

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Christ Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

North side of Maryland Route 18

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Stevensville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

VICINITY OF

CODE
24

COUNTY

First
Queen Anne's

CODE
035

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Vestry of Christ Church

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Stevensville

VICINITY OF

STATE
Maryland

21666

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Queen Anne's County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

STATE
Maryland

21617

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Christ Church is situated on the north side of Route 18 in the center of Stevensville. Modest in scale, the frame church and adjacent bell tower are constructed in the Queen Anne style.

The present church building, as constructed in 1880, consists of a rectangular frame structure with a steep slate roof, lofty Victorian chimney, and simple but pleasing stained glass windows. The exterior walls exhibit Victorian decorative work executed in cedar shingles and german siding. The facades are divided into panels, defined by chamfered posts and horizontal rails, painted a soft greyish-white. The infill is alternately composed of horizontal or vertical siding and patterned shingles; these are painted a bluish gray. The result is an array of varying colors, textures, and patterns, all unified by the more rigid framework of posts and rails.

The bell tower directly adjoins the east facade of the church and is similarly treated, although the infill does not include shingle work but is composed entirely of narrow horizontal siding. The attenuated, pyramidal roof is covered with shingles rather than slate and rests atop an open framework of chamfered posts and arching stick-style braces, enclosed by a low railing.

Several alterations to the church have been made. The present entrance in the center of the south gable is not original: an early 20th century postcard shows the church with a path leading to a side entrance behind the bell tower. The one-story, shed-roofed vestibule on the south gable is original, as it rests on the same cut granite foundation as the main body of the church. The short, projecting entranceway was probably added in 1927, when the altar area was expanded by constructing an east-west transept and an octagonal apse on the north gable. The west transept remains today and is used for the organ and choir. The east transept served as a sacristy, and in 1957 was incorporated into a new parish hall adjoining the northeast corner of the church.

The interior of the church is quite dramatic. A lofty, steeply pitched ceiling rises above the congregation, supported by open, stick-style trusses. There are three of these, dividing the interior of the building into four bays. The trusses spring from heavy, chamfered posts in the side walls. Large brackets support heavy tie beams, a pair of queen posts rise from the tie beam to a higher collar beam, and a braced king post rises from the collar to support a ridge beam. Great curving braces form Gothic arches below the collar and, minus the tie beam, the overall effect resembles a hammer beam truss. All of the timbers are chamfered, and the ends of the braces are scrolled. The ceiling is of narrow, beaded boards laid vertically from ridge to eaveline and secured to the top plate, two sets of purlins, and the ridge beam.

The remainder of the interior is equally fine, with Gothic-arched, stained glass windows arranged in three pairs along each side wall and larger arched windows in the upper south gable and behind the altar in the north apse. There are smaller windows on either side of the entrance vestibule and in the transepts.

Form No. 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Christ Church
Queen Anne's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

Interior woodwork consists of a heavily molded cornice, chamfered window frames, and a simple chairrail surmounting a dado paneled with narrow, beaded boards. The dark, rich color of the woodwork contrasts with the white plastered walls and soft, muted colors of the stained glass.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1880

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Kent Island is the cradle of the Anglican Church in Maryland, being the site of the earliest Anglican settlement in the colony. A congregation is known to have been established at Claiborne's settlement at Kent Point in the early 1630's, and from here the Anglican faith followed the early colonists as they crossed to the mainland and settled the central Eastern Shore.

In 1692 the Governor's Council and the Assembly passed the Act of 1692, officially establishing the English Church in Maryland. Christ Church Parish was one of thirty parishes recognized in this act.

The present building, constructed in 1880, is the fourth known church constructed by the parish in the Broad Creek area. It stands today as a superb example of the Queen Anne style of ecclesiastical architecture. This building, together with small frame churches in Sudlersville and Hillsboro, presents a textbook study of the tasteful simplicity advocated by such prominent 19th century architects and writers as Richard Upjohn, Calvert Vaux, and A. J. Downing.

