

CT-176

MUTUAL HALL

Mutual

1909

Suppers, dances, and meetings were held in this hall until recent years, when it has been used to store hay. The five-bay-long by three-bay-wide, one-story building has an arched ceiling. The exterior is covered with board and batten siding.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Mutual Hall
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Broomes Island
(MD Route 264) and Laveille Roads
CITY, TOWN Mutual
STATE Maryland

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
VICINITY OF
COUNTY Calvert

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
County Commissioners
STREET & NUMBER

Telephone #: 535-1600

CITY, TOWN _____ STATE, zip code _____
VICINITY OF _____

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
STREET & NUMBER

Liber #: JLB 79/367
Folio #:

CITY, TOWN _____ STATE _____

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

CT-176

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED	<input type="checkbox"/> ADDITION	DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

LOCATION _____

CLASSIFICATION _____

STATUS _____

EXEMPTION _____

CATEGORY _____

OWNER OF PROPERTY _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

REGISTRATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Andrews, W., Architecture, Ambition and Americans, 1955.

Footner, H., Charles Gift, N. Y. 1939.

Whiffen, M., American Architecture Since 1780, 1969.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Wayne L. Nield II

Winter 76-77

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey

TELEPHONE

STREET & NUMBER

c/o Planning Office

STATE

CITY OR TOWN

Prince Frederick, MD 20678

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

Mutual Hall

DESCRIPTION:

This structure was designed as a meeting hall and is of wooden frame construction with an exterior siding of boards with battens. Most of the materials such as the joists and sills are circular sawn. The roof is gable-end with a gentle pitch. Exterior measurements reveal that it is $30\frac{1}{2}$ ' wide and $60\frac{1}{2}$ ' long with a 20' x 29'4" wing on the west end of the north side. The distance between the sills and plates is 12'.

Much attention has been paid to fenestration as there are a total of eleven large and symmetrically placed sash windows which have openings measuring 32" in width and 61" in height. Although most of them are missing, the panes were 6/6 and louvered shutters hung outside. A single oculus is on the gable of the east end (entrance). The building is vented by an entrance consisting of double doors in a 48" x 78" frame with a 13" x 48" transom. Single doors are on both the north and south sides of the west end. Two side-by-side single doors enter the north wing, which has entrances on the east and west sides. That wing also has windows in its outer walls.

The main block was heated by space heaters which were served by flues located in the southeast and northeast corners as well as the southwest corner of the stage area.

The exterior appearance of the building is characterized most by the board-and-batten siding. The boards are 8" wide and continuous to the eaves (12') except on the gable ends. The battens are $1\frac{1}{4}$ " thick and 3" wide and are attached with wire nails. The most recent color appears to have been white; although, there is gray paint under the eaves of the wing.

The interior of the main block consists mainly of a single, very large room which measures 29' wide and 59' long. There is a 2' high stage at the west end which is c. 21' long and 11'10" deep. A diagonal wall creates a triangular shaped room in the northwest corner of the stage. The walls and ceiling are light green. Scraping shows a coat of cream colored paint beneath the light green, but the dark green seems solid through to the wood. Behind the rail itself, what is probably an undercoat of pure white, was observed.

Although they do not appear to be original, all but one window has a decorative cornice over it.

The arched ceiling lacks decoration save for the painted paneling and six free hanging electric lights which are presumed to be later additions. Three iron tension-rods span the ceiling at plate level and penetrate the walls via decorative metal plates.

On the exterior, beneath the eaves, one can see that the soffit has been cut to accommodate these rods.

The use of this structure as an agriculture storage building has not done it a great deal of good, although the hay may have protected the floor, for other than the stage floor the main portion remains in fair condition. 3" wide floor boards were laid lengthwise with the room.

The wing is also of wooden frame construction with similar board-and-batten siding. The materials differ somewhat, however, from the main block. The battens on the wing are thinner and more narrower (3/4" thick, 2 1/2" wide), and the eaves are left open exposing the ends of the 2" x 4" rafters.

There is no tongue-and-groove paneling on the interior, instead it is finished with plaster-board. This single room appears to have been used as a kitchen.

