

Monroe County Historic Preservation Board of Review



October 15, 2018

5:30 p.m.

**Monroe County Government Center
Planning Department
501 N. Morton Street, Room 224
Bloomington, IN 47404**

Monroe County Historic Preservation Board of Review Agenda

REGULAR MEETING
North Showers Building
501 N. Morton Street, Room 224
Bloomington, IN 47404
October 15, 2018

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes
a. September 17, 2018

3. Old Business – Board Discussion

PAGE 5

a. 1809-CDU-08

Mt. Ebal Church, Conditional Use for Historic Adaptive Reuse

One (1) 1.00 +/- acre parcel in Section 23 of Clear Creek Township at 8700 S Fairfax Road.

Zoned SR/HP Overlay. (Brook & Corey Rieman)

b. I-69 Towers, LLC Conditional Use for Wireless Communication Facility (WCF) – Cell Tower
Mount Zion Church Property, 7430 S Harmony Road.

c. 1806-COA-02

Beaumont House, Certificate of Appropriateness Application

One (1) 3.40 +/- acre parcel in Section 32 of Richland Township at 9030 W State Road 48.

Zoned AG/RR/HP Overlay. (Michelle & Darin Cardwell)

****CONTINUED BY PETITIONER****

4. New Business – Board Discussion

a. Monroe County Development Ordinance Update – Historic Preservation Ordinances

b. Board Education Item – Section 106 Presentation

5. Member Updates

6. Adjournment

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of Monroe County, should contact Monroe County Title VI Coordinator Angie Purdie, (812)-349-2553, apurdie@co.monroe.in.us, as soon as possible but no later than forty-eight (48) hours before the scheduled event.

Individuals requiring special language services should, if possible, contact the Monroe County Government Title VI Coordinator at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the date on which the services will be needed.

The meeting will be open to the public.

Monroe County Historic Preservation Board of Review Minutes

REGULAR MEETING North Showers Building 501 N. Morton Street, Room 224 Bloomington, IN 47404 September 17, 2018

Members Present: David Vanderstel, Danielle Bachant-Bell, Debby Reed, Donn Hall, Don Maxwell, Phil Stafford

Staff Present: Jordan Yanke, Nic Weinard

Guests Present: Michelle Cardwell, Darin Cardwell, Brook Rieman, Corey Rieman, Steve Wyatt, Beverly Bolin, Brenda Earnshaw, Others

1. Call to Order 5:32pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

August 20, 2018 – Approved unanimously.

3. Old Business – Board Discussion Items

a. 1806-COA-02 Beaumont House – Certificate of Appropriateness Application

One (1) 3.40 +/- acre parcel in Section 32 of Richland Township at 9030 W State Road 48. Zoned AG/RR/HP Overlay. (Michelle & Darin Cardwell)

Yanke – This is a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request for the Beaumont House.

Additional information is included in the packet from the prior meeting. The packet includes renderings and the approved site plan for the petition site.

Cardwells – Following up on last meeting, we sent additional information and worked with staff to make sure there is enough detail for the Board.

Bachant-Bell – It is evident that staff and the petitioner worked together and addressed the Board's request for additional detail for the certificate request.

Maxwell – Motion to approve request No. 3 (chapel) of Case No. 1806-COA-02 and continue request No. 2 of Case No. 1806-COA-02 to the next regular meeting in October.

Reed – Second.

Motion carried 6-0.

b. I-69 Towers, LLC Conditional Use for Wireless Communications Facility (WCF) – Cell Tower; Mount Zion Church Property, 7430 S Harmony Road

Yanke – The case is now set to be heard on November 7th by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Will keep everyone in the loop regarding the meeting. No update from the state thus. The petitioner has to decide to either have the case heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals on November 7th or withdraw the case. There are no additional continuances allowed per the Rules of Procedure.

Board Discussion – Please keep us informed and let us know if the state has any updates.

4. New Business – Board Discussion

a. Mt. Ebal Church, 8700 S Fairfax Road (Brook & Corey Rieman)

Riemans – Here today to discuss with the Board the fact that we would like to file for a conditional use to use the historic structure on the site for a *Tourist Home or Cabin*. Per staff, the conditional use is classified as *Historic Adaptive Reuse*. Also asking for comments and potential support.

Yanke – This is a property that Planning has been able to confirm was designated in 1981 and is permitted to file for the adaptive reuse. It is a conditional use filing that is heard at the Board of Zoning Appeals, same as the Beaumont House earlier this year.

Bachant-Bell – The property owners (Riemans) have done a good job with maintenance and upkeep with the structure and property.

Vanderstel – Concur with the fact the owners have done a quality job with the place.

Board Discussion – General consensus that the property owners have done a good job with the historic site/structure and that the proposed use would be a good fit within the structure.

Public Comment: (Recording On File)

Bolin – Concerned about the parking on the historic site that has been blocked by the owners. The parking has been used for many years on the historic site to access the cemetery across Fairfax Road. Have members with me this evening that share the same concerns.

Earnshaw – Same concerns and would like to see the property owners grant the public an option to park on the site.

Vanderstel – Advise the people that are here tonight to speak with the Township Trustee and an attorney about the situation. The Historic Preservation Board of Review does not have purview over this matter. The Board is only discussing the proposed use that the owners presented.

Bachant-Bell – The Board has no say in the parking matter. It is a private issue.

Reed/Stafford – Encourage each side to try and find a solution that works if it is agreed upon.

5. Member Updates

Yanke – Will shoot for the Section 106 presentation next meeting.

Bachant-Bell – Would be beneficial to create a list of locally designated properties and add it to the county's website.

Stafford – Brought up the issue of historic walls, one of which was demolished recently. Is there any option to protect these or have a better inventory? Maybe a grant for a survey from the Historical Society or Indiana University?

6. Adjourned 7:21pm.

Monroe County Historic Preservation Board
501 N Morton St., Suite 224
Bloomington, IN 47404

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MONROE COUNTY PLANNING

Brook and Corey Rieman
8803 S Fairfax Road
Bloomington, IN 47401

September 4, 2018

Dear Historic Preservation Board,


My husband and I are writing to request local historic designation for Mt. Ebal Church located at 8700 S. Fairfax Rd in Bloomington. We believe this action will actually help preserve this historic structure into the future by allowing us to apply for a historic overlay, allowing us to adaptively reuse the building as an Airbnb, a use of the property that allows the public to experience the building, as well.

The church's rich history is well documented in newspaper clippings archived in the Monroe County History Center and the Monroe County Library. This simple Methodist Church was built in 1872 by members of the original congregation living on land which is now within Monroe Reservoir. The lumber for the church was sawn at a mill located just down the road at Fairfax and then brought to the site by a team of oxen. The church was in continuous use until the late 1960's when the congregation dwindled and stopped holding services. This led to the building being vacant and falling into a state of disrepair for over 10 years. In 1978, it was fortunately purchased by Bloomington Restorations Inc. which then restored to its original condition. BRI sold the property (with deed restrictions) to Jay and Judith Ellis who used the building as a rental facility for weddings and other functions. To our knowledge, the church was used for this purpose for at least 25 years. According to the Monroe County Interim Report of 1989, Mount Ebal Church is "the best-preserved of the many frame country churches in the county". In 2008, Mr. Ellis' replaced the outhouses with modern restrooms located just west of the building. In 2011, Mr. Ellis passed away and his wife decided to sell the property. Brook's father, Gerald J Pagac purchased the property and deeded it to us.

