B-3690

Taylor's Chapel

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

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Last Updated: 05-26-2011

NPS Form 10-900 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

B-3690

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic: Taylor's Chapel

and or common: Taylor's Chapel

2. Location

street & number: 6001 Hillen Road, Mount Pleasant Park — n/a not for publication

city, town: Baltimore — n/a vicinity of — congressional district: Third

state: Maryland — code: 24 — county: independent city — code: 510

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	X religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	X yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	X not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name: St. John's of Hamilton United Methodist Church — Ellen Brown, John H. Campbell

street & number: 5315 Harford Road

city, town: Baltimore — n/a vicinity of — state: Maryland — 21214

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: Baltimore County - Clerk of the Circuit Court Recording Division

street & number: County Courts Building - 401 Bosley Avenue

city, town: Towson — state: Maryland — 21204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title: Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory — has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes X no

e: April 1983 — ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records: Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town: Annapolis — state: Maryland — 21401

7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	X unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	___ altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

Taylor's Chapel is located in a quarter acre fenced-in plot (that also includes a graveyard) within Mount Pleasant Park in northeast Baltimore. It is a small (approximately 25' X 36') simple mid-nineteenth century country church. It is rectangular, built of stone, covered with stucco, painted white and has a gable roof. It has Greek Revival stylistic elements, including the overall proportions of the building as well as a classical door surround and classical pediments and cornices. Inside there are frescoes on the walls and ceiling, attributed by tradition to the Italian-American painter Constantino Brumidi. The frescoes are trompe l'oeil paintings of classical architectural detailing, including pilasters, panels, coffering, and ornaments. The building has not been altered since its construction in 1853, and thus retains its integrity.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The main (eastern) facade is two and a half stories high and about 25' wide. In the center of the first story there is a wide double-door entrance flanked by wooden pilasters which support an entablature and cornice above. On either side of the entrance there is a 6/6 window. On the second story there are two 6/6 windows and in the attic level there is a small round opening with a decorative grill. Decorative molding, dentils, and modillions line the eaves.

Both the north and south sides have only two tall 6/6 windows with stone sills. The east side has only one smaller 6/6 window in the center. All of the windows in the entire building have louvered wooden shutters that are painted dark green.

The interior is a single rectangular room with a small gallery at the rear supported on two columns and approached by a small wooden staircase. The interior space rises above the tops of the walls, and the ceiling is level in the middle while along the sides it follows the sloped planes of the gable roof.

The interior is furnished with wooden pews on the main floor, and a wooden bench in the gallery. At the front there is a wide wooden pulpit on a raised podium flanked by two tall, round, tapered lamp posts. Surrounding the podium and lamp posts there is a low wooden balustrade with thin turned spindles. The pulpit and lamp posts are painted white while the balustrade has a unpainted finish.

Gas and electricity were never installed in the building; it is lighted by a large number of glass-chimneyed oil lamps installed around the room, both on wall sconces and on the furnishings; the building is heated by a large iron pot-belly stove placed prominently near the middle of the room just off the center aisle.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

All of the interior wall and ceiling surfaces are covered with frescoed plaster (except for the facing of the gallery parapet, which is wood-paneled). The frescoes depict no figures or themes, but are strictly neo-classical architectural trompe l'oeil. Around all four walls there are illusory pilasters and recessed panels. The ceiling appears to be coffered around the perimeter, with a large panel in the middle. In the center of this panel is a large elaborate painted cartouche. An elaborate border is painted around the perimeter of this central panel. Elsewhere on the ceiling there are small rosettes and other decorative accents.

This interior painting is true fresco, where the paint was applied to wet plaster, the pigments mixing into the plaster base. The colors are mainly subdued shades of gray and buff.

Integrity of the building: The building has not been substantially altered either on the inside or outside since its construction in 1853; the original furnishings, the original stove, and the original lighting system all remain; the frescoes, while now in need of restoration, are nevertheless fully visible and fully convey the architectural illusions they were designed for. Thus, the building retains its integrity.

Integrity of the setting: Taylor's Chapel was originally a private chapel on the grounds of a country estate. Part of that country estate is now Mount Pleasant Park. The chapel stands in a fenced-in plot that is surrounded by the public park. Thus, the setting remains buffered from dense urban development, and retains some of its rural quality.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	_X_ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	_X_ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
_X_ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates constructed 1853 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Applicable Criterion: C

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

Taylor's Chapel is significant for its architecture, as a small private family chapel embodying Greek Revival stylistic influence, and for the high artistic values represented by the frescoe decoration of its interior. The building is one of only two extant 19th century private chapels within Baltimore city limits; the other, located on the Crimea estate in Leakin Park in west Baltimore, is a Gothic-influenced frame structure. Notable stylistic features of Taylor's Chapel include its classical proportions and restrained exterior embellishment, comprising a dentilled cornice and an entrance framed by pilasters supporting an entablature. The interior walls and ceiling are adorned with frescoes depicting classical architectural elements in trompe l'oeil; these frescoes are attributed by tradition, supported by circumstantial evidence, to the Italian-American artist Constantino Brumidi, noted for his extensive work in the U. S. Capital and possibly the first artist to introduce Italian frescoe painting in America. The building's architectural and artistic significance is enhanced by its unusually high level of integrity; it has remained completely unaltered since its construction in 1853.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Mount Pleasant Park, in which the chapel stands, was originally part of the vast Taylor family plantation, originally called "Taylor's Range", later "Home Farm" (including the time when the present chapel was built), and, by the last members of the family to live there, "Mount Pleasant." There has been a chapel there since about 1770, and the present building is the third on the same site. (The first one was built of logs, and the second one was a frame building.

The original reason for the Taylors to build their own chapel dates back to the mid-eighteenth century. The Taylor family had changed religious affiliations a number of times, having been both Anglicans and Quakers. In 1755 then pater familius Joseph Taylor was "disowned" by the Quaker community for various infractions, and when he left the organization, his family and a large extended family followed. Still adhering to Quaker beliefs, and wishing to maintain Quaker practices, the Taylors began holding Quaker meetings in their own home; by 1770 they had built a log meeting house on the site of the present chapel.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

Sometime in the late eighteenth century, Joseph Taylor's heirs converted to Methodism, and the Quaker meeting house became a Methodist chapel. In 1853 the present stone and stucco Greek Revival chapel was built by Elijah Taylor, then head of the family plantation. The present Chapel was always Methodist, but the Taylors had a family tradition, perhaps from their Quaker heritage, of making the chapel available to itinerant preachers of several denominations. While privately owned and on private land it was attended by a congregation that included people from the neighboring countryside, and there is a provision in Elijah Taylor's will of 1863 that the road providing public access to his chapel remain permanently open. Thus, what had begun as a private family chapel had developed into a privately hosted church for a more general congregation.

In 1900 a later Joseph Taylor willed the chapel and graveyard to the Board of Trustees of Taylor's Chapel (which is now part of St. John's of Hamilton Methodist Church). In 1918 the city boundaries expanded to incorporate this area, and in 1925 the City purchased the remainder of the Taylor estate around the chapel and graveyard for use as a public park.

Constantino Brumidi (1805-1880), the artist to whom the interior frescoes are attributed, was born and trained in Rome. He studied under the two most influential neo-classical painters in Rome of the early nineteenth century, Vincenzo Camuccini and the Danish Bertel Thorwaldsen, and went on to do extensive work in the Torlonia Palace as well as in the Vatican. In 1852, amid political turbulence in Italy, Brumidi came to America. He did a large amount of fresco work in the U. S. Capitol between 1855 and 1877, including the murals om the dome, painted 1862-1865. He also painted the insides of large churches in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, and of the cathedral in Mexico City. He was one of the first artists (possibly the first) to introduce Italian fresco technique to America.

