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1/20/15

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Mt. Olive Methodist Episcopal Church

other names/site number DHR File No. 053-0994

#### 2. Location

street & number 20460 Gleedsville Road not for publication \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Leesburg vicinity X

state Virginia code VA county Loudoun code 107 Zip 20175

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_ 1/20/15  
Signature of certifying official Date

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: \_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	buildings
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	sites
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	structures
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION _____	Sub: Religious facility:Church _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION _____	Sub: Religious facility:Church _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Late Gothic Revival

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Fieldstone \_\_\_\_\_

roof METAL: Tin \_\_\_\_\_

walls WOOD: weatherboard \_\_\_\_\_

other BRICK

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

Period of Significance 1890-1954

Significant Dates 1890

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property .51 Acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
18	274747E	4325664N	2
3	_____	4	_____

See continuation sheet.

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: Leslie Wright

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ date June 20, 2004

street & number: 17448 Aldershot Place telephone 540-338-3050

city or town Purcellville state VA zip code 20175

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Unitarian-Universalist Church of Loudoun

street & number 20460 Gleedsville Road telephone 703-737-7644

city or town Leesburg state VA zip code 20175

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Built in 1890, Mt. Olive Methodist Episcopal Church is a single-story, Late Gothic Revival-style, wood frame building with a front gable roof, a stone foundation, a projecting front vestibule and a semi-hexagonal rear apse. It is rectangular in shape and measures forty-two feet by twenty-three feet in size. A small wooden front porch with a set of steps and a handicap ramp on the north side were added in the late twentieth century. A non-functioning chimney projects from the northwest corner of the painted standing-seam metal roof. *The interior walls and ceiling are completely covered with small, narrow, wood boards using three different types and patterns.* The church is in good condition and is currently used for both religious and community meetings. Restoration work has been completed on a small area of the foundation, the window sashes, and the exterior of the apse.

The church is located in a semi-rural, but rapidly growing, residential area about three miles south of the Leesburg town limits and approximately one mile north of Oatlands Plantation. The building sits on a ridge of land that rises sharply behind the church property. It fronts on Gleedsville Road (formerly known earliest as Carter's Mill Road, then Old Carolina Road). The original church property, then and now consists of .51 acres. The land was divided in 1901 with the northern half being sold to the local Odd Fellows lodge. The current owner re-purchased that acreage in 2004. Currently approximately one-quarter acre contains the church with the remainder consisting of a wooded area. The church cemetery is located about one-quarter of a mile from the church and is not included in the nominated property.

### Detailed Description

The foundation of the church is constructed of local fieldstone laid with mortar. It is visible on the east (rear) elevation to a height of six and one-half feet and on the south and north elevations from a height of three and one-third feet to six and one-half feet. Oral history from descendants of the builders relate that the stones for the foundation were brought from the land owned by two of the members whose property was located on the western side of Gleedsville Road between the church and Gap Road. A small portion (approximately three feet by three feet) of the southeast corner of the foundation was repaired in 2001. There are six mostly six-over-six sash windows in the foundation – two on the north and south sides and one each on the east and west sides of the building. A marble cornerstone is located in the southeast corner of the foundation. It is engraved "Mt. Olive M.E. Church, Oct 12, 1890."

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A braced frame method of construction, outdated for 1890, was used in the building. The frame is supported by studs mortised and tendoned into eight-inch by eight-inch white oak sills and the top plate uses machine-produced square nails. The spaces between the wall studs and floor joists are filled with bricks and mortar, a typical method used in this time period for insulation and to keep small animals out of a building. The German-style overlapping siding consists of five-inch-wide yellow heart pine boards. The cornerboards are also yellow pine, four inches wide. On the north and south elevations, a series of three double-hung windows are symmetrically placed. The majority of these triangular-headed windows, each with two lower panes and three upper panes, contain original clear glass. Two of the same style windows are found on the front elevation, on each side of the projecting vestibule, and two similar windows are found in the apse.

The front elevation of the church building consists of a small projecting vestibule, thirteen feet high by eight feet wide by six feet deep. The six-panel front door is a recent replacement. There is a window similar in style to the windows in the main part of the building in each of the sidewalls of the vestibule. Above the vestibule on the front gable are twenty rows of decorative shingles in three different patterns: squared corners in alternating lengths; clipped corners of the same length; and squared corners of the same length. This mixture of shingle styles is rare in Loudoun County. A Victorian S-shaped decorative knee bracket is found supporting the eaves on each of the two front corners of the building.

The apse is a one-story semi-hexagonal projection on the east elevation of the building. It is built of the same materials as the main block of the building and is supported by two columns recently added.

### Interior

The interior of the Mt. Olive M. E. Church is separated into two spaces; the small vestibule and a large room for services. The vestibule walls consist of tongue-in-groove three and three-eighths inch-wide narrow boards applied in a vertical pattern. It is separated from the main room by two painted four-panel solid pine doors. Above these doors is a triangular transom with three glass panes.

The floor of the main room consists of very grainy local pine boards laid in random widths in a repeating pattern of two-and-one-half-inch- and three-and-one-half-inch-wide boards using square

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headed nails. The lower half of the walls is covered in darkly stained and reeded wainscoting applied in a vertical pattern. The wainscoting appears to be original to the building with its square head nails and the grain more nearly matching the grain of the floor. Similar stained reeded trim frames each window. The upper portions of the interior walls are covered in narrow boards laid in a horizontal pattern. When repairs were made to a few of these boards, lath and plaster could be seen beneath them, indicating the upper wood cladding was probably added later. The plaster was finished with rounded corners – a technique more difficult to do than finishing with sharp square corners. The twenty-foot-high ceiling is covered in narrow boards similar to the upper walls and are applied in three concentric squares, somewhat reminiscent of a log cabin quilt pattern.