In 2012 with the assistance and blessing of the Historic Preservation Board, we received a use variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals to use the building as a photography studio. In 2017 due to life changes including fostering children and not having the time for the photography business, Brook closed the business. We decided to convert the church into a home by adding a modern bathroom and kitchen, while keeping the rest of the space intact and in its original state. We planned to move into the space as Corey was planning to change jobs and we were going to need a new residence. In the end, Corey did not get the new job and we are required to continue to live onsite as part of his job with State Parks. Since the building was sitting empty, we decided to try Airbnb. We thought this would allow people to appreciate the historical significance of the property and generate some income to help maintain the property. People loved the space and experiencing all of the history for themselves. We recently received a letter from the county and have ceased operations as an Airbnb and are seeking to receive the historic designation that would allow us to legally adaptively reuse it in this way, helping ensure that this unique 146 year old building will be preserved for the future. Many times over the years, people have stopped to thank me while I was washing windows or doing yard work. One memorable time, a woman stopped her car and with tears in her eyes, handed me a \$20 and thanking me for taking such loving care of her great grandmother's church. This building means so much to so many in the community and we love sharing it with others. We hope to continue to do so in this way.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brook and Corey Rieman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brook" being more prominent than the second name "Corey".

Brook and Corey Rieman

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MONROE COUNTY PLANNING

Monroe County Board of Zoning Appeals
501 N Morton St., Suite 224
Bloomington, IN 47404

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SEP 27 2018
MONROE COUNTY PLANNING

Brook and Corey Rieman
8803 S Fairfax Rd
Bloomington, IN 47401

September 24, 2018

Dear Board of Zoning Appeals,

Six years ago, we came in front of this board to request a use variance to use the Historic Mount Ebal Church building, that we own, as a photography studio. We were granted the use variance at that time after we added the required landscaping to meet the commercial requirements of the county. After using the building for this purpose for 4 years, our family situation changed and Brook had to discontinue her photography business in order to care for two special needs foster children in our care. For a time we thought we would be moving into the building, so we added a small bathroom and open-concept kitchen inside to make it a livable space. In the end, Corey did not get the job which would have required the move so we looked for other options to use the structure in a way that could produce an income for our family while at the same time creating funds for upkeep of the historic building.

We would like to request a Historic Adaptive Reuse of this property to use it as an Airbnb. We have learned that under the Monroe County Zoning Ordinance, Airbnb is considered "Tourist Cabin" use. Using this building as an Airbnb is very low-impact to the structure, as we only have two guests at a time, usually couples looking to spend the weekend near the lake. Using the building as an Airbnb has no greater impact than it had as a photography studio and it resides next door to a large commercial operation (restaurant and bar).

The building has a rich history which is well documented in newspaper clippings in the Monroe County Library and the Monroe County History Center. This simple Methodist Church was built in 1872 by members of the original congregation who lived on the land which is now under Monroe Reservoir. The lumber for the church was sawn at a mill located at Fairfax and brought to the site by a team of oxen. The church was in continuous use until the late 1960's when the congregation dwindled and stopped holding services. This led to the building being vacant and falling into a state of disrepair for over 10 years (1970's). In 1978, it was fortunately purchased by Bloomington Restorations, Inc. (BRI) as their flagship acquisition. Using a grant from Indiana Landmarks, BRI restored the building to its original condition and sold the property (with deed restrictions) to Jay Ellis who used the building as a rental facility. To our knowledge, Mr. Ellis used this building for rental purposes for at least 25 years. In 2012, Brook's Father Purchased the property and we (Brook and Corey) now own it. Today, 146 years after it was built, the exterior of the church looks almost identical to the way it did when it was built. According to the Monroe County Interim Report of 1989, Mount Ebal Church was "the best preserved of the many frame churches in the county".

Over the last 6 years, using the building for a business afforded us the opportunity to put money into the upkeep of the church. We refinished the original wood floor, repaired all of the plaster which was peeling off the walls and ceiling when we purchased it. We repainted the exterior, painstakingly re-glazed all of the window panes and hired a structural engineer to advise on an issue with the walls moving outward, potentially compromising the structure. This issue was remedied with the installation of guttering to direct water away from the building. We also repaired the sill plate and rotted siding on the front of the building. Additionally, we removed a fence and front patio which were installed by Mr. Ellis (before we purchased it) and were not authorized by the covenants of BRI. Our family has taken great pride in our role as stewards of this building and have enjoyed bringing it back to life. Many neighbors and community members have commented on the job we have done and expressed their gratitude that the building has found a new life.

We would like the chance to continue to use this building in a way that generates income that we can use to keep it up in the condition that we have so far while also providing a modest income for our family. As you probably know, buildings which are rarely used fall into disrepair, sadly this had already been the case 2 times in the life of this church. Using the building as an Airbnb allows the public to experience the unique, rich history of this building. Inside, we have all of the articles we have collected about the church, including some very interesting ones. One such article provides a very colorful depiction of a shooting that occurred at the Mount Ebal Church ice cream social in 1909. People love reading about the history of this church and it reminds them of years gone by and churches that they attended in their youth. We love being able to share this history with others. Some guests have come from states away, saying they chose our place above all others because they wanted a chance to stay in such a unique historical structure. They ended up falling in love with Bloomington as a result, and plan on returning.

In conclusion, we hope you consider our request for Historic Adaptive Reuse of the building as a Tourist Cabin. We hope to share this historic structure with others for many years to come.

Sincerely,



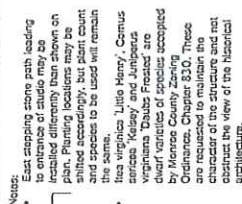
Brook, Corey, Lily and Briar Rieman

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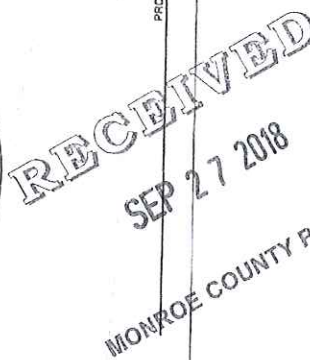








East Devonshire Water			
Total Demand per 1000 Gallons per annum (20° F + 2.0 inches ³ /20° F + 20.0 inches ³ /20° F)			
Symbol	Remarks	Comments	Size
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Reiman Photography: Landscape Plan

Designed By: Derek Zimmerman, LEED AP
Date: 12 - 11 - 2012
Revised: 5-5-2013
812.339.5296
Rieman 7-11-13

As Bullets in red by Brook Rieman 7-11-13

Approved
Changes
7/29/13

2010 Aerial



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2005

EMTEBAL RD

Clear Creek

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The NEWS Photo, Bill Pittman

Mt. Ebal Church in Monroe County to be used again.

Old Church Restored To Its Original State

By BILL PITTMAN

The News Indiana-Bloomington Bureau

SMITHVILLE, Ind. — Ulysses S. Grant had just begun his second term as president in 1872 when carpenter Dan Chambers started framing up the modest building that was to be Mt. Ebal church.

David and Anthony Deckard, father and son, had used a team of oxen to haul timber out of the woods to be made into planks at John Stultz's water-powered sawmill at Fairfax. Members of the congregation had raised \$550 with \$25 donations from 22 families and individuals. Mel Whisenand had given the land.

The little church was dedicated in 1873, and the congregation formed as a Sunday school class sponsored by the Indiana Methodist Conference in 1869 began nearly 100 years of existence.

Mt. Ebal followed the downward curve of other churches of its era with changing social patterns, the influence of the automobile and the rise of factions within the church. After Monroe Reservoir was completed, displacing many of the families who called Mt. Ebal their spiritual home, the church sat empty and unused almost 10 years.

Community Center

Now with a new roof, refinished floors, newly plastered walls, rebuilt pews, plastic screens to protect the original window panes and a new coat of paint, Mt. Ebal beckons to be used again as a center of community life.

It took a while.

In 1977, Urmy Chambers and Herbert Lucas began agitating for the United Methodist South Indiana Conference to restore the building. Chambers said he had three reasons for wanting the building preserved.

