

A history of Damascus United Methodist Church

Part I: 1822-1972, by Janie W. Payne

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INTRODUCTION

This year - 1972 - our congregation observes with great joy and happiness our Sesquicentennial. One hundred and fifty years have passed since our founding fathers built our first church in 1822.

There has been some confusion about our very early history. This is understandable because our church did not possess any early records. There was, however, in the church files a newspaper article written in 1932 containing an inaccurate account of the origin of our congregation. This information was used in a later historical summary.

A search in the Court House land records, the Methodist Historical Society, and elsewhere has revealed some of our early history. A Montgomery Circuit record book dating from 1857 to 1871, which includes our church, has been a valuable source of information. This book shows the change from the Mount Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church to the Damascus Methodist Episcopal Church when the congregation moved into town. The same members and Class Leader were listed before and after the move. This, along with other evidence, should convince anyone who has had any doubts that the same congregation worshipped in both churches. Photocopies of some of the pages in the record book which pertain to our church have been made for our records. As to the change of name, many congregations have changed their names because of a move or other reasons.

In presenting this history, I am sorry, because of space limitations and lack of knowledge, it is not possible to list more of the devoted and loyal individuals who have given of their time and abilities throughout the years. I have included some names like those involved in the Building Committees because of the historical importance of each church building. In other cases, I have included names where they are historically significant such as the beginning of an organization or event. Also, certainly the fact that I do not mention some ministers and say very little about others should not be interpreted to mean that they did not contribute any less than those of whom I speak in greater detail.

In grateful appreciation and with thanksgiving to God, we recognize the humble devotion and willing service of those who in one hundred and fifty years have made the present possible. May we too do our best to serve Christ and His Church so that we may leave a legacy of spiritual strength to the generations to come.

NOTE: It should be pointed out that the Mount Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church, in which our congregation worshipped, should not be confused with a later Mount Lebanon Methodist Protestant Church built in 1902 for an entirely different congregation. This later church building is still standing on the Damascus Etchison Road and is now occupied by the Damascus Assembly of God.

Janie W. Payne
Historian of the Damascus
United Methodist Church
March 17, 1972

CHURCH HISTORY

Our congregation has worshipped in four church buildings during the past one hundred fifty years. The history of each church will be given. Also, other highlights of our history and some representative interesting sidelights throughout the years will be presented.

CHAPTER I FIRST CHURCH – 1822

The first record that can be found pertaining to our congregation is on April 13, 1822 when Benjamin Benton, our founder, deeded one acre of land, part of the land tract “Pleasant Plains of Damascus” to the following trustees to “erect and build or cause to be erected and built thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church”: . . .“John Etchison, Elisha Etchison, and Evan Thompson of Montgomery County and Robert Warfield and Ephraim Warfield of Edw., both of Anne Arundel County.” (They lived in the area now called Howard County, then a part of Anne Arundel County.)

In order to place the year 1822 in perspective, perhaps it would be helpful to recall briefly the national scene one hundred fifty years ago. James Monroe, our fifth President, was in office. (Richard Nixon is now our thirty-seventh President.) There were only twenty-four states in the United States. The War of 1812 was over, but the Civil War was yet to come many years in the future. In 1822 there were no steam-powered railroads as yet. The United States was indeed still a young nation.

Let’s take a look at the local scene one hundred fifty years ago in 1822. Six years earlier in 1816 the town of Damascus was laid out by its founder and first postmaster, Edward Hughes. However, by 1822 the town consisted of little more than several houses and a store and post office. Damascus was not even a crossroads as yet! Only one public road existed in the Damascus area in 1822. This was the “Great Road also called the “Old Quaker Road”, which had meandered through the area since colonial days. Using present day names for places, the road came up through Etchison to Damascus, then on through Clagettsville and Kemptown to New Market. (The other sections of Ridge Road were later public roads.)

LOCATION OF FIRST CHURCH

Our first church stood on what is now called I “Mullinix Mill Road almost two miles from our present church. The name “Mount Lebanon” chosen for the church was most appropriate, considering it was built on the land tract “Pleasant Plains of Damascus”. This original land tract, consisting of 1,101 acres deeded to Matthew Pigman in 1774, extends from the center of Damascus on past Mullinix Mill

Road. The town of Damascus was named for this land tract when it was founded in 1816. The original town consisting of fourteen lots lay in the southwestern corner of this land tract.

Our church was added to the Montgomery Circuit, which had been formed in 1788 from the Frederick Circuit. The parsonage of the Montgomery Circuit was located in Clarksburg.

In addition to the name "Mount Lebanon", our first church was also referred to as "Benton's church" for many years.

BENJAMIN BENTON (BORN ABOUT 1760 - DIED 1833)

Since Benjamin Benton was undoubtedly the founder of our congregation, something of his life and family will be of interest. A census in 1776 (the year our nation declared its independence) listed Benjamin Benton as a boy of 16. He then lived on a farm in the area now called Potomac in Montgomery County. He had a number of brothers and sisters. His brother Joseph moved to Hyattstown where he was one of the original trustees of the Hyattstown Methodist Episcopal Church in 1804.

Benjamin Benton moved to his 225-acre farm near Damascus about 1792. The Benton house and part of his original farm are now owned by Millard Oland, and the house is occupied by one of his employees. For many years it was known as the Joseph (Bud) Clay farm.

We know- that Mr. Benton was an active Methodist as early as 1803 because a record in the Methodist Historical Society shows that he was a member of a Quarterly Conference Meeting in Clarksburg in that year. This indicates that he held an official position on the Montgomery Circuit at that time. We do not know to which church he belonged. Early Montgomery Circuit records have become lost.

We know very little about Mr. Benton's religious activities between 1803 and 1822 when he gave the land for our first church. He undoubtedly recognized a need for a church to serve the area in which he lived.

It is believed that Benjamin Benton held the important position of "Class Leader" in our first church.

The early Methodist societies were made up of "classes". The larger societies had more than one class. Our church, like many rural ones, had but one class, the membership of which was the same as the adult membership of the church. The class system with a "Leader" was important in the days of the large circuits. The "Leader" held the congregation together. He presided over the weekly class meetings or worship services between the infrequent visits of the circuit minister. Some of his duties as

listed in the Methodist *Discipline* were: "1. To see each person once a week at least; in order, 1. to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require . . ."

Some of the early Methodist societies met in homes before they erected church buildings. We do not have any record that Benjamin Benton conducted class meetings in his home or the homes of others prior to building a church, but this is a possibility.

