

Deed: Willis C Dickerson & wife To J. H. Murry & al
Trustees of Clayton A. M. E Church

This Indenture made the thirteenth day of July in the year
of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four

Between Willis C Dickerson and Maggie C, his wife
of the Town of Westover, Somerset County, State of Mary-
land of the first part and Jno H. Murry and Others of
Kepton Hundred Kent County and State of Delaware,
Trustees of Clayton A. M. E Church in trust and
their successors in office forever as parties of the second
part:

Witnesseth, That the said party of the first part, for
and in consideration of the sum of one Hundred dollars
Current lawful money of the United States of America unto
them well and truly paid by the said party of the second
part, at and before the sealing and delivery of these presents
the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have granted
bargained sold aliened enfeoffed released conveyed and
Confirmed and by these presents do grant bargain sell
alien enfeoff release convey and Confirm unto the
said parties of the second part their Successors in office

All that Lot piece or parcel of land lying
and being on Smyrna Avenue as it leads to the town
of Clayton, bounded and described as follows. Beginning
at a Stake in a thorn hedge on the North side of said
Avenue and running with other lands of said party of
the first part, North twelve and a half degrees West,
two hundred six and a half feet to a Stake in the
South line of the Baltimore and Delaware Bay Rail Road
thence with the South line of said Rail Road North
Seventy Eight and a quarter degrees East, fifty feet to
a Stake Corner for other lands of said Willis C Dick-
erson, thence South twelve and a half degrees East, two
hundred seven and a half feet to a Stake in the thorn
hedge at the side of Smyrna Avenue, thence with said
thorn hedge South Seventy Nine degrees West, fifty feet to the
place of Beginning, and Containing ten thousand three
hundred and fifty square feet of land be the same
more or less, and being part of the same land which
was conveyed by Herman P Hazel and wife by their
Indenture bearing date the 20th day of August A.D. 1880
and recorded in the Recorder's office at Dover in Book of
Vol 6. page 176re, as by reference thereto will more
fully appear.

Together with all and singular the improvements

woods ways waters, water courses rights liberties privileges hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, and the reversions and remainders rents issues and profits thereof, and all the estate right title interest property Claim and demand whatsoever of them the said parties of the first part in law equity or otherwise: howsoever of in and to the same and every part and parcel thereof

To Have and To hold the said Lot piece or parcel of land hereditaments and premises hereby granted or mentioned or intended so to be with the appurtenances unto the said parties of the second part and their successors in office, to and for the only proper use and behoof of the said parties of the second part and their successors in office forever:

And the said parties of the first part for themselves their heirs Executors and Administrators do by these presents Covenant grant and agree to and with the said parties of the second part and their successors in office that they the said parties of the first part their heirs all and singular the hereditaments and premises herein above described and granted or mentioned or intended so to be with the appurtenances unto the said parties of the second part and their successors in office against them the said parties of the first part their heirs and against all and every other person or persons whomsoever lawfully Claiming or to Claim the same or any part thereof shall and will by these presents Warrant and forever defend

In Witness whereof the said parties of the first part have hereunto set their hands and seals Dated the day and year first above written sealed and delivered

in presence of
Wm B. Sprax
Roger Woolford

Willis C Dickerson Seal
Maggie C Dickerson Seal

State of Maryland
Somerset County

Roger Woolford
Notary Public
Princess Anne Md

Be it Remembered that on this thirteenth day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four personally Came before me Willis C Dickerson and Maggie C Dickerson parties to this Indenture known to me personally to be such and acknowledged this Indenture to be their deed: And the said Maggie C Dickerson being at the same time privately examined by me apart from her husband acknowledged that she executed the said Indenture willingly without compulsion or threats

hand and seal: Dated the day and year first
above written
sealed and delivered in
the presence of } Asa B Mudge (Seal)
John S Casperson } Sephronia M Mudge (Seal)

State of Delaware {
Kent County } ss
John S Casperson Notary
Public State of Delaware
Appointed Feb 3 1828
For seven years } Re it Remembered that on the
fifteenth day of November in
the year of our Lord one thousand
eight hundred and ninety nine
personally came before me John
S Casperson a Notary Public
for the State of Delaware Asa
B Mudge and Sephronia M

