

K-624

1871, 1906

Asbury United Methodist Church

Millington

Private

The rather massive, two-storey, brick building of Asbury Methodist Church stands on the north side of Cypress Street, now the third building west of the crossroads. It was built in 1871 in an Italianate style, possibly from a plan made available by the parent church body. The first storey, used for Sunday School classes and as a church hall, is low-ceilinged and quite close to the ground. The second storey is high-ceilinged and used for worship services. From a small first storey vestibule a pair of curved stairs at the front corners wind upward to this second storey. The main entry is in the three-bay street-facing gable end, in the central bay. The facade features three large recessed brick panels with corbelling at their heads and windows within. The roof is a shallow gable. There is a small chancel projection at the center of the rear gable-end. In 1954 a two-part, one-storey, brick addition for offices and Sunday School space was added to the west side of the church building. The Italianate style of Asbury Methodist Church in Millington is quite unlike the style of most other Kent County churches built or remodeled during the same period. Most were in a Victorian Gothic Revival style that was lighter and with strongly pointed, vertical elements. Asbury Church is an unusually large, solid-looking church building and without the tower that local churches of the late nineteenth century generally had. It perhaps represents a progression from the county's somewhat earlier brick Greek Revival churches that, however, were one-storey in height. Asbury Church may have resembled the Victorian-period building of the First Methodist Church in Chestertown until the latter was "colonialized" during the twentieth century. Asbury Church strongly resembles the Presbyterian Church in Middletown, Delaware, about fifteen miles away. It too features recessed facade panels with corbelling. Especially notable at Asbury are the pressed-metal ceiling and cornice that were installed in 1906 on the high, flat ceiling. Such ceilings are rare in the county, though there is one at the Crumpton Methodist Church in Queen Anne's County, a sister church to this one.

7. Description

Survey No. K-624

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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.

The rather massive, two-storey, brick building of Asbury Methodist Church stands on the northside of Cypress Street, now the third building west of the crossroads. It was built in 1871 in an Italianate style, possibly from a plan made available to the church by the parent church body. The first storey, used for Sunday School classes and as a church hall, is low-ceilinged and quite close to the ground. The second storey is high-ceilinged and used for worship services. From a small first storey vestibule a pair of curved stairs at the front corners wind upward to this second storey. The main entry is in the three-bay street-facing gable end, in the central bay. The facade features three large recessed brick panels with corbelling at their heads. The roof is a shallow gable. There is a small chancel projection at the center of the rear-gable-end. On the high, flat ceiling of the nave, or auditorium, an outstanding pressed metal cornice and ceiling were installed in 1906, to which numerous ceiling fans recently have been added. In 1954 a two-part, one-storey, brick addition for offices and Sunday School space was added to the west side of the church building.

(Continued)

8. Significance

Survey No. K-624

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

Specific dates	1871, 1906	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria:	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	
	and/or	
Applicable Exception:	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local	

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

The Italianate style of Asbury Methodist Church in Millington is quite unlike that of most other Kent County churches built or remodeled during the same period. Most were in a Victorian Gothic Revival style that was lighter and with strongly pointed, vertical elements. Asbury Church is an unusually large, solid-looking church building and without the tower that local churches of the late nineteenth century generally had. It perhaps represents a progression from the county's somewhat earlier brick Greek Revival churches that, however, were one-storey in height. Asbury Church may have resembled the Victorian-period building of the First Methodist Church in Chestertown until the latter was "colonialized" during the twentieth century. Asbury Church strongly resembles the Presbyterian Church in Middletown, Delaware, about fifteen miles away. It too features the recessed panels of the facade with corbelling. Especially notable at Asbury is the pressed-metal ceiling and cornice that were installed in 1906. Such ceilings are rare in the county, though there is one at the Crumpton Methodist Church in Queen Anne's County, a sister church to this one.