Benjamin Benton had a large family. Eleven children were listed in the record at the time of his death, at least two of whom had moved westward. It would be interesting to know if they were pioneers of Methodism in the areas in which they settled. Mr. Benton's daughter Mary married Leonard Warthen. They lived on the Benton farm, Mary's home place. They had a son, Nathan Warthen, who was a "Class Leader" for many years in our church.

Many of Benjamin Benton's descendants are still members of our church today. Some of these are Janice Green, Herbert Hyatt, Grace King, Louise Pope, Willard Souder, Walter Souder, Ruth Gue, Helen Boyer, Jane Snapp, Gilmore Hurley, Carolyn Ray, Dorothy Burdette (Mrs. Roger Burdette), and their families. There are probably others but all of his descendants have not been traced,

Benjamin Benton died April 21, 1833 and was buried in the family cemetery on his farm, not too far from his church. The cemetery has recently been destroyed and most of the tombstones are gone. However, the upper part of our founder's tombstone was recovered, on which is carved "In Loving Memory of Benjamin Benton". The date of his death was gone but was obtainable from public records. The stone is being preserved at our church to prevent further destruction.

Some of Mr. Benton's treasured possessions which were sold after his death included a silver watch, a Family Bible, a small Bible, and numerous books and magazines. Joshua Purdum, an ancestor of some of our present church members, bought the Family Bible. Possibly someone can tell us who now has possession of it. Births, marriages, and deaths of Benton family members are probably listed in the Bible.

OTHER EARLY METHODIST PIONEERS

Let us return to the wording of the deed in 1822, in which the original trustees were listed, to learn something briefly about them and where they lived, in order to understand the wide area served by our first church. Trustees John Etchison and Elisha Etchison were brothers. John Etchison lived for many years in a house still standing a short distance off of Annapolis Rock Road on Annapolis Rock Lane. Elisha Etchison lived on a farm just northeast of the Gue Road-Ridge Road intersection. A house still standing is believed to be the one in which he lived. (The Elisha Etchison who was a Trustee of our church died in 1851. There was a later Elisha Etchison.) Another brother of John and Elisha was Ephraim Etchison, an original trustee of the Bethesda (Browningsville) Methodist Episcopal Church in 1808. Both

Ephraim and Elisha Etchison were commissioned officers in the Maryland Militia and served in the War of 1812.

Trustee Evan Thompson lived in Damascus in a stone house which stood on the site of the present Druid Theater. He played an important part in the early history of the town. He was a storekeeper, the town's second postmaster, and a school teacher. He owned much land in and around Damascus and subdivided lots which he called "Thompson's First, Second and Third Additions to Damascus".

The deed mentions trustees Robert Warfield and Ephraim Warfield of "Anne Arundel County". They lived across the Patuxent River in what is now Howard County not too far from the first church. Edward and Ephraim Warfield were first cousins. Robert Warfield was a brother-in-law of trustee John Etchison (who married Ann Warfield, sister of Robert).

Trustee Ephraim Warfield was only 25 years of age in 1822. He became a lay minister and served our church in that capacity until his death in 1860. A Certificate of Incorporation in 1857 shows that he was still a trustee of our church at that time.

DESCRIPTION OF FIRST CHURCH 1822

Like most rural structures built as early as 1822, our first church was probably of log construction. However, it was later weather boarded. (We are fortunate to have two photographs of it when it was later a school.) The church had a gallery but did not have a bell or a steeple. (Bishop Francis Asbury considered bells and steeples "contrary to the simplicity of Christ.")

Our first church was certainly built in accord with the Methodist *Discipline* in 1822 which stated, "Let all our chapels be built plain and decent, but not more expensive than is absolutely unavoidable: otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent on them, yea; and governed by them. And then farewell to the Methodist discipline, if not the doctrine too."

Our first church had a center entrance door with an aisle down the middle. The women sat on the right side of the aisle and the men sat on the left. The early American Methodists followed the policy of John Wesley in requiring the separation of the men and women in the churches. The Methodist *Discipline* in 1822 read: 'Is there any exception to the rule 'Let the men and women sit apart?' ? 'There is no exception – let them sit apart in all our churches.'

There was no organ in our first church. Organs were not considered proper for religious purposes in the early years of Methodism. (The first organ in a Methodist church in Baltimore was not

until 1858.) However, singing was very much a part of the service and was unaccompanied. A section of the *Discipline* dealt with “The Spirit and Truth of Singing”.

The rules of dress for women were interesting in the *Discipline* of 1822. Women were not allowed to attend religious services if they wore “high heads, enormous bonnets, ruffles, or rings.” Later on the rules were modified to read that the women should “not adorn themselves with ‘gold, or pearls, or costly array’ (I Timothy ii,9)

MINISTER’S SALARY IN 1822

In 1822 the annual allowance paid to the circuit preacher was \$100 plus traveling expenses. The preacher’s wife received an allowance of \$100 per year and each child received \$16 annually to the age of 7 years and \$24 annually from the age of 7 to 14. A committee was appointed to estimate the amount necessary to cover “fuel and table expenses”.

PUBLIC ROAD TO MOUNT LEBANON MEETING HOUSE

The record found in the Court House about the laying out of a public road to our church is interesting and tells us a little about our early history. Actually, a road existed past Benjamin Benton’s to Marshberger’s old mill (formerly called Pigman’s mill) in 1822 when our church was built. However, it had never been laid out as a public road. The records show that in 1847 Leonard Warthen (son-in-law of Benjamin Benton, our founder) and others signed a petition setting forth “that the public convenience requires a road to be opened” to the church. The Commissioners appointed to lay out the road reported that, ‘We proceeded to examine the proposed road for a public road leading from the Mount Lebanon Meeting House called the Methodist Episcopal Church to intersect the road leading from Damascus to Unity at or near the residence of Madison Duvall. On the examination of said road, we found that the road leading to the meeting house was so narrow that persons going to and from could not pass each other without great difficulty, the fencing being so close to each other that it is impossible for carriages to pass each other . . .”

The General Assembly of Maryland authorized the laying out of the road. It was made 30 feet in width. The total cost was \$24.00. The cost included damages to William Etchison \$20.00; to Joshua M. Dorsey for location of said road \$2.00; and to Green M. Etchison for one day as Commissioner \$2.00. Of course, we know this was not a paved road! Damascus did not get its first paved road until 1914.

In 1869 when John J. Mullinix was building his new grist and saw mill on the Patuxent River, another petition was submitted and a public road was laid out all the way to Howard County (now Millinix Mill Road).

