

BA-18

## Mt. Paran Presbyterian Church

### **Architectural Survey File**

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site ([mht.maryland.gov](http://mht.maryland.gov)) for details about how to make an appointment.

All material is property of the Maryland Historical Trust.

***Last Updated: 06-23-2004***

BALTIMORE COUNTY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC MOUNT PARAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AND/OR COMMON  
Same**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER 10,308 Liberty Road

CITY, TOWN Randallstown VICINITY OF 6th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
2nd Councilmanic District  
STATE Maryland COUNTY Baltimore County

**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 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                   | <b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>                 | <b>ACCESSIBLE</b>                            | <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 type="checkbox"/> NO                  | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER                     |

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME The Presbytery of Baltimore Telephone #: (301) 433-2012  
STREET & NUMBER 5400 Loch Raven Boulevard  
CITY, TOWN Baltimore VICINITY OF STATE, zip code Maryland 21239

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hall of Records

Liber #: WG No. T  
Folio #: 577

STREET &amp; NUMBER College Avenue

CITY, TOWN Annapolis STATE Maryland 21401

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Baltimore County Inventory of MHT, Site BA 18

DATE On-going since 1964  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Shaw House, 21 State Circle

CITY, TOWN Annapolis STATE Maryland 21401

**7 DESCRIPTION** MOUNT PARAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

| CONDITION                                |                                       | CHECK ONE                                   | CHECK ONE   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT       | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input checked="" 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

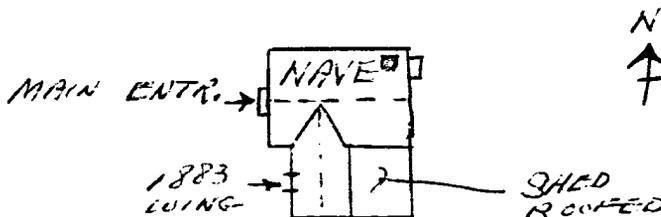
Mount Paran Presbyterian Church is a fairly simple structure consisting of a rectangular nave with a one-story addition or wing on the south. The nave is divided into a vestibule and sanctuary. The sanctuary is entirely clear space, free of posts or pillars, with a cathedral ceiling of dark oak paneling with ribs and pendants. The sanctuary is lighted by three opalescent glass windows along the north wall. Behind the pulpit, two similar windows open behind the pulpit in the east wall. Above the two rectangular sash windows just mentioned are two twin lancet windows, also in opalescent glass. The south windows of the sanctuary were lost in the 1884 renovations when the wing was added to the southside wall. The main facade of the nave is one bay wide; its central door is topped by a lancet transom in opalescent glass. Above the peak of this gothic door frame is a metal plaque bearing the name of the church. The main features of the gable peak are the twin lancet windows in opalescent glass. The most prominent Gothic Revival element at Mount Paran is the elaborate scroll-sawn barge boarding at the eaves. Since the roof is sharply pitched, these decorations create a dramatic effect. An elaborate scroll-sawn pendant bridges the angle between the eaves. All of this applied decoration produces striking shadows in the afternoon sunlight.

The southern wing is gable-roofed, attached perpendicularly to the line of the nave; a shed-roofed extension continues to the east end of the building, providing one room of space. The wing is three bays deep along the east wall.

The main entrance to the wing is on the west, by a paneled door flanked by two opalescent windows.

Mount Paran is built of frame and clapboard (with German siding in the front). The foundation of the original nave portion is of stone, the south wing of concrete. Roofing is light green rubber shingle. The brick chimney emerges through the north slope of the nave roofing, three bays back from the facade.

The original wide plank flooring survives along with straight-back benches with reversible backs. The original oil lamps survive, but have been electrified.



CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE** MOUNT PARAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

| 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING                       | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899            | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mount Paran Presbyterian Church is a building of considerable age that was renovated and Victorianized in 1884. Its congregation believes itself to be the continuation of the first Presbyterian body established in this county. "Presbyterian Puritans" had been welcomed to Maryland in the mid-1650s by Cecelius Calvert and he had also recruited Scotch-Irish settlers. (1) The Presbyterians had been unpopular and persecuted in early Virginia.

