**Glossary:**

**Bargeboard** – decorative wood trim on the end or edge of a roof.

**Bay** – a section of a building containing a window or door. A building with a center door and a window on either side has 3 bays.

**Bell cote** – roof structure to contain one or more bells.

**Buttress** – wall support usually of stone or brick on the side of a building.

**Clapboard** - a type of board, beveled toward one edge, used to clad the exterior of a frame building. Clapboards are attached horizontally, each one overlapping the next one down.

**Corbel** – decorative bricks atop windows, walls, or chimneys; sometimes used to create the shape of a bracket at the top of a wall beneath the roof.

**Dentil molding** – ornamental trim beneath the roof consisting of a row of small blocks shaped like teeth.

**Gallery** – balcony.

**Lancet window** – tall, narrow window with pointed arch at top.

**Nave** - the central part of the church building intended to accommodate most of the congregation.

**Pediment** – triangular space created by a front-facing gable roof, often used in Greek Revival buildings.

**Pilaster** – narrowly protruding column attached to a wall. Gives the illusion of a free-standing column.

**Portico** – small entrance porch.

**Tracery** – ornamental device by which windows are divided into sections using stone or other molding.

**Vernacular architecture** - characterized by the use of local materials and styles without the supervision of professional architects.

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Selected inventories from the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, Maryland Historical Trust, mht.maryland.gov.

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# CARROLL HISTORY JOURNAL
### THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CARROLL COUNTY, MD, INC.

## Carroll County's Church Architecture: An Overview

**BY MARY ANN ASHCRAFT AND DORIS J. HULL**

About 1735 a small group of Quakers from Pennsylvania established the Pipe Creek Settlement near Union Bridge. During the next hundred years thousands more settlers poured into the area that became Carroll County, creating communities large and small and taking advantage of its rich soil and abundant water-power. Religion played an important part in their lives whether they were English-speaking Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans (later Episcopalians), Catholics, German-speaking Lutherans, Reformed, Brethren, or other smaller sects. One of the first tasks of these fledgling communities was to build a place of worship, as befitted their cultural traditions. These buildings also often served as community centers and schools.

Places of worship remain an important part of community life today, and the county is home to a wide variety of them, ranging from an 18th-century Quaker meeting house in Union Bridge to a late 20th-century Hindu temple in Finksburg, to the International Meditation Center [Buddhist] near Silver Run. While Carroll's places for worship are more diverse in the 21st century than in the past, this article focuses on those built by Protestant and Catholic congregations in a variety of styles before the mid-20th century.

Photographs and postcards, chiefly from the Historical Society of Carroll County's extensive collection, offer a look at these churches. Some of



The design of Old Oakland Methodist Episcopal Church, built near Eldersburg c.1851, hints at the wide range of church architecture explored in this article. (Unless otherwise credited, all images are from HSCC's collection.)

them disappeared more than a century ago, while others have survived relatively intact or been modified to conform to society's ever-changing architectural tastes. Whenever possible, the images used here reflect how the churches looked close to the time of their construction or their last significant renovation. The inventories of church properties prepared for the Maryland Historical Trust and literature published by the churches themselves are valuable sources of information.
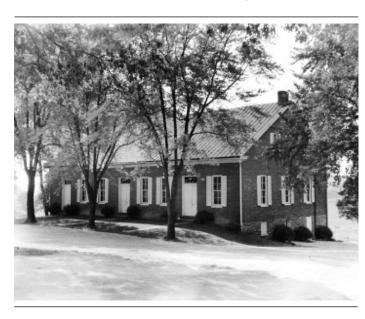
## Churches in the Folk Tradition

**Pipe Creek Friends Meeting House** (right), built by local Quakers in 1771-72, sits on Quaker Hill Road on the edge of Union Bridge. William Farquhar, one of the town's earliest settlers, donated the land. The unadorned 1½-story brick structure on a stone foundation reflects the plain taste of its 18th-century builders and is the oldest house of worship in continuous use in Maryland's Piedmont region. Changes during the 20th century did not significantly alter the original exterior, although a fire in October 1934 extensively damaged the interior. This late-1800s photograph shows the original roofline and other exterior features which preserve the mid-Atlantic folk style also seen in buildings in Southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore. In 1929 President and Mrs. Herbert Hoover paid a visit to the old meeting house where his ancestors once worshipped.