LIST OF CHURCH MEMBERS IN 1857

The earliest Montgomery Circuit record book we have been able to find dates from 1857 to 1871, which lists members of all the churches on the Circuit. This was kept by the Circuit Minister who at Conference time would transcribe names of members to the Circuit record book from the local class book kept in each church. He then had his overall record for the Circuit in order to make his report to the Conference.

The following is a list of the members of our church as of Conference time in March 1857 taken from this old record book:

(The initials M and S before the names mean "Married" or "Single".)

M	Ephraim Warfield	M	Eliza Shipley
M	Catharine Warfield	S	Louise J. Shipley
S	Margaret A. Warfield	S	Isidore Shipley
M	Nathan B. Warthen (leader)	S	Annie Shipley
M	Rhoda A. Warthen	M	Elizabeth Claggett
M	Ruth Etchison	M	William Benton
M	Jonathan Fry	S	Dorothy Bowman
M	Milly Fry	M	Wesley Miles
M	Aden Bowman	M	Ellen J. Miles
M	Keziah Bowman	M	Ellen Purduin
M	Rezin Bowman	S	Rachel A. Barber
M	Mary Bowman	S	Caroline E. Barber
M	William Bowman	M	Rezin Duvall
M	Sarah Bowman	M	Harriet Duvall
M	George W. Bowman	M	Eleanor Duvall
M	Ellen Bowman	S	Charles P. Penn
M	Henry L. Moore	M	Lydia E. Moore
S	Anenath Burditt	M	Grafton Watkins
M	Joseph Hopwood	S	Annie Duvall
S	Martha Hopwood	S	Ruth A. Duvall
M	George W. Gue	S	Lenora Claggett
M	Ellen Gue	M	Rachel A. Hilton
M	Sarah Warthen	S	Sarah B. Mullinix
M	Sarah E. Crockett	M	Eleanor McAtee
M	Drusilla Warfield		

CHURCH INCORPORATED - 1857

The Rev. Charles A. Reid was minister of the Montgomery Circuit in 1856 and 1857. He apparently was very conscientious and realized that none of the churches on his circuit had been incorporated, as required by law in 1802 that every Christian church or congregation should be incorporated (this law was quoted as a preamble to the incorporation documents).

In the Court House is a recorded copy of our Certificate of Incorporation. Apparently, the women at that time had very little say in the affairs of our church. It states in part, "that the male members of the Methodist Episcopal church above the age of twenty-one years residing in the vicinity and attached to the congregation or church and commonly called the Mount Lebanon church" adopted the Act of Incorporation January 5, 1857. It was signed by Ephraim Warfield, Aden Bowman, Henry L. Moore, Joseph Hopwood, John Wesley Miles, Trustees, and Charles A. Reid, Minister. Since then, there have been other Certificates of Incorporation, the latest one in 1941.

Other churches on the Montgomery Circuit filing Certificates of Incorporation during the Reverend Reid's pastorate were Clarksburg, Mountain Chapel, Hyattstown, Bethesda Chapel (Browningsville), Barnesville, Poolesville and Darnestown. (No wonder the Baltimore Conference minutes in those days referred to the retired ministers as "worn out preachers"!)

CIVIL WAR PERIOD

As we all know, during the Civil War period, there was much unrest in the Methodist churches. Many congregations split over the slavery issue which resulted in the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, denomination. A "Montgomery Circuit" of the Methodist Episcopal, South, was organized to which the new congregations were assigned. In some instances, both the Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal, South, congregations claimed the existing church buildings and both met at different times in the same church. It was resolved by court action in 1868 that the Methodist Episcopal congregations had legal possession of the church buildings and not the Methodist Episcopal, South. The Methodist Episcopal, South, congregations afterwards built their own church buildings.

The foregoing is presented as background information in order to understand our church's involvement at that time. Our congregation, then worshipping at the Mount Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church, was fortunate in that it was not divided, although there was an attempt to do so. Records of the Methodist Episcopal, South, Montgomery Circuit, on October 12, 1867, mentioned that a new Society met at Mount Lebanon. (This was reported by the Methodist Episcopal, South, minister from his residence in Hyattstown, who apparently had the responsibility of forming new congregations.) Undoubtedly this attempt to divide the congregation "died on the vine", as the Rev. Edwin Schell of the

Methodist Historical Society informed me, because no further reference was made to a Methodist Episcopal, South, service at Mount Lebanon in later minutes.

Some of the congregations on our circuit, such as Hyattstown and Clarksburg, split and Methodist Episcopal, South, churches were built at these places. Bethesda Chapel near Damascus (Browningsville), which was also on our circuit at that time, like our church did not divide. This is understandable, because in the Damascus area, we were not involved in the slavery issue as deeply as some other areas. A Federal Census of slave-owners in 1850 and 1860 shows very few slaves in and around Damascus. Also, the Montgomery Circuit records book dating from 1857 did not list any colored members at our church, whereas some of the other churches on the Circuit had "colored classes". (When the colored members were set apart into a body known as the Washington Conference, they built their own churches.)

CHURCH WAS SHELTER FOR CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS

Word has been handed down that our first church served as a shelter during the Civil War for both the Union and Confederate soldiers. Their horses drank from Swan Harbour, the stream of water running near the church. Civil War records show that some of General Burnside's troops came through Damascus in September 1862 prior to the Battle of Antietam. It took seven days to travel from Leesboro (vicinity of present Wheaton) via Brookeville, Damascus and New Market to the Monocacy near Frederick. Since they traveled up the Damascus Road (now State Route 108), these were probably some of the troops who camped at our-first church.

CHAPTER II SECOND CHURCH – 1869

Following the Civil War, there seemed to develop an era in which new congregations were organized and older churches were rebuilt or relocated. The congregation of the Mount Lebanon Methodist Episcopal Church was no exception, and apparently felt that a new church in the town of Damascus would better serve the needs of its members. By this time the town of Damascus showed signs of growth and no doubt seemed to be a promising location for a new church.

Forty-six years had passed since the building of our first church when on November 8, 1868, John Wesley Miles and his wife, Ellen J. Miles, gave one-half acre and 16 square perches of land in the town of Damascus to the following trustees for the purpose of erecting a new church: John R. Mount, George H. Gue, William Bowman, Nathan B. Warthen, and P. M. Smith, Jr. The deed stated the land was part of "Thompsons Addition to Damascus".

