your check payable to Williamsville Historical Society. Thank you for your thoughtful support of Griffith Chapel.

Membership	
Lifetime	\$100.00
Family	\$ 25.00
Individual	\$ 15.00

Williamsville Historical Society



Turn off Route 14 Harrington Milford Hwy. onto Williamsville Road. Located 5 miles off Route 14 in Williamsville, Kent County, Delaware

Mailing address:

Griffith's Chapel
7603 Hidden Meadow Lane
Greenwood, DE. 19950

- 1931 Historic Marker Comm.
- almost 500 throughout the state (25 a year)
- generous support of G.A. (thank Bonnie & Cullen)

**State Historical Marker Dedication Ceremony
Honoring Griffith Chapel**

October 18, 2008

Dedication Program

Moderator: Ron Bennett, Williamsville Historical Society

Greeting

Introduction of invited special guests:

- Senator Colin Bonini
- Representative Bobby Outten
- Moira Conlan

Speakers:

- Bobby Outten, State Representative 30th District
- Moira Conlan, Coordinator, State Historical Marker Program
- Lynda Anstine, Historian, Williamsville Historical Society

Unveiling of the Marker and Closing Remarks

Text included on the Historical Marker

Griffith's Chapel
Williamsville Methodist Church

When Methodism first came to this area in the late 18th century, residents worshipped in local homes and journeyed to nearby towns to attend services. On November 20, 1848 William and Sarah Griffith conveyed land at this location to Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church to build "thereon a church or place of worship". Construction was completed circa 1850, and the building was named in their honor. The chapel is a well-preserved example of a mid-nineteenth century, rural Methodist meeting house. The plain interior contains a balcony, recessed apse and original pews. Services were conducted here until the mid-1970s. In 1982 the Peninsula Conference of the United Methodist Church deeded the property to the Williamsville Historical Society. Griffith's Chapel was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

Delaware Public Archives – 2008

KC-109

The historical society secured, replaced the roof, plastered and painted inside and out and put a new fence around the cemetery. In 1982 the title of the property was handed over by the United Methodist Conference, and the following year the property was placed on the national register of Historic Places.

During the past twenty five years the historical society has provided Christmas Service in the Church almost every year. The chapel has been the site of "Honor the Brave," a Memorial Day Service complete with Civil War Re-enactors. The Chapel is now available for Weddings and christenings.



Griffith's Chapel c. 1850

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The purpose of the society is to preserve the historical, religious, education and community oriented programs, activities, structures, and property which reflect life in Kent and Sussex County Delaware.

Membership		Volunteer	
Lifetime	\$100.00	Programs, Painting	
Family	\$ 25.00	Repairs, Yard Care	
Individual	\$ 15.00	Communications	

If you would like to participate in any of the efforts to Maintain Griffith Chapel, please let us know!

Griffith's Chapel
7603 Hidden Meadow Lane
Greenwood, DE. 19950

302-422-3135

302-422-6849

Williamsville Historical Society



Turn off Route 14 Harrington Milford Hwy. onto Williamsville Road. Located 5 miles off Route 14 in Williamsville, Kent County, Delaware

Mailing address:

Griffith's Chapel
7603 Hidden Meadow Lane
Greenwood, DE. 19950

Griffith Chapel
(circa 1850)

The area of Williamsville has been settled since the 1600's. The old Kings highway from Dover Landing to Cannon's ferry ran through Williamsville. This road was situated here because it was easier at that time to build bridges over the headwaters of the streams than over the wider areas.

There were two grist mills in the area. One was located at Blair's Pond and the other at what we now call Abbott's Pond. With the development of the mill dams, roads were constructed over them making travel between neighbors and towns easier.

There was a road running from Milford through Williamsville, Farmington and Vernon to Marshy Hope Bridge.

As early as 1795 there was a store at the crossroads owned and operated by James Henderson. The Beers Atlas of 1868 shows a store located on the southwest corner of the crossroads.

In 1826 a post office was established in Williamsville. The postmaster was William Heathers. The post office continued until 1861.

Public School #47 was located on the road from Williamsville to Milford across from the present church. It was here that the congregation of the Williamsville Methodist Episcopal Church met before the church was built.

Williamsville was a growing community in 1850 when the church was built. Although Williamsville was largely a farming area, it had businesses, a school, and a post office. With the transportation up and down King's Highway, a link from Philadelphia to Norfolk—supplies were easily attainable. The road to the commercial center of Milford also kept this area supplied with goods and services.

The people of Williamsville were aware of the happenings in Philadelphia, Wilmington, Dover, and Milford due to the vital link of roads. It was a time of growth, and a proper time to build a church. The land for the church was given by William D. Griffith and his wife Sarah in 1847. Sarah had inherited the land from her father.

The actual construction of the church took place over a two year period, with the lumber being cut the first winter (when the farmers had more time), and the following winter the church building was erected.

The congregation of this church was Methodist Episcopal set off from the Milford Congregation. In 1851 Griffith's Chapel (Williamsville Methodist Episcopal Church) appears in conference minutes as part of the Williamsville-Vernon Circuit. Services were held in the church until 1884 when the congregation moved to Houston Methodist Church. In 1898 the Houston Methodist Church burned and the congregation met at Griffith's Chapel until 1900 when the new Houston Church was completed.

Records found in Griffith's Chapel show that there was a small congregation that met in the church from 1916 until the mid 1970's.

When the doors of Griffith Chapel closed as a house of worship in the 1970's the congregation was elderly and unable to maintain the building grounds.

