

Recommendation

Asbury United Methodist Church, Warren County, Historic Site

Whereas Asbury United Methodist Church holds a unique place in the history of Northwestern New Jersey as an important preaching site for Bishop Asbury and early Methodist circuit riders.

Whereas Asbury Methodists were the first to organize a class meeting in 1792 in the area and second to build a church. Bishop Asbury made his first visit to the site in the same year. His last visit came in 1811.

Whereas Asbury United Methodist Church is the place where the first town in the United States of America was named for the Bishop. The name change, from Hall’s Mills to Asbury, took place in 1796 on the occasion of Bishop Asbury laying the cornerstone of the first Methodist church built in Northwestern New Jersey (“West Jersey Circuit”). The one acre land for the church was purchased for 15 pounds. Bishop Asbury was present for the event. He would return many times to preach and minister to Asbury Methodists.

Whereas Asbury United Methodist Church’s most historically significant member was Colonel William McCullough, a Methodist layperson who arrived in Hall’s Mills in 1784, whose friendship with Bishop Asbury began with Asbury’s first visit in 1786 and who became the driving force behind the town’s name change to Asbury. McCullough’s impact extended far from the Methodist Episcopal Church as a legislator, judge and business man in the development of Asbury’s industrial economy, and to the creation of both the Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church and the Flanders Methodist Episcopal Church in Flanders, NJ.

Whereas Asbury United Methodist Church is part of the National Parks Service national registered historic places called Asbury Historic District. The designation recognizes Asbury Church as one of the significant 19th century architectural gems that make up the district.

Rationale: Asbury United Methodist Church has a special place in Northwestern New Jersey’s Methodist past. Whether it was the first town in the nation to be named after Bishop Asbury, recognition of its classic 19th century style church architecture or Asbury’s Church’s continued witness for 230 years, Asbury’s unique contribution to both New Jersey Methodism and Warren and Hunterdon counties society in its immediate parish area places Asbury as a treasure amongst Greater New Jersey United Methodism.

Therefore be it resolved that as one of the most unique and influential larger circuits in early Northwestern New Jersey, Asbury be recognized by this body as a Greater New Jersey Annual Conference Historic Site.

Respectively Submitted and Presenter of Recommendation: Reverend Bill Wilson, Chair of Commission on Archives and History

Recommendation

Drew Theological School Historic Site

Whereas Drew Theological School has had a profound effect on the history of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, United Methodism and the world Methodist movement and its alumni are trained in a leadership style that is spiritually transformative, rooted in social justice and nurtures healing ministries.

Whereas Drew Theological School became United Methodism’s first solely post-baccalaureate seminary, the first such school created by General Conference, initially offered free tuition (due to a founding gift given by Daniel Drew and his continued financial support for the seminary until his financial demise) and collected one of the greatest theological libraries in the world.