

VLR-12/6/00 NRHP-2/16/01

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 Opequon Presbyterian Church

other names/site number 34-0009VDHR

2. Location

street & number 217 Opequon Church Lane not for publication NA
city or town Winchester, VA vicinity X
state Virginia code VA county Frederick code 069 Zip 22602

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

H. Alexander Wimp 12/29/00
Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
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 commenting or other official 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 Keeper

Date of Action _____

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Opequon Presbyterian Church name of property
Frederick County, VA location

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Religion	Sub:	religious facility
	Funerary		cemeteries

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Religion	Sub:	religious facility
	funerary		cemeteries

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Opequon Presbyterian Church
Frederick County, VA
name of property
location

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

Gothic Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

roof ~~standing-seam metal~~

walls stone

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 patterns of our history.
- B** Property is 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.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance 1742-1897

Significant Dates 1742
1897

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 file (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: Virginia Department Of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5.25

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>17</u>	<u>742420</u>	2	<u>4335720</u>	2
3	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

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name of property
location

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Helen Lee Fletcher and C. Langdon Gordon

Organization: _____ date 8/30/00

street & number: 273 Broad Avenue telephone 540 667 9308

city or town Winchester state VA zip code 22602

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Opequon Presbyterian Church

street & number 217 Opequon Church Lane telephone 540 662 1843

city or town Winchester state VA zip code 22602

Paperwork Reduction Act 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 Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Opequon Presbyterian Church (Name of Property)
Frederick County, VA (location)

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7. Summary Description:

Opequon Presbyterian Church is a one-story, gable-roofed, random-rubble stone church completed in 1897. Situated on a split level stone foundation, the church features Gothic-arched colored-glass, one-over-one windows and a northeast corner bell tower containing an entrance. The three-stage tower consists of a stone first level with a wooden-shingled section above rising to a frame section containing rectangular vents where the bell is housed. The tower is capped by a polygonal roof. The entrance is flanked by stylized stone buttresses, a date stone, and a plaque from the Presbyterian Historical Society. Circular windows with tracery are located in the wood-shingled gable ends and the rafters are exposed in the eaves. The gable roof of the church is standing-seam metal. Original interior details include a decorative metal ceiling and wood paneling. Additions include a connecting two-story stone and block education building on a banked site. The church is the third on the site, and is home to the oldest established Presbyterian congregation west of the Blue Ridge.

The oldest known marked grave site in the Shenandoah Valley (Wilson-1742) is in the largest of the four burying grounds on the nominated property. A February 19, 1745 deed conveyed the land for this cemetery which is a prominent feature near the entrance of the church. It is enclosed with a wrought-iron fence with a arched gate bearing the inscription "Old Opequon". A second cemetery has marked graves dating from 1905 to 1938. Old photographs and church records indicate the approximate location of the two unmarked burying grounds.

(8-86)

**United States Department of the Interior
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(Location)**Opequon Presbyterian Church
Frederick County, VASection 7 Page 2**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION****SITE**

The Opequon Presbyterian Church is located on approximately six acres of land situated on the south side of State Route 706, known as Opequon Church Lane. To the west lies the Grim farm, recently acquired by the Kernstown Battlefield Association to protect the land where two Civil war battles were fought in 1862 and 1864. Woodbrook Village, a subdivision of one-story single-family homes for retirees is located beyond the east property line where evergreen trees have been planted as a buffer between the houses and the nominated property. The church faces north in the northwest corner of the property. On the east side of the church between the building and the parking area are stone entrance steps to the 1790 sanctuary, the first on this site. They are marked with an explanatory plaque. A cemetery surrounded by a three-foot-high, black wrought-iron fence is in the northeast corner. It has a handsome arch over the gate with the words "Old Opequon" (sic) worked in iron. Open farm land borders the property on the south side. A small burying ground is at the south property line some distance from the building. Between the small cemetery and the sanctuary is a recently built wooden picnic shelter on a cement floor. An unpaved driveway is on the east, with a neatly landscaped, lighted parking area southeast of the building. Behind the church at a lower level is a small area equipped for children. Although there are many large trees on the property, the church stands out against an uncluttered landscape that, with current preservation efforts, should remain unchanged into the future.