Little is known of the early history of Christ Church Parish. In 1694 the provincial council reported to Governor Nicholson that "Kent County has two parishes -- one church built and another laid out to be built -- but no ministers." Kent Island was at that time part of Kent County, and it seems probable that the church mentioned in this report was Christ Church. In 1714, in a petition to the Governor, the vestry described their church as "being old and gone very much to decay," and noted that they had just completed a new church.¹

The lack of a minister seems to have plagued the Parish throughout its history. The 1714 petition reports the parish had been vacant for nine years, and the small number of taxables made it difficult to fine someone. To aid in supporting a minister, the parish purchased a glebe farm in 1718 (See QA-136)*. This consisted of 150 acres of land on Coxe's Creek, purchased of Benjamin Ball for 12,000 pounds of tobacco.

In 1738 Matthew Brown, clerk of the parish, submitted a report to the Governor, including the following description of the church and glebe:

...The church is of brick, 25 feet by 40. The altar and stairs want repairing with some other small repairs. The glebe has a new dwelling house half-finished, one tobacco house, and one house almost useless....²

Form No. 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Christ Church
Queen Anne's County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

2

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

In 1748 a memorial from Christ Church was presented, stating that the congregation had outgrown the church and requesting funds for its enlargement and repair. A tax was enacted, and 37,100 pounds of tobacco was provided for this purpose. A contract was apparently entered into with John Smith for the construction of an addition and necessary repairs to the older building; Thomas Barnes was hired to build pews.

The parish continued to suffer from a lack of taxables, and in 1765 successfully petitioned to have part of St. Paul's Parish on the mainland (of Queen Anne's County) attached to Christ Church Parish.

The Revolutionary War ended what might otherwise have been a prosperous time for the Kent Island Church, and the parish entered a long period of decline, the rectorship remaining vacant until 1806.

In 1802 the glebe land was rented out, and repairs were ordered for the church building. The parish continued to be troubled by declining membership, however, and by 1820 the buildings were in desperate need of repair. In that year, at the request of Bishop Kemp, the Reverend Purnell F. Smith visited the vacant parishes of the Eastern Shore, and in May, 1820 sent the following report on Christ Church Parish:

On the 7th, I went into Queen Anne's County, and on the 10th passed over to Kent Island. Here I found the church in a deplorable state. The house is not fit to preach in. The pulpit is pulled down, and all the pews are taken away by the neighboring inhabitants, as well as many of the bricks out of the wall, and stock of all kinds take shelter in the church. Although there is a vestry in the parish, there appears to be but little attention paid to its concerns. There are about fifteen families of Episcopalians as nearly as can be ascertained. There is a glebe of about 130 or 140 acres of land, which now rents for only \$60...and as to repairing the church at the present time, they think it could not be done. I advised them to set about repairing it immediately, and several of them expressed a wish to do so, but I fear it will not be done.³

In May, 1825 Reverend Mr. Jackson, of Chestertown, visited the island at the request of Bishop Kemp and reported that the parish continued to decline and the church was almost in ruins.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

Form No. 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Christ Church
Queen Anne's County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

In November of the same year the following letter was sent from Matthias Harris to the Bishop:

Soon after I received the appointment of lay reader, I left Chestertown for this place, and found the church in a most deplorable condition. The house is in ruins, and the members scattered as sheep without a shepherd... After visiting and conversing with the people from time to time for the space of six weeks, the subject of repairing the church became more acceptable to them... A subscription was taken up, the materials purchased, the workmen employed, and we had no doubt of success, but who can tell what a day may bring forth? In one house our hopes were laid low, our joy was turned into mourning, our rejoicing into heaviness of heart. The church of which we write was built somewhat in the shape of an L, the two parts, denominated the old and new, had been put up at different periods. The walls of the old part were in so ruinous a state that it was deemed advisable to pull [it] down and repair the new part, which seemed much stronger. This would have reduced the size of the building to 24 x 30 feet, which, though small, would have been large enough for the congregation.