(Continued)

The main body of the Asbury Church building is about 43 feet wide by 63 feet long. At the center of the rear gable-end is a lower two-storey chancel projection, also with gable roof, that measures about 13-1/2 feet wide by 4 feet deep.

The brick of the church sides and rear is of two kinds. A more uniform, dark-red brick was used on the gable-end facade, and a fairly dark red common brick used on the sides and rear. The joints there are quite wide, occasionally as much as 5/8" to 3/4". The mortar is quite light. The bond of the rear and sides is 1-to-8 common. Some areas low in the walls have deteriorated, the mortar having become sandy and washed out. Unfortunately, some of the repair work already done has been executed with modern grey cement mortar. The brickwork of the facade divides it into three unequal bays, the center one wider. On the second-storey level there are three recessed brick panels, with corbelling at their heads from recessed-panel plane to main-wall plane. The side-bay panels have a single tall window with segmental head in them, and the larger center panel has a group of three windows, the center one taller and wider. Below the center panel with its windows is the main entry, and in each side bay on the first storey is a small, recessed, plain brick panel, a window blank actually, to balance the composition. Above the second-storey side-bay windows, within the large recessed panels they are within, there is another set of recessed panels, plain, small, and almost square to balance the height of the shorter side windows with the taller center group.

The main building is five bays deep, with openings on each storey in each bay, though the first storey adjacent to the newer, side addition can no longer be seen. The east side's rearmost bay has a door on the first storey instead of a window, evidently to a furnace room. The chancel projection is one bay wide and one bay deep. There are no openings on the rear wall of the projection, but on each side there is an opening on both storeys. The 1954 addition was executed in two parts, forming an L shape, with the section tied to the church's west first storey side meeting the church with its end. The front wall of this section is parapeted and straight across at the top, with its facade just to the rear of the church's west side's second bay from the front and about at the height of the second storey windows.

The roofs are now covered with asphalt shingles. They are said to have been slate originally. The cornice was originally bracketed on the building sides. Ghosts remain on the "pilasters" between the brick panels of the sides for what seems to have been single brackets with a long leg on the wall. The front gable-end brackets seem to have been paired; there were five pairs there. The cornice has been covered with white aluminum on the fascia, over the crown molding, and on the soffit. In one section of the rear roof the aluminum fascia has blown off, revealing the original material. The crown molding is a large cyma recta, with perhaps double fillets below. A bed molding could not be seen; perhaps it has been removed.

The building seems to have been built over a crawl space. The brick
(continued)

walls extend to ground level and at least five courses below ground level. Any other foundation material, if present, cannot be seen.

The nave is reached by a pair of identical stairs from a tall vestibule that is under the nave's "gallery." The stairs curve while ascending steeply around the building's front corners. The stairs are broad, but there are no landings. The stairs exit from a boxed area near the rear of the church, where there are double doors. There is a cross aisle in front of these entrances, with access to the church's two main aisles to the front. There is no center aisle. To the rear of the cross aisle is a very unusual seating arrangement for a Kent County church. It is a successor to a suspended gallery, more like a bleacher arrangement. The floor is arranged into successive risers, each with a pew. From the highest level there is access to a the flat platform areas over the entry "boxes," evidently used on rare occasion for additional seating. Tall, double-hung windows with colored glass have bold Italianate hoods that repeat the shape of the segmental window heads. The opening from nave to chancel is similarly with a heavy, molded hood applied to the plaster over the opening. The tall, flat ceiling is covered with a pressed-metal ceiling with a square motif that is now painted white. According to the church's records, the minister at the time of the ceiling's installation spent months painting the ceiling with numerous light colors. There is a very deep, coved metal cornice with a number of motifs, including egg-and-dart molding at its upper edge. This is one of two such ceilings in Millington, though by far on the largest scale. The other is on the ceilings of the Sunday School building of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, now a dwelling on north Sassafras Street. Those are now closed off in a nearly inaccessible second-storey.