EXTERIOR

The one-story, random-rubble stone church was built in 1897 on a split-level stone foundation, with the south and west walls being atop the base of the 1790 building. The church features Gothic-arched, colored-glass, one-over-one windows. The northeast corner of the facade is dominated by a three-stage bell tower containing the main entrance. Wooden shingles cover the second stage of the tower above its stone first stage. The third stage contains rectangular vents where the bell is housed. The tower is capped by a polygonal standing-seam metal roof. A simple directional weathervane tops the tower. The entrance is flanked by stylized stone buttresses, a date stone, and a plaque from the Presbyterian Historical Society. A new date stone was placed in the wall in 1997 when the original one was removed and stored inside to preserve it for future generations of the congregation.

The sanctuary has two interior stone chimneys, one in the southeast quadrant of the building, and another in the northwest quadrant. Wooden shingles cover the gable ends which have large

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circular windows with tracery. Rafters are exposed in the eaves. The gable roof is clad in standing-seam metal with snow guards.

The east wall of the 1897 sanctuary has five windows, while the west has three-- all with one-over-one double-hung sashes. Most of the panes are tinted and several are frosted. All are recessed ten inches from the wall and feature solid stone sills. Simple wood trim is painted white. Two windows and one door on the south wall have been closed in with stone and board, so that there are no openings on this elevation.

In 1956 a building was constructed immediately to the west of the sanctuary, separated by a breezeway and garden referred to as the dell. Later the buildings were connected by enclosing this area and making it into a part of the new addition. The addition is *non-intrusive* with a facade of stone matching the sanctuary, double entry doors of glass, and a wood cruciform decoration in the gable end. Although the addition is two stories on a banked site, only the top story is visible from the front.

INTERIOR

During the 1956 renovation wood pews were cut to allow for a center aisle with ten rows on each side. Hymnal and communion cup holders are on the back of each pew. The aisle and open floor areas are covered with carpet. The floor consists of tongue-and-groove hardwood boards. Each of the one-over-one windows is recessed ten inches from the twenty-inch-thick walls and feature plain sills. Plain wood surrounds and sills are painted white. The side and back walls have new plaster, painted white, rising above three-foot-high tongue-and-groove stained paneling. The original molded-metal ceiling conforms to the gable roof line. During the 1956 renovation doors were created from original windows in the southwest and northwest corners to provide access to the addition. At the same time a door and window on the south wall were enclosed on the exterior. Early style radiators along the walls still provide heat for the sanctuary.

The 1956 addition is accessed through a glass-enclosed former breezeway that was recently expanded into a parlor area that creates a pleasant transition between the two buildings. The addition has a large fellowship hall, kitchen, library, office and minister's study on the level with the sanctuary. A glass double-door entry is on the north facade. A wood door is in the south wall. Six classrooms and lavatories are in the finished basement area reached by interior stairs and also by a door to the playground on the south side of the building.

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Opequon Presbyterian Church
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8. Statement of Significance

Opequon Presbyterian Church was built in 1897 on the site of two previous Presbyterian Meeting Houses. Cemeteries on the property contain headstones dating from the Revolutionary War period, as well as the oldest known marked grave site in the Shenandoah Valley, that of John Wilson who died in 1742. The exterior of the church has excellent architectural integrity and the interior has some original features, including a decorative molded metal ceiling. The property represents the funerary and religious activities and practices of the early settlers in the Shenandoah Valley and the development of the Presbyterian faith in the area. Established ca 1736, the church is registered by the Presbyterian Historical Society as an "American Presbyterian and Reformed Historical Site" being the oldest place of Presbyterian worship of positive continuous record in the Valley of Virginia. Opequon Presbyterian Church is widely recognized as one of the oldest religious congregations west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

