

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Watters Meeting House

AND/OR COMMON Thomas Run Church (preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER South side of Old County Road (abandoned)  
near Thomas Run Road

CITY, TOWN	Bel Air	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VICINITY OF	First	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT	NOT FOR PUBLICATION
STATE	Maryland	CODE	24	COUNTY	Harford
				CODE	025

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" 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 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"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Thomas Run Church Foundation, Inc., c/o Mrs. Eleanor G. Robinson

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 2  
CITY, TOWN Bel Air VICINITY OF Maryland 21014 STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Harford County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER Main Street  
CITY, TOWN Bel Air STATE Maryland 21014

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

HA-49

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

The Watters Meeting House, or Thomas Run Church, is a one-story, rubble stone, three-bay church with a slate-covered gabled roof of moderate pitch.

The entrance is centered on the east end, and consists of a pair of two-paneled doors, the upper panel being arched, with a shallow three-light transom above. A simple Greek Revival molding finishes the exterior surface of the transom bar. Steps up to the door are of stone with slate treads, flanked by solid stone podia coped with slate.

Three twelve-over-twelve windows on each side and two similar windows flanking the pulpit in the west end, all with counter-balanced sash, light the church. Two six-over-six windows high in the east end light the gallery. A rectangular panel of plain granite, perhaps intended to display the name and date of the structure, decorates the east gable.

The east bay, which contains the gallery, is somewhat longer than the other two bays (and may actually be considered two bays); on the north side, close to the northeast corner, a former single-width door has been closed with rubble stone masonry. Traditionally, this was the direct access to the gallery stair, although there is no obvious evidence that the existing stair has been changed.

A simple Greek Revival crown molding decorates the eave and rake cornice, both of which extend over a foot beyond the stonework.

The floor is of random-width pine over straight-sawn joists (a few of which are visible through ventilating holes in the exterior side walls). The lower walls are covered with narrow beaded wainscotting, stained a dark brown; upper walls are plastered, with a furred space behind. The ceiling is covered with narrow beaded wainscotting, also stained a dark brown, with simple applied jig-sawn geometric decorations.

The east gallery is supported by two plain octagonal wood columns, and the solid gallery front is paneled with large, unmolded panels in a simple Greek Revival scheme. The stair rises from the northeast corner and a small storage closet is under the lower run of the staircase. The gallery floor is stepped with risers, and the plastered soffit slopes correspondingly. Early, open back pews are attached to the stepped floor, the risers forming most of the seat height. These pews may have been constructed to fit in this location, or they may have been sawed off conventional pews, placed here when later seating was installed in the church.

See continuation sheet #1

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Harford County,  
Maryland

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DESCRIPTION (continued)

The fixed pulpit and pulpit platform are paneled with flat, unmolded panels, matching the gallery front. The platform is covered with 19th century ingrain carpeting.

The communion rail is composed of standard 19th century turned balusters with massive newels at each end, and wide walnut rail.

Seating units are of the late 19th or early 20th century, and consist of cast iron frames with decoratively-pierced bent plywood backs, and similar seats which can be raised; beneath each seat is a wire hat rack.

Hanging from the center of the ceiling is a cast iron chandelier with six coal oil lamps; a pair of two light wall scones matching the chandelier flank the pulpit on the west wall, and a matching pair single light wall scones light the area beneath the gallery.

A small trap door, centered in the east end of the ceiling above the gallery, provides access to the attic. All roof and ceiling structure is visible in the attic, and is constructed of dimensional, straight sawn material, fastened with cut nails. Rafters are mitered at the ridge and terminate at the eaves on a flat plate board nailed to the top side of the ceiling joists; a collar beam is half-lapped and nailed into each pair of rafters, and a vertical cord extends from the roof peak to the ceiling joists, nailed to rafters, collar beam and joists. The stone gable walls are visible at each end of the attic. Random width roof sheathing is closed, for the slate roofing. No reused materials are in evidence, nor is there any evidence of alteration.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
10-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
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 checked="" 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

The site of the Thomas Run Church, formerly known as the Watters Meeting House, was among the first used by the Methodists in colonial America. The structure standing on the site today is of interest for its architecture as well as for its associations with the history of Methodism in Maryland.

The general proportions of the church, including the roof pitch, suggest a typical, small, Greek Revival temple church, without the characteristic portico. It is similar in form to many other Methodist churches in Harford County, including Rock Run (dated 1843), Darlington and Mount Tabor. Calvary (dated 1821) exhibits both an earlier form and earlier detailing. There is no evidence of alteration to this church structure, which remains in excellent condition.

Methodism began in England when Charles and John Wesley (1703-1791) were fellows at Lincoln College, circa 1739. The United Society evolved from the Holy Club. Methodism spread from England to Ireland and from Ireland to America by way of an emigrant named Robert Strawbridge, in 1759 or 1760 (Dr. William Hamilton, Methodist Quarterly Review, July 1856). The first preaching house was built by him, circa 1764, at Sam's Creek, Frederick County, Maryland (Mrs. Arthur B. Bibbins, How Methodism Came: The Beginnings of Methodism in England and America, Baltimore; The American Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Annual Conference, 1945, p. 42).