"The carpenter, Dan Chambers, was my great-uncle, and the Deckards were my great-grandfather and grandfather. The church is a landmark in the area without doubt. A third reason

is that the cemetery across the road is practically inaccessible without the church yard to park in," he said.

"The Methodists wanted to sell the church as a house," Chambers said. Instead, the church was purchased by Bloomington Restorations Inc. in 1978 with a grant from the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. Additional small grants have been used to complete the restoration, and last July the church was rededicated in an open house and rang with hymns by the Sacred Harp Singers.

\$1,500 Price Tag

Rosemary Miller of Bloomington Restoration Inc. said: "We worked a long time on restoring the church. First we tried to get the state to do it, and couldn't get them interested in it. The Methodist board suggested they might sell it to us cheap, even though the land was assessed at about \$15,000. After about a year and a half, we negotiated with the Methodists and with a loan from the Historic Land-

marks Foundation, bought it for \$1,500."

The church has been restored as it was in the beginning — there is no heat, no plumbing and no electricity. And the pews are divided as they were at first for the women on one side and men on the other. There are separate doors, as well.

Missing, however, is the bell tower. Mrs. Miller said BRI has begun raising money to build one.

The original bell is in private ownership in Lafayette.

"We have been offered similar bells, but there is a chance we may be able to buy back the one that was here," she said.

BRI is encouraging use of the church as a community center and several organizations have scheduled events there and at least two weddings are on the calendar for spring.

Joann Steele, also of BRI, said, "We want the church to be used. It can't just sit there and deteriorate; again, it has to be alive."

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MONROE COUNTY PLANNING

the Way... this week

OUR COMMUNITY CHURCHES

First Congregation in Mt. Ebal Methodist Church Met at School House in Year 1869

The Mt. Ebal Methodist Church, as the church in the Mt. Ebal neighborhood was named on Nov. 14, 1875, is a large white one-roomed frame building facing the east.

The church cemetery is directly opposite the front of the church.

The Indiana Methodist Conference first organized a class at the school house in the year 1869, near where the church now stands. The land was given by Mel Whisenand for the church which was built in 1872.

The men of the community assisted Dan Chambers in building the structure for the worship of God. Part of the logs were supplied by David Deckard and hauled by Anthony "Uncle Bud" Deckard, with a team of oxen.

Some of the other neighbors furnished logs, and some brought lumber, which had been sawed by water power at Fairfax by John Stultz. The sills of the church were given by Steven Davis and lumber for the pews was given by Calvin Wisley.

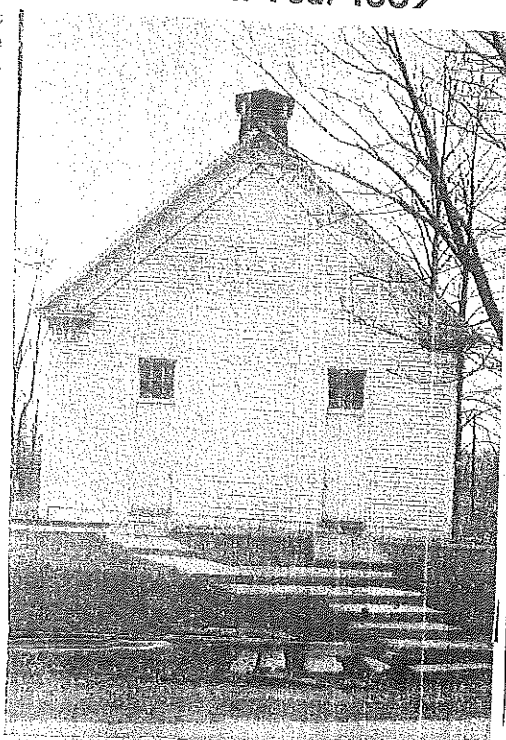
The lime kiln was built about 200 yards south of where the church now stands, on the farm owned by Paul Scott. This work, too, was done by neighbors interested in seeing a church erected in their community.

Each of the following men and families donated \$25 towards the building of the new church: John Scott, Alexander Mercer, Washington Mercer, Joe Lucas, James Lucas, Pete Lucas, David Deckard, Calvin Wisley, Leonard Litz, Sam Perry, Mel Whisenand, Isaac Mitchell, Henry Nikirk, Calvin Young, George Mercer, Hiram Butcher, James Woodward, James Harrell, Anthony Chambers, Jr., Anthony Chambers, Sr., David Chambers and John Harrell.

One of the last parts of the meeting house to be constructed was a hitch-rack around the church for the members to tie their horses to during the services.

The church was dedicated for all to worship in by the Rev. Hugh Stackhouse, in 1873.

Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. David Deckard, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Perry, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. ...



MT. EBAL METHODIST CHURCH

Hiram Howard, Matthew Butcher, Mr. and Mrs. John Howard, Mr. and Mrs. James Kelly, Lizzie Richardson, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Chambers, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Mitchell.

Oldest member of the congregation is 77-year-old Elmer Lucas.

Former pastors whose names are remembered by several members of the congregation are the Reverends Maldon Baker, Hugh Stackhouse, D. Flood, Sandy Baker, Wesley Cazzee, Mose Adams, Henry Adams, Silas Adams, Claude Simors, Charles Laken, Smith Harper, Percy Botwell, Sam Sturges, George Bundy, John McHenry, W. W. Lineberry, Nicholas Smith, Paul Emery, Rev. Zimmerman, Ralph Owings, Alonzo Hamilton, Ross Bennett, Rev. Ashbaugh, Lloyd Sawyer, Carl Nikirk, Alfred Chastain, Fred Reynolds, Oscar Williams, James Cox, Jr., and the present pastor, Paul Haywood, of Bloomfield.

Present officers of the church are: Mrs. Clara Wisley, Sunday School Superintendent; Miss Dorothy Scott, Sunday School ...

The Mt. Ebal church is located three miles south of Smithville on Fairfax Road. The original building, which was erected in 187. is still used for services, and a unique feature of the church (in this day and age) is the 2 by 6 railing which extends down the center of the church dividing the pews. In former days, the men sat on the south side of the church, while the women occupied the pews on the north side.

The large one-room frame building faces the east and was built on ground donated by Mel Whisenand. Although it was built in 1872, it was not named until November 14, 1875.

Prior to the erection of the church building, meetings were held in the neighboring school house where a class was organized in 1867. Revivals were held often and old timers say that so great was the enthusiasm of the people, especially when the Rev. Hugh Stackhouse was preaching, that the building would not accommodate the crowds. Many stood under the eaves in the rain to hear him.

The church cemetery is directly opposite the front of the church.

The men of the community assisted Dan Chambers in building the structure for the worship of God. Part of the logs were supplied by David Deckard and hauled by Anthony "Uncle Bud" Deckard, with a team of oxen.

Some of the other neighbors furnished logs, and some brought lumber, which had been sawed by water power at Fairfax by John Stultz. The sills of the church were given by Steven Davis and lumber for the pews was given by Calvin Wisley.

The lime kiln was burnt about 200 yards south of where the church

now stands, on the farm owned by Paul Scott. This work, too, was done by neighbors interested in seeing a church erected in their community.

Each of the following men and families donated \$25 towards the building of the new church: John Scott, Alexander Mercer, Washington Mercer, Joe Lucas, James Lucas, Pete Lucas, David Deckard, Calvin Wisley, Leonard Litz, Sam Perry, Mel Whisenand, Isaac Mitchell, Henry Nikirk, Calvin Young, George Mercer, Hiram Butcher, James Woodward, James Harrell, Anthony Chambers, Jr., Anthony Chambers, Sr., David Chambers and John Harrell.

One of the last parts of the meeting house to be constructed was a hitch-rack around the church for the members to tie their horses to during the services.

