

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED APR 16 1979  
DATE ENTERED JUN 7 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

**NAME**

HISTORIC Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Church

AND/OR COMMON Taylor's Island Methodist Church or Old Brick Church

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER ~~East and west sides of Hoopers Neck Road, 1.8 miles from the bridge to the mainland~~ <sup>rd.</sup>

CITY, TOWN Taylor's Island VICINITY OF First

STATE Maryland CODE 24 COUNTY Dorchester CODE 019

**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	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Taylor's Island Methodist Church ✓

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Taylor's Island VICINITY OF Maryland STATE 21669

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Dorchester County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER High Street

CITY, TOWN Cambridge STATE Maryland 21613

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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"/> 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

Bethlehem M. E. Church or Old Brick Church is located on the east side of Hoopers Neck Road, two miles north of the bridge from Taylor's Island to the mainland. The brick structure sits very close to the road with the entrance gable facing west. Across the road is a very substantial cemetery dating from the middle of the 19th century.

The main facade (west gable end) of the church has a central entrance flanked by two windows with pilasters at the corners and a pediment over all. Each leaf of the double doors has two octagonal panels at the top and two at the bottom with two long octagonal panels in the center. Above the doors are two stationary elongated octagonal panels set back from the architrave, which is a rather simple facing with a very heavy cornice supported by brackets; below this cornice is a row of dentils. The two windows have 9/9 sash and cornices similar to that over the door. At the corners are brick pilasters with wooden capitals. Between these capitals and the pediment is a frieze with dentil molding. In the center of the pediment is a stone plaque reading: Bethlehem Methodist-Episcopal Church 1857.

At the apex of the roof in the front portion of the chapel is a square base with a wide, overhanging cornice supporting an octagonal belfry. Above this is an octagonal dome with a spire superimposed, making it look like an inverted ice cream cone. The spire is covered with copper, with a star at its apex.

The church is three bays deep, with three windows on each side with 9/9 sash and louvered shutters. Above each window is a recessed, semicircular arch. On each side of the building is a stepped brick cornice painted white to match the wood cornice across the front.

The front of the chapel is built of very smooth bricks laid in all stretcher bond with a very narrow mortar joint, while the rest of the building is constructed of common brick with a rather wide mortar joint in comparison to the front brickwork. At the rear of the building, as in most small Methodist chapels along the Eastern Shore, there is a small projection along the center of the gable. This is lighted by a 4/4 sash window on each side of the projection; there is no window in the back.

The interior is composed of an entrance hall with balcony above it and a large meeting room. The hall stretches across the front (west) end of the church and has a stair to the balcony in the northwest corner. Two double doors in the partition under the balcony lead to the meeting room. This partition is probably not original, but seems very early.

The meeting room retains the original pews divided by two aisles. There is a kerosene stove in the center of each side bank of pews. The projection described above from the exterior is just behind the altar. Some Victorian furniture remains in the church, in particular several benches behind the altar. The original organ, now electrified, sits in the southeast corner. A period kerosene fixture of five lamps hangs from the center of the ceiling; one kerosene lamp is attached to each of the surrounds on the east and center windows (the east ones have been electrified.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1.

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Bethlehem Methodist-Episcopal Church  
Dorchester County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

Early 20th century electric lights are also hung from the ceiling.

The balcony is supported by a single central column. There are recessed plastered arches above the large windows in both side walls.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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 checked="" 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

1857

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### SIGNIFICANCE

Architecturally, Bethlehem Church is the best example of a mid-19th century Methodist chapel in Dorchester County. It is also the only one to be built of brick and retains its original interior, down to the kerosene lamps and chandelier. The building is a simple, well constructed structure typical of the mid-19th century in form and detail.

This site has been used by the Methodists since the 18th century and is the first site connected with this denomination in Dorchester County. The fact that Bethlehem was one of the Methodist churches to split from the main church during the schism over slavery reflects the general conservatism of the Eastern Shore at that time, as well as the belief in the plantation system in this particular area of the Shore.

### HISTORY

The first chapel built on this site was donated by Moses and Elizabeth LeCompte. The deed granting the land and chapel to the trustees of the church is dated September 15, 1787, making it the oldest on record for Methodist Episcopal Church land in Dorchester County. The trustees at that time were Benjamin Keenes, Jr., William Geozhagan, Thomas Hooper, John Ashcom Travers, Peter Harrington, John Aaron, John Geogehan, John Robson, and Isaac Creighton. The deed reads that they are the "Trustees appointed to take the care and management of the Chapel lately built on Taylors for the use of the Ministers belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church." (NH 9/411.)

The chapel was built on a half-acre of the tract Patricks Progress. The trustees were "to care for the chapel and at all times admit those appointed by yearly conference of Methodists in America to preach and expound God's word and for no other purpose."

According to E. C. Hallman's book, The Garden of Methodism, Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Church was the first church built by the Methodists in Dorchester. The congregation organized in 1781 in Thomas Wollen's home and had their first chapel by 1787. This early building was sold when the present brick structure was built in 1857. The new church was "improved" in 1863 for \$900.

In 1860 the Methodist Episcopal Church divided over the slavery issue. The Peninsula Conference of the Church divided, and part went with the Baltimore Conference and part with the Virginia Conference. Sixteen charges on the Eastern Shore joined the Methodist Episcopal Church South and Bethlehem was one of them.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Flowers, Thomas A. Dorchester Tercentenary. 1969.
- Hallman, E. C. The Garden of Methodism. Peninsula Annual Conference of the Methodist Church. (Copy at Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.)
- Land Records of Dorchester County, Hall of Records, Annapolis.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.4 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	3 85	2 10	42 5 0	9 30	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on the east side of Hoopers Neck Road 1.8 miles north from the Maryland Route 16 bridge to the mainland and about 200 feet north of a side road, then moving east approximately 200 feet then north approximately 300 feet, then west approximately 400 feet, crossing Hoopers Neck Road, then south approximately 300 feet, then east approximately 200 feet, crossing Hoopers Neck Road to the point of beginning, containing 2.4 acres. (This acreage includes the church on the east side of the road and the cemetery on the west side.)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael Bourne, Architectural Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

April 1975

STREET & NUMBER

21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

(301) 269-2438

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

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

4-6-79

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer, Maryland

DATE

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Charles H. Adams*  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST *Emma Jane Sapp*

*Little* DATE 6-7-79  
DATE 6/6/79  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
Regional Review Coordinator

RECEIVED

APR 16 1899

NATIONAL REGISTER

(SHARPS ISLAND)

17'30"



*Bethlehem  
M.E. Church*

*Taylor's Island Quad*



Hooper Cove

Oyster Cove

Cators Cove

Davis

Creek

Bethlehem

Chapel Cove

Grace Ch

Taylor's Island

SLAUGHTER

SLAUGHTER

Buzzard Island Creek

SLAUGHTER