

K-52

Methodist Meeting House
Chestertown
1801-1803

Methodist missionaries had begun to visit the Delmarva peninsula before the Revolution of 1776. By the close of the century these itinerant preachers had become so influential that chapels were built in the countryside so that the locals could have places to gather other than in private dwelling houses. Apparently all of the chapels were built in the country except for the one in Chestertown.

The first Chestertown chapel may have been built as early as 1784 and was most likely a wooden structure. By 1799, however, the Chestertown congregation had become so strong that they prevailed upon the State Legislature to secure a lot in the town square where upon they could build a new meeting house. Two years later the Legislature appointed five gentlemen of Kent County to lay out a place for erecting the new building, which they did the following year.

(insert photo static copy of Legislature record)¹

Apparently the fact that a relatively new organization had been successful in obtaining public land was considered an extraordinary accomplishment by Francis Asbury, as he recorded it in his diary in the following manner.

"Mon 12 April, 1802 – That evening I came on to Chester Town, the wind at East; cold and damp.

Tues 13 April, 1802. We had a rainy day, but we attended the house of God, noon and night. Our brethren in this town are about to build: by a train of strange persons, providences, and things, they have a place in the public square, where the market house stood: the chapel will be in line with the Episcopal Church; its size, forty by forty-eight."²

When Asbury returned to Chestertown, the new chapel was already in use. "The new chapel in Chester Town is elegantly planned: Brother Whatcoat first preached in it."³

The "New" chapel Asbury visited was remarkably similar to, though plainer than, the Episcopal Chapel with which it stood "in line." Basically it was a five-bay long, three-bay deep structure with principal facades, on High Street and the Town Square, laid in Flemish bond. The windows were classically larger on the first floor than those on the second; 16/12 sash on the lower story and 12/12 on that above. The principal entrance, like its Episcopal neighbor was located in the central bay on the High Street facade and possessed a double door with transom. All windows were fitted with louvered blinds.

There is no contemporary record of its interior, but from a remaining patch of plaster in the attic in the form of an arc and a difference in the brick work near the roof, it can be deduced that its original ceiling was arched like the Episcopal chapel, and the roof pitch was lower than that which exists today. The reworked brickwork is visible only on the Town Square gable, suggesting it was repaired due to, perhaps, a structural failure. When the roof was changed, the ceiling was reinstalled without an arch.

Two small areas of patched brickwork centered on the northwest gable at the second floor level indicate the original presence of two small windows. Their placement may suggest the location of the pulpit and table on the northwest side of the building. This hypotheses would include the placement of a gallery at the opposite end, like Barrett's Chapel. If this were the case, it would have differed from the Episcopal chapel which had an altar on the long axis with gallery on three sides.

Not long after the chapel was erected, divisions in the Methodist Church occurred. By 1830, the New Methodist Protestant Church had been established sufficiently to buy a small parcel of land at the corner of Cross and Cannon Streets.⁴ The original Methodist Episcopal Church retained ownership of the "Chapel" until they built a new church one block up High Street in 1870. Thereafter, the old "Chapel" was purchased by Reverend Samuel Thomas, a Methodist minister from Philadelphia, who also owned the Tilghman House and a farm on the Fairlee Road bordering Bakers Lane.⁵

After Reverend Thomas' acquisition, the building was remodeled into offices. In the early 20th century, the second story was used by the C & P Telephone Company for many years and is now an office in which this book is being written.

1. Land Records, Lib. TW 2, fol. 219.
2. Elmer T. Clark, editor, Journals and Letters of Francis Asbury (Nashville: Abbingon Press, 1958), Vol. II, p. 334.
3. Ibid., p. 387.
4. Nancy Harrington and Robert Sutton, "The History of Christ

Methodist Church – 1773-1988," p. 9.

5. Land Records, Lib. DCB 1, fol. 622.

Methodist Meeting House

High, Spring and Park
Chestertown, Md.

privately owned, houses businesses

Located prominently on the town park, formerly the market place, the Methodist Meeting House is a tribute to Bishop Francis Asbury who worked so diligently in this area for Methodism. Built between 1801 and 1803 in Flemish bond it has been slightly altered but is in excellent condition and is an example of Federal architecture.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Methodist Meeting House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

High, Spring and Park Row

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Md.

COUNTY

Kent

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- YES: RESTRICTED ON ACCESSIBLE
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

business

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Kent & Queen Anne's Hospital Aux., Inc. Telephone #: none

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Md. 21620

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

Liber #: WHG 77
Folio #: 415

STREET & NUMBER

Kent County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Md.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

none known

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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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

The Methodist Meeting House is built in a Flemish bond which has been kept in fairly good condition. The roof has recently been replaced and is the fire-resistant wood shingles which adds greatly to the building's appearance. It is a 2 1/2 story structure.

