

G-I-A-160

Samuel McKenzie House  
Avilton  
Private

ca.1840

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To the small Catholic community that settled on Walnut Hill, the Samuel McKenzie House was an important gathering place; religious services were held there regularly until a proper church building could be built in the neighborhood.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

G-I-A-160  
MAGI #1202885635  
NR

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY 1.32 885404

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Samuel McKenzie House

AND/OR COMMON  
Nellie Miller House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Blue Lick Rd, W side, .2 mile S of Avilton - Lonaconing RD,

CITY, TOWN Avilton X VICINITY OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 6th

STATE Maryland COUNTY Garrett County

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: NONE

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Lloyd and Nellie M. Miller Telephone #: 301-689-8142

STREET & NUMBER  
Route 1, Box 86

CITY, TOWN Lonaconing X VICINITY OF STATE, zip code Maryland 21536

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC  
Garrett County Courthouse

Liber #: 129  
Folio #: 420

STREET & NUMBER  
Third and Alder Streets

CITY, TOWN Oakland STATE Maryland 21550

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
None

DATE  
 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

G-4-160

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

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The Samuel McKenzie House is a gable-roofed, 1½ story, four bay by two bay timber frame structure on a stone foundation. Its weatherboarded exterior originally had a full length porch sheltering the two door facade, however, this and a side wing have deteriorated and been removed. Of special note is the original woodwork, paint colors, and ornamentation that are retained on the interior of the two room plan.

The house is located on the east side of Walnut Hill, facing east, .6 mile north of Blue Lick Run and .5 mile south of St. Ann's Church. The wooded hill rises steeply at the rear of the house and in the front it is treeless, dips slightly and then rises gently up to Blue Lick Road, creating a small valley. A dry stream bed passes in front of the house and a small orchard of about ten apple trees is located approximately 15 feet beyond the north endwall.

The facade (E elevation) has a symmetrical, four bay arrangement with two center doors spaced very close together, and a window on each side. The northern door is board and batten, while the southern one is a raised, four-panel door. A 6/6 sash window pierces the northern end of the wall. This window and both doors are without surrounds. The southern window, a 1/1 sash, has a plain board surround and a molded dripboard. The upper level of the facade is unfenestrated because the porch that formerly stretched across this elevation was an extension of the roof from the main block, and fully masked this upper portion of the wall. According to a 1920 photograph of the house<sup>1</sup>; the southern half of the porch was enclosed, sided with weatherboard, and lit by a small window on its east side. The open area of the porch was supported by two posts with a baluster railing on the east edge, and two steps leading up to the north side. The roofline was continuous from the ridge to the cornice of the porch. Recently, the porch has fallen away from the house and its dry-laid, split stone foundation has tumbled.

The north endwall is pierced by a 6/6 sash window and a four-panel door (E and W ends respectively) on the ground level, and its gable is lit by a 6/3 sash window. The door apparently is an alteration, as the 1920 photograph, previously cited, shows a 6/6 sash window in the present location of the door.

A board and batten door occupies the extreme western end of the south endwall. Two four-pane casement windows pierce the gable. Scars on the siding reveal the outlines of a one story, gable-roofed wing that projected from the western half of this wall, encompassing the door and a brick stove chimney on a concrete base.

The rear (W elevation) is pierced by two windows at the ground level: a 1/1 sash at the southern end, and a small, square, single pane fixed window at the northern end.

The house is situated on a split stone foundation with a full basement below. Its frame is heavily constructed; the basement joists being logs hewn on their top and bottom faces, and the sills, joists, plates, cornerposts, and swaybracing being square hewn timbers held together in pegged, mortice and tenon joints. Six posts form the major vertical support for the building with locations at the four corners

**CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY**

**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 type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	interior design	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES                      ca. 1840                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Samuel McKenzie House is significant architecturally as a rare example of hewn timber frame construction in Garrett County. Equally significant is the interior design of the house. Original colors, woodwork, and ornamentation have been preserved. To the small Catholic community that settled on Walnut Hill, the Samuel McKenzie House was an important gathering place; religious services were held there regularly until a proper church could be built in the neighborhood.

This house is one of the few examples in Garrett County of a building constructed in timber frame. Sections of the James Drane House (G-II-B-010), c. 1800, and the Coddington Homestead (G-II-A-110), c. 1835, are the only other early timber frame buildings in the county. Extant 19th century painted wall decoration is a rarity in this area, as well. The variety of colors used on the walls of this house reveal a style of interior decoration used during this period. Also, the fine painted details such as the scalloped ceiling border, and the beaded false chair rail give an indication of the level of craftsmanship available.

The Catholic community on Walnut Hill, designated as the "McKenzie Settlement" at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was without a church building for worship. From 1837 to 1859 services were held at the home of a neighbor, Christian Garlitz. After Garlitz sold his farm, Samuel McKenzie served the community by opening his home for church services until 1874 when St. Ann's Church was constructed.<sup>2</sup>

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

1

Rev. Father Alysius. History of St. Stephen's and St. Ann's Mission.  
(Cumberland, Maryland: Enterprise Printing Co., 1920), p. 49.