The earliest history of Methodism in the Millington area has been lost, but it appears, like the rest of Kent County, to have been visited during the late eighteenth century by itinerant ministers. By 1800 a society was formally established and met at the home of the father of the Rev. Shadrack Bostwick, somewhere near the town, then called Head of Chester. It was a regular preaching place on a circuit. This congregation was part of the Methodist Episcopal Church until the union of the twentieth century.

The Methodists evidently then began to meet in the building of the Millington Academy, which later also served the Episcopalians of Millington until they built a chapel in Millington. In 1838 a brick building, stated to have been 34 feet wide by 44 feet deep, was built on the south side of Cypress Street at the western edge of the town. The church's cemetery is still there, but at the site of the old church building, to the east of the cemetery, a house has been built. After the Civil War there was a desire for a new, larger building. By 1871 a new lot was acquired closer to the crossroads, on the north side of Cypress Street, and a new building begun. The moving force behind the new building seems to have been Thomas Mallalieu, of the family that owned and operated a textile mill on the south side of the Chester River in Queen Anne's County. The church foundation was begun on September 13, 1871. The contractor was H. M. Stewart and Brother, said to formerly have been of Millington. By June 30, 1872, the shell was essentially finished and the first storey, at least, ready for use, and it was dedicated. The dedication service also served as a fundraiser, yielding \$8,000 more toward the work on the building. The church building severely strained the financial resources of its members, however, and it was seven more years before the upper storey, then called the auditorium or lecture room, was finished enough to dedicate. A dedication service was held on November 9, 1879. The day began with \$4,000 to \$5,000 needed to finish paying for the church, and it was raised during the day, "and the church was dedicated free of debt." (Kent County News, Anniversary Issue, Sept., 1953) The metal ceiling was installed during 1906 and painted by the minister, the Rev. Edwin Gardner. It was also at this time that the choir platform near the right front of the church was built, with curtain and rail installed at the front. The church was reopened on January 6, 1907, after completion of the renovations. Electric lighting was added in 1919.

There seems to have been a schism in Millington Methodism during the period when this new building was being planned and built. It may have resulted from controversy over the new building itself, or perhaps more likely, from the positions taken during the Civil War. A group separated from Asbury Church and bought property in 1872 on north Sassafras Street, organizing themselves as Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church South. The two Methodist churches both operated in Millington until the union of the three branches of Methodism that took place in the 1930s. There being no justification for the two buildings because of the great size of Asbury Church, the "Southern" church was closed.

