



## ARCHIVES & HISTORY

General Commission on Archives and History

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

P.O. Box 127  
Madison, NJ 07940

Michelle Merkel-Brunskill  
Executive Assistant

August 25, 2017

Mr. Mark Shenise  
RE: Old Stone Church  
North Broadway  
Upper Nyack, NY

Dear Mark,

We have received the completed application for Old Stone Church located in Upper Nyack, New York. Congratulations! The site has been registered as United Methodist Historic Site Number 538.

We are pleased to add Old Stone Church to the register and will maintain a file of information here in Madison on the site. We would love to receive any additional items for the file, including materials from a dedication service or other special event, historical data, and photographs.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Michelle Merkel-Brunskill

APPLICATION for REGISTRATION of a  
UNITED METHODIST HISTORIC SITE  
GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY  
P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940; 973-408-3189

Name of Site: Old Stone Church

Location of Site: North Broadway, Upper Nyack, NY 10960

Authorized as a "United Methodist Historic Site"

By action of: The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey  
(Annual, Central, or Jurisdictional Conference)

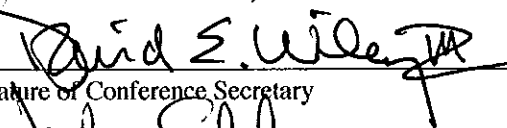
Meeting at: Wildwood Convention Center

City: Wildwood

State (or equivalent): New Jersey

Date: May 21-23, 2017

  
Signature of President/Chair, Conference Commission on Archives and History

  
Signature of Conference Secretary

Signature of Resident Bishop

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF THE CONFERENCE RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING DESIGNATION OF SITE.

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE - FOR GENERAL COMMISSION USE ONLY  
No. 538 Received by Michelle Merkel-Brunskill Date 8/17/2017

Additional Data Requested NA By \_\_\_\_\_ Received \_\_\_\_\_

\$75 Registration Fee Received Yes Registered 8/17/17 By M. Merkel-Brunskill

Copies of this report sent to:

Conference Archives at \_\_\_\_\_

Jurisdictional Archives at \_\_\_\_\_

Marker sent to: Left on Mark Shenfise's Desk

Date 8/25/17

Marker installed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Description:**

Please attach a brief description of the Historic Site and its significance in the history of the Conference, area, and/or general church (100 to 200 words).

**Supporting Data and Materials:**

If there are published or manuscript copies of articles, pamphlets, books, brochures, clippings, etc. related to the Site, please list these. Please enclose copies of evidence for the General Commission's files.

**Photographs of Site:**

Please enclose black and white photos of the Site. These should be large enough to discern significant details but not in excess of 8" x 10".

**Data on Historic Site:**

Date of Original Construction or Event 1812

Architect (if any) N/A

Builder (if any) William Palmer, Nicholas Williamson, John Green, Garrett Onderdonk

Original Owner First Methodist Episcopal Church

Present Owner Village of Upper Nyack (in cooperation with the Historical Society of Rockland County)

Address 328 North Broadway Upper Nyack, NY 10960

Telephone 845-358-0084

Approximate Value N/A

Mortgage (if any) None

Has owner been informed of pending Conference action? Historic Society notified December 2016 and cooperated with GNJCAH. Village of Upper Nyack informally approached June 1, 2017.

What is the Owner's attitude toward visitors? Visitors are welcome with advance preparation. Calling the Village of Upper Nyack prior to a visit is a must. The Village Clerk's Office is open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday to Friday except holidays.

Access: Describe route to Site from a main road: From NY State Thruway, Exit 11, travel east toward the Hudson River, turn left onto Broadway and continue north on Broadway. The Old Stone Church is in Village of Upper Nyack, across the street from the Upper Nyack Elementary School

Parking? Parking on North Broadway. Handicapped access? Step or two to enter building

**Upkeep:** What provision has been or will be made for maintenance?

Caretaker Name: Village of Upper Nyack

Address 328 N. Broadway, Upper Nyack, NY 10960

Telephone 845-358-0084

**Reception:** Is competent guide service available? Arrangement through Village of Upper Nyack. This might be turfed out to a member of the Historic Society of Rockland County. Any guide or representative will be a volunteer. No donation or gratuity requested.

Name Village of Upper Nyack

Address 328 North Broadway, Upper Nyack, NY 20960

Telephone 845-358-0084

Is there a charge for guide service? No Is a donation expected? No, but always appreciated

**Publicity:**

The designation "Registered United Methodist Historic Site" will be called to the attention of the following Historical/historical agencies:

Local: Historical Society of Rockland County , 845-634-9629 (private phone), info@rockland history.org, www.rocklandhistory.org

State/Regional: Village of Upper Nyack, 328 North Broadway, Upper Nyack, NY 10960

Others: TBD

What has been or will be done to promote it to the public through:

Newspapers: TBD

Radio: TBD

Television: TDB

Other media: TBD

Publicity items (brochures, postcards, etc.) available: Through Rockland County Historic Society

What person or organization will be responsible for an ongoing program of publicity?

