

G-II-B-050

Mill Run Mercy Chapel
Selbysport
Private

1874

Mill Run Mercy Chapel is a vertical plank constructed, octagonal one-room building. It is built of locally sawn lumber, rests on a stone foundation and is covered with a modified pyramidal roof. The chapel features pivoting windows and vertical german siding wainscoting. The chapel is the only known 19th century octagonal building in Garrett County and possibly in western Maryland, and is one of three known multi-sided ecclesiastical structures in Maryland.

7. Description

G-II-B-050

Condition		Check one	Check one
excellent	deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
good	ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	moved date <u>n/a</u>
fair	unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources

Contributing	Noncontributing	Number of previously listed
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings	National Register properties
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites	included in this nomination: <u>0</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects	Original and historic functions
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total	and uses: religious

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

The Mill Run Mercy Chapel and its adjoining cemetery are located on a slight rise of ground in a wooded clearing on the south side of Mill Run Road, approximately six tenths of a mile west from its intersection with the Friendsville-Addison Road (MD Route 53) near Selbysport in Garrett County, Maryland. It is a one story, one room frame structure built on an octagonal plan above a coursed stone foundation. The modified pyramidal roof, now covered with metal, is truncated on four of the facades, forming four small pediments. Possibly unique in the state, it is an unusual solution to the problem of roofing an octagonal building. Also unusual are the four 6/6 sash windows, the lower sashes of which pivot on their central muntins. Built in 1874 by a local carpenter, the chapel has been altered only slightly since then and is in a good state of preservation, both in the interior and on the exterior.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

G-II-B-050

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Mercy Chapel at Mill Run Item number 7 Page 1
 Garrett County, Maryland

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Mill Run Mercy Chapel and its adjoining cemetery are located on a slight rise of ground adjacent to Mill Run on the south side of Mill Run Road approximately six tenths of a mile from its intersection with Friendsville-Addison Road (MD Route 53). It is set in a woodland clearing in a heavily forested and rural area of Garrett County in Western Maryland.

The Chapel is a one story, one room building constructed of vertical planks on an octagonal plan. It is built on a random coursed, squared stone foundation with a cellar and is covered on the exterior with German siding painted white.

An entrance with two stone steps is located at the southeast end of the chapel. The four-panelled door is topped by a pointed-arched transom with two lights. A small cellar door is located above ground on the northeast elevation. On each of the other six elevations is a narrow 6/6 sash window; the top sash of each is fixed while the bottom are pivots on the central muntin.

The roof of the chapel is a modified pyramid which is truncated at the southeast, southwest, northwest and northeast elevations, forming four small pediments. These are recessed and covered with vertical German siding. On the front of the southeast pediment is a small shield with the words "M. R. Mercy Chapel 1874" in black Gothic print. The roof was previously covered with wood shingles, but is now covered with standing seam metal.

There is a brick stove flue with corbel chimney cap at the exterior of the southwest elevation, serving a cellar furnace. This replaces a metal stove pipe installed in the 1920s.

The interior of the chapel is a fine example of local craftsmanship and is virtually unchanged since the 1870s. A chair rail runs around the walls, above the level of the windowsills. The wainscoting below the chair rail consists of vertical German siding painted green. The ceiling, which follows the form of the roof exterior rather than being flat, is covered with narrow width German siding painted white. A podium with carved altar rail is at the northeast end of the chapel. There are eight pews on the left of the center aisle, and six on the right; the pew ends are topped by a modified Fleur-de-lis decoration

Two small graveyard plots lie northwest and southwest of the chapel. The oldest grave is dated 1867, before the construction of the chapel; the most recent is dated 1974. The graveyard to the northwest of the chapel contains graves reinterred from the Methodist cemetery at Selbysport.

8. Significance

G-II-B-050

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1874 **Builder Architect** ~~XXXXXXXX~~ John Miller, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: C
 Applicable Exceptions: A religious exception
 Level of Significance for Evaluation: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

Mercy Chapel is significant as one of the most architecturally sophisticated and well preserved Octagonal buildings in Maryland. Approximately a dozen mid-19th century octagonal buildings survive in Maryland, reflecting the influence of Orson Fowler's The Octagon House - A Home for All published in 1854. Most of these structures are outbuildings, such as dairies or smokehouses. Mercy Chapel is one of only three octagonal church buildings in the state and is the only known octagonal building in the four counties in Western Maryland. The chapel is also notable for its several unusual architectural features not found on other octagonal buildings in the state. Among these are the use of vertical plank construction, a roofing system probably unique in the state and windows with pivoting window sashes.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet Mercy Chapel at Mill Run
Garrett County, Maryland