It is not known precisely how Brumidi met the Taylor family, but it is known that during his early years in America he was a friend and frequent visitor to the Taylors at their "Home Farm" estate, where the chapel is located. As a recently arrived immigrant whose reputation as an artist was not yet established in America, visiting a family in the process of building a small private chapel, it is entirely plausible that he would have hired out his talents, or simply repaid their hospitality, by decorating that chapel. This is especially likely in view of the neo-classical style of the frescoes, a style in which Brumidi painted even when it was unfashionable, and in view of the wet plaster technique.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Baigell, Matthew; Dictionary of American Art; Harper & Row; New York; 1979.
Loeschke, Naomi and Carroll T. Sinclair; History of Taylor's Chapel-1770-1968; published by St. John's of Hamilton Methodist Church; Baltimore; 2968
Land records and probate records of Baltimore City and County

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property about ¼ acre

Quadrangle name Baltimore East, MD Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	364080	435800
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

For Boundary Description see attached map. The nominated property includes only the quarter-acre fenced plot which encompasses that resource and provides its immediate setting.

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

state n/a	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Jeffrey Honick, Research Analyst		
organization	Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation	date	April 1983
street & number	601 City Hall	telephone	(301) 396-4866.
city or town	Baltimore	state	Maryland 21201

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature J. Mitchell 6-20-83

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS use only

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

date

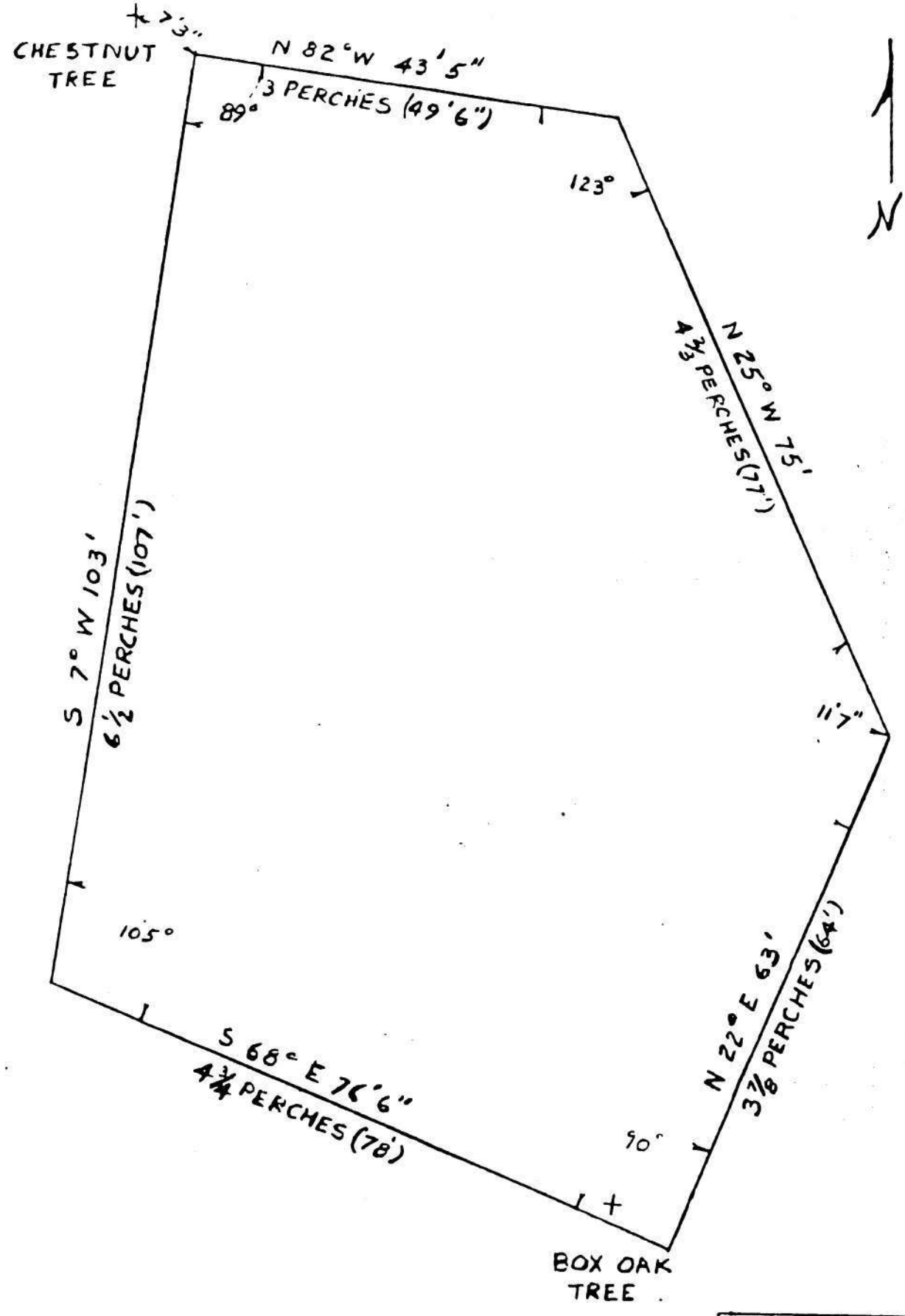
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

GPO 938 835

B-3690



1 INCH = 1 PERCH (16½ FT.)

TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
MT. PLEASANT BALTO. MD.
UNOFFICIAL SURVEY
SURVEYOR:-THOMAS GUILD

TAYLOR'S CHAPEL

BUR. GROUND
MOUNT PLEASAN
HALTO [illegible]

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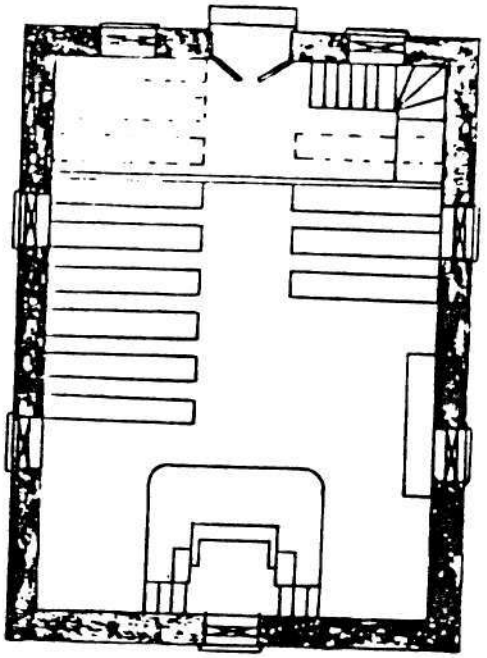