Through Historic Society of Rockland County

From whom may publicity be obtained?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ TBD \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ TBD \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ TBD \_\_\_\_\_

Who will affix the "REGISTERED UNITED METHODIST HISTORIC SITE" marker?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ TBD \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ TBD \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ TBD \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_ TBD \_\_\_\_\_

What public ceremony will mark the event? TBD \_\_\_\_\_

This report has been prepared by:

Name Donald DeGroat, GNJCAH vice chair | Walter Jones, Archivist \_\_\_\_\_

Address PO Box 25 Long Pond, PA 18334 | 26 Edgewater Dr., Matawan, NJ 07747 \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone 570-646-9298 | 732-566-5321 \_\_\_\_\_

email dfdegroat4@aol.com | walterhjones26@gmail.com \_\_\_\_\_

Date June 26, 2017 \_\_\_\_\_

To whom shall the marker be sent? (DO NOT use post office box address — shipped UPS)

Name Picked up at GCAH by Don DeGroat, John Callanan or Mark Shenise \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Old Stone Church

Methodism came to the Nyack area of New York State at the beginning of the 19th century. Itinerant preachers were active as early as 1806. William Palmer's house was a welcoming base for Methodism, and in 1811, by the result of a rejection, provided the land for the first small church building. Rev. John Robertson and Rev. John Finley were the earliest recorded preachers of the Bergen Circuit of which Nyack was a part.

William Palmer, Nicholas Williamson and John Green had petitioned the Classis of the Dutch Reformed Church to build a church in Nyack in 1812. The Classis declined the request. Though truth be told, later regretted the decision and did create a Reformed Church in Nyack.

Undaunted, at a meeting in John Green's house, the following resolutions were adopted:  
RESOLVED, that this be regarded as a meeting to organize and build a Methodist Episcopal Church:  
RESOLVED, that we begin to build the Church tomorrow morning.

True to their word, the next day, on property donated by Mr. Palmer, who is regarded as a father of Methodism, construction began on a small building which will be known both as the First Methodist Episcopal Church and the stone church. The stone was provided from a quarry owned by Brother Palmer supplemented by other funds and resources from Brothers Williamson, Green and Garret Onderdonk.

First Church was opened for public worship February 1813. Completed the following year, the church was dedicated at a Quarterly Meeting on Sunday, March 2, 1814. Among the signers of the deed and charter was Hannah Palmer. Rev. Daniel Fidler is the first appointed minister.

For thirty years the efforts of the laity and circuit preachers built the church from a point on the Bergen Circuit, to a two point charge with Rockland Lake, later a one point charge. Many different preachers were appointed or dropped by lead services. Among them were soon-to-be leaders of the Conference Rev. Manning Force and Rev. George Banghart. The Nyack area was considered a vital area in Eastern Rockland County and Christians travelled to this strategic area for services, which usually began on Saturday, concluding Sunday afternoon.

In the year 1842, after a series of revival meetings under the ministry of Rev. Benjamin Day, the congregants concluded First M.E.C. had outgrown its home. In addition, its location quite far from the Village of Nyack business center, was not helpful. Property was secured on Piermont Avenue and the second church building was built. Growth was evident and after some false starts, a new building was envisioned. Under the leadership of Rev. J. R. Daniels the Second M. E. Church was reorganized in 1875-76. Under the pastorate of Elbert Clement, pastor, and Rev. William Tunison, Presiding Elder, the church was incorporated as St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church.

Spiritual and numerical growth necessitated additional space. In the early 1890s property was secured on the corner of Division Avenue and South Broadway, in what was now South Nyack. 1894 that building was completed but again the congregation outgrew the space necessitating yet again another building program to add a commodious sanctuary in 1910. Growth continued, at one point reaching 350. But after the second world war changes in the Nyacks and Rockland Country brought about a fateful decline in ministry. With a heavy heart St. Paul's United Methodist Church in South Nyack disbanded in 2007.

But what of the Old Stone Church? It continued as a home to worshipping congregations for well over a century, most recently a nondenominational Christian Church until they disbanded about 2010. The building itself, being the earliest church building Rockland County, would be taken over by the village of Upper Nyack and later transferred to the Rockland County Historic Society. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998 as First Methodist Episcopal Church of Nyack.