In the 1930's the church received a new coat of paint, a new roof, and a fence around the cemetery.

In 1981 members of the community became alarmed by the church's condition. The Williamsville Historical Society was formed with the preservation of Griffith's Chapel as its focal point

the boundary line crossed the doorstep of the church which was burned in 1934. The first church was erected in 1834. Thomas Baynard was the builder and the building is still in use on the farm of Thomas E. Cahall.

In 1872, work was started on the second structure. The corner-stone was laid on Nov. 7, 1872. It was dedicated in May, 1873, with Bishop Levi Scott in charge and the Rev. Andrew Manship preaching the sermon. Henry Thawley, for many years Supt. of the Sunday School, was the builder. He also cut and hauled the timbers. On Feb. 18, 1934, just after the morning service had closed, the building was burned to the ground. Work was started immediately to build another church. There was some sentiment that the new building should be located in the village but it was decided to retain the old site. Under the leadership of the Rev. Leon W. Ross, the church was ready for dedication on Dec. 16, 1934, with all of the costs met by cash and subscription. The Rev. E. C. Hallman, Dist. Supt., conducted the dedication and preached at the morning service. The Rev. Roy T. Thawley, grandson of Henry Thawley, assisted at the dedication and preached the afternoon sermon. There is a large cemetery enclosed with an iron fence.

Milford Circuit M. E. Church, colored, was located one and one-half miles west of Prettyman's Corner. The church site was donated on May 19, 1894, by Samuel A. Tharp, at which time the church had been erected. It became defunct and no evidence of the church remains.

Houston Methodist Church (M.E.) was built of frame in 1883-84. It was dedicated in October, 1884. The church site, on Broad St., was donated on May 7, 1886, by David Scott. After major improvements, the church was rededicated on Sun., Nov. 26, 1893, by the Rev. W. L. S. Murray. In January, 1899, both the church and the parsonage were destroyed by fire.

A new church site, on Broad St., was donated on Mar. 6, 1899, by John C. Wharton. The corner-stone of the present brick church was laid on July 4, 1899, by the Rev. G. S. Smith. It was dedicated in October, 1899. The church was incorporated on July 22, 1911.

A new electric organ was dedicated on Sun., Apr. 27, 1947, by the pastor, the Rev. Wm. J. McKee assisted by the Rev. Dr. O. A. Bartley. The Wesley Junior College choir sang under the direction of Mrs. Wm. J. Storey. An organ recital was given by Mrs. Ethel Johnson. Funds for purchasing the organ were raised by Mrs. Estelle Biggs' class with former State Senator Robt. H. Yerkes as leader.

Houston Mission M. E. Church, colored, is located on the western edge of Houston. The church site was donated on Nov. 1, 1923, by Geo. F. Dunning. This church was established, in 1924, when the Williamsville congregation secured the old schoolhouse, moved it to Houston and transferred their activities to this point. More land was purchased on June 26, 1928.

Williamsville Methodist Church (M.E.) was the outgrowth of meetings held in the schoolhouse previous to 1850. Then, W. T. Griffith donated a piece of land upon which a chapel was built and named "Griffith's Chapel," in honor of the donor. A graveyard is located beside the church, the tombstones dating back to 1862. In 1884, services were discontinued and the membership transferred to Houston Church. The church was reopened in 1897. After another closed period it was reopened as a Houston charge. Services were discontinued in 1940. The church was reopened on Sun., Mar. 15, 1942,

w/ Rbt Hammond as Supt of Sun School, Preaching held every other Sunday by pastor of Houston Church

Sussex County, Delaware (continued)

church was dedicated. In 1904 a carload of dynamite exploded in the town and among other damaged buildings was our church and parsonage. The railroad company assumed full responsibility and repaired all damages at a cost of \$2,000.

Greenwood Methodist Protestant Church was organized in the year 1879. Upon land donated by Simeon Pennewell, the church was built and dedicated Aug. 8, 1880. The present church dates back to 1904. It was partially wrecked by the explosion of a car of dynamite two weeks after dedication. The railroad company replaced all damages. The church has been improved in 1913, 1927, and 1931.

Griffeth's Chapel, Methodist Episcopal Church, Milford Hundred, located in the southwestern part of the Hundred, was built in 1850. Prior to the building of the church the congregation worshipped in the school house. This church was near Williamsville and was their church until the Houston Methodist Church was built. The building was not used for several years but it was reopened for worship in 1898. It is still active.

Groom's Memorial Methodist Protestant Church. See Lewes Methodist Protestant Church.

Gumboro Chapel, Methodist Episcopal Church, was originally organized under the name of Bethesda in 1778. This building stood outside of the town a few miles. Old Bethesda ceased to function when they moved the congregation into town in 1875. The Methodist Protestants had built a church in town in 1865, but sold it to the Methodist Episcopal society in 1875. They have had two new buildings since then, namely in 1891 and 1925.

Gumboro Methodist Protestant Church was organized and built in 1865. The society ceased to function prior to 1875. At that time they sold the building to the Methodist Episcopal Church of Gumboro.

Harbeson Methodist Episcopal Church in Broadkilm Hundred and located in the town of that name, was built as an independent Methodist Church by a local preacher, Rev. William H. Conway. It was on his own land, and largely built by his own hands. After running it as an independent Methodist Church for several years, he turned over the property and congregation to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the year of 1882. The society having lapsed, the Methodist Protestant moved the building across the road and used it as a part of a new church. This land was sold by order of the Conference in 1940.

Harbeson Methodist Protestant Church. See Beaver Dam.