Item number

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Most nineteenth century octagonal buildings in the United States can be attributed to the influence of Orson Fowler's The Octagonal House - A Home for All published in 1854. In it Fowler provided a number of plans for houses, churches and schools as well as recommendations for building materials and landscaping. Fowler, who was a phrenologist and social reformer rather than an architect, used mathematical ratios to argue that octagonal buildings were healthier, more efficient to maintain and provided greater usable space. He was one of a number of mid-nineteenth century social critics, among them Catharine Beecher, who believed that the redesigning of houses to increase efficiency would provide more leisure time for servant-less middle class households. Partly because of the radical opinions of Fowler and his followers however, octagonal buildings were often thought of merely as follies or eccentricities and the style never gained wide acceptance.

Many of the octagonal buildings in Maryland were as much a product of the builder's own personal fancy as they were a direct result of Fowler's writings. Sometimes octagonal plans were used for small outbuildings, such as dairies, smokehouses or bath houses. Good examples of these remain at BA-41 in Baltimore County, HA-2 in Harford County, and CE-41 and CE-97 both in Cecil County. Several lighthouses on the Chesapeake Bay were also built on an octagonal plan, three of which are still standing.

Of the two other octagonal churches in Maryland, the Russian Orthodox Chapel in Calvert County was built in the 1940s and is a copy of a church in Russia. The Peach Blossom Meeting House in Talbot County was built in the third quarter of the nineteenth century for a Quaker congregation; it is an austere plain building, reflecting its Quaker affiliation.

Several architectural features differentiate Mercy Chapel from other octagonal buildings in Maryland and indicate the inventiveness of its builder, John Miller. Vertical-plank construction is often found in 19th century workers' housing elsewhere in Western Maryland, but Mercy Chapel is the only known instance of its use for a church. Even more unusual is the roofing system, probably unique in the state. Whereas eight-sided roofs were commonly used for octagonal buildings, the roof of Mercy Chapel is a four-sided pyramid with truncated corners. Also notable are the windows, the lower sashes of which pivot on the central muntins. Because the original records of the congregation of Mercy Chapel are lost, it is not known whether these features were specifically suggested or approved by the members or whether the octagonal form was conceived of by the builder John Miller.

The congregation of Mercy Church was first organized in 1874 by the Reverend L. W. Haslip, a circuit-riding Methodist minister who also initiated support for the construction of a small church on land donated by Elizabeth Fike near Mill Run.¹ John Miller, a builder of Alsatian descent, sawed all lumber on his water-powered reciprocating sawmill and made the lectern, pews and altar rail for a cost of 300 dollars.²

See Continuation Sheet No. 3

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet	Mercy Chapel at Mill Run Garrett County, Maryland	Item number	8	Page	3
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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

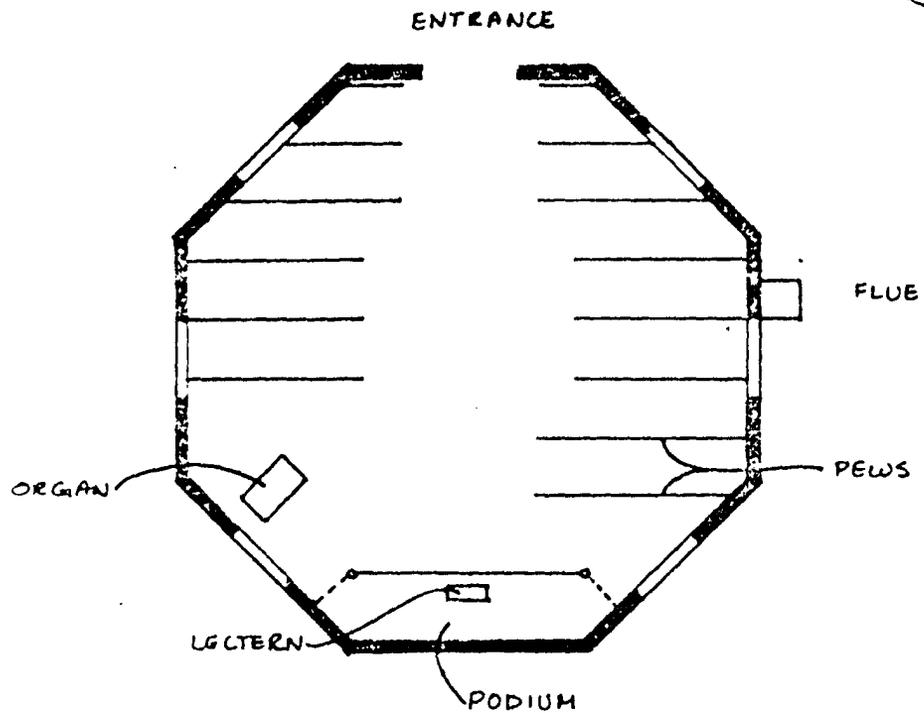
Improvements to the church over the next seventy years were usually undertaken by the approximately twenty families who belonged to the congregation. In 1896 a pump organ was installed, and in the early 1920s the cellar was excavated and a furnace installed. The congregation began to dwindle in the 1930s and when the Youghiogheny Hydro-Electric Corporation began buying area farmland to construct the Youghiogheny River reservoir in the 1940s this caused a further dislocation. The church closed in 1941.