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Opequon Presbyterian Church
Frederick County, VA

HISTORY

The roots of the Opequon settlement go back to the year 1731, when in October of that year sixteen families, led by the German Joist Hite, migrated to the lower Shenandoah Valley from the York, Pennsylvania area. The date by which a Presbyterian congregation was formed at Opequon is unknown, but strong evidence indicates it was done either by the Rev. Samuel Gelston in July or August of 1736, or by the Rev. James Anderson sometime in 1737. Oversight of the congregation's welfare was the responsibility of the Donegal (Pennsylvania) Presbytery, of which Opequon became a part.¹

By the year 1736 the first log meeting house was built at the present site. William Hoge, donated two acres of land for a burying place and specified its enclosure with a wood fence.² Tradition holds that he also built the first meeting house at his own expense. By 1755 the congregation had become quite large and a second log meeting house was built. By that time Opequon was considered the most important church in the lower valley, being the only place of public worship within a large area. According to minutes of the Donegal (Pennsylvania) Presbytery, Rev. John Hoge, grandson of William Hoge, became the first settled minister at Opequon in 1755.³

During the twenty years following the Revolutionary War the congregation was served by the Rev. John Montgomery (1780-1789) and the Rev. Nash LeGrand (1790-1809). Shortly after LeGrand arrived the second log meeting house was torn down, and in 1790 a new stone structure was erected. It was approximately fifty per cent larger than the present sanctuary.⁴

Minutes of the Winchester Presbytery reveal that in 1861 Opequon joined with other southern congregations in the formation of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. When the Civil War erupted Opequon was caught directly in the line of fire. The First Battle of Kernstown in 1862 raged around and just to the west of the church. The building was heavily damaged and finally in 1863, after further damage, services were discontinued. Some sporadic services were held during the remainder of the war in the stone schoolhouse which stood about forty feet north of the present sanctuary.⁵

In 1866 a small remnant of the former congregation decided to rehabilitate the ruined structure. Worshipping for awhile on a sawdust floor, with Rev. William A. Crawford as minister, they slowly

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improved the structure and had it nearly completed when in 1873 a fire broke out during a Sunday morning service and the congregation saw the flames consume all but the stone walls. Because of the financial panic of 1873, and other hardships following the Civil War, there was no money for rebuilding. For the next twenty years the congregation worshiped in other churches in the Kernstown area. The old church site reverted back to nature. The stone walls crumbled and the old burying grounds became overgrown.

According to Session minutes of Opequon Church, in 1889 a movement stirred with the small congregation to rebuild the old church. Financing was difficult but the idea surfaced to rebuild the church as a memorial to the early settlers of the valley. After securing all local possible funding, it was decided to contact descendants of early Opequon settlers living in various parts of the country for additional financial assistance. The campaign was successful, the present sanctuary was completed and the dedication ceremony was held on October 30, 1897.⁶

The west and south walls are built on the foundations of the stone church of 1790, and many of the stones in the walls are from that building. Because many memorial contributions made the rebuilding of the church possible, the word "memorial" was added to its name, and for the next 83 years it was known as Opequon Memorial Presbyterian Church. In 1983 the original name of the church was restored by official action of both the congregation and Shenandoah Presbytery. The word "memorial" was dropped and the original name, Opequon Presbyterian Church, was reinstated.⁷

In the four burying grounds on the property lie some of the earliest settlers of the valley. Assuming that early burials were done according to customs that were prevalent in the country of origin, it is very likely the earliest burials at Opequon were adjacent to the meeting house. Generally, most of those burials occurred in the nine year-period between 1736 and 1745. This first burying ground lies immediately adjacent to the north wall of the present sanctuary and extends forty-five feet northward and forty feet westward. Due to Civil War destruction and removal of grave site markers, most identities are lost. One of the oldest burials here is that of Rene St. Julien, a French Huguenot who was born in 1660 and died in 1740. His wife, Mary Bullock is buried beside him. Strong evidence exists that Joist Hite was buried in this ground in 1761. His grave site is supposedly located ten to fifteen feet north of the sanctuary wall near the bell tower entrance. His second wife, Maria Magdalena, was buried beside him in 1792. Additional information exists that a friend and contemporary of Joist Hite, Robert Allen, was