Hebron Methodist Protestant Church, Georgetown Hundred on the Georgetown-Bridgeville road. The deed was given Oct. 24th, 1888. The deed specifically states the church was already built. The pastor in charge of the congregation was Rev. F. H. Mullineaux. Rev. J. A. Weigand was their first pastor following the building of the church in 1888.

Hepburn Methodist Episcopal Church in Little Creek Hundred was the name of Kings' Methodist Episcopal Church. A gentleman by the name of Hepburn offered them twenty dollars on the day of dedication, 1885, if they would call the church after him. They did so, but in two years they voted to give it the name of Kings. See Kings for more information.

Hickman Meeting House, Methodist Episcopal Church, Cedar Creek Hundred, was organized prior to 1810, for the church was built that year. In 1855, they changed locations and changed the name to Slaughter Neck Zion Meeting-house. This was when they built the second church. This church burned in 1943 and was replaced by a new one in 1944. Perhaps these organizations were the result of the society of Methodists at Draw Bridge. See Drawbridge and Zion Methodist Church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received SEP 30 1982

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Griffith's Chapel

and/or common Williamsville Methodist Church

2. Location

Set of SR 442 and 443

street & number Apex of intersection between Kent Cty Roads #442 & #443 NA not for publication

AND Kings Hywy (384)

city, town Williamsville vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Delaware code 10 county Kent code 001

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA 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 Peninsula General Conference - United Methodist Church

street & number 139 N. State Street

city, town Dover vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Recorder of Deeds

street & number Kent County Building

city, town Dover state DE

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Delaware Cultural Resource Survey K-4072 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

city, town Dover state Delaware

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Griffith's Chapel is a neat, plain, one-story frame building, measuring 24X30 feet in its principal dimensions; it is clapboard-sheathed, and corner-framed. The building faces west on a triangular plot formed by the intersection of county roads 442 and 443. Its surroundings are open lawn to the west and south, and a cemetery, with stones dating to the mid-nineteenth century, on the north and east. At the time the nomination was prepared, the original white paint with green trim was almost completely weathered away. However, repainting the siding was an immediate priority within an ongoing restoration. Other minor changes from the original exterior appearance are asbestos shingling of the roof; replaced double entrance doors; a concrete stoop; and stucco over brick foundation. Otherwise, the church maintains very good integrity of exterior mass, fabric, and detail. Interior integrity is excellent.

Griffith's Chapel is rectangular in plan, except for a small (three by six foot) rectangular apse at the east end. This projecting bay is itself gable roofed, and is lighted by narrow one-over-one sashes in its side walls. The side walls of the main body of the church are each broken by two widely spaced two-over-two sashes. Entrance is through double doors, with a plain frame and a simple, heavy lintel, centered in the west wall. A pair of narrow one-over-one sashes is centered in the gable end over the doorway, providing illumination for the interior gallery. The plain ceiled undersurface of the roof is exposed behind narrow vergeboards in the gable ends, and extended over exposed, lobed rafters on the sides.

The interior is a single open space, with a plain planked floor and a ceiling which opens up to a shallow crawl space under the ridgebeam. A small upper rear gallery is supported by two short flights of stair in the northwest corner. The balustres are plain squared sticks. The windows, tall on the exterior, have unadorned frames; the walls are encircled with plain grooved wainscoting. The woodwork framing the apse-like bay is embellished only by simple beading of the outer edges. The altar rail is supported on turned balustres. The movable pews, like the wainscoting, are thought to date from a turn-of-the-century remodeling. Their simple lines reflect the Arts and Crafts aesthetic, and they are hand-grained in a lighter shade than that used on woodwork. Sections of a stenciled border, which ran along the top of the walls and above the wainscoting, have been uncovered in several places. (This stenciling is barely visible at the extreme right end of the gallery in photograph #5 of the accompanying documentation.) The pattern has been reconstructed from these fragments, and the frieze will be reproduced in the restoration, along with the original interior colors.

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 1850 Builder/Architect NA

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Griffith's Chapel is architecturally and historically significant as an extremely evocative and well-preserved example of a small mid-19th century rural Methodist meeting house with a fine, unusual interior gallery. In its immediate locality, it is unexcelled as an icon not only of its functional type but of early community life. In the small, sparsely built crossroads community of Williamsville, only a few other 19th century buildings still stand; they are residences, and do not approach the church either in level of physical integrity or in institutional force. Seen in the larger context of southern Kent and Sussex counties, the church holds its own among surviving county churches, both in integrity and in architectural and historical significance. While the comprehensive survey data for southern Kent County has not yet been systematically evaluated, initial review has uncovered no better examples of mid-19th century churches which are equally well-preserved and equally elaborate at this very unassuming scale. In Sussex County, immediately to the south, a recently-submitted nomination for Cool Spring Presbyterian Church emphasized an intact interior gallery as an unusual feature in the surviving early architecture of southern Delaware. Historically, Griffith's Chapel is particularly illustrative seen in connection with nearby Barratt's Chapel (N.R. 1972). This large and ambitious structure, built in brick in the late 18th century, has been called "The Gradle of Methodism" because it housed early meetings leading to the establishment of Methodism as a separate denomination. If Barratt's Chapel represents the cradle stage, then Griffith's Chapel represents the rural adolescence of American Methodism. Its simple, functional but affectionately decorated frame provided the necessary setting for circuit riders and lay preachers to a country congregation. For such congregations such churches succeeded the tent meetings and borrowed rooms of the early period; they preceded the building boom in Methodist churches that followed the Civil War. On the basis of its architectural interest and integrity and of these illustrative qualities, Griffith's Chapel is nominated to the National Register on the basis of Criteria C and A: it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.*

From the time of the visit of John and Charles Wesley to Georgia in 1736-37 to the time of the Revolution, the efforts of Methodist missionaries had met with

* The building, while still nominally owned by the Peninsula Conference of the Methodist Church, has been on inactive status for many years, and efforts are being made to transfer title to the Williamsville Historical Society, the local group which has undertaken its restoration. In any case, it is nominated to the National Register on the basis of its unusual architectural and historical merit, and thus in exception to the formal disqualification of structures owned or used by religious groups.

