
7. Description

Inventory No. 15-117

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair altered

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

The Mt Lebanon School was built about 1901. The frame building is a late example of the one story, front gable structure used for schools and other public buildings. The roof is covered with metal sheathing. A brick interior end chimney stands on the west slope of the north gable. Windows are 1/1 sash, which replace 6/6 sash seen in a historic photograph. The original siding, which appears to be in place beneath extant vinyl siding, is German or drop siding.

The main entrance is in south gable façade. A gable portico shelters the central door flanked by single windows. A one story shed roof addition on the east eaves façade has a central entrance bay. A shed roof eaves side structure with a central entrance bay, shown in a historic photograph, had probably been in place since about 1917.¹ A gable end belfry shown in historic photographs is no longer extant.

The property includes the site of the Mt Lebanon Church, a log structure built about 1833 and used for a school from about 1872 until 1901.

The property may also include a graveyard. According to historian William Hurley, members of the Hilton family are believed to be buried near the old church site. These individuals may include Lloyd Hilton, who died about 1880, and his wife Rachel Hilton.²

¹ Insurance for the school increased from \$440 to \$765 in 1917, indicating improvements to the school property. Source: E Guy Jewell, MCPS—Schools That Were, 1973, MCHS manuscript.

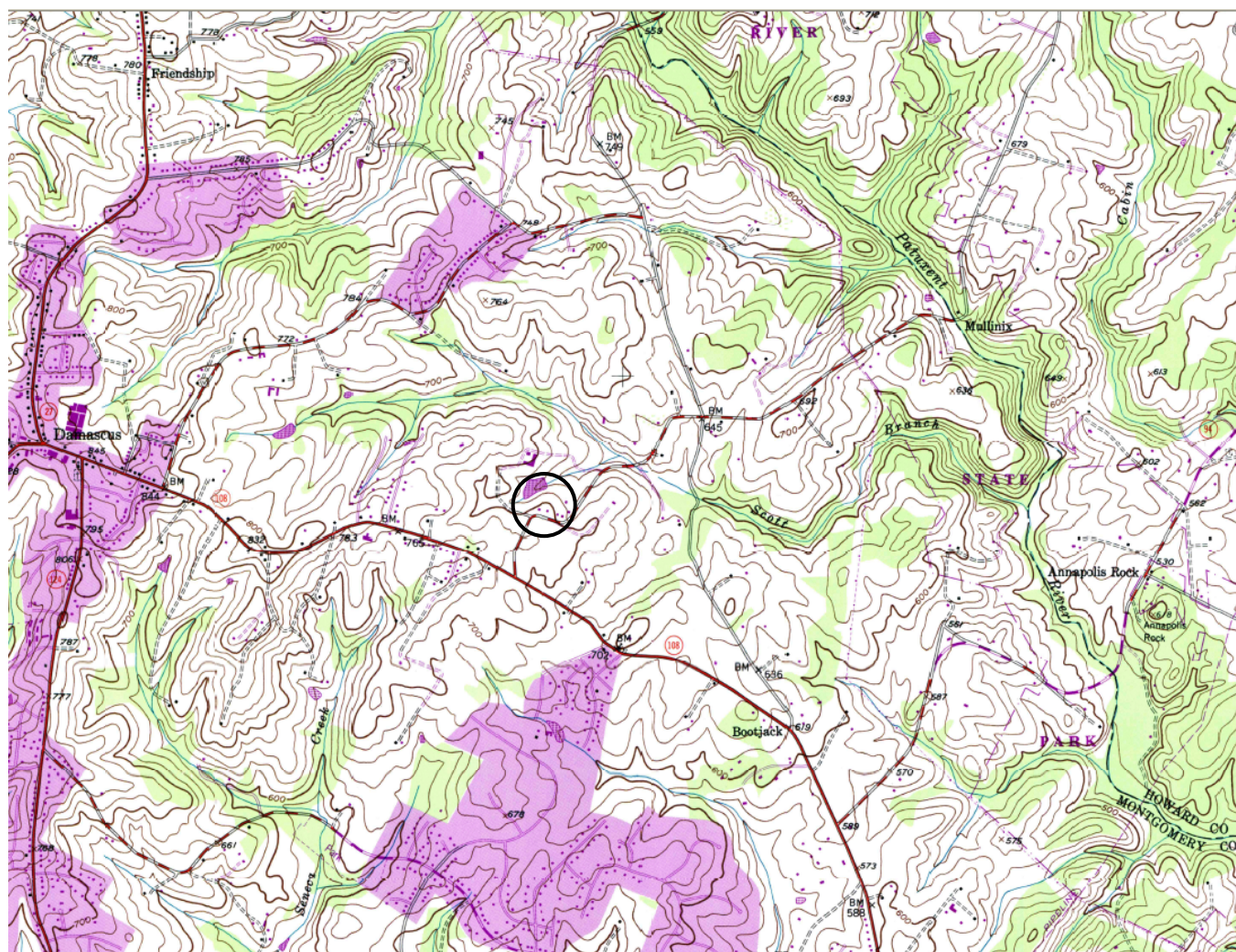
²William N Hurley, Jr. *Our Maryland Heritage: Book 43: Hilton Families of Montgomery County, Maryland*, pp54-55.