There is a small raised stage at the rear of the room. The floor of this stage is made of pine with a beadboard covering the front. Even though the pews are painted white, many appear to be original and are constructed in pine using one piece of wood for the back and one for the seat. Lines and grooves from a hand plane can be seen through the paint on the pews. All the windows have ornate dark brown stained four-and-one-half-inch-wide trim similar in design and color to the lower wall wainscoting.

**Integrity**

Restoration work has been done over the last five years to a few areas of the church including the foundation, windows, and siding. A very small portion, approximately three feet by three feet of the southeast corner of the foundation was repaired using similar materials and techniques as the original foundation. Some deteriorated pieces of siding on the lower southeast side and on the apse have been replaced by hand-milled poplar to match the original material. The cornerboards on both sides of the apse have also been replaced. Window pulleys were replaced in order to make them serviceable. The vast majority of Mt. Olive M. E. Church, both inside and outside, appears to consist of original materials as built in 1890 with the addition of the interior wood cladding on the upper walls believed to have been added between 1900 and 1910.

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mt. Olive Methodist Episcopal Church, dedicated in 1890, was a symbol of progress and pride to a group of African-Americans who had gone from a lifetime of yearning to be free to the reality of building their own church on their own land. Constructed by ex-slaves from nearby Oatlands Plantation, the building served as a religious facility, a meeting place for mutual aid societies, and it was the center of community life for a small town. The area where the building now stands was known in the late nineteenth century as Gleedsville, named after Jack Gleed, one of the first of the ex-slaves to purchase land in the vicinity. In the twenty-five years between the end of the Civil War and the dedication of the church, a small group of newly freed African-Americans found work, legally married, voted, bought land, built homes, accumulated property, educated their children and established a town. But during the next twenty-five years, which brought the adoption of Jim Crow laws, Gleedsville fell on hard times. Finally many of the original families left the area searching for better opportunities. Eventually by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Gleedsville disappeared as a town, leaving this structure as a symbol of the dreams and ambitions of people who had served in bondage at the nearby plantation. Mt. Olive Methodist Episcopal Church qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A as a religious property significant for its association with the cultural and social history of African-Americans in central Loudoun County during a pivotal period in their history.

### Historical Significance

According to the 1860 Federal Census, 22,000 whites, 5,501 slaves and 1,252 free Negroes lived in Loudoun County, Virginia. There were 670 slaveholders; 80% of them owning fewer than 20 slaves each.<sup>1</sup> The largest slaveholder by far with 128 slaves was Elizabeth O. Carter, the widow of George Carter and owner of Oatlands Plantation located in the Southern Magisterial District of Loudoun County. When the Civil War ended five years later approximately 70 of these slaves remained at Oatlands. Here, like other areas of the South, the exodus of slaves began with the Emancipation Proclamation and increased dramatically by war's end. After the Union army invaded Loudoun County in February 1862, some slaves sought work with or left to join the

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Union forces. At least one of the Oatlands slaves, 19-year-old Martin VanBuren Buchanan walked away to join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment U.S. Colored Infantry in Washington, D.C. Others headed for Washington, D.C. and Alexandria in search of family, freedom, and employment.<sup>2</sup> Catherine Barbara Broun, wife of the Middleburg postmaster, wrote in her diary in 1862, "Servants are running off from all parts of the country."<sup>3</sup>

However, just as throughout the rest of the South, the majority of the Oatlands emancipated slaves stayed where they had lived their entire lives. Historians postulate a number of reasons why this happened. Chiefly, they had no money and no other place to go. Many had families with young children and many were elderly. Particularly at Oatlands there were slave families of long standing. In his will George A. Carter described many of his slaves as family groups rather than listing each as an individual.<sup>4</sup> By tracing the first names and the few last names used in Carter's will and documents, it appears that many of the families had been at Oatlands for a few generations. The Day family members listed in Carter's will encompassed three generations (Gerrard and Alanda were parents of Julius who was the parent of Emmanuel)<sup>5</sup>. Three generations of Buchanans are also listed (Andrew was the father of Robert and grandfather of Martin). From family histories and later legal records, it is apparent that these families intermarried and developed bonds with each other. Additionally, a few were married to free Negroes who lived nearby. One, Robert Buchanan, married Mahala Jackson whose mother had been freed by a local farmer prior to the war. Their roots went deep in this area.

Another reason they may have stayed was safety. Even though Loudoun County saw much less chaos and violence immediately following the war there definitely was some. The Loudoun Democratic Mirror reported June 1, 1865, "Lawlessness abounds in the region and we fear it will continue to do so until civil law is full established and her strong arm is raised to crush it out."<sup>6</sup> Another newspaper story reported that on July 5<sup>th</sup> a Negro youth, John Cook, was shot by a white youth who was not even arrested for another year when he stole a horse.<sup>7</sup> The newspapers were full of stories of riots and lawlessness in Washington and Richmond.

Often, after many years and generations of living together, there was a connection formed between the master and his slaves and between the slaves and the land. In the northern Virginia area, loyalty to the owner was common at the end of the war. The nearby Marshall, Horner, and Benton plantations were some of the farms in the area whose entire slave populations chose to stay nearby. George Johnson, a slave who grew up in Loudoun County later said, "...the Southern masters were believed to be much worse than those around us."<sup>8</sup> Carter's slaves may have felt the

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same way about him and the land because when emancipated many stayed very close, continuing to work for the Carters at Oatlands through the 1950s.<sup>9</sup>

Because legal status as free citizens required surnames, one of the first things freedmen did was to publicly adopt names that they had privately called themselves or add surnames to their slave names. The Buchanan, Gleed, Valentine, Bryant, Hughes, Russ, Rust, Day, Turner, Moore, Barnes, Steward, and Johnson families formed the core of the newly freed community living at Oatlands.<sup>10</sup>

In 1891 writer Samuel J. Barrows took an extensive trip throughout the South gathering information about the state of the Negro since emancipation. Barrows concluded, "...the Negro and his descendants remain pretty much in the places where they lived when the war closed. Three courses were open to him as a free man: first, to rent his own labor; secondly, to rent and work the land of his former master; thirdly, to buy and work a farm for himself. All these courses have in turn been accepted."<sup>11</sup> This describes the course followed by those that remained at Oatlands in 1865. Initially, it is believed, they stayed in the slave quarters at Oatlands and rented their labor to the Carters and local farmers. This was followed by a period of renting neighboring land and accumulating property. Finally they were able to purchase small tracts of land, often the land that had been rented earlier.