This lot in Damascus (like the first site on Mullinix Mill Road) happened to be on the original land tract "Pleasant Plains of Damascus". Actually, the site was part of the original town of Damascus laid out in 1816 by Edward Hughes, but later resurveyed by Evan Thompson.

A church was built on this lot in Damascus in 1869^[1] and was renamed the Damascus Methodist Episcopal Church. This church which stood to the rear of the present Educational Center was a simply constructed red frame building with a center front door, a center aisle and a gallery. The women sat on the right side of the aisle and the men on the left like our earlier church.

We have not been able to locate a photograph of this our second church. However, Stephen Hawkins, a student of architecture, has made a sketch from a description given him by Bradley Woodfield who remembers the church.

Nathan Warthen, mentioned earlier, was Class Leader for many years before and after the congregation moved to Damascus. (In 1869 he lived in the house now occupied by the Roger Day family.) Nathan Warthen and members of his family helped to cut and haul logs to be sawed into lumber for the new church. Also, lumber was donated by Wesley Darby. Others active in the building of the church included John R. Mount, George H. Gue, William Bowman and P. M. Smith, Jr. (A store and post office which stood on the Shell station lot in the center of Damascus was operated for many years by P. M. Smith, Jr.)

The cost of our second church built in 1869 is not known, but apparently a debt was incurred at the time, because at the next annual session of the Baltimore Conference held March 2-9, 1870 in Frederick, the minutes show that "permission was granted to sell the old church and to apply the proceeds of sale to pay the debt on a new church building in Damascus to supercede the old one." The old church and acre of ground was sold for \$175.

As already mentioned, the congregation renamed the church in town the "Damascus Methodist Episcopal Church". It was logical to relinquish the name "Mount Lebanon" when the congregation moved because the area surrounding the old church had been known over the years as "Mount Lebanon".

OUR FIRST CHURCH BECOMES MOUNT LEBANON SCHOOL

Our old church building on Mullinix Mill Road became the Mount Lebanon one-room public school. Reportedly, the pulpit, altar and gallery were still standing when school was first held there. The children carried water from a nearby spring which had acquired the name "meeting house spring". The desks were rough homemade ones fastened to the wall. The students sat on benches made of slabs about ten feet long. (These were probably the pews which had been used earlier by the church members.) There were no backs, and the children became very tired before the day was over. The late

Dr. George M. Boyer who went there to school made the remark that if a child sitting on a bench had to get out, one end had to give way! Later on, the homemade desks and backless benches were replaced by the county with more up-to-date ones. My grandmother, Mrs. Emma C. Woodfield, also attended school in the old church building.

Another school was constructed about 1902 to replace the dilapidated building, by then about eighty years old. The new school was built alongside the old church building. professor Vernon D. Watkins, the Mount Lebanon school teacher, used the old building for manual training (woodworking) after the new school was built. A lathe and other equipment occupied the building. When Professor Watkins left the school, there was no one to teach the subject and the old church was torn down (about 1904).

The later Mount Lebanon school on the old church site is still standing on Mullinix Mill Road, but its appearance was changed somewhat when it was converted into a house after the school was closed in the 1930's. It is now owned by Millard Oland who owns the adjoining land. It stands at the first sharp turn on Mullinix Mill Road about one-half mile from the Damascus-Etchison Road.

TAKE PILGRIMAGE TO OLD CHURCH-SCHOOL SITE

Perhaps some of our members will wish to view the spot where our first church stood. Lovely farm land still surrounds the site as it did in 1822. The house where Benjamin Benton, our founder, lived is still there some distance back off the road but can be seen from the church site. However, the house has changed somewhat in appearance since Benjamin Benton died in 1833. The house, originally constructed of logs, is now covered with siding. A front porch has been added along with other small additions. Much of the massive old stone chimney on the south end of the house is still standing (this cannot be seen from the church site). The barn, two tobacco houses, log kitchen, and some of the other outbuildings which existed when Benjamin Benton died are no longer standing.

OUR CHURCH JOINS NEW LAYTONSVILLE CIRCUIT FORMED 1890

Until 1890 our church was on the Montgomery Circuit with the parsonage in Clarksburg. In 1889 the circuit had increased to ten churches. The parsonage where our minister lived before 1890 is still standing in Clarksburg and is now known as the Jarvis house on Route 355. A front porch and other changes have been made in recent years. However, a photograph of the house as it appeared when a parsonage has been located and added to our church records.

In 1890 the Laytonsville Circuit was formed by taking the Laytonsville and Mt. Tabor (Etchison) churches from the Rockville Circuit and Wesley Grove (Woodfield), Salem (Cedar Grove), and Damascus churches from the Montgomery Circuit. The Rev. C. L. Pate was assigned to the Laytonsville Circuit.

The parsonage in Laytonsville where our pastor lived from 1890 to 1915 was on what is now the main thoroughfare through Laytonsville (State Route 108). The house still standing is the lovely home of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Bennethum.

In 1915 the Damascus church joined with the other churches on the circuit to build a larger parsonage in Laytonsville. The earlier parsonage was sold and the proceeds were applied to the new one which was a handsome frame structure on the road in Laytonsville that leads to Woodfield. It is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Mills.

(Photographs of both Laytonsville parsonages have been taken recently for our records.)

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN 1890

In 1890 when we joined the Laytonsville Circuit, there were 71 adult members of our church. Nathan J. Burdett was Class Leader.

ADDITION TO CHURCH CEMETERY - 1896

The property deeded in 1868 had become inadequate for both the church and the cemetery adjoining it. Therefore, on January 17, 1896, one-half acre was purchased from Rufus J. Burdette and wife for an addition to the cemetery at a cost of \$50.

OUR SECOND CHURCH DESTROYED BY HAILSTORM – 1899

We had worshipped in our second church in Damascus for thirty years when on June 9, 1899, a violent wind and hailstorm occurred which severely damaged our church building. Crops throughout the area were destroyed and windows were broken in homes and the school. Those who remember the storm say there has never been another like it since.

Mrs. Frances Scott, one of our older members, has a vivid recollection of the day of the hailstorm. She had gone home from school to lunch (the custom in those days), and the skies were so threatening that her parents would not let her go back in the afternoon. When the hailstorm struck, all of the family went to the cellar except her father who stayed upstairs with the baby.

June 9, 1899, was an eventful day in more than one way for the Claude Hamilton Burdette family who lived on Main Street across from the church. Mrs. Sallie Burdette gave birth that day to a son she named Basil - now a member of our church who served for many years as Treasurer. The hailstones blew in on the bed in the mother's bedroom. The house in which Basil was born stood on the lot where the Citizens Building and Loan Association is now located.

