



Somerset County Historical Trust **Tribune**

Preserving the Legacy of Somerset County

Saving a Plantation House

In May 2018, the Somerset County Historical Trust under the direction of Gale Yerges saved one of Somerset County's oldest homes which was destined for destruction - the **Ballard/Waddy House**.



The 2-bay brick dwelling was built by Jarvis Ballard, Jr. on a farm near what is now Perryhawkin Road. He and his family moved there in 1756. Over the years a succession of families owned and managed the house and land, notably William F. Waddy, from 1914 and his son, William E. and wife Lucy Grace Waddy, who lived there until 2003.

The house was meticulously moved by Expert House Movers of Sharptown, Maryland about one mile down the road to the property of Dr.

Daryl Insley. In the process, the lowest 5 courses of brick were damaged but were salvaged and restored to their original condition by historic mason, Jimmy Stringer.



The three fireplaces and chimneys had seen considerable decay over the centuries but were also carefully restored by Mr. Stringer.

Contents

Ballard/Waddy House	1-2
Historic Mt. Zion Memorial Church	3-5
Renew your Membership	back

The Ballard/Waddy House (cont'd)

With Dr. Insley's guidance, significantly rotted rafters, ceiling joists, upper sill, and plates were restored in 2021 and 2022 by master carpenters Kevin McIntyre and James Parks. During this process the structural elements were protected by numerous temporary studs. Rotted members were either removed or sistered using modern materials, in order to achieve structural integrity, while preserving all original fabric.



Beneath the eaves, decorative joist ends were repaired and left exposed. All four dormers showed significant decay and were completely rebuilt prior to replacing the roof with modern historically sensitive materials.

Much remains to be done, including plaster work, upper level ceiling repairs, window restoration, heating, air conditioning and lighting. Dr. Insley, with the help of historical architect Barton Ross, has built a new house adjacent to the old, connected by a small hyphen with minimal attachment to the old house.

The Ballard/Waddy house is but one example in Somerset's treasury of historical architecturally significant properties, hundreds of which have survived the ravages of time. These old places persist due to the commitment of countless diligent owners.

While some are fading relics whose caretakers lost the energy required to maintain them, in this case, one of the more ancient legacies of our county's history has been saved and will stand in memorial for generations to come.



Historic Mt. Zion Memorial Church

and the Somerset County Historical Trust

In September of last year a number of Trust members had an initial meeting with the elders of the Historic Mt. Zion Memorial Church to assist them in procuring funds for much-needed property repairs.

In 2003 Hurricane Isabel tore up the East Coast, wreaking havoc among many of our communities. On Polk's Road west of Princess Anne, a small African American church received the brunt of the storm. Its roof, grounds and cemetery sustained such extensive damage that the church could no longer be open to the community.



Shown in picture (left to right): Beatrix Bounds, Lillie Anderson, Retta Jones, Annette Cottman

Undeterred, its lifelong members banded together to save their beloved Mt. Zion Church. Retta Jones and several other parishioners, along with Gale Yerges and Paul Touart of the Somerset County Historical Trust, worked tirelessly to obtain 501c3 non-profit tax determination certificate, critical for grant applications and private donations.

Mt. Zion Memorial Church, now the Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, is one of the few surviving late-19th and early-20th century African-American churches in Somerset County. The formation of a Methodist church for the rural African-American population residing in the Polk's Road community of Hungary Neck dates to the closing years of the Civil War, and until 1980 the original meeting house stood at this location.

The Victorian church that the congregation financed in 1887 follows the asymmetrical Gothic Revival format advocated by the mainstream Methodist Church hierarchy, and almost certainly derived from one of the numerous mail-order plans created by architect Benjamin D. Price. Features include Victorian church furniture and arched openings over the altar and choir stalls.



The interior underwent a thorough remodeling in 1916, and the interior features have remained essentially unaltered. The use of curved pews and folding doors across the east side of the sanctuary reflects the denomination-wide movement to incorporate the Auditorium plan and lecture room arrangement that dominated Protestant church architecture during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Only a handful of the remaining African-American churches in Somerset County have survived with such a high level of original fabric, most having been remodeled and expanded as congregations demanded larger and more modern facilities. A large church cemetery located on three sides of the building has many above-ground burial vaults.

The Church was added to the National Register of Historic Properties in 2007.

Extensive leaking during the past year has caused damage to the roof, ceilings, interior walls and flooring, and the church has had to suspend activities.

Currently the structure is in **serious danger** of decay. Plaster damage is already occurring, and numerous leaks require water collection in buckets.



Let's keep Mt. Zion Church dry!



For a number of years, ladies and gentlemen of the community have personally raised monies through contributions and Homecoming food events and now have over \$11,000 in their bank account.

The Trust is already assisting with grant applications and we believe that this effort falls well within our mission to preserve our county's architectural and cultural heritage.



To this end, a group of Trust members has committed \$5,000 as a local matching grant and is asking for your help in filling this match with your tax-deductible contributions.

- ◆ You can make an online contribution on the Donate page of our website - schtrust.org/donate and choose 'Mt. Zion Roof Fund'.
- ◆ Or mail a check to: SCHAT, PO Box 863, Princess Anne, MD 21853. Please note 'Mt. Zion Project' on your check.

The Mt. Zion group hopes their church may be restored so they can actually celebrate their annual Homecoming event on-site. Families from all over Maryland and beyond wish to once again 'Come Home' to the small beloved church on Polk's Road.

We hope you consider supporting this dedicated local group and help restore a valuable part of our local architectural history.

**For more info, email us at info@schtrust.org
or call Randy George at 410-713-5993.**

REFERENCES:

Touart, Paul; Somerset: An Architectural History. Annapolis, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 1990.

Maryland Historical Trust National Register of Properties: <https://mht.maryland.gov/nr/NRDetail.aspx?NRID=1526>

Somerset County Historical Trust

PO Box 863
Princess Anne, MD 21853



<http://schtrust.org>
info@schtrust.org

Haven't renewed yet?

Trust memberships run from January to December -- so if you've not yet renewed for 2022 it's now time! Dues are \$25/individual or \$45/couple.

Go to our Join Us page - schtrust.org/join - or send your check to: SCHAT, PO Box 863, Princess Anne, MD 21853.



Help spread the word . . .

We thank all of you for your ongoing support of the Trust. You can help us grow our membership by encouraging interested neighbors and friends to become members of the Trust.

Our website schtrust.org explains the Trust's mission and ongoing work in the areas of preservation and stewardship.