

**K-549 Site of African-American Meeting House at Hynson's Chapel**

Martenet's Map of 1860 indicates an "African Meeting House" adjacent to Hynson's Methodist Chapel at the junction of Route 20 and Ricaud's Branch Road. Neither Hynson's Chapel nor the colored meeting house have survived, although there are tombstones from the early nineteenth century at the sight of the former.

No description is known of this structure, but like Randle's Chapel near Worton erected in 1780, it probably was of planked log construction. There is some possibility that the original 1770's Hynson Chapel, was moved and used for the African meeting when Hynson's white congregation built a new meeting house for themselves.

After extensive investigation of the site in 1989 by Margaret Fallaw and Vincent Hynson, they concluded that the African Meeting House site was probably to the south of the small creek that runs through this wooded corner site. In 1853, a John P. Smith and his wife Lea, evidently whites, sold a 40 foot-square plot from their farm at this location "for the use of the coloured people, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church...situated a few rods below Hynson's Chapel."

Hynson's Chapel, established in 1773, was the first Methodist meeting in Kent County. Methodism grew rapidly, particularly on the Eastern Shore and in Delaware, and by 1780 the total membership of all American societies was 8,500, with less than 400 members north of the Mason-Dixon line.

The African Meeting House may have been the old Hynson's moved to the new site, or a new building, the 1853 deed states that the trustees "shall erect and

build...thereon a house or place of worship and to keep it always erected for the use of the coloured people, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church...[and] they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such ministers and preachers belonging to Said church as shall from time to time be duly authorised by the General Conference of the Ministers and Preachers of Said Methodist Episcopal Church or by the annual conference authorize by said General Conference to preach and expound Gods Holy Word therein." Such wording is generally standard in church deeds and should not be taken to mean that in all cases no building had been built on the property yet.

The deed reveals that the buyers, the trustees for the black church, were both black and white. James H. Edes, Richard Coleman, and Thomas Strong were designated as "white men," and Peter Glenn, Abram Brown, Henry Jones, James Jones, Henry Ward and Samuel Reed were designated as "coloured." This suggests that the whites retained considerable control over these black Methodists, even though they were now allowed (and perhaps even encouraged) to have their own building and meet separately."

The County map issued in 1877 does not show this meeting house, so, as with Hynson's Chapel itself, the congregation had probably disbursed and abandoned. After Emancipation in 1864, African-Americans tended to move off their former owners' farms and into villages of their own, frequently clustered around a Methodist Church. Such communities grew up nearby at Edesville, Sharptown, and Sandy Bottom, near St. Paul's Church.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

**K-549**

### **SITE OF AFRICAN MEETING HOUSE AT HYNSON'S CHAPEL**

#### **MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA**

##### Geographic Organization

- 1) Eastern Shore

##### Chronological/Developmental Period

- 10) Agricultural-Industrial Transition 1815-1870

##### Historic Period Themes

- 2) Architecture
- 7) Social/Cultural

##### Resource Type

Category - Site, private, public acquisition, not applicable, unoccupied, accessible restricted. Present Use - forest and abandoned grave yard.

Historic Environment - Rural

Historic Functions and Uses - Church

Unknown Design Source

Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. K-549

Magi No.

DOE \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Site of African Meeting House at Hynson's Chapel

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number SE Corner of Rte. 20 and Ricaud's Branch \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Langford Rd, 3 mi SW of  vicinity of congressional district One

Fairlee

state Fairlee, MD county Kent

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Feather Branch Farms, Inc., c/o Samuel R. Jones, Sec.

street & number 480 N. Spruce St. telephone no.:(717)367-1488

city, town Elizabethtown state and zip code PA 17022

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber JFG 1

street & number Cross Street folio 15G

city, town Chestertown state MD

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title Survey No. K-591, Application to the State of Maryland for a Roadside Marker

date (1989 Revision) \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville state MD

## 7. Description

Survey No. K-549

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

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After extensive investigation of the site in 1989 by Margaret Fallaw and Vincent Hynson, they concluded that the African Meeting House site was probably to the south of the small creek that runs through this wooded corner site. In 1853, a John P. Smith and his wife Lea, evidently whites, sold a 40 foot-square plot from their farm at this location "for the use of the coloured people, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church... situated a few rods below Hynson's Chapel."

# 8. Significance

Survey No. K-549

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/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input 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	1730	Builder/Architect	Unknown
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check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
 and/or  
 Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
 Level of Significance:  national  state  local

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

Hynson's Chapel, established in 1773, was the first Methodist meeting in Kent County. Methodism grew rapidly, particularly on the Eastern Shore and in Delaware, and by 1780 the total membership of all American societies was 8,500, with less than 400 members north of the Mason-Dixon line.

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# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-549

Survey No. K-501, Application to the State of Maryland for a Roadside Marker.  
William Williams Garden of American Methodism, Kent County Land Records

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
---	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Davy H. McCall

organization Historical Society of Kent County date February 27, 1996

street & number Church Alley telephone 410-778-3499

city or town Chestertown state MD

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  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438~~

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DHCP/DHCC  
100 COMMUNITY PLACE  
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023  
514-7600

U.S.G.S. 7.5 Min. Map  
Kent County, Maryland  
Rock Hall Quad  
K-549