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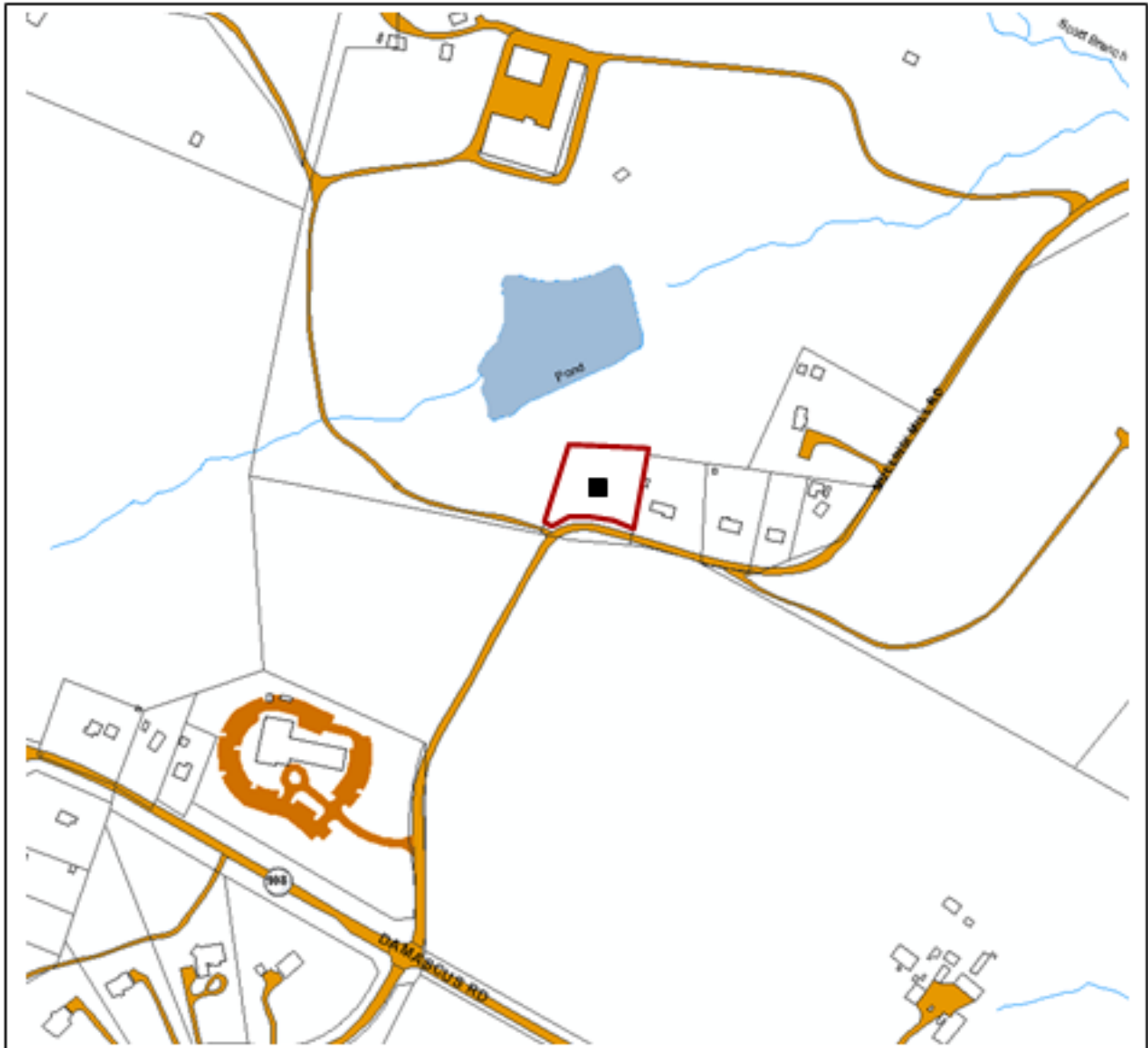
USGS map, Damascus quadrant