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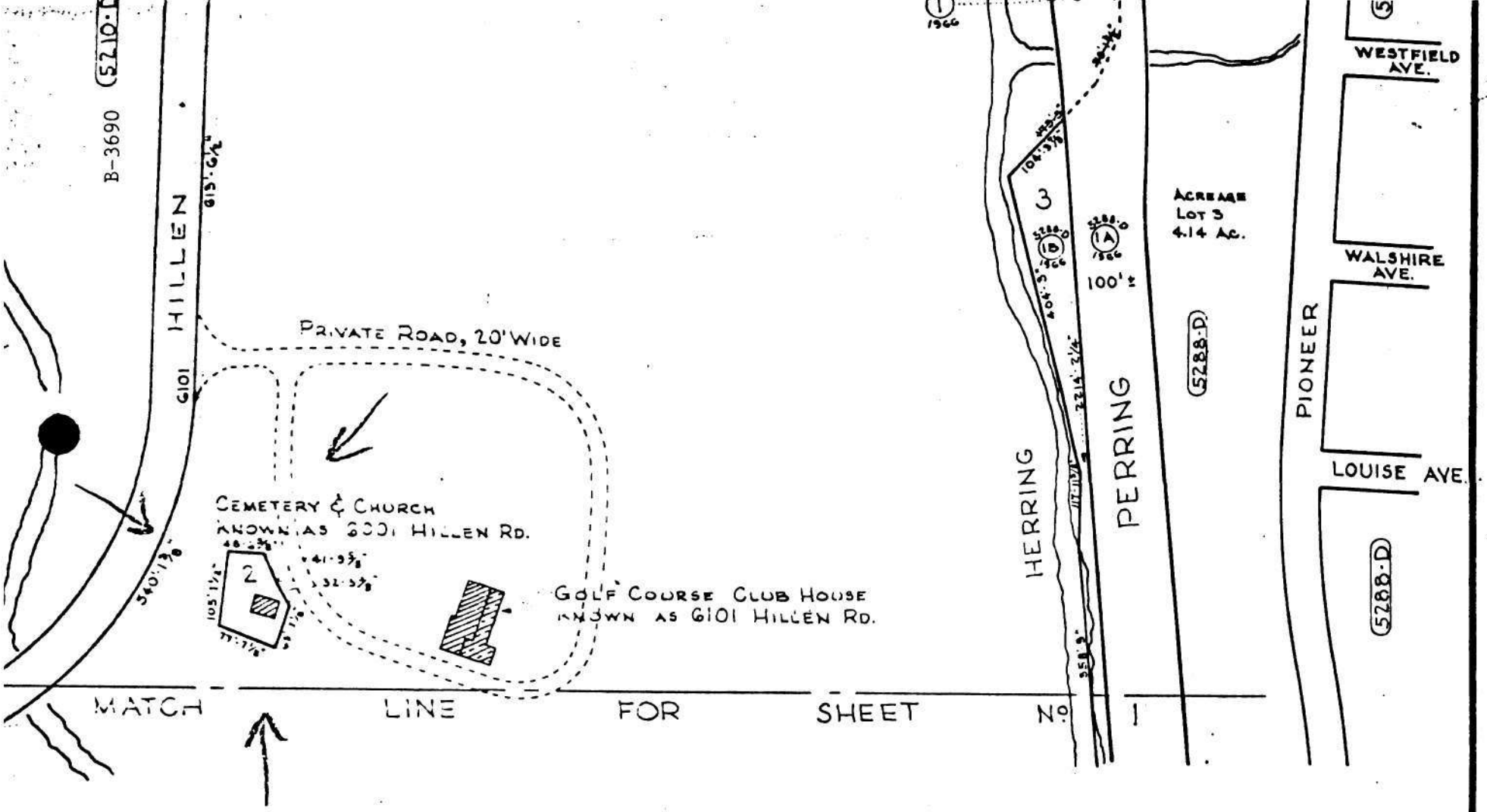


CITY OF BALTIMORE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

PROPERTY LOCATION DIVISION

WARD 27 SECTION 29/30

BLOCK 5288-B

SCALE 1"=200' DATE 1-25-66

NOTICE

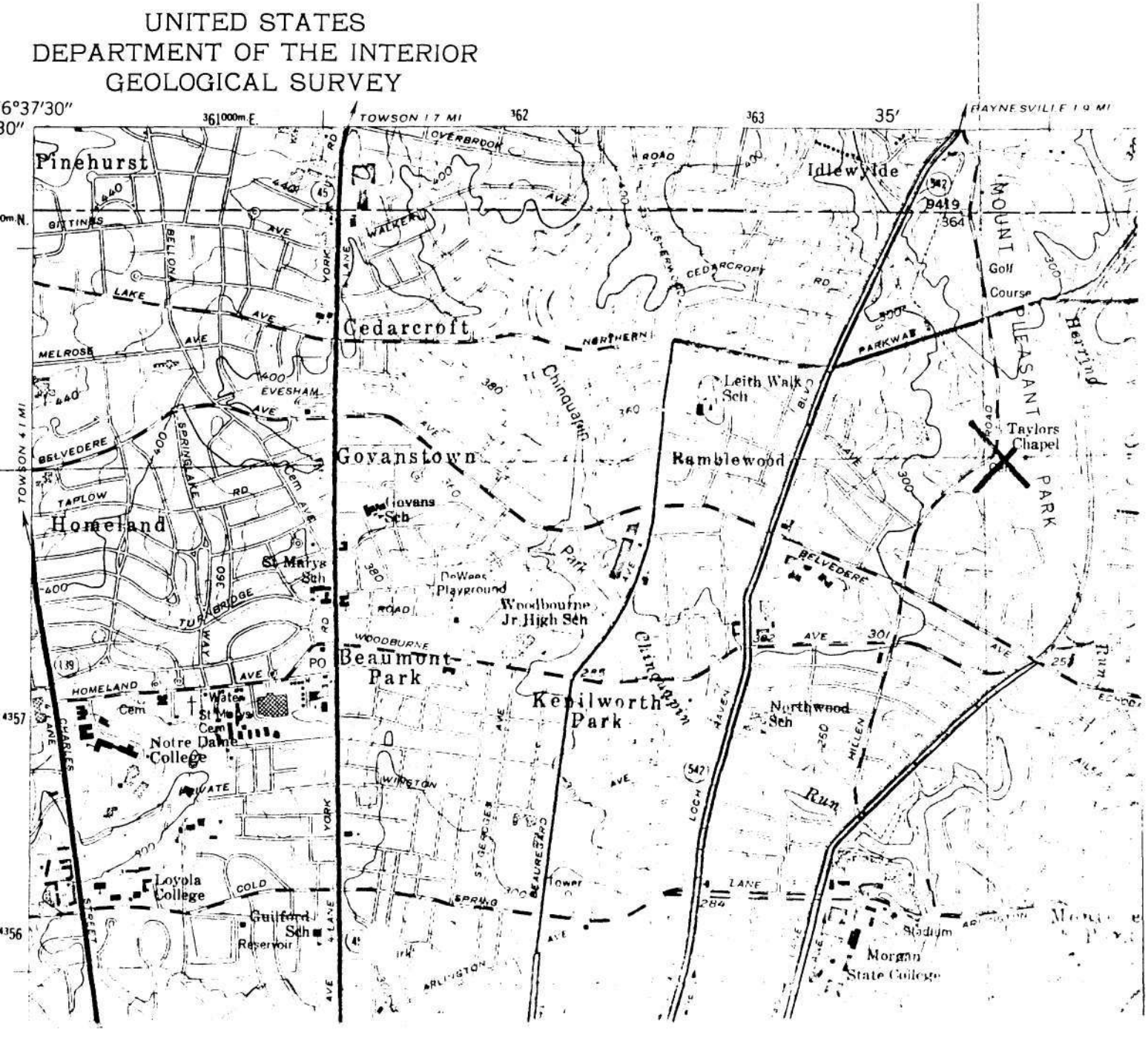
THIS IS A REAL PROPERTY PLAT AS PROVIDED FOR UNDER ARTICLE 76(d) OF THE CITY CHARTER IT IS COMPILED FROM TITLE AND OTHER SOURCES AND IS NOT AN AUTHENTIC SURVEY.

ET. 3
No. 2

5662 I NW
(COCKEYSVILLE)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

B-3690
TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
BALTIMORE CITY, MD.
18-364080-4358000