After the workmen had pulled down the old part, and whilst they were engaged in clearing away the rubbish, etc., the roof of the remaining part fell in, pushing out the walls on each side, and thus blasted our fondest expectations.⁴

Harris suggested selling the glebe to raise money for construction of a church, and in April, 1826 the glebe was offered for sale. The high bid of \$900 was considered too low, and the land was not sold. Later that month John Denny purchased the glebe for \$1,000.

In August, 1826 Harris reported that the rebuilding of the church had begun but that progress was slow. It is uncertain when the new building was completed, but it was not consecrated until 1841. It must have been a very simple structure for the Bishop described it in 1841 as "...neat, though plain and inexpensive...erected on the ruins and in part of the materials of the former building. Though completed some years since, it has only recently been plastered." The Reverend T.A. Thompson, writing in 1854, was less generous in his evaluation:

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Christ Church
Queen Anne's County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

The old church was in the shape of the letter L. The sides of the main building fronted east and west. It had four rows of pews, gallery and pulpits - a remarkable fine sounding church. Mr. Carter thinks it would have been far better to have repaired the old building than to have taken it down. The present is a very inferior structure every way...⁵

This new church was abandoned in 1872, giving some indication of the probable accuracy of these accounts. The congregation used a room adjoining the rectory for services until the present church was completed in 1880.

The earlier churches stood on a low knoll at the head of Broad Creek, but the new church was built in the nearby town of Stevensville on land purchased from the Chambers family and adjoining a two-story parsonage purchased in 1866.⁶

Emory describes this church, then only recently completed, as being "a gothic structure of wood, with stone foundation and slate roof. It is 50 x 25 feet, and its seating capacity 150 persons." It was begun in March, 1880, and first occupied as a place of worship in June of that year.⁷

In 1927 the chancel area at the north end of the church was enlarged, and the entrance was shifted from the east transept to the south gable, but the changes remained faithful to the earlier work, and only the lighter interior woodwork and brick foundation offer evidence of the change. In 1939 memorial windows were placed above the altar, and in 1957 a parish hall was added to the rear of the sacristy.

¹Frederick Emory, Queen Anne's County, Maryland, pp. 135-136.

²Ibid, pp. 139-140.

³Ibid, pp. 145.

⁴Ibid, pp. 145-146.

⁵Ibid, p. 147.

⁶The Vestry minutes document the purchase of the parsonage, but the minutes are missing for the period during which the church was built.

Form No. 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Christ Church
Queen Anne's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

⁷Emory, p. 148. Emory's book was first published as a series of newspaper articles written during the 1880's. These were gathered together and published by the Maryland Historical Society in 1950.

*Queen Anne's County Survey - Lilian Tanner farm, Kent Island.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Emory, Frederick. Queen Anne's County, Maryland. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1950.

First Parishes of the Province of Maryland, 1942.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #6.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 200' X 200' lot

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Queen Anne's County Historical Society

DATE

May 3, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

124 South Commerce Street

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland 21617

1 km

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

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

Form No. 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Christ Church
Queen Anne's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 6

