

VLR-4/15/75 NRHP-5/21/75

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Mathews
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Methodist Tabernacle

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Methodist Tabernacle

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: South side of Route 611; .1 mile southeast of intersection of Route 611 and Route 644.

CITY OR TOWN: (Tabernacle vicinity) CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: First (Thomas N. Downing)

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: Mathews CODE: 115

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	not in use	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Robert C. Hutson and Kathleen P. Hutson

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Diggs STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Mathews County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Mathews STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Mathews
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Methodist Tabernacle stands in a flat, cleared field amidst the woods of Mathews County. It is surrounded by a shallow ditch that helps to drain the low-lying land, and in addition reputedly prevented worshippers from driving too close to the building. A large, open pavilion, it was built in 1922 to cover the meeting area and replaces an earlier structure erected around 1879.

The hipped roof of the tabernacle is slightly longer than it is wide, is covered by asphalt shingles, and is surmounted by a hipped clerestory monitor with wooden shutters which might be opened to allow the heat to escape. The whole is supported on square wooden posts set in the ground and steadied by angle braces. There are twenty-one rows of wooden benches on the dirt floor, arranged along three aisles. These aisles are expressed on the facade by three light wooden arches between the posts and three corresponding steeply pitched gablets along the eaves above them.

At the opposite end of the building is the speakers platform which stretches the full width of the building and is faced with vertical matchboard. A central pulpit in a recess is flanked on each of three sides by four ascending tiers of pews for the choir and other participants. Latticework screens close the outside edges of the platform which can be reached by two flights of stairs at the rear.

The interior of the Tabernacle is painted white throughout. The whole is in a good state of preservation, and all of its accoutrements are intact. The new owner intends to make necessary repairs and then return the building to religious uses.

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**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1922

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/XXXX	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<del>XXXXX</del>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	itarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Methodist Tabernacle in Mathews County is a rare example in Virginia of an early twentieth century revival meeting facility. It is especially noteworthy for having been preserved with its original furnishings and its rural setting intact.

Revivals have been a recurrent feature of American social history since the First Great Awakening of the 1740s. These were believed to be spontaneous divine gifts, however, and it was not until the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century that the possibility of creating a revival by "the right use of constituted means", in the words of one leading proponent, was recognized. Camp meetings grew out of this movement to create revivals. The early meetings consisted primarily of exhortations by a number of preachers, often holding forth simultaneously at different locations throughout the encampment, along with some congregational hymn singing.

The Methodists were among the first and most enthusiastic supporters of the revivals, and as the nineteenth century wore on and the practice grew more routine and more institutionalized, they easily adopted "protracted meetings" as a regular feature of Methodist life. In the later years of the century, many revivalists had become highly polished performers. Some accomplished preachers like Dwight L. Moody and, in the early twentieth century, Billy Sunday staged elaborate productions featuring such amenities as professional choirs.

The Methodist Tabernacle in Mathews is a product of this era. Revivals were no longer either surprising, as in the eighteenth century, or infrequent products of itinerant evangelists, as in the nineteenth century, but rather regularly scheduled events. Thus, it was reasonable to build a permanent structure to house them. This building has a platform which is really a stage with the preacher placed at the center and his choir arranged in tiers on three sides of him. There is a "mourners' bench" along the front of the platform, a feature conceived by the Methodists during the Second Great Awakening. Finally, because the Tabernacle is a product of the automobile age, there was no need actually to live at the site. So many people drove, in fact, that it was necessary to construct a ditch around the building to keep them from driving right to the threshold, as they did at the nearby Holiness Tabernacle, no longer extant.