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ArcGIS, M-NCPPC, 12-2009

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Mt Lebanon School
South façade, left, and east façade, right
6-2009

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Mt Lebanon School
South (front) façade
6-2009

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North façade
Pictometry, 3-2006

8. Significance

Inventory No. 15-117

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates	1822 church site, 1901 school	Architect/Builder
Construction dates	1901	

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Summary:

The Mt. Lebanon School and Church site are historically and socially significant as a center of community life in the Upper Patuxent area from 1822 to 1933. Both the site and the two buildings that have occupied it hold a large place in the memory and affections of local residents. The property was the site of the first church in the Upper Patuxent. Originally called Benton's Church and founded 1822, the church, a log structure, was later known as Mt. Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church. From about 1872 until 1901, the building was used as the Mt. Lebanon School, and from about 1901-04 as the school's manual arts classroom. This building was demolished in 1904. A new Mt. Lebanon School was built around 1901. This Mt. Lebanon School building maintains its front-gabled form, a building type favored for non-residential architecture through the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries in upper Montgomery County. The structure is the only remaining one-room school house in the Upper Patuxent area.

History:

The property was the site of the first church in the Upper Patuxent. Known as Benton's Church, the church was founded in 1822. It is the forerunner of today's Damascus United Methodist Church. Benton's Church was a front-gabled one-story log structure named after Benjamin Benton, who donated the land. By the early 1840s the church was known as Mt. Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church (not to be confused with the nearby Mt. Lebanon Methodist Protestant Church, Resource #15/20, built in 1902). The name "Mt. Lebanon" was probably taken in biblical homage to the name of the tract of land on which the church was located – "Pleasant Plains of Damascus." A cemetery was associated with the church, but apparently was removed. Benjamin Benton's headstone was moved to the Damascus United Methodist Church. The graveyard may have continued to be used for burials after the building was converted into a school. According to historian William Hurley, members of the Hilton family are believed to be buried near the old church. These individuals may include Lloyd Hilton, who died about 1880, and his wife Rachel Hilton.³

In 1847, parishioners demanding more convenient access to the church were instrumental in convincing the government to put in one of the earliest public roads in the area – the western portion of Mullinix Mill Road, which connected the church to Damascus Road. It has been reported that during the Civil War, the church served as a

³William N Hurley, Jr. *Our Maryland Heritage: Book 43: Hilton Families of Montgomery County, Maryland*, pp54-55. Michael F Dwyer interview with Mc Kendree Bowman, 9-25-1975.

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shelter for both Union and Confederate soldiers, who watered their horses at nearby Scotts Branch, then known as Swan Harbor. By the late 1860's, the congregation decided to relocate to a site in the town of Damascus. At its new location, the congregation renamed itself the Damascus Methodist Episcopal Church, in recognition that the area around the original church had become known as Mt. Lebanon and was no longer an apt name for the newly sited church.

Mt Lebanon School appears to have opened shortly after August 1872, in the old church building. On August 28, 1872, the School Board authorized purchase of "Mount Lebanon Church for \$250." Land records show a deed dated August 12, 1872, School Commissioners Samuel Jones, Walter M. Talbott, and William T. Jones purchased "all that lot of land known as 'Mt. Lebanon', part of Pleasant Plains of Damascus", for \$250, for use as a school house. Thus the old Mt. Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church became a one-room school house known as the Mt. Lebanon School. An 1883 insurance policy provided coverage of \$325 on the school, located "on road from Damascus to Mullinix Mill, one-quarter mile south of residence of B F Burdette."⁴

In 1901, a new front-gabled one-story, one-room schoolhouse, about 22 feet by 24 feet, was built for \$500 adjacent to the old church/schoolhouse. Constance and Edwina Mullinix, local residents who grew up at the nearby Shipley-Mullinix Farm (Resource #15-13), were students at this second school and remembered a Woodland stove in the room's center and a water well used during lunch breaks.⁵ School records also indicate that money was appropriated in 1903 for an organ.⁶

