



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

October 19, 2017

Ms. Christine O'Malley
Preservation Services Coordinator
Historic Ithaca
212 Center Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

RE: Former Methodist Episcopal Church
605 Jacksonville Road
Ulysses, Tompkins County

Dear Ms. O'Malley:

Thank you for your recent request to evaluate the former Methodist Episcopal Church in Jacksonville (Town of Ulysses) for State and National Registers of Historic Places eligibility. Based on the information provided by you and information contained in our files at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), it is the opinion of the SHPO that the former church building meets the criteria for listing to the Registers. The attached Resource Evaluation provides a statement of significance for the building.

This is an evaluation of eligibility only. Properties cannot be listed without the consent of the owner. Eligibility or listing on the National Register offers a measure of protection under federal and New York State historic preservation laws. It does not prohibit a property owner from making changes, selling, or even demolishing a property with private funds. The SHPO provides consultation when public money or permitting is associated with a historic property. The purposes of the Registers program are to document and recognize sites of cultural significance in communities; and to qualify properties for potential grant programming and tax credit incentives for rehabilitation.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 518-268-2177 or by email at Anthony.opalka@parks.ny.gov.

Sincerely,

Anthony Opalka
Historic Preservation Program Analyst

enc.

cc: Nancy Zahler, Board Member, Town of Ulysses



Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

Resource Evaluation

Date: 10/19/2017

Staff: Anthony Opalka

USN Number: 10909.000055

Name: Former Methodist Episcopal Church

Location: 605 JACKSONVILLE RD, ULYSSES NY

Resource Status:

1. **Determination:** Eligible
2. **Contributing:**

Criteria for Inclusion in the National Register:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns in our history.
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. 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 may lack individual distinction.
- D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Summary Statement:



Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

Resource Evaluation

The former Methodist Episcopal Church in Jacksonville, town of Ulysses, Tompkins County, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, Community Development and Planning as one of the earliest and most intact of the remaining buildings of the nineteenth-century hamlet of Jacksonville in a rural part of the county. It is located near the intersection of Jacksonville Road and what was the Ithaca and Geneva Turnpike (1811), now New York State Route 96.

It is also eligible under Criterion C, Architecture, as a substantially intact early religious building. Although it was constructed in 1827, it retains its appearance from its enlargement in 1855 during the Greek Revival period. It remains the sole example of a monumental church building in the hamlet and was moved a short distance in 1898.

In 1997, the property was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for an evaluation and was determined eligible. In the ensuing 20 years, the building became vacant and was left uncared for. Although there has been some deterioration in those years, it retains sufficient physical integrity to remain eligible for the National Register. The building was constructed during Jacksonville's first period of extensive development. In 1855, after a discussion about selling the church, the congregation decided to retain and remodel it. At that time, a second story was added as an "audience room" and a steeple, since removed, was added.

The building functioned as church for a number of years but by the early-twentieth century, it housed the Public Hall Association. In 1960, it was sold to another owner and for several years was used as a commercial establishment, and later a multi-use commercial/residential building and finally abandoned.

Architecturally, the building is an example of a small but monumental rural church in the Greek Revival style with heavy timber framing and clapboard siding. It is two stories in height and has a rectangular plan. There is a center entrance on the façade, flanked by colossal window openings with a spandrel panel between stories now covered by vertical boards. The first-story windows are small but above them are tall double-hung windows with 20/20 sash, reaching to the heavy entablature and full pediment. The entrance features wide pilasters supporting a full entablature, dentils and a cap that is missing its crown molding (visible in earlier photographs). Double six-panel doors, which appear to date from the early-nineteenth century, remain in place. There are five stone steps leading to the entrance from the grade of the road. Side elevations are detailed similarly to the front with small boarded-up windows on the first story and large 20/20 windows on the second, reaching to the full entablature. There are three bays on each side elevation and a newer doorway into the first floor in the center of the south face. The rear has a similar appearance without the colossal windows and only cornice returns rather than a full entablature.

The interior of the first floor has a front entrance room with symmetrical curving stairs with a wide opening between allowing passage to the rear half of the building. There are walls separating rooms under the stairs but the wood finishes on some of these walls suggest an early date. There are historic wood floors and ceilings and historic columns supporting the second story. The rear portion of the building contains a large room, into which a modern kitchen has been installed, although some of the finishes on the exterior walls appear to be historic.

The second story, which was the sanctuary of the church, retains many original features. At the front of the room is a raised platform between the two staircases, Greek Revival window trim, and a coved ceiling that runs front-to-back in the space. A non-historic wall was inserted to divide the space into two sections, but its installation did not damage the historic finishes: it only cut the volume of the space and could easily be removed to restore the original space. Original features are present in the rear half of the space. There is historic paneling with wood graining beneath the second-floor windows and the paneling shows evidence of where church pews had been attached to the walls.

While the building shows signs of deteriorating from having been abandoned for at least 20 years, it retains a high degree of architectural integrity and is the most prominent historic building in Jacksonville.