The church was dedicated for all to worship in by the Rev. Hugh Stackhouse, in 1873.

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Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. David Deckard, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Perry, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. John Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. James Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Nikirk, Mr. and Mrs. Sally Richardson, and Mr. and Mrs. Silas Adams.

Mr. and Mrs. Washington Mercer, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Mercer, Mr. and Mrs. William Butcher, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Wisley, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Deckard, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Litz, Mr. and Mrs. Mel Whisenand, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Chambers, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Chambers, and Mr. and Mrs. John Scott.

Mr. and Mrs. John Howard, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Howard, Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Butcher, Lizzie Richardson, Mr. and Mrs. James Shelley, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Mitchell, and others.

Oldest member of the congregation is 77-year-old Elmer Lucas.

Former pastors whose names are remembered by several members of the congregation are the Reverends Maldon Baker, Sandy Baker, Clyde Simons, Perry Bixwell, John McKenny, Paul Emery, Ralph Owings, Hugh Stackhouse, Wesley Caze, Charles Laken, Sam Sturgeon, F. N. Lineberry, Rev. Zimmerman, Ross L. Bennett, D. Flood, Mose Adams, Smith Harper, George Bundy, Nicholas Smith, Alonzo Hamilton, C. Chastain, and others.

Present officers of the church are: Mrs. Clara Wisley, Sunday School Superintendent; Miss Dorothy Scott, Sunday School Secretary; Willis Souders, Sunday School Treasurer. Trustees of the church are Willis Souders, Elmer Lucas and Wayne Wisley. The Church Treasurer is Warren Wisley. Mrs. Anna Mitchell is pianist. Mrs. Mildred Wisley is song leader.

Services at the church are: Sunday School each Sunday at 10 o'clock, Church Services the second and fourth Sunday of each month at 11 o'clock.

Average attendance at the church services is 35.

(This was the schedule for the year 1953.)

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*I am the only one who
has been in the
of the church since
1953.*

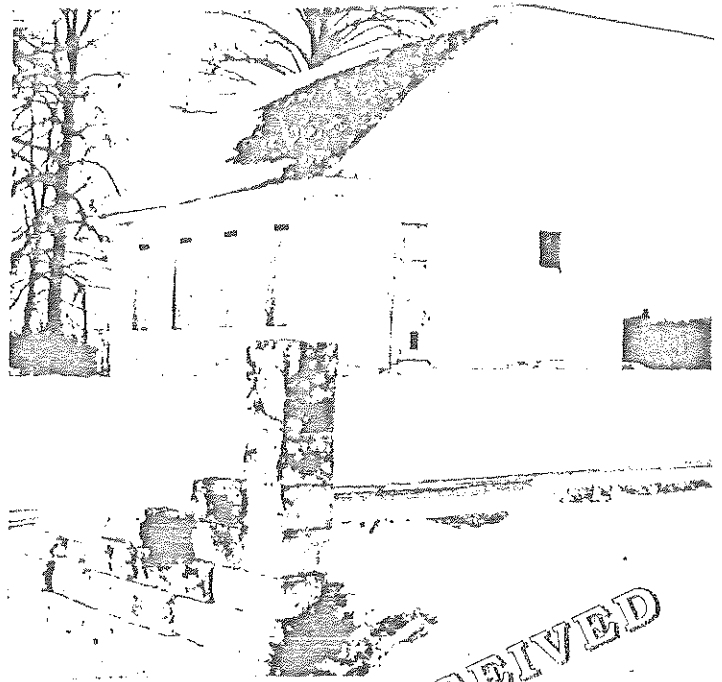
Mt. Ebal Church Needs Help

Follow Highway 37 South to Fairfax Road. Take Fairfax Road to Lake Monroe. As you approach the Fairfax Recreation Area and the Inn of the Four Winds you will pass a small, white frame church, the Mt. Ebal Church, with a small cemetery across the road. The church belongs to BRI and major efforts are being made to restore it to its original state. The church, now timeworn and dilapidated, was once the center of the Mt. Ebal community. Some of its members lived on farms now covered by Lake Monroe. Homes of other members stood where we now see condominiums, a golf course or a motel. The construction of the building takes us back to the church-going customs of another day—the pews are divided into two sections, one for men and one for women and there are two doors, also one for men and one for women.

The congregation that worshipped in this little church has a long history. It began as a class, organized by the Indiana Methodist Conference in 1869, in a schoolhouse which stood near the present site of the church. The building was built in 1872 on land donated by Mel Whisenand. As was customary in those days, the men of the community assisted Dan Chambers in building the structure. Chambers' grave is in the cemetery across the road from the church he built. Logs were furnished by David Deckard and hauled by Anthony "Uncle Bud" Deckard with a team of oxen. Other neighbors furnished logs and lumber which were sawed by water power at Fairfax by John Sultz. Records show that donations of \$25 were given toward the building fund by a total of 22 members or families. The church was dedicated by the Rev. Hugh Stackhouse in 1873. Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. David Deckard, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Perry, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. John Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. James Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Nikirk, Mr. and Mrs. Silas Adams and Mrs. Sally Richardson. Others were Mr. and Mrs. Washington Mercer, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Mercer, Mr. and Mrs. William Butcher, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Wisley, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Deckard, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Litz, Mr. and Mrs. Mel Whisenand, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Chambers, Mr. and Mrs. John Scott, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Howard, Matthew Butcher, Mr. and Mrs. John Howard, Mr. and Mrs. James Kelly, Lizzie Richardson, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Chambers, and Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Mitchell. After its dedication in 1873, the church was used as a place of worship until , when it closed. The building was then owned by the United Methodist Southern Indiana Conference which, although unable to maintain the building, recognized its historic significance. In 1978, the building was purchased for \$1500 by BRI with a loan from the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.

Bloomington Restorations Inc.

A Foundation for Historic Preservation in Monroe County
P.O. Box 1522, Bloomington, IN 47402



Interview With Joanne Steele

The following questions were asked of Joanne Steele who has been active in the restoration of the church up to this point.

How did BRI become involved with the Mt. Ebal Church?

BRI got involved in 1977 when Norris Wenworth brought the late Urmy Chambers and Herbert Lucas into my shop and asked who they could contact to help save the Mt. Ebal Church. BRI approached the Methodist Conference to see if the building could be saved. We also got in touch with the Department of Natural Resources to see if they could use it in connection with the Lake Monroe development but they were not interested. At the same time, we learned that Historic Landmarks of Indiana had money to lend and wanted to try a short-term grant with a local organization. Reid Williamson, of that organization, met with me and Rosemary Miller and gave us ideas for drawing up a grant proposal. The proposal was written and the grant was funded for the \$1500 it took to buy the building in 1978.

What was done then?

We learned about Community Development money which was available from HUD for the Smithville area and another proposal was written for a grant of \$5000. We got that for the beginning of the restoration.

What has been done up to now to restore the building?

The Community Development funds were used on the replacement of the shingles, repairing and replacing glass in the windows, making new storm windows that will protect the old glass once the windows are put back in. Volunteers removed the windows from the church and attempted to remove the paint. This turned out to be a very big job, and after much hard work by many people, Mr. Galloway of the

continued on next page . . .

Bloomington Restorations Inc.
(Mt. Ebal Church)

127200

BOOK 123 PAGE 85

ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,
MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA

Ordinance #134-Plan Commission
Date: March 30, 1981

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MONROE COUNTY MAP DATED THE 3RD DAY OF JUNE 1974

Whereas the Board of Commissioners of Monroe County, Indiana passed a zoning Ordinance and adopted a Zoning Map on the 3rd day of June, 1974, which said Ordinance and Maps are now incorporated in the Ordinance of Monroe County, Indiana, and whereas the Monroe County Plan Commission has recommended that said Zoning Map be amended by the Board of Commissioners of Monroe County, Indiana, under authority of Chapter 174 of the Acts of 1974 of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana.