In 1970 the church was restored by a reborn congregation who also installed a new organ and heating system. It was bought by them from the West Virginia conference of the United Methodist Church in 1977.

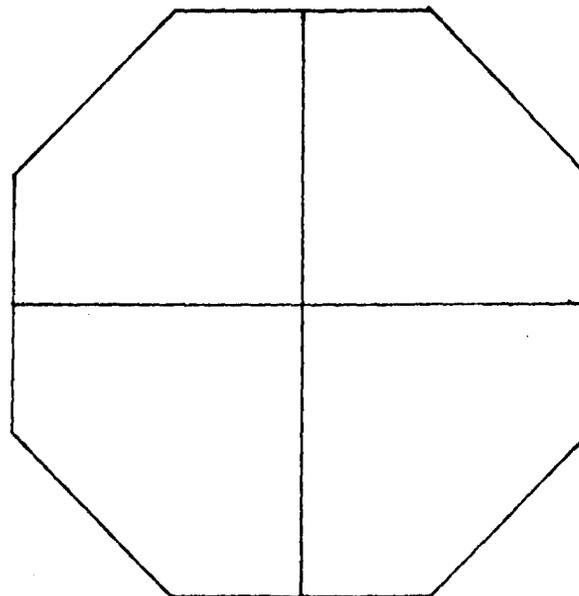
Footnotes

¹ Garrett County Land Records, Liber 2, Folio 365.

² McCullough, Dr. Raymond O. "A Brief History of Mercy Chapel" The Glades Star, vol. 4, no 23, (December 1974), p. 530.