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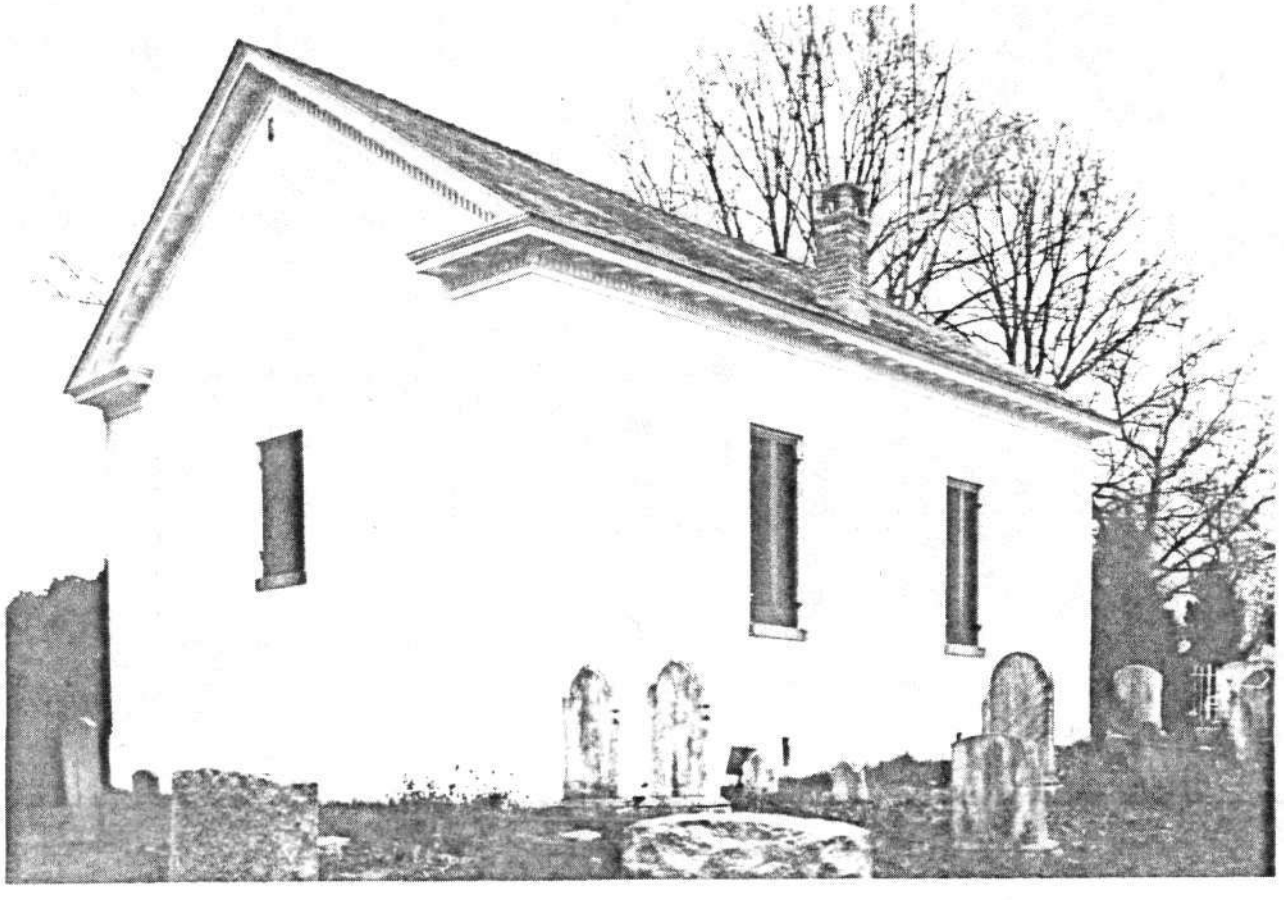

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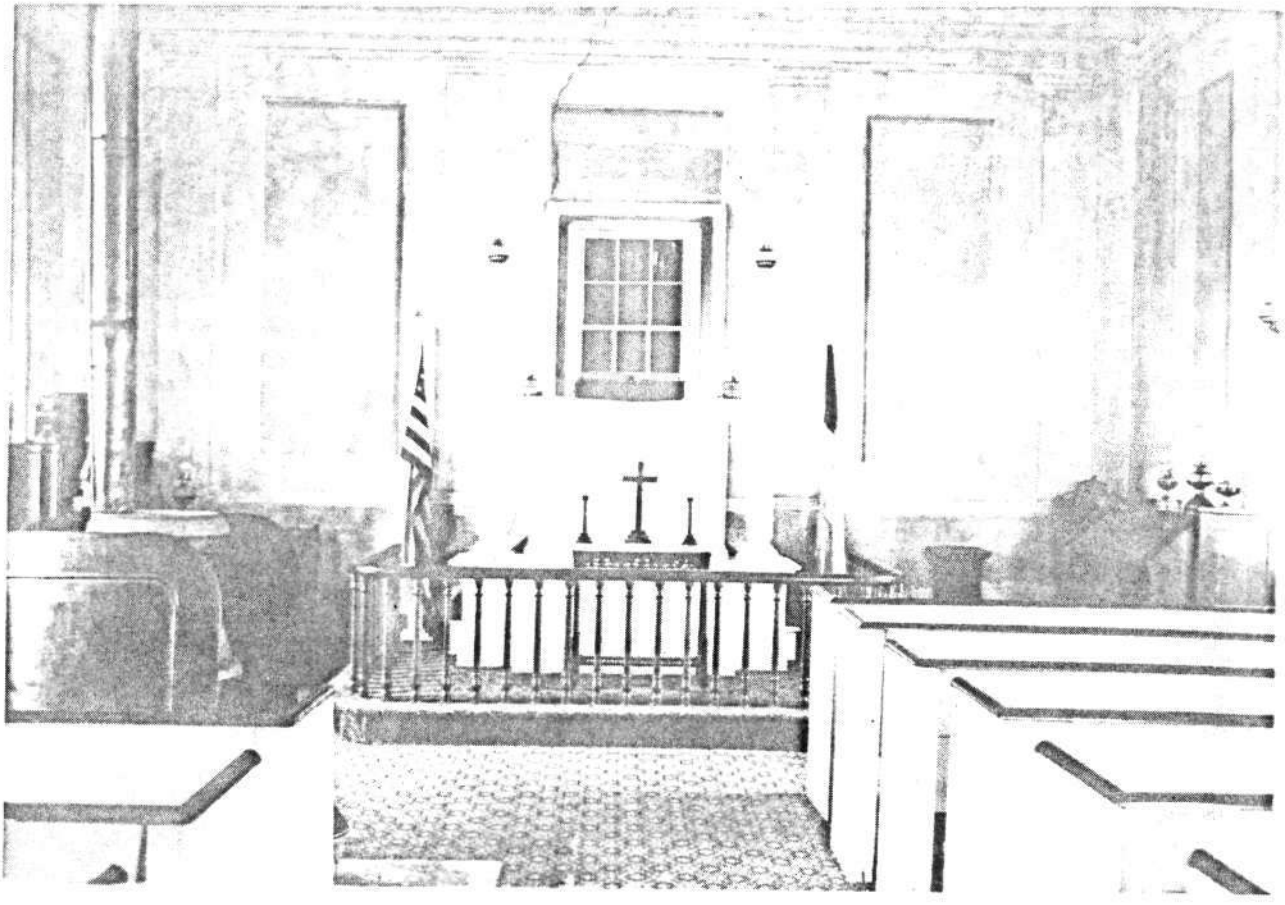
Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Negs. at C.H.A.P., 601 City Hall, Baltimore
Maryland 21201
view from northeast
1/11