There is some confusion as to the sequence of Methodist Societies in Maryland, but most historians agree that the meeting houses were established in this order:

- (1) Sam's, or Pipe Creek, Frederick County, circa 1764
- (2) Bush Forest, near Aberdeen, Harford County, circa 1769
- (3) Evans (now Govans), built by 1770 (Francis Asbury Journal and Letters, Vol. I, p. 697)
- (4) Watters (later Thomas Run), built by 1772
- (5) Fork, 1773
- (6) Gunpowder, 1773

The Watters family is credited by Methodist historians as being

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

influential in the forming of the Deer Creek Society which became Watters Meeting House or Thomas Run Church. Of the seven Watters brothers, three became ministers. The best known of these was William who was born October 16, 1751, at the Henry Watters homestead in Thomas Run. He was converted in 1771, becoming one of the first native itinerant preachers in America (Edwin Schell, Those Incredible Methodists: A History of the Baltimore Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1972, p. 14). He wrote "A Short Account of the Christian Experience and Ministerial Labors" which told of a conference held at Watters Meeting House on May 20th, 1777: "Our conference began at my eldest brother's preaching house, Deer Creek... It was a time much to be remembered" (William Watters, "A Short Account of the Christian Experience and Ministerial Labors of William Watters," Fairfax, 5/14/1806, p. 56). This conference was attended by Strawbridge and Bishop Francis Asbury. Asbury wrote in his journal: "we rode together to attend the conference at Deer Creek" (Asbury, p. 239). [Francis Asbury (1745-1816) was appointed by the British Conference of 1771 to work in America. A Wesleyan missionary, he became the chief organizer and molder of American Methodism. He also attended a powerful meeting at Henry Watters' near Deer Creek in November of 1772 (Bibbins, p. 56)].

The exact date of either the first building or the existing building at Thomas Run has not been established. A deed for the property, dated August 12, 1782, and recorded in the Harford County Land Records as JLG #E/4, mentions "all that lately erected house and tenement thereunto adjoining" and is for 314 acres, 28 perches. A second deed, dated July 11, 1871, ALJ #26/263, is a land addition of one acre, 17 perches, adjoining the old graveyard.

Until 1788 Watters Meeting House was a part of the Baltimore Circuit and was served by such able men as Asbury, Strawbridge, Webster, Wade, Watters, Garrettson and Ruff. Among those who served the Harford Circuit in 1817 were J. Toy and J. W. Bond; in 1820, J. Reed; in 1823, J. L. Gibbons; in 1826, D. B. Dorsey and 1844, T. T. Wysong (Circuit Records, Methodist Historical Society).

An act of the Maryland General Assembly passed during the January Session of 1868 provided for the incorporation of religious societies. In order to benefit from this law, the Trustees of Thomas Run M. E.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Church of Harford County were incorporated on July 26, 1916. In later years, as the church grew, it was joined by Darlington M. E. Church and Rock Run M. E. Church to form a circuit known as the Darlington Methodist Charge. During the 1930's and 1940's, the community around the church changed and it was closed by the Baltimore Annual Conference.

The Thomas Run Church Foundation, Inc. was formed to restore and preserve the building and grounds as a place of historic interest. Services are held the last Sunday in May and September of each year. The church will be opened to interested groups upon request. The Foundation acquired the property on September 16, 1963, from the Baltimore Annual Conference of the M. E. Church (GRG 637/550).

a diary entry written by Mittie Munnikhuisen on Friday, June 25, 1858, she says, "I am now seated at the back window upstairs and have one of the loveliest views of the Valley of Thomas Run. As far as the eye can reach is seen a beautiful range of woodland and the hills on which it is look almost mountainous, and on the highest hill opposite is Mr. Watters' peaceful dwelling surrounded with many trees, close by, stands dear old Watters' Meeting House. It too is a lovely spot" (Munnikhuisen, Diaries of, Vol. I, Life in Maryland, 1858-1860, Louisiana State University Library, Baton Rouge, Louisiana).

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

HA-49

attached page #4

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.94 A

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	318,891,8,0	4,318,30,8,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The acreage nominated for the Thomas Run Church consists of the lot on which the church building is located and the adjoining cemetery, containing in all 1.94 acres and comprises all the land owned by the Thomas Run Foundation, Inc.

