

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 process, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Francis Asbury Memorial  
other names \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number Reservation 309-B, 16<sup>th</sup> and Mount Pleasant Sts., N.W.  not for publication  
city or town Washington  vicinity  
state D.C. code DC county n/a code 001 zip 20010

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying office/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
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 certifying office/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. State/Federal Agency 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 the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Francis Asbury Memorial  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

**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**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
		structures
1		objects
1	0	Total

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

Memorials in Washington, D.C.

**number of contributing resource previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function of Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION and CULTURE: work of art

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION and CULTURE: work of art

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Naturalism

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation  
walls  
roof  
other Bronze, Marble

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Francis Asbury Memorial

Name of Property

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### DESCRIPTION

The *Francis Asbury Memorial* is a bronze, life-size, equestrian statue on a marble pedestal located in the center of Reservation 309-B at the intersection of 16<sup>th</sup> and Mount Pleasant Streets, N.W. The sculpture is rendered following the tenets of Naturalism.

Asbury wears a cloak and a wide-brimmed hat. His right arm is bent and he carries a bible in front of his chest. The hand holds the closed book while his forefinger is inserted between the pages to mark a particular passage. The horse, carrying a bulging saddlebag, bends his neck toward his left knee to in order to lick it.<sup>1</sup>

On the front of the marble pedestal, bronze lettering lists Asbury's name, dates, and the description, "Pioneer Methodist Bishop in America." The rear of the pedestal features the bronze phrase, "The Prophet of the [L]ong Road." (N.B. Deterioration or vandalism has caused the "L" to be missing.) Along the western side of the base of the pedestal is the inscribed quotation, "If you seek for the results of His labor you will find them in our Christian civilization."

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<sup>1</sup> Two things that Asbury carried in his saddlebag were a pistol and powder horn. His horn was recently discovered in an antique shop and is now located in the Methodist Archives at Drew University. Asbury urged Methodist circuit riders to not display their weapons, typically used to protect themselves from mobs or to hunt for food. In Europe, as well as the colonies, Methodists were perceived as a threat to the established church and experienced attacks (by Protestants and Roman Catholics) frequently.

**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 pattern of our history.
- B** Property 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 as yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**Area of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Art

**Period of Significance**

1924

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

H. Augustus Lukeman  
Evarts Tracy

**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 files (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:  
NPS, National Capital Region Headquarters

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National Park Service

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Francis Asbury Memorial

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### SIGNIFICANCE

The *Francis Asbury Memorial* is significant as a rare example (in Washington, D.C.) of the commemoration of a leader of a religious community. H. Augustus Lukeman created the bronze grouping and Evarts Tracy designed the base. The memorial, funded by public contributions (\$50,000) collected by the Francis Asbury Memorial Association, was accepted under a Congressional Act approved February 28, 1919 (40 Stat. 1213) and dedicated on October 15, 1924. The monument is significant under Criterion C in the area of Art.

The eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival, of which Methodism was by far the most vibrant element, had religious and social effects throughout Great Britain and the New World. Facing much opposition from the established Church of England, John Wesley (1703-1791) is recognized as the founder of the Methodism, and his brother Charles (1707-1788) is appreciated as an important leader, especially for hymns, within the community. Sons of an Anglican priest, the brothers attended Christ Church, Oxford. Reacting to a perceived apathy in the Church of England, they began, in 1729, meeting regularly with a small group of friends to methodically approach the scriptures. In addition, they took communion weekly, fasted regularly, and generally abstained from excessive forms of amusement and luxury. The group, consequently, acquired the pejorative label: "Methodists."

John Wesley was ordained in the Church of England in 1728 and Charles received holy orders in 1735. After Charles' ordination, the brothers traveled to Georgia, John as a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and Charles as secretary to Governor James Oglethorpe. They returned to London three years later, disillusioned by their experiences, nevertheless, in May 1738, both underwent inner conversions experiences, three days apart. Once John started to preach on this experience, the various doors of the Church of England began to shut him out. Following the precedent set by George Whitfield, Wesley preached his first sermon in a field in 1739. His preaching was well-received by the British working and industrial classes. As Wesley's popularity increased, he sought to expand his teachings and spread the Gospel by recruiting lay itinerant preachers without formal educational training.