HISTORY:

Tax records indicate the building to be on the half-acre lot identified in JLB 79/367 as the property acquired by the County Commissioners from the Vestry of Christ Episcopal Church (-) GWD 9/376 shows that the Church acquired this property on May 5, 1909 from Albert and Aletha Gantt. It was part of a 100-acre parcel acquired by them in 1900. (GWD 1/347)

SIGNIFICANCE:

For its date, the style of this building at first seems to be somewhat out of date. It has been documented previously, however, by other buildings recorded in Calvert County that styles popular in the Victorian era remained in vogue here somewhat longer than in more metropolitan areas. Gingerbread porches, bracketed eaves, and fishscale shingles have been noted on many extant buildings. It perhaps is not surprising to see a board-and-batten structure being erected in 1909. As such, it should be seen as a document of an important American style which was still viable in this area in the first decades of this century.

Mutual Hall has a further significance for the role it played in this community. The importance which churches have played in rural communities is often underestimated. This role went beyond spiritual guidance as the church often took on a role providing educational and recreational activities as well. Oral history suggests that this was the case with the Mutual Hall which for many years housed suppers, dances, and meetings of all kinds. One event which Christ Church has and still does sponsored is jousting tournaments. In modern times, jousting has been declared the state sport in Maryland. It is no new event in Mutual, however, and the event with which the hall was connected is mentioned in one of Hulbert Footner's tales of the county:

"At the Mutual Tournament last week, the old familiar faces were to be seen up and down the course. It is very satisfying to an exciting man to find himself in a big gathering where he knows everybody. Makes him feel as if he had a place in the world. Miss Alice Weems, now something over ninety, was there. She surprised me by hailing me as her benefactor. Years ago, she explained, when her sight began to fail, I told her she had something that could never be taken from her, vix. her memories. "You were right," she said solemnly; "I'm living on 'em now!" The young knights charged down the course with the same determined mien they showed in 1908--

but not the same knights. Those were serving as Marshals, Heralds and Judges now. Fried chicken, country ham and deviled crabs were served out of doors in the same generous and sloppy style, and tasted as good as ever. At the ball the latest aspirant for political office addressed the successful knights and their ladies on the subject of our fair women, our brave men and the ancient chivalry of Maryland, just as if we had never heard it before. The hall was packed to suffocation, but how young, how young the dancers were! I realized sadly that I was the oldest man on the floor. All my contemporaries were on the side lines."

Bibliography

Andrews, W., Architecture, Ambition and Americans, 1955.

Footner, H., Charles Gift, N. Y. 1939.

Land records GWD 9/376
GWD 1/347

Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Cranford of Mutual--February 25, 1977

The Story of Old Christ Church, Vestry of Christ Church, 1972.

Whiffen, M., American Architecture Since 1780, 1969

In an interview with Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Cranford, this information was obtained concerning the Mutual Hall.

The Cranfords are in their eighties and are among the oldest members of Christ Church. Mr. Cranford was born in Mutual and has spent his life here, and Mrs. Cranford has worked for the church most of her life.

Mr. Cranford remembers that the oculus in the north gable of the Hall had glass on which "1906" was written. He was ten years old when the building was built, and he lived at "Laveille." He remembers the Hall being constructed and that James B. Duke and Brook Bond were its builders. He has not forgotten the many fine suppers and dances there. There were times when there was "really some dancing" to the sounds of bands brought down from Washington.

Mrs. Cranford has worked on many of those suppers which were fine feasts. Home cured meats were served with chicken, ham, and lamb being regulars. All three were often served at the same meal along with deviled crab. She says that crabs were boiled in a large pot cooked over an open fire in the yard. Mr. and Mrs. Cranford recall that the present kitchen was added to the building during the 1930's.

