

VLR-12/20/77 NRHP-3/26/80

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Kimberling Lutheran Cemetery

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

On S side of State Route 617; .5 mile SW of intersection of state
STREET & NUMBER routes 617 and 735; .9 mile N of U.S. Route 11.

CITY, TOWN	Rural Retreat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VICINITY OF	Ninth (William C. Wampler)	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT	NOT FOR PUBLICATION
STATE	Virginia	CODE	51	COUNTY	Wythe
				CODE	197

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OBJECTS	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Cemetery

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Cemetery Association of Kimberling c/o Miss Lelia Huddle

STREET & NUMBER Route 2

CITY, TOWN	Rural Retreat	VICINITY OF	Virginia	STATE	24368
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5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Wythe County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN	Wytheville	STATE	Virginia
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6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE	1977	<input type="checkbox"/> FEDERAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STATE	<input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY	<input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL
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DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

CITY, TOWN	221 Governor Street, Richmond	STATE	Virginia	23219
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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated on a steep, cleared hillside overlooking the rolling terrain of Wythe County, Kimberling Lutheran Cemetery is one of a small group of cemeteries in Southwest Virginia containing a significant collection of early Germanic gravestones. There are about fifty such sandstone monuments, dating from 1800 to 1850, in the cemetery, which has continued in active use until the present. Owing to the nature of the material and the exposed position of the cemetery, few of the stones bear legible inscriptions. They range in size from about 18 inches to about 3 feet tall and from about 3 to about 6 inches thick. There are several basic shapes: Some stones have a semi-circular central tympanum with slight, square shoulders, others have smaller tympani with prominent rounded shoulders, and a few have a central portion which is almost circular. Unlike English gravestones of the same period German stones are often decorated both on the obverse and reverse; in fact, the principal decoration on most of the Kimberling stones is on the reverse. This embellishment normally consists of a single, high-relief motif framed by a double band. Designs at Kimberling include hearts, upside-down anchors, fylfot crosses, six-pointed stars, ladder-like devices, and a variety of vegetal forms. Enrichment of the front of the stone usually consists of no more than the inscription lettered onto a rectangular recessed panel; occasionally there will be a simple design carved in the tympanum. German inscriptions are rare at Kimberling. Even the earliest stones bear English legends with an occasional word or two of German. Elizabeth Snavely's monument, for instance, relates in English that she died in 1807 and concludes "P S EHE FRAU."

The present church building at Kimberling the third on the site, is a large frame structure with two unequal-sized towers, vestigial transepts and chancel, and pedimented "Gothic" window and door openings, as well as decorative pressed-tin shingles on its tower roof. It was erected in 1913.

DU

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The three acres comprising the Kimberling Lutheran Cemetery property are bounded on the northeast and east by the church drive, on the northwest by State Route 617, and on the south and west by the cemetery boundaries. This acreage includes both the church and the cemetery.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" 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 1800 - (Cemetery)
 1913 (Church) BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Situated on a steep hillside looking out over the rolling countryside of western Wythe County, in Kimberling Lutheran Cemetery, one of the oldest graveyards in the county, contains an outstanding collection of traditional German gravestones of the period 1800-1850. It is one of a small number of such collections in Southwest Virginia. Its stones, with their combination of traditional and contemporary (19th-century) decorative devices, seen in their unspoiled pastoral setting present a striking image of German life and culture in rural Wythe County in the last century.

A few Germans settled in Wythe County in the middle of the 18th century, but it was not until after the Revolution that German settlement there was firmly established. The church at Kimberling or Kimmerling's as it was sometimes called, was one of the earliest Lutheran churches in the area. Its first building was dedicated in 1797, and the earliest legible stone in the cemetery was erected three years later. This building was repaired and rededicated in 1834, and another was erected to replace it in 1854. The present church dates from 1913.

In its early years Kimberling shared its pastors with other Lutheran Churches in the area. George D. Flohr, also pastor at St. John's Church in Wytheville, the site of another of Wythe County's German cemeteries, served from 1799 until his death in 1826.

The cemetery at Kimberling reflects the changes occurring among the German groups in Virginia during the first half of the 19th century. Despite their reputation for aloofness from the English-speaking community the Germans were in fact assimilated to many aspects of Anglo-American culture by the beginning of the 19th century. The stones in the Kimberling churchyard reflect this in their almost-exclusive use of the English language for inscriptions and in their shapes which are influenced by early and mid-19th-century design concepts (as are their lettering styles). In contrast to worldly concepts of form they retain traditional German motifs in their symbolic (religious) content. Hearts, sinuous vegetation, stars and pinwheels of every sort were all parts of the Continental vocabulary of religious symbolism which the Kimberling carver continued to use throughout the first half of the century. As the decades(s) passed, however, the use of these traditional motifs grew weaker, and the last stone to employ them is dated 1850, just four years before the church replaced its original building with a new one. From 1850 onward gravestones at Kimberling were indistinguishable from those of any other Virginia denomination.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Cassell, C.W., et. al. History of the Lutheran Church in Virginia and East Tennessee. Strasburg, Virginia, 1930.
- Eisenberg, W.E. The Lutheran Church in Virginia, 1717-1962. Roanoke, Virginia, 1967.
- Kincer, Lucille M. Glimpses of Wythe County History. Wytheville, Virginia, 1967.
- Presgraves, J.S., ed. Wythe County Chapters. Wytheville, Virginia, 1972.
- Whitman, J.A. Historical Facts About the Churches of Wythe County. Wytheville, Virginia, 1939.