2

History of St. Stephen's and St. Ann's Mission, pp. 45-51.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Valerie Cesna, Historic Sites Surveyor

March 1982

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust/Bureau of Mines

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

Shaw House, 21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

(301) 269-2438

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

Samuel McKenzie House  
(Description #7 - Continued)

and the midpoints of the facade and rear walls. Between these posts straight-sawn, 3" by 4½" studs are fixed in place with cut nails. The spaces between the studs are filled with sawdust, and the entire frame is covered with weather-board.

Eleven sets of rafters butted at the peak form the roof frame. The circular sawn, random width boards laid horizontally across the rafters are covered with several layers of tarpaper and asphalt roll roofing material.

The interior is divided into two rooms of equal size per floor by a wall of random width, beaded vertical plank. An enclosed staircase on the south side of the partition wall rises, in a straight run from the rear wall, nine treads to the upper floor. A small closet occupies the space below the stairs, its door opening on the narrow side of the staircase.

The first floor, south room was remodeled by covering the walls and ceiling with plasterboard. It is the only room where the original woodwork and wall treatment are not visible.

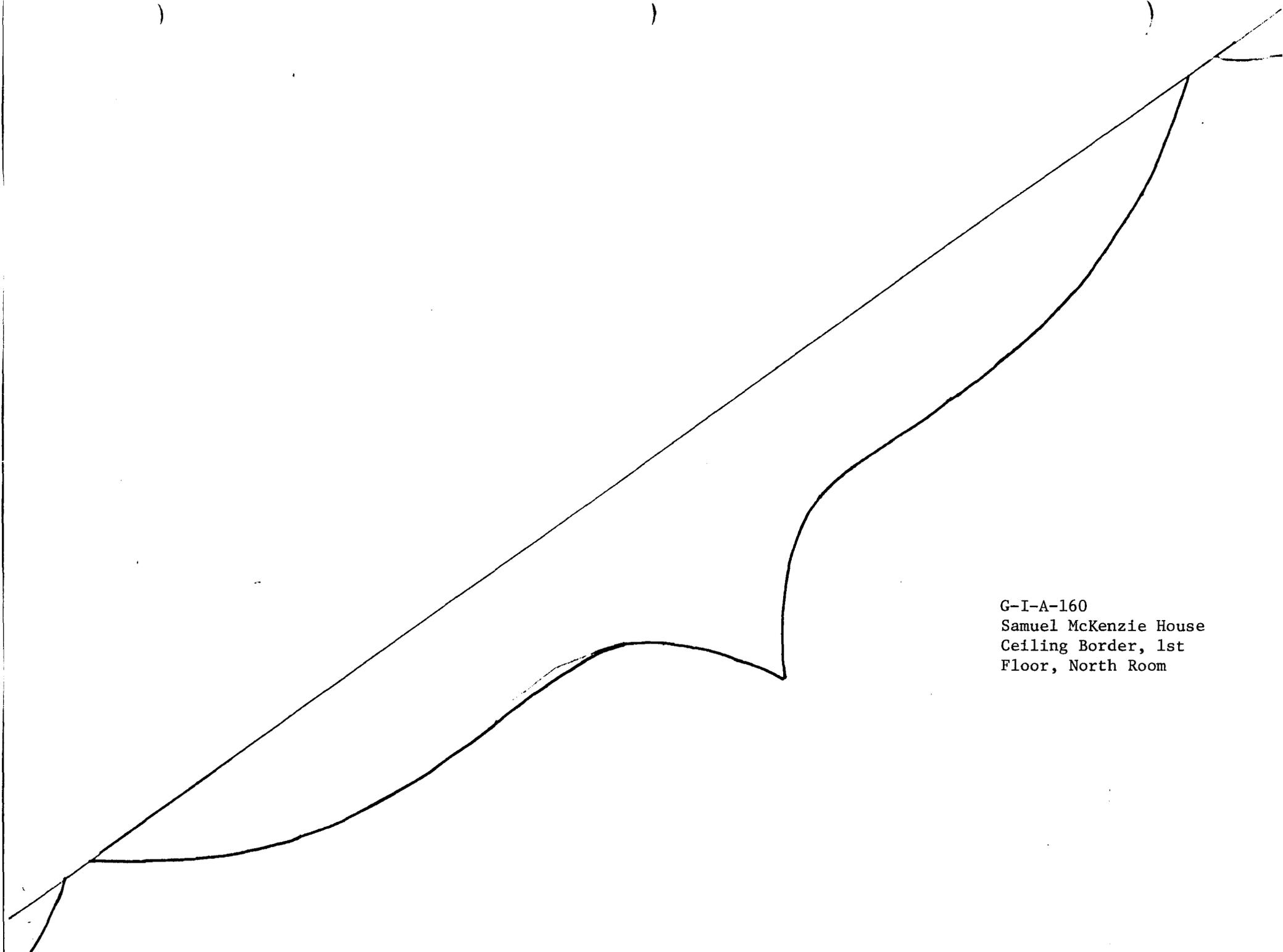
The walls in the first floor, north room are paneled with horizontal, random width, beaded board. A beaded chair rail surrounds the room on all walls but the partition wall. At the corners of the room the chair rails overlap, the base of one touching the top of the other, so that they are fixed to the walls at differing heights rather than being mitred together at the same level. Random width, flat boards line the ceiling. A flimsy partition wall made of studs covered with corrugated cardboard and wallpaper, was installed in this room in the mid-twentieth century to create a front and a back room out of this space.

