1. **NAME**
   - **COMMON:** Old Stone Church (Old Bonhomme Church)
   - **AND/OR HISTORIC:** Bonhomme Presbyterian Church

2. **LOCATION**
   - **STREET AND NUMBER:** Conway Road at White Road *
   - **CITY OR TOWN:** Chesterfield

3. **CLASSIFICATION**
   - **CATEGORY (Check One):** District
   - **PUBLIC:** Public
   - **ACQUISITION:** In Process
   - **STATUS:** Occupied
   - **ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:** Yes

4. **OWNER OF PROPERTY**
   - **OWNER'S NAME:** Bonhomme Presbyterian Church
   - **STREET AND NUMBER:** Route 2, Box No. 471, Conway Road
   - **CITY OR TOWN:** Chesterfield
   - **STATE:** Missouri
   - **CODE:** 63017
   - **COUNTY:** St. Louis
   - **CODE:** 189

5. **LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**
   - **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:** St. Louis City Recorder of Deeds Office
   - **STREET AND NUMBER:** City Hall, 12th & Market streets
   - **CITY OR TOWN:** St. Louis
   - **STATE:** Missouri
   - **CODE:** 63107

6. **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**
   - **TITLE OF SURVEY:** Historic American Buildings Survey
   - **DATE OF SURVEY:** 1961-1967
   - **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:** Library of Congress
   - **CITY OR TOWN:** Washington
   - **STATE:** D.C.
   - **CODE:** 08

* 2nd Congressional District - Hon. James W. Symington
  House of Representatives
6. #1

OLD STONE CHURCH (OLD BONHOMME CHURCH)

2. Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue (state)
   1963
   State Historical Society of Missouri
   Corner, Hitt and Lowry streets
   Columbia, Missouri 65201 Code: 29

3. Advisory List to the National Register of Historic Places (federal)
   1969
   United States Department of the Interior
   National Park Service
   Washington, D. C. Code: 08

4. 100 Historic Buildings in St. Louis County (county)
   1970
   Historic Buildings Commission
   St. Louis Department of Parks and Recreation
   Clayton, Missouri 63105 Code: 29

5. Missouri State Historical Survey (state)
   1972
   Missouri State Park Board
   P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building
   Jefferson City, Missouri 65101 Code: 29
The Old Stone Church (Old Bonhomme Church) is a rectangular, one-story with full-height basement, stone meeting house. A flight of stairs and a chimney dominate the main, south facade.

### EXTERIOR

**Over-all dimensions**

The church is 30' 3" long on the north and south facades and 40' 4" long on the east and west facades. On the south, the church rises 37' 5" above the ground level.

**Wall construction**

The walls of the Old Stone Church are of rough-cut stone laid in irregular courses. The corner stones and lintels are more regular in shape and generally larger than the stone blocks of the main walls.

**Openings**

Windows. There are no basement windows, the original openings having been filled (at an unknown date) with masonry to match the walls. These "window openings" are on all facades except for the south and are trimmed with smooth-cut stone, jack-arched lintels.

The first story windows are 16-over-16 light, double-hung sash and are located on the east and west facades, three to each wall. Each window has a wood sill and a smooth-cut stone lintel. These windows are currently boarded up.

Doorways and doors. The only entrance into the church at the first story level is on the south facade. The doorway is slightly recessed and has five-panel wood reveals and a six-light transom. Both leaves of the wood, double door have four panels. A stone lintel is over the doorway. Access to this entrance is by a wide flight of wooden stairs (not original).

The only basement entrance is on the east facades and fills the northernmost window opening. Its plank door is slightly recessed and has wood reveals.

**Chimney**

A single, plain, red brick chimney is positioned at the apex of the gable roof and is flush with the south wall.

**Roof**

A gable roof covers the church. The original wood shingles are under the present asbestos shingle covering.

**Decorative features**

The only decorative features are: 1) the stone lintels (already mention-
OLD STONE CHURCH (OLD BONHOMME CHURCH)
ed); 2) the simple, boxed, wood cornice, with plain freize, occurring on
the east and west facades only; and 3) the wood trim on the north and south
gable ends.

INTERIOR

Basement

The unfinished basement is one large room. Its walls are stone masonry
covered with plaster. Much of this plaster has deteriorated. Patches
remaining on the south wall exhibit remnants of the various wallpapers.
Other walls show evidence of having been whitewashed. The ceiling is plas­
ttered and whitewashed. It is in the same condition as the walls with the
joists for the upper floor exposed in many places. Wooden columns are used
to support the first floor. Only the central column appears to be original.
All columns have cement plinths (a recent repair). The floor is dirt (the
original wood floor having decayed and disappeared long ago).