**Wesley Chapel** (above), the only Methodist church in Carroll County to survive substantially unaltered since its construction in 1822, stands west of Eldersburg on Liberty Road (Route 26) surrounded by a small cemetery. The chapel's design is plain—a single-story building of uncoursed rubble stone with a gable roof, a single front door, and a balcony on one side. A survey by the Maryland Historical Trust calls the chapel "a significant example of early vernacular church architecture in rural Piedmont Maryland." By contrast, many Methodist churches constructed later had separate entrances for men and women, several balconies, and frequently incorporated other architectural features popular at the time.



**Pipe Creek Church of the Brethren** (below) on Pipe Creek Road near Uniontown is considered the mother church of the German Baptist Brethren (also known as Dunkards) in Carroll County. Before the church was built in 1806, the Brethren congregation worshipped in barns and private homes. After serving the congregation for 60 years, the building was enlarged in 1866, then rebuilt in 1891, possibly with portions of the 1866 structure retained. The brick was laid in English bond.



In keeping with the tenets of the Brethren faith, the exterior of the one-story structure remained simple and functional, even when other local Protestant denominations adopted more elaborate architectural styles during their renovations at the end of the 19th century. The interior, updated in the 20th century, contains a museum room with some of the congregation's historic artifacts.

## Romanesque Revival Style

During the last quarter of the 19th century, Romanesque Revival architecture gained popularity across the country, especially for churches and other large public buildings. Following the upheaval of the Civil War and the Financial Panic of 1873, the United States entered a period of calm and prosperity. Two Carroll County congregations that built or renovated churches during that time chose the Romanesque Revival style for its massive appearance which conveyed strength and permanence. The broad, rounded Romanesque arches over windows and doorways stood in sharp contrast to Gothic pointed arches.

Shortly after Taneytown's Lutheran and German Reformed congregations separated, the Lutherans built **Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church** (top) in 1811 on the main east-west route through the town. It began as a simple brick structure that later received significant alterations in 1840, 1871, and 1897. The final one, depicted here, was the work of architect John Augustus Dempwolf. His design, in pure Romanesque Revival styl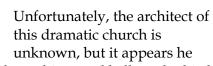e reminiscent of another famous architect, H.H. Richardson, updated the 1871 church by resurfacing it in new brick with Hummelstown brownstone accents around the windows. He added a four-stage bell tower to replace the steeple on the earlier church as well as a huge semi-circular projection on one side.

The front elevation facing West Baltimore Street has the typical round-arched windows and projecting vestibule of the Romanesque style plus buttresses and brick corbelling along the roofline. The back of the building, however, retains some of the original 1871 appearance. Overall, the church is imposing and dominates Taneytown's most-traveled street. Dempwolf's significant changes cost just over $17,000.



In 1883 the Reformed congregation of Grace Church in Taneytown separated from the Presbyterian congregation, with which it had shared a plain brick church built in 1822, and began major renovations. By 1890, with the addition of an elaborate bell tower on one corner, a new façade, and a small, semi-circular projection on one side, **Grace Reformed Church** (bottom)—now United Church of Christ—on West Baltimore Street became Taneytown's second example of Romanesque Revival architecture. Set back about 20 yards from the street, it appears less massive than Trinity Lutheran. The light color of the stone basement contrasts with the brick used above. Fish scale shingles add to the ornate appearance of the bell tower and the small semi-circular projection at its base.



Unfortunately, the architect of this dramatic church is unknown, but it appears he incorporated all the architectural bells and whistles at his disposal when he drew up his plans. The Romanesque shape of the large stained-glass window on the façade is emphasized by bricks which fan out around it. Within the window itself there is elaborate tracery. Corbels appear to drip from the front-facing gable roof. The multi-stage bell tower is especially elaborate although not as tall as that of Trinity.
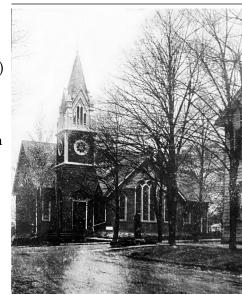
The congregation of **ST. MARY'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH** (right) in Silver Run chose York, PA, architect John Augustus Dempwolf to design its 1895 church. The asymmetry of the gray stone and Hummelstown brownstone building with its multiple elevations exemplifies a late Gothic Revival style. The east-facing façade includes a four-stage bell tower at the north corner above the main entrance. A front-facing gable with large Gothic-arched windows centers the façade. Dempwolf's design for St. Mary's prefigures his Romanesque Revival design for Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Taneytown two years later. Both churches include brownstone to define the shapes of the windows, but the soft grey stone used for the walls in Silver Run creates a quite different appearance than the dark brick that Dempwolf used in Taneytown.
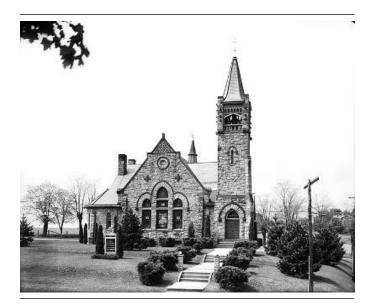
**ST. PAUL'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH** (right) —now United Methodist—at the corner of Main and High streets in New Windsor, is another example of the popular late Gothic Revival style. In 1897 the Methodist congregation chose a plan
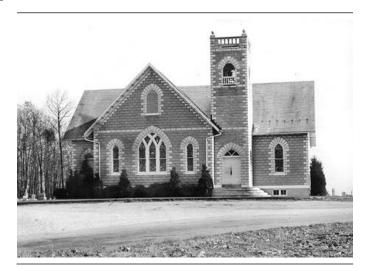
(Courtesy of New Windsor Heritage.)