In Baltimore County, the Patapsco Presbyterian Church was founded in 1715 and met on the Todd's Inheritance property at North Point. The first minister, the Rev. Hugh Conn, left in 1719 because of the "paucity of the flock." (2)

Court Records show an application for holding the meetings at North Point:

Maryland To His Majesties Justices for the County of Baltimore, Thomas Todd Humbly prays that his House may be Licensed for a Presbyterian Minister to preach and which Petition by the Justices here being [illegible] is granted provided said Minister qualifies himself by taking the Oaths by Act of Assembly appointed. (3)

The group moved to a new site on the southside of the Patapsco, then still part of Baltimore County in 1736, and built a chapel mentioned in the following court proceedings enacted at Joppa:

Upon petition of Hugh Conn a Presbyterian Minister that a house lately built on the land of John Frizell Junr. on the South Side of Patapsco River at the head of Curtis Creek may be recorded for a Presbyterian Meeting House it is ordered accordingly. (4)

Some decades after its foundation, Patapsco Church moved to the western fringe of Baltimore County and became Soldiers

Delight Church, approximately in 1766. (5) The congregation had the use of a burying ground along the Lyons Mill Road and the burials apparently predate either construction of a church or the acquisition of title. The stone of Robert Gilchrist bears the date of October 17, 1767. (6)

The Rev. Ethan Allen, writing the history of St. Thomas Church, noted that about 1771-1773:

About this time the Presbyterians and Baptists Commenced their services. The former built a meeting house on the Liberty Road five or six miles west of St. Thomas' Church . . . . (7)

The church trustees acquired title to 3/4 of a acre of the tract "Plains of Paran" on May 4, 1784 from Gilbert McIlvaine. The trustees were Dr. William Lyon (owner of Lyons Mill), William Weir, Robert Weir, Henry Jones, William McIlvaine, Henry Crook, Robert Gilcreissh /sic/, and John Ebert. The deed conveyed:

all that piece of ground being part of a Tract of Land Lying in Baltimore County aforesaid called the Plains of Paran heretofore set apart and used by the religious society of Christians called Presbyterians as a place of publick worship and burying ground. (8)

The McIlvaines had been in the neighborhood since 1769, when Gilbert McIlvaine bought 713 acres of "Plains of Paran Resurveyed" from Alexander Lawson, who had it resurveyed in 1758. (9)

This body, the Church of Soldiers Delight, was reincorporated in 1841, according to church records, under the name Mount Paran Presbyterian Church, (10). Like Mount Gilboa Chapel near Oella, the church was established on a tract of land that already bore a biblical name. Mount Paran is a portion of the Sinai, and the name had been selected by the first settler to own it, Henry Owens in 1729. The actual incorporation papers were filed at Towson on May 25, 1864. (11)

The structure appears as "Presbyterian Meeting House" on J. C. Sidney's map of 1850 and on Taylor's 1857 map. It was shown as "Pres. Ch." in the 1877 Hopkins atlas plate of the second election district. (12)

The congregation has always believed that the existing building contains the first church structure, a "simple log sheepfold or barn . . . . that is still preserved underneath the 1883 clapboard exterior and renovations which upgraded the church. The wide-plank floors and straight-backed benches (some call them "widow's benches" because of their reversible backs) attest to the older age of the present structure." (13)

The County paper also reported that the church had undergone a renovation, rather than a total reconstruction, in the work done in 1883:

Rededication of a Church.—Mt. Paran /sic/ Presbyterian Church at Harrisonville, 2d district, has lately undergone extensive improvements at a cost of about \$1,000. The rededication ceremonies took place on Sunday last, and were conducted by the Rev. John Ewing, D.D. of Pennsylvania. This church is one of the oldest in the Baltimore Presbytery and was first organized in 1715, and was then known as the Church of the Patapsco. The first minister who filled its pulpit was the Rev. Hugh Conn, a graduate of the University of Glasgow. From 1766 to 1841 it was known as the Church of Soldiers' Delight, and it has borne its present name since 1841. The church has been handsomely renovated inside and out. An addition has been built to the front making room for a vestibule and a stairway to the gallery. The Rev. A. M. Jelly, of New Windsor College, is pastor. Mr. James L. Ridgely is superintendent of the Sunday School. (14)

In 1924, further work, including installation of opalescent-glass windows was performed, also reported in the County weekly:

Mt. Paran Presbyterian Church Being Renovated

Pending completion of interior renovations, Mt. Paran Presbyterian Church is closed indefinitely. Until the work is completed, services are being conducted in the church lecture room. (15)

Each time work has been done to open up walls for repairs, the workmen have always reported finding logs and other primitive construction materials under the contemporary surfaces.

In 1982, following further research in the national archives of the parent body, the church and cemetery were enrolled in the American Presbyterian/Reformed Historical Sites Registry as Site No. 222, by the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. (16) Presentation of the plaque was scheduled for December 19, 1982.