FLOOR PLAN



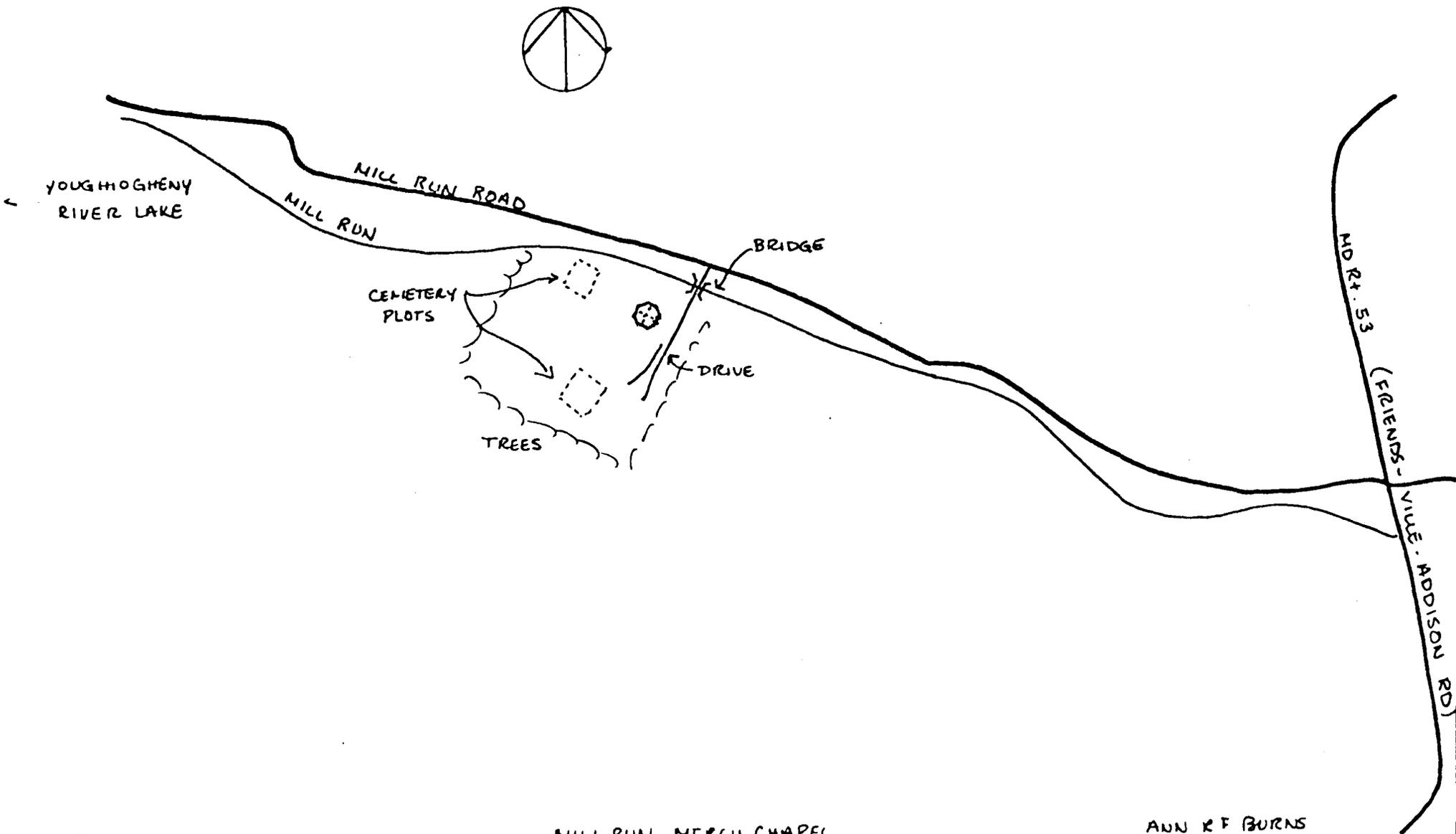
ROOF PLAN

NOT TO SCALE

G-II-B-050

MILL RUN MERCY CHAPEL
MILL RUN RD,
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND

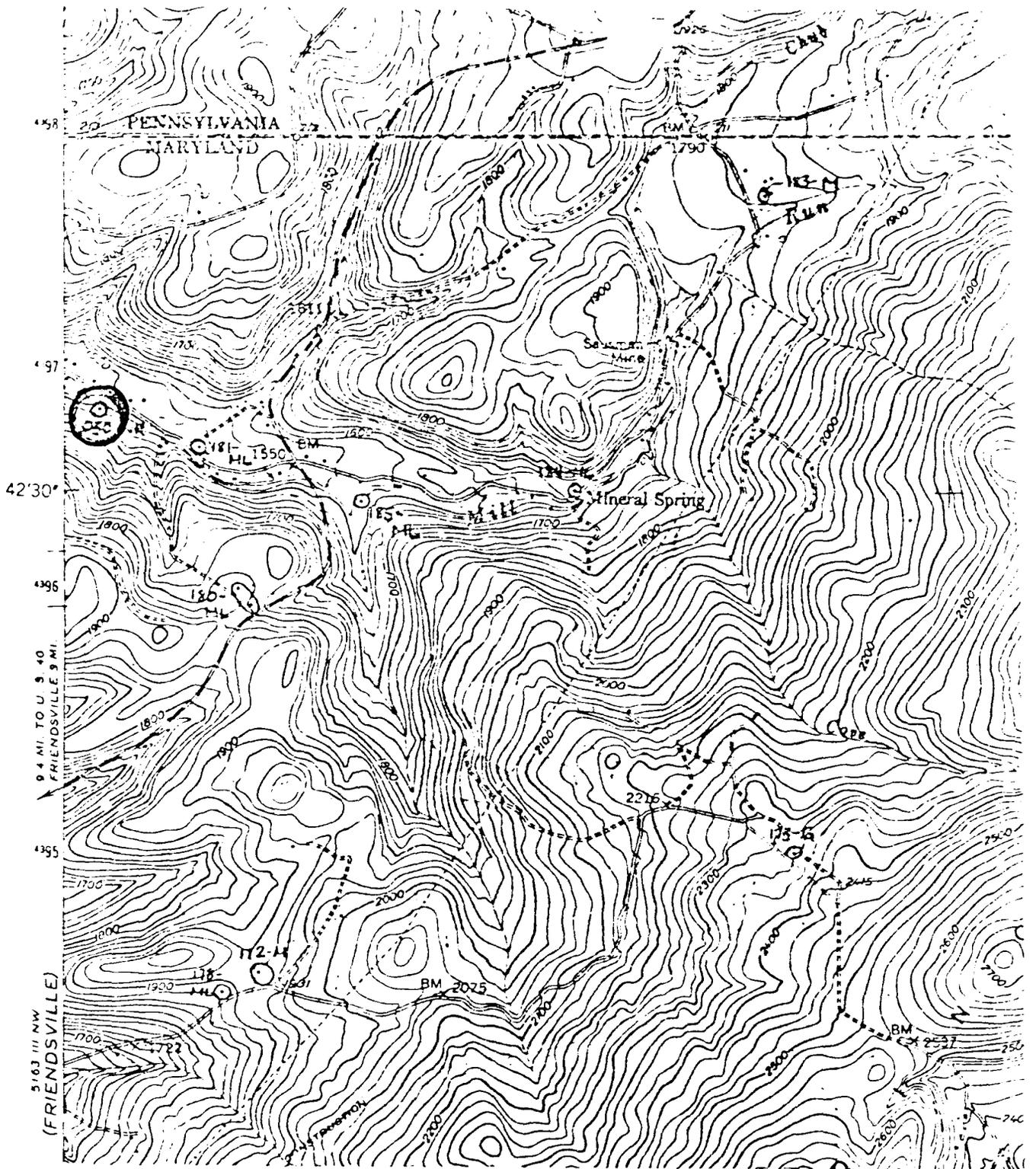
ANN R.F. BURNS
SURVEY DATE 8-6-80
PLAN DATE 5-12-81