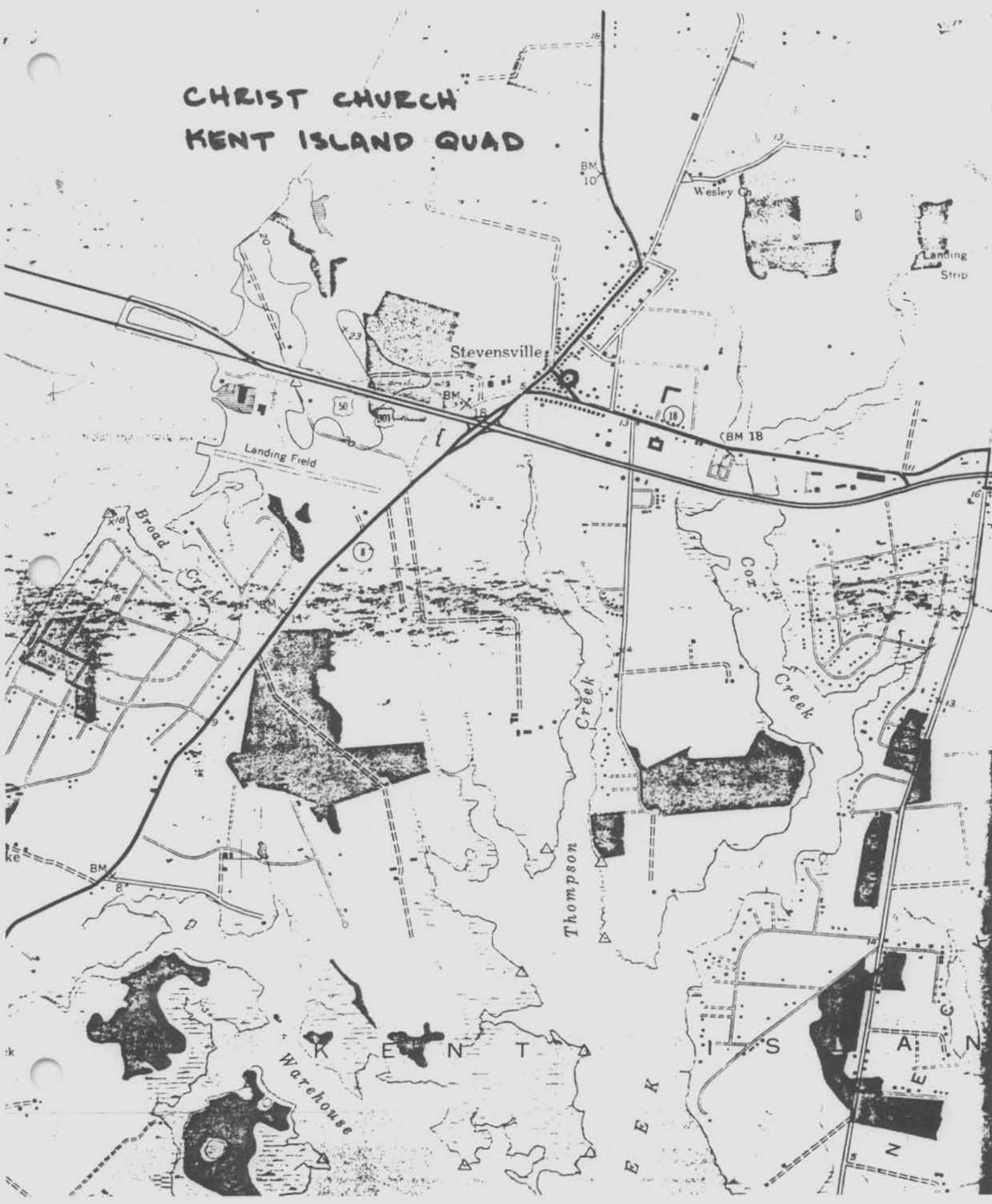
(BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES, continued)

Gould, Clarence, P. Christ Church Parish. Stevensville, 1959.

Land Records, Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Vestry Minutes of Chrish Church, Stevensville, Maryland.

CHRIST CHURCH KENT ISLAND QUAD



QA-212
Christ Church
Stevensville

1880

Kent Island is the cradle of the Anglican Church in Maryland, being the site of the earliest Anglican settlement in the colony. A congregation is known to have been established at Claiborne's settlement at Kent Point in the 1630's, and when the Act of 1692 officially established the English Church in Maryland, Christ Church Parish was one of the thirty parishes recognized.

The present building, constructed in 1880, is the fourth known church constructed by the Parish in the Broad Creek area. It is a superb example of the Queen Anne style of ecclesiastical architecture, and is one of the most carefully preserved Victorian churches in Tidewater Maryland.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Christ Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

North side of Maryland Route 18

CITY, TOWN

Stevensville

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Queen Anne's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" 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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Vestry of Christ Church

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Stevensville

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21666

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Queen Anne's County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

QA-212

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Christ Church is situated on the north side of Route 18 in the center of Stevensville. Modest in scale, the frame church and adjacent bell tower are constructed in the Queen Anne style.