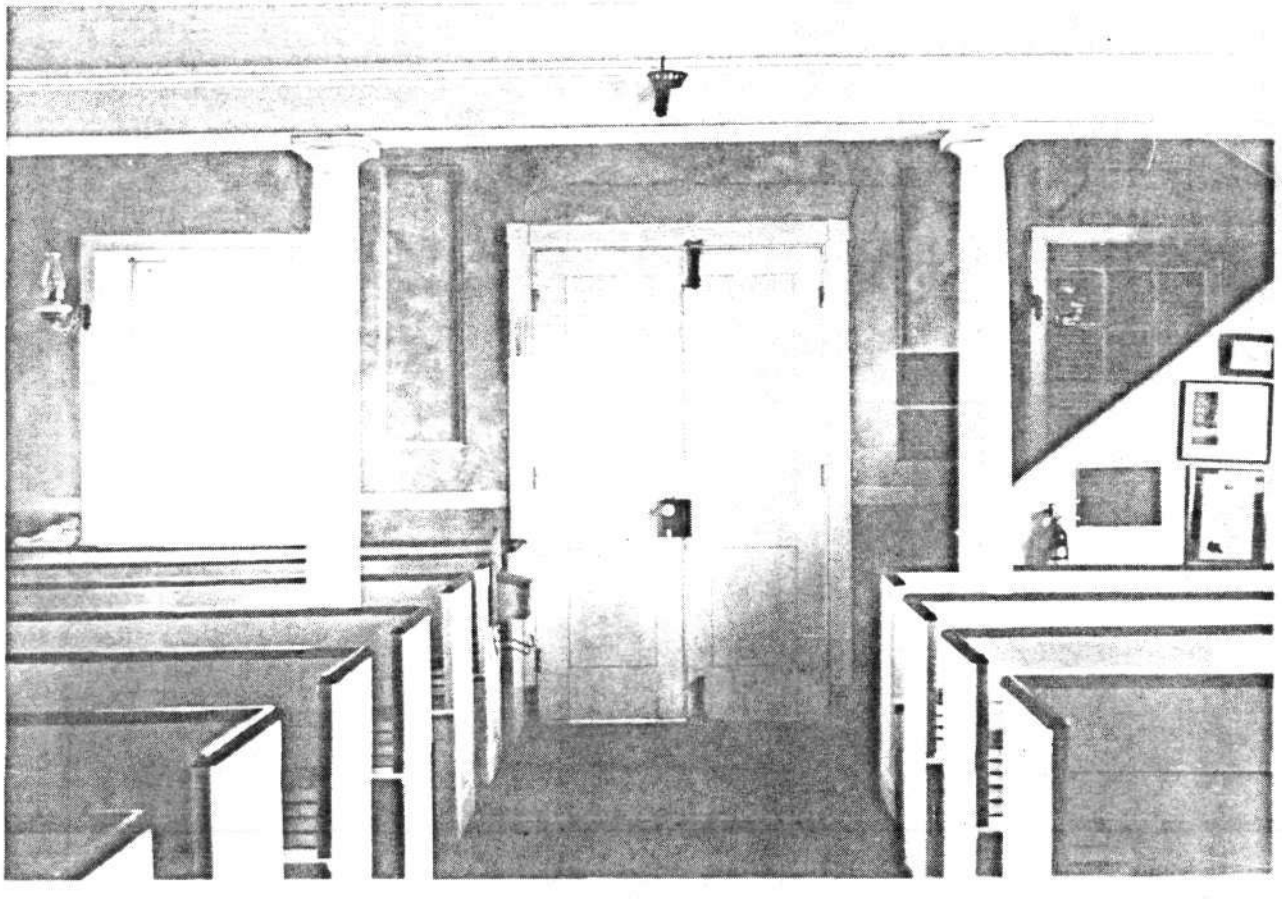
TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
JEFFREY HONICK
APRIL 1983
C. H. A. P.
VIEW FROM NORTHEAST.

Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Negs. at C.H.A.P., 601 City Hall, Baltimore
Maryland 21202
view from southwest
2/11

TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
JEFFREY HONICK
APRIL 1983
C. H. A. P.
VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST

B-3690





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Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Negs. at C.H.A.P., 601 City Hall, Baltimore
Maryland 21202
interior
3/11

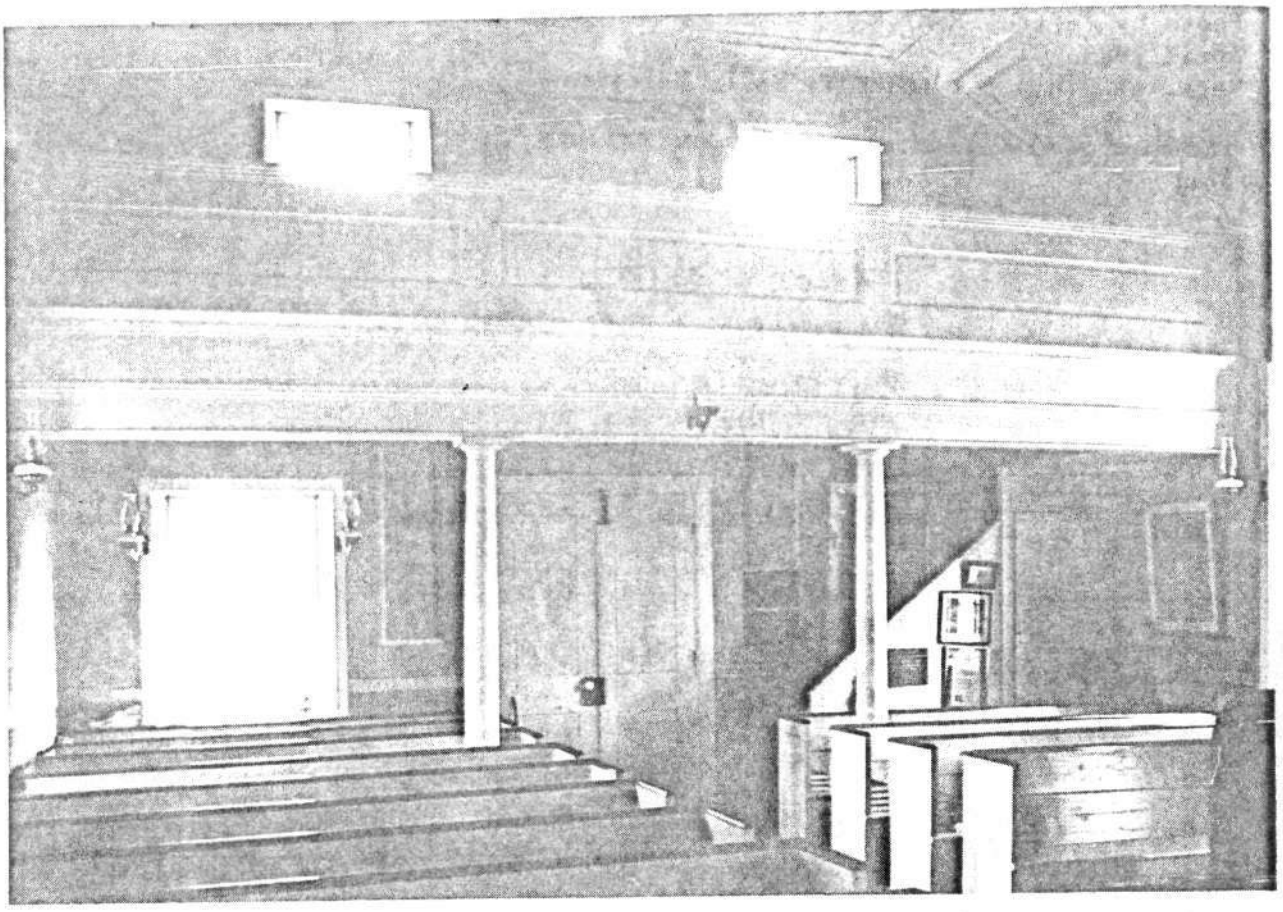
TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
JEFFREY HONICK
APRIL 1983
C.H.A.P.
INTERIOR