Mudge parties to this Indenture known to me personally to
be such and severally acknowledged this Indenture to
be their deed. And the said Sephronia M Mudge
being at the same time privately examined by me
apart from her husband acknowledged that she executed
the said Indenture willingly without compulsion or threats or
fear of her husband's displeasure

and seal of office the day and year aforesaid Given under my hand

John S Casperson
Notary Public

Received for Record September Fifth A D 1901

A true Copy of the original James Lord, Recorder
Attent: James Lord, Recorder

Deed: John P Hudson and Mary H Hudson, his wife
Trustees of Mount Friendship and Byrds African M. E. Chapel

This Indenture made the twenty eighth day of August in the year
of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and one

Between John P Hudson and Mary H. his wife of Kent
County and State of Delaware parties of the first part and
The Trustees of Mount Friendship African Methodist
Episcopal Church and The Trustees of Byrds African Meth-
-odist Episcopal Chapel, in trust for the uses and pur-
-poses herein after mentioned, all of Kent County and State
aforesaid of the second part:

Witnesseth that the said John P Hudson and Mary H. his wife, parties of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Five Hundred Dollars lawful money of the United States of America to them in hand paid at and before the sealing and delivery of these presents the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged Have granted bargained sold aliened enfeoffed re-leased conveyed and confirmed and by these presents do grant bargain sell alien enfeoff release convey and confirm unto them the said Trustees, parties of the second part and their attorney or successors Trustees in trust for the uses and purposes hereafter mentioned and declared:

All that certain Lot piece or parcel of timber land situated in Kenton, Hundred Kent County and State of Delaware described as follows viz:

Beginning at the centre of the Bridge in the public road and running with the ditch, in an Easterly Course thirty three rods: thence in a North westerly Course and parallel with the public road twenty four rods thence Westerly thirty three rods to the centre of the public road: thence in a South Easterly Course in the Centre of the public road twenty four rods to the place of Beginning containing Five Acres of land be the same more or less: And it being the same Lot piece or parcel of land which was conveyed to said John P Hudson, by Asa B Mudge and wife, by their Indenture of bargain and sale dated the fifteenth day of November A.D. 1899 and intended to be recorded:

Together with all and singular the buildings woods waters ways privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging or in anywise appertain-
-ing

To have and to hold all and singular the above mentioned and described Lot piece or parcel of land situate lying and being as aforesaid: together with all and singular the houses woods water ways and privileges thereto belonging unto the said Trustees parties of the second part their attorney or successors in office forever in trust that they shall use and maintain thereon a Tent or Tents for a Camp meeting or other proper house or buildings suitable and convenient as a place of public worship for the use of the Members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America according to the


rules and discipline of said Church, which from time to time may be adopted and agreed upon by the Ministers and Preachers of said Church at their General Conferences in the United States of America: And in further trust and Confidence that they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such Ministers and preachers belonging to said Church as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conferences of the Ministers and preachers of the said African Methodist Episcopal Church, or by Annual Conferences authorized by the said Conferences to preach and expound God's Holy Word therein: and in further trust and Confidence that as often as any one or more Trustees heretofore mentioned, shall die or cease to be a member or members of said Church, according to the rules and discipline 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 said Church, to call a meeting of the members for the election of all the Board or a part according to law, as soon as conveniently may be: and when so met 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 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 members so assembled shall proceed 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 Trustees forever and in case of an equal number of votes for and against said nomination, the Stationed Minister or Preacher shall have the Casting vote.

