K-549 **Site of African-American Meeting House at Hynson's Chapel**

Martenet's Map of 1860 indicates an "African Meeting House" adjacent to Hynson's Methodist Chapel at the junction of Route 20 and Ricaud's Branch Road. Neither Hynson's Chapel nor the colored meeting house have survived, although there are tombstones from the early nineteenth century at the sight of the former.

No description is known of this structure, but like Randle's Chapel near Worton erected in 1780, it probably was of planked log construction. There is some possibility that the original 1770's Hynson Chapel, was moved and used for the African meeting when Hynson's white congregation built a new meeting house for themselves.

After extensive investigation of the site in 1989 by Margaret Fallaw and Vincent Hynson, they concluded that the African Meeting House site was probably to the south of the small creek that runs through this wooded corner site. In 1853, a John P. Smith and his wife Lea, evidently whites, sold a 40 foot-square plot from their farm at this location "for the use of the coloured people, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church...situated a few rods below Hynson's Chapel."

Hynson's Chapel, established in 1773, was the first Methodist meeting in Kent County. Methodism grew rapidly, particularly on the Eastern Shore and in Delaware, and by 1780 the total membership of all American societies was 8,500, with less than 400 members north of the Mason-Dixon line.

The African Meeting House may have been the old Hynson's moved to the new site, or a new building, the 1853 deed states that the trustees "shall erect and

build...thereon a house or place of worship and to keep it always erected for the use of the coloured people, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church...[and] they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such ministers and preachers belonging to Said church as shall from time to time be duly authorised by the General Conference of the Ministers and Preachers of Said Methodist Episcopal Church or by the annual conference authorize by said General Conference to preach and expound Gods Holy Word therein." Such wording is generally standard in church deeds and should not be taken to mean that in all cases no building had been built on the property yet.

The deed reveals that the buyers, the trustees for the black church, were both black and white. James H. Edes, Richard Coleman, and Thomas Strong were designated as "white men," and Peter Glenn, Abram Brown, Henry Jones, James Jones, Henry Ward and Samuel Reed were designated as "coloured." This suggests that the whites retained considerable control over these black Methodists, even though they were now allowed (and perhaps even encouraged) to have their own building and meet separately."

The County map issued in 1877 does not show this meeting house, so, as with Hynson's Chapel itself, the congregation had probably disbursed and abandoned. After Emancipation in 1864, African-Americans tended to move off their former owners' farms and into villages of their own, frequently clustered around a Methodist Church. Such communities grew up nearby at Edesville, Sharptown, and Sandy Bottom, near St. Paul's Church.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

K-549
SITE OF AFRICAN MEETING HOUSE AT
HYNSON'S CHAPEL

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization
1) Eastern Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period
10) Agricultural-Industrial Transition 1815-1870

Historic Period Themes
2) Architecture
7) Social/Cultural

Resource Type
Category - Site, private, public acquisition, not applicable, unoccupied, accessible restricted. Present Use - forest and abandoned grave yard.
Historic Environment - Rural
Historic Functions and Uses - Church
Unknown Design Source

Survey No. K-549

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Site of African Meeting House at Hynson's Chapel

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number SE Corner of Rte. 20 and Ricaud's Branch ___ not for publication

city, town Langford Rd, 3 mi SW of Fairlee X vicinity of congressional district One

state Fairlee, MD county Kent

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	X private	X unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
X site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	X religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	___ not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

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

name Feather Branch Farms, Inc., c/o Samuel R. Jones, Sec.

street & number 480 N. Spruce St. telephone no.: (717)367-1488

city, town Elizabethtown state and zip code PA 17022

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber JFG 1

street & number Cross Street folio 15G

city, town Chestertown state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Survey No. K-591, Application to the State of Maryland for a Roadside Merker

date (1989 Revision) ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville state MD

7. Description

Survey No.K-549

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	___ original site
___ good	___ ruins	___ altered	___ moved date of move _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

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

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8. Significance

Survey No. K-549

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

Specific dates 1780 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

check: Applicable Criteria: __A X B __C __D
and/or
Applicable Exception: __A __B __C __D __E __F __G

Level of Significance: __national __state X local

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

Hynson's Chapel, established in 1773, was the first Methodist meeting in Kent County. Methodism grew rapidly, particularly on the Eastern Shore and in Delaware, and by 1780 the total membership of all American societies was 8,500, with less than 400 members north of the Mason-Dixon line.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-549

Survey No. K-501, Application to the State of Maryland for a Roadside Marker.
William Williams Garden of American Methodism, Kent County Land Records