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buried beside him in 1769. His wife, Sarah Allen was buried in this location and their son John, who fought in the Revolutionary War, was buried here in 1794. The latest burial in this location was Sarah Allen in 1799. Apparently this old burying ground became filled at about that time. It is known that prior to the Civil War this burying ground was enclosed by stone walls, and contained many grave site markers.⁸ Foundation stones that supported the stone walls can still be faintly seen.

A second early burying ground is located about ten feet south-southwest of the present sanctuary south wall. Originally the area was approximately thirty feet by thirty-five feet and immediately adjacent to the south wall of the stone church built in 1790. While not documented, it is believed that this burying ground was established at the time the 1790 church was built. Most of the burials in this location occurred between 1795 and 1860. As far as is known there were no burials here after the Civil War. Since the burying ground on the north end of the church was filled about 1795, members of the congregation probably requested burial sites very near the church. Unfortunately, the identities of most of those buried in this location are unknown due to removal of grave site markers during the Civil War. It is known that many members of the Chipley and Simrall families are buried there. Captain William Chipley, an officer in the Revolutionary War was buried here in 1811. Unfortunately this burying ground was disturbed by the building of the present sanctuary and a parking lot. In 1955-56 when the new educational building was constructed, the area was used for a staging ground for building materials, equipment and parking. Additionally, when excavation work for the east wall of the new building was in progress it encroached upon the burying ground and the residual remains of one or two burial sites were disturbed.⁹

Another burying ground, located northeast of the sanctuary, is the only one separately deeded and specifically designated as such. The deed dated February 19, 1745 conveys from William Hoge, Sr. to trustees of Opequon Meeting House "a tract or parcel of land containing two acres as a burying place". Located on this land is the oldest known marked grave site in the Valley of Virginia, (Wilson-1742). Unmarked grave sites include those of William Hoge, Sr. (1600-1749) and his wife, Barbara Hume; Dr. Robert White (1688-1752) a British navy surgeon, and members of his family and many unidentified early settlers. The current enclosed area of this burying ground is about three-quarters of an acre. Since there were no metes and bounds designated in the original deed, it is not possible to designate where the remaining deeded area is situated. It may

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have extended across the current road, which was not in existence prior to 1933. In the original conveyance of the two acres, William Hoge made provision "for its impalement", and guaranteed free timber for its installation and ongoing repair. At a later date the burying ground was enclosed by stone walls. However during the Civil War, occupying Union soldiers hauled many of these stones away for cooking purposes and markers in this and the earlier burying ground were destroyed. In 1897 when the current sanctuary was built, an iron fence and entrance gate were installed as a memorial gift by the Gilkerson family. This burying ground was used until it became filled in the early 1900s. It is believed that the last burial to occur here was in 1904 (McCauley).¹⁰ The fourth burying ground on the property is located at the extreme south end of the church grounds. It is approximately twenty feet by forty feet in area and contains six burial sites. All burials occurred there between 1905 and 1938. The reason for the establishment, as well as the discontinuance of this burying ground is unknown. Sessional records during this time contain no reference or information regarding either. Sessional records do indicate that all six of those buried here were members of Opequon Church, and that five of the six transferred their membership directly from their home churches in Scotland.¹¹ All the burial sites are marked with stones. A wrought iron fence encloses the grave sites of three members of the Petrie-Cruickshank family.

In September 1996, in celebration of the church centennial, the original cornerstone was removed and opened. The contents included the deed to one of the church cemeteries, a list of church members, and a history of the church. The stone was placed into safe storage inside the education building in order to protect it from further weather damage. A new stone with the same information (i.e. Organized about 1738--Built 1790--Rebuilt 1870-73-- Rebuilt 1896)¹² replaced the original in the northeast corner of the bell tower.

