

FOR NPS USE ONLY

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

BA-637

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Mount Gilboa Chapel

AND/OR COMMON

MOUNT GILBOA AME CHURCH

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

northwest corner of Oella and Westchester

Avenues

CITY, TOWN

Oella

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

Sixth

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

Baltimore

CODE

005

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input 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	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input 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"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Benjamin Banneker Memorial Committee, Reverend Roland Howard, President

STREET & NUMBER

7334 Roosevelt Boulevard

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21227

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# DESCRIPTION

BA-637

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Mount Gilboa Church is located on the west side of Westchester Avenue, just north of Oella Avenue in Baltimore County, Maryland. This small stone church, three by four bays, faces east. A plaque in the front gable gives the date 1859.

The front facade is ashlar masonry, but the sides and rear are of rubble. The sanctuary on the principal floor sits on a high basement which is used for the Sunday school and social area. Basement openings are boarded and have large stone lintels and sills.

Entry to the building is through double paneled doors at the front of the basement. Inside is a small vestibule flanked by a quarter turn stair with a landing leading up to the sanctuary. The sanctuary is plain, finished with white plaster walls. On the interior the openings, having 4/4 windows, are splayed.

# SIGNIFICANCE

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) black history
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1859

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mount Gilboa has served the same community of black families since the 18th century. That community today continues to look to this building as its central focus and important local landmark.

Mount Gilboa A.M.E. Church is remembered as the site where Benjamin Banneker, free black scientist of the 18th century, worshipped and attended school. Located in Oella in Baltimore County, Maryland not far from the site of Banneker's farm, it stands as a symbol of honor to an ingenious American.

Benjamin Banneker was born in 1731 on a farm in Oella. A self-taught mathematician, he published an almanac from 1792 to 1806 for which he made all the astronomical calculations and weather predictions. His work was praised by Thomas Jefferson, then Secretary of State. His achievement was considered the more remarkable because he had little schooling and studied mathematics and astronomy in the time that he had free from farming. The Ellicott brothers, prominent because of the milling industry (see Ellicott City Historic District, Howard County, and Oella and Ellicotts Mills Historic Districts, Baltimore County), were friendly with Banneker, and shared with him their books on science and mathematics.

Banneker was also a surveyor and was hired in this capacity to work with the Ellicotts on the plans for the City of Washington. Although he did not play a major role in this project, his participation on any level is important for that time.

The present Mount Gilboa Church (1859) is located on a tract of land dedicated in the 18th century by the Ellicott family for "an African Meeting House and School House." In 1836 the Ellicott family formally deeded the property to the black community for their use as long as the property continued to function for religious and educational purposes.

The Benjamin Banneker Memorial Committee and the adjacent community at large have undergone a twelve-year project to provide recognition for Benjamin Banneker. His 100-acre farm at the southeast corner of Oella and Westchester Avenues has been cut up into numerous tracts and does not resemble its 18th-century appearance. The site of Banneker's house is not known, leaving Mount Gilboa as the sole above ground memorial to Banneker.

**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- Baltimore County Land Records, Baltimore County Courthouse  
Towson, Maryland
- Bedini, Silvio. The Life of Benjamin Banneker. New York:  
Charles Scribners Sons, 1972
- Joynes, J. William. "Oella Church Symbolizes Strength of Brotherhood."  
Personal Collection of Reverend Howard