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____ Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Davy H. McCall

organization Historical Society of Kent County date February 27, 1996

street & number Church Alley telephone 410-778-3499

city or town Chestertown state MD

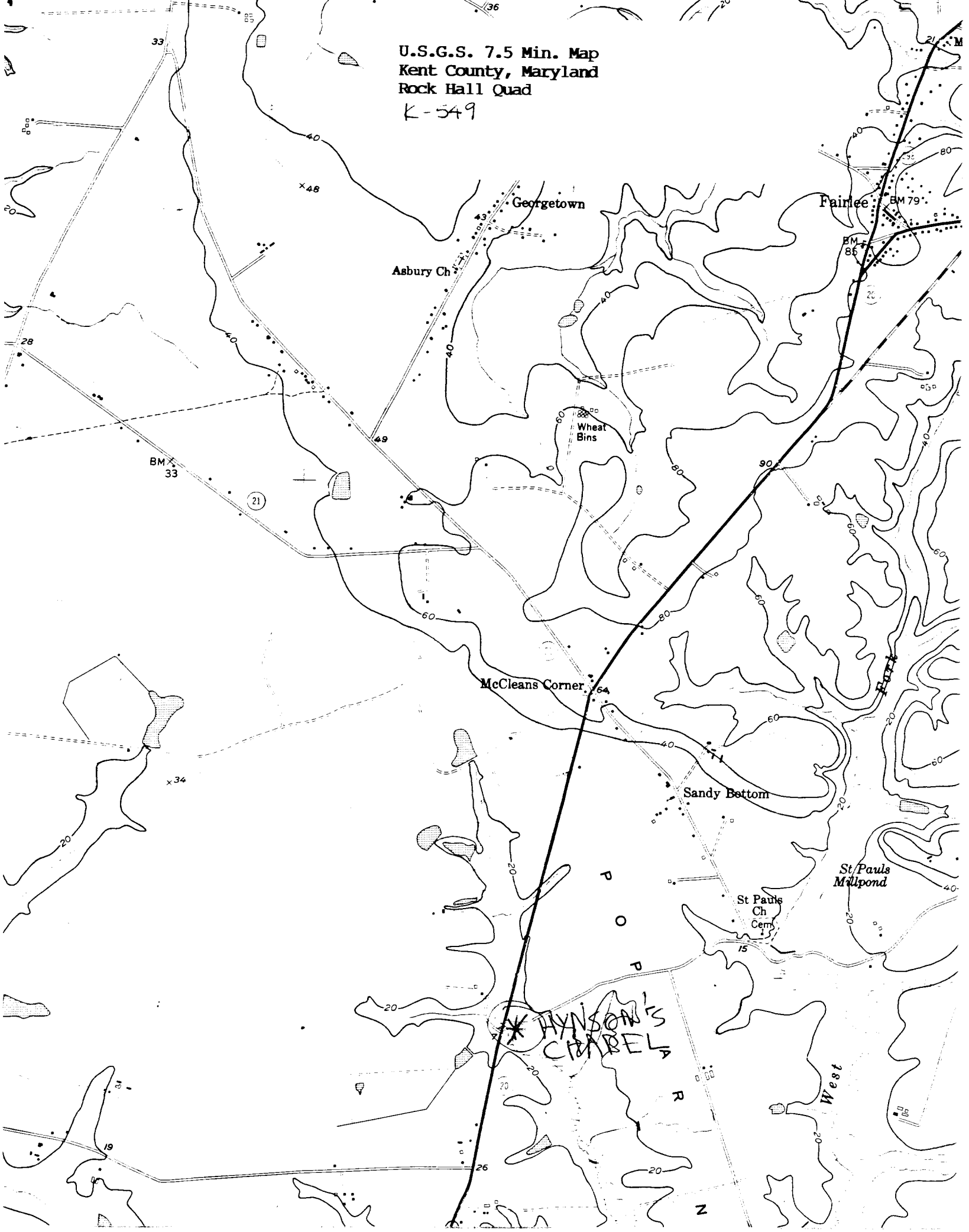
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

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
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
514-7600

PS-2746


U.S.G.S. 7.5 Min. Map
Kent County, Maryland
Rock Hall Quad
K-549
Georgetown
Asbury Ch
Fairlee
BM 79
BM 85
Wheat Bins
BM 33
McCleans Corner
Sandy Bottom
St Pauls Millpond
St Pauls Ch Cem
POPLAR
West
Fork
HYNSON'S CHAPEL