SECTION I.

That said map entitled "Monroe County Zoning Map" dated the 3rd day of June, 1974 be amended to reclassify:

That part of the South half of the North East quarter of the North West quarter of Section twenty three township seven Range One West Beginning at the center of the Bloomington and Salem State Road where the county road leading from Harrodsburg intersects said road on the aforesaid described section thence South 10 rods, thence west 16 rods, thence North 10 rods thence East 16 rods to the place of beginning containing one acre.

RESIDENTIAL TO SPECIAL HISTORIC

SECTION II.

That this ordinance shall be in full force and affect from and after its passage and approval by the Board of Commissioners of Monroe County, Indiana. Passed and adopted by the Board of Commissioners of Monroe County, Indiana on the 20th day of March, 1981.

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MONROE COUNTY PLANNING
Attest:

VI Simpson
Monroe County Auditor

WARREN DEEGAR

PHILLIP ROGERS

CHARLOTTE ZIETLOW

RECORDED
A.M. P.M. 1:31

APR 14 1981

RECORDER MONROE CO., IND.

Mt. Ebal Church in Monroe County to be used again.

Old Church Restored To Its Original State

By BILL PITTMAN

The News Indiana-Bloomington Bureau

SMITHVILLE, Ind. — Ulysses S. Grant had just begun his second term as president in 1872 when carpenter Dan Chambers started framing up the modest building that was to be Mt. Ebal church.

David and Anthony Deekard, father and son, had used a team of oxen to haul timber out of the woods to be made into planks at John Stultz's water-powered sawmill at Fairfax. Members of the congregation had raised \$550 with \$25 donations from 22 families and individuals. Mel Whisenand had given the land.

The little church was dedicated in 1873, and the congregation formed as a Sunday school class sponsored by the Indiana Methodist Conference in 1869 began nearly 100 years of existence.

Mt. Ebal followed the downward curve of other churches of its era with changing social patterns, the influence of the automobile and the rise of factions within the church. After Monroe Reservoir was completed, displacing many of the families who called Mt. Ebal their spiritual home, the church sat empty and unused almost 10 years.

Community Center

Now with a new roof, refinished floors, newly plastered walls, rebuilt pews, plastic screens to protect the original window panes and a new coat of paint, Mt. Ebal beckons to be used again as a center of community life.

It took a while.

In 1977, Arny Chambers and Herbert Lucas began agitating for the United Methodist South Indiana Conference to restore the building. Chambers said he had three reasons for

is that the cemetery across the road is practically inaccessible without the church yard to park in," he said.

"The Methodists wanted to sell the church as a house," Chambers said. Instead, the church was purchased by Bloomington Restorations Inc. in 1978 with a grant from the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. Additional small grants have been used to complete the restoration, and last July the church was rededicated in an open house and rang with hymns by the Sacred Harp Singers.

\$1,500 Price Tag

Rosemary Miller of Bloomington Restoration Inc. said, "We worked a long time on restoring the church. First we tried to get the state to do it, and couldn't get them interested in it. The Methodist board suggested they might sell it to us cheap, even though the land was assessed at about \$15,000. After about a year and a half, we negotiated with the Methodists and with a loan from the Historic Land-

marks Foundation bought it for \$1,500."

The church has been restored as it was in the beginning — there is no heat, no plumbing and no electricity. And the pews are divided as they were at first for the women on one side and men on the other. There are separate doors, as well.

Missing, however, is the bell tower. Mrs. Miller said BRI has begun raising money to build one.

The original bell is in private ownership in Lafayette.

"We have been offered similar bells, but there is a chance we may be able to buy back the one that was here," she said.

BRI is encouraging use of the church as a community center and several organizations have scheduled events there and at least two weddings are on the calendar for spring.

Joann Steele, also of BRI, said, "We want the church to be used. It can't just sit there and deteriorate again, it has to be alive."

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Mt. Ebal Methodist

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the thirty-sixth in a series of articles on Bloomington and Monroe County churches. Today's article concerns the Mt. Ebal Methodist Church.

By VIRGINIA BARNARD ¹³⁶
Telephone Staff Writer

The Mt. Ebal Methodist church, as the church in the Mt. Ebal neighborhood was named on November 14, 1875, is a large white one-roomed frame building, facing the east. The church cemetery is directly opposite to the church.

The Indiana Methodist Conference first organized a class in the school house in the year 1869, near where the church now stands. The land was given by Mel Whisenand for the church which was built in 1872.

The men of the community assisted Dan Chambers in building the structure for the worship of God. Part of the logs were furnished by David Deckard and hauled by Anthony "Uncle Bud" Deckard, with a team of oxen.

Some of the other neighbors furnished logs, and some brought lumber, which was sawed by water power at Fairfax by John Stultz. The sills of the church were given by Steven Davis, and lumber for the pews was given by Calvin Wisley.

The lime kiln was burnt about 200 yards south of where the church now stands, on the farm owned by Paul Scott. This work, too, was done by neighbors, interested in seeing a church erected in their community.

Each of the following men and families donated \$25 towards the building of the new church: John Scott, Alexander Mercer, Washington Mercer, Joe Lucas, James Lucas, Pete Lucas, David Deckard, Calvin Wisley, Leonard Litz, Sam Perry, Mel Whisenand, Isaac Mitchell, Henry Nikirk, Calvin Young, George Mercer, Hiram Butcher, James Woodward, James Harrell, Anthony Chambers, Jr., Anthony Chambers, Sr., David Chambers and John Harrell.

One of the last parts of the meeting house to be constructed was a hitch-rack around the church, for the members to tie their horses to during the services.

The church was dedicated for all to worship in by the Rev. Hugh Stackhouse, in 1873.

Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. David Deckard, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Perry, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. John Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. James Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Nikirk, Mrs. Sally Richardson and Mr. and Mrs. Silas Adams.

Mr. and Mrs. Washington Mercer, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Mercer, Mr. and Mrs. William Butcher, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Wisley, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Deckard, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Litz, Mr. and Mrs. Mel Whisenand, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Chambers, Mr. and Mrs. John Scott, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Howard, Matthew Butcher, Mr. and Mrs. John Howard, Mr. and Mrs. James Kelley, Lizzie Richardson, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Chambers and Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Mitchell.

ers are: Mrs. Ruth Mitchell, president; Mrs. Erie Stewart, vice-president; Mrs. Mae Hartman, secretary; Mrs. Pearl Deckard, treasurer; and Mrs. Ruth Mitchell, news reporter.

Sunday School is held each Sunday morning at 10 a. m. with the superintendent, Mrs. Otis Deckard, in charge. Saturday night services are held at 7:30 p. m. on the third Saturday nights of each month. Prayer meetings are held at 7 o'clock on Wednesday nights.

Officers of the Sunday School are: Mrs. Otis Deckard, superintendent; Miss Doris Mitchell, secretary; and James Stewart, treasurer. Mrs. Ruth Mitchell is teacher of the Adult class, and Mrs. Erie Stewart teacher of the Young People's class. The primary class is taught by Robert Deckard.

Mrs. Daisy Stotts is secretary of the church, and A. O. Mitchell, treasurer. Stewards are Clifford Deckard, Fred Stotts and Robert Deckard. A. O. Mitchell, Fred Stotts and Elmer Lucas are trustees, and Mrs. Pearl Deckard is pianist.

The church has a present membership of 32 persons. It is deeded to the "trustees and their successors, and their successors."

Credit for source of this information goes to Anthony Deckard, Elmer Lucas and A. O. Mitchell. Miss Doris Mitchell, County correspondent for Daily Telephone deserves credit for the gathering of the material and submitting of it to the writer.

