

## Virginia Department of Historic Resources PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the property for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the property could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

<b>General Property Information</b>	For Staff Use Only
	DHR ID #: 050-0150
Property Name(s): Lanesville Christadelphian Church	
Property Date(s):	1875          Circa Pre Post          Open to Public? Yes <b>Limited</b> No
Property Address:	Intersection of Mt. Olive Cohoke Rd. (Rt. 632) and Powhatan Trail (Rt. 633)          City: King William          Zip: 23086
County or Ind. City:	King William          USGS Quad(s): New Kent
<b>Physical Character of General Surroundings</b>	
Acreeage:	1          Setting (choose one): Urban Town Village Suburban <b>Rural</b> Transportation Corridor
<p>Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features:  The Lanesville Christadelphian Church sits on the southwest corner of the intersection of Powhatan Trail (Route 633) and Mt. Olive Cohoke Road (Route 632). A short gravel driveway off Mt. Olive Cohoke Road leads to a small parking lot next to the church. Much of the land surrounding the church is under cultivation.</p> <p>Secondary Resource Description (Briefly describe any other structures (or archaeological sites) that may contribute to the significance of the property:  Three small modern structures were installed in the parking lot during the building's restoration in the late 1990s. The "school-house" is the largest of the three and the closest to the church. It is currently used for storage. The two smaller buildings are "privies" or outhouses, currently serving no distinct function. All are commercially-produced and would not have stood on the site during the period of significance. Southwest of the church sits a small house (050-0151), not a part of this PIF, in which at least one of the leaders of the church lived, which ties the church into the surrounding domestic landscape.</p>	
Ownership Category:	<b>Private</b> Public-Local          Public-State          Public-Federal

## Individual Resource Information

What was the historical use of this resource? Church

What is the current use? (if other than the historical use) Museum

Architectural style or elements of styles: Vernacular

Architect, builder, or original owner: Dr. Lemuel Edwards

# of stories 1 Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Poor Ruins Rebuilt **Renovated**

Are there any known threats to this property? The church sits within six feet of Powhatan Trail (Route 633). Future repair, rebuilding, or expansion of the road could be detrimental to the building.

## Resource Component Information

Please answer the following questions regarding the individual components of the resource. If the component does not exist, answer "n/a." If you feel uncomfortable in answering the question, please leave the space blank. Photographs of the features can also help our staff identify specific feature components. Usually, priority is given to describing features on the primary (front) facade of the structure.

**Foundation:** Describe the foundation that supports the structure. Examples include piers, continuous brick, poured concrete. A new cinderblock foundation sits on top of at least one visible course of the original brick foundation.

**Structure:** Describe the primary structural component of the resource. Include primary material used. Examples include log, frame (sawn lumber), and brick. Also include the treatment, such as a particular brick bond or type of framing, if known. Frame

**Walls:** Describe the exterior wall covering such as beaded weatherboard or asbestos shingles. Weatherboard

**Windows:** Describe the number, material, and form of the primary windows. This includes the number of panes per sash, what the sashes are made of, and how the sashes operate (are they hinged or do they slide vertically) Have the windows been replaced? Wooden, double-hung 6 over 6 sash windows that have not been replaced.

**Porch:** Briefly describe the primary (front) porch. List the primary material, shape of the porch roof, and other defining details. N/A

**Roof:** Describe the roof, listing the shape and the covering material. Gable roof covered with composite shingles.

**Chimney(s):** List the number of chimneys and the materials used. Include the brick bond pattern if possible. One interior brick chimney laid in running bond.

**Architectural Description of Individual Resource:** *(Please describe architectural patterns, types, features, additions, remodelings, or other alterations. A sketch of the current floor plan would be appreciated.)*

Lanesville Christadelphian Church sits at the intersection of Mt. Olive Cohoke Road (Route 633) and Powhatan Trail (Route 632). To the northwest of the church is a small gravel parking lot on which sits three small modern buildings, meant to represent a school house and two privies or outhouses. These buildings were added during the restoration of the building in the late 1990s to add "character" to the site. Two posts with non-operable lights were added just in front of the church's main entrance at the same time. Grass covers the remainder of the parcel. A frame house, dating to the late 19th century, is immediately behind the church to the southwest, though the property is separated by a picket fence and not part of this PIF. The house (050-0151) served as the dwelling for the last pastor of Lanesville Christadelphian Church. Agricultural fields surround the church, currently giving it a sense of rural isolation though it once served as a hub of community activities with buildings formerly on at least two of the other three lots adjacent the intersection.

The church is a relatively simple rectangular frame structure, sheathed with weatherboard, and topped by a gable roof. The primary elevation is one bay, with a double leaf front door surmounted by a two-light transom and pediment. A small circular window is centered between the top of the door and the peak of the roof. A shield painted with the church's name and founding date is mounted between the transom and the circular window. Its original location is unclear, as it has been moved several times.