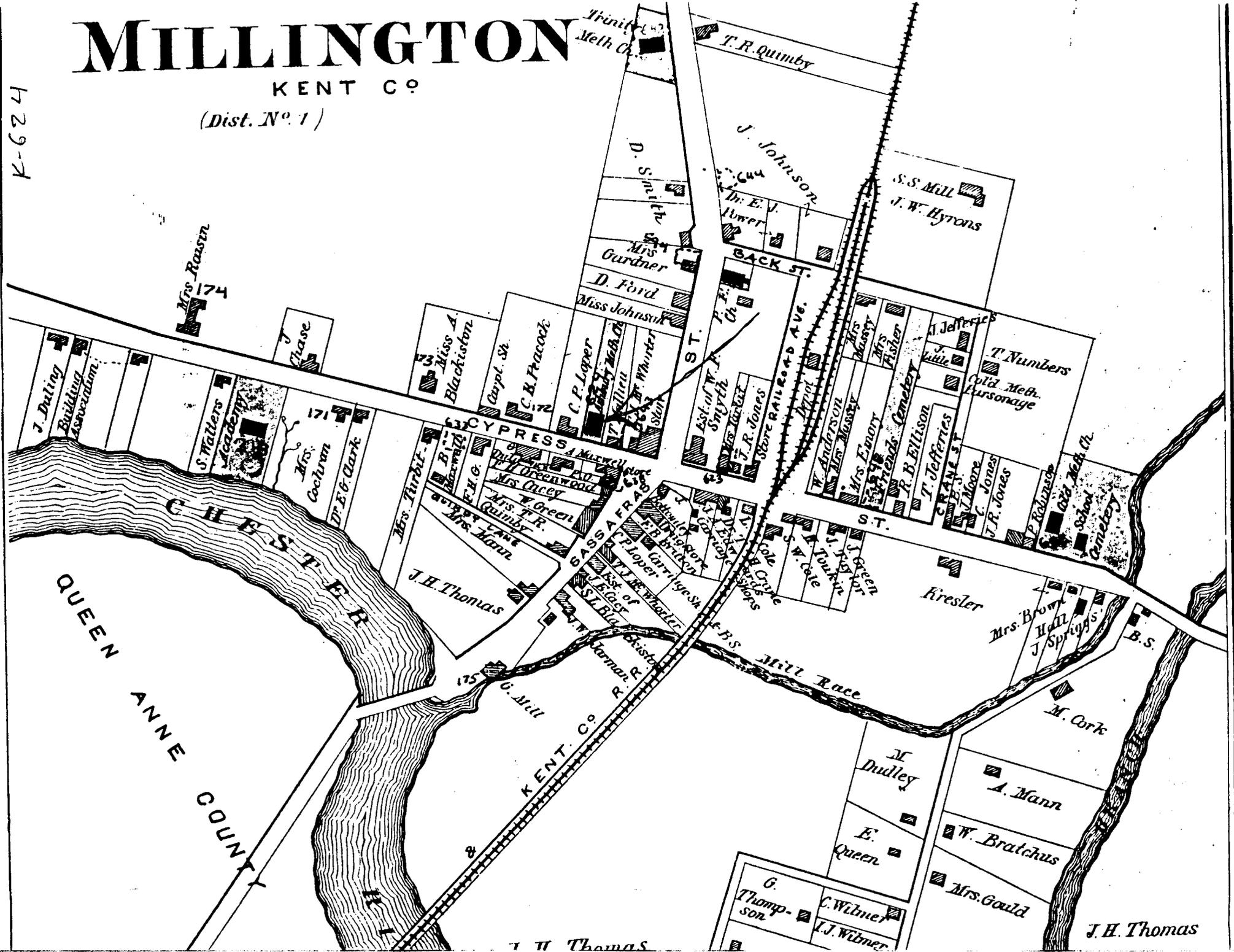
The church building narrowly escaped being burned during the Millington fire of 1904 that burned the Episcopal chapel, all town stores, many houses, and the entire crossroads area. The fire may have advanced to the church and stopped there because of its being brick and having a slate-shingle roof.