Even though the greatest fear of the southern white in the aftermath of the war was vagrancy and crime, in Loudoun County there was very little of this. The assistant superintendent in Loudoun County for the Freedman's Bureau reported to his superior on September 31<sup>st</sup>, 1866 "I have the honor to report that the Freedmen, as a general thing are enterprising and industrious – nearly all being employed who are old enough to labor."<sup>12</sup>

By 1870 the freedmen had moved from the old slave quarters to tenant farms around the northern and eastern edges of Oatlands. Only 70-year-old Joshua Washington, 60-year-old Gerard Day and four house servants remained at Oatlands with the Carters. Most freedmen from Oatlands migrated to an area north of the original Oatlands entrance on Carters Mill Road. This area is approximately at the crossroads of Mountain Gap Road that connected Aldie Pike (now Route 15) and the Old Carolina Road (now Gleedsville Road). At this crossroads, land owned by Elizabeth Carter abutted land owned by John Elgin on the east side of Old Carolina Road and Hannah Daniel on the northwest side.<sup>13</sup> Elgin and Daniels seemed willing to employ freedmen, as well as rent to them and eventually sell land to them. By 1870 John Gleed lived on a parcel of land, probably rented from Hannah

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Daniels. Small African-American towns grew up throughout Loudoun County and the South in this same manner.

In order to care for and support the entire former slave community, many families took in in-laws, orphans, and friends. Robert Buchanan and John Gleed, who lived next to each other, both had in-laws and others living with their family. John Gleed lived with his sister, Lucinda, John Webb, a 10-year-old boy whose parents lived a few miles away, and Washington Day, a 45-year-old widower. Robert Buchanan's household consisted of his wife Mahala, four children, his mother-in-law Hannah Jackson, a grandchild, and two unrelated Ball children, 4 and 2 years old.<sup>14</sup> Other family members, usually older children, boarded with the local farmers they were working for. Hiram and Archibald Valentine, Emily Buchanan, Daniel Barnes, Lucinda Valentine, Russ and Joseph Russ all lived with white farmers they worked for in the immediate area.<sup>15</sup>

At a time when male tenant farmers were being paid between \$8 and \$12 a month<sup>16</sup>, a cow cost about \$25<sup>17</sup> and good land in this area of Loudoun County cost about \$40 an acre<sup>18</sup>, the Gleedsville families began accumulating small amounts of property. The 1870 census records that John Gleed owned no real estate, was a renter, and had personal property valued at \$250. Robert Buchanan had \$100 worth of real estate<sup>19</sup> and \$150 worth of personal property. The Stewards property was valued at \$400 of real estate and \$300 of personal property; John Barnes had \$400 of real estate and \$150 of personal property; Joseph Russ had \$150 of real property; Alfred Valentine had accumulated \$150 in real property and \$100 in personal property. Henry Johnson and George Bryant had no property recorded. In comparison, the George Carter estate was worth \$80,000 of real estate and \$28,000 of personal property; and Francis Daniel owned real estate valued at \$3,800 and personal property valued at \$490.

Between 1870 and 1880 a community was established at the intersection of Mountain Gap Road and the Old Carolina Road. Residents endeavored to improve their quality of life and to participate in civil society. In the late 1880s the Old Carolina Road began to be called Gleedsville Road and the settlement at the crossroads began to be referred to as Gleedsville in legal documents. Marriages continued to strengthen the bonds among the families. John Gleed married two of Robert Buchanan's daughters – Virginia in 1871 and Mahala after Virginia's death in 1874. He stated he was a widower when he registered his marriage to Virginia, but according to Buchanan family history his first wife was Lucinda Day who eventually moved to Washington, D.C with their two children. Elizabeth Buchanan married Hiram Valentine and their daughter married a Johnson. Susan Buchanan married a Barnes.

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According to the census of 1870, a few younger children were "attending school."<sup>20</sup> African-Americans throughout the South sought educational opportunities as soon as the war ended. Barrow reports he saw an eagerness for education at every level – local schools, normal institutes, and colleges.<sup>21</sup> Although Virginia legislated free public education for all citizens to begin in 1870<sup>22</sup>, it was not until 1887 that a school was built in the vicinity to serve the Gleedsville area residents. Schools for Negroes were not popular in Loudoun County. The first superintendent of public instruction in 1872 wrote that the opposition of the "...educated and refined portion" of the citizenry was based on the belief that education would "...promote the interests and elevate the condition of Negroes and lower classes of whites at the expense of property holders."<sup>23</sup> Only nine "colored" schools were built in the early 1870s in Loudoun County, as compared to 55 "white" schools.<sup>24</sup> Finally at the urging of John Gleed, who had emerged as a leader of the community, the Leesburg school district purchased land on Mountain Gap Road from George Bryant to build the Mountain Gap Colored School. The school was a one-room building framed with clapboard. It had two windows on each side and was painted white.<sup>25</sup>

Land purchase opportunities in the South varied by region. Samuel Barrow found that "...in Virginia and Kentucky and Tennessee [and North Carolina] the condition of things is much better than further south and the colored man in spite of these obstacles is rapidly becoming a farmowner and householder."<sup>26</sup> The first purchase of land by any of the freedmen in the area was by John Gleed in 1881 when he bought seven acres along the Old Carolina Road for \$175. He sold it back at a loss to the original owner two years later. Most properties were purchased with a short-term trust (similar to a mortgage). Gleed may have had difficulty paying the trust. However, in 1884 he re-purchased the same land that now had a house on it for \$600. Gleed's property was located on the east side of the Old Carolina Road and about 100 yards south of the present church. John Gleed sold 1½ acres of this land to Murray Allen in 1889. Two acres which he acquired on the hill to the east of his property was later sold to Henry Washington for \$50.