Once the new school was built, the old church building was then was used for manual training by Professor Vernon D. Watkins, the Mt. Lebanon school teacher. A recently enacted state law had authorized funds for manual training. A lathe and other equipment were installed in the building. Insurance in 1903 was increased \$60 for Manual Training Supplies. Students managed to build an operable steam engine, a distinction mentioned in an Annual Report of the State Department of Education. Thus Mt. Lebanon School must have been one of the first to offer vocational training.⁷

The old church was torn down in about 1904 when Professor Watkins left the school. Before the old church/school building was demolished, it seems likely that it was the site where a new church, the Mt. Lebanon Methodist Protestant Church, was organized, in 1901. A Works Progress Administration survey form of Maryland church records, prepared in 1937 on the Mt. Lebanon Methodist Protestant Church (located nearby at 8115 Damascus Road), states that the that the church "was organized in the old school house across road and about a quarter of a mile from the site. (School house now gone). The original building is still standing." Since, in 1936, the only known school house within a quarter mile of the Mt. Lebanon Methodist Protestant Church on Damascus Road would have been the second Mt. Lebanon School House, now 26130 Mullinix Mill Road, the surveyors probably were slightly misinformed and should have written "the new school house is still standing." Perhaps the

⁴Deed EBP 18:435, recorded September 10, 1878. Edgar Guy Jewell, "Damascus: Small But Lively," The County Courier, 1974. MCHS files.

⁵Jerry Krakoff, "Mullinix Sisters Retiring After 45 Years' Teaching," Sentinel, no date. MCHS vertical file, Mt Lebanon School.

⁶School records. Jewell, op cit.

⁷Edgar Guy Jewell, MCPS—Schools That Were. 1973, Unpublished, MCHS.

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Name Mt Lebanon School
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Mt. Lebanon Methodist Protestant Church in 1901 organized itself in the old school, hoping that the Board of Education would allow the building to be used as a church indefinitely now that a new school was being built, and when the Board instead decided to allow manual arts classes in the old school building, the Mt. Lebanon Methodist Protestant Church commissioned its own building on Damascus Road.

On September 12, 1933, the Board of Education ordered the school to be closed, as part of its effort to close one-room school houses in the county. In 1936, the second school building was sold and is currently used as a residence.

The Board also ordered that students be transported to Damascus for school. For a fee, J.H. Mullinix transported children along Mullinix Mill Road to Damascus Road to catch the regular school bus, using a horse-drawn Dayton wagon, which was restored years later. Jeremiah Brandenburg⁸, one of the last students to attend school in the second Mt. Lebanon School building, remembers riding in the wagon. He is one of several local residents photographed riding the bus as children and then as adults, when the wagon was restored. The wagon is used for Damascus celebrations now.⁹

A number of notable figures taught at Mt. Lebanon School, old and new. John T. Baker, thought to be the first teacher, started teaching in the original building in 1874, assisted by Jim Woodfield. John T. Baker eventually became the first principal of the Damascus High School, in 1909. Damascus Middle School was named after him. His son, William Baker, who was a teacher at Damascus High School while his father was principal, became the last teacher at Mt. Lebanon School (in the new building that still exists today). Another notable teacher was Columbus W. Day.

The Mt. Lebanon School is the only remaining one-room school house in the Upper Patuxent area: schools at Clagetsville and Etchison are long since gone. Although remodeled, the Mt. Lebanon School building still exhibits the front-gabled form favored for non-residential architecture through the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries in upper Montgomery County.

⁸ Current owner of Clagett-Brandenburg Farm and Log Tobacco House, Resource #15-16.

⁹“Early 1900s school bus restored from ‘pile of junk’”, Vertical File, Damascus Schools, MCHS

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Name Mt Lebanon School
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Log church, built 1822, demolished c1904.

By the time this photograph was taken, the church was being used as a public school (1872 to 1901) .