from the pattern book of Philadelphia architect Benjamin D. Price for its third, and final, church. St. Paul's is built of brick in an asymmetrical, roughly cruciform shape, with a bell tower topped by a spire. The primary entrance is at the base of the tower. The gable end of the roof is filled with fish scale shingles, a popular Victorian decorative element also used on the bell tower. There is a large stained-glass window with tracery on the façade. Total cost of the building amounted to $7,000. Additions to the church during the 20th century have not altered its general appearance when viewed from Main Street.

**CARROLLTON CHURCH OF GOD** (below), 2151 Bethel Road between Westminster and Finksburg, is a modest example of the late Gothic Revival style popular well into the 20th century. The design for Carrollton, built in 1921, likely came from a pattern book as the congregation was relatively small. The contrasting colors of the masonry emphasize the Gothic shape of the windows and entrance as well as serving to outline the building and bell tower. With approximately $3,000 worth of labor donated by the church members, the community kept the total cost of the church to $18,000.

A number of other local congregations chose to build in the late Gothic Revival style: Grace Lutheran Church (built in 1885) on Carroll Street in Westminster; Wesley United Methodist (1922) near Houcksville; and Greenmount United Methodist (1925) near Hampstead.
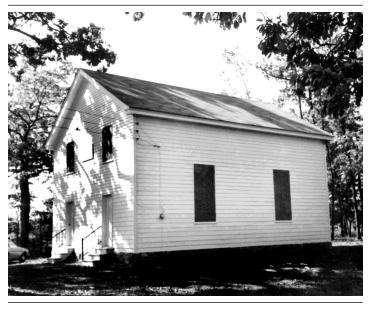
## Frame Country Churches

With an abundance of wood available locally, frame churches were inexpensive to build. While some have disappeared, a number still have active congregations and are well maintained. Most are found in rural areas and are vernacular in style.

The **CARROLL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE** (right), also known as the Davis Meeting House, stands on Watersville Road northeast of Mt. Airy. Henry Shipley Davis donated the land in 1856, and the building was completed in 1857. It is a one-story structure with a rubble stone foundation, white clapboard siding, and a gable roof. The front has the original double doors while the sides and back each have 9-over-6 clear-glass, sash windows. Architectural historian Kenneth Short wrote: "It is very typical of churches built in Carroll County throughout the nineteenth century, as most had two entrances on one gable end and were a simple rectangular box. . . . It is the only such church of this denomination known in Carroll County. The virtually pristine condition of the building, however, is much more unusual and gives this particular sanctuary added significance."

Uniontown's Lutheran congregation built **ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH** (below, left) in 1874 for a cost of $1,760. The small, white frame structure is typical of Carroll's late 19th-century vernacular church architecture with its gable façade,

prominent brackets supporting the roof, and ornate belfry. The windows on the front and over the door have pointed arches reflecting the Gothic Revival style. The side windows have rectangular sashes. At some point the façade of St. Paul's was altered by adding a central three-story bell tower and new entrance door that give the church a less ornate appearance today.

**CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH** (below, right) stood in Woodbine from 1890 until it burned in 1904. Judging from the photograph, the 3-bay by 3-bay frame building was erected in Gothic Revival style but with more ornamentation than often seen on frame country churches. There is dentil molding below the cornice along the roof line, and the pointed-arch windows appear to have stained glass with some evidence of tracery. Calvary is a modest version of the Gothic Revival style of St. John Roman Catholic Church in Westminster that is discussed on page 8.