In 1882 a number of Gleedsville residents were able to make their first real estate purchases. George Bryant purchased three and one-quarter acres on Mountain Gap Road for \$84.37. He finished paying his mortgage in 1896. Thomas Day purchased three acres next door to George Bryant for \$79.80, but was forced to sell it in 1886 to pay off debts. Emmanuel Day and James Johnson purchased land bordering John Gleed on the west side of Old Carolina Road. In 1883

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Elizabeth Valentine inherited land on the corner of Mountain Gap Road and Gleedsville Road from her grandmother and step-grandfather, Philip and Nancy Stewart. Her brother Robert's homeplace next to John Gleed and close to Elizabeth was rented until 1908 when Robert's son Martin and his wife Amelia Massey Buchanan bought one acre for \$650. The mortgage was finally paid in 1914. Even though they now owned small parcels of land, most continued to work as farm laborers for nearby farmers or at Oatlands.

As early as 1866 the newly emancipated slaves in Leesburg and the surrounding vicinity realized that they needed ways to help each other, particularly the destitute and orphans left to care for themselves at the end of the war. In February of that year they formed a "Colored Man's Aid Society" with the express mission of assisting the indigent and ill.<sup>27</sup> This was not a successful venture, but branches of national fraternal and mutual aid organizations quickly followed it. The Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in America (GUOOF) became the first and largest of these in Loudoun County. Seven lodges were chartered between 1873 and 1897.<sup>28</sup> The GUOOF was established in 1842 in Philadelphia when the Independent Order of Odd Fellows refused to admit Negro members. Their purpose was to assist families of members through hard times and provide educational and social benefits. This included caring for the sick, burying the dead and providing for widows and orphans.<sup>29</sup> The usual fee from members to support these activities was 50 cents a month.<sup>30</sup> Many fraternal organizations encouraged their members to buy land, build meeting halls, and provide educational opportunities. In Loudoun County the Waterford Lodge of the Odd Fellows established an industrial school for youth.

The men of the Gleedsville community received a charter for the Mountain Gap Odd Fellows Lodge #2047 in 1880. A female auxiliary, The Household of Ruth, was chartered in 1900. It is unknown where the lodge members met prior to using the church building, but the lodge purchased ¼ acre on the north side of the church for \$20 in 1901 probably with the idea of building their own meeting hall.<sup>31</sup> Trustees Jacob Bryant, James Johnson, and George Smith signed the deed. No lodge was ever built. The land, as well as the church, was probably used during the annual "turnout" in May when lodge members would march wearing uniforms to a church for a thanksgiving service and a banquet. The black fraternal societies grew more important as Reconstruction ended, segregation took hold, and the political atmosphere became hostile. The mutual aid societies provided "...a place where they could be someone, hold positions of leadership, and belong to a large national organization with tens of thousands of members where, most importantly, they could help each other."<sup>32</sup> Samuel Barrows observed during his trip through the South, "The colored people are doing

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much to take care of their own unfortunate classes. The cooperative spirit is slowly spreading through trades unions, building associations, and benevolent guilds. In no way is the colored man doing more for himself than by silently and steadily developing a sense of self-respect, a new capacity for self-support, and a pride in his race, which more than anything else secure for him the respect and fraternal feeling of his white neighbors."<sup>33</sup> No records of the Mountain Gap Lodge have been located. However, a number of the graves in the Gleedsville cemetery have the letters "GUOOF" on their gravestones.

As the black community of Gleedsville grew economically in the 1880s, plans were made for a church. In addition to the store at Carter's Mill about a mile away, the town had its own grocer since 1870. A thriving shoemaker operated mid-way between Oatlands and Gleedsville. On January 3, 1889 a half-acre of land on the east side of Gleedsville Road was purchased for \$18 from Washington and Margaret Thornton, freed prior to the war. Robert Day, George Bryant, Thomas Washington, Bushrod Murray, Emmanuel Day, Thomas Waters and James Serors(?) were listed on the deed as the trustees of the new church.<sup>34</sup> The deed describes the property as on the road leading from Oatlands to Leesburg. The boundaries are described as from the center of the road take 26 steps to a hickory, then turn south and go 46 steps to a walnut, then go in westerly direction 23 steps to the center of the road and take 43 steps to the beginning spot. Sadly, neither the hickory nor the walnut tree still stands on the property.

After the family, the center of African-American life at this time was the church. Christianity spread among the American slave population in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the Second Awakening. Although under slavery all gatherings were strictly controlled by law and by slave masters to prevent the possibility of conspiracies to escape or revolt, most slave masters condoned a church service on Sunday. After emancipation African-American congregations arose spontaneously throughout the South. Services were held everywhere--outside, in homes, and schools.<sup>35</sup> The Methodist Episcopal association grew from a membership of 73,000 in 1866 to a membership of 466,202 in 1890.<sup>36</sup> Between 1864 and 1900 thirty African-American churches were established in Loudoun County. Eleven of these were of the Methodist-Episcopal denomination. The Methodist-Episcopal denomination was appealing because it emphasized social action in addition to religious observances. Such activities as "preach the gospel, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, provide jobs for the jobless and encourage economic advancement" were included in the church's mission statement.<sup>37</sup>

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All Mt. Olive M. E. Church records were lost when the church merged with the Mt. Zion Church in Leesburg in the 1980s. From family histories and the names of those buried in the nearby Gleedsville cemetery, early members of Mt. Olive included the Johnsons, Bryants, Gleeds, Buchanans, Valentines and Barneses. Martin VanBuren Buchanan married Amelia Ann Massey in the church in 1893. There is no documentation or oral history regarding how money was raised or where the design plans originated. Oral history suggests that the members of the church built it themselves in the evenings by kerosene light. The stones for the foundation came from John Glead's and Martin Buchanan's fields across the street. The outside of the building is somewhat similar to the nearby First Baptist Church Sycoline built in 1884. A number of Gleedsville residents are known to have been members of that church. Most of the decorative elements, including the triangular-arched windows and the interior lower wainscoting, are very similar to the John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church in Waterford, which was built the year after Mt. Olive.