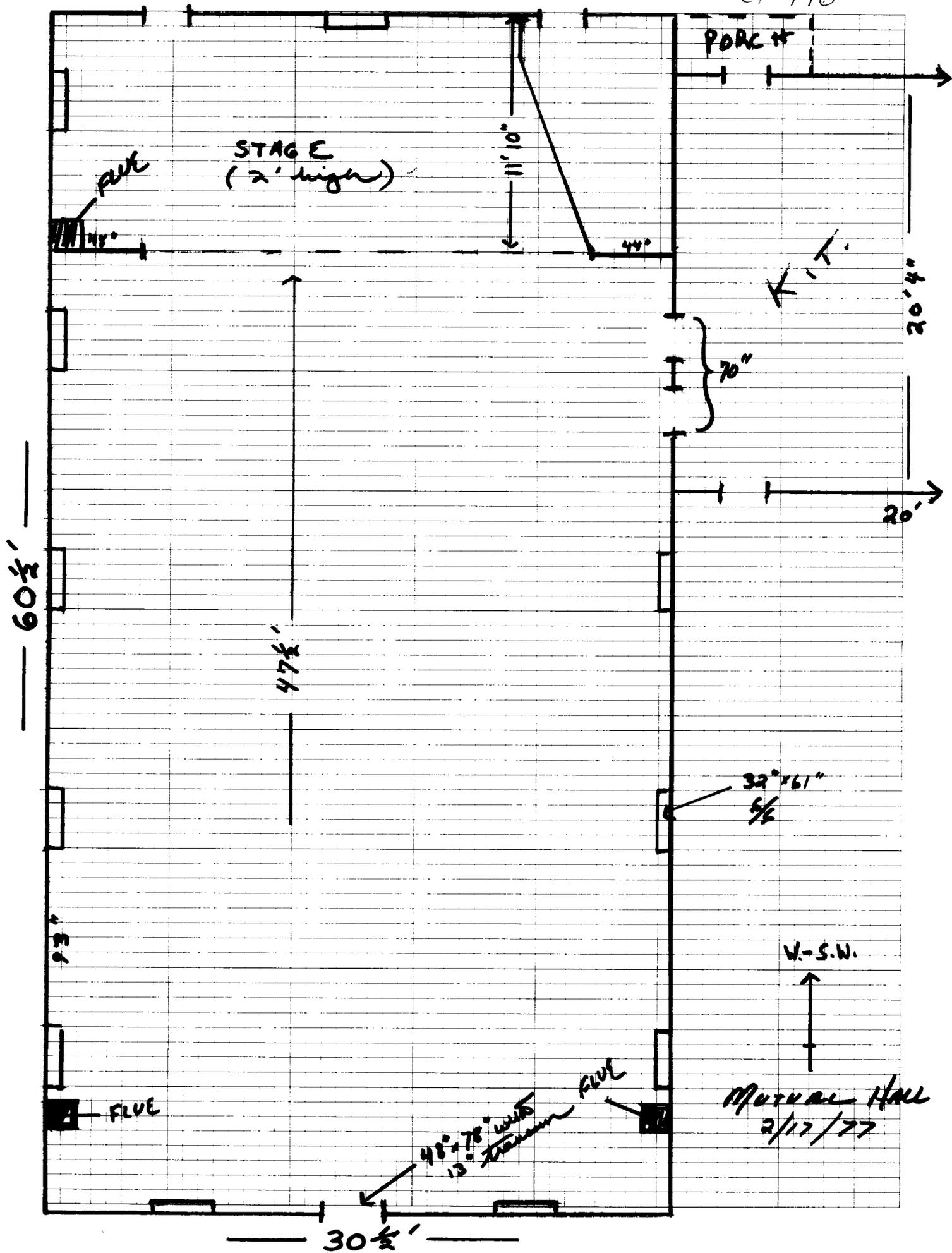
Footner suggests in his mention of the Mutual Hall such feasts were often held in conjunction with the annual jousting tournament. The tournament was held in the fields across the street (on the south side of Broomes Island Road). The tradition of this event is described in The Story of Old Christ Church.

When the jousting took place in the fields near this building, Mutual Hall was connected with an event which has become an important aspect of Maryland culture.

"Once each year, on the last Saturday in August, Christ Church sponsors Calvert County's jousting tournament, as it has for more than a century. A field back of the Church provides the terrain. The tournament is the only public money-raising activity the Church engages in. More important, it is a Calvert County tradition that has its roots in Maryland's beginnings and that provides the people of the County an opportunity for an annual reunion and home-coming. And if official sanction is needed, there is the fact that the General Assembly in 1962 declared jousting the official sport of the State of Maryland."

Oral history and Charles Gift show that before this important event was held behind the church ~~it~~ was held in the fields across from the Mutual Hall. It is not stretching a point to see the old building as part of the history of this event.

CT-176



PORCH

STAGE
(2' high)

FLUE

11'10"

44°

KITCH.