## Churches in the Federal Style

By the first decades of the 19th century, many union churches dotted the landscape of Carroll County, often replacing earlier log meeting houses. Their architectural style, like so many churches constructed throughout the new republic, was Federal. They offered the advantage of several denominations supporting one building when preachers and money were scarce. The precedent came from Germany and its history of shared churches ("Simultankirchen"). At one point, the U.S. had over 500 of them, chiefly in areas settled by German immigrants, so it is not surprising that the northern tier of Carroll County, with its large German-speaking population, was home to most of the union churches.

The Union Meeting House in Westminster, Krider's Union Church on the outskirts of Westminster, St. Mary's Union Church in Silver Run, and Emmanuel (Baust) in Tyrone were all built of brick, stood two stories high, and had nearly identical door and window placement. They were so similar in their plain but elegant Federal style that it is difficult to distinguish one from the other in old photographs.

Westminster's UNION MEETING HOUSE stood in the center of the town cemetery from about 1811 until 1891. A lottery in 1808 raised money to finish construction. The result was a 30- by 50-foot structure, 25 feet tall, with a small belfry housing an iron triangle (rather than a bell) to summon worshippers. For nearly 40 years Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, German Reformed, Mormons, and Baptists worshipped there, some congregations holding services more regularly than others. As the largest building in Westminster during those early years, the Meeting House also was the site of secular gatherings to discuss community affairs. On a snowy January 19, 1837, it hosted a large crowd celebrating the formation of Carroll County and, until the courthouse was finished, it served as a temporary place to handle circuit court matters. As new buildings gradually took over Westminster's secular and religious functions by the mid-1850s, the meeting house slowly fell into disrepair. For a short period during the Civil War it served as a



**Above:** Westminster's Union Meeting House (c.1808 to 1891).

**Below:** Krider's Lutheran and Reformed Church (c.1809 to 1889)



hospital, but following years with no upkeep it was demolished in 1891.
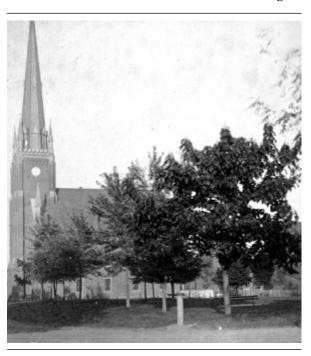
KRIDER'S UNION CHURCH on the northern outskirts of Westminster served German Lutheran and Reformed congregations from its construction in 1809 until 1889. Following demolition of the

TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH (below)—now United Church of Christ—is an imposing, symmetrical 3-bay by 6-bay, rectangular brick building constructed in 1864 on York Street in Manchester. The May 27, 1863, issue of the *Messenger* described it as "a neat, elegant, and . . . beautiful building; such as one of which the town and the community around will be proud." The men of the church and the community performed much of the labor, so the cost was only a little more than $8,000.



(Courtesy of Manchester Historical Center.)

Although an example of Gothic Revival architecture, Trinity has relatively few Gothic design elements except those on the square brick tower on its symmetrical façade. The windows in the side walls are slightly recessed with decorative corbel brickwork above each. Considering that this

church was constructed during the Civil War, it is not surprising that the congregation did not indulge in many extra decorative details, although its slate-clad steeple is so impressive that it forms part of Manchester's town seal.

Westminster's Reformed congregation built ST. PAUL'S REFORMED CHURCH (bottom, left)—now United Church of Christ—at 17 Bond Street using two local architects, Messrs. Shorb and Leister. The plan was like that of Manchester's Trinity Reformed Church. Because St. Paul's was a new congregation, the building committee decided, rather than build a small traditional church at little expense, it would build a large one, but not all at once. Services were initially held on the ground floor of the brick shell. The full, 2-story church was completed in 1869 at a cost of $16,500. St. Paul's incorporated more decorative elements than Manchester's Trinity, including pointed-arch windows filled with stained-glass, buttresses, and decorative corbels on the bell tower on the façade. The towering steeple collapsed in 1893 and was never replaced.

By 1871 Carroll County had another impressive church similar in design to Trinity in Manchester and St. Paul's in Westminster. TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (bottom, right) on West Baltimore Street in Taneytown was the result of major renovations to an existing 1840-1841 brick church and not built from scratch. The Gothic Revival influence is unmistakable on the façade and the sides. The decorative corbels along the roofline were undoubtedly new in 1871 as was the outlining of the arched windows and door with brick of a different color. Within 26 years, Trinity was again renovated but in the Romanesque Revival style.

