

WO-285
Showell United Methodist Church
Showell
Public worship

1903-1904

Showell United Methodist church traces its history back to the turn of the twentieth century when several families living in and around the village of Showell decided to organize a Methodist congregation. With enough local support it was decided to engage in a construction program to erect a church in the small village. During a meeting held on May 13, 1903, a building committee was chosen consisting of Rev. R. H. Lewis, John W. Mumford, F. C. Truitt, C. C. Mumford, F. C. Truitt, C. J. McCabe, J. M. Moore, C. F. Gumm, J. M. Ryan, and O. M. Shockley. Within the following week \$500 was raised for the project. The church was completed the following spring and dedicated on March 13, 1904, by the Reverend R. H. Lewis. The rear church hall was erected in 1954.

The Showell United Methodist church stands out as one of the most architecturally distinctive buildings in this roadside village in northern Worcester County. Built during the first decade of the twentieth century, the exterior boasts a two-story pyramidal roofed tower and a Gothic arched entrance. The principal sides of the church are pierced by tripartite colored glass windows.

HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

Resource Name: SITOWELL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MHT Inventory Number: WV-295

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
(1870-1930)

4) Resource Type(s):

STANDING STRUCTURE
CHURCH

Survey No. WO-285

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common SHOWELL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2. Location

street & number North side of Pitts Road ___ not for publication

city, town Showell ___ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Worcester

3. Classification

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------|---|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
| ___ district | ___ public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| ___ site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | ___ entertainment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable | ___ no | ___ military | ___ other: |

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

name Trustees of Showell United Methodist Church

street & number Pitts Road telephone no.:

city, town Showell state and zip code MD 21862

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Clerk of Court liber

street & number Worcester County Courthouse folio

city, town Snow Hill state MD 21863

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. W0-285

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved

date of move _____

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

The Showell United Methodist church stands on the north side of Pitts Road west of US Route 113 in the village of Showell, Worcester County, Maryland. The single story T-shaped frame structure faces south with the principal gable oriented on an east/west axis.

Built in 1903-1904, the aluminum sided frame building is supported by a low brick foundation and is covered by a steeply pitched asphalt shingle roof. Rising in the southeast corner is a two-story entrance and bell tower topped by a pyramidal roof. Extending to the rear is a single story addition that contains the church hall and Sunday School rooms.

The south (main) elevation is an asymmetrical facade with a large gable-front pierced by a tripartite, pointed arch colored glass window. The eaves to the roof are slightly extended and the rafter feet are exposed. The adjacent corner is marked by a Gothic arched double door entrance on the first floor. The doors have been replaced. The bellfry is open, and it is trimmed with simple cross brackets in the corners and a short turned baluster railing. The pyramidal roof has a slight kick to the eave.

The east and west sides of the church are gabled elevations as well with tripartite windows flanked by single lancet windows.

Stretching across the back of the main building is a shed roofed addition that joins the church with the rear addition. The church hall is a long single story structure covered by a steeply pitched asphalt shingle gable roof. A separate entrance is located at the southeast corner, and the interior is lighted by two-over-two sash windows. An interior brick stack rises through the roof.

The church interior was not seen.

8. Significance

Survey No. WO-285

| 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input checked="" 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 1903-1904 **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.

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Showell United Methodist Church traces its history back to the turn of the twentieth century when several families living in around the village of Showell decided to organize a Methodist congregation. With enough local support it was decided to engage in a construction program to erect a church in the small village. During a meeting held on May 13, 1903 a building committee was chosen consisting of Rev. R. H. Lewis, John W. Mumford, F. C. Truitt, C. C. Mumford, F. C. Truitt, C. J. McCabe, J. M. Moore, C. F. Gumm, J. M. Ryan, and O. M. Shockley. Within the following week \$500 was raised for the project. The church was completed the following spring and dedicated on March 13, 1904 by the Reverend R. H. Lewis. The rear church hall was erected in 1954.