20"

20'4"

20'

32'161"
 $\frac{1}{2}$

W-S-W.

Mutual Hall
2/17/77

FLUE

48×78 with
 13 *truss*

FLUE

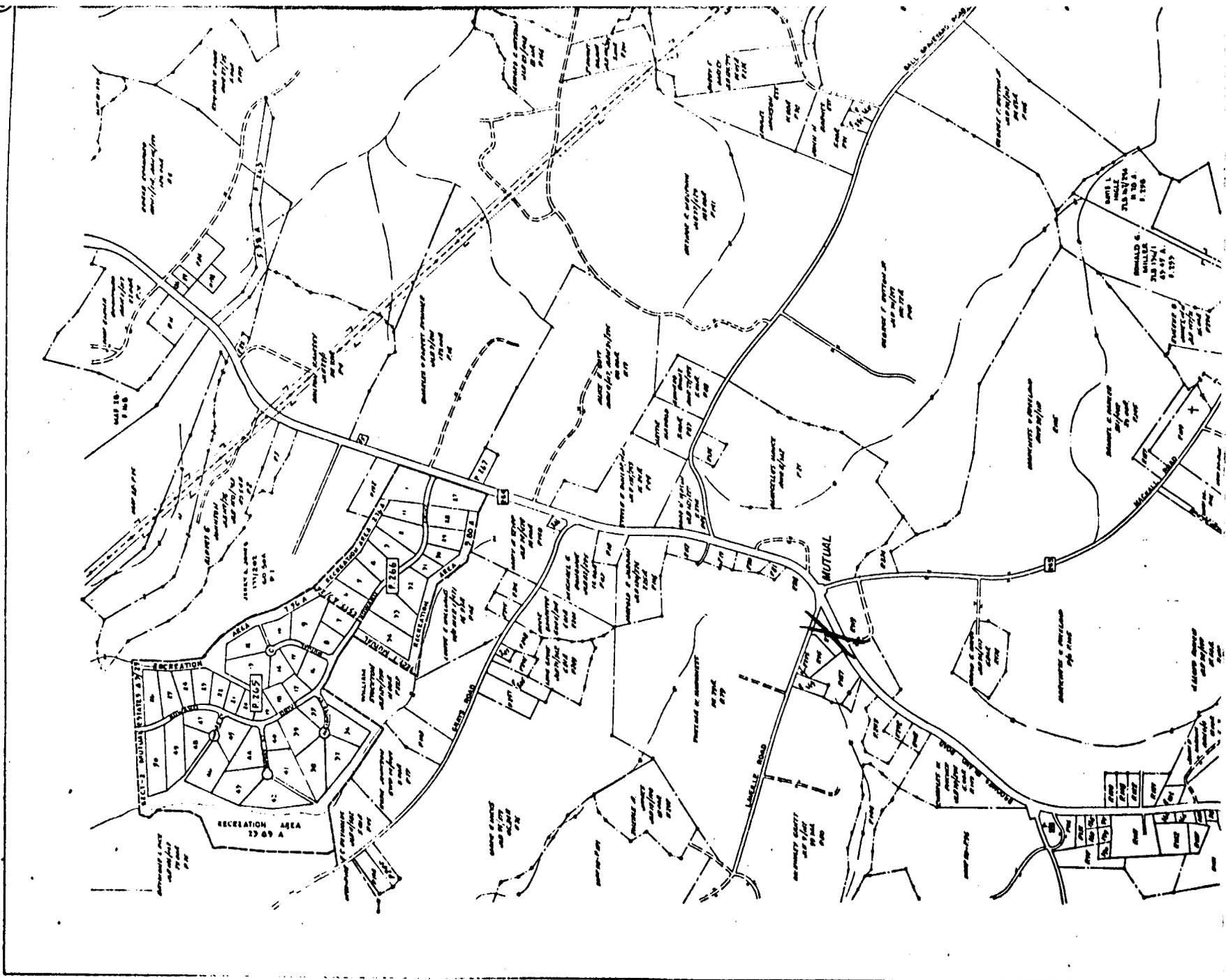
30 $\frac{1}{2}'$

60 $\frac{1}{2}'$

47 $\frac{1}{2}'$

93"