## Gothic Revival Style

By the mid-19th century, many Carroll County congregations began building large new churches in the popular Gothic Revival style. These were often the second or third replacements of original log churches and reflected more affluent members and regional or national funding from the denomination. By the end of the 19th century and into the first decades of the 20th century, the late Gothic Revival style that favored asymmetry, bell towers, and large pointed-arch windows, filled with stained-glass and elaborate tracery, supplanted the perfect symmetry sought earlier.

CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION (top), an Episcopal house of worship at 23 North Court Street in Westminster, dates to 1846. Its diminutive size and attractive stone exterior make it noteworthy among Carroll's churches. The Reverend D. Hillhouse Buel urged Westminster's small Episcopal congregation to build its own church after years of worshipping in the town's Union Meeting House. Several parishioners canvassed the surrounding counties and Baltimore City to collect money for construction beginning in 1842.

A survey by the Maryland Historical Trust describes Ascension as "a modest, but good example of the type of church advocated by the Ecclesiological Society." Its plans were drawn by the renowned Baltimore architect Robert Cary Long, Jr. (1810-1849). The locally-quarried greenstone of the exterior complements the rustic Gothic Revival style. Above the entrance is an open bell cote. Inside, the nave is tall and narrow with four lancet windows on each side.

When constructed in 1866 ST. JOHN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (right) occupied a prominent place on Westminster's flourishing East Main Street. The *Democratic*



*Advocate* of November 22 reported, "St. John's Catholic Church of Westminster is to be dedicated today with appropriate ceremonies." It was described as "almost Cathedral" in its dimensions. The tall wooden steeple, not completed by the time of the dedication, was in place the next year. Designed by Eben Faxon (1826-1868) of Baltimore, St. John was considered one of Maryland's most attractive Gothic Revival churches. John Orendorff, a stone mason from Bachman's Valley, donated 500,000 bricks for its construction, hauling them to Westminster in an oxcart. Faxon's plan fo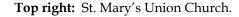r the Gothic interior included no visible supports for the elegant, vaulted ceiling. Stained glass windows and Stations of the Cross imported from Germany added to the impressive structure.

During a spectacular storm in 1952 lightning struck the steeple, breaking it in half. The bottom half fell through the roof of the nearby rectory which could not be salvaged, but, after significant repairs to the church, worship services resumed until it was condemned in 1968 as structurally unsound. St. John's congregation has since built two new churches on Monroe Street.

**Top right:** St. Mary's Union Church.

**Lower right:** Interior photo of St. Mary's with its raised pulpit, the circular sounding board over the pulpit to project the minister's voice, and a glimpse of one of the galleries.

union church, the congregations built separate churches within several hundred yards of each other and shared a cemetery.

ST. MARY'S UNION CHURCH in Silver Run also served Lutheran and Reformed congregations from 1821 until 1902. If it ever had a secular function in that small community, its role was likely minor in comparison to its use as a house of worship. Supposedly, it could seat 600 people when the balconies on three sides were full. A circular staircase led to the raised pulpit; a sounding board hanging from the ceiling helped to project the minister's voice. Records show the total building cost in 1821 was $2,505.60. By the end of the 19th century, both the congregations built separate churches in newer architectural styles side by side before demolishing the old church.

The history and architecture of EMMANUEL (BAUST) CHURCH at 2950 Old Taneytown Road parallels the other union churches. Built in 1815 and torn down in 1906, Baust replaced a log church and school on the same site built in the 18th century. The interior view shows one of the three balconies, the altar, and two stoves.





**Above:** Emmanuel (Baust) Church.

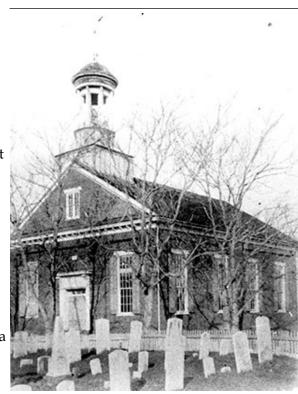**Right:** Interior photo Emmanuel Church showing the stoves and pipes.