9. Major Bibliographical References

J. Thomas Scharf History of Delaware. Volume II, Philadelphia: 1888
Frank R. Zebley The Churches of Delaware, Wilmington: the author 1947

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .8936 ac ±

Quadrangle name Harrington

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

UMT References

A

1	8	4	5	5	9	1	0	4	3	0	5	1	2	5
Zone		Easting				Northng								

B

Zone		Easting				Northng								

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification The boundaries of the nominated property correspond to the boundaries of the approximately .8936 acre lot on which Griffith's Chapel stands. These boundaries extend 306'5" northeast along the inner public R.O.W. of county road 443, and 322'9" southeast along the inner public R.O.W. of county road 442, from the intersection

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries See Continuation Sheet

state NA code county code

state NA code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Calvin Vinyard Hollis III/edited by Patricia Wright

organization Williamsville Historical Society/B/A&HP date 1980/1982

street & number Old State House, the Green telephone 736-5685

city or town Houston/Dover state Delaware

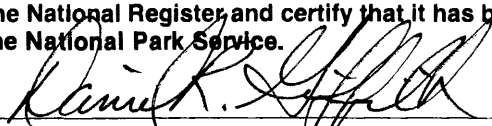
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

Deputy
State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date Sept 28, 1982

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 10/29/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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The 20th century heating and lighting systems which had been introduced into the building have been removed as part of the current restoration. Two modern brick side chimneys were demolished; evidence in the attic crawl space of an earlier central stovepipe (and fire) led to the installation of a cast iron wood stove of Pennsylvania manufacture, dating from within a few years of the 1850 construction date of the church. The building has also been de-electrified. Candlelight is the sole source of illumination for the occasional evening meetings now held there. Nineteenth century holders have been installed for this purpose.

JUSTIFICATION OF BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the nominated property correspond to those of the triangular parcel on which Griffith's Chapel stands. These boundaries provide appropriate visual access to the building from the two county roads which intersect at the apex of the triangle. They also enclose an historic resource in addition to that represented by the building itself: the 19th century graveyard in which early members of the congregation are buried. The parcel has historic integrity, too, in corresponding to the 19th century gift of W.T. Griffith. These factors made the boundaries of the legal parcel the logical boundaries of the nominated resource.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet

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resistance from conservative adherents of the Church of England. In Delaware, however, the itinerant preachers met with considerable success. As noted above, that receptiveness was reflected in the building of Barratt's Chapel in 1780. In an era of difficult travel, however, congregations were necessarily local; smaller country meetings played an important role in nurturing Methodism on its way to becoming by far the largest denomination on the peninsula. Prior to 1850, Methodists in the southwestern part of Milford Hundred worshipped in the District 47 schoolhouse. The land for the first permanent Methodist Church in the area--a triangular lot, symbolic of the Methodist belief in the Trinity--was donated in that year by W. T. Griffith. The trustees named the church in his honor.

Level of Significance

The level of significance checked in item 10 is local. In the opinion of Bureau staff and the State Review Board for Historic Preservation, Griffith's Chapel is an unusually, possibly uniquely, well-preserved example of a small, rural Methodist meeting house in Delaware. It could certainly be profitably considered in the context of 19th century Methodist churches statewide, and might well emerge in that context as possessed of statewide significance. However, the comprehensive comparative data which would make such a consideration possible is not yet available. For the present, at least, the significance of Griffith's Chapel is best understood and demonstrated in the context of Milford Hundred, Southern Kent and Northern Sussex counties.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