Evidently the skills needed to build the church were available among the membership of the church. Conceivably, stone masonry and carpentry were learned at Oatlands. It is interesting to note that although John Glead stated in 1870 and 1880 that his occupation was a farm laborer, in 1900 he stated he was a carpenter.<sup>38</sup> George Russ, the son of one of the ex-slaves, also reported that he was a carpenter.

The drive to achieve equality reached its peak by 1880. Even though racial tensions in Loudoun County were not as intense as in other parts of the South during Reconstruction, the attitudes of the majority of whites in the area never changed. Reconstruction in Loudoun County accomplished very little. The Conservative Party (former secessionists) quickly gained power in local politics, mainly by appealing to racial hatred. "Republicans had strength only among the Quakers and black communities."<sup>39</sup> The year 1900 brought the first of many "separate, but equal" laws to the state of Virginia. In 1872, 3,336 whites and 1,209 Negroes voted in the presidential election in Loudoun County.<sup>40</sup> By 1902 a new Virginia constitution contained a poll tax in an attempt to keep blacks from voting. Only 238 African-Americans voted in the 1902 election.<sup>41</sup> The rights to vote, serve on juries, and be treated as an equal member of the community were gradually lost after 1900. The fear and impotence felt under slavery returned. In 1902 a black man was accused of killing a white man on a back road in the eastern part of Loudoun County. A mob took Charles Craven from the authorities and lynched him.<sup>42</sup>

In the early part of the twentieth century a few more Gleedsville residents purchased small tracts of land. However, African-Americans never owned any large farms in the area. As farming

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became mechanized in the 1920s, less work was available. Some continued to work at Oatlands as gardeners, domestics and chauffeurs. Just as it was happening in the rest of the South, African-Americans migrated to the North and to cities.

John Gleed died around 1904 without ever paying the mortgage on his property. His wife Mahala Ann lived there until 1933. Martin Buchanan, at 74, with his wife and daughter, worked as servants in Leesburg. Elizabeth Valentine's sons moved to Middleburg after she died. The period of hope that was ushered in with the end of the Civil War was over. The town of Gleedsville and its church functioned until the 1980s when the local population was too small to support it. Its most prosperous years were from 1890 through the 1920s. With the Great Depression much of the population of Gleedsville migrated to more populous areas of the county and Washington, D.C. Gleedsville had reached its pinnacle about 1890 with the building of the church. The small frame building remains as the only evidence of the struggle of one group of African Americans as they made the transition from chattel to free, responsible citizens.

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**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Charles Poland, From Frontier to Suburbia, Walsworth Publishing Co. (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth, 1976) 131-133.

<sup>2</sup> New York Herald, June 17, 1865.

<sup>3</sup> Eugene Scheel, "For Some Slaves, Path to Freedom Was Far From Clear-Cut," The History of Loudoun County, Virginia, May 25, 2004 < <http://www.waterfordva-wca.org>>.

<sup>4</sup> Will of George Carter, Loudoun County Wills, 2C 187. George Carter's will of 1847 lists in addition to many individual names, a number of "slaves" that he bequests to his wife, Elizabeth, : namely, Charles wife & children, Joe Rust wife & children, Solomon wife and children, Betsy & children, Hiram wife & children, Alley & children.

<sup>5</sup> Will of George Carter, Loudoun County Wills, 2C 187.

<sup>6</sup> The Loudoun Democratic Mirror, June 1, 1865.

<sup>7</sup> The Loudoun Democratic Mirror, July 5, 1865.

<sup>8</sup> Brenda Stevenson, Life in Black and White, 180.

<sup>9</sup> Family histories include stories about the following: Robert and Martin Buchanan who worked as gardeners for the Carters and the subsequent owner, William Eustis. Elizabeth Valentine worked as a maid and her son, Hiram, worked on the grounds; Mahala Ann Gleed was a maid as was Martin Buchanan's daughter Deborah who worked as a personal maid to Mrs. Eustis through the 1930's; Basil Turner worked there until his late 80's. Members of the Hughes family worked in the dairy.

<sup>10</sup> Most of these names can be found with variant spellings in official records such as the census, marriage and birth records, deeds and wills. For example, John Gleed is found as Jacob Gleede, and Jack Glead. This is probably the result of the fact that none of the Oatlands slaves could read or write.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel J. Barrows, "What the Southern Negro is Doing for Himself," Atlantic Monthly, June 1891, Vol.67 805.

<sup>12</sup> Bureau of Refugees, Freedman and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869, Roll 45 489.

<sup>13</sup> John Elgin was an ex-confederate soldier and son of an old Loudoun County family. Hannah Daniel was the widow of a confederate soldier and mother of 10 children.

<sup>14</sup> Loudoun County Wills, 3X, 207, 18, 289. The Ball children are not included in the all known relations list completed in 1933 of Mahala Ann Gleede (sic)

<sup>15</sup> According to the Federal Census of 1870, Hiram Valentine and Daniel Barnes lived with John F. Iden, a farmer located southwest of Oatlands. Emily Buchanan was a nurse for J.B. Watson, the miller at Carter's Mill. Russ (sic) Russ was a housekeeper for George Wynkoop and Joseph Russ was an 8-year old farm laborer for Charles Wynkoop. Archibald Valentine worked for Josephus Carr, a wealthy farmer north of Oatlands.