CHAPTER III THIRD CHURCH 1899

As far as the church was concerned, the hailstorm did not turn out to be as much of a disaster as it appeared at the time. For several years before the storm struck, the old church building was in need of repair. The members could not agree on whether a new church should be built and possibly create an unreasonable debt, or whether repairs should be made to the old building which might be a waste of time and money. However, the matter was unexpectedly decided for them when the hailstorm occurred and the building was so twisted by the wind and damaged by the hail that it was beyond repair. The congregation had no choice but to rebuild.

Much to the surprise of the congregation, the new church was completely paid for when finished. Many contributions were received from members of the church, as well as from other individuals and organizations. A sum of \$62.06 was raised at a "picnic". A basket collection from an oyster supper yielded \$9.35. (Sterling Day remembers attending an oyster supper.) The seats, pulpit, and lamps in the old church were sold for \$17.76. The old chandelier brought \$3.75. The damaged church was sold for \$41.00. John Mount used the lumber that could be salvaged from it in a house he built on Ridge Road in Damascus (where Mrs. Lizzie Day now resides) and in another house he built in Ridgeville.

The church built in 1899 to replace the one destroyed by the hailstorm was erected on the same property just north of the old structure. This, our third church building, was the old sanctuary portion of our Educational Center severely damaged by fire in 1967 and later rebuilt.

The Building Committee for our third church built in 1899 consisted of Nathan J. Burdette, John T. Baker and James W. Burdette. Alfred C. Warthen was the contractor. The contract price was \$1,443. Other miscellaneous expenses were added to make the total cost \$1,911.92. These included such expenses as seats, freight included, \$330; labor to put seats together \$16; pulpit \$30; lamps \$12.25; two

dozen chairs \$13.21; and repairs to stoves \$13.21. Apparently, the stoves were the only furnishings used from the old church.

The new church was a frame structure with two entrance doors and two aisles. The custom was still followed of having the men and women sit apart. The women entered the church through the right door and sat on the right side and the men entered through the left door and sat on the left side.

The cornerstone for the new building was laid July 22, 1899, with Masonic ceremonies conducted by the Prudence Lodge of Mt. Airy. The church was dedicated on January 21, 1900. The following article appeared in the Frederick Post two days later:

“The new Methodist Episcopal Church at Damascus, Montgomery County, was dedicated Sunday. The services were conducted by Dr. Luther B. Wilson, presiding elder of the Washington district, assisted by Rev. D. Benton Winstead, pastor of Memorial M. E. Church, of Baltimore; Rev. Thomas J. Cross, of the Liberty Circuit; and Rev. J. H. Marsh, pastor of the church. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Dr. Wilson.”

The Reverends Cross and Winstead who attended were former ministers of our church.

CONVERSATION WITH AN OCTOGENARIAN

Some of the activities of our church around the turn of the century are revealed in a recent conversation I had with Mrs. Lillian Baker Leatherwood, an octogenarian now living in Mt. Airy. She is the daughter of John T. Baker, in whose honor the Damascus Junior High School has been named. He was a teacher for many years at the Damascus Grammar School and the first Principal of the Damascus High School when it was established in 1910. He was an active member of our church until his death in 1921.

Mrs. Leatherwood grew up in Damascus and was an organist at our church for several years until she married in 1912 at age 24 and moved to Mt. Airy. She remembers attending the Epworth League youth meetings on Sunday nights. She recalled that Mr. “Lummy” (Columbus) Day led the singing at the church. The worship service was informal - if Mr. “Lummy” called out a hymn to be sung and the organist or the congregation did not know the tune, he would change it to another, and another, and another, if need be.

Mrs. Leatherwood particularly remembered attending picnics held “in a woods nearby when everybody got together and there were good things to eat such as ice cream, ginger snaps, stick candy

and peanuts". The woods referred to was John Mount's woods on Ridge Road in the vicinity of present Tune Avenue.

In other years, some of the older members of our church tell me that picnics were held in Kent King's woods on the Damascus-Etchison Road and also in Mary Mullinix's woods on Woodfield Road (near Mt. Vernon Ave.). These picnics were fund-raising activities for the church. The entertainment featured at these events was the Browningsville Band. People would come from miles around to attend these picnics.

CHURCH PROPERTY ENLARGED – 1914

A strip of land alongside the original one-half acre deeded in 1868 was purchased on April 27, 1914, from R. Newton Poole and wife. The parcel purchased was 30 feet wide (fronting on Main Street) and 369.6 feet deep and contained 10,348.8 sq. ft. of land. The cost was \$270. This was a much-needed piece of land for future expansion. The west wing of our Educational Center is now located on some of this land. The back portion is cemetery property.

DAMASCUS CIRCUIT IS FORMED - PARSONAGE BUILT 1923

At the annual session of the Baltimore Conference in 1923, the Laytonsville Circuit was divided. The Wesley Grove (Woodfield), Mt. Tabor (Etchison) and St. Paul's (Laytonsville) remained on the Laytonsville charge, and Damascus and Salem (Cedar Grove) were assigned to the new Damascus two-point charge. The Laytonsville parsonage was sold for \$8,000 of which \$2,500 was given to the Damascus charge toward a new parsonage.

William Baker and wife, Belle F. Baker, gave a lot on the road between Damascus and Cedar Grove on which a new parsonage was built. This is our present Ridge Road parsonage. The Rev. Norris Lineweaver, who had been the minister of the Laytonsville circuit, was assigned to the new Damascus charge.

A general contractor was not employed to build the parsonage, but workmen were hired under the direction of the Official Board. Some of the men of the church cut logs and dragged them to the sawmill on Bruxnmel Beall's farm to be sawed into the rough lumber used for the parsonage.

Laborers and carpenters were paid from \$3.00 to \$5.00 a day to build the parsonage. The cost of digging the well was \$135. A daily wage of \$3.00 per day was paid to build the hen house and hog pen. (Mrs. Clyta Woodfield tells me that the Reverend Lineweaver also had a cow he milked every day.)

Many members volunteered many hours of labor and many made cash contributions. The parsonage was paid for as follows: From Laytonsville charge - \$2,500; contributed by Damascus \$1,420; contributed by Salem \$629 – Total \$4,549.

The parsonage was one of the first houses wired for electricity when it was built, as plans were being made at that time for electricity to come to Damascus. (The total cost to wire the parsonage was \$42.00.) Later that year in September, the Official Board voted to “wire the church and procure fixtures for same . . .”