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ENDNOTES

1. Cartmell, Thomas K. Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants: A History of Frederick County, Virginia, from Its Formation in 1738 to 1908. Reprinted, Bowie, Md, 1989, page 167. Cartmell gives an eyewitness account of the cornerstone laying of the 1897 church, as well as providing general information he was privy to in his position as Clerk of the Frederick County Court.
2. Frederick County Land Records, Deed Book #1, Pages 275-277.
3. Woodworth, Robert Bell. A History of the Presbytery of Winchester. Staunton, VA, 1947, page 7.
4. Gordon, C. Langdon. A Sketch of the Historic Opequon Presbyterian Church, Winchester, Virginia. Winchester, VA, 1984. VDHR file 34-0009.
5. Ibid.
6. White, Henry M., Rev. Unpublished manuscript Opequon Presbyterian Church dedication on October 30, 1897. VDHR file 34-0009.
7. Gordon, C. Langdon. A Sketch of the Historic Opequon Presbyterian Church, Winchester, Virginia. Winchester, VA, 1984. VDHR file 34-0009.
8. Gordon, C. Langdon. The Old Burying Grounds of Opequon Presbyterian Church 1736-1938. Winchester, VA, 1996. VDHR file 34-0009.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Cartmell, Thomas K. Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants: A History of Frederick County, Virginia, from Its Formation in 1738 to 1908. Reprinted, Bowie, MD, 1989, page 168.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cartmell, Thomas K. Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants: A History of Frederick County, Virginia, from Its Formation in 1738 to 1908. Heritage Books, Inc., Bowie, MD, facsimile reprint, 1989.

Frederick County Land Records, Deed Book #1, Pages 275-277

Gordon, C. Langdon. The Old Burying Grounds of Opequon Presbyterian Church 1736-1938. Private publication, Winchester, VA. 1996.

Gordon, C. Langdon. A Sketch of the historic Opequon Presbyterian Church, Winchester, Virginia. Private publication, Winchester, VA. 1984.

White, Henry M. Rev. Unpublished manuscript of address delivered at the dedication of Opequon Presbyterian Church on October 30, 1897. Winchester-Frederick County Historic Society.

Woodworth, Robert Bell. A History of the Presbytery of Winchester. McClure Printing Co., Staunton, VA, 1947, pages 7 and 290.

VDHR file 34-0009 Opequon Church.