ONE NO. 1000000
EXP. 10/1/81

For NPS use only

received

date entered

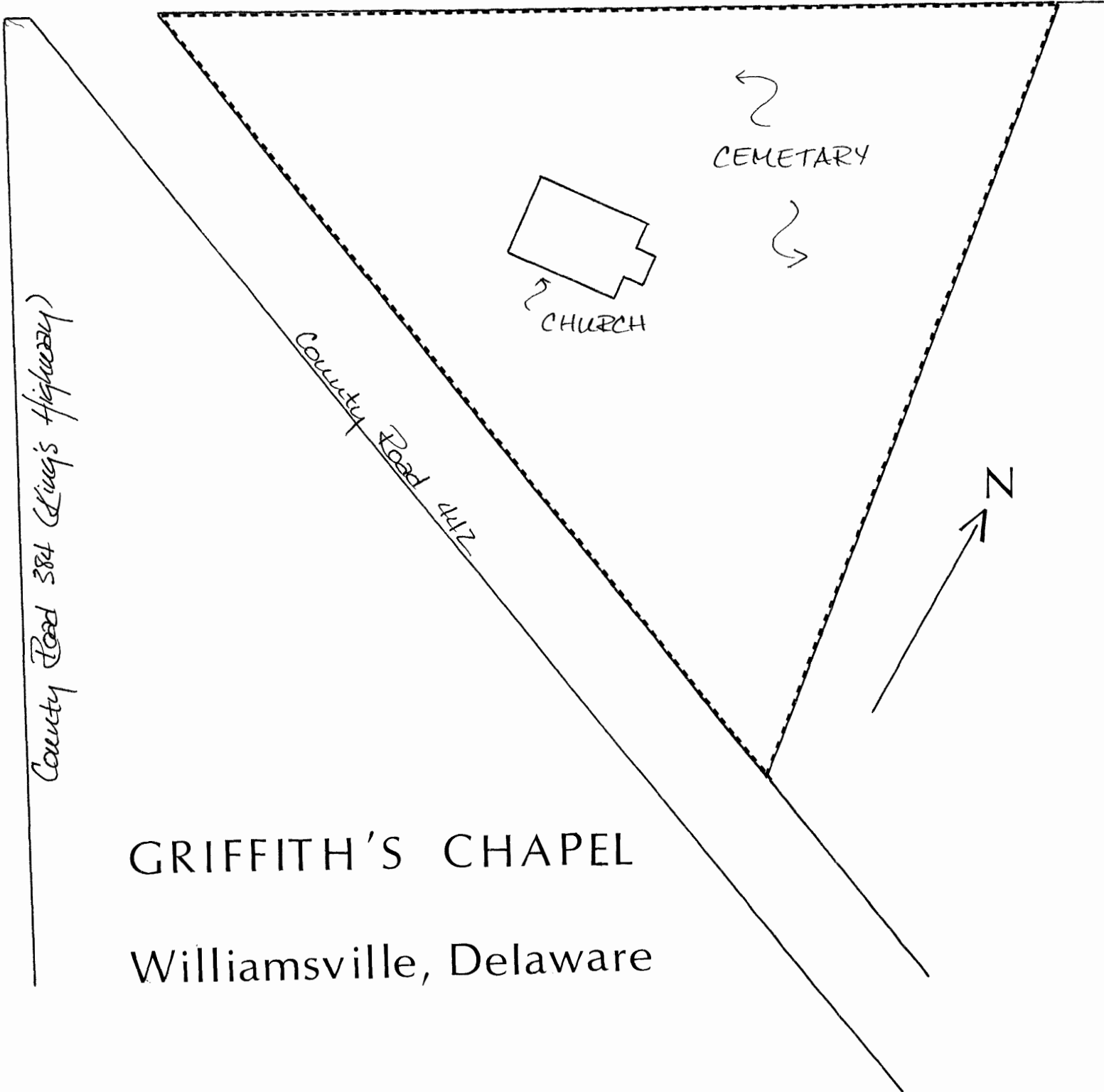
Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

of these two roads. The eastern boundary is a straight line drawn between the extreme northeast and southeast points of these two lines.

County Road 443



County Road 384 (King's Highway)

County Road 443

GRIFFITH'S CHAPEL
Williamsville, Delaware

~ not to scale ~

to it this Deed, I saw under my hand and seal of Office, the day and
year aforesaid.

Charles J. Fleming, N.O.

I Received this Deed to Record this 29th day of July A.D. 1872,
John Slay Beers

A true copy,

Attest,

John Slay Beers.

Deed, John C. Goldsborough, To Caroline C. and Henrietta G. Davis,
Stamp 50¢.

This Indenture, Made this thirtieth day of April in the year
of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and seventy-two; Between John
C. Goldsborough formerly of Talbot County in the State of Maryland,
now of Baltimore City of the one part, and Caroline C. Davis and Henrietta
G. Davis, daughters of Henry Davis deceased, and granddaughters of the
late Deacon Davis of Superior Kent County and State of Delaware, of the
other part,

Whereas the said Henry Davis, in his lifetime became and was
seized either in severalty or in connection with others of and in the follow-
ing described lands and premises, formerly the property of Deacon Davis
his father and being so seized died leaving to survive him three children
viz: Mary, Caroline C. and Henrietta G. Davis his heirs at law, and the said
Mary intermarried with and was the wife of the said John C. Goldsborough
and afterwards died having had issue of said marriage leaving the said
John C. Goldsborough to survive her and the said issue having died in
the lifetime of the said Mary, whereby according to the Laws of the State
of Delaware, the share of the said Mary of and in the said lands and
premises descended to the said Caroline C. and Henrietta G. Davis, sub-
ject nevertheless to an estate for his own life of and in the said John C.
Goldsborough therein, as limited by the Curtesy.

Now therefore this Indenture Witnesseth, that the said
John C. Goldsborough, for and in consideration of the sum of Five
hundred Dollars, lawful money of the United States of America, to him in
hand paid by the said Caroline C. Davis and Henrietta G. Davis at or
before the sealing and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof is
truly acknowledged, (the said sum of Five hundred Dollars being an
well consideration for this conveyance as other assurances) hath grant-
ed, bargained and sold, aliened, enfeoffed, released, conveyed and con-
firmed, and by these presents doth grant, bargain and sell, alien, release,
enfeoff, release, convey and confirm unto the said Caroline C. Davis
and Henrietta G. Davis their heirs and assigns, all the right, title,
interest and estate of him the said John C. Goldsborough of in and out
out of the following described lands and premises viz: Wm. Chesnut

with Smith's line North seventy three and three-fourths degrees East three
 perches and two tenths of a perch to a stone a corner for Sarah Mitchem
 lot thence South one degree and three fourths West fifteen and one tenth
 perches to a stone in public road, thence with public road South seventy three
 degrees and three fourths West three and two tenth perches to a stone, thence
 with Smith's line North one degree and forty-five minutes East fifteen and
 one tenth perches to the place of Beginning, Containing Forty eight sq. per-
 ches of land be the same more or less.