## Greek Revival Style

The simplicity of Greek Revival buildings, with their rectilinear shape, low-sloping gable roofs, symmetry, pediments, and occasional use of columns or pilasters, suited some Carroll County congregations from the 1840s through the 1880s. The style was equally adaptable to brick or stone construction. Some congregations chose to add a belfry or integrate a bit of Gothic Revival design with pointed-arch windows and a modicum of stained glass, but by the end of the 19th century, this style was out of fashion.

EBENEZER METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH (right) —now United Methodist—on Woodbine Road south of Winfield is a one-story structure that closely adheres to the Greek Revival style. The classical design with a temple-like portico, supported by four columns reminiscent of the Doric style, makes it unique among churches in Carroll County and a very late use (1888) of an earlier style. The walls are brick, painted white, but the pediment is filled with wood German siding. In the accompanying photograph, shrubbery nearly obscures the four pointed-arch windows with stained-glass on each side, which add a hint of Gothic Revival style.

JERUSALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH (right), also known as Bower's (Bauer's) Church, Bachman Mills Church, or Jerusalem Union Church, sits above the intersection of Bixler Church and Bachman Valley roads on the site of an earlier house of worship. Built of brick in 1864, Jerusalem "exhibits the refined proportions, restrained ornament and architectural detailing emblematic of the Greek Revival style," according to a survey by the Maryland Historical Trust. The rectangular shape is that of a small Greek temple with a low-pitched roof and symmetrical façade with four



brick pilasters, instead of stand-alone columns such as those seen on Ebenezer Church. Builder Joseph Slagle of Hanover, PA, may have followed plans in one of the church pattern books widely available in the mid-19th century. The execution of Jerusalem's Greek Revival style is considered superior to other local examples. The church retained its original appearance until 1938 when a belfry was added. The Historical Trust found the church "retains sufficient integrity to embody the distinctive characteristics of the Greek Revival style" despite 20th century changes.



NEW WINDSOR ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (opposite, top) on High Street in New Windsor was built in 1844 for a cost of $3,543 which included a separate parsonage. The church is a symmetrical 3-bay by 3-bay brick building. Like Jerusalem, it has pilasters rather than free-standing columns on the façade, but these are more robust to support a simple gable roof. The belfry was part of the original construction. The congregation replaced the original clouded glass, 2-over-2 sash windows with stained glass in 1898, but



otherwise the church has not changed much over the last 176 years.

Henry Bussard financed the building of PINE GROVE CHAPEL (right, below), originally known as Ridge Presbyterian Church, near Mt. Airy in 1846. It holds the honor of being the town's oldest surviving building. Bussard probably chose a local stone mason to construct this church along very austere Greek Revival lines. Slaves who belonged to Bussard's neighbors, Henry Shipley Davis and George H. Davis, quarried the stone nearby. There is no exterior ornamentation, no belfry, and the front door and square-top, multi-pane sash windows are plain. Bussard's records show the building cost $1,765.96¾; the

(Courtesy of New Windsor Heritage.)

fraction of a cent reflects that nails cost 6¼ cents per pound in 1846.

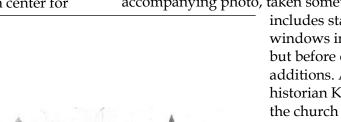Pine Grove Chapel also served as a school and gathering place for Mt. Airy residents. Although the accompanying 1907 photograph shows the church in poor condition, that is no longer the case. Over the years, local organizations have raised thousands of dollars for its upkeep while respecting the structure's original simplicity. It is the site for the town's Memorial Day commemorations. In 2020 there is no stucco on the stone walls, and new steps lead to a modern front door.



(Courtesy of Mount Airy Historical Society.)

## Queen Anne Style

Sykesville's 19th-century developer, Frank Brown, donated two acres of land in the town center for the relocation of ST. PAUL'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH (now United Methodist) from its earlier Howard County site. The oldest part of the present building dates to 1889. Parishioners hauled stone from the earlier church across the Patapsco River for the 50-by 30-foot foundation. The 2-story frame superstructure was topped with a belfry.

Originally the church faced uphill to Norwood Avenue, but in 1903 it was rotated 180

degrees and a new façade constructed after Sykesville residents recognized Main Street was now the center of the community. The accompanying photo, taken sometime after 1914, includes stained-glass windows installed that year but before other 20th-century additions. Architectural historian Ken Short noted the church "appears very gay due to its construction using fabricated shingles, bargeboards, and novelty siding, all painted white." St. Paul's Queen Anne architectural style is unique among Carroll County churches but blends nicely with other Victorian buildings in the town.



(Courtesy of Sykesville Gate House Museum.)