

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rock Methodist Episcopal Church
other names Christ Rock United Methodist Church; D-585

2. Location

street & number 2403 Maryland Route 16 not for publication
city or town Cambridge x vicinity
state Maryland code MD county Dorchester code 019 zip code 21613

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

[Signature] Date 4-17-14
Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby, certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - Determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church (D-585)
Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
1		objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility
FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19th CENTURY/Vernacular
LATE VICTORIAN/Gothic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Wood/Weatherboard
roof SYNTHETICS/Asphalt
other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1875-1911

Significant Dates

1875, c. 1889, 1910-11

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, D-585
Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 1.5 acres Cambridge, MD USGS quad

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8 Zone	4 0 3 8 9 1 Easting	4 2 6 6 8 0 9 Northing	3			
2				4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul Baker Touart, Architectural Historian
Organization Private Consultant date 4.23.2012
street & number Cedar Hill, Box 5 telephone _____
city or town Westover state Maryland zip code 21871

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

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

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

Description Summary:

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

General Description:

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

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

The north (main) elevation is an asymmetrical façade with an entrance and bell tower on the northeast corner. On the first floor of the tower, replacement metal raised-panel double doors are fitted within a pointed arch door opening. Fixed above the double doors is a round

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

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

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

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

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 7 Page 3

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

Summary Statement of Significance:

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

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church meets Criteria Consideration A (Religious Property) because its significance stems principally from its architecture. The building ceased to be used for religious services in the 1990s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

Resource History and Historic Context:

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

The enlargement and restyling of the church exterior and interior in 1889, as well as the further expansion of the building in 1910-11 with an asymmetrical entrance tower, and rear Sunday School room and choir loft, point to the prominent trends inherent in the Methodist denomination nationally. During the late nineteenth century, the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church published catalogues of architectural plans for churches and parsonages which influenced greatly rural congregations across the Eastern Shore. While the architectural form and decoration of the tower and Gothic arched windows do not repeat exactly pattern-book designs, they easily evoke the intent to follow in the design recommendations espoused by the national leadership. The choir loft and Sunday School room addition speak to the growth and importance of these two congregational functions. The African-American congregations on the Eastern Shore are especially known for the key role that the choir and congregational singing had in their worship services. The property includes a cemetery dating to the period of use, beginning during the post-Civil War years. Rock Methodist Episcopal Church stands prominently on the south side of Maryland Route 16 at the intersection of several county roads across the highway from the Stanley Institute, a post-Civil War school building now used as a museum for the history of African-American education in Dorchester County, Maryland. The school and church are closely linked historically as they were established during the decade following the Civil War. Oral traditions within the church membership trace the early formation of a congregation in this community to 1867 when a small building was relocated from the village of Church Creek and jointly used as a school and a chapel.¹ Within five years, a building committee was established to erect a church separate from the school, and in August 1874 a half-

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

acre parcel of the Bellfield tract was transferred by Thomas J. and Francis S. Dail, residents of the Baltimore, to Samuel Harris, Jon Cornish, Elisha Jolly, Lawrence Cornish and Josiah Marine.² According to the marble datestone set in the foundation pier, the original section of this church was erected the following year. Also recorded on the datestone are two additional dates and the word, "Rebuilt, 1889 and 1911." Fabric analysis of the structural frame confirms that the 1875 church, a 25' by 30' timber frame structure, survives and is masked by a uniform interior and exterior finishes. The initial single story timber frame church had a center, gable-front entrance and most likely two sash windows on each side. The windows were most likely of multi-pane lights with clear glass. Potentially, the only surviving interior elements of the 1875 church are the turned baluster altar rail and paneled pulpit. The paneled sides of the pulpit are enriched with 1870s ogee panel moldings, and the balusters of the altar rail are executed with turnings typical of post-Civil War stair rail baluster profiles. It is clear the altar rail has been cut and modified several times in its history of use.

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

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

In its original configuration, a board partition enclosed the balcony staircase, which was modified with the installation of a turned newel post, turned balusters, and a molded handrail during the 1910-11 period of construction. Similar turned work is found in the choir loft, also dating to the same time. The rear addition required the removal of the apse, and the colored glass windows were reused in the south wall of the extended structure. The altar area was

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 4

reworked with diagonal matched, tongue-and-groove beaded boards that infilled the section formerly occupied by the apse. The altar was raised at that time in a two tiered form. According to the church history, the 1910-11 addition was executed by contractor, R. B. Dixon of Easton.

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

Major Bibliographical References:

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

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rock Methodist Episcopal Church, D-585

Name of Property

Dorchester County, Maryland

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

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

Boundary Justification:

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

2-585

ROCK
METHODIST
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

DORCHESTER
COUNTY, MD

8-403291-32' 30"
4-266-809

AMBRIDGE, MD
GUARD



250 000
FEET

D-585

ROCK
METHODIST
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

Dorchester Co.
MD

18-403891
4266809

Cambridge MD
Quod



250 000
FEET

D-585
 21. 1ST ROCK
 UNITED
 METHODIST
 CHURCH
 DORCHESTER
 COUNTY, MD
 18-403891-32' 30"
 4266809
 CAMBRIDGE, MD
 QUAD