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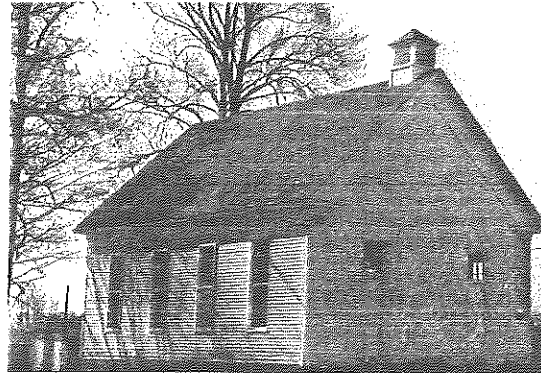
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MONROE COUNTY PLANNING

Ketcham's gristmill in the northwest corner of the township on Clear Creek served the needs of many nearby settlers, including many of the inhabitants of Indian Creek Township. Ketcham was also known for his business acumen, lively conversation and his hospitality to travellers. His log "dog-trot" house stood near Clear Creek until recently, and his son's house still stands on Fluck Mill Road.

When Clear Creek Township was officially established in 1818, several families had already settled in the area later organized as Harrodsburg. These enterprising early settlers sent flatboats loaded with grain, pork and lumber to southern markets, beginning a tradition that continued in Harrodsburg until the 1880s. Fairfax, on Salt Creek, another early community in Clear Creek Township, flourished from the 1830s to the 1850s. Smithville, which was founded to accommodate railroad workers in the 1850s, grew as a result of the nearby limestone companies to reach a population of 375 in 1910.

Although the Salem limestone belt runs through much of Clear Creek Township, quarrying has been limited to the Smithville area. The township's residents have capitalized instead on its areas of good farmland, its scenic beauty, and its proximity to major north-south thoroughfares.



Mount Ebal Church (50004) Built in 1872 by men from the community, under the direction of carpenter Dan Chambers, Mt. Ebal Church was dedicated in 1873. It belonged to the United Methodist Southern Conference until 1978 when Bloomington Restorations, Inc. purchased it and restored it to its original appearance. It is the best-preserved of the many frame country churches in the county.

No. Rtg. Description

- 001 C House, 3635 Cleve Butcher Road; Hall-and-parlor, c.1895; Vernacular/Construction (009)
- 002 C House, 3630 Cleve Butcher Road; Gabled-ell, c.1860; Vernacular/Construction (009)
- 003 C House, 8290 Fairfax Road; Double-pen, c.1900; Vernacular/Construction (009)

- 004 O Mt. Ebal Church, 8699 Fairfax Road; Greek Revival, 1872; Architecture, Religion; MCHD (009)
- 005 C House, 888 Hobart Road; Gabled-ell, c.1890; Vernacular/Construction (115)
- 006 C House, 9450 Strain Ridge Road; Double-pen, c.1900; Vernacular/Construction (115)
- 007 C House, 9092 Strain Ridge Road; Bungalow, c.1925; Architecture (115)
- 008 C House, 2655 Mt. Ebal Road; Gothic Revival, c.1885; Architecture (115)
- 009 N House, 8605 Strain Ridge Road; Hall-and-parlor, c.1850; Vernacular/Construction, Exploration/Settlement (115)

- 010 C House; Vern Arch
- 011 C House; Goth Arch
- 012 C House; Bung (115)
- 013 C House; Bung (115)
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presented plans for our present building. The first services were held in it on February 2, 1974.

Already a building fund is growing for future expansion. Our membership is around 350 resident members. We do not claim perfection but we are a harmonious and friendly people. Like the rest of humanity we have difficulties, disappointment, joys and expectations. However, we share all these and are held together through a bond of love in Christ Jesus, knowing He will see us through each valley and rejoice in each triumph.

We are not a large church, but because we serve a great God, we are a great church.

MT. EBAL CHURCH

The Mt. Ebal Church is located three miles south of Smithville on Fairfax road. The original building, which was erected in 1872, is still used for special events, and a unique feature of the church is the 2 by 6 railing which extends down the center of the church dividing the pews. In former days, the men sat on the south side of the church, while the women occupied the pews on the north side.

The large one-room building faces the east and was built on ground donated by Mel Whisenand, to the Indiana Methodist Conference in 1871. It was not named until November 14, 1875.

Revivals were held often and old timers say that so great was the enthusiasm of the people, especially when the Rev. Hugh Stackhouse was preaching, that the building would not accommodate the crowds. Many stood under the eaves as the rain to hear him.

The church cemetery is directly opposite the front of the church.

The men of the community assisted Dan Chambers in building the structure for the worship of God. Part of the logs were supplied by



Mt. Ebal Church

David Deckard and hauled by Anthony "Uncle Bud" Deckard, with a team of oxen.

Some of the other neighbors furnished logs, and some brought lumber, which had been sawed by water power at Fairfax by Stultz. The sills of the church were given by Steven Davis and lumber for the pews was given by Calvin Wisley.

The lime kiln was burnt about 200 yards south of where the church now stands, on the farm owned by Paul Scott. This work, too, was done by neighbors interested in seeing a church erected in their community.

Each of the following men and families donated \$25 toward the building of the new church: John Scott, Alexander Mercer, Washington Mercer, Joe Lucas, James Lucas, Pete Lucas, David Deckard, Calvin Wisley, Leonard Litz, Sam Perry,

Mel Whisenand, Isaac Mitchell, Henry Nikirk, Calvin Young, George Mercer, Hiram Butcher, James Woodward, James Harrell, Anthony Chambers Jr., Anthony Chambers Sr., David Chambers and John Harrell.

The church was dedicated, in which all could worship, by the Rev. Hugh Stackhouse, in 1873.

Charter members were the David Deckards, Sam Perrys, Joe Lucases, John Lucases, James Lucases, Henry Nikirks, Sally Richardsons, Silas Adams, Washington Mercers, Alexander Mercers, William Butchers, Calvin Wisleys, Anthony Deckards, Leonard Litzs, Mel Whisenands, Anthony Chamberses, Dan Chamberses, John Scotts, John Howards, Hiram Howards, Matthew Butchers, Lizzie Richardson, James Shelleys, Robert Wilsons, Isaac Mitchells, and others.

Pastors who served the church were Maldon Baker, Sandy Baker, Clyde Simons, Perry Bixwell, John McKenny, Paul Emery, Ralph Owings, Hugh Stackhouse, Wesley Caze, Charles Laken, Sam Sturgeon, W.M. Lineberry, Ross L. Bennett, D. Flood, Mose Adams, Smith Harper, George Bundy, Nicholas Smith, Alonzo Hamilton, C. Chastain, Solomon Lucas, and others.

The church is now owned and has been restored by Bloomington Restorations in 1980. Joan Steele manages the renting of the building. Many people enjoy visiting the old church at country weddings, memorial services and other functions.

MT. GILEAD CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Mt. Gilead Christian Church is believed to have been organized in 1849 or 1850 at the home of Presley Mathers. He had lately moved from the Clear Creek Church and was living on what is known as the Alexander farm. A locust grove near the house afforded a place for open air meetings in warm weather. The preacher was Washington Houston. John C. Mathes, who helped him, was the younger brother of Elder James M. Mathes, who was the best known advocate of the cause in this part of the state. The young Mathes, though still working at his trade as cabinet maker, was beginning to attract the favorable notice of his brethren for his zeal and ability in speaking.