Methodism crossed the Atlantic around 1760 when the farmer Robert Strawbridge, raised a Roman Catholic and converted by Methodism in 1753, left Ireland for economic reasons. He settled a farmstead near Sam's Creek, in (old) Frederick County, Maryland, and almost immediately organized a Methodist class. When he began preaching and converting, others began harassing him. Strawbridge is considered the founder of American Methodism. Other early Methodist communities existed in Baltimore and Philadelphia, and one was established in New York City by 1766. John Wesley dispatched two lay leaders, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore, to preach in the colonies in 1769. Two years later, he sent two more missionaries, Francis Asbury and Richard Wright.

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Francis Asbury (1745-1816), ultimately, became recognized as the father of the American Methodist Church. Asbury was born to Elizabeth and Joseph Asbury in the hamlet of Hamstead, near Birmingham, England. After his older sister died at the age of five, his mother, known as “Eliza,” found solace through prayer inspired by evangelical Methodist preachers. Mocked by classmates due to his mother’s religious practices, Francis readily left school as a child and began an apprenticeship with a local metal worker.<sup>2</sup> At the age of seventeen, Asbury began to preach Methodist teachings. Five years later, in 1767, he became an itinerant preacher. At the Methodist Conference of 1771, John Wesley appointed Asbury and Wright to head to the New World. Asbury thereafter set sail from Bristol and landed in Philadelphia in October 1771.

Two years later, ten Methodist preachers assembled in Philadelphia for the first conference held in the colonies. Among the various resolutions, the most important were that these lay leaders pledged their allegiance to Wesley and that they agreed to not administer the two (Protestant) sacraments: Baptism and Communion. Like the Methodists in England, followers would receive the sacraments in the local Anglican church.

During the Revolutionary War, Asbury was the only Methodist missionary to remain in the colonies. Since he did not renounce his British citizenship, he necessarily went into hiding (in Delaware) for three years. Methodists born in the colonies, however, continued to practice and evangelize during the war. In 1784, John Wesley appointed the Oxford trained lawyer-turned-priest Thomas Coke (1747-1814) as the Superintendent of American Methodism and dispatched him to ordain the Methodist lay leaders who had completed their probationary periods.<sup>3</sup> Coke arrived in the new nation later that year to hold the service. He and Asbury organized a service on December 24, 1784 at in the Lovely Lane Meetinghouse in Baltimore for the occasion.<sup>4</sup> The Christmas Conference, as it came to be known, is recognized as the founding of the American Methodist Church. Following the ordinations, the men decided to establish an independent American institution with episcopacy. The new ministers proceeded to elect Coke and Asbury as their Bishops. When Coke left the country six months later, Asbury assumed control of the new denomination.

<sup>2</sup> [www.FrancisAsbury.org](http://www.FrancisAsbury.org). Oral tradition, that cannot be documented, claims that Asbury may have had two apprenticeships, and that the second was with Thomas Foxall, the father of Henry Foxall (1758-1823) who immigrated to Philadelphia in 1795 via Ireland. It is known that the Asbury and Foxall families worshiped in the same Methodist community in England. I am grateful to Methodist Historian Jane Donovan for providing me information on the connections between Asbury and Foxall.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Wesley adamantly opposed the uncanonical ordination of these preachers. Previously, Coke had been appointed Superintendent of Ireland; the position was essentially an administrative (coordination) office, not one entailing religious authority. To be ordained a Methodist preacher in the late eighteenth century, one had to have experienced a “call” to the ministry of preaching, gained an endorsement from the local community, and completed a two-year internship.

<sup>4</sup> The original Lovely Lane Meetinghouse no longer exists. A tablet on the building located at 206 E. Redwood Street marks the site.

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For the rest of his life, Asbury traveled and preached up and down the eastern seaboard and at least as far inland as Kentucky and Tennessee (he never made a trip back to Great Britain).<sup>5</sup> Asbury organized circuits, each served by a circuit rider-preacher, and advocated the establishment of “Sabbath School.” He was also an early opponent of slavery and petitioned George Washington to enact anti-slavery legislation. During Asbury’s lifetime, the American Methodist Church expanded greatly and became one of the most important Protestant denominations in the new nation.