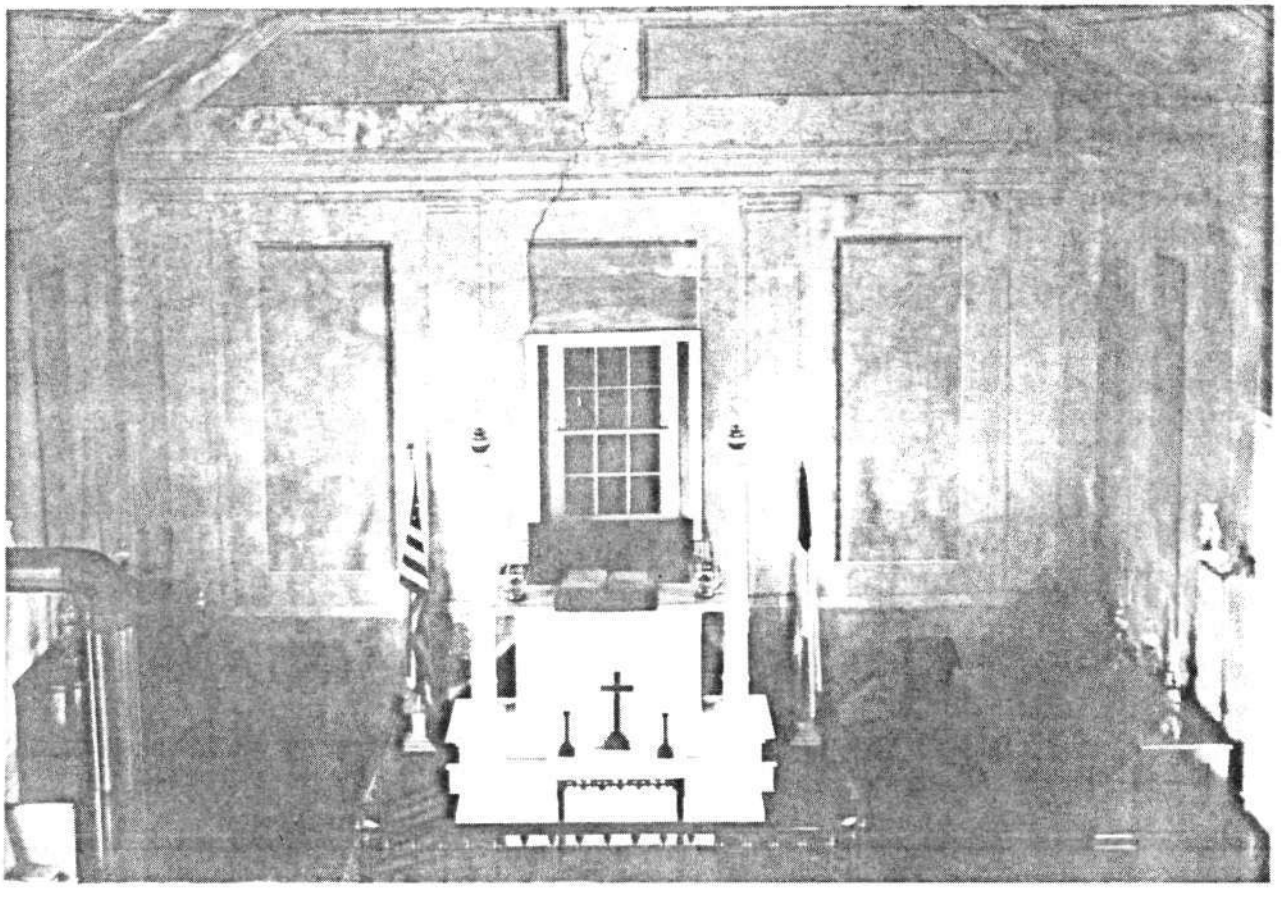
Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Negs. at C.H.A.P., 601 City Hall, Baltimore
Maryland 21202

interior - entrance
4/11

TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
JEFFREY HONICK
APRIL 1983
C.H.A.P.
INTERIOR - ENTRANCE

B-3690





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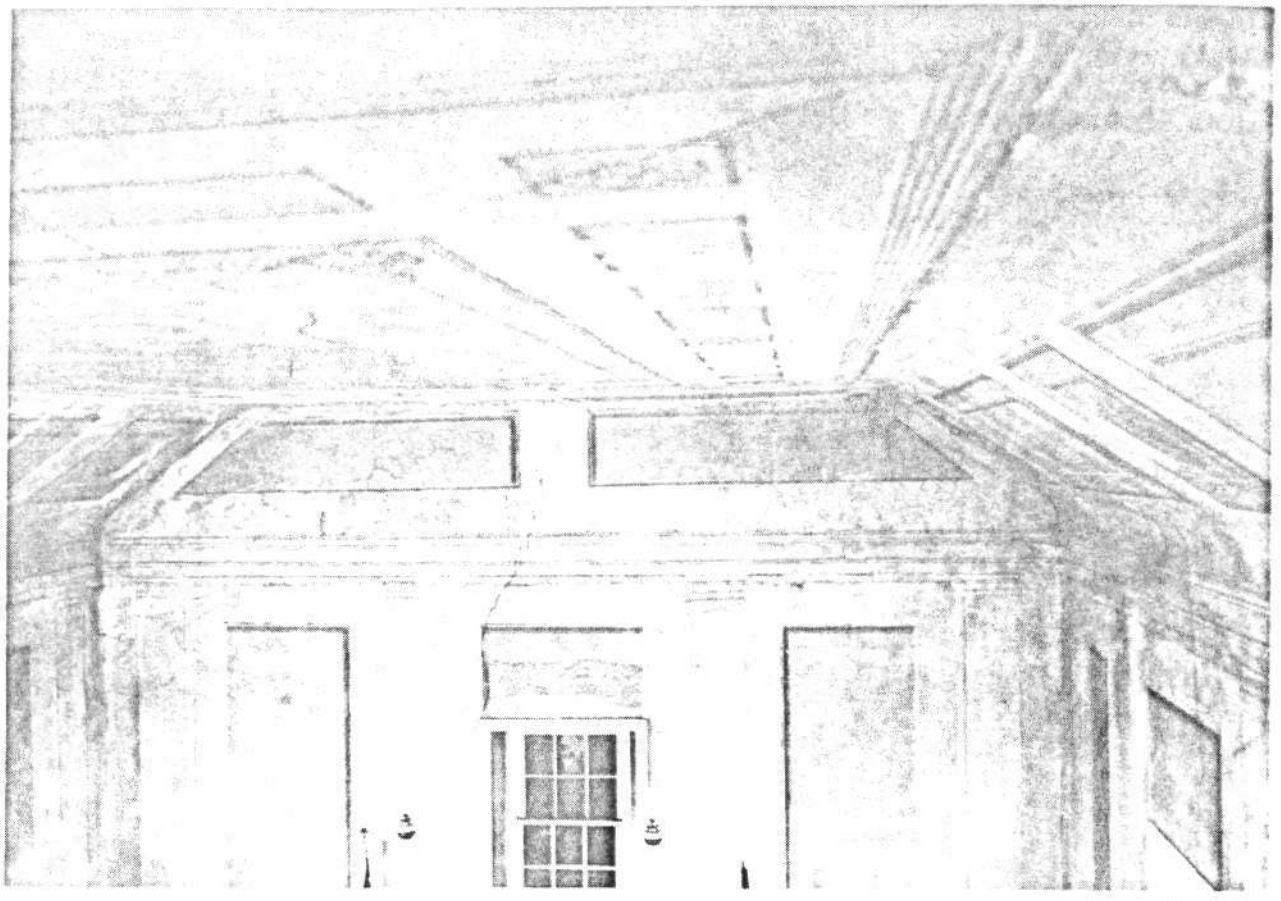
Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Negs. at C.H.A.P., 601 City Hall, Baltimore
Maryland 21202
interior - view toward entrance and gallery
5/11