And all and singular the buildings, improvements, fixtures, crops,
 woods, waters, and water-courses, rights, liberties, privileges, hereditaments and
 appurtenances to the said hereby granted lot or parcel of land, belonging
 to, or in anywise appertaining, and the reversion or reversions, remainder and
 remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof, and all the estate, right, title,
 interest, property, claim and demand of them the said Sarah Mitchem, late
 the M. Mitchem and David Mitchem at law or in equity, of, to, in, or out
 of the same, and every part or parcel thereof, To Have and To Hold the
 land and premises hereby bargained and sold, or intended to be with the ap-
 purtenances unto the said Nathaniel Bradley, George Curry, George Price,
 Deace Fleming, Wesley Fleming and Spencer Turner Trustees for the M. C.
 Church at Williamsville and their successors forever, to and for the use, use
 and purpose of the Church.

And the said Sarah Mitchem, Caroline M. Mitchem and David
 Mitchem for themselves, their heirs, executors and administrators, doth hereby
 further grant, covenant and agree to and with the said Nathaniel Bradley,
 George Curry, George Price, Wesley Fleming, Deace Fleming and Spencer
 Turner the aforesaid Trustees and their successors as Trustees that the lands
 and premises hereby bargained and sold, or intended to be, with the ap-
 purtenances, against them the said Sarah Mitchem, Caroline M. Mitchem and
 David Mitchem their heirs, executors and administrators, and against all
 persons claiming or lawfully to claim by, through, from or under them,
 unto the said Nathaniel Bradley, George Price, George Curry, Wesley
 Fleming, Deace Fleming and Spencer Turner Trustees and their successors
 forever, they the said Sarah Mitchem, Caroline M. Mitchem and David Mit-
 chem shall and will warrant and forever defend.

In Witness Whereof, they the said Sarah Mitchem, Caroline
 M. Mitchem and David Mitchem have hereunto set their hands and
 seals,

Signed, Sealed and Delivered,
 in the presence of
 Ch. S. Fleming,
 Deace Friend,

for
 Sarah X Mitchem,
 Caroline Mitchem,
 David X Mitchem.
 mark.

State of Delaware, Be it Remembered that on this Eighteenth day of May A.D.
 Kent County, Pa. 1867, thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven, personally came
 before me, Charles S. Fleming Notary Public for the State of
 Delaware, Sarah Mitchem, Caroline M. Mitchem and David Mitchem,
 the said persons, parties to this instrument known to me personally
 to be such, and severally acknowledged the foregoing instrument



State of Delaware } We it Remembred, that on this twelfth 12 day of October
 Sussex County, } in the year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred
 and seventy one, personally came before me, William F.
 Revillo a Notary Public for the State of Delaware, Joseph S.
 Pruitt and Sarah E. Pruitt his wife parties to this Indenture,
 known to me personally to be such, and severally acknowl-
 edged this Indenture to be their deed; that the said Sarah E.
 Pruitt being at the same time privately examined by me,
 apart from her husband, acknowledged that she executed the said Inden-
 ture willingly, without compulsion or threats, or fear of her husband's displeasure.
 Given under my hand and seal of office, the day
 and year aforesaid.

See
 100

W. F. Revillo, N.P.

I Received this deed to Record this 26th day of July A.D. 1872.
 John Slay Recr.

A true copy,

Attest
 John Slay Recr.

Deed, Sarah Mitchens and others, To Nathaniel Bradley and others.
 Stamp 50 ¢

This Indenture, Made this first day of May in the year
 of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven: Between Sarah
 Mitchens, Caroline M. Mitchens and David Mitchens of Mispillion Hun-
 dreds, Kent Co, and State of Delaware, of the one part, and Nathaniel
 Bradley, George Cury, George Pierce, Isaac Fleming, Wesley Fleming and
 Spencer Turner of the County and State aforesaid of the other part.

Witnesseth that the said Sarah Mitchens, Caroline M. Mitchens
 and David Mitchens for and in consideration of the sum of Thirty Dollars
 lawful money of the United States of America, to them in hand paid by the
 said Nathaniel Bradley, George Cury, George Pierce, Isaac Fleming, Wesley
 Fleming and Spencer Turner at or before the writing and delivery of these pres-
 ents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, Have and each of them abso-
 lutely granted, bargained and sold, aliened, conveyed, released, conveyed and confirmed
 and by these presents, Do and each of them Doth grant, bargain and sell, alien,
 convey, release, convey and confirm unto the said Nathaniel Bradley, George Cury,
 George Pierce, Isaac Fleming, Wesley Fleming and Spencer Turner Trustees of
 the Methodist Episcopal Church and their successors as Trustees forever,
 to and for the only use and benefit of the Church, All that certain piece or
 lot of land situated in Mispillion Hundreds, Kent County and State
 aforesaid and to the Northwestward of Williamsville, and on the North side
 of the Public Road, which leads from Vernon to Milford, and is bounded on
 the North and West by land of Jonathan Smith and on the East by land
 Mauler's lot, Beginning at a stone a corner for Jonathan Smith and land

A true copy of Original

Attest

A. J. Wright.
R. S.

Deed, William D. Griffiths wife To Parker, Lofland, & other Trustees.

