

Survey # WA-III-144
Street Address 4412 Main Street
Town, State Rohrersville, Maryland 21779
private X, public _____

Approximate date 1879 (cornerstone)

The former Saint Mark's Lutheran Church is located on the west side of Main Street in Rohrersville. The cornerstone is dated July 12, 1879. It is a three bay, gable-fronted brick building with a three story entrance and bell tower. The tower is square with a flat balustraded top. Newer brick work forming the balustrade at the top indicates that the top was altered and originally had some sort of spire. Openings have Gothic pointed arches. Windows have two over two pane sash, although the upper ones are pointed to fit the openings. The brick walls are laid in common bond on field stone foundations. Corbeled pilasters separate the window bays. The entrance is centered in the front face of the tower. This is one of three church buildings in Rohrersville. All three date from the 1870s and 1880s. All three are German derived denominations, reflecting the cultural background of the community. This church retains its original exterior finish, windows and paneled double doors. The only alteration appears to be the removal and reconstruction of the top of the tower.

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

- I. Geographic Organization: Western Maryland
- II. Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance 1870-1930
- III. Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning
- IV. Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Church

Photo Reference: Photo # 21

Form Prepared By: Paula S. Reed, PhD, Architectural Historian
Woodward-Clyde
200 Orchard Ridge Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Date: 6/97

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. WA-III-144

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 4412 Main Street

not for publication

city, town Rohrerstown

vicinity of

congressional district

state Maryland

county Washington

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Blue Ridge Beginnings, Inc.

street & number Box 3

telephone no.: 301-766-7344

city, town Rohrerstown

state and zip code Maryland 21779

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

Liber 769

street & number 95 West Washington Street

Folio 1033

city, town Hagerstown

state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date

federal

state

county

local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Resource Count = 1

Built in 1879, St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church is located in Rohrsersville on the west side of Main Street and is a one-story symmetrical brick building designed with Gothic elements. Although the tower may have been altered by the removal of its steeple, the remainder of the church retains its original ornamental scale and massing.

The church's parcel is very small, perhaps just taking in the building footprint, and was carved out of the parcel to its north. The building sits close to the sidewalk. Landscaping includes bushes and a tree at the front facade. A stone retaining wall is located on the southwest corner of the property.

The front gable building is rectangular in shape and constructed in a common bond brick pattern. A stone foundation is visible along the facade and the first one-third of the length of the building. The shingle covered roof is decorated with a bracketed cornice in the front gable. The wood windows are long and narrow in a lancet design of the Gothic Revival style.

The most prominent feature of the church is its central square tower in the facade. The tower contains pointed arch double doors and windows and an arcaded top. The plain panel doors are topped with a matching upper section. A lancet window is located directly above the front door and on each side of the tower. A row of header bricks is laid in at a projecting angle above the louvered windows in the tower. Paired louvered windows are positioned close to the top of each side of the tower. The tower is topped in an arcaded fashion with projecting brick posts in each corner.

The facade and side elevations are vertically divided by projecting brick pilasters into two bays in the facade and four bays on the sides. Window openings are aligned within each bay. The top of the bays feature the same projecting brickwork as contained in the tower.

Barely visible through the bushes, the rear facade has a two-foot projecting section that mimics the rear gable and contains a rounded window on its end wall and very narrow lancet windows on its north and south sides.

The interior was not accessible.

Newer brick work forming the arcade at the top of the tower indicates that the top was altered. Documentation from Williams' 1906 history states that the church contained a 45-foot spire in addition to the tower¹. Long time residents of the community only remember the existing tower. Therefore, the tower most likely was altered in the early 20th century. All other features of the church are original and the building retains a high degree of integrity.

¹ Williams, Thomas J.C. A History of Washington County, Maryland. John M. Runk and L. R. Titsworth, 1906, p. 507.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
1500-1599	agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
1700-1799	art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other(specify)

Specific dates 1879

Builder/Architect Members of the community

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D

and/or

Applicable Exceptions: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Built by members of the community in 1879, St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church is significant for its Gothic Revival style and as one of three churches in Rohrsersville dating from the 1870s-1880s of German denomination. The church remains in its original rural village setting along Main Street and, along with other churches and institutions in the village, created strong social/cultural ties in a rural farm trading center in the late 19th to mid-20th centuries.

History

The St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran congregation is an outgrowth of the Mount Zion Lutheran congregation of Locust Grove, a community located northeast of Rohrsersville. The congregation was permanently organized in June 1879, with 38 members. The building committee was comprised of Joseph Rohrer, Ezra D. Miller, John H. Poffenberger, Henry Clay Rohrer, and Noah Rohrback with the pastor Rev. Mr. Beckley who had been pastor of the Boonsboro charge. Samuel Keedy of Keedysville did the carpenter work. John W. Brantner and Silas W. Norris were the masons, assisted by James Dunn in the brick work². Silas Norris was also a merchant who owned a store in Rohrsersville that operated for 87 years³.