The present church building, as constructed in 1880, consists of a rectangular frame structure with a steep slate roof, lofty Victorian chimney, and simple but pleasing stained glass windows. The exterior walls exhibit Victorian decorative work executed in cedar shingles and german siding. The facades are divided into panels, defined by chamfered posts and horizontal rails, painted a soft greyish-white. The infill is alternately composed of horizontal or vertical siding and patterned shingles; these are painted a bluish grey. The result is an array of varying colors, textures, and patterns, all unified by the more rigid framework of posts and rails.

The bell tower directly adjoins the east facade of the church and is similiarly treated, although the infill does not include shingle work, but is composed entirely of narrow horizontal siding. The attenuated pyramidal roof is covered with shingles rather than

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.1 DESCRIPTION

slate and rests atop an open framework of chamfered posts and arching stick-style braces, enclosed by a low railing.

Several alterations to the church have occurred. The present entrance in the center of the south gable is not original: an early 20th century postcard shows the church with a path leading to a side entrance behind the bell tower. The one-story shed roofed vestibule on the south gable is original, as it rests on the same cut granite foundation as the main body of the church. The short projecting entranceway was probably added in 1927, when the altar area was expanded by constructing an east-west transept and an octagonal apse on the north gable. The west transept remains today and is used for the organ and choir. The east transept served as a sacristy, and in 1957 was incorporated into a new parish hall adjoining the northeast corner of the church.

The interior of the church is quite dramatic. A lofty, steeply pitched ceiling rises above the congregation, supported by open, stick-style trusses. There are three of these, dividing the interior of the building into four bays. The trusses spring from heavy, chamfered posts in the side walls. Large brackets support heavy tie beams, a pair of queen posts rise

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.2 DESCRIPTION

from the tie beam to a higher collar beam, and a braced king post rises from the collar to support a ridge beam. Great curving braces form gothic arches below the collar and, minus the tie beam, the overall effect resembles a hammer beam truss. All of the timbers are chamfered, and the ends of the braces are scrolled. The ceiling is of narrow, beaded boards laid vertically from ridge to eaveline and secured to the top plate, two sets of purlins, and the ridge beam.

The remainder of the interior is equally fine, with gothic arched, stained glass windows arranged in three pairs along each side wall and larger arched windows in the upper south gable and behind the altar in the north apse. There are smaller windows on either side of the entrance vestibule and in the transepts.

Interior woodwork consists of a heavily molded cornice, chamfered window frames, and a simple chairrail surmounting a dado paneled with narrow, beaded boards. The dark, rich color of the woodwork contrasts with the white plastered walls and soft, muted colors of the stained glass.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

QA-212

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1880

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Kent Island is the cradle of the Anglican Church in Maryland, being the site of the earliest Anglican settlement in the colony. A congregation is known to have been established at Claiborne's settlement at Kent Point in the early 1630's, and from here the Anglican faith followed the early colonists as they crossed to the mainland and settled the central Eastern Shore.

In 1692 the Governor's Council and the Assembly passed the Act of 1692, officially establishing the English Church in Maryland. Christ Church Parish was one of the thirty parishes recognized in this Act.

The present building, constructed in 1880, is the fourth known church constructed by the Parish in the Broad Creek area. It stands today as a superb example of the Queen Anne style of ecclesiastical architecture. This building, together with smaller frame churches in Sudlersville and Hillsboro, presents a textbook study of the tasteful simplicity advocated by such

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

prominent 19th century architects and writers as Richard Upjohn, Calvert Vaux, and A. J. Downing.

Little is known of the early history of the Parish. In 1694 the provincial council reported to Governor Nicholson that "Kent County has two parishes--one church built and another laid out to be built--but no ministers." Kent Island was at that time part of Kent County, and it seems probable that the church mentioned in this report was Christ Church. In 1714, in a petition to the Governor, the vestry described their church as "being old and gone very much to decay", and noted that they had just completed a new church.⁽¹⁾

The lack of a minister seems to have plagued the Parish throughout its history. The 1714 petition reports the parish had been vacant for nine years, and the small number of taxables made it difficult to find a minister.