In 1916, various Methodist bodies throughout the country celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of Francis Asbury’s death and several publications were produced to coincide with the occasion. Consequently, Dr. H.K. Carroll, head of the New York Historical Society, conceived the idea of an Asbury memorial. Carroll’s fundraising efforts, despite World War I, ultimately made the monument feasible. The most ambitious book published in conjunction with the centennial, Ezra Squier Tipple’s *Francis Asbury: The Prophet of the Long Road*, was the source for one of the inscriptions on the base of the memorial. Tipple, President of Drew Theological Seminary, who had published previously on Asbury’s journal, devised the subtitle to refer to the preacher’s itinerant lifestyle.<sup>6</sup> In the forty-five years that Asbury lived in America, he never rented a house, room, or had any permanent lodgings.<sup>7</sup>

The Francis Asbury Memorial Association pressed the Commission of Fine Arts to allow their monument to be erected on the reservation located at the intersection of 16<sup>th</sup> and Mount Pleasant Streets. The site appealed to the organization due to its association with the White House and the surrounding upper-middle class neighborhood. The close proximity to Argonne Place, Harvard Street, and Columbia Road, immediately to the south was also considered a plus, because various roads at this juncture alluded to the numerous roads and trails Asbury, himself, traveled.<sup>8</sup> The unveiling of the memorial, held on October 15, 1924, entailed a ceremony with prayers, hymns—accompanied by a U.S. Army Band, and speeches. Speakers included Methodist bishops, Dr. Carroll, and Lt. Col. Clarence O. Sherrill, Chief Officer of Public Buildings and Grounds, who accepted the memorial on behalf of the federal government. President Calvin Coolidge gave the keynote address.<sup>9</sup> Although only one speech referenced local Washington, remarking upon the many generals on horseback, the fine homes in the

<sup>5</sup> Asbury’s journal records that he entered: New York, more than 50 times; New Jersey, more than 60 times; Pennsylvania, 78 times; Maryland, 80 times; Virginia, 84 times; North Carolina, 63 times; Tennessee, 20 times; South Carolina, 46 times; and Georgia, 20 times. He crossed the Allegheny Mountains eighteen times. See Ezra Squier Tipple, *Francis Asbury: The Prophet of the Long Road* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1916), 162. His powder horn, inscribed, May 1, 1790, signifies his earliest trip to Kentucky. See, [www.materialreligion.org/objects/apr01obj.html](http://www.materialreligion.org/objects/apr01obj.html).

<sup>6</sup> Drew Theological Seminary located in Madison, New Jersey was founded in 1867 by Methodists.

<sup>7</sup> Tipple, 158.

<sup>8</sup> The National Baptist Memorial Church (1922-1926) at the northeast corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and Harvard Streets and All Souls Unitarian Church (1924) at southeast corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Columbia Road were under construction at the time. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was built at the southwest corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Columbia Road between 1932 and 1933.

<sup>9</sup> The entire ceremony is documented in, Carroll, H.K., ed., *The Francis Asbury Monument in the National Capital* (Location?: The Francis Asbury Memorial Association Press of the Methodist Book Concern, 1925).

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immediate vicinity, and stressing the importance of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street axis, the nomadic Asbury had a special connection to Washington, D.C.

The earliest documented Methodist meeting held in what would become the District of Columbia occurred in 1772; Robert Strawbridge preached in a cooper shop on Montgomery (28<sup>th</sup>) Street near present-day M Street in George-Town (Maryland).<sup>10</sup> In 1795, the local community erected a Meetinghouse on Montgomery Street in between M and Olive Streets. The first known occasion that Asbury preached in George-Town also occurred in 1795. After Henry Foxall moved to George-Town in December 1799, Asbury “regularly” visited the community.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The small tobacco trading station became part of the District of Columbia in 1790. The spelling of George-Town had changed by 1807. See, Jane Donovan, ed., *Many Witnesses: A History of the Dumbarton United Methodist Church* (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1998) p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> After arriving in Philadelphia in 1795, Henry Foxall started the Eagle Iron Works with Robert Morris, Jr. west of the city on the Schuylkill River. When Foxall relocated to the District of Columbia, he purchased land west of George-Town to establish Columbian Foundry. Foxall, who had had a religious conversion experience and became a Methodist enthusiast by late 1791, also (lay) preached at the Montgomery Street Meetinghouse. (See Jane Donovan “Henry Foxall and the Arigna Iron Works,” *Methodist History* July 2003 (Vol. 41, No. 4), pp. 179-191. Because the Columbian Foundry was spared destruction by the British during the War of 1812, Foxall purchased land at 14<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, NW in 1815 and commissioned a 40’ x 50’ brick meetinghouse as an offer of thanksgiving. Its name, Foundry Methodist, was chosen in honor of John Wesley’s first church in London, located in an abandoned foundry; Foxall refused to memorialize himself. Later, Foxall served as Mayor of Georgetown (1821-1823). Foxall’s building stood until 1864, when it was replaced by a brick Victorian church building designed by Cluss and von Karmmerhueber. Foundry (United) Methodist Church relocated to 16<sup>th</sup> and P Streets, NW in 1904; the new edifice, designed in the English Gothic style, was by local Washington architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr.