G-II-B-050
 SITE PLAN
 NOT TO SCALE

MILL RUN MERCY CHAPEL
 MILL RUN R.
 GARRETT CO. MD MARYLAND

ANN R F BURNS
 SURVEY DATE 8-6-80
 MAP DRAWN 5-12-81



Accident, MD.-PA.
 USGS 7.5 minute series
 Scale - 1:24000
 1948; photorevised 1974

Site #: G-II-B-050
 Mill Run Mercy Chapel
 South side, Mill Run Road, approximately
 6/10 mile from its intersection with
 MD Rt. 53

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Mill Run Mercy Cahpael

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Mill Run Road, South side, approx. 6/10 mile from junction West MD Rt. 53

CITY, TOWN

Selbysport

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6th

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Garrett

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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	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

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Garrett County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

Third and Alder Streets

CITY, TOWN

Oakland

STATE

Maryland 21550

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

G-II-b-050

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"/> MOVED	DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED			
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED				

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Mill Run Mercy Chapel is a one-story, one-room building, constructed of vertical planks on an octagonal plan. The ground slopes from southwest to northeast, making the foundation more visible at the northeast side. The entrances faces southeast.

The Chapel rests on a randomly coursed, squared stone foundation. The exterior is covered with german siding, painted white. All elevations except the northwest and southeast elevations have one window each. The windows have six over six lights. The lower panel of each window pivots on the center muntin. The roof of the chapel is a modified pyramid, with pediments at the southeast, southwest, northwest, and northeast elevations. The roof was previously covered with wood shingles, but is no covered with standing seam metal.

There is one brick stove flue at the exterior of the southwest elevation, rising from a cellar furnace. The furnace is reached by a cellar door at the northeast elevation. The entrance door has four raised panels; over it is a two-light Gothic arch transom.

On the interior, a chair rail runs around the walls, above the level of the windowsills. Wainscoting below the chair rail is vertically placed German siding, painted green. The walls are of white plaster. The ceiling, which follows the lines of the exterior, is covered in narrow german siding, painted white. A podium with a hand-made altar rail fills the northwest side. The chapel has a single center aisle, with six pews at the northeast side, and eight pews at the southwest side. A small organ stands under the north window, and a hand-made oak lectern stands at the center of the podium.

Two small graveyards plots lie northwest and southwest of the chapel. The oldest grave is dated 1867, the newest, 1974. The graveyard plot to the northwest of the chapel contains graves re-interred from the cemetery at Selbysport.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

G-II-B-050

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 1874 BUILDER/ARCHITECT John Miller

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mill Run Mercy Chapel is significance for its architectural character. It is the only known nineteenth century octagonal building in western Maryland (Washington, Allegany, and Garrett Counties) and is one of only three known ^{by 1801} multi-sided ecclesiastical structures in Maryland.¹ Unique architectural features include: windows which open on a central pivot and vertical German siding wainscoting.

History and Support

In 1793, the earliest Methodist congregation in what is now Garrett County was organized at Little Meadows near Tomlinson's Inn. Methodist congregations were subsequently organized in Grantsville (1816) and Blooming Rose (before 1858) and at an early date in Selbysport, but the area around Mill Run did not support a local church.

In 1874, Rev. L.W. Haslip, a circuit-riding Methodist minister organized support for a small local church and John Miller was engaged to supervise its construction. Miller sawed all lumber on his waterpowered reciprocating saw-mill and made the lectern, pews and altar rail.

