K-622 1865-1877; 1922-23

John Wesley United Methodist Church

Millington

Private

Located just west of the old Cypress Branch millrace and on the north side of Route 291 on the eastern edge of Millington, John Wesley Church is one of the county's oldest black congregations. It housed the first school for the black children of the vicinity, for which it was burned by whites opposed to the education of blacks. Although a date of 1865 is claimed for the present, extensively remodeled building, it is not likely that it incorporates any of the original building, said to have been given to the congregation by the white Methodists of Millington before 1865. An 1877 map of Millington does show a church on the site, however, with a schoolhouse alongside. The church is said to have been extensively rebuilt and remodeled in 1922-23, from which time the windows date, and perhaps also the vestibule-tower and rear, five-sided projection used for choir seating on a high platform. The roof is said to have been lowered about four feet at that time. Altogether, the church resembles many of the local, rural, frame churches of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in its three-part construction, though the vestibule-tower is not attached to the center of the approach gable-end but is at the southeast corner, its side continuous with the church's long side. In 1964 both exterior and exterior were almost entirely resurfaced with new materials. The exterior is now covered with white aluminum siding, also enclosing the formerly open belfry under its pyramidal roof.

Survey No. K-622

Magi No. 1506225508

DOE __yes __no

# Maryland Historical Trust
# State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church, Millington

and/or common John Wesley United Methodist Church, Millington (current)

## 2. Location

street & number North side Cypress St. (Rt. 291), .2 mile east of Rt. 313 (Sassafras Street) ___ not for publication

city, town Millington ___ vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Kent

## 3. Classification

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

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

name Trustees, John Wesley United Methodist Church

street & number c/o Mrs. Alice Lorraine Johnson telephone no.: 928-3288

city, town Millington state and zip code Maryland 21651

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber DCB 3

street & number Cross Street folio 426

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys NONE

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. K-622

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| X good | ___ ruins | X 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.

John Wesley Methodist Church is located on the north side of Route 291 at the eastern edge of Millington, with the bank of the old millrace from the Cypress Branch mill pond to the east. Gable end facing the street, the frame, one-story church is entered through a small, short vestibule-tower projecting from the gable end at the southeast corner. One large double-hung, round-headed window, with multiple lights around larger center sections, is centered in the remainder of the gable end. The building was originally three bays deep on both sides, but a shed-roofed wing now projects from the rear east side. There is a five-sided, rear gable-end, shed-roofed chancel projection. The tower is enclosed on the second level but has there a 9-light square window turned on its corner on the facade. The short belfry is now enclosed under its pyramidal roof. The congregation claims a building date of 1865, with a major remodeling or rebuilding in 1923 and remodeling in 1964 but historical information and what physical evidence can be seen does not support a date as early as 1865. Unless fragments of the building burned in 1865 were used, it is more likely that this church dates from about 1880, when it was built in the simple, vernacular Gothic Revival style popular for Kent County churches at the time. The exterior of this well kept church is entirely covered with white aluminum siding, and the interior has been redone with new materials as well. The windows appear to date from 1923 remodeling.

(Continued)

# 8. Significance

Survey No. K-622

| 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 | X architecture | ___ education | ___ military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| X 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1865, 1922-23 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: __A __B __C __D
and/or
Applicable Exception: __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.

Millington's John Wesley Methodist congregation appears to have been one of Kent County's earliest black congregations, having been established by about 1855, though then still under the supervision of the nearby white Asbury Methodist Church. In 1865, encouraged by the results of the Civil War and with a pent-up desire for educating the heretofore unschooled black children of the community, the church established a school in the church with the aid of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People. Whites opposed to education for blacks reacted by burning the church less than one month after the school began. The reaction was the same at Edesville, where the church there was also burned for the same reason. It is not likely that much, if any, of this early church is a part of the present building. The church that replaced the burned one may be the basis for the present church, though it is not known when a replacement church was built. A church building is shown on the Millington map of the 1877 atlas, with a school alongside (replaced about 1893 by the Sandfield Public School, K-621). The year 1877 was also the first date of a formal land transaction, though the site may have been used for the earlier building(s). A large cemetery is to the east and south of the church.