NOTES:

1. C. Ernest Smith, Religion Under the Barons of Baltimore (Baltimore 1899), pp. 330, 336, 349.
2. Rev. Ronald E. Martin-Minnich, Randallstown, to Landmarks Preservation Commission, September 24, 1982.
3. Baltimore County Court Minutes, March Term, 1714, Hall of Records, Annapolis.
4. B.C. Court Minutes, August 7, 1736, Hall of Records.
5. Rev. Martin-Minnich, 1982.
6. Photo of extant Mt. Paran tombstone, LPC files.
7. Rev. Ethan Allen, The Garrison Church (New York, N.Y.), p. 32.
8. B.C. Deeds, WG No. T, f. 577 (1784), Hall of Records.
9. B.C. Deeds, AL No. A, f. 51 (1769). Also, Patents BC & GS No. 12, f. 28 (1758), Hall of Records.
10. B.C. Chattel Records, HMF 6:125 (1864), Hall of Records.
11. Patents, IL No. B, f. 62 (1729). The signers of 1864 were William Chapman, George E. O'Dell, Asa Warner, John B. Devries, and James L. Ridgely, Jr.

12. J. C. Sidney, "Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys," Baltimore, 1850. G. M. Hopkins, Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland (Philadelphia, 1877), District 2 plate.
13. Martin-Minnich, 1982.
14. Baltimore County Union, Towson, January 5, 1884, p. 3. James L. Ridgely was a prominent public figure, chairing the 1850 commission for separating City and County and serving as clerk of the orphans' court and collector of internal revenue.
15. Jeffersonian, Towson, August 9, 1924, p. 2.
16. Gerald W. Gillette, Research Historian, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, to Rev. R. E. Martin-Minnich, June 21, 1982.

MOUNT PARAN

Baltimore County Chetel Records, Liber HMF 6:125 (Hall of Records, Annapolis, microfilm):

Act of Incorporation of Mt. Paran Presbyterian Church of Baltimore County

At a meeting of the Male members of the Congregation of Mount Paran Presbyterian Church of Baltimore County, held at the place of worship on the ninth day of May Eighteen hundred and sixty four called by the session for the purpose of availing themselves of the benefit and advantages, of the Act of Assembly of Maryland entitled "an act to incorporate certain persons in every Christian Church in this State," did [illegible] by their qualified voters of the Congregation--viz. Members of said Church, to wit, William Chapman, George E. O'Dell, Asa Warner, Jno. B. Devins, and James L. Ridgely, Jr., as trustees of the above church, to manage the Estate, Property, interest, and inheritance of the same, and do further ordain, and establish the following rules and Regulations and the said Trustees so selected were requested and instructed to acknowledge and have them recorded according to law, as and fort the Charter of Incorporation of Mount Paran Presbyterian Church of Baltimore County, State of Maryland.

... etc ... (the rules) ....

f. 127 signatures ....

Witnessed: Luther Timanus  
Nicholas M. Haight

(May 9 1864)

Recorded, Towson .... 25 May 1864

**Rededication at church**

The Mount Paran Presbyterian Church will celebrate its centennial rededication of its sanctuary at 4 p.m. December 19 at the church, 10308 Liberty road, in Randallstown.

*SUN Dec. - 1982*

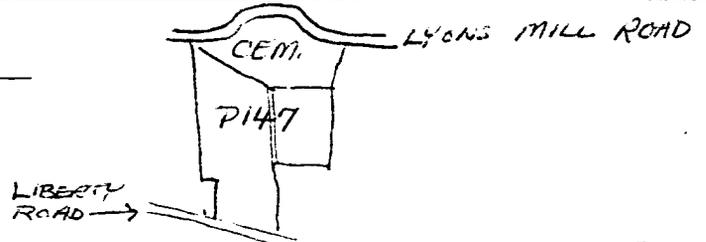
**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES** MOUNT PARAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Files of current minister, Rev. Ronald E. Martin-Minnich,  
Randallstown.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 12



**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Three parcels running between Lyons Mill Road on the north to Liberty Road on the south. Shown on Tax Map 66 as Parcels P147, P349, and a cemetery tract without parcel number.

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

STATE None COUNTY None

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

John W. McGrain, Executive Secretary

ORGANIZATION Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Office of Planning and Zoning

DATE

November 1982

STREET & NUMBER

County Courts Bldg., 401 Bosley Avenue

TELEPHONE

494-3521

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