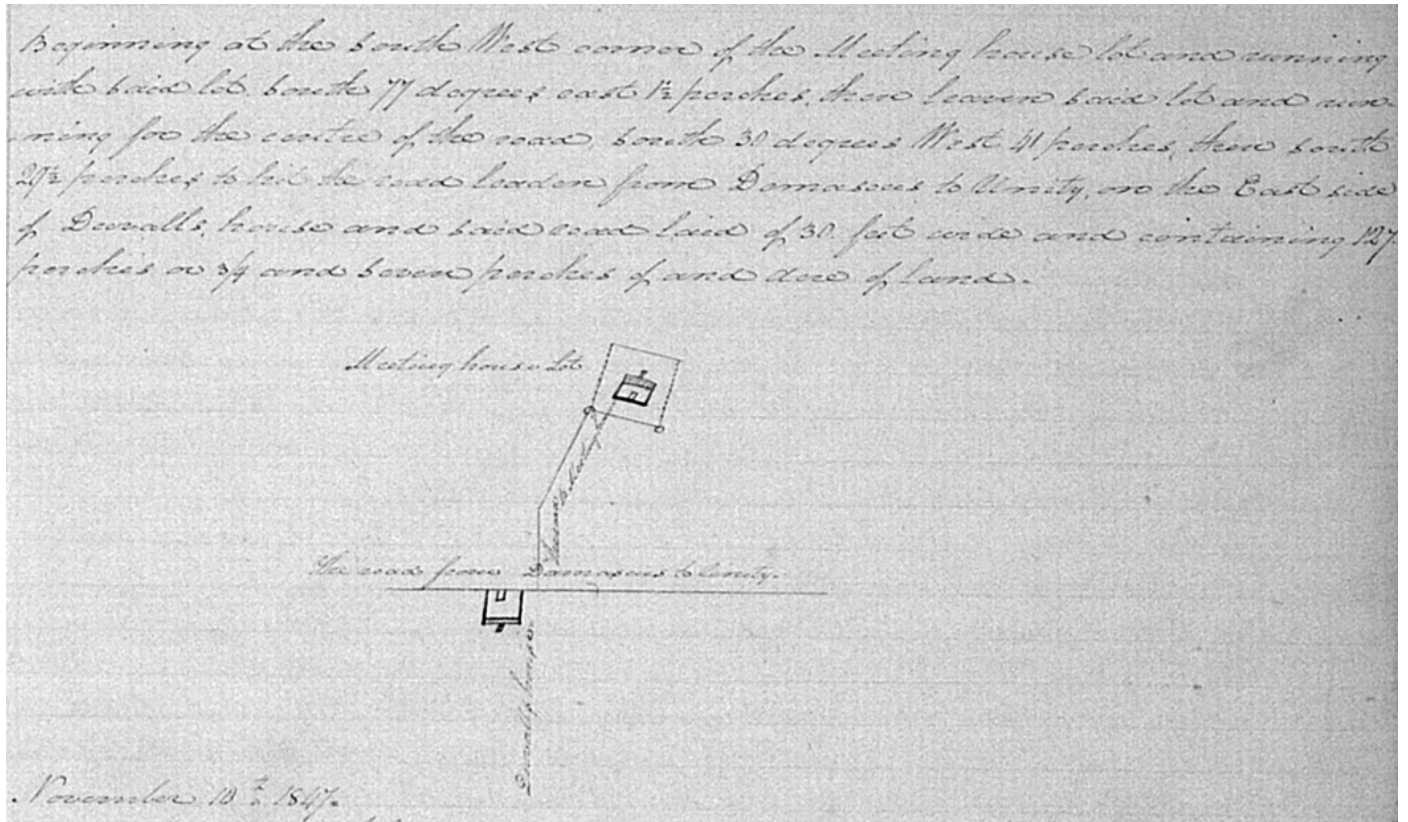
Source: Janie Payne, 1972 history, in Damascus History CD

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Mullinix Mill Road, 1847 plat
Western section of road. STS 3:221-3

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Name Mt Lebanon School
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The Old Mt. Lebanon Schoolhouse

BY JOYCE MULLINIX

Widely known among the residents of Upper Montgomery County is the old Mt. Lebanon school, which is located between Damascus and Etchison. It has probably influenced a larger area than any other one-room school in the county.

The land where this building now stands was originally granted by a family of Bentons for a church which was established before the Civil War. This was known as Benton Church and the pulpit, gallery, and altar were still standing when school was first held there. The same society which established this church, or-

residents of this community as one of the outstanding teachers at Mt. Lebanon. She is still living in her home in Baltimore.

The following teachers succeeded Miss Laura Hammond: Mr. William Bird, 1883; Miss Louise Etchison, who later became Mrs. J. Webb Mullinix, 1887; Mr. Willis Burdette, who was a former superintendent of education of Montgomery County, 1898; Mr. V. D. Watkins, better known as "Professor," 1900; Mr. Columbus W. Day, a former member of the Board of Education, 1904; Miss Mildred Burns, now Mrs. Charles Trundle of Millville, West Virginia, 1908; Miss Beulah Souder,



The first school building still standing.