Provided nevertheless That 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 on account of said premises and they the said Trustees or their successors be obliged to pay the said sum or sums of money, or a Majority of them shall be authorized to sell the said sum or sums of money by mortgage on the said premises or by selling the said premises: Notice given to the Pastor or Preacher.

oversight of the said Congregation attending divine service on the said premises if the money due be not paid to the said Trustees or their successors within six months after such notice has been 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 such sale, shall deposit the remainder of the money produced from or by the said sale in the hands of the Steward or Stewards of the Society to, or attending divine service on said premises which surplus, or the proceeds 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 their best judgment for the use of the said Society: And the said parties of the first part, by these presents hereby grant and confirm unto the said parties of the second part as herein above specified, the said Lot piece or parcel of land so that the said Trustees of Mount Friendship African Methodist Episcopal Church have vested in said Trustees the two thirds interest in and to the said Lot piece or parcel of land, and the said Trustees of the Byrd African Methodist Episcopal Chapel have vested in them the other and remainder of same, namely the one third interest

In Testimony whereof the said John P. Hudson and Mary H. Hudson have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first herein above written

John P. Hudson 

Mary H. Hudson 

signed sealed and delivered in the presence of
The words Trust or Trusts for
on 2^d page interlined at the 17th

line; and the words Remainder of the on page 4th, line 3 marked x x were interlined before this paper was executed.

E. V. Cooper as to both parties

State of Delaware
Kent County } ss

Ezekiel T. Cooper Notary
Public State of Delaware
Appointed June 1896
for seven years

Be it Remembered that on this twenty Eighth day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and one personally came before Ezekiel T. Cooper Notary Public for the State of Delaware John P. Hudson and Mary H. his wife parties to this Indenture known by me personally

to be such and severally acknowledged this indenture to be their
Deed respectively: And the said Mary H Hudson being at the
same time privately examined by me apart from her husband
acknowledged that she executed the said Indenture 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

Ezekiel V Cooper, Notary Public

Received for Record September Fifth A D 1901

James Lord Recorder

A True Copy of the original

Attest: James Lord, Recorder

Deed

Benjamin C Cabbage & Wife to Thomas D Cabbage

This Indenture Made the seventeenth day of May in the
year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy
five

Between Benjamin C Cabbage and Elizabeth Cabbage
his wife of Kent County and State of Delaware of the first
part and Thomas D Cabbage of the County and State
aforesaid of the second part:

Witnesseth: That the said
Benjamin C Cabbage and Elizabeth Cabbage his wife for
and in consideration of the sum of Two Hundred and fifty
Dollars Lawful money of the United States of America to
them in hand paid by the said Thomas D Cabbage
before the sealing and delivery of these presents the
receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged Have and
each of them hath granted bargained and sold alien
enfeoffed released conveyed and confirmed and by
these presents do and each of them doth grant bargain
and sell alien enfeoff release convey and confirm unto
the said Thomas D Cabbage his heirs and assigns

All that certain piece or parcel of land lying and being
in the County of Kent and State of Delaware and
is described and known as follows to wit: The
Corner of the Farm known as the Farm of
deceased now in possession of

entered in the school. The farm, of 158 acres, was presented by Edwin H. Gayley, et al., on Nov. 23, 1895.

St. Joseph's Chapel at the Industrial School was built in 1896. The corner-stone of the chapel was blessed by Bishop Alfred A. Curtis.

The chapel was dedicated on Thurs., June 15, 1897, at 10:30 A. M., by the Most Rev. John J. Monaghan assisted by the Revs. L. J. Welbors and D. J. Flynn. Pontifical High Mass was celebrated. These ceremonies were followed by a dinner, held in the rectory, where speeches were made by Chief Justice Charles B. Lore, Judge William C. Spruance, William Michael Byrne and the Very Rev. J. R. Slattery, S.S.J.

Father deRuyter, the founder, had been buried in front of the chapel and on dedication day his body was reinterred beneath the altar of the chapel.

On Nov. 18, 1900, fire destroyed the main building and two of the shops of the school.

On the morning of Wed., May 15, 1901, four new white marble altars, in the chapel, were consecrated by Bishop John J. Monaghan. In the afternoon the Bishop blessed the newly installed chapel bell. The sermon was preached by the Very Rev. J. R. Slattery, S.S.J.

Bishop Monaghan designated the chapel to become the parish church in 1918. St. Polycarp's Church at Smyrna had been sold and plans to build a church at Clayton were postponed because of the war.

In the meantime a graveyard has been established beside the woods on the school farm and Father deRuyter's body has been reinterred there. A number of interments have been made. A large rugged granite cross bearing the inscription I.H.S. occupies a commanding spot in the graveyard. At the entrance there is a beautiful shrine of St. Joseph.