The church stands on the ground where the first building was erected by George Kefauver in the village of Rohrsersville. The ground was purchased in 1879 by Joseph Rohrer of the building committee for \$100 from Magdalena Buck, George Kefauver's daughter. Rohrer transferred the property to John Poffenberger and the trustees of the church in 1880. The building cost \$3,500 and is 56 by 33 feet, with a 50-foot tower, and a seating capacity of 280. Dedicated in 1880, the church had an active Sunday School with a membership of 60 and a total of 95 church members. Of the 38 original members of the church, almost half (16) were from the Rohrer family, descendants of settlers in the Rohrsersville region⁴.

At the time the church was built in 1879, Rohrsersville, had become a well established rural trading center in a fertile area known as Pleasant Valley in southern Washington County between South Mountain and Elk Ridge. The village grew as a result of a grist mill located at the north end of town in the early 19th century. Families began moving in and the town developed in a linear fashion along Main Street. Many of the early families to who moved to this section of Washington County were from Pennsylvania and were of German descent. No social, cultural, or educational institutions were located within the village prior to the beginning of the mid-19th century. Local tradition states that Rohrsersville's first school was built in 1800 near the point where Trego Road meets Rt. 67, one mile south of the village and on

² Williams, p. 504.

³ Woodring, Frank. "Church Plays Important Role in Lives of Town's Oldest Couple." Maryland Cracker Barrel, December/January 1993, p. 14.

⁴ Williams, p. 507.

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Magi No.

DOE yes no

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Sundays the building was used as an inter-denominational church. St. Mark's was one of three churches built in Rohrersville in the late 19th century. Of these three churches, St. Mark's is the second oldest and is the only church that has not been sandblasted.

One resident of Rohrersville who moved to the village in 1941 reflected that "churches were right full then" and that the church played a prominent role in the lives of its residents. "On Sundays we went to church in the morning and back to church in the evening."⁵ The churches, combined with the Rohrersville School, local businesses, and the band hall combined to create a strong sense of community.

The advent of modern transportation brought changes to Rohrersville in the mid-twentieth century, as interstate commerce developed and altered the economic character of the community, with all of its businesses closing. St. Mark's discontinued worship on April 25, 1971. The Boonsboro Historical Society purchased the building in 1973 as a place to store and display its artifacts. Approximately one year later the society sold the property which then continued to change owners three more times before its current owner, Blue Ridge Beginnings, Inc., placed a retail business in the church called Alice's Cottage Industry. The business has since relocated and the church stands vacant.

Themes

Late 19th century architecture in Rohrersville, Maryland: The architecture in Rohrersville in the last quarter of the 19th century was a combination of traditional building styles and Victorian influence. St. Mark's exhibits this time period in its Gothic Revival elements from the Victorian period. The overall modest scale of the church reflects its location within a rural farm trading center. While all three churches in the village of the Gothic Revival style, only St. Mark's contains a three-story entrance and bell tower. Certain features of this church were also applied to the early 20th century Band Hall (WA-III-129). The only public building created in a different style was the 1919 Rohrersville School (WA-III-166) which was designed in the Colonial Revival style.

Social and cultural activities in Rohrersville, Maryland, 1870-1947: Social and cultural activity during this time revolved around the village's school, the Rohrersville Comet Band, and the churches. The churches were all German derived denominations, reflecting the cultural background of the community. These churches played an important role in communities in the 19th and early 20th centuries and in Rohrersville this is reflected in the construction of all three churches between 1871 and 1888; indicating the growth and stability in the community brought on by the industrial transition period and the railroads.

⁵ Woodring, p. 14.

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DOE yes no

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Chain of Title

04/24/1879 Magdelana Buck to Joseph Rohrer
 Part of "Park Hall" and "Elk Hill"
 Liber 78Folio 55

02/18/1880 Joseph Rohrer to John H. Poffenberger, et al., Trustees of St. Marks
 Liber 78Folio 692

11/23/1973 St. Mark's Lutheran Church Corp. to Boonsboro Historical Society, Inc.
 Liber 571 Folio 292

12/19/1974 Boonsboro Historical Society, Inc. to Marvin Kline Evangelism, Inc.
 Liber 589 Folio 351

08/04/1975 Marvin Kline Evangelism, Inc. to Franklin E. Binkley and Raymond D. Monninger
 Liber 600 Folio 550

11/26/1975 Franklin E. Binkley to Raymond D. Monninger
 Liber 606 Folio 304

01/26/1977 Raymond D. Monninger to William L. & Janet K. Tritopoe
 Liber 629 Folio 700

02/24/1978 William L. & Janet K. Tritopoe to Innokenty & Willadene Tolmachoff, Jr.
 Liber 654 Folio 818

08/31/1984 Innokenty Tolmachoff, Jr. & his wife, Willadene to Blue Ridge Beginnings, Inc.
 Liber 769 Folio 1033

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Magi No.