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Name Mt Lebanon School
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The Old Mt. Lebanon Schoolhouse

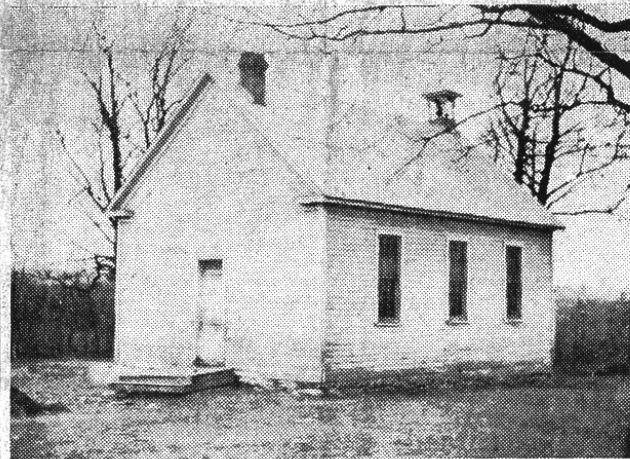
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The first school building still standing.

organized the Damascus Methodist Church in 1872.

It is thought that school was first opened at Mt. Lebanon in 1872; however, Mr. John T. Baker, who is believed to have been the first teacher, assisted by Mr. Jim Woodfield, did not come there until about 1874. During the three years while he taught in this school, he boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Milton Boyer, parents of Dr. George M. Boyer, who started to school with him. Mr. John T. Baker later became the first principal of Damascus high school.

Attempting to outwit the teacher is not confined to the students of today, for it was also practiced in the days of the "Little Red Schoolhouse." One morning, just before the Christmas holiday Mr. Baker was late for school. Some of the older boys decided to nail a bench to the door. When he came, they wouldn't let him in unless he promised to give them holiday for the day. Only too glad for the vacation, he did not hesitate in agreeing to their plans.

Miss Laura Hammond came to Mt. Lebanon in 1879 and stayed four years. When the superintendent visited the school, he asked her for a list of the students she had whipped since his last visit, and she always replied that she had not whipped any. He told her that she could not be recognized as a good teacher unless she punished her students in this way. How times have changed. It would be the laughing-stock of the community now, for a young, twenty-year old teacher to turn a young man (possibly older than she) across her knee and "paddle him." Miss Laura Hammond, who later became Mrs. Webb-Peploe, is still spoken of by the older

who is the present Mrs. Herbert Hyatt and the mother of Mrs. Kenneth Howes, girls' physical education coach at Damascus high school, 1909; Mr. Richard Haney of Purdum, 1910; Miss Mary E. Green, now Mrs. Frank Watkins, who lives at Clarksburg, 1911; Mr. Albert Warthen, who is now the principal at Germantown elementary school, 1912; and Mr. William A. Baker, son of Mr. John T. Baker, 1919. When Mr. William Baker resigned, the school was closed and the property was returned to the Benton farm which was then owned by Mr. "Bud" Clay.

During these years from 1872-1930 the records and registers at Mt. Lebanon included many persons from the following families: Etchison, Duvall, Warfield, Bowman, Norwood, Williams, Brandenburg, Gue, Burdette, Day, Mullinix, Shipley, Boyer, Mount, Stanley, Watkins, Darby, Burns, Becraft, Snyder, Souder, Lewis, Lydard, Driver, Hilton, and Reed.

This building, that housed school children and church gatherings, was a shelter during the Civil War for soldiers of both the North and the South and once again truth seems stranger than fiction when we hear that the mules and horses of these armies drank old "Swan Harbor" dry.

Captain Anderson, first superintendent of education of Montgomery County, still held this position when Mt. Lebanon school was opened. It is thought that the first trustees of this school were Mr. Mack Bowman, Mr. Bennie Burdette and Mr. John J. Mullinix.

Not only is Mt. Lebanon widely known among the residents of Upper Montgomery County, but it is one of the oldest schools in this section.

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Mt Lebanon School students, 1904.
Source: Mary Frances Gosnell, in Damascus History CD

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Mt Lebanon School, 1907

Source: "History of Damascus," The County Courier, 7-21-1976

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Mt Lebanon School, 1929 *Maryland News*. Source: MCHS photo 022-017A, donated by Donald M Leavitt

9. Major Bibliographical References

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See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 43,560 sq ft

Acreage of historical setting _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale: _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Sandra Youla and Clare Lise Kelly		
organization	M-NCPPC	date	12-2009
street & number	8787 Georgia Avenue	telephone	301-563-3400
city or town	Silver Spring	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

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

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

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Name Mt Lebanon School
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