### Bibliography

Hampton, Vernon Boyce, editor, Newark Conference Centennial History, 1857-1957 (The Historical Society of the Newark Annual Conference of the Methodist Church), 1957

Hudson River Valley Heritage Website, [hrvh.org](http://hrvh.org)

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, Nyack, New York, One Hundred and Twenty Fifth Anniversary, 1812-1937, November 7th to 28th, 1937

The Historical Society of Rockland County, [rocklandhistory.org](http://rocklandhistory.org)

Trachenberg, Helen Wright, One Hundred and Seventy-five Years of Service, 1812-1987, (Nyack, NY: St. Paul's United Methodist Church), 1987

Various sources within the archives of Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, contained in a loose-leaf volume entitled, Historical Sketches, 1812-1917 (and later)

Wikipedia, National Historic Places, New York State, Rockland County, First Methodist Episcopal Church, St. Paul's United Methodist Church

## Recommendation

The Old Stone Church / St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Rockland County, Nyack,  
Rockland County, NY Historic Site

**Whereas** The First Methodist Episcopal Church in Nyack, New York was built by the Methodist Society of Nyack in 1812, opened for worship in 1813 and dedicated March 2, 1814

**Whereas** First Methodist Episcopal Church of Nyack was on the circuit of Bergen of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference and served by such future important preachers as Manning Force and George Banghart

**Whereas** the Methodist Episcopal Church of Nyack became known locally as "The Old Stone Church" and as the "Mother Church" for Methodism in the Nyack region.

**Whereas** The congregation of the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Nyack, New York outgrew the Old Stone Church building, moving to a larger edifice in downtown Nyack in 1844, changed their name to the Second Methodist Episcopal Church in Nyack, and continued to grow, reaching a membership of 250 in 1873.

**Whereas** the congregation was reorganized and incorporated as "St Paul's United Methodist Church" in 1877 was honored to host the 28th Session of the Newark Annual Conference in 1885.

**Whereas** the congregation continued to grow, built another church building in South Nyack in 1894, added a larger sanctuary in 1910, reached a church membership of 350 before World War II and contributed many leaders to the Conference in the twentieth century.

**Whereas** The Old Stone Church was recognized as the oldest existing church sanctuary in Rockland County, New York and was named to the National Register of Historic Places on February 20, 1998, and St. Paul's United Methodist Church was additionally named to the National Register Historic Places, on March 12, 2001.

**Therefore be it resolved** that "The Old Stone Church" in Nyack, New York, be recognized by The Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey as a Conference Historic Site.

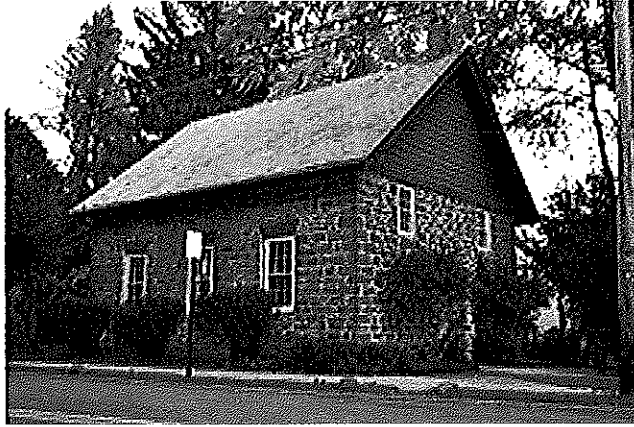
**Rational:** The Methodist presence in Nyack and surrounding Rockland County benefitted from access to transportation and provided ministry to the growing population of the county along the Hudson River. The Methodist Society first erected a small church building constructed of locally quarried sandstone, which continued as a place of worship long after the Methodists moved to larger quarters in the business section of Nyack, the commercial hub of Rockland County. The members served Christ for more than one hundred and seventy-five years. The historical significance of The Old Stone Church and the later St. Paul's church complex are each separately recognized on the National Register of Historic Places, so it is fitting for the Annual Conference to recognize the historic nature of the congregation that created both of those sites and pioneered Methodism in the Nyack, New York area.

Submitted by:

Rev. John D. Callanan, Chairperson  
Commission on Archives and History

copied from pages 50 and 51 of 2017 Pre-Conference Journal  
The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

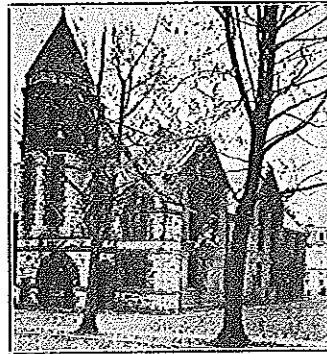




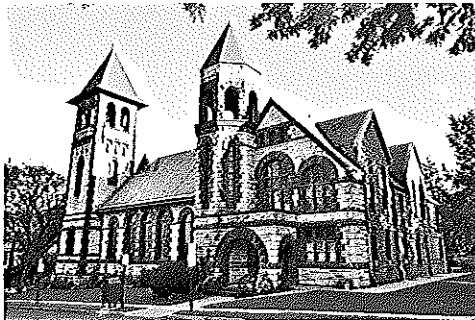
Old Stone Church  
First Methodist Episcopal Church



2nd M. E. Church—1842-1877



St. Paul's M. E. Church—1894-1910



St. Paul's United Methodist Church  
1910-2007