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Both Asbury and Foxall grew up in West Midlands, England and their parents worshiped in the same congregation near Birmingham for twenty-five years.<sup>12</sup> (Foxall would have been nine when the twenty-two year old Asbury began his life as an itinerant preacher in England.) Asbury made at least eleven visits to Georgetown between 1800 and his death in the spring of 1816, to preach to the local community. On these occasions, Asbury stayed at Foxall's home. During his March 1813 visit, Asbury also officiated at the marriage of Foxall's only daughter, Mary Ann.<sup>13</sup> By that year, Methodism in the District of Columbia included the Montgomery Street Meeting House, a second congregation on Capitol Hill (now known as Capitol Hill United Methodist Church), and the Meeting House, also known as The Ark (later known as Mount Zion), located at P and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets, NW, that the Montgomery Street Meeting House helped establish for the black communicants.

Henry Augustus Lukeman (1870-1935) created the sculptural group for the *Francis Asbury Memorial*. Born in Richmond, Virginia, Lukeman studied at the National Academy of Design in New York City, the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and then began an apprenticeship with Daniel Chester French. His work includes: *Kit Carson*, Trinidad, Colorado; *General David McMurtrie Gregg*, Reading, Pennsylvania; *Honor Roll*, Prospect Park and *Soldier's Monument*, Red Hook Park in Brooklyn, New York; *Straus Memorial*, New York, New York; *Women of the South*, Raleigh, North Carolina; *General William Shephard*, Westfield, Massachusetts; *Soldier's Memorial*, Pittsfield, Massachusetts; and *Manu, the Law Giver of India* for the Appellate Court Building in New York City. After Gutzon Borglum was dismissed from the project, Lukeman completed the colossal *Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial* near Atlanta, Georgia. In 1925, Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania conferred on Lukeman an honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities.

Architect Evarts Tracy (1868-1922) designed the pedestal. Tracy and Lukeman had collaborated previously on the *Straus Memorial* in 1914.

<sup>12</sup> Shortly after Foxall was born in Monmouth Forge in South Wales his family returned to their home in the West Midlands.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Ann wed Samuel McKenney on March 8, 1813 at the Foxall town home (demolished) located in the waterfront on Frederick (34<sup>th</sup>) Street. Jane Donovan.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Donovan, Jane, ed. *Many Witnesses: A History of the Dumbarton United Methodist Church* Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1998.

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Tipple, Ezra Squier. *Francis Asbury: The Prophet of the Long Road*. New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1916.

[www.FrancisAsbury.org](http://www.FrancisAsbury.org)

[www.materialreligion.org/objects/apr01obj.html](http://www.materialreligion.org/objects/apr01obj.html)

Francis Asbury Memorial  
Name of Property

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre.

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

### Boundary Justification

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

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Eve L. Barsoum, Historian  
organization National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers date May 2006  
street & number 444 North Capitol Street, N.W. telephone 202.354.1822  
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20001

## 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 SHPO or FPO)

name U.S. Government, administered by the National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park  
street & number 3545 Williamsburg Lane, N.W. telephone 202.895.6000  
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20008

**Paperwork Reduction 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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## Verbal Boundary Description

The *Francis Asbury Memorial* is located in Reservation 309-B at the northwest corner at the intersection of Sixteenth and Mount Pleasant Streets. The boundary of the object includes the land occupied by the marble pedestal.

## Boundary Justification

The boundary of *Francis Asbury Memorial* has been historically associated with the object.