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 Eleanor Greer Robinson/James T. Wollon, Jr., AIA

bjn

ORGANIZATION Thomas Run Church Foundation

DATE March 1976

STREET & NUMBER 1301 Singer Road/Craig's Corner Road

TELEPHONE 301-676-4333

CITY OR TOWN Joppa/Havre de Grace

STATE Maryland 21085/ 21078

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE X 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

*John N. Pearce* 4/14/77

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

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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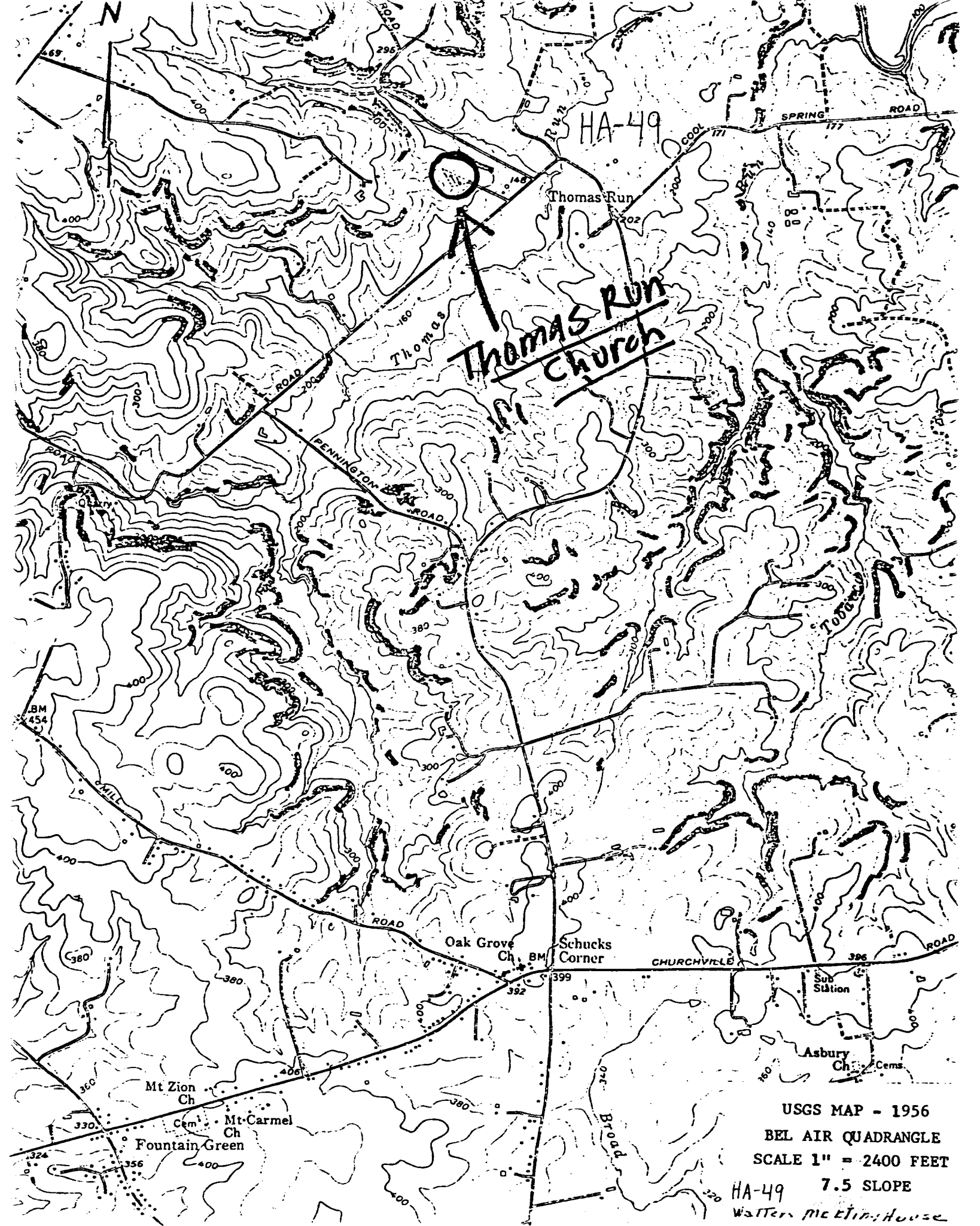
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- Harford County Land Records, Courthouse, Bel Air, Maryland.
- Baker, Gordon Pratt, ed. Those Incredible Methodists. Baltimore: Commission on Archives and History, Baltimore Conference, 1972.
- Bibbins, Mary Ruthella, ed. How Methodism Came: The Beginnings of Methodism in England and America. 1945.
- Clark, Elmer T., J. Manning Potts, and Jacob S. Payton, ed. The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury. Vol. I, 1958.
- McNeal, Hazel Little, ed. Diaries of Mittie Munnikhuysen. Vol. I: Life in Maryland, 1858-1860. 1963.
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- Wright, C. Milton. Our Harford Heritage, A History of Harford County, Maryland. 1967.





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**THOMAS RUN  
CHURCH**

SPRING ROAD

Thomas Run

Thomas

PENNINGTON ROAD

Oak Grove Ch.

Schucks Corner

CHURCHVILLE

Asbury Ch.

Mt. Zion Ch.

Mt. Carmel Ch.

Fountain Green

USGS MAP - 1956

BEL AIR QUADRANGLE

SCALE 1" = 2400 FEET

HA-49 7.5 SLOPE

WALTERS MEETING HOUSE



HA-49

Watters MEETING HOUSE

JSE Nov 69



1000000

HA-47

WATTERS MEETING HOUSE

357  
1000000



10502

HA 49

25A

Nov 69

WATTERS MEETING HOUSE