

T-789

1892

Unionville A. M. E. Church
Unionville
Public worship

Located in the center of Unionville, St. Stephens A. M. E. church is one of the oldest structures in the village, and the building has served this black community since 1892. Dated by a cornerstone, the extant frame church was is detailed with Gothic Revival features including pointed arch door and window openings and a three-story pyramidal roofed tower. The interior has survived with a large degree of original late nineteenth century finishes including a turned baluster altar rail, beaded board wainscoting, and the original balcony. Behin the church is a nineteenth and twentieth century cemetery with a significant collection of gravemarkers.

The church history claim to have been founded in 1871 after a group of Civil War veterans built houses on the edge of the Cowgill family plantation. However, oral tradition of local residents relates that a black community known as Cowgilltown was started before the Civil War. By the time of the 1877 Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas of Talbot County was published the community, labeled Unionville, included a "Colored M. E. Church," School No. 2, along with a couple dozen houses.

HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

Resource Name: St. Stephens A. M. E. Church

MHT Inventory Number: T-789

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA:

- 1) Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture
Religion
- 2) Geographic Orientation: Eastern Shore
- 3) Chronological/Developmental Period(s):
Industrial / Urban Dominance
1920-1930
- 4) Resource Type(s):
Church
Black Congregation

Survey No. T-789

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic ST. STEPHENS A. M. E. CHURCH

and/or common

2. Location

street & number East side of Unionville Road (MD 370) ___ not for publication

city, town Unionville ___ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Talbot

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Trustees of Unionville A. M. E. Church

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Talbot County Clerk of Court liber 141

street & number Talbot County Courthouse folio 80

city, town Easton state MD 21601

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. T-789

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 of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

St. Stephens A. M. E. church is located on the east side of Unionville Road (MD 370) in the small community of Unionville, Talbot County, Maryland. The church faces west with the gable roof oriented on an east/west axis.

Built in 1892, the church is supported by a covered brick pier foundation, and it is sheathed with a layer of aluminum siding. The steeply pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Fixed in the southwest corner of the church foundation is a marble datestone inscribed, "St. Stephen A. M. E. Church, 1892." Extending from the north side is a single story concrete block church hall addition. A nineteenth and twentieth century cemetery joins the church. Also located in the church yard, south of the church, is a concrete step that formerly served the frame church hall torn down in the 1970s.

The west (main) elevation of the frame church is dominated by a three-level entrance and bell tower. The first story is highlighted by a Gothic arched double-door entrance topped by a colored glass transom. Small pointed arch sash windows pierce the sides of the tower. Marking the second story is a round colored glass window. The entrance tower is topped by a pyramidal roofed belfry surmounted by a wooden finial. Each side of the belfry is defined by pairs of pointed arch louvered vents. To each side of the tower are large pointed arch colored glass sash windows.

The sides of the church are marked by three pointed arch, colored glass windows. Narrow interior side brick stacks rise through the north and south sides to provide stove heat for the building.

The east end of the main block is extended by a shorter single story two-bay apse with small pointed arch windows that light the choir.

The interior to the church has remained essentially intact aside from the replacement of the pews. A raised altar is highlighted by a turner baluster altar rail, and beaded board wainscoting trims the perimeter of the sanctuary. Fixed in the west end of the sanctuary is the balcony supported on chamfered posts. Access to the balcony is gained by an enclosed stair located in the northwest corner. Some older square topped pews are located in the gallery.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1892 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or
Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Located in the center of Unionville, St. Stephens A. M. E. church is one of the oldest structures in the village, and the building has served this black community since 1892. Dated by a cornerstone, the extant frame church was is detailed with Gothic Revival features including pointed arch door and window openings and a three-story pyramidal roofed tower. The interior has survived with a large degree of original late nineteenth century finishes including a turned baluster altar rail, beaded board wainscoting, and the original balcony. Behin the church is a nineteenth and twentieth century cemetery with a significant collection of gravemarkers.

The church history claim to have been founded in 1871 after a group of Civil War veterans built houses on the edge of the Cowgill family plantation. However, oral tradition of local residents relates that a black community known as Cowgilltown was started before the Civil War. By the time of the 1877 Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas of Talbot County was published the community, labeled Unionville, included a "Colored M. E. Church," School No. 2, along with a couple dozen houses. Despite the founding and construction of a church in Unionville during the 1870s, a deed for the property was not executed until the early twentieth century. In December 1903 Robert B. Dixon, Alexander Fountain, William H. Kemp, and James Dixon executed a mortgage to the trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal church of Unionville for \$468.(141/180) The trustees at the time included Horace Townsend, Alexander Kerr, John Dashields, James Viney, and Stephen Boulden.