(Continued)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-622

# 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 | Margaret Q. Fallaw, Survey Consultant | | |
| organization | County Commissioners of Kent County<br>Historical Society of Kent County | date | April 25, 1986 |
| street & number | Courthouse<br>Cross Street | telephone | 778-4600<br>778-3499 |
| city or town | Chestertown | state | Maryland |

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

PS-2746

The main section is about 24 feet wide by 40 feet deep. The vestibule-tower projecting from the southeast end, with its east side continuous with the east side of the main section, measures about 8 feet wide by 5-1/2 feet deep. The five-sided chancel projection at the east end, with its high platform floor actually used for seating the choir, projects about 10 feet and at its widest is about 12 feet wide.

The horizontal, lapped aluminum siding with an 8" exposure apparently covers weatherboard of the same type but with a smaller exposure. The foundation can not be seen because of the cement asbestos board placed around it. Brick is visible at one corner, but it cannot be ascertained whether it is for brick piers or a solid foundation. The two chimneys that were once used for stoves have been removed. The wing has a prefabricated chimney that is used for a furnace.

The main roof, not as tall and steep as might be expected with such tall walls, is covered with black asphalt shingles. There is a plain box cornice with an overhang about 10" and rather small returns of about 12" on the facade end only. All details have been removed or covered with aluminum. This roof may not be the original, which may have been higher. A gallery is said to have been removed and the ceiling perhaps lowered. The chancel projection and tower roofs are also covered with black asphalt shingles.

The windows in the main-section sides are double-hung and measure about 3 feet by 6-1/2 feet. The upper sash has nine colored lights (one color per horizontal row), and the lower sash a single light. All glass is obscure. The trim is plain and 3" wide except for the head trim, which has a cap over a cyma reversa with a lower bevel.

The tower had an unusually short, open belfry supported by an upwardly-braced heavy post at each corner. The cornice-like band of probably handsome moldings between the solid portion of the tower and the belfry has, like the belfry itself, been covered with aluminum, resulting in a plain projection on each side. There is said to be a bell in the tower.

The main entry now has modern double metal doors, into a remodeled vestibule, from which there are double swinging doors into the nave. The interior was said originally to have been plastered above vertical board (probably beaded) wainscoting. Most interior surfaces appear to date from the 1964 remodeling, and most of the church furniture appears to be from that period also. The pews, which are older, are canted from the center aisle and came from an out-of-state church. The ceremonial end of the church has the usual middle and late nineteenth century Kent County double-platform arrangement.

