1. NAME
   COMMON: Rehoboth Church
   AND/OR HISTORIC: Rehoboth M.E. Church, South—"Old Rehoboth"

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: 2 miles east of Union, off State Route #3
   CITY OR TOWN: Union
   STATE: West Virginia
   CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Second
   CODE: 54
   COUNTY: Monroe
   CODE: 063

3. CLASSIFICATION
   CATEGORY (Check One)
   - District
   - Site
   - Structure
   - Object
   - Building
   - Public
   - Private
   - Structure
   - Private
   - Object
   - Public
   - Private
   - Religious
   - Other (Specify)
   - Government
   - Industrial
   - Military
   - Museum
   - Scientific
   - Park
   - Private Residence
   - Transportation
   - Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
   OWNER'S NAME: The Methodist Historical Society of the West Virginia Conference
   STREET AND NUMBER: General Conference Headquarters
   CITY OR TOWN: Charleston
   STATE: West Virginia
   CODE: 54

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
   COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
   Office of the County Clerk of Monroe County
   STREET AND NUMBER: County Courthouse
   CITY OR TOWN: Union
   STATE: West Virginia
   CODE: 54

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
   TITLE OF SURVEY:
   DATE OF SURVEY:
   DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
   STREET AND NUMBER:
   CITY OR TOWN:
Located in the center of a depression in limestone table and called a "sink," this small structure is made of medium size logs hewn on the inside only. The logs are diamond-shaped on the ends for a length of about eighteen inches to receive the next log above. The walls to the eaves are thirteen logs high.

The building's only door is in the middle of the south side. It is forty inches wide but only sixty-five inches high. There is one window on the east end. It is behind the pulpit and gives a bit of light for reading. Another, larger window is high on the north side of the church. It is three feet square. No provision is shown to have been made for heat, and light was sacrificed to give added protection from possible Indian raids.

The inside floor space is 21 feet by 30 feet. A deep gallery extends around three sides of the interior at the height of the door.

A pulpit of rough-hewn walnut and poplar boards stands high against the east wall. It is high off the floor to provide the preacher with a good view of the worshippers in the balcony.

Some of the backless truncheon benches used by the early congregations of Rehoboth are still in place. They are split logs with legs bored into the unhewn side. They have the darkness of age and the smoothness of much use. The whole of the little sanctuary seems to glow on a sunny day in the soft light from the two small windows and the open door.

A cemetery surrounds Rehoboth on each side in close proximity to the building. There are stones which mark the graves of many of those who gave the land, built the church, and first worshipped in it. Most markers date from the 18th and 19th centuries. Trees have grown up around the building, some to great size, to replace the ones which were cut down to prevent the Indians from hiding behind them.

Through the years the building received repairs, new roofs like the original board and shingled one. Later, a roof with more slant and better shingles was built. Presently, Rehoboth is well protected from the weather by a tin-roofed shed which covers the entire structure. The Commission of Archives and History of the United Methodist Church is making plans to replace this shelter with another which will give a better view of Old Rehoboth.

The church lot is well kept. The site is attractive and inviting. A caretaker lives nearby who gives aid, as needed, to visitors who are asked to sign a register.

An all weather gravel drive with a parking lot gives access from State Route No. 3 to the Rehoboth site.
8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

starting churches in Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois by 1832, was at Rehoboth on occasion.

Jessie Lee, who introduced Methodism into New England and preached his first sermon in Boston under an elm tree, for no church group would permit him to its sanctuary, visited this sanctuary early in its existence.

Freeborn Garrison, John Tunnell, and Francis Poythress were others who preached in this little wilderness meetinghouse, possibly the oldest Protestant church building west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The Centennial celebration of the founding of this Methodist Society was held at Rehoboth on July 20, 1884. Hundreds of people were present to hear the principal address given by the Reverend J.L. Kibler. In an historical sketch, he reviewed the history of Old Rehoboth, the events and her people for the past one hundred years.

A Methodist Shrine Edition of Reverend Kibler's address was published in pamphlet form in 1960, by Lawrence Sherwood of Glenville, West Virginia. The closing paragraph was as follows:

"Here, the now glorified Bishop Asbury, lifted up his voice in the wilderness, and sent out through this country an influence and a power, which is felt even today in more than a thousand hearts. My own heart catches the fire, and my own eyes see the light which he kindled in yonder old church."

By the action of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in 1960, Rehoboth Church was designated one of ten Methodist Shrines in America. One of a very few remaining log churches, Rehoboth's rough-hewn sturdiness and simplicity of style are attributes of the frontier atmosphere in which the needs for such a structure were met. The building is impressive for its contrast to grand design and ornamentation of another period.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 3/4 Acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Colonel C.E. Turley, Field Agent

ORGANIZATION: West Virginia Antiquities Commission

DATE: October 31, 1973

CITY OR TOWN: Morgantown

STATE: West Virginia

CODE: 54

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

Name: Leonard M. Davis
Title: State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: March 12, 1974

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

GPO 931-294
Rehoboth: "For now the Lord has made a broad place (Rehoboth) for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." --Genesis 26:22.

The Christmas Conference held in Baltimore in 1784 founded the Methodist Society in America and appointed Francis Asbury to be the Society's first Bishop. In that same year, a regular Methodist Society was formed on the western frontier in what was known locally as the "Sinks" of Greenbrier County (now Monroe County).

Meetings of the Society were in cabin homes and in the few widely scattered school houses. Preachers were seldom present because of the hardships of travel to such a remote community.

Early in 1785, Edward Keenan, a Catholic, wrote Bishop Asbury to send a regular preacher. A young man, newly ordained, William Phoebus answered the call and, thus, became the first full-time Methodist minister to the first Society in the region.

Under the leadership of Brother Phoebus, the Society soon outgrew their cabin meeting places. A meetinghouse was an urgent need. In 1785 or 1786, a cabin church was raised in a location well chosen to afford protection from Indian attack, a "broad place" made free of hiding places for the Indians.

A short time later, Edward Keenan, now converted to Methodism, gave a deed to the land where the Rehoboth Church was built and where it still stands:

"...in the County of Greenbrier and the State of Virginia...unto William Scarborough, Daniel McMullen, James Christy, and Alexander House...in the just sum of fifty pounds of good and lawful money in the state aforesaid...I have therefore set my hand and seal this ninth day of February in the year of our Lord 1787,...for as long as grass grows and water flows."

Tradition says that Bishop Asbury preached the dedication sermon. The story is that he stood in the doorway to speak to a crowd larger than the church would hold. At Rehoboth, the Bishop did hold sessions of the Greenbrier Conference in 1792, 1793, and 1796.

Other early giants of Methodism to visit Rehoboth were:

Peter Cartwright, Hardy circuit rider who carried "the faith" westward,
1. NAME

COMMON: Rehoboth Church
AND/OR HISTORIC: Rehoboth M.E. Church, South—"Old Rehoboth"

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 2 miles east of Union, off State Route 3
CITY OR TOWN: Union
STATE: West Virginia

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: United States Geological Survey
SCALE: 1:62,500
DATE: 1921

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)