This Indenture, made this twentieth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty eight, Between William D. Griffiths of Milford hundred Kent County and State of Delaware and Sarah Anne his wife of the one part and Parker Lofland, Adam Marvel, Philip Marvel, Joseph W. Willas, John R. Whitty, John N. Johnson and Levin Hardesty, Trustees in trust for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church (all members of the Williamville class on Milford Circuit in the State of Delaware) of the other part,



Witnesseth that the said William D. Griffiths and Sarah Anne his wife for and in consideration of five Dollars to them in hand paid at and before the signing sealing and delivering of these presents the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged and themselves therewith fully satisfied contented and paid have given, granted, bargained, sold, aliened, remised, released enfeoffed, conveyed and confirmed and by these presents Do give, grant, bargain sell, alien, remise, release, enfeoff, convey and confirm unto the said Parker Lofland, Adam Marvel, Philip Marvel, Joseph W. Willas, John R. Whitty, John N. Johnson, and Levin Hardesty, and their successors, Trustees in trust for the use and purposes herein after mentioned and declared, All the estate, right, title, interest, property claim and demand whatsoever either in Law or equity which the the said William D. Griffiths, and Sarah Anne his wife have have or that either of them hath in to or upon, all and singular a certain lot piece or parcel of land situate in the hundred and County aforesaid and lying in the forks of two roads, one leading from Williamville to Riggs Mills and the other to Johnsons Mill the metes and bounds, as follows. (Viz) Beginning in the forks of said roads and thence with the road leading to Riggs Mills North sixty three degrees east fourteen perches and nine tenths of a perch to a corner in the side of said road near a scrub white oak, thence through the woods due South twelve perches to a corner in the north side of the road leading to Johnsons Mill, thence with said road towards Williamville North eighty eight degrees and fifteen minutes West fourteen perches and three tenths of a perch more to the place of Beginning, containing and laid off for one half of an acre, together with all and singular the improvements, houses, privileges hereditaments and appurtenances there to belonging or in any wise appertaining. To Have and To Hold the said hereby granted premises limited and bounded as aforesaid with all the appurtenances unto the said Parker Lofland, Adam Marvel, Philip Marvel, John R. Whitty, Joseph W. Willas, John N. Johnson and Levin Hardesty and their successors in fee forever in trust that they may see and build

or cause to be erected and built thereon a church or place of worship for the use of the members of the ^{Methodist} M. E. C. in the United States of America according to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted by the Ministers and Preachers of the said Church at their general Conference in the United States of America, and in further trust and compliance that they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such Ministers and Preachers belonging to the said Church as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the general Conference of the said M. E. C. or by the annual conference authorized by the said general Conference to preach and expound God's holy word therein; and in further trust and compliance confidence that as often as one or more of the trustees herein before mentioned shall die or cease to be a member or members of the said Church according to the rules and discipline as aforesaid then and in such case it shall be the duty of the stationed Minister or preacher (authorized as aforesaid) who shall have the pastoral charge of the members of the said Church to call a meeting of the remaining trustees as soon as convenient try may be: And when or next the said Minister or preacher shall proceed to nominate one or more persons to fill the place or places of him or them whose office or offices has or have been vacated as aforesaid. Provided the person or persons so nominated shall have been one year a member or members of the said church immediately preceding such nomination and be at least twenty one years of age and the said trustees or assembly shall provide to Elect and by a majority of votes appoint the person or persons, so nominated to fill such vacancy or vacancies, in order to keep up the number of seven trustees forever and in case of an equal number of votes for and against the said nomination the stationed minister or preacher shall have the casting vote. Provided nevertheless that if the said trustees or any of them or their successors have advanced or shall advance any sum or sums of money or are or shall be responsible for any sum or sums of money in account of the said premises and they the said trustees or their successors be obliged to pay the sum or sums of money they or a majority of them shall be authorized to raise the said sum or sums of money by a Mortgage on said premises or by selling the said premises after notice given to the pastor or preacher who has the oversight of the congregation attending divine service on said premises, if the money due be not paid to the said trustees or their successors within one year after such notice is given; and if such sale take place, the said trustees or their successors after paying the debt and other expenses which are due from the money arising from the sale shall deposit the remainder of the money produced by the said sale in the hands of the stewards of the society belonging to or attending divine service on said premises; which surplus of the produce of such sale so deposited in the hands of the said Steward or Stewards shall be at the disposal of the next annual conference authorized as aforesaid; which said

annual conference shall dispose of the said money according to the best of their judgment for the use of the said society, And the said William D. Griffith and Sarah Ann his wife for themselves their heirs and each of their heirs executors and administrators do covenant promise grant and agree to and with the said Parker Loofland, Adam Marvel, Philip Marvel, Joseph W. Willas, John R. Whitby, John D. Johnson and Lewis Hardwily trustees as a part and their successors forever, that against the future lawful claim or claims of them the said William D. Griffith and Sarah Ann his wife their heirs and each of their heirs executors and administrators and against the claim or claims of all and every other person or persons claiming or hereafter to claim the same through by former under him her them or either of them or any other way shall and will warrant and forever Defend by these presents,

In Witness Whereof the said William D. Griffith and Sarah Ann his wife have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and first above written.

Signed Sealed in the presence of us.
 John Hollis.
 Daniel L. Griffith.

William D. Griffith. 
 Sarah Ann, Griffith. 

State of Delaware
 Kent County S.S.