First floor

Access to the first floor sanctuary is through a vestibule which runs the
length of the south wall. Two, wooden, L-shaped stairways, leading to the
upper gallery, are at the east and west ends of this vestibule. The vesti­
bule walls are wallpaper (two shades of beige) over plaster. The stairs are
painted grey.

The sanctuary, which occupies the remainder of the floor space, is oriented
towards the north end of the church. Four columns, two on each side of the
room, are approximately five and a half feet from the east and west walls
and are evenly spaced along the length of the room. These wooden columns
support the upper gallery. Two pilasters, which are attached to the north
wall and are in line with the columns, also help to support the gallery.
Most of the wooden pews which are set perpendicular to the east and west
walls of the sanctuary have been removed, with only those that are built
into the columns remaining. These pews are painted grey.

The walls of the sanctuary are finished in wallpaper over plaster. Below
the window sills the walls are creamy beige; above they are dark beige. A
quarter-inch brown band separates the two color areas. The ceiling is wall­
papered white. A green and beige band with gold rosette medallions decorates
the ceiling. This band is positioned approximately six feet from the juncture
of the walls and the ceiling. The wooden window frames are painted
grey, while the sash are painted white.

The central, north wall area is emphasized by a wood dado and a wallpaper
"mural." The vertically paneled dado is painted creamy beige to match the
color of the lower walls. The "mural" consists of two pilasters supporting an arched band which is decorated with rosette medallions, matching those of the ceiling. An open Bible, resting on palm leaves, is centered just below the semi-circular space of the arched band.

There is a tongue and groove wood floor.

Gallery

The gallery consists of a U-shaped balcony which spans the east, west, and south walls of the sanctuary, cutting across the windows on the east and west walls. A solid, 14-panel, wood railing trims the inner edge of the gallery.

ALTERATIONS

The Old Stone Church exists in a condition very close to its original appearance, even though alterations have been completed.

In the 1930's, a program of repair repointed the walls and added cement plinths under the basement columns (all but one of these columns having been added at an unknown date).

Due to time, weather, (and perhaps improper construction techniques), the walls have settled, causing them to buckle and crack. In an attempt to reinforce these walls and stop any further damage, the basement windows were filled in with masonry.

The basement entrance has been moved (at an unknown date) from its original location in the central opening on the east facade to the northernmost opening.

The main entrance stairway has been altered several times with the present stairs being at least the third version.

Other alterations (dates of execution unknown) include the addition of a new roof of asbestos shingles over the original wood shingles and the removal of partition walls in the basement.

SITE

The Old Stone Church (Old Bonhomme Church), Chesterfield, Missouri, is located on the northeast corner of Conway and White roads. It faces south towards Conway Road. A cemetery is to the north and northeast of the church. A large, old, gnarled, oak tree dominates the south lawn.
7. #3

OLD STONE CHURCH (OLD BONHOMME CHURCH)

cyclone fence encloses and protects the church and its surrounding property. Bordering the church property is: 1) a wooded lot (on the north and east); 2) a vacant lot (on the west, across White Road); and 3) a vacant lot and power plant facility (on the south, across Conway Road).

CONDITION

The Old Stone Church is in a very deteriorated condition due to time and vandalism. Settling, due to age and water leakage, has caused the walls to crack and warp, both on the interior and exterior. The south wall has pulled away from the west vestibule stairs and many wall cracks allow the sunlight to filter into the church. Due to non-use in recent years, vandals have broken in and damaged or stolen church property. As a protection against more vandalism and more damage due to natural causes, the windows have been boarded up, the doors locked, and most of the furnishings removed.

FOOTNOTES

1. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory: Bonhomme Presbyterian Church, MO-1180, Summer, 1967, Sheet 2 (project supervisor, Buford L. Pickens, Professor of Architecture, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri); and personal interview with Mr. William B. Lane, A.I.A., restoration architect for the Old Stone Church Restoration, and Mrs. A. H. Kerth, Jr., Chairman of the Old Stone Church Restoration Committee, on August 15, 1972.


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.
The Old Stone Church (Old Bonhomme Church), constructed in 1841, is significant as an architectural landmark in Missouri, especially in the St. Louis area. Its importance is due to its design and construction materials. The building is also noteworthy as a pioneer church, housing the second Presbyterian congregation organized west of the Mississippi River and the first in the St. Louis area.