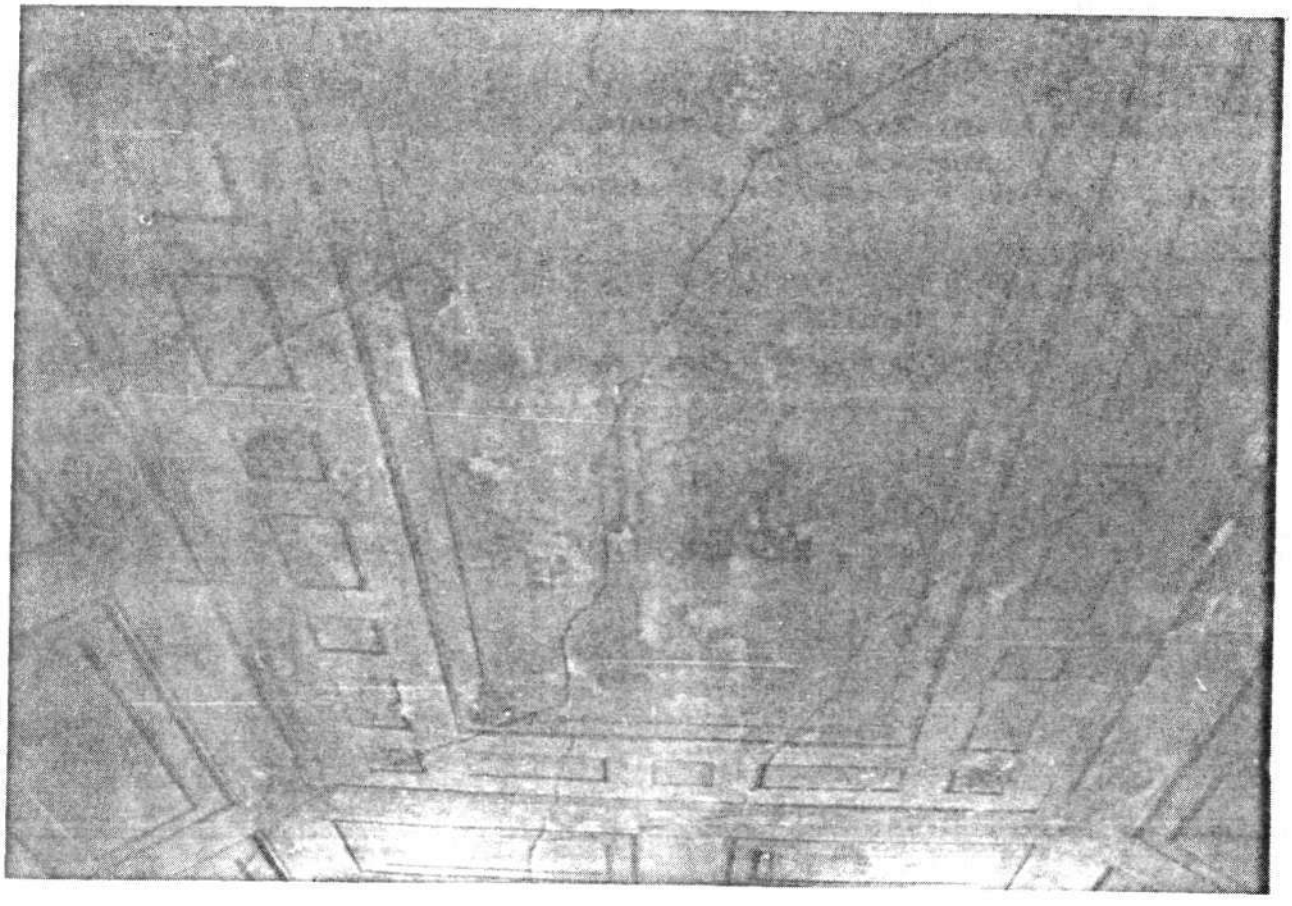
TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
JEFFREY HONICK
APRIL 1983
C. H. A. P.
INTERIOR - VIEW TOWARD ENTRANCE & GALLERY

Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Negs. at C.H.A.P., 601 City Hall, Baltimore
Maryland 21202
interior - view from gallery
6/11

TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
JEFFREY HONICK
APRIL 1983
C. H. A. P.
INTERIOR - VIEW FROM GALLERY

B-3690





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Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Negs. at C.H.A.P., 601 City Hall, Baltimore
Maryland 21202