The congregation of about twenty families made the improvements to the church which took place over the years. In 1896 a pump organ was installed, in the early 1920s the cellar was excavated and a furnace was installed. Electricity was added in the 1930s. The congregation began to dwindle in the 1930s. When the Youghiogheny Hydro-Electric Corporation began buying area farmland to construct the Youghiogheny River Lake (1943), this caused a further dislocation. The church closed in 1941.

In 1970, the church was restored by the Congregation of Mill Run Chapel. It was bought by them from the West Virginia conference of the United Methodist Church in 1977.

1

The other two are: Peach Blossom Meeting House (MHT #T-121), Route 50, Talbot County, Maryland. Built in the third quarter of the 19th century. This small frame hexagonal building was built for a Quaker congregation. Russian Orthodox Chapel (MHT #CT-73), Ward Road, Dunkirk, Talbot County, Maryland-circa 1940. This small, six-sided chapel was built as "a chapel of ease...to serve a small community of Russian immigrants vacationing at Cave Point" from Calvert Co. Inventory Book. The chapel honors Spas Na Boru, a small wooden chapel near Moscow.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Strauss, Mary M. "Historical Society Tours Northwestern Garrett County;
The Glades Star, 5, #11, Dec. 1979, 206, 208.

Raymond McCullough, Jr. A Brief History of Mercy Chapel, Mill Run, Maryland,
 unpublished.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ann Burns, Historic Site Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust/Bureau of Mines

DATE

March 1981

STREET & NUMBER

Shaw House, 21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

301-269-2438

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

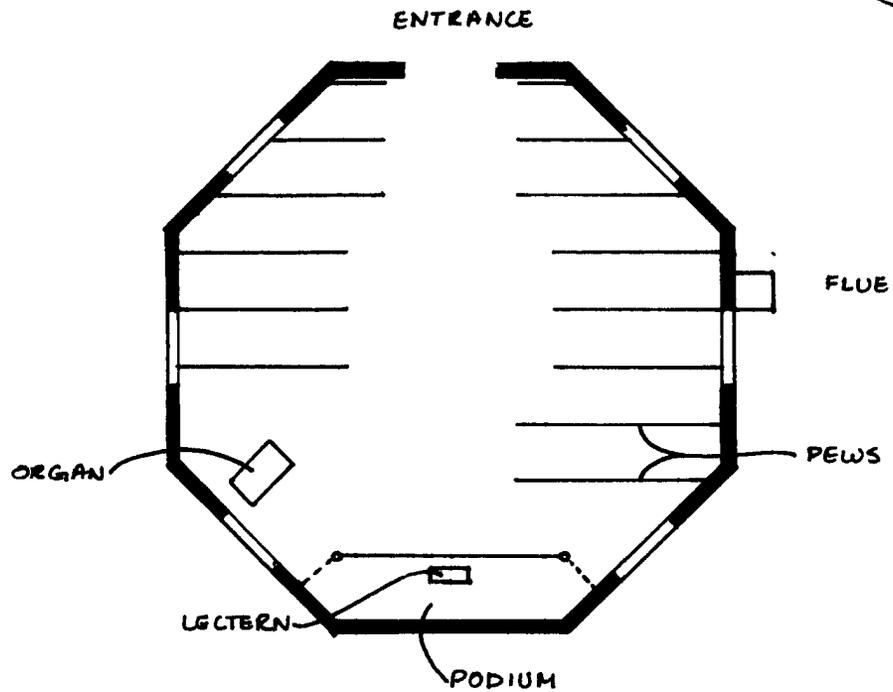
STATE

Maryland 21401

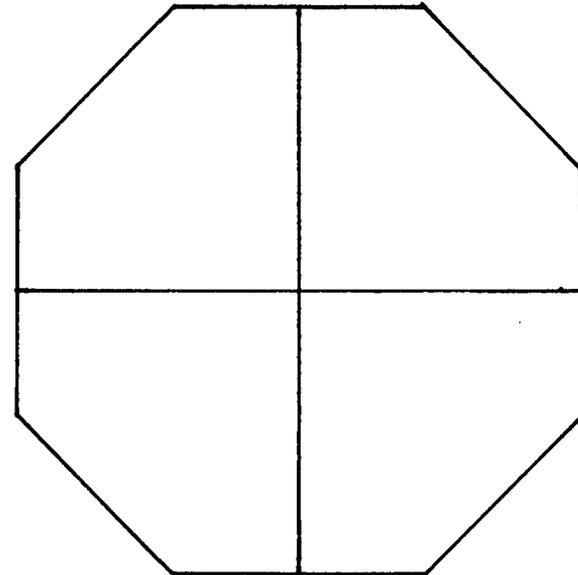
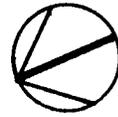
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