The side elevations of the church each have four bays, sheathed in weatherboarding. The windows are wooden, six-over-six sash with triangular case moldings above each. Their upper edges are currently hidden under plastic flashing. The rear elevation of the church has the same dimensions and sheathing as the front elevation, though it supports different architectural elements, including a small extension that accommodates the chancel. This extension is sheathed with weatherboard on all sides and has a wooden, six-over-six sash window with triangular case molding above. Given the smaller dimensions of the extension walls, the window was scaled down to match. To the left of the extension is a secondary entry. While the door is a replacement, the frame appears to be original to the church as it also has the triangular case molding above it (also original).

The interior of Lanesville Christadelphian Church consists of a single room. The floor is made of thin boards and appears to be original. According to Ms. Overton Edwards, a congregant in the church between 1955 and 1962, carpet covered the floor during that period and likely contributed to the preservation of the original flooring. The walls are sheathed in a combination of paneling types. A modern chair rail rings the room. Below this appears to be modern, replacement wainscoting, currently painted a light green. Above the chair rail are thinner vertical boards that are likely the original wall covering, currently painted white. These boards continue to the top of the wall and along the interior surface of the arched ceiling. Opposite the main door is the chancel. Within the body of the church is an elevated platform. Beyond that, two additional steps lead to a small chancel that extends past the rear wall of the church. Red carpet installed during the church's rehabilitation currently covers the floor surface of both the platform and the chancel. The paneling that covers the chancel's walls, however, appears to be completely intact, including the beaded wainscoting and the plain chair rail.

Several remarkable elements are found within the church, though their provenance is unknown. The most striking are the pews. Sixteen uniform pews fill the main body of the church. Each has decorative piercings at the top and the base of the backrest, as well as a repeating pattern of a modified floriant cross set within a circle enclosed in a rectangle on the seat. These motifs are echoed in a shorter pew and two chairs in the chancel. A small paneled pedestal-style table sits on the platform and serves as the repository for the communion service (plate, cup, and a silver communion tray with lid and individual glasses). A similarly built desk sits in the chancel, in front of the pew and chairs. According to Ms. Overton Edwards, a large bible once rested on the desk, as would be expected in a faith devoted to an intellectual understanding of the scriptures. The centrality of the scripture to the Christadelphian faith is apparent in several painted plaques that form the only decorative architectural element in the church. Drawn from Ephesians chapter 4, these

embody the Christadelphian emphasis on scriptural study and are likely original to the church. The Lanesville Christadelphian Church was originally heated by a stove vented through an interior chimney. The chimney remains intact both within the church and above the roof line, though the stove currently in the building is a replacement added during the church's restoration.

**Significance Statement:** Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the property. (Detailed family genealogies are not necessary.) Please list all sources of information. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Normally, only information contained on this form will be posted for consideration by the State Review Board.

Lanesville Christadelphian Church is exceptional both for its close associations with the roots of Christadelphianism in Virginia and for being the oldest purpose-built Christadelphian chapel still standing in Virginia.

Christadelphianism has its roots in Virginia. Dr. John Thomas immigrated to the United States in 1832. During his voyage, a severe storm led Thomas to “vow that if ever [he] was permitted to set foot on terra firma, [he] would not rest until [he] found the true religion” (Hodge 1905:109). He first settled in Cincinnati, where he undertook “a tour of the religious houses of that city” (Hodge 1905:109-110). Through one Brother Challen, Thomas became acquainted with the “Campbellites,” which he determined to be “one of the most delightful, scriptural, intelligible isms [he] ever heard defended” (Hodge 1905:109). Shortly after, Thomas relocated to Philadelphia, where he became acquainted with Thomas and Alexander Campbell, leaders of the Churches of Christ (Melton 2010:603-604). Dr. Thomas embarked on a few evangelizing tours in Virginia, eventually taking charge of the Sycamore Church in Richmond in 1835 (Hodge 1905:110). Disagreements with the Campbells regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, the mortality of the soul, and the judgement of unbelievers led Dr. Thomas to break away from the Church of Christ in 1844 (Melton 2010:603-604).

Thomas cultivated several followers in Virginia, including members of the Jerusalem Christian Church in King William County who were subsequently ejected from the Campbellite church. Prominent among these ecclesiastical migrants was Dr. Lemuel Edwards. Formerly an elder in the Jerusalem congregation, he took up the leadership of the newly formed Thomasite Mount Zion Ecclesia in Lanesville in 1845 (Thomas et al n.d.:56). He and Dr. Thomas apparently formed a close friendship, based on their shared medical and religious interests. Edwards' support of his fledgling ecclesia was substantial, as he not only served as an elder in the community, but also either assigned or allowed Braxton, one of his slaves who was also a member of the ecclesia, to construct the Mount Zion meeting house (Thomas et al n.d.:55-57).