Due to the application of many layers of wallpaper over the years, the original paint colors and ornamentation in this room have been preserved underneath. The chair rails are painted pale blue, the wall area above it is light green, and the lower wall is black with a subsequent layer of deep yellow-gold. The ceiling's color is a very dark blue-green. A scalloped border painted just below the ceiling is the same blue-green color. Rather than stenciling the scalloped border, lines were drawn on the wall, then painted in. The partition wall is painted in the same color scheme as the other walls, however, since it has no actual chair rail, a dark blue-green chair rail was painted on, down to the fine detail of depicting the beaded edge that distinguishes the real chair rail.

In the stair case the walls were originally light green with black steps and a painted black baseboard. The walls were later painted white, and the baseboard and steps received additional coats of red, then yellow-gold paint.

The walls and ceiling in both rooms of the upper story are paneled with random width, horizontal board that was originally whitewashed and later covered with wallpaper. The partition wall is made of roughly finished, straight-sawn board. The door between the rooms is a dark blue-green batten door made of beaded boards.

The house has been unoccupied since the 1950's, so some deterioration has taken place. However, this injury to the building does not mar the integrity of the structure or disturb its decorative details.



G-I-A-160  
Samuel McKenzie House  
Ceiling Border, 1st  
Floor, North Room

G-I-A-160



Home of Samuel McKenzie

present owner. Samuel McKenzie distinguished himself by zealous interest in church affairs. His unremitting efforts to keep the flame of faith burning in the hearts of the little mountain flock are remembered and spoken of to this day.

Leo McKenzie, at whose house the August Sacrifice was also offered, is the father of Zacharias, Sedras and Marcellus, who are still living. Their house is a quarter of a mile to the south of Samuel's. For twenty-five years before the church was built both Samuel and Leo McKenzie threw open their doors to the children and taught them catechism. They were very conscientious in the performance of this duty, as their scholars testify to the present day.

In summer Mass was also said in two schoolhouses. One of them stood southwest of the present church, on the road to Christie Run, several hundred yards from the cross roads. The other was situated on the road to Blue-lick Run, about a quarter of a mile from the cross roads. Of the priests who visited the mission in those days, the Record (42) mentions especially the Rev. Fathers Morgan and Valentine Schmitt.

(42) St. Michael's Baptismal Record, Years 1866, 1868.

*History of the Father's History of St. Stephen's and St. Mary's Mission (Garrison Family, Maryland, Cumberland, Md., 1920, (Greenfield Library))*

## FIRST CHURCH

"The beautiful places of the wilderness shall grow fat and the hills shall be girded about with joy."  
Psalm 64:13.

In 1871, the Rev. Valentine Schmitt, reviewing the McKenzie Settlement, found there about fifteen Catholic families, and with their hearty consent decided to build a church. A plot of ground comprising one acre and adjoining the public road on Walnut Hill, about one hundred and fifty rods northwest of the former "Church-house" was selected by Father Schmitt. This property



Leo McKenzie's Home

was a part of the McKenzie farm and was donated by Jeremiah and his wife Catherine to the zealous missionary, though the deeds for the same were not executed till August 4, 1884. (43) This section has an altitude of 2770 feet. With the cheerful co-operation of the parish a little church was built in a cluster of pines at the brow of the hill. After a lapse of some thirty years the beautiful location of the old church in its little pine grove would almost suggest the title, "St. Ann's of the Pines," and is the admiration of visitors to this historic little spot.

The principal question that vexed Father Schmitt in his undertaking was that of funds. Recourse was had

(43) Liber W. H. T., No. 9, folio 536, etc., Oakland, Md.

*Alpining. For rather. History of St. Stephen's and St. Ann's  
Garrett Camp Maryland. Cumberland, Md. 1920.  
(Grantville Library)*





G-I-A-160

Samuel McKenzie House

Garrett Co., MD

Valerie Cesna 7/14/81

Facade - E elevation

FIGURE 91



G-I-A-160  
Samuel McKenzie House  
Garrett Co., MD  
Valerie Cesna 7/14/81  
Rear - W & S elevations

FIGURE 91