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY one

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

The Reverend Roland Howard

ORGANIZATION

Benjamin Banneker Foundation

DATE

Fall 1975

STREET & NUMBER

7334 Roosevelt Boulevard

TELEPHONE

(301) 796-1060

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

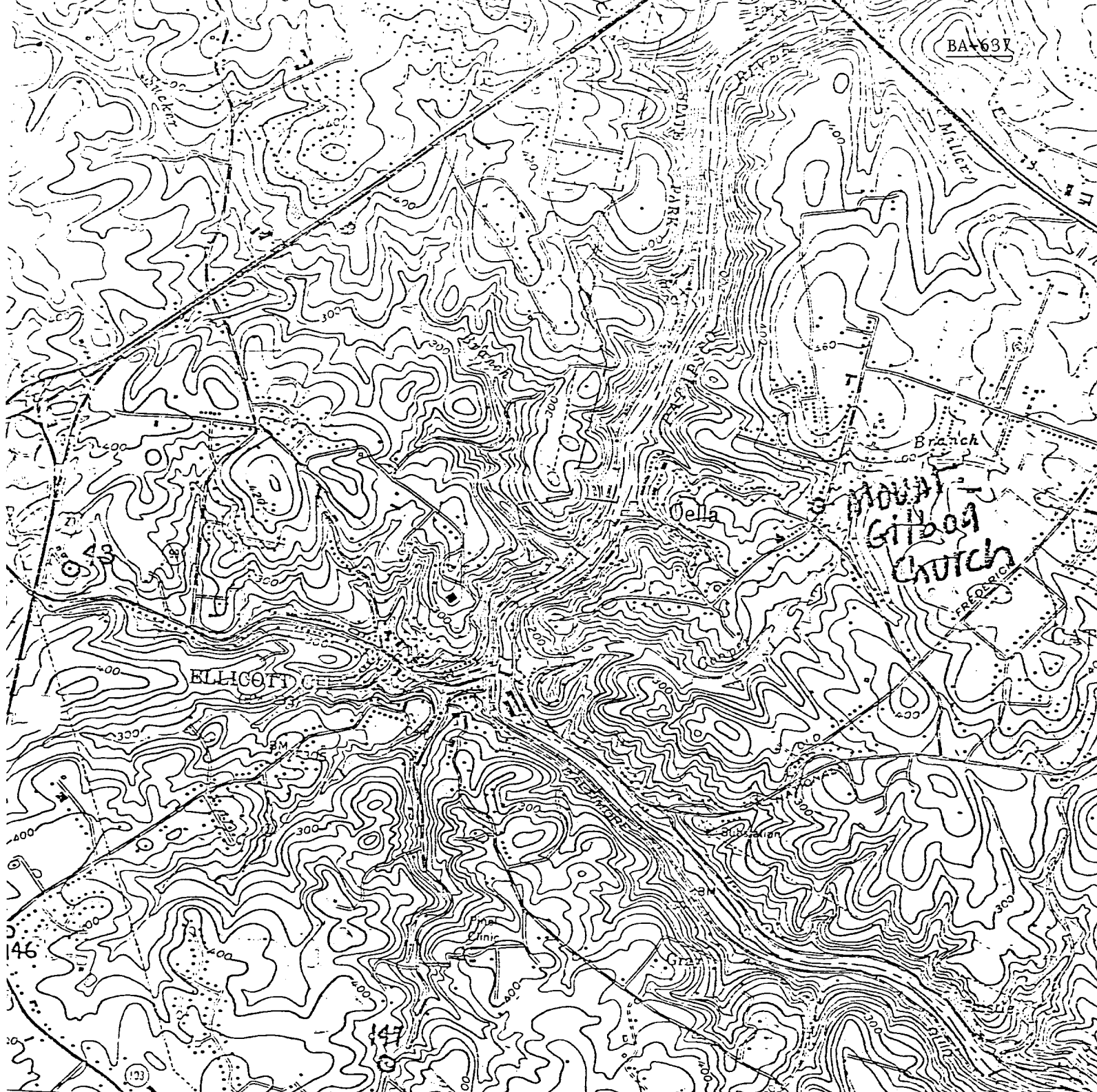
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

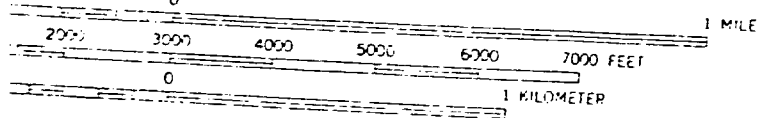
DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

BA-63X

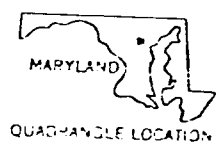


(SAVAGE)  
 5662 III NE 1.3 MI. TO MD. 175  
 WEST ELKRIDGE 5.9 MI.  
 SCALE 1:24000



FOUR INCH INTERVAL 20 FEET  
 D IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