The High Street facade is 5 bays wide with 5 12/12 double hung windows on the second floor. The first floor, from left to right has a 12/12 double hung window, a door made from lengthening a window, the central doorway, another door enlarged from a window, and a 12/12 double hung window. All windows and non original doors have cantilevered bricks above the frame. The central doorway is framed by an entablature with denticulated moulding.

The west facade which is directly on Spring St., as the building covers all of the land granted it, has 2 casement windows, now vents, in the gable. The 2nd story has two 12/12 double hung windows, and the first, from l to r, a 12/12 double hung window, door, 16/12 double hung window with much older glass, and a 12/12 double hung window. Again all are topped by cantilevered bricks.

The rear of the building is only 4 bays, with 4 12/12 windows, double hung on the 2nd floor. The first floor has one door on the far right with cantilevered bricks above it as well as a small pent. There are also 3 windows, 12/12 double hung, again with cantilevered bricks. One window bay is obviously bricked up.

Facing on the park, the east facade has one vent in the center of the gable top. The 2nd story has 3 double hung windows, all 12/12 and the first story 2 of the same windows, a door, and another similar window. Again, all have cantilevered bricks at the top of the frame.

The plain cornice and the bargeboard are painted white.

In the center of the roof is a small, obviously newer than the building, brick chimney.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1801-1803

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Methodist Meeting House is located prominently on the town park, which was the market place. It presently houses businesses and is an example of Federal architecture, being built between 1801 and 1803 in Flemish bond.

Bishop Francis Asbury found Chestertown "a very wicked place", and so spent much of his time here. This building was erected due to efforts for Methodism in Chestertown.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Fred G. Usilton's history on Chestertown
The Chestertown Story, Oct. 5-13, 1956 a program
The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury in 3 vol., Abingdon Press,
Nashville, 1958

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 90' x 50'

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the end of 37 ft. from High St., 15 ft. from Club Lane, from thence running NE parallel with Club Lane 90 ft., thence SE 50 ft., thence SW 90 ft., and from thence NW 50 ft. to the place of beginning.

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kathleen B. White, Historic Site Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Md. Historical Trust, City of Chestertown

DATE

Sept. 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

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

Methodist Meeting House

WHG 77/415 11/8/62 Frederick G. Jr. and Patience P. Usilton to Kent and Queen Annes Hospital Auxiliary, Inc.

RRA 8/554 3/7/27 George E. Thomas and Juliette Wilson Thomas to Fred G. Usilton (who willed it to his wife, Addie, who dies intestate and the property descended to her only heir at law, FGU Jr.). \$10,000.00

JTD 28/41 7/14/13 Henry B. Thomas and Jennis B., wife to Geo. E. Thomas (son), \$1.00. Henry had received the property from his father, Rev. Samuel E. Thomas who died 5/24/1910.

DCB 1/622 12/22/75 John N. Usilton, James H. Plummer, Thomas W. Eliason and James H. Thompson (majority of the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Chestertown) to Rev. Samuel W. Thomas. \$1,800.

TW 2/219 11/1801 General Assembly of Md. Act passed at November session, 1801. "An Act to authorise the persons therein named to build a Methodist Meeting house on the public ground in Chestertown in Kent County. Mr. Benjamin Chambers, James Hodges, Jr., James Scott, Cuthbert Hall, Dr. James Anderson, Jr., the Subscribers, appointed in the said Act. Commissioners to lay off a quantity of the public ground on the Market place in ChesterTown, on such convenient part thereof as we the above named Commissioners or a majority of us shall think proper, not exceeding ninety feet in length, fifty feet in breadth..." "Beginning at the end of thirty seven feet from High Street, fifteen feet from Club Lane"(now Park Row)", from thence running North East parallel with Club Lane ninety feet, thence South East fifty feet, thence South West ninety feet and from thence Northwest fifty feet to the beginning."

K-52

N

CEMETERY

VITA FOODS

FOODS (JEW) FARM

COUNTY

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

LYNCHBURG

POPLAR RD

STREET

KENT STREET

STREET

MILL

CALVERT STREET

STREET

MT. VERNON

WASHINGTON U.S. 213

CAMPUS

COLLEGE

AVENUE

BROWN VIEW RD

STREET

SCHOOL STREET

SCHOOL AVENUE

1652

SPRING ST.

ROW

STREET

PHILOSOPHERS

TERRACE

BYFORD DRIVE

WALDO DRIVE

DAVID DRIVE

BARROLL DRIVE

SCHOOL AVENUE

TWILLEY LANE QUEEN

PARK COURT ST.