The following are believed to have been members from the beginning: John C. Mathes (younger brother of James), Ruth Mathes, Benjamin Franklin Rogers (was for a long time Elder of the church), Sophie Rogers, Catherine Gabber, Elizabeth Buskirk (Mrs. Isaac Buskirk), Mar-



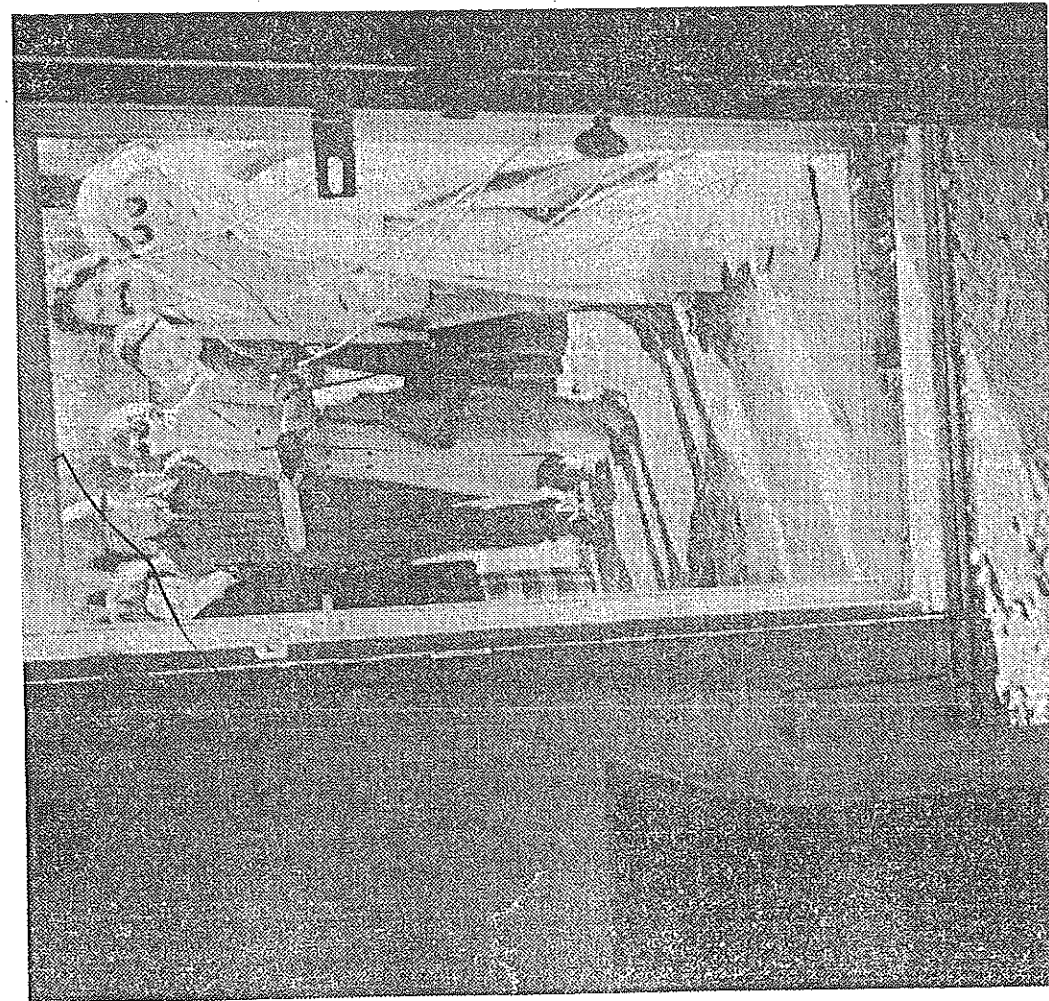
Mt. Gilead Christian Church

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Mt. Ebal Church to

be restored



Staff photo by Larry Grewell

Bloomington Restorations Inc. officially took possession of the 106-year-old Mt. Ebal Church on Fairfax Road at Mt. Ebal Road in ceremonies today. Among those participating in the ceremonies were the group standing at one of the entrances to the church.

right are Gayle Cook, BRI vice president; Urney Chambers, former member of the church; Vera O'Lessker, BRI member; Larry Burke, restoration architect for BRI; and Rosemary Miller, BRI president.

Bloomington Restorations, Inc., the not-for-profit corporation dedicated to preserving and restoring historic structure in Bloomington and Monroe County, officially took possession of the Mt. Ebal Methodist Church this morning.

THE CHURCH, CONSTRUCTED in 1872, was owned by the Southern Indiana Methodist Conference and had not been used for several years. It was headed for the wrecking ball until Bloomington Restorations made the decision to purchase the building. It's located on Fairfax Road at the intersection with old Ebal Road.

Bloomington Restorations president Rosemary Miller said no decision has been made about how the building will be used.

"It was acquired because of the opportunity, not because we had an immediate use for it," she explained. "Whatever is done will be in keeping with the church character of the structure."

Miller said it will probably be used as a location for meetings because the pews in the church are the original ones and they will be preserved. She noted that the pews are divided into two sections, one for men and one for women, and that the church has two doors, also one for men and one for women.

"THERE'S NOTHING ORNATE or elaborate about the church," Miller noted, "but it is unique because it is one of those structures that was constructed by the people of the community. There aren't many little frame churches like it left."

Miller said Bloomington Restorations is interested in obtaining any furniture or other memorabilia that has been in the church in the past. She indicated BRI is especially interested in obtaining old pictures of the church that can be used in providing so guidance for restoration efforts.

The land on which the church now stands was given to the Indiana Methodist Conference by Mel Whisenand in 1871.

Construction of the church was a community project with labor and materials donated.

Most of the logs were donated by David Deckard and were hauled to the site by Anthony "Uncle Bud" Deckard with a team of oxen.

Lumber used in the church was sawed at nearby Fairfax on Salt Creek by a water power driven saw operated by John Stultz.

The sills of the church were given by Steven Davis and lumber for the pews was given by Calvin Wisely.

A total of 22 families donated \$25 each towards building the new church. They were: John Scott, Alexander Mercer, Washington Mercer, Joe Lucas, James Lucas, Pete Lucas, David Deckard, Calvin Wisley, Leonard Litz, Sam Perry, Mel Whisenand, Isaac Mitchell, Henry Nikirk, Calvin Young, George Mercer, Hiram Butcher, James Woodward, James Harrell, Anthony Chambers Jr., Anthony Chambers Sr., David Chambers and John Harrell.

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Renovation project gives old church new life



Jay Ellis has finished restoring the Mount Ebal Church on Fairfax Road south of Bloomington.

By Dann Denny
331-4350 | ddenny@heraldtimes.com

Jay Ellis has been busy this summer, trying to keep a bit of Monroe County history alive.

He's spent more than \$60,000 restoring Mount Ebal Church — a small white frame building on Fairfax Road.

"It's a quaint little one-room church that represents a way of life from more than a century ago," Ellis said.

"Years ago, preachers who rode horses from church to church would stop at Mount Ebal. My wife's great grandfather was one of those old preachers."

Built in 1872 as the Mount Ebal Methodist Church, it was restored by Bloomington Restorations Inc. in 1981 — and designated as an historic structure. Ellis, owner of Ellis Floral, bought the building from BRI in 1995 and rented it to couples for weddings.

"It didn't have rest rooms — just a concrete block pit toilet out back with no heating or air conditioning," he said. "It was a four-holer, so you could sit there with your favorite friends."

This summer, Ellis hired workers to replace the pit toilet with modern rest rooms in a separate building behind the white clapboard church. They also covered the walls and ceiling with a fresh coat of eggshell paint, caulked and painted gray the trim around the eight 12-foot-high windows — and added heating and air conditioning.

"My goal was to restore the building to its original condition, plus some amenities," he said. "We've kept an old pump organ that might be original; and the original walnut lectern. We even kept the wooden barrier down the middle of the church that kept the men

"We even kept the wooden barrier down the middle of the church that kept the men from getting at the women and vice versa; and the two Amish-made entrance doors — one for men and one for women."