Church of God Mission at Clayton. This mission was opened on the main street in 1945.

Byrd's A. M. E. Chapel, at Clayton, was founded in 1894. They purchased the site on July 13, 1894, from W. C. Dickerson. This section was known as "Sweeneytown." On Aug. 28, 1901, with Mt. Friendship Church, they purchased five acres of land from John P. Hudson as a camp-meeting site. The church was incorporated on June 10, 1918.

Blackiston Methodist Church (M.E.) is located seven miles west of Clayton, beyond Blackiston Crossroads. The first church was built, in 1787, on land donated by Benjamin Blackiston for whom the church was named. The building was designed by Bishop Asbury. On May 19, 1810, the Quarterly Conference of the church passed the following resolution: "That every preacher and every Quarterly Meeting Conference be advised to use all of their lawful and prudential influence to promote the freedom of slaves. Not to give licenses to any preacher or exhorter who holds slaves unless said slaves are emancipated. Not to appoint any class leaders who were unfriendly to the freedom of slaves." In 1847, the old church was moved away and a new church was built. In the graveyard that surrounds the church the oldest inscribed tombstone is that of George W. Stevens who died on Aug. 14, 1846. At the present time an annual meeting is held on the second Sunday in September.

The Church of Love and Charity, colored, was located on the road through Mt. Friendship. They purchased the church site from Lydia A. Thome on Mar. 22, 1877.

EXP. 10/31/82

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received SEP 16 1982

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Byrd's ~~A.M.E.~~ African Methodist Episcopal Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Smyrna Avenue ~~NA~~ not for publication

city, town Clayton vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state Delaware code 10 county Kent code 01

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"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

(confirmed 5/21/82 at Kent County Board of Assessments)

name Byrd's A.M.E. Church

street & number Smyrna Avenue

city, town Clayton vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Kent County Administration Building

city, town Dover state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Del. Cultural Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1981 ☐ 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 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	date NA
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Byrd's A.M.E. Church is a small frame structure located at the eastern edge of Clayton on a quiet side street, Smyrna Avenue; its environment is the Smyrna-Clayton road and the railway tracks to the north, open fields to the south, and open, early residential development on either side. The church faces south on a slightly elevated parcel of land. It retains its earthen yard, trees, and considerable space on the deep lot behind its kitchen wing. The original main block is cornerstone-dated 1894. It is clapboarded and corner-framed, with a tall, broad front-facing gable and a picturesque offset entry "tower." To the rear is a much lower-pitched clapboarded kitchen wing, which was the principal element of the 1958 rebuilding also referred to on the cornerstone. The kitchen surrounds the small beveled apse which once emerged from the rear of the building, and which is still visible from within. Except for this relatively inconspicuous and compatible rear addition, and the remodeling of the stoop with metal hand rails and concrete, the exterior of the church is in virtually unaltered condition. The interior has been more extensively altered, but retains a number of original features intact and exposed, and others intact under modern veneer.

The body of the church, containing the single large room that serves as a sanctuary, is lighted by three narrow one-over-one light sash windows across the front, and three two-over-two light sashes on the east side. The west side is two bays deep behind the joining of the outset tower. The upper window trim is simple strips set edgewise over ogee molding; the molding is missing on the front windows, which are glazed with plain tinted glass. The upper surrounds of the narrow front windows are cut to form shallow segmental arches. Most of the decorative emphasis, however, is on the entry tower. A band of shaped shingle, four courses deep, circles the tower where it springs free of the main gabled roof. Above this rises a steep, tent-on-hip roof, presently asphalt-shingled and missing a finial. The wall of the tower has a slightly battered profile on its free, left side; the resulting irregular strip of wall to the left of the door is emphasized by infilling with diagonally set strips. Above the double entry doors, which are quite plain, is a shallow, two-light, clear glass transom, trimmed with spandrels of sawn wood.