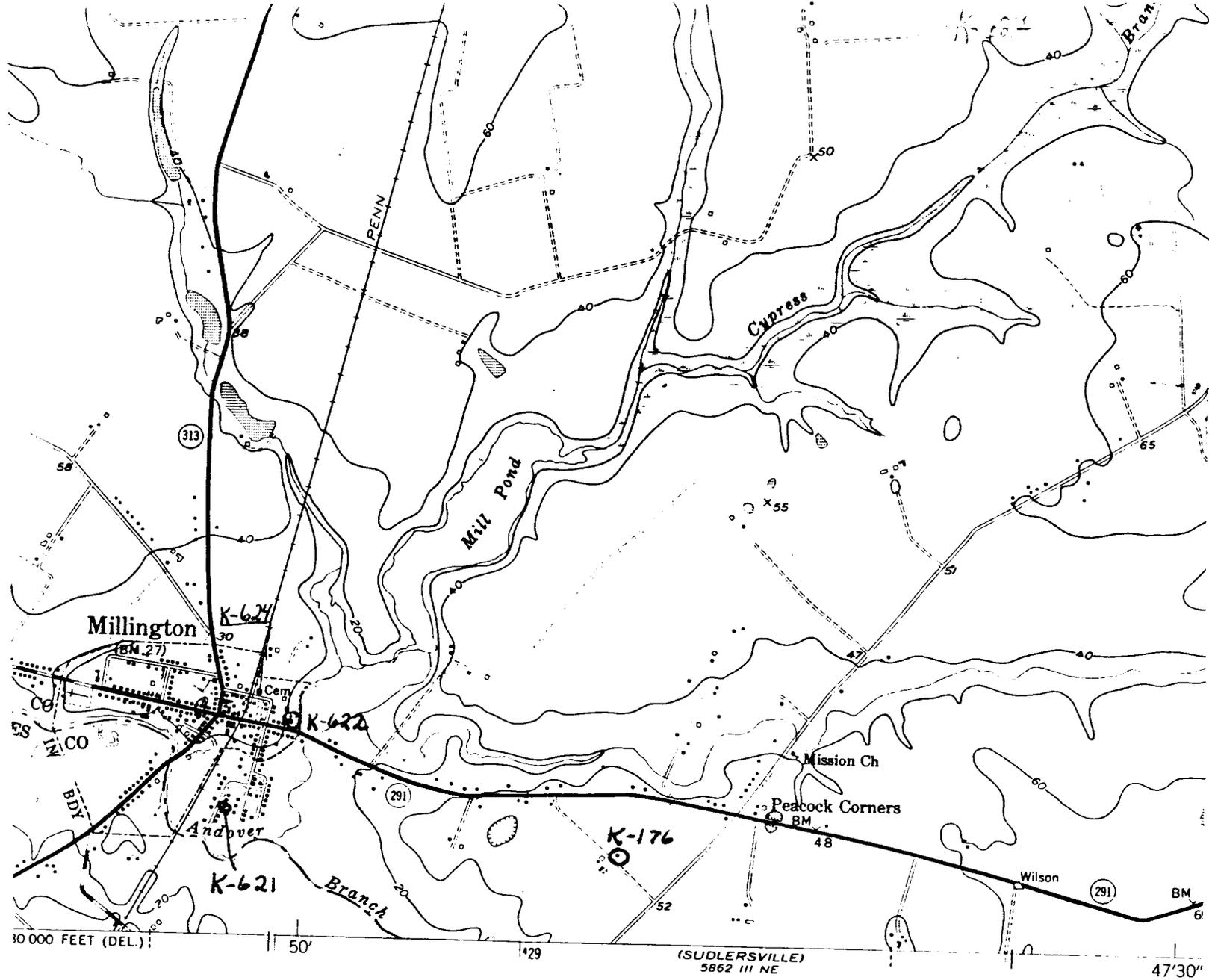
MILLINGTON

KENT CO

(Dist. No. 1)

K-624





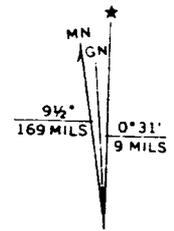
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50'

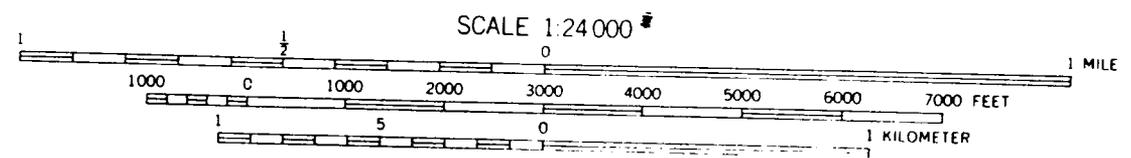
29

(SUDLERSVILLE)
5862 III NE

47'30"