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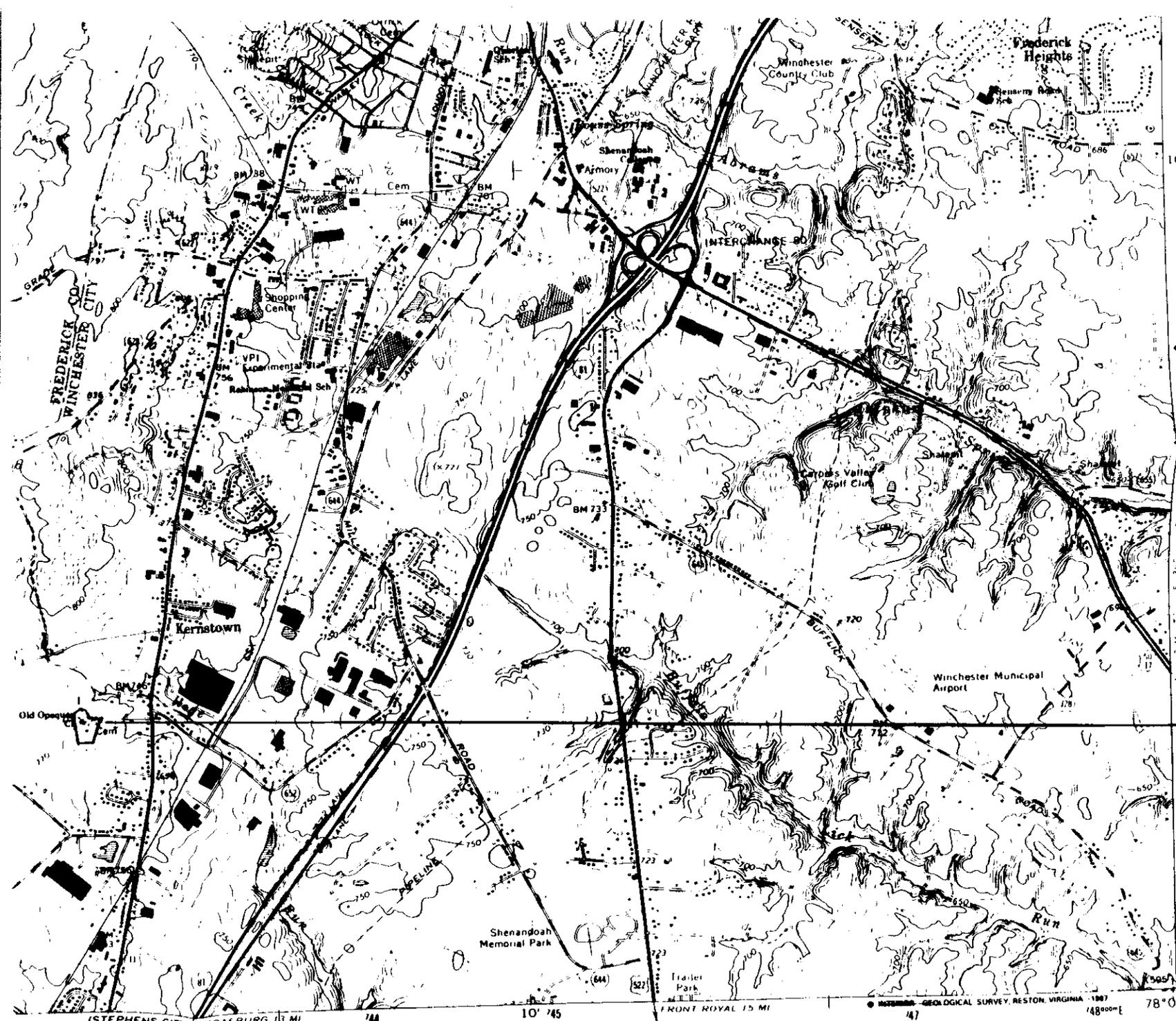
Opequon Presbyterian Church
Frederick County, VA

Verbal Boundary Description

All that property commonly associated with Opequon Presbyterian Church, beginning at an iron rod marker on Opequon Church Lane, then S47°32'41"W for 161.72' to iron rod marker then S57°52'21"W for 323.34' to iron rod marker for 508.79' to iron rod marker then S56°55'22"W for 774.8' to corner post then N44°55'04"W for 178.42' to corner post then N43°47'08"E for 454.95' to post then N52°13'25"E for 272.20' to iron rod marker then N42°31'18"E for 135.07' to point on stone fence then S30°03'53"E 50.88' to VDOT point and S03°28'35"W for 100.00' to VDOT point then S86°31'25"E for 305.27' to iron rod at beginning.

Boundary Justification

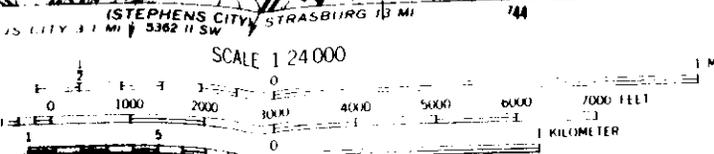
The nominated property has historically comprised the Opequon Church site and cemeteries.



10°
4338
4337
4336
4335000 N
39°07'30"
78°07'30"

OPEQUON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 FREDERICK COUNTY, VA.
 UTM REFERENCE:
 17/742420/4335720

WINCHESTER
 USGS



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy duty	—————	Light duty	-----
Medium duty	- - - - -	Unimproved dirt

1901CE
 5,027 EE