The interior has been considerably renovated, but most of the changes were superficial and much original material remains. The sanctuary is a single large open space, rectangular except for the outsetting, behind a broad screen arch, of the beveled three-sided apse. The apse has a window on either side, and an unbroken rear wall. The space within it accommodates the altar and pulpit, on a raised dais that extends back into the sanctuary. The ceiling of the sanctuary is open from the springing of the roof about half way up to the ridgebeam, and the sloping surfaces are plastered continuously with the walls. Light acoustical tiles have been applied to the narrow width of ceiling, screening the original wood. Similarly, modern plywood veneer has been applied to the wainscoting, but the original material is said to survive underneath it.

(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 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 checked="" 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)
				<u>local history</u>

Specific dates	1894	Builder/Architect	Unknown
----------------	------	-------------------	---------

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Byrd's A. M. E. Church was built on the outskirts of Clayton in 1894, by a local Black community whose members had previously then been walking several miles out in the country to worship. The small, picturesque, little-altered Queen Anne-style church stands today as an evocative architectural image of one of the major community experiences of Black Delawareans in the Clayton area. Indeed, since even after the abolition of slavery Blacks were subject to discriminatory policies and practices which prevented their equal participation in the wider society, Black churches became institutions not only of major but of unparalleled importance. They were virtually the only extra-familial, extra-local institutions of which Black people were in control. Therefore, among the early buildings of a Black community a nineteenth- or early-twentieth-century church will always be a building of unusual associative power. In Clayton, Byrd's Church holds this position. Further, it has the stylistic ambition of a building as beautiful as a people of modest financial means could make it. Because of the degree of integrity with which this original style and its setting have survived, it is a particularly effective carrier of its associations both with the wider A. M. E. movement, and with the particular historical needs and personalities that brought his local church into being. These qualities render it significant in terms of National Register criteria A and C: that is, for its association with events which made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the local past, and for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type and period. Because its primary significance rests on these qualities, it is nominated to the National Register as an exception to the usual ineligibility of properties owned and used by religious organizations.

The origins of Black American Methodism are complex and subject to debate. A recent dissertation argues convincingly, however, that the first "completely separate and independent movement to assume organized connectional form in America," was incorporated in Delaware in 1913, by Wilmingtonian Peter Spencer. Spencer's Union Church of African Members underwent schisms, after his death in 1843, that produced the present-day African Union and Union American M. E. churches. But it was the African Methodist Episcopal Church which proved to be the main branch of Black Methodism in America. This denomination grew from an incorporating conference held in 1816 under the principal inspiration of Philadelphian Richard Allen. In 1822, the two districts of the A. M. E. had 6,000 members. Sixty years later the denomination had 34 districts, a publishing house, a university in Ohio and several smaller schools in the south, and a membership reported at 400,000.

(see continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Baldwin, Lewis V., "'Invisible' Strands in African Methodism: A History of the A.U.M.P. and U.A.M.E Churches, 1805-1980." Unpubl. Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1980.
 Caley, George, Footprints of the Past, Smyrna 1963. Historical & Cultural Encyclopedia of Delaware, 1882. Payne, Daniel., The Semi-Centenary of the A.M.E. Church in the U.S.A., Baltimore, 1866. Kent County Land Records. Interviews with Clarence Barrett, Lillian Faust and Robert Ross, May 1982.

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property less than one
 Quadrangle name Clayton

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

A 1 8 4 4 5 9 2 0 4 3 4 9 1 9 0
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundaries of the nominated parcel, as set forth and justified in the section seven justification of boundaries, were set at the boundaries of the 50' X 207' legal parcel on which Byrd's A.M.E. Church stands.

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

state	NA	code	county	code
state	NA	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Wright, Historian

organization Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Pres. date May, 1982

street & number Old Statehouse, The Green telephone (302) - 736-5685

city or town Dover state Delaware

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X 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

Daniel R. L. Smith

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/10/82

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
 National Register

date 10/19/82

for 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**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Byrd's AME Church

Item number 7

Page 2

Intact interior material includes the simple molded surrounds of the windows and doors, and the heavy curved altar rail with its turned balusters; the random-width board floors, bare except for light carpeting laid in the rear and center aisles and around the altar; and the two ranks of pews, each hand-carpentered from five pieces of wood: two long planks for back and seat, a wooden underbrace, and end pieces embellished with flat semi-circular terminations and trefoil cutouts at the base.