The church, with its one-story, full-height basement design, is a rare, unusual example of 1840's church architecture in Missouri. The use of the full-height basement appears to be almost unknown outside St. Louis County, most of the churches being either set directly on the ground level or on very shallow basements. The only other similar example is the First St. Peter's Catholic Church with School in St. Charles, Missouri. (It is interesting to note that these two churches were located in close vicinity of each other). As there appears to be no specific eastern models, it seems that the design was developed out of the necessity for both church and school structures and combining them under one roof for economy reasons.

The church is an expression of the people, simple and practical. All unnecessary ornament was omitted. The stone for the walls was readily available from a nearby ravine. Only enough room to accommodate the necessary activities was provided, no room for expansion being allowed for.

The Old Stone Church is unusual in its stone construction. Most other 1840's examples in Missouri were constructed of brick or wood frame. It is interesting to note that of the few stone churches built, all are located in counties along the Mississippi River: St. Louis, Perry, Ste. Genevieve, and Marion.

History of the Church

In 1814, the Reverends S. J. Mills and Daniel Smith came to St. Louis as agents of the Philadelphia Bible and Missionary Society. These pastors remained in Missouri for only a short time during which they preached frequently and organized a Bible Society. Their labors marked the beginnings of Presbyterianism in Missouri.2
It was not until the summer of 1816, however, that the Presbyterian church was firmly organized in Missouri. At that time, Reverend Salmon Giddings, an agent of the Connecticut Missionary Society, began his work in Missouri. He is credited with organizing sixteen churches, six in Missouri and the rest in Illinois. As a result of this work, Giddings is recognized as the founder and father of Presbyterianism in Missouri and Illinois.

Reverend Giddings organized, on August 3, 1816, Concord Presbyterian Church in Caledonia, Missouri. Bonhomme Presbyterian Church was organized on October 6, 1816, thus becoming the second congregation west of the Mississippi River and the first in the St. Louis area.

The first church meetings at Bonhomme were held in the log cabins of the settlers, as there was no church building. A log structure was eventually built. Its fate is unknown.

The present church building was erected in 1841, by James Sappington and John Baxter under the superintendence of Judge Joseph Conway. The land (originally part of a 1796 Spanish Land Grant) was donated by Judge Conway. The design of the building was dictated by its intended use as not only a church, but as the public school.

The church building was used fairly regularly until 1959, when all use of the church was suspended.

Salmon Giddings

Salmon Giddings was for many years a minister and educator in the St. Louis area. He had been the first Presbyterian minister to establish himself permanently west of the Mississippi River. (Other ministers had come to Missouri before him, but none had stayed).

Giddings carried Presbyterianism westward to the Omaha, Pawnee, and other Indian tribes. As an educator, he opened a school for boys in St. Louis on October 12, 1816; and by January 3, 1818, he was also conducting a school for girls.

He was an earnest and active agent in the distribution of Bibles and Sunday school and tract publications. A preliminary meeting to form the first society west of the Mississippi River for the circulation of the Bible was held in Giddings' school room on December 8, 1818.
Plans for the restoration of the Old Stone Church are actively being pursued. The Restoration Committee and William B. Lane, A.I.A., restoration architect, hope to restore the church to its appearance after the last alterations were completed in the 1930's. This restoration is urgently needed in order to stave off the imminent collapse of the structure before it succumbs to vandals, weather, and age.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER EARLY MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY (1840's) CHURCHES

Surveying other examples of early mid-nineteenth century church architecture in Missouri, it appears that the Old Stone Church is atypical in its one-story with full-height basement, meeting house design. Only one other somewhat similar example has come to light, the First St. Peter's Catholic Church with School, St. Charles, Missouri. This 1848 church, like the Old Stone Church, housed a school on the basement level. It was, however, built on a grander scale than the Presbyterian church. The church has since been torn down and replaced by a newer structure. Other churches appear to be constructed with either no basement or with very shallow ones and their activities restricted to religious functions only.

The survey of Missouri's historic sites is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies in Missouri history as outlined in Missouri's "Comprehensive Statewide Preliminary Preservation Plan." The Old Stone Church (Old Bonhomme Church) is therefore being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places because of its 1) atypical, one-story with full-height basement, meeting house design and 2) importance as the second Presbyterian church organized west of the Mississippi River and the first in the St. Louis area.