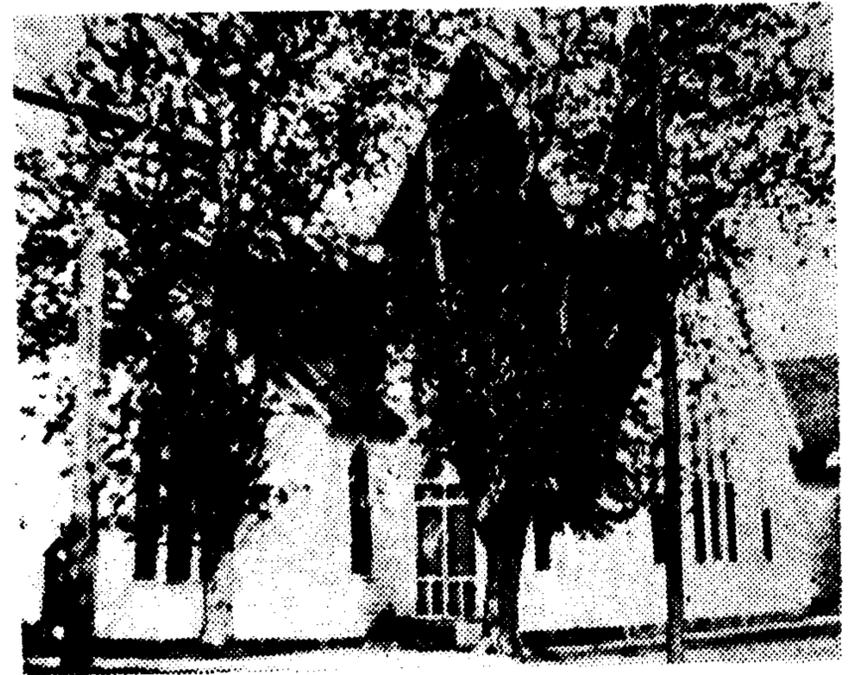
110-285

\$17,000 for the Church and \$3,000 for the present parsonage. Three living members were members then: Mrs. Cora Godfrey, Mrs. Eva Lee Moore and Mrs. Annie Taylor. Four well known but recently deceased members were: Mrs. Cora Henman, Mr. Sidney Godfrey, Mrs. Sarah Parsons and Mrs. Sallie Truitt.

L. W. Bates served as assistant in 1840 and as minister in 1844 and 1858. He is buried in Nassawan-go Cemetery and it is in his honor that the Church is named. It is interesting to note that many people around Snow Hill bear names of one of these early ministers.

In the early days of Bates Church, it was customary for the ministers to change almost every year. There were 49 ministers between 1833 and 1900. One of these,

The present Church building was rebuilt in 1947 under the leadership of Rev. Elmer Shield at a cost of \$65,000. Its present pastor is Rev. Harvey Flater.



Showell Church Had Start In Little Red School House In 1903

In 1903 the little community of Showell consisted of a general store, a Post Office, the Railroad Depot and the little Red School House over the Branch, surrounded by not more than a dozen homes.

There was no Church nor place of public worship. Those who were christians held membership in Bishopville, Selbyville, Frankford and elsewhere, but no

movement had ever been initiated to provide such a place of worship.

The story or history of Showell Church cannot be accurately nor truthfully told without giving considerable mention of the Mumford name which without a doubt pioneered in envisioning a better Showell Community with a little church in its center.

C. C. Mumford, already settled

in Showell, had previously introduced Commercial Tomato Canning.

He and his brother, John W., associated with the Bowen brothers, Elijah and Ara, of Newark, Maryland, decided to build and operate in Showell a Saw and Planing Mill in connection with their dealings in Timber, Lumber and Canning of Tomatoes.

At the beginning of the year 1903, John W. Mumford, together with his family, moved to Showell and proceeded to erect a Mill Plant which was to give employment to a considerable number of laborers and which provided the stimulant essential to the development of a more prosperous community.

After a few weeks the optimistic nature of John W. Mumford began to assert itself. His ambition was to erect a House dedicated to the worship of God.

The first proposal was that a Sunday School and Preaching Service be opened in the little Red School House. Permission was sought and granted by the Trustees of the school and the Worcester County School Board of Education, and services were begun.

There were in the community six or eight families who reacted so favorably and enthusiastically that within a few short weeks, actually on the 13th day of May, 1903, a meeting was called to consider the possibility of building a Church.

The response was immediate and complete and the conclusion was reached that it looked possible that a Church could and should be built and when the meeting adjourned a building Committee had been set up consisting of Rev. R. H. Lewis, J. W. Mumford, C. C. Mumford, F. C. Truitt, C. J. McCabe, J. M. Moore, C. F. Gumm, J. M. Ryan

and O. M. Shockley. One week later on May 20th., the Committee convened and reported that \$500 had been subscribed and they were authorized to proceed with plans for the building.

The committee moved promptly visiting other churches securing prices and other details in connection with the project and on August 24th., they met to open the sealed bids.

