

Carroll Yesteryears
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Baldwin's Station Retains its Historical Significance By Mary Ann Ashcraft

Homeowners often visit the Historical Society of Carroll County's library for help tracing the history of their newly-purchased property. Sometimes we volunteers can only send them to perform a deed search in the Land Records Office at the Court House Annex on North Court Street, Westminster, but sometimes we are able to surprise them with an amazing amount of information from files created by the Maryland Historical Trust.

Recently, HSCC volunteers Dolores Racja and John Carbaugh updated those MHT files covering more than 1,400 Carroll County barns, houses, churches, bridges, schools, and other structures. Perhaps you want to learn about the Bruceville Historic District near the Frederick County border, the one-room Springdale School outside New Windsor, Piney Creek Presbyterian Church near Harney, or the B&O train depot in Sykesville known as Baldwin's Station. Those structures, and hundreds, more are covered in the MHT files, often with detailed descriptions, photographs, and maps.

The Maryland Historical Trust is a state agency "dedicated to preserving and interpreting the legacy of Maryland's past" through research, conservation and education. It was created in 1961. Since then, a survey and inventory program has gradually built a sizable list of historically and culturally important structures in every Maryland county known as the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties. The MHT website, www.mht.maryland.gov, explains its various missions, and allows you to see the files on structures in each county. You can search by county, by property name, and by address. Some of the files contain nothing more than the name of a property, while others offer very specific information compiled by architectural historians or other trained staff who have spent hours documenting a particular structure. Westminster architect Dean Camlin is currently Carroll's area representative to the Trust. Joseph Getty and Kenneth Short did much of the research on local sites.

Baldwin's Station, now a restaurant on Main Street in the historic downtown area of Sykesville, is CARR-265 - an inventoried property listed as the "Sykesville Train Depot." In 1990, the old Baltimore and Ohio station was reviewed by a member of the MHT staff and declared a "certified historic structure," and noted to be "within the boundaries of a registered historic district." In addition, it "contributes to the significance of the [historic] district." Baldwin's Station also happens to be on the National Register of Historic Places which gives it even greater historical/cultural prestige.

Architecturally speaking, the 1883 building is "an outstanding Queen Anne structure" built of brick with typical Queen Anne features including decorative brickwork and colored glass. Inside, it has the original beaded board ceiling, wainscoting, doors, and woodwork and retains "a

high degree of integrity,” meaning it hasn’t been significantly altered. When you visit the depot, you get an accurate picture of an important stop on the B&O line during the late 1800s.

The station takes its unofficial name from its architect, E. Francis Baldwin, who designed many depots along the B&O’s routes including a famous one at Point of Rocks, Maryland. Baldwin was designated the “Architect for the B&O Railroad” about 1872 and worked for the company for approximately 25 years.

Mary Ann Ashcraft is a library volunteer at the Historical Society of Carroll County.



Photo credit: Sykesville Gate House Museum

Photo caption: The 1883 Sykesville B&O Train Station, now a restaurant called "Baldwin's Station," is one of hundreds of historically and culturally important sites in Carroll County listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties. Much of the station looks just as it did 130 years ago.