<sup>16</sup> Bureau of Refugees, Freedman and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869, Roll 46, 0074. This letter also states that female workers were paid \$3-\$4 dollars a month less than men.

<sup>17</sup> Loudoun County Deeds, 6I, 324. Homestead deed of Thomas Waters, Old Carolina Road (Gleedsville), 11/14/1876.

<sup>18</sup> Poland 229.

<sup>19</sup> The Federal Census of 1870 recorded that all freedmen in the Oatlands area rented their property. From later deeds it can be concluded that the real estate described in 1870 was probably the same land that was purchased at a later time and referred in 1870 to homes built on the rented land.

<sup>20</sup> The number of African-American children recorded in the census "attending school" is significantly less than white children of the same age.

<sup>21</sup> Barrow 810-811.

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<sup>22</sup> This law stated that schools would be segregated and there must be at least 15 pupils in order to build a school building.

<sup>23</sup> Poland 252.

<sup>24</sup> Wynne C. Saffer, Loudoun Votes 1867-1966 A Civil War Legacy, (Westminster: Willow Bend Books, 2002) 10.

<sup>25</sup> Eugene Scheel, Loudoun Discovered Vol 2, Leesburg and the Old Carolina Road, (Westminster: Willow Bend Books, 2002) 87.

<sup>26</sup> Barrow 806.

<sup>27</sup> The Loudoun Democratic Mirror, February 7, 1866

<sup>28</sup> Elaine Thompson and Betty Morefield, Courage My Soul, Historic African American Churches and Mutual Aid Societies, (Leesburg, Virginia: Loudoun Museum, 2000) 35.

<sup>29</sup> Stuart Doyle, "Fraternal Lodges," ChickenBones: A Journal for Literary & Artistic African-American Themes, 2002, March 23, 2004 <<http://www.nathanielturner.com/blackfraternalorders.htm>>.

<sup>30</sup> Dubois 98

<sup>31</sup> This property, commonly referred to as the Oddfellows Lot, was purchased in June 2004 by the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Loudoun, current owners of Mt. Olive M.E. Church.

<sup>32</sup> Thompson 35.

<sup>33</sup> Barrow 814.

<sup>34</sup> Bushrod Murray was the teacher at Mountain Gap Colored School for 40 years and lived on land directly south of the church. Thomas Waters was a 46-year-old blacksmith who moved to the Gleedsville area in the 1880's. In 1880 he lived in Leesburg with his mother and two brothers in the household of Richard Lane, a Methodist minister. Because his son was a horse trainer and he was a blacksmith, they may have come to Gleedsville to work for the burgeoning horse industry that was gaining popularity among the large landowners in the area.

<sup>35</sup> Thompson 2.

<sup>36</sup> DuBois. 79

<sup>37</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, The Black Church in the African American Experience, (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1990) 55-56.

<sup>38</sup> United States Federal Census 1870, 1880, 1900.

<sup>39</sup> Saffer 15.

<sup>40</sup> The Loudoun Democratic Mirror, November 1872.

<sup>41</sup> Saffer 25.

<sup>42</sup> Ida Lee Rust Collection, Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, Virginia, Diary of Ida Lee Rust, July, 1902.

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United States. Federal Census 1900.

United States. Federal Census 1910.

United States. Federal Census 1920.

Virginia. Loudoun County Deeds. Book 6I, 324.

Virginia. Loudoun County Deeds. Book 6T, 252

Virginia. Loudoun County Deeds. Book 6U, 281

Virginia. Loudoun County Deeds. Book 6Z, 371

Virginia. Loudoun County Deeds. Book 6Z, 379

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The deed survey describes the boundaries of Mt. . Olive M.E. church as:

Tax Map 59----33 Deed Book 1291, Page 1908:

Beginning at a set iron pipe (Point "A") in the southeast line of Route No. 650 at a corner to Murray;

Thence leaving Murray and running with the southeast line of Route No. 650 North 38° 10' 45" East 111.04 feet to a set iron pipe corner to Cope;

Thence leaving Route No. 650 and running with Cope South 58° 23' 03" East 102.05 feet to a set iron pipe (Point "C") corner to Murray;

Thence leaving Cope and running with Murray South 30° 01' 09" West 115.27 feet to a set iron pipe (Point "B") and North 55° 59' 59" West 118.05 feet to a point of beginning, containing 0.2850 acres of land.

Tax Map 59----33A Deed Book 1292, Page 1674:

Beginning at a corner to Cope in the southeast line of Route No. 650 as shown on attached plat which is hereby made a part of this description:

Thence leaving Route No. 650 and running with Cope South 52° 24' 33" East (passing over a found iron pipe at 10.50 feet) total distance of 97.39 feet to a found iron pipe, South 30° 16' 33" West 106.58 feet and North 58° 23' 03" West 99.97 feet to a set iron pipe in the southeast line of Route No. 650;

Thence leaving Cope and running with the southeast line of route No. 650 North 38° 10' 45" East 17.93 feet and North 30° 49' 19" East 92.89 feet to the point of beginning, containing 0.2361 acres of land.

**Boundary Justification**

These boundaries were selected for this application because they describe the current property boundaries which are identical to the original land purchase made in 1889.