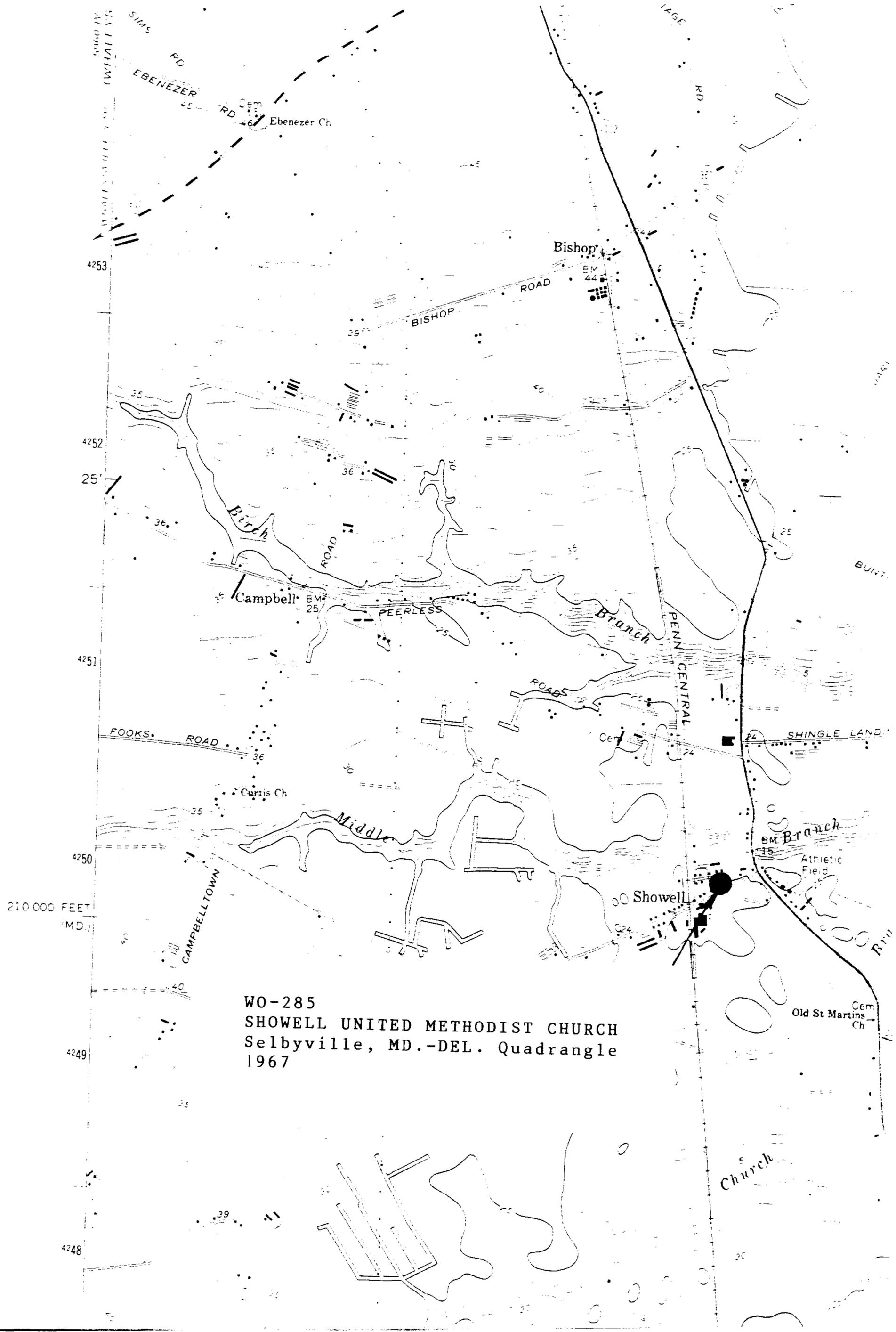
The work started promptly and moved speedily forward to completion and on March 13th., 1904, the Church was dedicated under the direction of the Pastor, Rev. R. H. Lewis, with the total expenses either paid in cash or subscriptions.

On January 24th., 1910, the Men's Bible Class met in the old Depot and effected an organization and adopted the name of The Brotherhood New Movement Adult Bible Class.

In 1913 on came B. L. McFarland, a brilliant fellow whose Bible interpretations first suggested to us the preaching technique which came to be recognized later as modernism. No one familiar with this era will fail to remember the obstreperous young Colt he borrowed from Bro. John Bodley and which in a breach of misconduct broke the minister's leg.

N. C. Benson came in 1915, served faithfully, made friends, stayed only one year.

In the Fall of 1954, the Methodist Youth Fellowship of the Church, added rest rooms and a hall that connected the church to the Community Hall. Then in 1955 the same Fellowship put in a new heating plant that heats the entire building, and paid the bill down to less than one hundred dollars during that calendar year. For the past two years the Reverend E. Carroll Justis has been pastor of the church.



WO-285
SHOWELL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Selbyville, MD.-DEL. Quadrangle
1967