To aid in supporting a minister, the parish purchased a glebe farm in 1718 (See QA-136). This consisted of 150 acres of land on Coxe's Creek, and was purchased of Benjamin Ball for 12000 pounds of tobacco.

In 1738 Matthew Brown, clerk of the parish, submitted a report to the Governor, including the following

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.2 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

description of the church and glebe:

...The church is of brick, 25 feet by 40. The altar and stairs want repairing with some other small repairs. The glebe has a new dwelling house half-finished, one tobacco house, and one house almost useless... (2)

In 1748 a memorial from Christ Church was presented, stating that the congregation had outgrown the church, and requesting funds for its enlargement and repair. A tax was enacted, and 37,100 pounds of tobacco was provided for that purpose. A contract was apparently entered with John Smith for the construction of an addition and necessary repairs to the older building; Thomas Barnes was hired to build pews.

The parish continued to suffer from a lack of taxables, and in 1765 successfully petitioned to have part of St. Paul's Parish on the mainland (of Queen Anne's County) attached to Christ Church Parish.

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Revolutionary War ended what might otherwise have been a prosperous time for the Kent Island Church, and the parish entered a long period of decline, the rectorship remaining vacant until 1806.

In 1802 the glebe land was rented out, and repairs were ordered for the church building. The parish continued to be troubled by declining membership, however, and by 1820 the buildings were in desperate need of repair. In that year, at the request of Bishop Kemp, Rev. Purnell F. Smith visited the vacant parishes of the Eastern Shore, and in May, 1820 send the following report on Christ Church Parish:

On the 7th, I went into Queen Anne's County, and on the 10th passed over to Kent Island. Here I found the church in a deplorable state. The house is not fit to preach in. The pulpit is pulled down, and all the pews are taken away by the neighboring inhabitants, as well as many of the bricks out of the wall, and stock of all kinds take shelter in the church. Although there is a vestry

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

in the parish, there appears to be but little attention paid to its concerns. There are about fifteen families of Episcopalians as nearly as can be ascertained. There is a glebe of about 130 or 140 acres of land, which now rents for only \$60...and as to repairing the church at the present time, they think it could not be done. I advised them to set about repairing it immediately, and several of them expressed a wish to do so, but I fear it will not be done. (3)

In May, 1825 Rev. Mr. Jackson, of Chestertown, visited the island at the request of Bishop Kemp and reported that the parish continued to decline and the church was almost in ruins.

In November of the same year the following letter was sent from Matthias Harris to the Bishop:

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Soon after I received the appointment of lay reader, I left Chestertown for this place, and found the church in a most deplorable condition. The house is in ruins, and the members scattered as sheep without a shepherd...After visiting and conversing with the people from time to time for the space of six weeks, the subject of repairing the church became more acceptable to them...A subscription was taken up, the materials purchased, the workmen employed, and we had no doubt of success, but who can tell what a day may bring forth? In one hour our hopes were laid low, our joy was turned into mourning, our rejoicing into heaviness of heart. The church of which we write was built somewhat in the shape of an L, the two parts, denominated the

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.6 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

old and the new, had been put up at different periods. The walls of the old part were in so ruinous a state that it was deemed advisable to pull (it) down and repair the new part, which seemed much stronger. This would have reduced the size of the building to 24 x 30 feet, which, though small, would have been large enough for the congregation.

After the workmen had pulled down the old part, and whilst they were engaged in clearing away the rubbish, etc., the roof of the remaining part fell in, pushing out the walls on each side, and thus blasted our fondest expectations.⁽⁴⁾

Harris suggested selling the glebe to raise money for construction of a church, and in April, 1826 the glebe was offered for sale. The high bid of \$900 was considered too low, and the land was not sold.

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.7 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Later that month John Denny purchased the glebe for \$1000.