The onset of the Civil War brought new challenges to Dr. Thomas' followers. They abjured participation in the government, including voting, politics, holding civil office, or war (Melton 2009:469-481). This allowed them to register as conscientious objectors, but one problem stood in their way: Thomas' followers had no name. Looking toward the egalitarian principles that shaped their religious practice, Dr. Thomas settled on Christadelphian, meaning “brethren in Christ” (Melton 2010:603-604). Even as conscientious objectors, the Civil War brought challenges to the Christadelphians in King William County. Dr. Edwards was arrested by Federal authorities and held at Fort Monroe, where he suffered from neglect and dehydration, as well as nearly being shot by a Union guard (Anonymous 1992; Anonymous n.d.). The Civil War also saw Edwards, and likely other members of his religious and secular community, plunged into economic distress. The 1860 Census enumerates Edwards' real estate at a value of \$6,000 and his personal property – including slaves – at \$10,000 (United States Census 1860). John Thomas recognized the ecclesia's struggles during a visit in 1865. Despite “God [having] reduced them to poverty,... the brethren in King William [were] responsible for the truth there; for they have believed it and accepted it” (Anonymous n.d.).

Despite post-war struggles, the Mount Zion ecclesia continued to grow. On a visit in 1870, John Thomas spoke at the meeting house. Though the “ecclesia there number[ed] about thirty persons,” the house was full “with many on the outside that [looked through] the windows” (Anonymous n.d.). During an 1871 visit, the leader of the British Christadelphians, Robert Roberts, participated in two meetings with the ecclesia. The first, “confined to the immediate friends of the truth,” numbered between forty and fifty (Anonymous 1992). The second drew about two hundred (Anonymous 1992; Thomas et al n.d.:55-57). By 1875, the ecclesia outgrew the Mount Zion meeting hall and decided to erect the structure that stands today as Lanesville Christadelphian Church.

The survival of the building belies tensions which pushed the Christadelphians apart. In 1899, a conflict developed between Robert Roberts and J. J. Andrew, two leaders of the British Christadelphians, over resurrectional responsibility (Melton 2009:469-481). As expressed by Dr. Thomas, in Christadelphianism “both believers and non-believers would be resurrected and only those who had become 'responsible' for responding to the gospel would be summoned for judgement” (Melton 2010:603-604). Roberts proposed an amendment that “among unbelievers, only those who had heard the gospel and been called to repentance could be considered responsible,” leaving room for unbelievers who had no exposure to the gospel to still enter the afterlife (Melton 2010:603-604). Those ecclesia that accepted Roberts' amendment became the *Amended*, while those who held firm to the older theology supported by Andrews became the *Unamended* (Melton 2009:469-481).

After Edwards' death in 1907, the Lanesville ecclesia became associated with the *Unamended* interpretation of Christadelphianism through the magazine *The Faith* (Hemingray 2008:120; Hemingray n.d.), which John Lea began publishing in 1909 (Hemingray 2008:120). A. H. Zilmer assisted Lea beginning in 1910, and oversaw the magazine's production from 1920 to 1958 (Hemingray 2008:120). This association led to the gradual isolation of the Lanesville ecclesia from the surrounding, *Amended* Christadelphian community and may have contributed to its decline (Hemingray 2008:120). Numbers dwindled as the 20th century wore on, and regular meetings became difficult to maintain before ceasing in 1962 (Thomas et al:55-57).

The Lanesville Christadelphian Church stands as a significant representation of a faith founded and practiced in Virginia, but linked to communities around the globe. As the ecclesia embraced the *Unamended* stance in the 20th century, they became outliers within their faith, making this last remaining physical marker even more significant a representation of their community.

Lanesville Christadelphian Church also serves as a notable example of rural 19<sup>th</sup>-century vernacular church architecture. After the ecclesia dissolved in 1962, the building fell into disrepair. In the early 1990s, it was saved by local businessman Carol Lee Walker who stabilized and restored the structure, including a new foundation and selectively replaced siding. He made relatively few additions, such as installing exterior light fixtures despite the building having no electrical service. However, the building's footprint underwent no additions or alterations on the interior or the exterior, leaving the structure remarkably intact, including original windows and original hand-crafted pews.