JAY ELLIS, who restored Mount Ebal Church on Fairfax Road

getting at the women and vice versa; and the two Amish-made entrance doors — one for men and one for women."

Outside the church, Ellis spread fresh pea gravel on the parking lot, enclosed the back yard with a white picket fence and built a front-yard patio with tumbled stone.

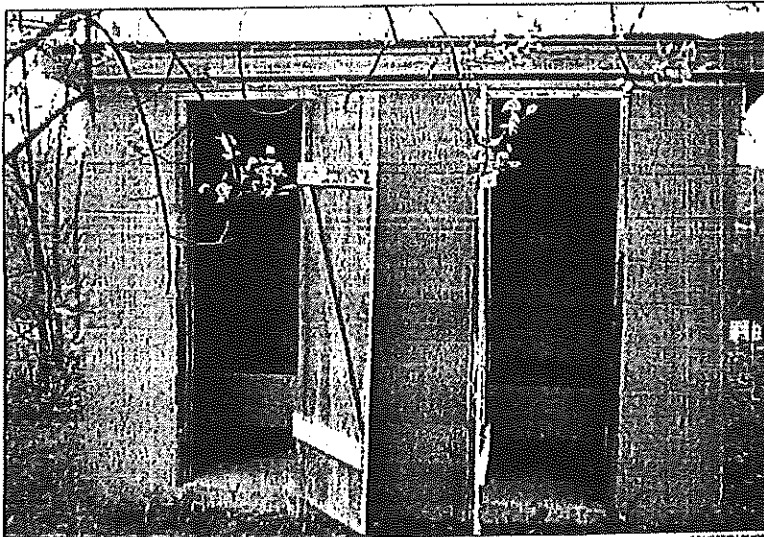
"One thing I'm most happy about is keeping a big oak tree on the south side of the church," he said. "It's 200 to 300 years old."

Ellis said he hopes to some day build a chuppah, a canopy-like structure that could be used for outside weddings. He'd also love to refinish the old walnut pews, which have been painted gray.

Ellis plans to rent the refurbished church to people for weddings, receptions, family reunions and funerals.

And though Mount Ebal Church has not housed regular church services since the early 1970s, Ellis has been approached by two different groups that want to have church services there at various times. "That made me feel really good," he said. "I would love to see some church services there again."

The two-hole outhouse at Mount Ebal Church as it was in July 1979. Bloomington Restorations did some renovations at the church in 1981, but there were no functioning rest rooms until a project this summer added modern facilities.



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Herald Times

Historic Mount Ebal Church restored and ready for use

Special to the H-T 11/19/79

EDITOR'S NOTE: Although Mount Ebal Church is no longer holding regular Sunday services, the historic church is ready to be rented for weddings and other types of receptions.

It has been said that a Methodist preacher was on every wagon train that crossed the mountains on the westward journey in the early 19th century. The plaque of the pioneer Methodist circuit rider serves to indicate the antiquity of the Mount Ebal Church. It is part of the monument of the Rev. Marshall Wisley, (Weissle, in German) 1888-1970, a native of the area who often preached at the church, located on the corner of Fairfax and Pointe roads. The cemetery across the road from the church is the burial place of some who were born as early as 1790. Although the present building was not built until 1872, as early as 1838 there was a log school house which stood on the site behind the present building and served as a church. The school and church were maintained by the joint ef-

forts of the founders of Fairfax, an early shipping town located where the Four Winds Marina now stands, and the early farmers of Strain Ridge and Fairfax roads.

Mount Ebal Church is an example of the vigorous beginnings of modern Monroe County. It is not the faded little brown church in the vale, but the little white church on the hill. It was supposedly placed there because the early settlers believed that God should be worshipped on a mountain or high hill. This belief was in harmony with the Bible's teaching that Jehovah's dwelling place is in Jerusalem on Mount Zion.

The pews, which can seat up to 175 people, are the original handmade seats the church founders fashioned from the native lumber hewn from their farms. A 2 x 6-inch railing extends down the middle of the center pews and divided the men from the women during church services. According to the belief of the early congregation, the purpose for the division was also in harmony with the teachings of the Bible.

The church has been restored by Bloomington Restorations Inc. for community groups and individuals to use for meetings, reunions, weddings and anniversaries. An antique organ can be used to lead an old-fashioned hymn sing. The stately oak on the south lawn and the grove in the back provides a spacious shady setting for outdoor summer activities, such as wedding and anniversary receptions.

Guests are invited to park, free of charge, in the southeast corner of the large parking lot surrounding Fairfax Inn. Permission was granted by the owner of the nearby property.

There are four choices of banquet services near the church. Fairfax Inn is the closest. Fourwinds and the Pointe are nearby. The beautifully restored Redmen's Hall at Smithville offers catering service and is but a short drive north on Strain Ridge Road.

For more information on reserving Mount Ebal Church, call 824-6172 or write to BRI at P.O. Box 1522, Bloomington, IN 47402.

Historic Mt. Ebal church restoration needs help

By JOHN FANCHER
H-T Civic Affairs Editor

Do you have some human energy you'd like to volunteer for cleaning up Mt. Ebal Church? Or do you have a pickup truck that could be used for hauling trash away from the site? A brush hog would come in handy, too, for cutting big, tough weeds that have engulfed

part of the property

Mt. Ebal Church was built in 1872, and it is now the center of a big restoration job undertaken by Bloomington Restorations, Inc.

"But we need help," said Joanne Steele, member of the board and director of the Mt. Ebal project.

Steele is hoping enough people show up at 1 p.m. Sunday to get a lot of the work done at the church, which has been vacant for the last six years.

By preserving the building, she sees the facility being used for meetings by garden clubs and other community organizations.

"Hopefully, it also will be used by those desiring a country wedding," Steele said.

She pointed out anyone wishing to have a wedding in the church could probably make arrangements to have the reception at the nearby Inn of the Fourwinds.

"We might even get a survey to take them from the church to the inn," Steele said.

The church is located at the intersection of the Fairfax and Mt. Ebal roads a short distance from the entrance to the Fairfax Recreation Area in which is located the inn.

Steele said Mt. Ebal Church was destined to be torn down, so Bloomington Restorations, Inc., landed a grant, bought the property and is now in the midst of restoring it.

"If we can get the community's ministers interested, we'd like to see summer church services conducted there for people who are vacationing at Lake Monroe," Steele said.

But, in the meantime, she said: "We do need help with the restoration."

Steele said the windows of the church have been removed and are being refinished. Some of the clear glass panes have been broken, and she made this appeal:

"If anyone has the old wavy type of glass, we'd love to have it to replace the broken panes."

She said she hopes people also will show up on Sunday afternoon to help strip the paint off the window frames.

"Bring rubber gloves, scrapers and paint brushes," she said.

If enough people show up, Steele is hopeful the inside of the structure can be thoroughly cleaned, and trash hauled away, if someone brings a pickup truck.

Anyone desiring more information about the Mt. Ebal project may call Steele at work, phone 334-1776, or at home, phone 339-1084.

Air BnB Guestbook entry

ce/de

Lovely place and enjoyable stay.

Very comfortable. Great workmanship
I so admire what you've done to this
well loved structure. Thank you for
preserving it for others to enjoy.

Much success to you.

Nigel, Martha and the ~~Family~~ Family
Indianapolis

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MONROE COUNTY PLANNING

August 5, 2018

AirBnB guestbook entry

Such a great mother/daughter weekend getaway! We loved all the details in the Historic Hideaway!

Reminded my mother of her grandmother's old church! We loved being close to the lake & enjoyed time in Blainington.

Thank you!

- Jana + Kelli
Muncie, IN

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MONROE COUNTY PLANNING