In August, 1826 Harris reported that the rebuilding of the church had begun but that progress was slow. When the new building was completed is uncertain, but it was not consecrated until 1841. This must have been a very simple building, for the Bishop described it in 1841 as being "...neat, though plain and inexpensive... erected on the ruins and in part of the materials of the former building. Though completed some years since, it has only recently been plastered." The Rev. T. A. Thompson, writing in 1854, was less generous in his evaluation:

The old church was in the shape of the letter L. The sides of the main building fronted east and west. It had four rows of pews, gallery and pulpits - a remarkable fine sounding church. Mr. Carter thinks it would have been far better to have repaired the old building than to have taken it down.

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.8 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The present is a very inferior structure every way... (5)

This new church was abandoned in 1872, giving some indication of the probable accuracy of these accounts. The congregation used a room adjoining the rectory for services until the present church was completed in 1880.

The earlier churches stood on a low knoll at the head of Broad Creek, but the new church was built in the nearby town of Stevensville on land purchased from the Chambers family and adjoining a two-story parsonage purchased in 1866. (6)

Emory describes this church, then only recently completed, as being "a gothic structure of wood, with stone foundation and slate roof. It is 50 x 25 feet, and its seating capacity 150 persons." It was begun in March 1880, and first occupied as a place of worship in June 1880. (7)

In 1927 the chancel area at the north end of the church was enlarged, and the entrance was shifted from the east transept to the south gable, but the changes remained faithful to the earlier work, and only the lighter interior woodwork and brick foundation offer

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.9 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

evidence of the change. In 1939 memorial windows were placed above the altar, and in 1957 a parish hall was added to the rear of the sacristy.

Footnotes

- (1) Frederick Emory. Queen Anne's County, Maryland
p. 135-136.
- (2) *ibid*, p. 139-140
- (3) *ibid*, p. 145
- (4) *ibid*, p. 145-146
- (5) *ibid*, p. 147
- (6) The Vestry Minutes document the purchase of the parsonage, but the Minutes are missing for the period during which the church was built.
- (7) Emory, p. 148. Emory's book was first published as a series of newspaper articles written during the 1880's. These were gathered together and published by the Maryland Historical Society in 1950.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Emory, Frederick. Queen Anne's County, Maryland
Baltimore, Maryland Historical Society, 1950.
2. First Parishes of the Province of Maryland, 1942.

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

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Queen Anne's County Historical Society

DATE

5/3/78

STREET & NUMBER

124 South Commerce St.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland

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.