FOOTNOTES


8. #3

OLD STONE CHURCH (OLD BONHOMME CHURCH)


4. Bonhomme Presbyterian Church: 1816 – 1941. (Speech delivered at the 125th anniversary of the church by Walter M. Lantry, pastor emeritus of the Central Presbyterian Church).


6. Ibid., p. 1700.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Bonhomme Presbyterian Church: 1816 - 1941. (Speech delivered at the 125th anniversary of the church by Walter M. Lantry, pastor emeritus of the Central Presbyterian Church).


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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than ten acres

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

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: M. Patricia Holmes, Chief Architectural Historian (NBB)

ORGANIZATION: Missouri State Park Board, State Historical Survey and Planning Office

DATE: Dec. 14, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building

CITY OR TOWN: Jefferson City

STATE: Missouri

CODE: 29

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:

National [ ] State [x] Local [ ]

Name: Joseph Jaeger, Jr.

Title: Director, Missouri State Park Board, and Missouri State Liaison Officer

DATE: ____________________________

ATTEST:

______________________________

Keeper of The National Register

DATE: ____________________________
9. #1

OLD STONE CHURCH (OLD BONHOMME CHURCH)

3. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory: Bonhomme Presbyterian Church, MO-1180, Summer, 1967, Sheet 2. (Project supervisor, Buford L. Pickens, Professor of Architecture, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri).


8. West County [St. Louis County, Missouri] Journal, April 19, 1972, p. 2-DE.

OTHER PERTINENT SOURCES

1. Barrett, Reverend T. C. History of Bellevue Presbyterian Church. (Text of a sermon delivered on August 5, 1877).


9. #2

OLD STONE CHURCH (OLD BONHOMME CHURCH)


15. St. Louis [Missouri] Post-Dispatch, April 14, 1972, p. 6N.


U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle
"Chesterfield" (1954)
Scale 1:24000
Old Stone Church (Old Bonhomme Church)
Lat. 38° 38' 59"N Long. 90° 31' 26"W

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty
Medium-duty
Unimproved dirt

U.S. Route
State Route

CHESTERFIELD, MO.
N 3837.5 - W 9030 / 7.5
1954
Old Stone Church (Old Bonhomme Church)
Chesterfield, Missouri

Denotes area being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places
FINISHES:
EXISTING FLOOR SURFACE (EARTH DEPOSITS FROM WALLS & CEILING.
WALLS: PLASTER ON STONE, NOW MOSTLY FALLEN OFF.
CEILINGS: PLASTER ON WOOD LATH.
SPLASH BLOCKS AT CORNERS ARE CONCRETE.

NOTES:
DOORWAY HAS SOLID 2" PLANK JAMBS & HEAD RECAT TO FIT THE
SMALLER OPENING. OTHER OPENINGS HAVE BEEN FILLED IN WITH STONE TO MATCH
ORIGINAL WALLS APPARENTLY, WHEN CHURCH WAS ERECTED (C. 1805 TO 1817).
CENTRAL WOOD COLUMN (12" DIA OCTAGONAL) MAY HAVE BEEN THE
ONLY ORIGINAL SUPPORT, OTHER SMALLER COLUMNS (8" DIA.)
APPEAR TO BE LATER CONSTRUCTION.
OUTSIDE STAIRS ARE ENTIRELY WOOD CONSTRUCTION.
FOUNTAINERS HAVE SETTLED SEVERELY CAUSING STONE WALLS TO
BULGE 3" TO 4" ON NORTH, SOUTH & EAST SIDES.

GROUND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"

OLD STONE CHURCH (OLD BONHOMME CHURCH)
OLD STONE CHURCH (OLD BONHOMME CHURCH)

GALLERY PLAN

SCALE: 5" = 1'-0"

NOTE:
DOTTED LINE INDICATES POSITION OF STOVE PIPES AND FLUE.

TYPICAL WINDOW DETAIL

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"
### Photo Log:

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<td>Photographer:</td>
<td>Frederick J. Breme</td>
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**Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:**

1 of 4. Lower E end of the N façade showing one of the cracks in the wall and the prop holding up the wall. View from the NW looking SE.
2 of 4. Interior view looking N. View shows furnishings before their removal for safe keeping and “mural” on N wall behind altar.
3 of 4. S façade from the SE looking NW. The S façade is on the left and the E façade is to the right.
4 of 4. N façade from the N looking S. Cemetery is in the foreground. Wood props hold up the N (rear) and W walls.