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



FLOOR PLAN



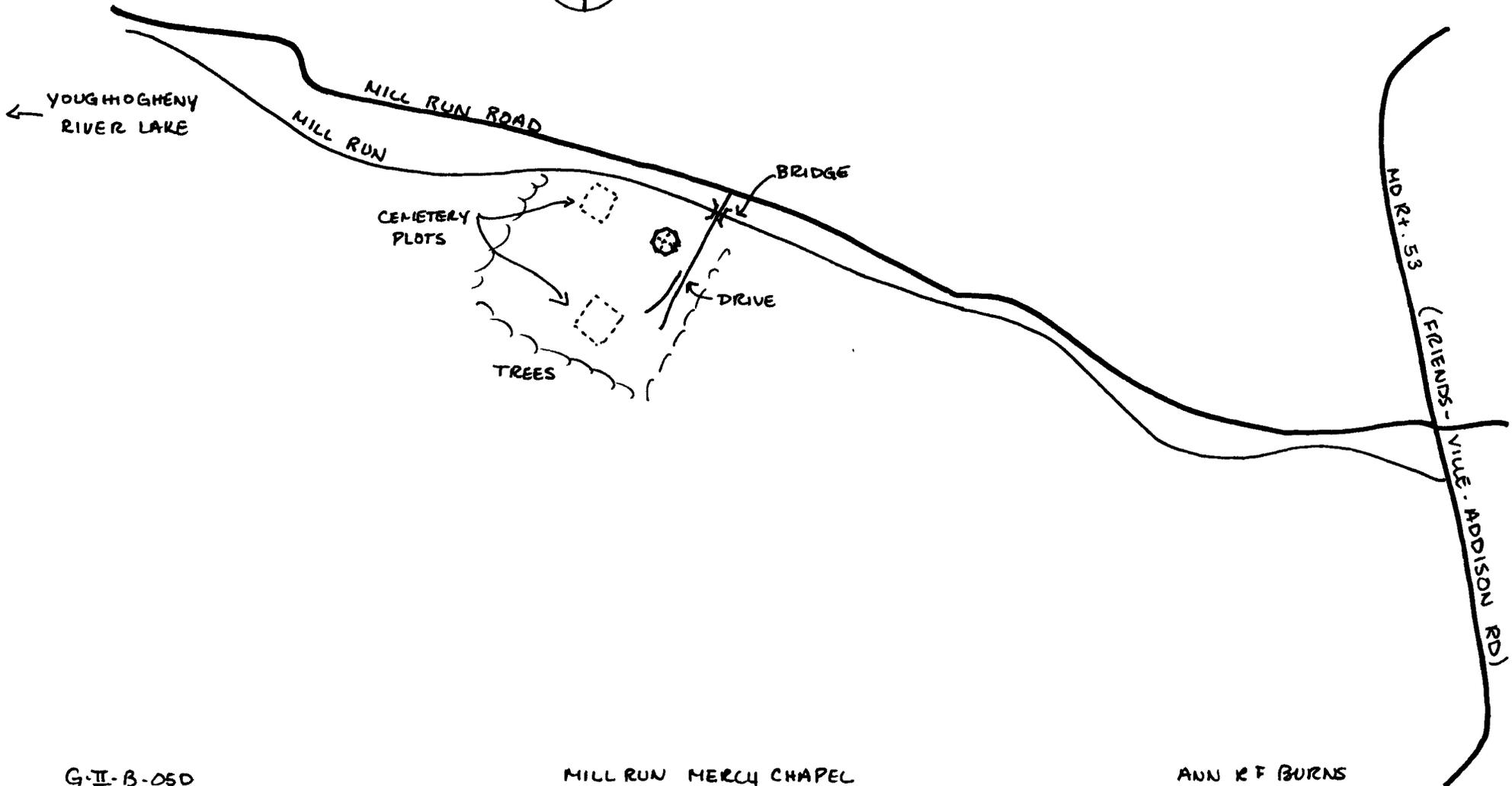
ROOF PLAN

NOT TO SCALE

G-II-B-050

MILL RUN MERCY CHAPEL
MILL RUN RD,
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND

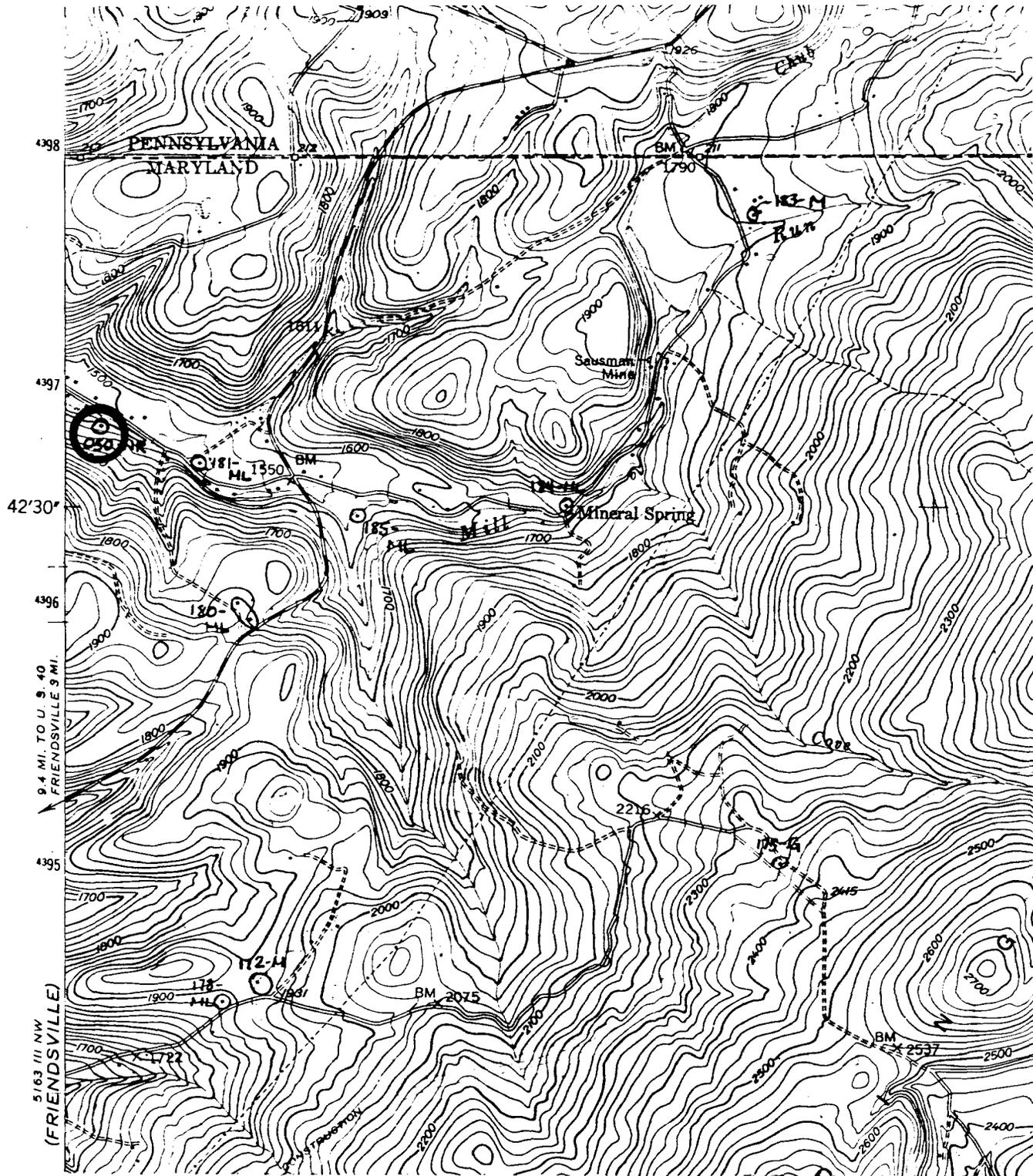
ANN R.F. BURNS
SURVEY DATE 8-6-80
PLAN DATE 5-12-81



G-II-B-050
SITE PLAN
NOT TO SCALE

MILL RUN MERCY CHAPEL
MILL RUN RD
GARRETT COUNTY MARYLAND

ANN KF BURNS
SURVEY DATE 8-6-80
MAP DRAWN 5-12-81



Accident, MD.-PA.
 USGS 7.5 minute series
 Scale - 1:24000
 1948; photorevised 1974

Site #: G-II-B-050
 Mill Run Mercy Chapel
 South side, Mill Run Road, approximately
 6/10 mile from its intersection with
 MD Rt. 53



G-II-B-050

Mill Run Mercy Chapel

Garrett Co., MD

Photo: V. Cesna 6 Aug 1980

SW & S elev; Facade-SE elev.



G-II-B-050

Mill Run Mercy Chapel

Garrett County, MD

Facade: SE elev.

Winter 1979



G-II-B-050

Mill Run Mercy Chapel

Garrett Co., MD

Photo: V. Cesna 6 Aug 1980

E, NE, N elevs.