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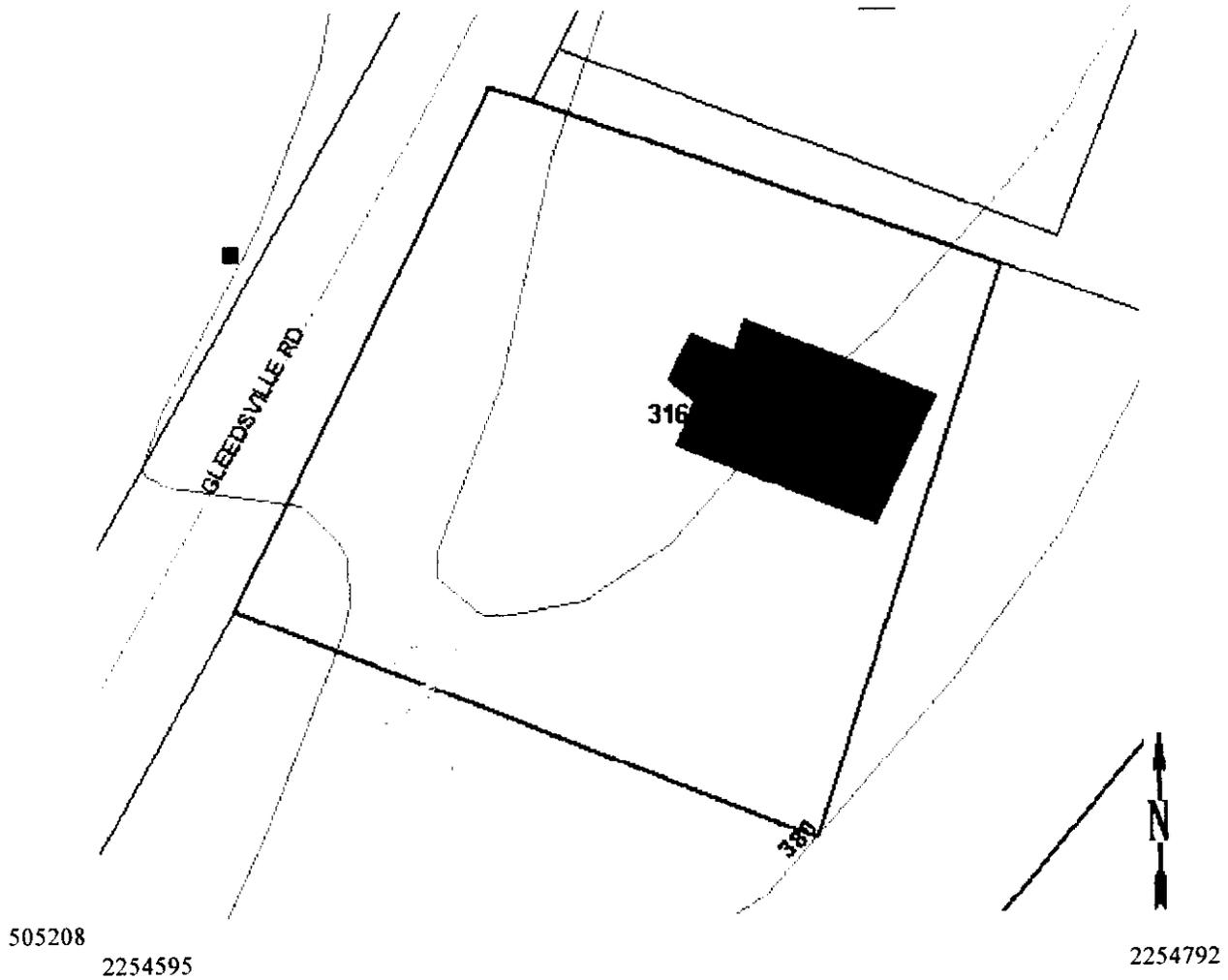
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Site Map – Tax Map 59----33