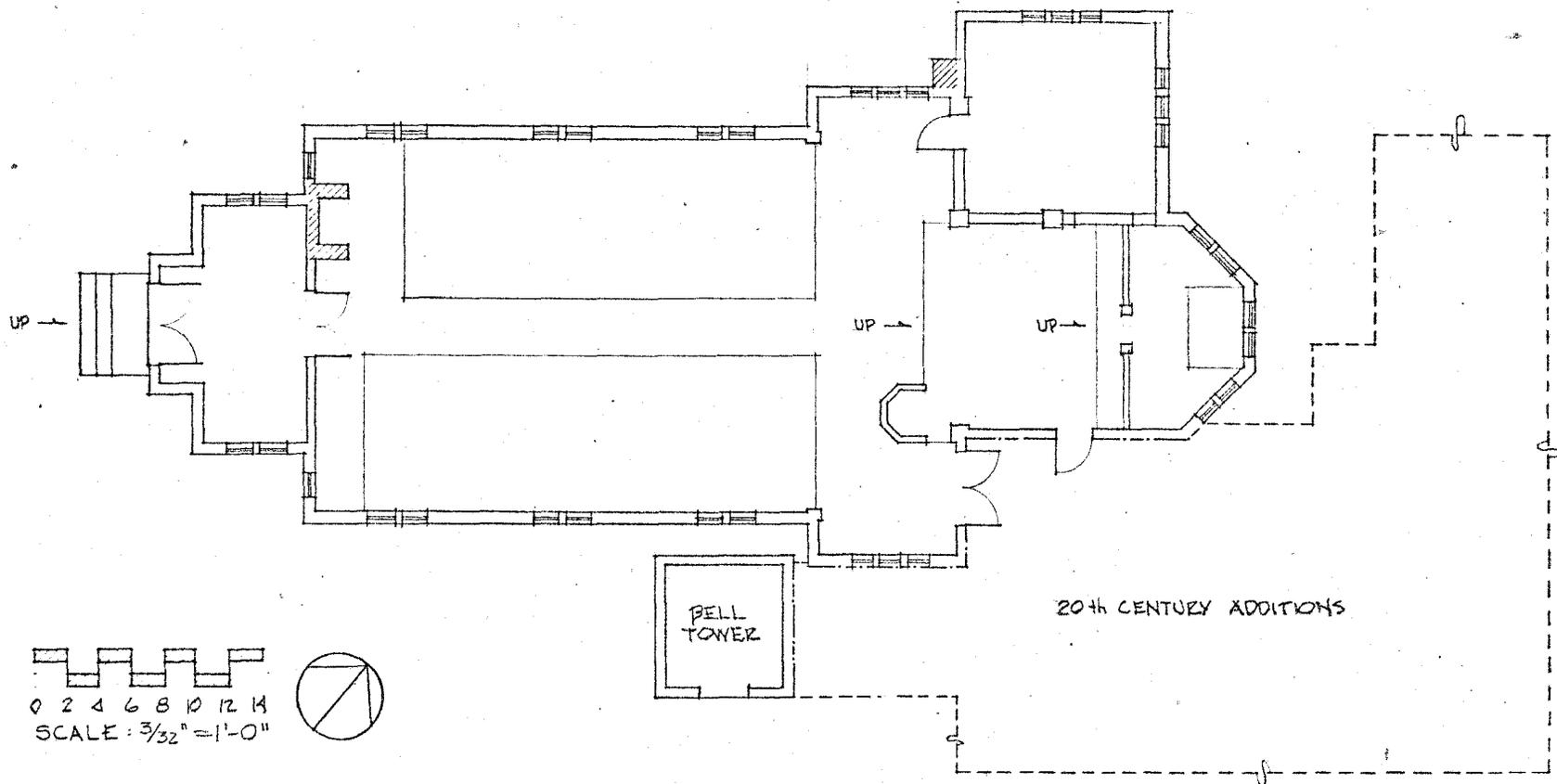
The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

9.1 BIBLIOGRAPHY

3. Gould, Clarence P. Christ Church Parish
Stevensville, 1959.
4. Land Records, Queen Anne's County, Maryland.
5. Vestry Minutes of Christ Church, Stevensville, Md.



QA-212

CHRIST CHURCH
STEVENSVILLE, MARYLAND

APRIL 6, 1978.

CHESAPE

CHESAPE

on the Bay

Log Inn

SANDY POINT LIGHTHOUSE

Sandy Pt

Love Pt

Love Point

CHRIST CHURCH
GA-212
STEVENSVILLE

KENT ISLAND

CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

DEPT CHESAPEAKE
BAY AFFAIRS
MARINE POLICE
ACADEMY

Bay City

CAMP WRIGHT

Matapeake - BM

Matapeake Estates

Normans

Sunny Isle of Kent

Chesapeake Estates

LANDING FIELD

Kentmoor

Queen Anne Colony

Mattapex

LANDING FIELD

NUSSERY

Warehouse Creek

COX CREEK

Johnson Island

Little Island

CRAB ALLEY

BAY

Turkey Pt

Long Marsh I

20-24-1-1-1-2

QA-212
Christ Church

Mary McCarthy
Spring/Summer 2003
Digital color photo on file at MHT





CHURCH OF THE
BRETHREN AND SISTERS
OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH
A BROTHERLY
MEMORIAL CHURCH
SUNDAY 11:00 A.M.
TO YOUR PASTOR
ALLISON DOWD, 40
BUNKING ST. PHOENIX
AZ 85018

OA-212 Christ church
Stevensville, Md.

600

ORV 1979 MHT

114



QA-212

Christ Church

Stevensville, MD

Orlando Ridout V 1978

View from Southeast



QA-212 Christ Church
Stevensville, Md.

BKV 1979 MHT



QA-212 Christ Church
Stevensville, Md.

ORV Feb 1979 (M4T)

Interior