As a sidelight, it is interesting to note that our minister, the Reverend Lineweaver, was very active in the project of obtaining electricity for the area. He assisted Leslie Woodfield of the newly organized Damascus Light Power Co. in obtaining the many signatures needed for the right-of-way.

BUDGET FOR 1925

It is interesting to take a look at our budget for the Conference year 1925. This is the first budget I have been able to find relating to our congregation.

Pastor’s Salary	\$1,066.66	(His Salary was \$1,600. We paid 2/3; Salem paid 1/3.)
Dist. Supt.	40.00	
Janitor	72.00	
Conference Claimants	74.66	
Bishop	16.66	
Printing, postage, envelopes, etc.	52.00	
Heat and light	<u>60.00</u>	
	\$1,381.98	
World Service and Benevolence Goal	<u>272.00</u>	
Grand total	\$1,653.98	

The next budget of record is ten years later following the depression years. The budget totaled \$2,165.60 in 1935.

We do not have in our records the total number of church members for these years. The Baltimore Conference minutes are of no help because the statistics of a circuit were always lumped together.

THIRD CHURCH GETS ADDITION IN 1932

By 1932 the church sanctuary had become inadequate to serve the growing enrollment of the Sunday School. Also, an all-purpose room and a kitchen were very much needed. A major project of remodeling the sanctuary and adding a Sunday School wing (no basement as yet) was completed in November 1932. The two entrance doors to the church were removed and new windows were installed in front of the sanctuary. The entrance was through a new vestibule.

A month-long celebration was held when the building was completed. Special speakers were obtained for the Sunday morning worship services. Evangelistic services were held every night for a week with former pastors as guest speakers. On Wednesday afternoon, December 7th, the Ladies Aid held their first meeting in the new addition. That same night a reception was held "to which everyone in the community was invited". There was a program of brief addresses and music, followed by a social hour.

Bishop Edwin H. Hughes conducted the dedication ceremonies on Sunday, December 18, 1932. So extensive was the remodeling that it was called the "New Damascus Methodist Episcopal Church" in a newspaper article,

The Building Committee for the project consisted of Dr. George M. Boyer, Bradley Woodfield, Lola Stanley, Columbus W. Day, Morgan H. Watkins and the Reverend W. Clark Main. Plans were drawn by Harold Ward and the contractor was Howard Watkins.

The sanctuary was decorated under a separate contract by Thomas H. Carter. Bookcases and chairs of various sizes were purchased for the Sunday School room. William (Billy) Mullinix, presently one of the older members of our church, made the tables for the new Sunday School room. He tells me they were built of different heights to accommodate the various age groups. However, they were constructed so that extensions could be added to the legs to make them adult height for use at church suppers. Some of these tables are still in use at the Educational Center.

At the next session of the Baltimore Conference, the District Superintendent reported that:

"Damascus church, Clark Main, pastor, has been practically rebuilt. A tower, vestibule, kitchen, new room for Sunday School purposes, and a steam heating plant have been added, and the auditorium thoroughly renovated. The entire cost of \$4,500 has been paid in full and a small balance remains in the treasury".

MORAL ISSUES OF THE 1930's

Sabbath: The pastor and our congregation were always working toward the task of keeping the Sabbath Day Holy. An example was in 1931 during the pastorate of the Reverend Main when the congregation adopted a resolution which stated in part, that they "do here by protest against any bill seeking to legalize Sunday motion pictures, amusements or sports of any kind for commercial purposes anywhere in the state." Copies were sent to both houses of the State Legislature.

Two years later in 1933 the records show that the congregation was still working to defeat certain bills which churches felt would "tend to break down the Sabbath."

In 1934 when the Rev. Raymond Hunter Brown came to Damascus to begin his six-year pastorate, he did not lose much time in letting the community know how he felt about the Sabbath Day. He later reported in a Quarterly Conference report:

"One of the sights which was spiritually depressing to your pastor when he spent his first Sunday in the village, was the opening of all stores, just like a Saturday night. Through the mutual cooperation of the grocery store owners, it has been possible to agree on closing all day, except from 7 to 10 in the morning. I believe this has aided our village and community spiritually."

Temperance: Through the years, the church has always concerned itself with the cause of temperance. Following is an excerpt from a report by our pastor, Reverend Main, on May 24, 1933 (this is the year prohibition was repealed)"

"The cause of temperance has been presented by the pastor and visitors. Dr. Crabbe, Dr. Wilson, Mr. Patterson, Mr. Pickett, and Brother Day have been one or more times our guests. We have contributed liberally toward their work. We deplore the legalizing of the sale of beer in Maryland and Montgomery County. None is now sold in Damascus District. An application for its sale was filed by one of our residents. After the publication of the application in the paper on Friday, things happened so fast that the application was withdrawn early the following Monday morning. We look forward to outlawing the sale of beer in this district by an election next year. Damascus District does not want beer."

The next year, on the same issue, it is reported:

"Brother Pickett has been in our midst, stressing the cause of temperance. We deplore the sale of beer in our district and look forward to the referendum next year to restore Damascus District to its rightful place in dry leadership."

We all know the outcome, and the Damascus Election District in 1972 is still "dry".

CHURCH CHRISTMAS PAGEANT HELD AT SCHOOL - 1934

The pastor's Quarterly Conference report dated March 31, 1935, includes the following:

"On the Sunday before Christmas, a pageant, 'The Magnificent Christmas Story' written by your pastor, and directed by Mrs. Brown, was presented in the Damascus High School Auditorium, with 495 people present. It had a cast of twenty- five characters, a choir of some thirty Junior High Leaguers, and a number of special solo and choir selections. Our fine people were most responsive to this type of spiritual teachings, and as one layman remarked" 'Somehow, I seemed to be lifted out of myself and given an appreciation of the Christmas Story, as I have never before experienced'".

This pageant was held in the old high school which stood near the present water tower. If there were 495 in attendance, the whole community must have turned out - remember, this was 1935!

CHURCH KITCHEN REMODELLED - GETS RUNNING WATER - 1937

In a report dated May 12, 1937, the pastor reported:

"At Damascus, need for the expansion of the present kitchen is imperative. The matter is being considered at present by the Ladies Aid of the church. Certainly, anyone who has worked in a small kitchen, limited in space and equipment will understand the need for expansion in this, and it is their plan that running water will also be installed. The ladies of our churches have been active in serving suppers and aiding in the current expenses of the church, such as purchasing coal, fixing needy repairs, and the like."