*over*



## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1** NAME

HISTORIC Mount Gilboa Chapel

AND/OR COMMON

Mount Gilboa African Methodist Episcopal Church

**2** LOCATION

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1221 Westchester Avenue

1st Councilmanic District

3rd Congressional District

CITY, TOWN

Catonsville

— VICINITY OF Oella

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland 21228

COUNTY

Baltimore

**3** CLASSIFICATION

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

**4** OWNER OF PROPERTYNAME Trustees of Mount Gilboa Chapel/Free African Burying Ground Assn.  
c/o Mr. Leopold Saunders, et al. Telephone #: 465-3046

STREET &amp; NUMBER

315 Oella Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21228

**5** LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURT, HOUSE, BALTIMORE CITY COURTHOUSE  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Liber #: TK 368

Folio #: 141

Also, certificate of survey (1845)

STREET &amp; NUMBER

North Calvert Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21202

**6** REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS \*

TITLE

["Mt. Gilboa Chapel"] - National Register of Historic Places

DATE

entered October 21, 1976

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

U.S. Department of the Interior

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

\* Also entered on the Baltimore County Historic Sites Inventory 7/30/72 [BA-637 Mount Gilboa Chapel]  
a county-wide survey on deposit at the Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis Md. 21401

# DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Mount Gilboa Church is located on the west side of Westchester Avenue (No. 1221), just north of Oella Avenue in the first district of Baltimore County. This small stone church, three by four bays, faces east, and measures 28 X 42. A plaque in the front gable gives the date: 1859.

The front facade is ashlar masonry, but the sides and rear are of rubble. The sanctuary on the principal floor sits on a high basement which is used for the Sunday school and social area. Basement openings are boarded and have large stone lintels and sills.

Entry to the building is through double paneled doors at the front of the basement. Inside is a small vestibule flanked by a quarter turn stair with a landing leading up to the sanctuary. The sanctuary is plain, finished with white plaster walls. On the interior the openings, having 4/4 windows, are splayed.

Mount Gilboa has the same overall dimensions as Old Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church on Ingleside Avenue, and it has been remarked that Old Salem (1849) and the extinct Saint Agnes Church of 1853 had a certain resemblance in their straightforward design and technique of construction. The builder of Old Salem is a matter of record, but that of Mount Gilboa is at present lost.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

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 checked="" 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      1859                                  BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Unknown

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Mount Gilboa Chapel is significant as an achievement on the part of free black people who built a substantial stone church of about the same size and quality as the places of worship used by other small congregations of the dominant majority. Mount Gilboa of the present is the replacement of an earlier log chapel of unknown origin. There was certainly no place of Methodist worship in 1799, when the Rev. William Colbert recorded preaching about a mile away at the Hagerty Paper Mill on River Road just south of Frederick Road (September 22, 1799). There is proof in an Ellicott family deed of partition made in 1835 that there existed a road leading to the "African Meeting" (Liber TK 260:27). If such a meetinghouse was in use before 1806, it is conceivable that Benjamin Banneker, Oella's first man of science and letters, could have attended services there as traditions hold. It is of record that the Rev. William Colbert on his 1799 visit performed a Methodist burial service for a Banneker relative (Bedini, 1972, p. 254-255).

The name "Mount Gilboa" attached itself to the church by an indirect route. The ground occupied by the church was first surveyed under the name of "Stout" in 1702 for Thomas Beale. In 1761, William Williams, who then owned part of the original 529-acre Stout tract, had his 329-acre portion resurveyed under the new name of "Mount Gilboa." That mountain, located in present Israel, is mentioned but casually in the First and Second Books of Samuel, and merely as the place where King Saul's body was found after a battle (I Sam. 31:8, and II Sam. 1:21).

In 1803, the Ellicott brothers, who had acquired numerous scattered properties, had a large acreage, stretching over a mile along the Patapsco Valley, resurveyed into one tract (with more the 130 boundary lines) under the title of "West Ilchester" (Anne Arundel Patented Certificate No. 1673, Hall of Records). This resurvey drew new lines around - and included within its boundaries - the former tobacco farm of Benjamin Banneker which the Ellicotts had bought from him about 1799.