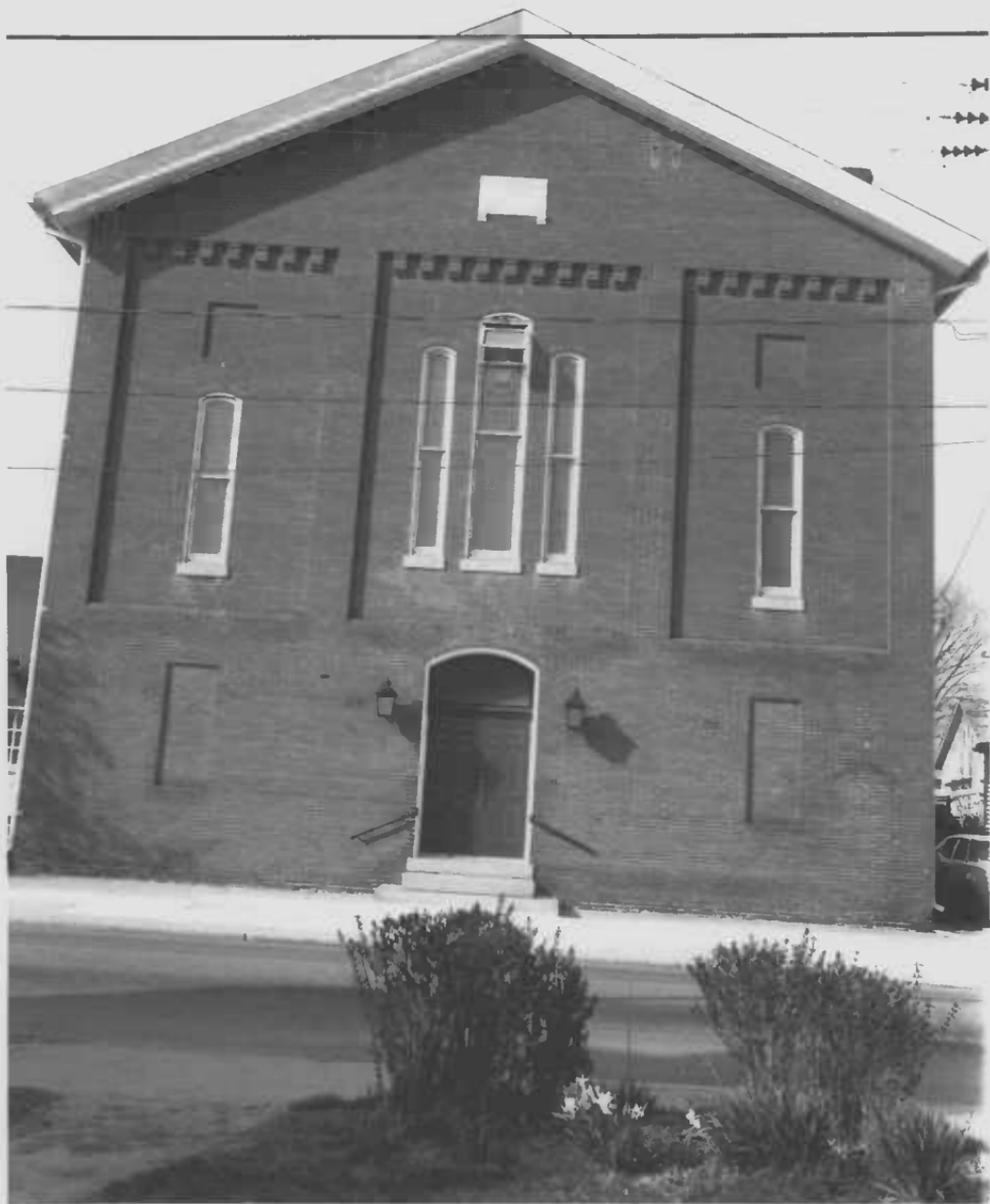
M GRID AND 1973 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



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-624

Asbury Methodist Church, Millington

Cypress Street, Millington

M. Q. Fallaw - 4/10/86

View to north

K-624 - 13A