Later that year the amount of \$793 was spent in remodeling the kitchen, "increasing the space a little over double that heretofore, with running water and additional kitchen equipment" (quoted from a later report). A hot water heating outfit was installed at this time. Norman Burdette was the contractor.

ADDITION TO CEMETERY - 1938

On December 21, 1938, an acre of land was purchased from Paul Welsh for an addition to the cemetery. The cost was \$250.00.

METHODIST MERGER AND NAME CHANGE - 1939

On April 25, 1939, at the United Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, the three great divisions of American Methodism, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church, joined together to become The Methodist Church. As a result of this merger, our church changed its name from the Damascus Methodist Episcopal Church to The Damascus Methodist Church.

ADDITION TO CEMETERY – 1948

On November 18, 1948, three-fourths of an acre of land was purchased from Paul Welsh for an addition to the cemetery. The cost was \$1,000.

SOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL WING ADDED TO THIRD CHURCH - 1947-48

Following World War II, Damascus began to boom and the population increased at an incredible rate. Until the late 1940's when the Seventh Day Adventist Church was built, the only church in the town was the Methodist Church. Churches of other denominations did not follow until the late 1950's and 1960's. Many of the newcomers attended our church - some were Methodists and some were of other denominations. Our church continued to expand to make room for its growing attendance.

In 1947 and early 1948, during the pastorate of the Rev. Jacob Snyder, a major building project was undertaken. The south Sunday School wing was constructed with a basement underneath. We even got indoor toilets for the first time. (The outdoor ones were given to the Fire Department.) Also, the kitchen was extended. Mrs. Beulah Hyatt was the Chairman of the project. If there were others on the Building Committee, their names cannot be found. The contract price was \$13,078. Philip R. Souder was the builder. Furnishings for the building were extra.

The addition was made possible through the sacrificial giving of many of the congregation. Contributions amounted to \$8,084.17 and the sum of \$5,000 was borrowed from the bank. When the addition was finished in May 1948, the congregation held a Joash Chest pageant and \$1,186.00 was raised at this one event to apply toward the debt.

BUDGET FOR 1949-50 CONFERENCE YEAR

The budget for the 1949-50 Conference year was \$5,274.24. The pastor's salary was \$3,000 per annum, of which we paid two-thirds or \$2,000.

DAMASCUS BECOMES STATION CHURCH – 1951

By 1951 the growth of the Damascus and Cedar Grove communities made it possible for both Damascus and Salem to become station churches. For the first time in our history, our church had a full-time minister. The Rev. A. Odell Osteen who had been the Charge pastor remained in the parsonage on Ridge Road to serve only our congregation. Salem church built a new parsonage in Cedar Grove. Salem was paid \$4,000 as that church's share of parsonage property, including furniture.

PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN HELD AT CHURCH - 1951-53

The Board of Education of Montgomery County had difficulty in expanding their school facilities fast enough to keep up with the growing population in the post-World War II period. In 1951 when the Damascus Elementary School became overcrowded, arrangements were made for the kindergarten pupils to use the Sunday School facilities at our church. It is believed that the kindergarten children met in the church for about two school years.

ANOTHER EXPANSION TO THIRD CHURCH - BASEMENT EXCAVATED 1954

By 1953 our Sunday School facilities had again become inadequate to serve the increased enrollment. Under the pastorate of the Reverend Osteen, the very difficult job was undertaken of excavating and building rooms under the Sunday School wing which had been built in 1932. When an estimate of \$7,500 to do the work was given by a contractor, the congregation decided to do it with volunteer labor. This resulted in a considerable saving, as the cost totaled only about \$2,000 when the project was completed. In the fall months of 1953 and the spring months of 1954, the men of the church, including the pastor, spent many laborious hours on the project. The women too have never been known to shirk their duty! They provided morale building refreshments for the men while they worked. In addition to the basement Sunday School rooms, there was a room completed under the kitchen for the pastor's study.

CHURCH KITCHEN REMODELLED – 1954

In April 1954 Janice Green, the President of the Woman's Society of Christian Service, stated in a Quarterly Conference report: "We have remodeled our church kitchen. We enlarged the old kitchen and now have a modern kitchen with plenty of workspace, cooking area, and three sinks for washing dishes. We have added new dishes, silverware and glasses and will get new pans, etc. in the near future."

A kitchen shower was later held and many things, including pans, and money for buying more pans were received.

The work which cost between three and four thousand dollars was paid for entirely by the Woman's Society. They obtained a bank loan which they hurriedly paid off with contributions and fund-raising activities. The ultra-modern kitchen made their task of serving church suppers somewhat easier.

The contractor for the remodeling project was Perry Burdette who handled the carpentry work (the pantry was added at this time). The Damascus Electric Company did the cabinet and electrical work.

MEMBERSHIP AND BUDGET 1960

The membership of our church as of June 1960 totaled 688 members.

Our budget for the 1960-61 Conference year was \$17,694.00. Our pastor's salary was \$5,400, plus \$300 traveling allowance. This was the last year of worship in the sanctuary of our third church. We moved into our new church in June 1961.

CHAPTER IV FOURTH CHURCH - 1960-61

As the population of Damascus grew during the 1950's, so did the membership of the Damascus Methodist Church. (The 1960 Federal census showed the population of the Damascus Election District had increased 59 per cent in ten years.)

The sanctuary originally built in 1899 was handling crowds way beyond its capacity. Chairs had to be set up in the aisles and at the back of the church to handle the congregation during worship

services. The Sunday School space was once again inadequate. Eventually, because of lack of space, double sessions were held for Sunday School and two Sunday morning worship services were scheduled.

During the pastorate of the Rev. A. Dean Kesler, land was purchased and a new brick church was built in 1960-61.

Before the church was built, however, there were several years of planning and sacrificial giving. Two parcels of land were purchased in 1955: one for 8.4474^[2] acres from Perry Burdette and wife between Woodfield Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue for \$7,000, and the other for 12,000 square feet of land from Noah King and wife for \$1,600 (deed dated April 28, 1955). The latter was for an entrance on Woodfield Road to the property. On January 23, 1957, additional land (28,360 square feet) and the garage thereon was purchased for \$16,000 from Noah King which increased the frontage on Woodfield Road. The total cost of the three parcels for the church building site was \$24,600. A gift of \$2,000 was received from the Baltimore Conference to apply toward the purchase of land.

Since we were not yet ready to build following the purchase of the land, there was no need to raze the Noah King garage for some time. The church rented it to George Kelly who operated the "Bargain Barn", a store selling miscellaneous articles. Also, it was used as a community Youth Center for a short period of time. Subsequently, it was torn down to make way for the new church.