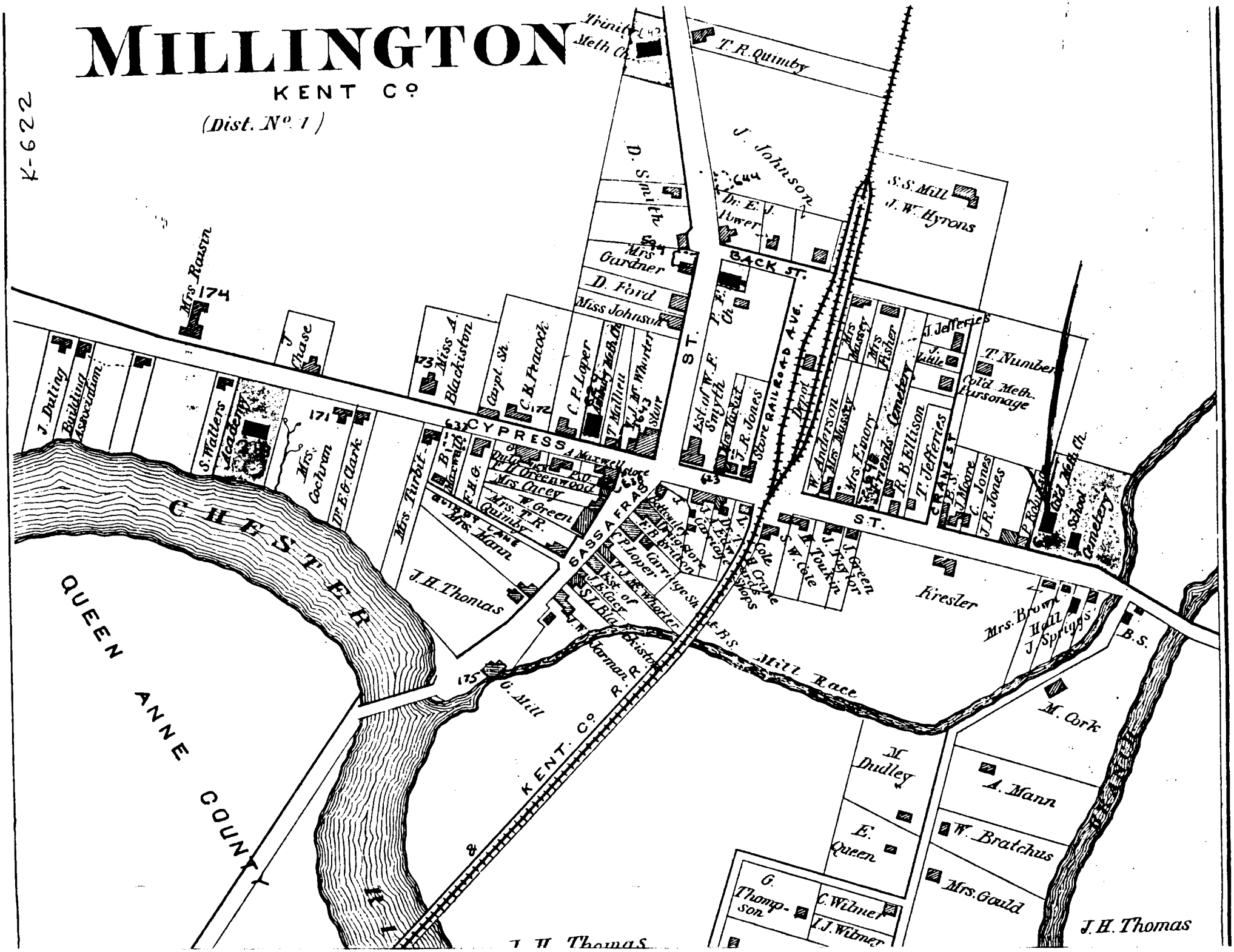
The congregation seems to have begun meeting as at least a semi-independent black group by 1855, though apparently still under the supervision of the white Methodists of Asbury Church in Millington. With the increasing segregation preferred by the whites in the pre-Civil War period, coupled with the blacks' apparent desire to meet separately (and preferably independently), the black group is said to have been given an old building, perhaps already at the present location on the eastern outskirts of the town. It may have been this church that was burned in the fall of 1865 when the congregation, encouraged by the results of the Civil War and aided by the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People, established a school in the church for their previously unschooled children. In less than a month's time the church was burned, thought by some to be the work of those opposing the education of blacks and by others to have been caused by a faulty flue. The church at Edesville, near Rock Hall, was also burned; there it was more clearly a case of arson. The 1877 map of Millington in the Kent County atlas shows a church in the approximate location of the present church and also a school building to the east. The first deed for the property was drawn in 1877, which may indicate that a new building was being built at that time and formalities which previously had not been attended to now were. By about 1893 the school for blacks of the Millington area was located to the south, in the community of Sandfield (see K-621), where most of the congregation lived.