T-789
ST. STEPHENS A. M. E. CHURCH
Unionville

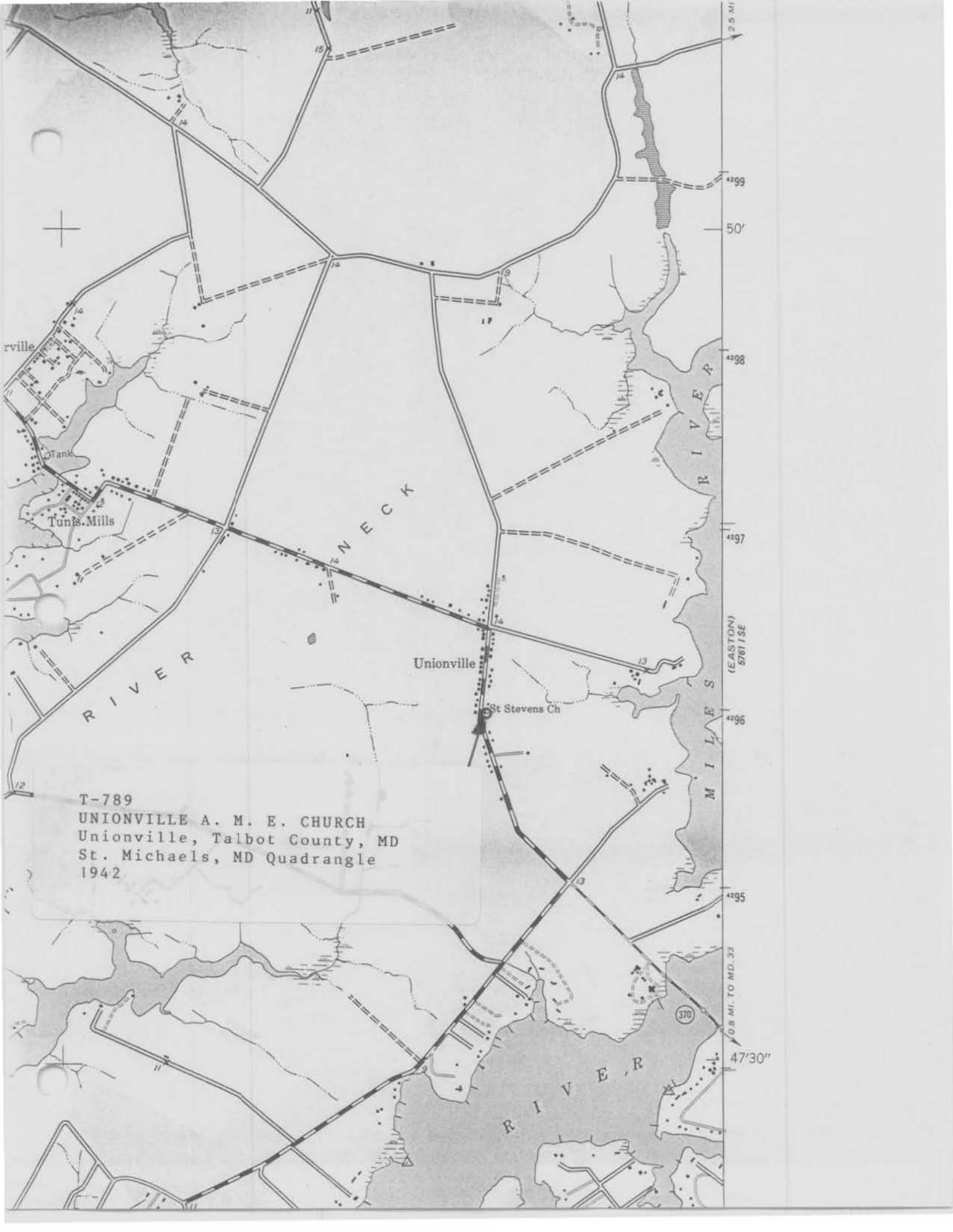
Mortgage
141/180

Robert B. Dixon, Alexander Fountain,
William H. Kemp, and James Dixon, trading
under the firm name of Robert Dixon & Co.

to

12/3/1903

Trustees-African M. E. Church, Unionville
Horace Townsend, Alexander Kerr, John
Dashields, James Viney, Stephen Boulden
\$468.00



3.5 MI

4299

50'

4298

4297

(EASTON)
5761 SE

4296

4295

0.8 MI. TO MD. 33

47'30"

rville

Tank

Tunts Mills

NECK

Unionville

St Stevens Ch

T-789
UNIONVILLE A. M. E. CHURCH
Unionville, Talbot County, MD
St. Michaels, MD Quadrangle
1942

370

RIVER



C-17-2

T-789

ST. STEPHENS A.M.E. CHURCH

Unionville, Talbot County, Maryland

Southwest elevation

6/90, Paul Touart, photographer

Negative/MD Historical Trust



T-789

ST. STEPHENS A.M.E. CHURCH

Unionville, Talbot County, Maryland

Northwest elevation

6/90, Paul Touart, photographer

Negative/MD Historical Trust



T-789

ST. STEPHENS A. M. E. CHURCH

Unionville, Talbot County, Maryland

Interior, balcony

4/90, Paul Touart, photographer

Negative/MD Historical Trust



T-789

ST. STEPHENS A.M.E. CHURCH

Unionville, Talbot County, Maryland

Interior

4/90, Paul Touart, photographer

Negative/MD Historical Trust