CT-176



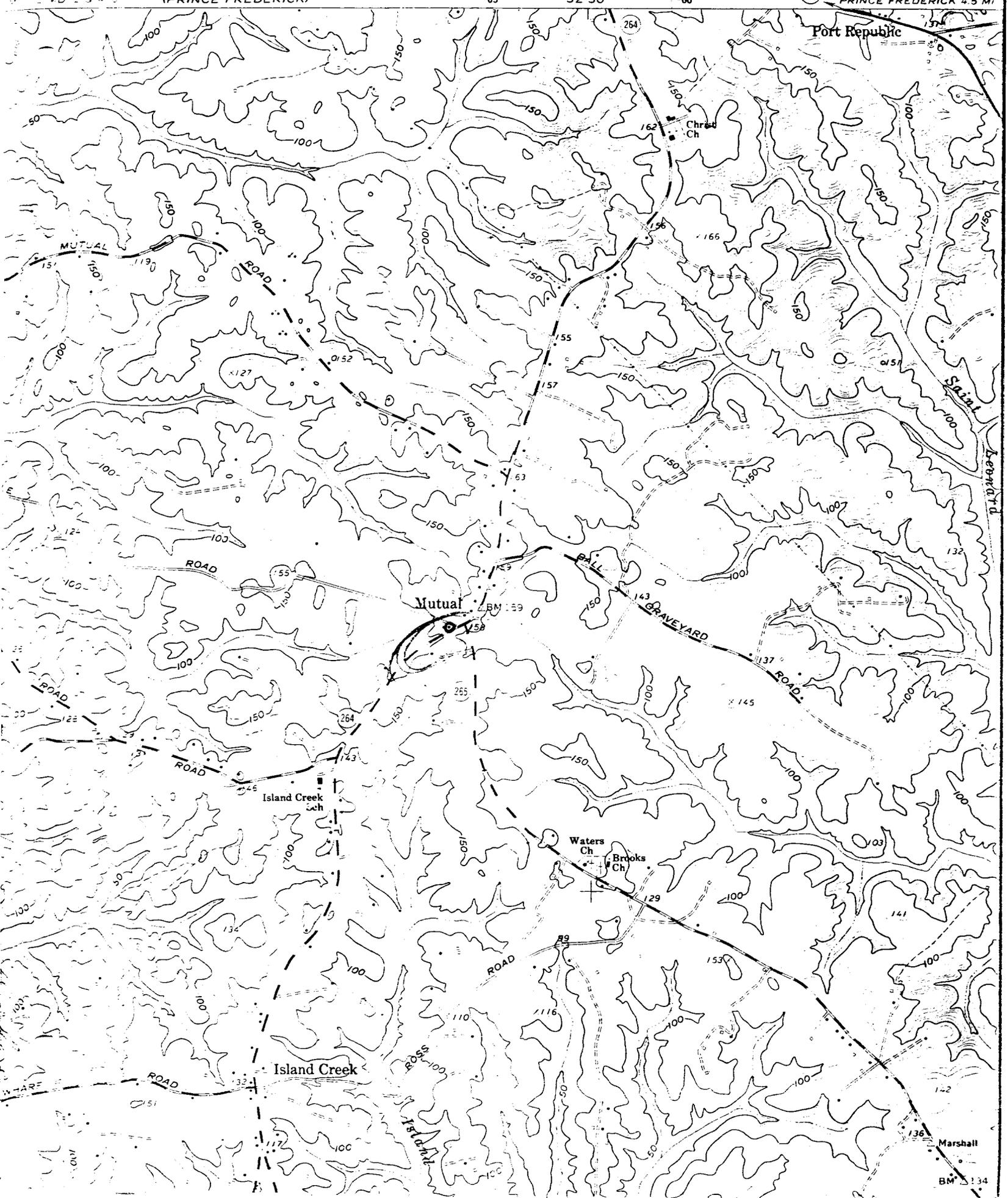
CT-176

7.5 M

5661 II SE
(PRINCE FREDERICK)

365 32'30" 366

2
416 ANNAPOLIS (VIA MD 21 41)
PRINCE FREDERICK 4.5 MI





CT-176

CLUT-176
MUTUAL HALL
N.E. corner

Wayne L. Nield, II
Historic Sites Survey
Bromes Island, Maryland 20615
586-2050