DOE yes no

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Maryland

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community
Planning
Social/Educational/Cultural

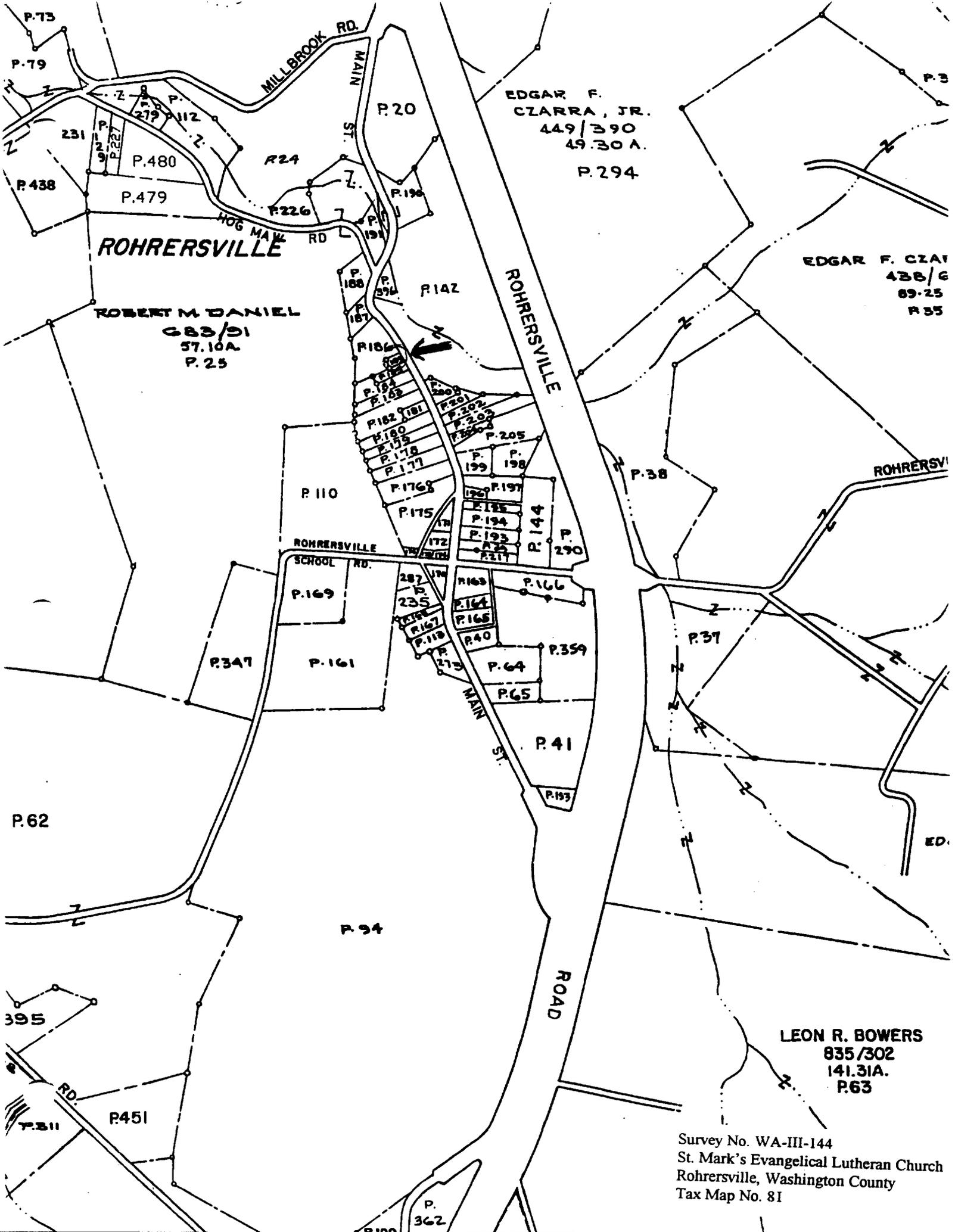
Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Church