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

History of American Methodist, Vol. II. Nashville, 1964.  
 Johnson, Charles. The Frontier Camp Meeting. 1954.  
 McLoughlin, William G. Modern Revivalism. 1959.  
 Sweet, W. W. History of Virginia Methodism. Richmond, 1955.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

UTM References:  
18/385260/4142260

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 6 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE: April 1975

STREET AND NUMBER:  
221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond

STATE: Virginia

CODE: 51

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.  
 Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Exec. Director  
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date APR 15 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

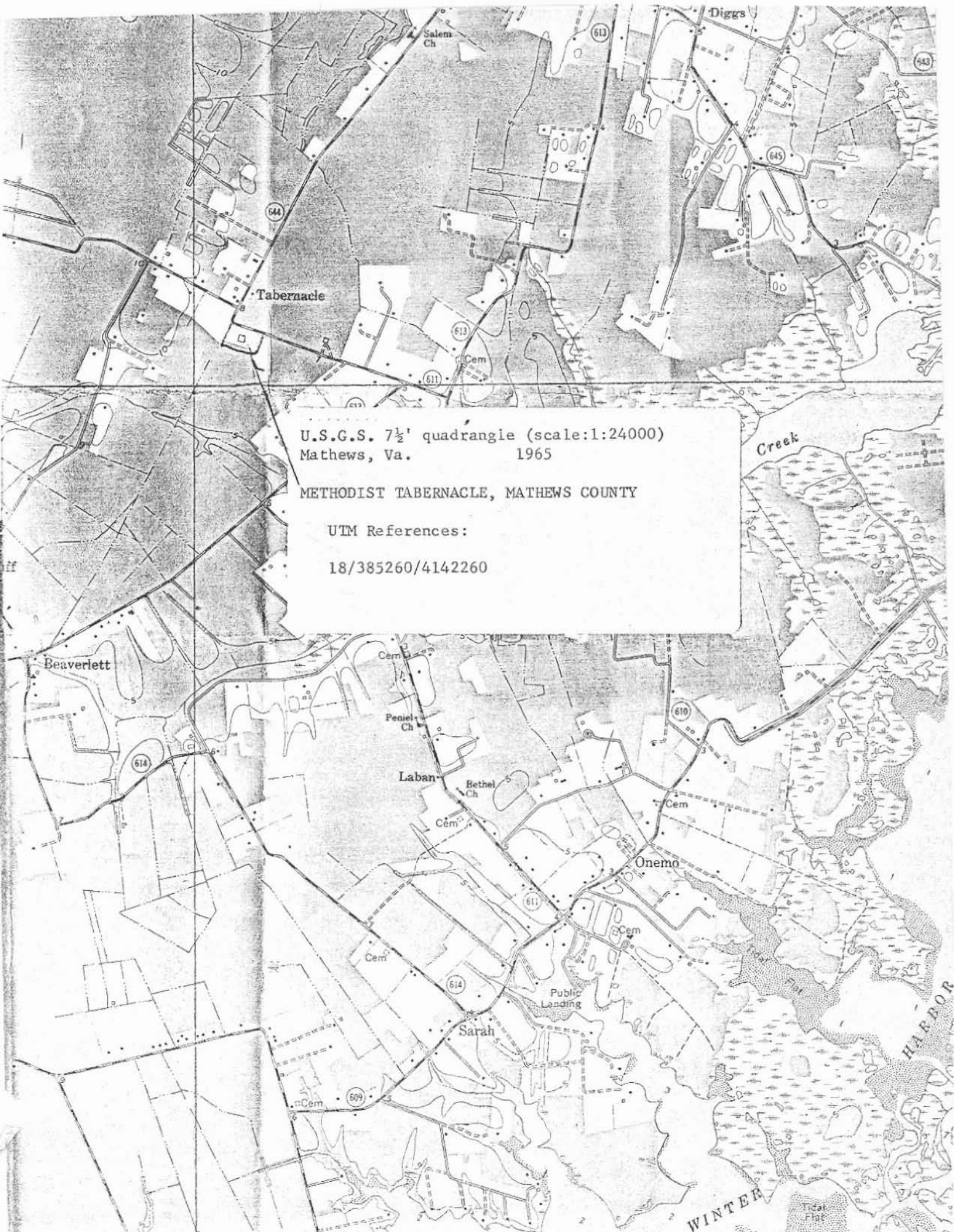
\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
Mathews, Va. 1965

METHODIST TABERNACLE, MATHEWS COUNTY

UTM References:

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