The intact interior offers an unparalleled understanding of the geography of the Christadelphian faith. There is no central organizing body in Christadelphianism, a remnant of its roots in the anti-institutionalism of the Baptist faith in the 19th century. Authority in all matters rested in the hands of each local ecclesia (Melton 2009:507-515). Ecclesia employ no salaried clergy, instead electing “serving brethren” to handle liturgical and administrative duties (Melton 2010:603-604). This approach, both individual and egalitarian, shaped the interior architecture of the Lanesville Christadelphian Church. The seating arrangements offer a parity of experience, as the only seats are seventeen wooden pews and two matching wooden chairs. Of these, sixteen of the pews form two columns of eight rows each in the main body of the church. Identical in size and decoration, they intimate to viewers and users an inherent equality among those who come to worship in the space. One smaller pew and two matching chairs sit in a small raised chancel. This serves to separate the serving brethren overseeing the meeting and the communion service, so as to draw focus to the message conveyed during worship. Between the two spaces is a platform with a small paneled pedestal on which sits, at present, the communion service. Given the rotation of liturgical duties among the ecclesia's brethren, these separated spaces convey the need for the congregation to focus on word and action, rather than denoting separate status for those speaking or performing said actions.

The pews speak similarly to an expression of community identity and individual equality. The repetition of the decorative pattern described in the previous section across all the seating surfaces indicates the equality of the ecclesia's members, in that none occupied a space more ornate than another during meetings. These pews,

however, have no known parallel in extant Virginia Christadelphian churches according to Department of Historic Resources records and so likely reflect the skills of craftsmen within the community, offering an expression of both their skill and the beauty of the fellowship which they perceived.

There are several other Christadelphian churches in Virginia, including Bethany Christadelphian Church in Goochland County (037-5032), a chapel in Richmond (055-5132), and Good Hope Christadelphian Chapel in Lunenburg County (127-0742-0227). Bethany Church was founded in 1898, and follows much the same plan as Lanesville, in that it is a one story frame structure which has seen some preservation efforts, including a standing seam roof and a concrete block foundation. However, Bethany Church has not been evaluated. The Richmond Chapel similarly post-dates Lanesville. The colonial revival building was erected in 1925 and today is incorporated into the West of Boulevard Historic District. Despite this, it has not been evaluated individually. Only Good Hope Chapel offers any parity to Lanesville. It was built in the 1830s, making it the older of the two. However, given that Dr. Thomas did not found Christadelphianism until 1844, it likely served another religious community first. Furthermore, Good Hope was moved to its current location in 1902, which detached it from its original landscape. In contrast, Lanesville retains its exterior integrity, as it occupies the same site on which it was built, as well as its interior fittings. Together, these elements make Lanesville Christadelphian Church a remarkable surviving example of ecclesiastical architecture.

In 2008, Ashley Neville inventoried the property, which had been determined ineligible in 1993. In her comments, she mentioned that the building could be eligible under Criterion C if the interior retained architectural integrity or Criterion A if the history of the building was better understood. Based on our research, we believe the property is eligible under Criteria C and Criteria A.

#### References Cited:

Anonymous

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p=GVRL&sw=w&u=viva\\_wm&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CCX1766500317&asid=d7fe4db51311f9  
379f8e2e8fb1b099a4.](http://go.galegroup.com.proxy.wm.edu/ps/i.do?p=GVRL&sw=w&u=viva_wm&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CCX1766500317&asid=d7fe4db51311f9379f8e2e8fb1b099a4)

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#### United States Census

1860 "Lemuel Edwards," Year: 1860; Census Place: King William, Virginia; Roll: M653\_1357;  
Page: 565; Image: 145; Family History Library Film: 805357; Ancestry.com. 1860 United States  
Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Images  
reproduced by FamilySearch; Original data: 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. NARA microfilm  
publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.



**Legal Owner(s) of the Property** (For more than one owner, please use a separate sheet.)

Owner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••**

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Dr. David A. Brown, President

Daytime Telephone: (804) 8415-1066

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

Mr. Mrs. Dr.  
Miss Ms. Hon.

Dr. David A. Brown and  
Thane H. Harpole

DATA Investigations, LLC

1759 Tyndall Point Lane

(Name)

Gloucester Point

(Firm)

VA

23062

(Address)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

Fairfield@fairfieldfoundation.org

804-815-4467

(Email Address)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Mrs. Dr.  
Miss Ms. Hon.

King William County Historical  
Society

227 Horse Landing Road

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(Zip Code)

kwhs@kingwilliamhistory.org

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**Notification**

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

<b>Mr.</b>	Mrs.	Dr.			
Miss	Ms.	Hon.	Sanford B. (Sandy) Wanner		County Administrator
			(Name)	(Position)	
King William County			180 Horse Landing Road		
(Locality)			(Address)		
King William			VA	23086	804-769-4926
(City)			(State)	(Zip Code)	(Daytime telephone including area code)

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this property. The King William County Historical Society wants to be the best stewards of the property possible, and is consequently interested in pursuing tax credits for long-term stabilization and modernization that is sensitive to the surviving historic fabric.

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? **Yes** No  
Would you be interested in the easement program? **Yes** No