The resurvey skirted around and excluded a ten-acre plot which the certificate of survey showed as "Negroes' Lott." That lot, part of "Mount Gilboa," had been bequeathed in 1786 to her former slaves by Mrs. Mary Williams, a Quaker and widow of William Williams. This bequest was mostly west of present Oella Avenue (which was not laid out until 1808). The free people who owned that small tract formed the basis for the Mount Gil-

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY



boa Chapel congregation and their descendants still hold small lots in the ten-acre tract.

The chapel property is formed of two parcels: the part at the NW corner of Westchester and Oella Avenues is an 84-acre tract costing \$50, conveyed as the "Cemetery Lot" from the Union Bank of Maryland to the Free African Burying Ground Association, July 10, 1846 (Liber TK 368:141). The upper end of the property is a 0.25-acre plot called The Meeting House Lot, and its lines are described in an 1846 certificate of survey in the possession of the trustees. The certificate mentions a lot, log house, and schoolhouse that previously was "set out ... the same now lying within outlines of Lot 4." All this ground had been Ellicott property and the chapel portion was a gift by that family to the congregation - with a reversion clause if services were discontinued for more than two years. It is clear that the congregation had use of the meetinghouse lot and had built upon it or employed an existing structure there before acquiring title under the certificate.

J. C. Sidney's map of 1850 shows "Coloured Meeting House" at this spot. The construction date of the present chapel is confirmed by a stone set in the front gable reading: "MT. GILBOA CHAPEL/1859." The church was part of an AME Conference with headquarters in Washington, D.C., but no records of the earliest period have been found.

"Mount Gilboa has served the same community of black families since the 18th (sic) Century. That community," in the words of the Rev. Roland Howard, past minister, "continues to look to this building as its central focus and important local landmark."

By 1971, the congregation was reduced to eight members, but the trustees have held on in spite of difficulties. The chapel lies outside the Oella Historic District (National Register) but was entered in its own right on the National Register of Historic Places on October 21, 1976.

In the spring of 1977, the church members and clergy were engaged in planning for a new roof, relying on a "block grant" applicable to National Register properties. On Monday, April 11, 1977, a fire started in the roof and burned through in places. The blaze was put out by Baltimore County fire companies and the Ellicott City unit. The State of Maryland has selected the Mount Gilboa grounds as the site of an obelisk dedicated to the memory of neighbor Benjamin Banneker. Plans now in the works call for using the chapel basement to house displays relating to Banneker's work in astronomy and surveying.

### MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Joynes, J. William, "Oella Church Symbolizes Strength of Brotherhood,"  
 Baltimore, American.  
 Bedini, Silvio, The Life of Benjamin Banneker (New York, 1972),  
 pp. 254-255, 302.  
 Stroh, Jean, "A Lesson in Brotherhood," Maryland Living, February 21,  
 1971.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.75 ? *should include com.*

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning on north side of Union Company's Road, N64°30'W83.22 ft; N30°45'  
 259.05 ft; N39-1/2W104 ft; S29W104 ft; S39.75W103 ft; S32°30'E21.4 ft;  
 S37°30'W198 ft.

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

STATE	None	COUNTY	None
STATE		COUNTY	

### FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John W. McGrain

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning

DATE

April 1977

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

TELEPHONE

494-3495

CITY OR TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland 21204

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



5/6

MOUNT GILBOA CHURCH  
Baltimore County, Maryland

BA-637

G.J. Andreve            fall 1975  
Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis

from northeast



BA-637

Mount Gilboa Church

George J. Andreve

Fall, 1975

56



BA-637

Mount Giboa Church

George J. Andreve

Fall 1975

5/6





Mount Gilboa Chapel fire

April 11 1977

BA-687

RECEIVED

APR 29 1977

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

1977



Mount Gilboa Chapel fire

April 11 1977

BA-637

**RECEIVED**

**APR 29 1977**

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL**  
**SOCIETY**