CHURCH ST.

AVENUE

STREET

BYFORD COURT

WATER CANNON

HIGH

STREET

MAPLE

RIVERSIDE TERRACE

U.S. 213

River

Chester

MORGNEC

STREET

ELM STREET

GREENWOOD VALLEY

PINE

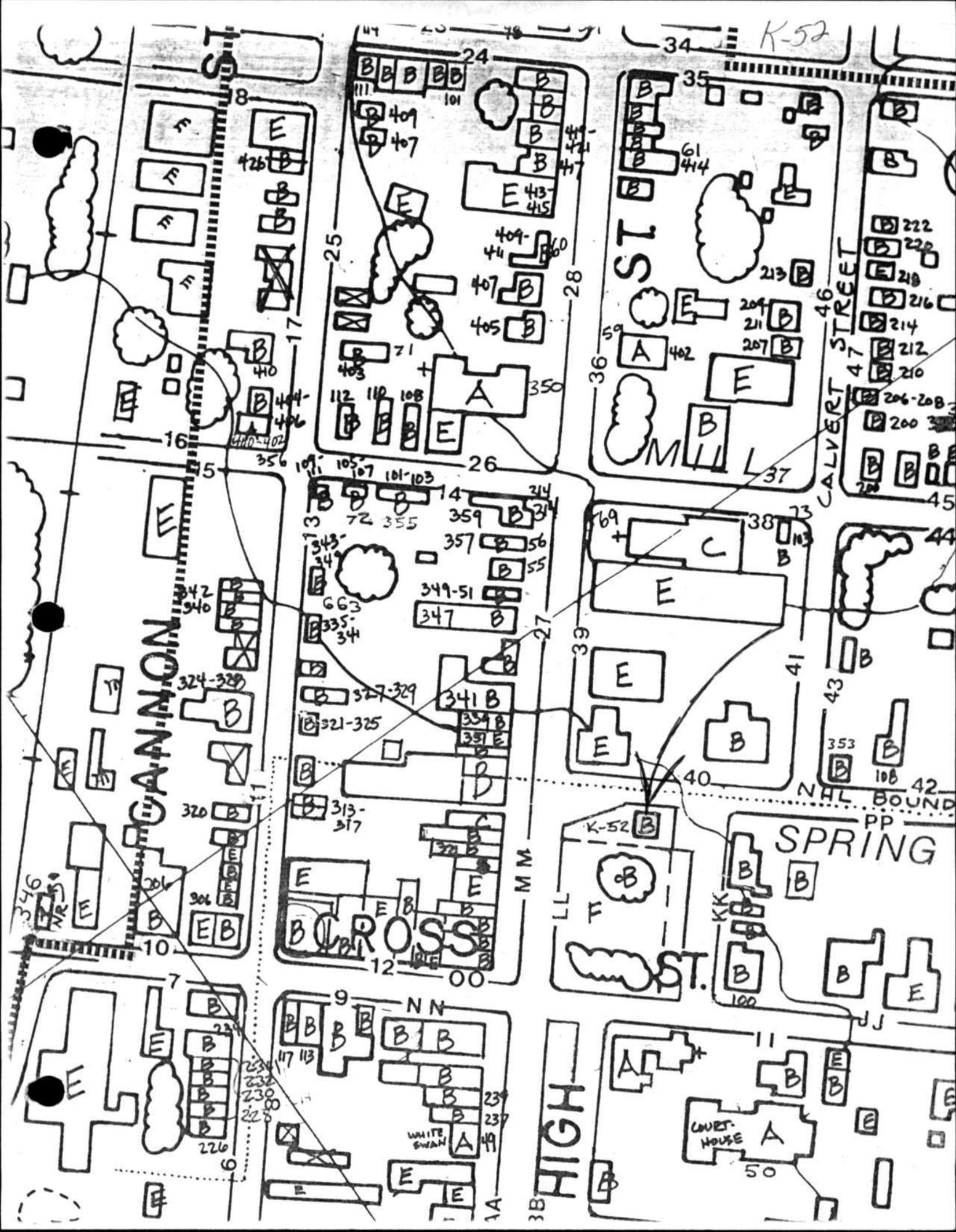
CEDAR

SCHOOL

SCHOOL AVENUE

STREET

MORRIS



K-52
Methodist Meeting House
Spring St. and Park Row
Chestertown
Chestertown Quad.
Kent County





K 52 Methodist Meeting House

- 1/77 S



K 52 Methodist Meeting House
1/77 NW



K 52 Methodist Meeting House

S + E 1/77