Be it remembered that on the 20th day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty eight before the subscriber a Notary and Tabeleim Public for said State William D. Griffith and Sarah Ann Griffith his wife named in this Indenture personally appeared and acknowledged said Indenture to be their act and Deed respectively and desired that it might be recorded as such and that on the same day the said Sarah Ann, Griffith wife of the said William D. Griffith being privately examined by me apart from her said husband acknowledged that she executed the said Indenture willingly without compulsion or threats or fear of her husbands displeasure.

Witness my hand and Notoreal seal the day and year aforesaid.
 John Hollis.
 N. & T. P.

I received this Deed to record this 4 day of October A. D. 1865.

A. J. Wright.
 Recd.

A true copy of Original
 Attest

A. J. Wright.
 Recd.

BOOK H 40 PAGE 143

01991

THIS DEED, Made this 2nd day of June, in the year of our LORD one thousand nine hundred and eighty-three, by and

BETWEEN, THE TRUSTEES OF THE PENINSULA ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, INC., a Delaware corporation, party of the first part,

AND

WILLIAMSVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, a Delaware corporation, party of the second part,

WHEREAS, the Trustees of the Peninsula Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, Inc., are executing this deed to the Williamsville Historical Society, an eleemosynary corporation of the State of Delaware, whose members have restored and are interested in permanently maintaining the church building, its contents, the grounds, and the small cemetery in the rear of the church, known as "Williamsville Methodist Church" and formerly known as Griffith's (Griffeth's) Chapel; and

WHEREAS, the history of this church is set forth briefly in the "Churches Of Delaware" by Frank Zebley (published in 1947) and in the "Garden of Methodism" by Rev. E. D. Hallman; (and other historical data) indicates that this place of worship was first built in the early 1800's (and rebuilt several times), and was affiliated with the Methodist Church and used by Methodists in the Williamsville area under color of title and with all the attributes necessary to constitute adverse possession for approximately 175 years; and

WHEREAS, no deed or other recorded instrument of title has been discovered (over the years by search) in the deed records of Kent County, Delaware, or from the records in the office of the Peninsula Annual Conference of the Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, this Williamsville Methodist Church was officially declared as abandoned at the June 1982 Peninsula Annual Conference of the Methodist Church (see p. 146 of June 2-4 Conference Journal) and the Trustees of the Peninsula Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, Inc., were duly authorized to dispose of the same, as authorized by Subsection 2541, Par. 1, of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (1980 ed.); and said Trustees have duly determined that a gift of title to all this real and personal property to the party of the second part is the best disposition of the same so as to preserve and maintain it presently and for the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of ONE DOLLAR (\$1.00) lawful money of the United States of America, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, hereby grants and conveys unto the said party of the second part, its successors and assigns, in fee simple, the following described property:

ALL that certain tract, piece and parcel of land, and church building and premises, known as Williamsville Methodist Church and Cemetery, situate, lying and being in Milford Hundred, Kent County and the State of Delaware, fronting on the southerly right of way line of County Route 443, at 30 feet wide, and on the northeasterly right of way line of County Route 442, at 50 feet wide, adjoining lands of Edward L. Rust, and more particularly described as follows, to wit:

BEGINNING at a set iron pipe at the intersection of the ~~the~~ aforementioned right of way lines of County Route 443 with County Route 442; thence proceeding along said right of way line of County Route 443 and deflecting left along a 1293.02 foot radius curve, the chord of which bears North 67 degrees 25 minutes 05 seconds East 89.15 feet, an arc distance of 89.17 feet to a point of tangency; thence continuing along said right of way line of County Route 443 North 65 degrees 26 minutes 33 seconds East 167.84 feet to a point at the northwesterly corner for lands of Edward L. Rust; thence running with said Rust lands South 04 degrees 41 minutes 59 seconds East 236.40 feet to a found iron pipe on the aforesaid northeasterly right of way line of County Route 442, passing over a found iron pipe at 10.73 feet; thence finally following said right of way line of County Route 442 North 62 degrees 38 minutes 27 seconds West 286.38 feet to the place of beginning, containing 28,384.2 square feet of land, more or less. The foregoing description being taken from a plat and survey made by Charles D. Murphy, Jr.,

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Professional Land Surveyor, dated May 4, 1905, which plat is intended to be returned to the land records of Kent County.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said Trustees of The Peninsula Annual Conference of The Methodist Church, Inc.

THE TRUSTEES OF THE PENINSULA ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, INC. a Delaware corporation

BY: James Owen Wise
President

ATT: Thomas P. Weston, Jr.
Secretary

Sealed and Delivered in the Presence of:

R. Thomas Livingston



WITNESSED AND SUBSCRIBED
COUNTY OF KENT)
) SS)

name before me, the Subscribed, a Notary Public in and for the State of Delaware, do hereby certify that the above said, JAMES OWEN WISE President of The Trustees of the Peninsula Annual Conference of The Methodist Church, Inc., a Delaware corporation, party to this Indenture, known to me personally to be such and acknowledged this Indenture to be his act and deed and the act and deed of said corporation, that the signature of the President thereto is in his own handwriting and the seal affixed is the common and lawful seal of said corporation and that his act of executing, acknowledging and delivering said Indenture was duly authorized by a resolution of the Board of Directors of said corporation.

GIVEN under my Hand and Seal of Office, this day and year aforesaid.

Thomas P. Weston, Jr.
Notary Public



RECEIVED FOR RECORD
F. O. CONNOR
ROBERT J. DONAWAY
RECORDER OF DEEDS
KENT COUNTY, DELAWARE

State of Delaware
STATE TAX DEPT. KENT
REALTY TRANSFER TAX
\$80.00