505381



Pin #316497927000  
Map Width = 197 feet  
Map Created 6/17/04

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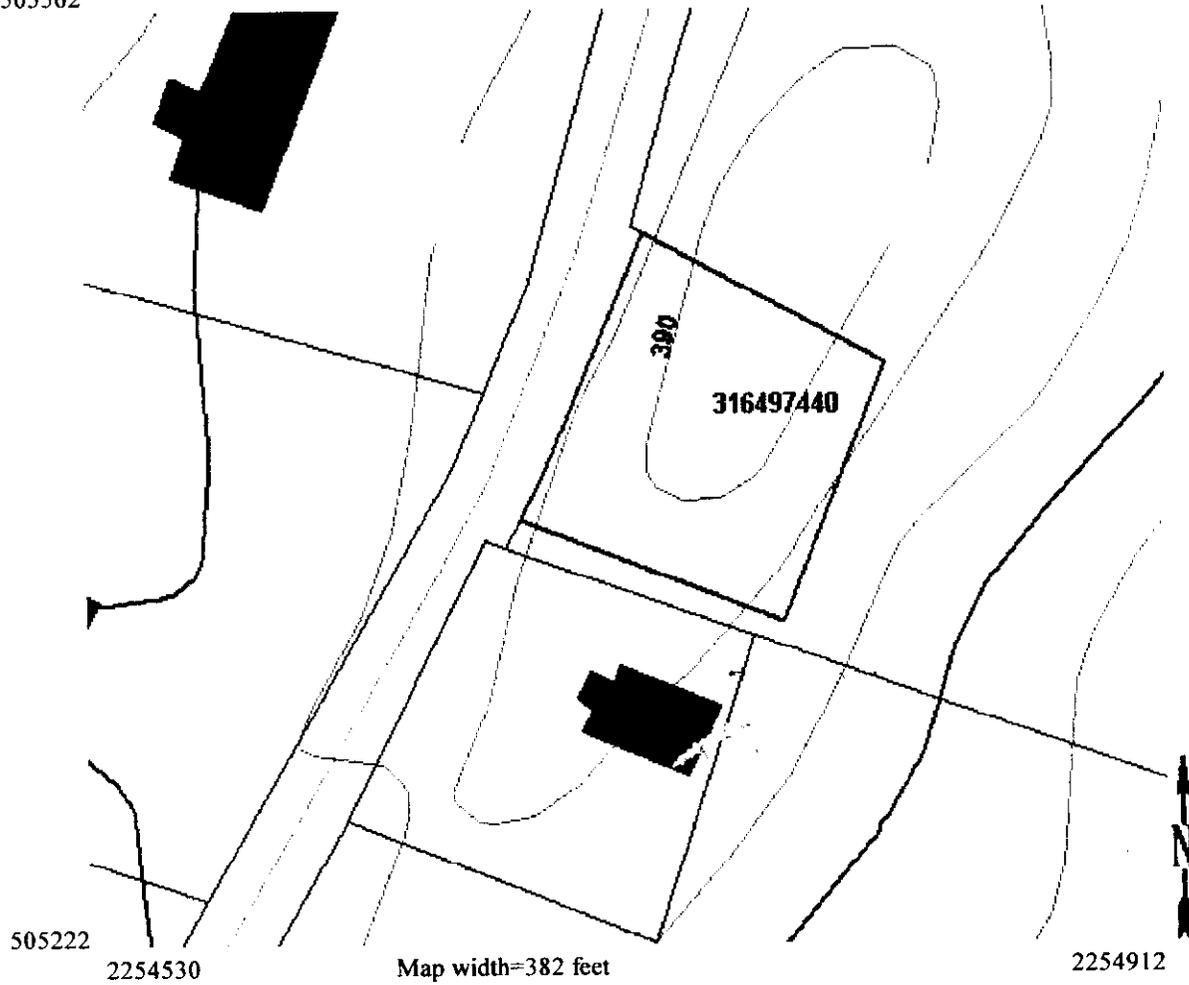
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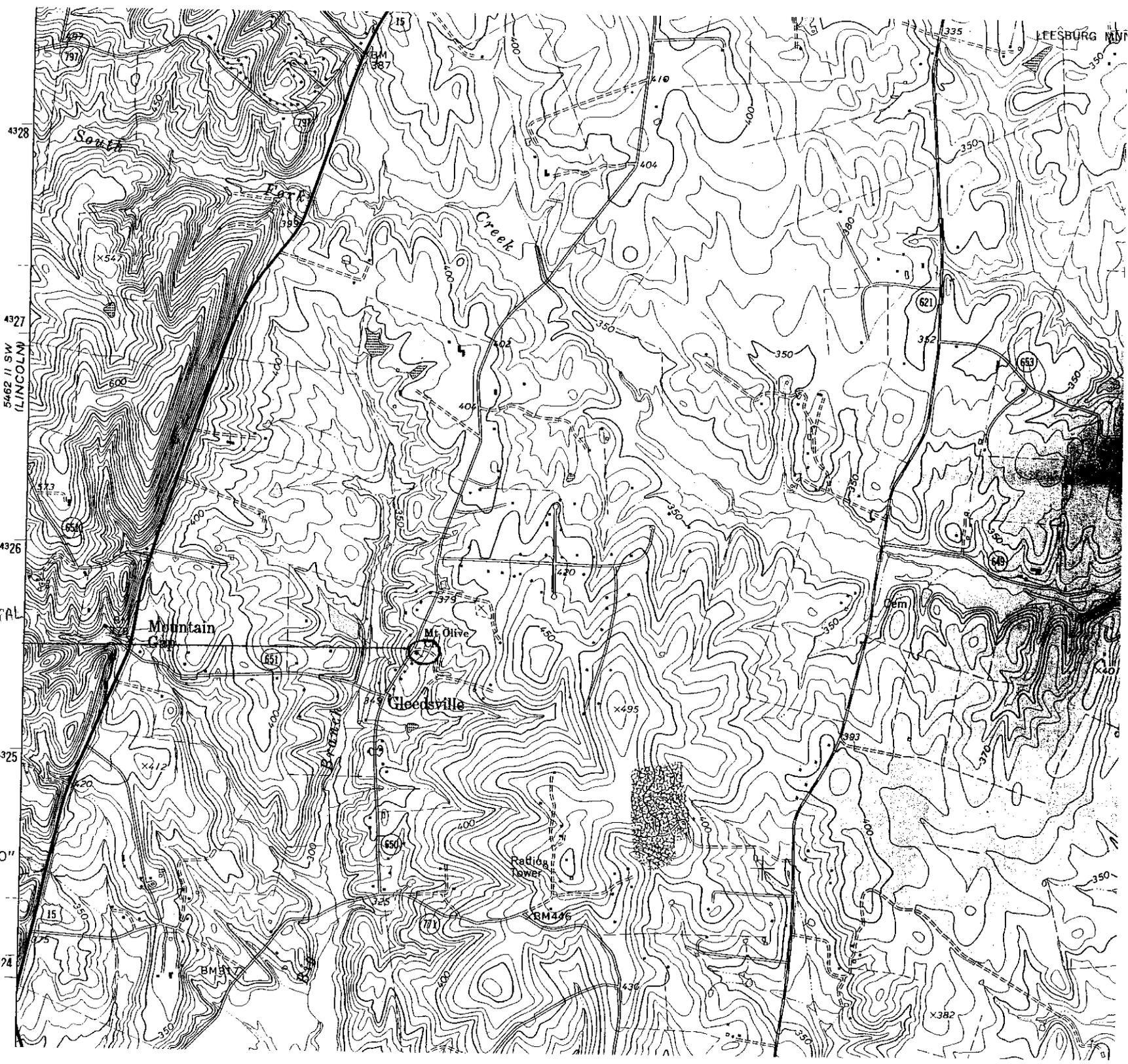
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Site Map - Tax Map 59----33A

505562



Pin #316497440  
Map created 7/15/2004



4328  
4327  
4326  
4325  
2'30"  
4374

5462 II SW  
(LINCOLN)

MT. OLIVE METHODIST EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH  
LOODRON COUNTY, VA  
UTM REFERENCE:  
18/2741147/4325664  
LEESBURG QUAD