(See continuation sheet # 1)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 7	4, 7, 2, 8, 5, 0	4, 0, 8, 5, 15, 5, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The three acres comprising the property of the Kimber-Lutheran Cemetery are bounded by a line beginning at a point at the intersection of the church lot, SW side of an unimproved road, and State Route 617, .4 mile SW of intersection of state routes 617 and 735; thence following W side of said unimproved road and cemetery boundary for a distance of approximately 600 feet S; then running approximately 200 feet W in a straight line following cemetery border; then extending about 50 feet N following cemetery boundary; then extending a little over 50 feet W following cemetery boundary; then running approximately (See Continuation Sheet # 1)

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

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

December 1977

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

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

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE DEC 20 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Kimberling Lutheran Cemetery, Wythe County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER

9,10 PAGE

1

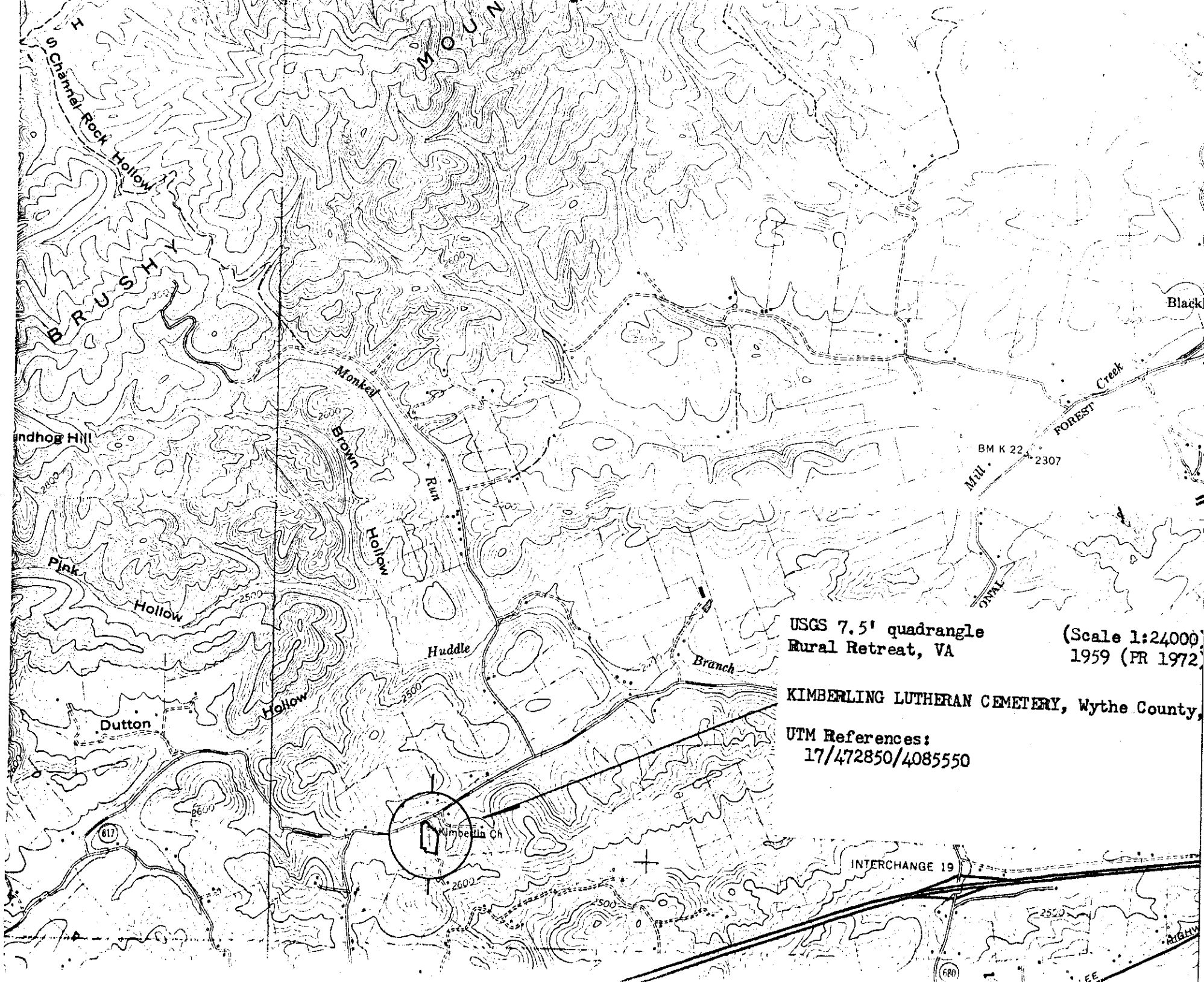
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wust, Klaus. Folk Art in Stone. Edinburg, Virginia, 1970.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

400 feet N in a straight line following cemetery border to intersection with S side of State Route 617; then following S side of State Route 617 for a distance of approximately 100 feet NE to point of origin.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Rural Retreat, VA

(Scale 1:24,000)
1959 (PR 1972)

KIMBERLING LUTHERAN CEMETERY, Wythe County,

UTM References:
17/472850/4085550