Known Design Source: Unknown



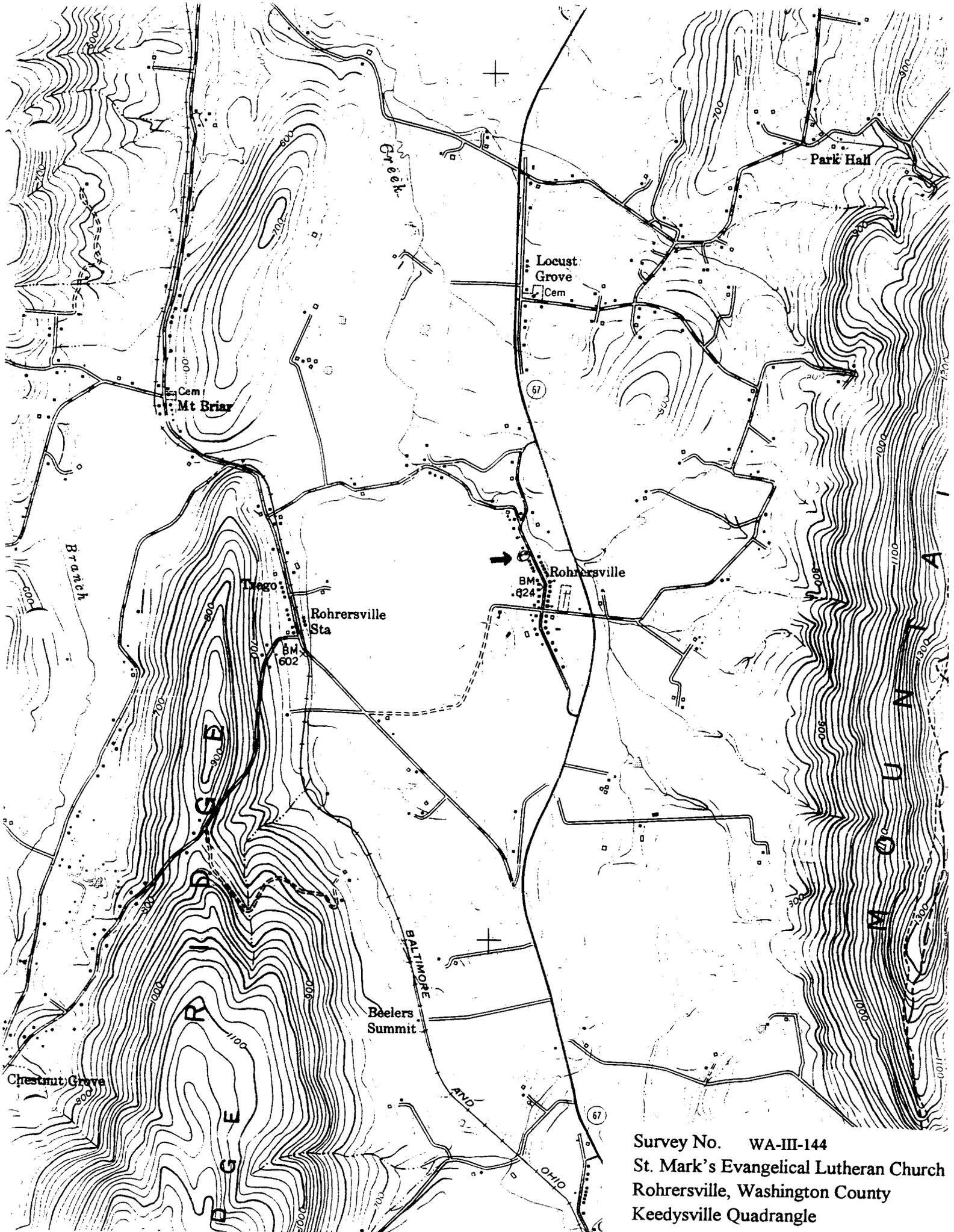
EDGAR F. CZARRA, JR.
449/390
49.30A.
P.294

EDGAR F. CZARRA
438/G
89-25
P.35

ROBERT M DANIEL
683/51
57.10A
P.25

LEON R. BOWERS
835/302
141.31A.
P.63

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St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Rohrerstown, Washington County
Tax Map No. 81



Survey No. WA-III-144
St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Rohrersville, Washington County
Keedysville Quadrangle



WA-III-144

4412 MAIN ST., Rohrersville

Washington Co., MD

St Salvatore

5/97

Neg- MD SHPD

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, NW VIEW

21 of 43 (cap)

1 of 2 (ind)



WA-III-144

4412 Main St, Rohrersville

Washington Co MD

SE Salvatore

5/97

Neg: MDSHED

ST MARKS CHURCH, SW VIEW

#2042