Justification of Boundaries

The boundaries of the nominated property were set at the boundaries of the 50' X 207' legal parcel on which Byrd's A.M.E. Church stands. Since these were the dimensions of the lot purchased by the Church's trustees in 1894, and since they have persisted unchanged, this appeared to be the logical definition of the boundaries of this historic resource.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Byrd's AME Church

Item number

8

Page 2

In the early 1890s, the Smyrna-Clayton area of Delaware boasted two A. M. E. churches: Bethel Church on the eastern outskirts of Smyrna, and Mt. Friendship Church in the countryside west of Clayton. The churches were about equidistant from Clayton, and members of the Black community there, many of them railroad workers on the lines that branched at Clayton, generally walked out the Kenton Road to Mt. Friendship, rather than through Smyrna to the older and larger Bethel Church. Within a decade after the 1886 raising of Mt. Friendship, the needs of the Clayton-area residents led to the construction of Byrd's Church.

The two congregations maintained very close ties. Mt. Friendship was called the Home Church by Clayton members. Reverend E. Byrd, for whom the Clayton church is named, served as pastor to both. The two congregations cooperated in the purchase of a camp meeting ground in 1907, and cooperated as well in the annual ten-day tent meeting that raised money for the churches and provided an inspirational vacation for members and friends.

The early records of Byrd's Church have been lost, but the building was probably raised by the members. An older member of the congregation remembers Button Garner, John Murray, and Andrew Briscoe as probable leaders in that effort. John Murray was first and only specifically named trustee of the Clayton A. M. E. Church on the 1894 deed for a \$100 lot on Smyrna Avenue, south of the Baltimore and Delaware Bay Railroad.

The church erected in that year is a modest essay in the Queen Anne style, which enjoyed its brief popularity in Delaware in the years around the turn of the century. The cardinal traits of that style are picturesque asymmetry, mixed texture, and eclectic allusion. Byrd's A. M. E. Church exercises these options in the offsetting of the tower and the picturesque lines of the tower roof; in the contrasting textures of clapboards, shaped shingles, and diagonally laid trim board; and in the various arch forms, segmental in the front windows, pointed in the pews.

The Queen Anne, among all nineteenth-century styles, is the one perhaps hardest to pin with ideological or symbolic meaning. What it seems most to represent is a love of decoration, a desire to beautify and make fancy. In this context the style of Byrd's Church perhaps represents only the desire to make the new building as up-to-date and lavish as possible, in keeping with its importance. Its somewhat older neighboring churches had been built, probably for the same reasons, in somewhat earlier styles; Gothic Revival at Mt. Friendship in the 1880s; a kind of hybrid Gothic-Greek at Smyrna in the 1860s.

ONE 40 1000-019
EXP 10 8 1984

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

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

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Byrd's AME Church Item number 8 Page 3

But like these other churches, Byrd's A. M. E. makes clear references throughout to its function as a church. The narrowing and arching of the front windows, the tinting of the glass; the vaulting of the ceiling; even the Gothicizing, trefoil outcuts on the plain end panels of the pews; all these are references to a traditional vocabulary of forms associated with Christian religious practice, executed by hand in a local setting. These architectural forms are the record of a minority people's assimilation in faith if not in social or economic practice, and of their experience in turning assimilation to their own purposes in independent community institutions.

Level of Significance

The level of significance checked in Item 10 is local. The institutional and historical significance of Byrd's church in its immediate locality is manifestly present. Its architectural significance in the wider Smyrna-Clayton area is also demonstrable, not only because it is an independently stylish and attractive building, but because it has maintained greater integrity of fabric and mass than either of the two neighboring A. M. E. churches. Both Mt. Friendship and Bethel have had enclosed front vestibules added, which blur their historic architectural features; Bethel's original brick exterior has been stuccoed. The use of the Queen Anne style is unique in the area and is probably unusual in the state. However, comparison on this level should await collection and evaluation of survey material from a much broader sample of Delaware A. M. E. churches.