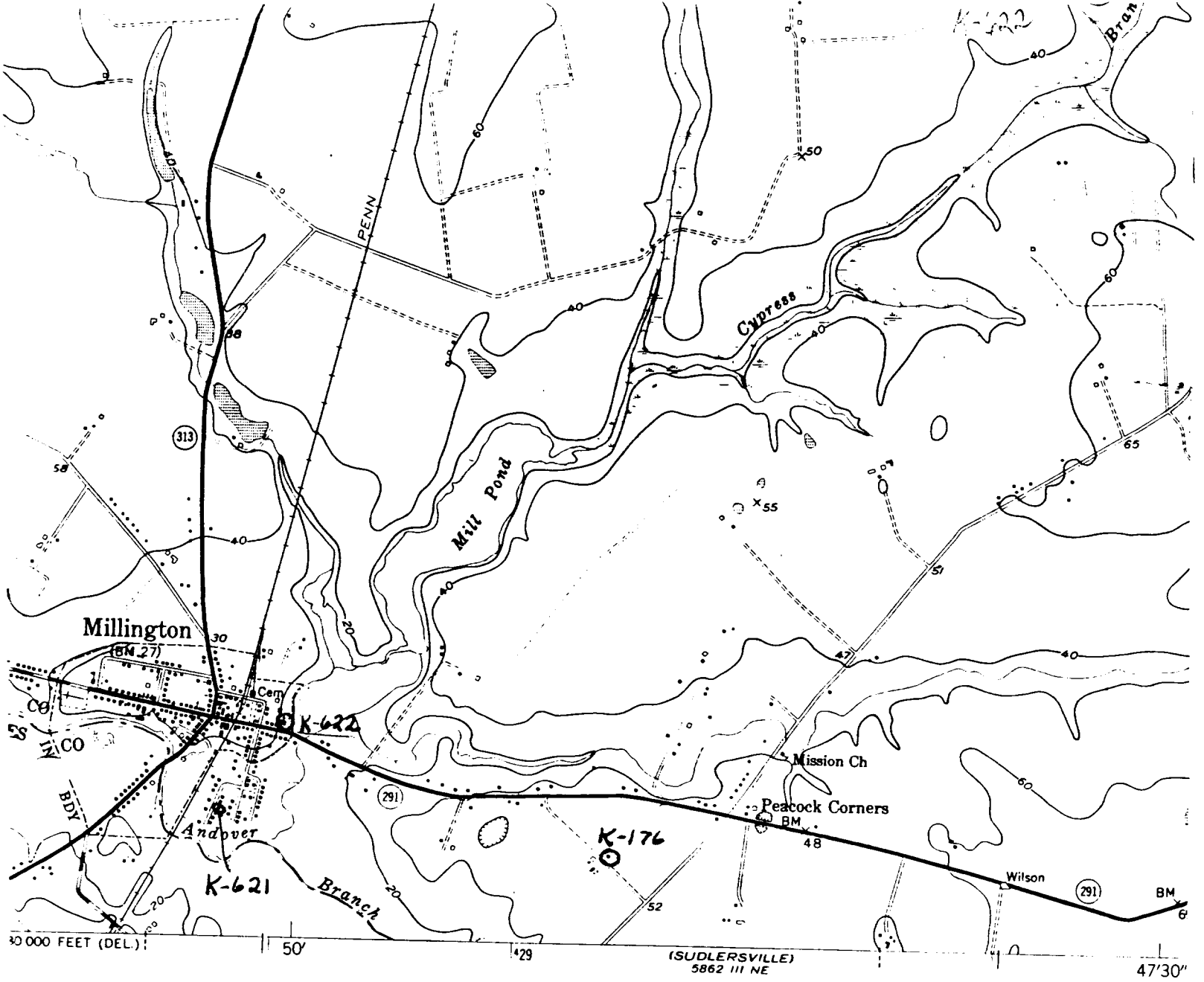
# MILLINGTON

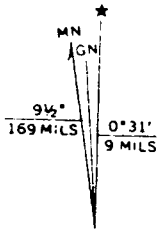
KENT Co

(Dist. No. 1)

K-622






GRID AND 1973 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

1 MILE

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

MILLINGTON QUADRANGLE

K-622
John Wesley Methodist Church, Millington
Cypress St., Millington
M. Q. Fallaw - 4/25/86
View to north

K622.18

K-622
John Wesley Methodist Church, Millington
Cypress St., Millington
M. Q. Fallaw - 4/25/86
View to south

K 622 -2.0