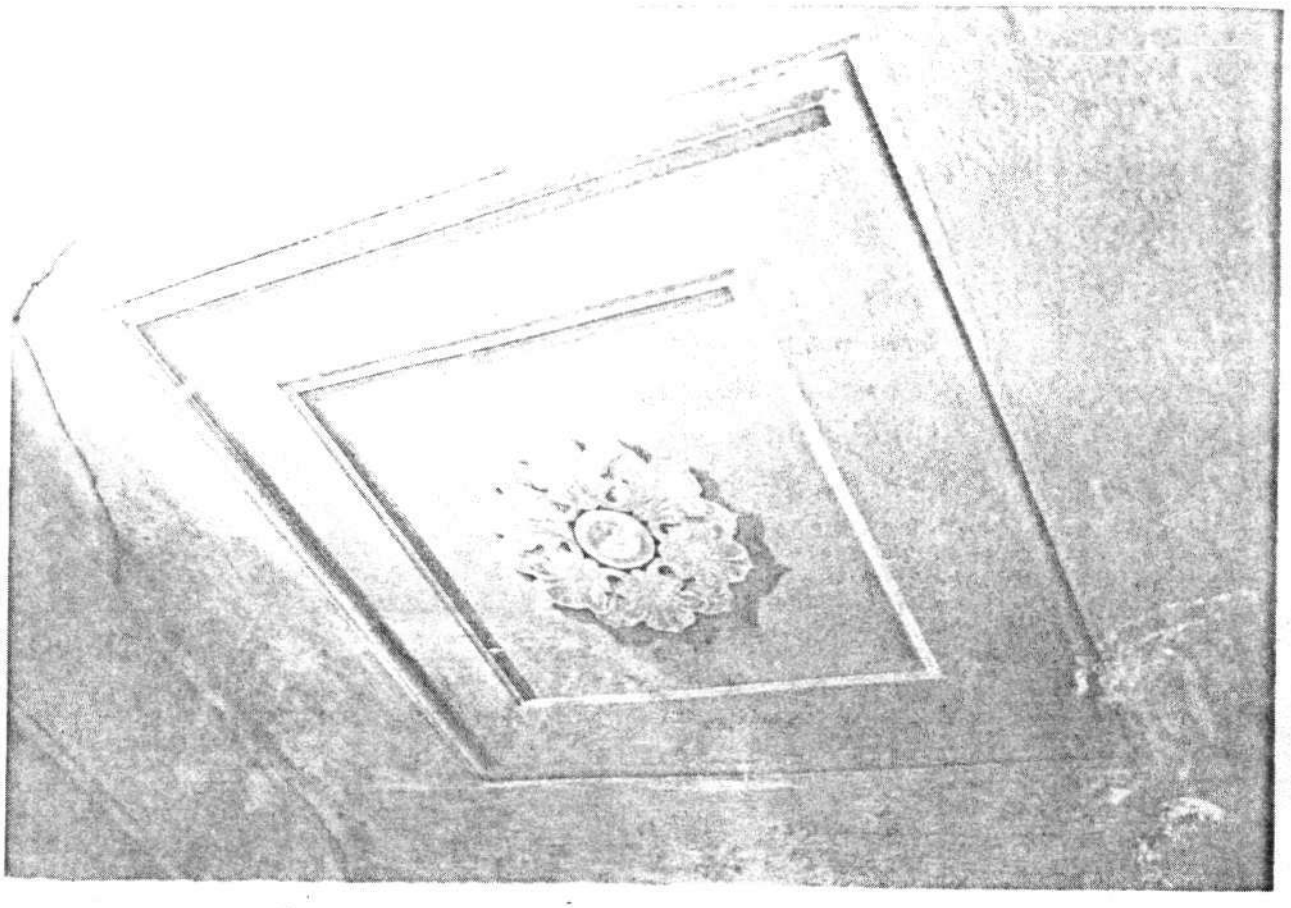
interior - ceiling
7/11

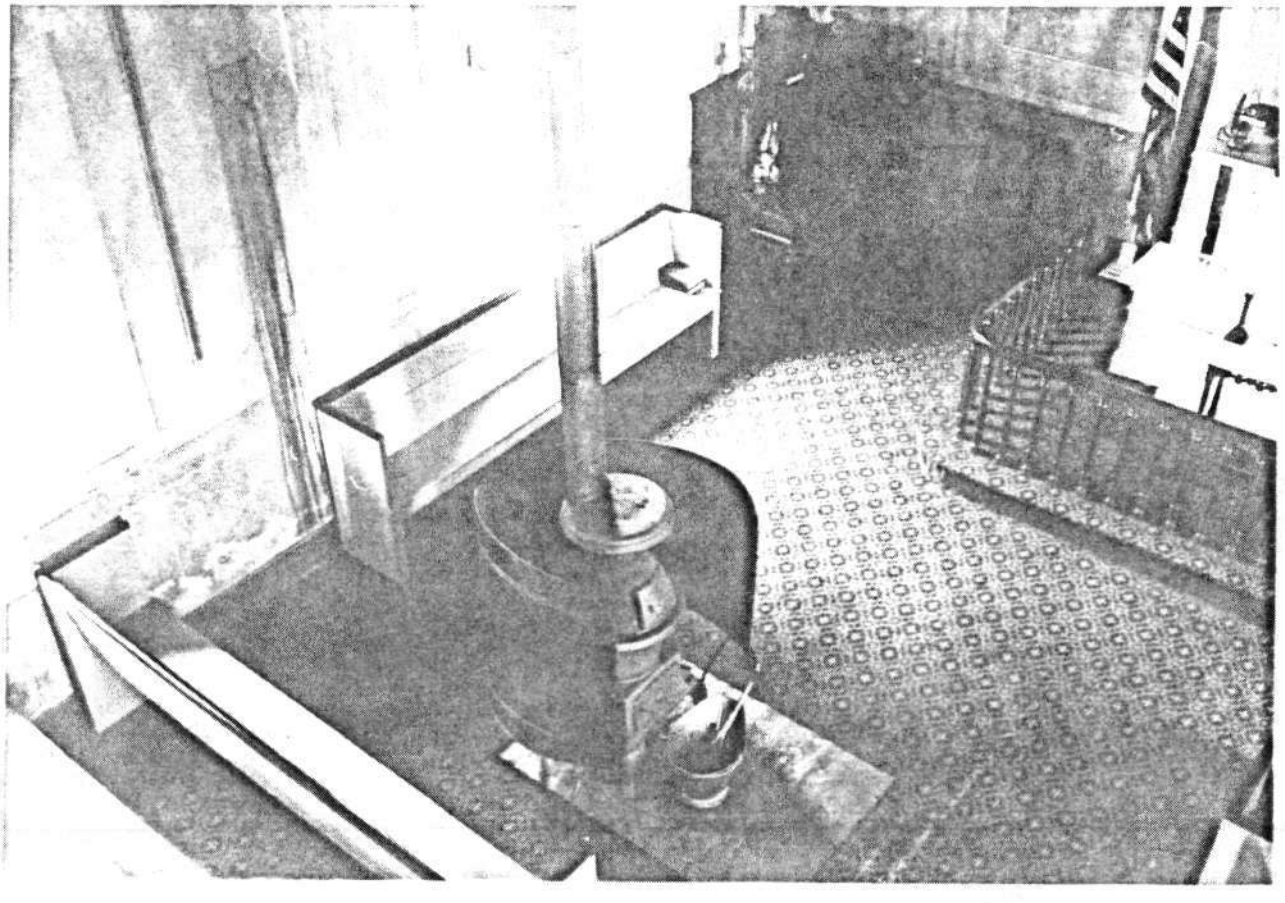
TAYLOR'S CHAPEL B-3690
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
JEFFREY HONICK, PHOTOGRAPHER
C. H. A. P.
APRIL 1983
INTERIOR - CEILING

Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Neg. at C.H.A.P. 601 City Hall, Baltimore,
Maryland 21202
interior - ceiling - trompe L'oeil frescoes
8/11

TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
JEFFREY HONICK
APRIL 1983
C. H. A. P.
INTERIOR - CEILING - TROMPE L'OEIL FRESCOES

B-3690





B-3690

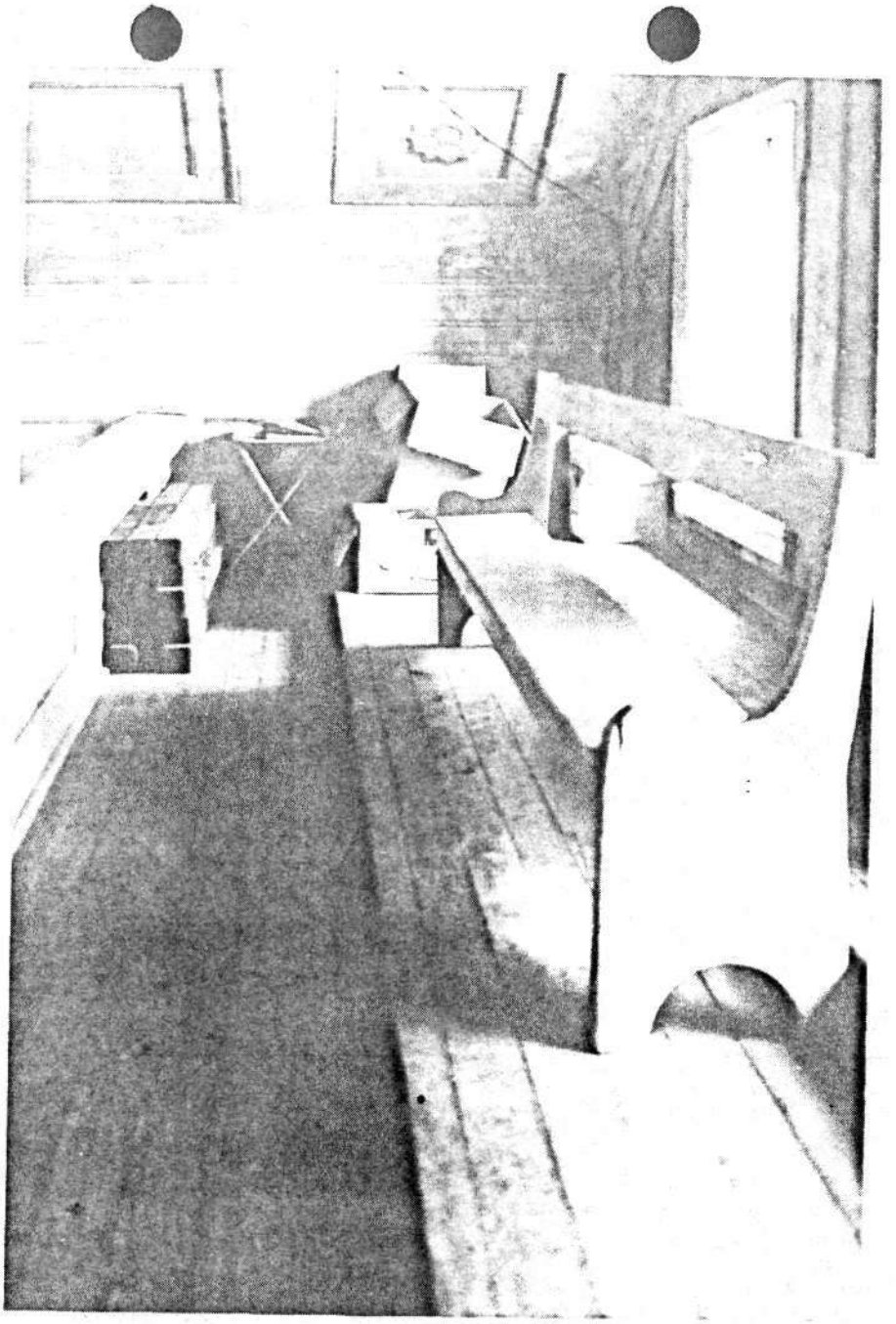
Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Neg. at C.H.A.P., 601 City Hall, Baltimore,
Maryland 21202
interior ceiling detail
9/11

TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
JEFFREY HONICK
APRIL 1983
C. H. A. P.
INTERIOR - CEILING DETAIL

Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Neg. at C.H.A.P. 601 City Hall, Baltimore,
Maryland 21202
interior - view from gallery toward iron stove
10/11

TAYLOR'S CHAPEL
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
JEFFREY HONICK
APRIL 1983
C. H. A. P.
INTERIOR - VIEW FROM GALLERY TOWARD
IRON STOVE

B-3690



Taylor's Chapel
Baltimore City, Maryland
Photo by Jeffrey Honick
April 1983
Neg. at C.H.A.P. 601 City Hall, Baltimore,
Maryland 21202
interior - gallery
11/11