Members of a Building Committee studied the needs of the congregation and visited other churches in order to determine the type of structure that should be built, they decided on a colonial design and presented their ideas to Elmer Cappelman of Arlington, Virginia, architect, who drew the plans. The sanctuary was designed to seat 334 in the nave, 50 in the choir, and 40 in the balcony. Space was provided for eight Sunday School rooms, choir room, pastor's study and church office. The architect also submitted preliminary plans for the entire plant which provided for two future additions,

The builder was C. M. Hale Co. of Kensington, Md., and the contract price was \$178,167.81 (including change orders). However, the total cost of the church, including the architect's fee (\$10,700), organ and installation, furnishings, public address system, glass for windows, and other expenses totaled about \$230,000. (This is the final figure reported by our District Superintendent to the Baltimore Conference.)

Furnishings and windows were given by members of the congregation in memory of and in honor of loved ones. The Woman's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild also gave windows. There were also memorial gifts to the Organ Fund. The church has a Book of Memorials which lists the names of the donors.

A loan of \$140,000 was obtained from the Acacia Mutual Life Insurance Company with interest at the rate of 6 per cent.

GROUNDBREAKING, CORNERSTONE LAYING, CONSECRATION CEREMONIES

The groundbreaking ceremony for the new church was held May 5, 1960. A gold shovel was all ready for the occasion but it was such a rainy day that the ceremony was held in the church sanctuary.

The cornerstone laying ceremony was held November 27, 1960.

On June 4, 1961, Bishop John Wesley Lord, assisted by the Rev. E. W. Beckett, District Superintendent, conducted the consecration ceremony for the new building and an "open house" and refreshments followed. This was the climax of several years of planning on the part of the minister and the congregation. A dedication ceremony was held on June 7, 1961, for the memorials.

There was one big difference this time when we occupied our fourth church from the earlier moves into our other three churches. The age-old tradition that the men and women should sit apart had long since ended. Everyone could sit where he pleased

BUILDING COMMITTEE

Those who served on the Building Committee for the new church were as follows: Bradley M. Woodfield (chairman), William L. Freienmuth, Murray Andrews, Dr. M. M. Boyer, Mrs. Lola Day, Herbert S. Hyatt, Jr., Mrs. Beulah Hyatt, Everett Jones, Mrs. Margaret Miles, and Joseph Rice, Sr.

OLD SANCTUARY BECOMES EDUCATIONAL BUILDING

After the new brick church was built, the old church built in 1899, with its additions, became known as the Educational Building - later renamed the Damascus United Methodist Educational Center. The Primary, Junior and Junior High Sunday School departments were still held in the old building after the new church was completed. Other Sunday School classes moved to the new church. The old building continued to be used for church suppers and community activities.

FIRST NEWSLETTER – 1962

The first issue of the monthly newsletter, The Courier, was in January 1962 with Louise Floyd as the first editor. (A community newspaper was later established which adopted the same name.) Other editors of our church newsletter have been Doris Cobb, Thelma Walter, and Wilma Paxton.

LAND DEEDED FOR CHURCH STREET EXTENSION - 1964

A lot fronting on Mt. Vernon Avenue was given to the church by Dr. M. M. Boyer to permit Church Street to be extended. The deed conveying the lot to the church is dated August 31, 1964, from Jean Baker, with whom Dr. Boyer had made a trade for another lot he owned on Mt. Vernon Avenue. The street could be extended in a more direct line through her lot. The land conveyed contained 16,083 square feet.

NEW PARSONAGE BUILT – 1967

Construction was started on a new parsonage on February 17, 1967, and was completed on May 5, 1967. This parsonage is located on Church Street next to the new brick sanctuary. The Reverend and Mrs. Frank Depro, who have been with us since 1961 in the parsonage on Ridge Road, moved into the new parsonage. On June 18, 1967, about 250 persons attended the parsonage 'Open House'. The women of the church and the Depros provided afternoon refreshments for those who visited this beautiful addition to our church facilities.

The new parsonage was consecrated by Bishop John Wesley Lord on June 25, 1967, assisted by Dr. Edward G. Carroll, our District Superintendent.

The Parsonage Building Committee consisted of Hal D. Crawford, Chairman, Bradley Woodfield, William Slaton, Mrs. Betty Smith, Joseph Rice, Jr., Mrs. Janice Green, Mrs. Becky Snapp, Robert Fulton, and the Rev. and Mrs. Depro. The Committee on Interior Color and Materials consisted of the women on the Building Committee and Easter Freienmuth, Olivia King, and Margaret Lentz. The Landscape Committee consisted of Emerson Slacuni, Roger Burdette and Milton Proett.

The general contractor handling the building of the parsonage was the John Haines Construction Company. The contractor and a number of the sub-contractors and suppliers made substantial cost allowances in work and materials which reduced the total cost considerably.

The cost of the parsonage was \$42,000. A loan was obtained from the Damascus bank in the amount of \$33,000 with interest at the rate of 5 per cent.

The furniture for the living room and one bedroom of the parsonage was given by the Woman's Society of Christian Service. The furniture for the dining room was given by the Wesleyan Service Guild. As had been the tradition in the past, many contributed their time and talent and many gave cash donations.

CHURCH GETS ASSISTANT PASTOR - 1967

As our congregation grew, the need developed for a larger ministerial staff. During the summer of 1967, the church employed an Assistant Pastor, the Rev. Robert Porter. He came from Midland, Michigan, with his family to attend Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington and to assist our pastor, the Reverend Depro, in his many duties. He remained until the summer of 1971 when he obtained his Master of Divinity degree and returned to Michigan to accept a ministerial assignment there. He and his family occupied the parsonage built in 1923 which we now call the Ridge Road parsonage.

FIRE DAMAGES EDUCATIONAL BUILDING - 1967

On August 9, 1967, lightning struck our Educational Building. This was our old historic sanctuary (third church) which had been built in 1899 with its later additions. The Damascus Fire Department with its volunteers responded at 4:19 P. M. and battled the blaze until 7:00. Also responding were the Laytonsville and Mt. Airy Fire Departments. The blaze quickly gutted the old sanctuary room and damaged the adjoining east Sunday School wing built in 1932. Due to the prompt action of the firemen and other volunteers, the fire did not reach the south Sunday School wing.

When this disaster occurred, one could not help but recall that on this same property sixty-eight years before in 1899 an earlier church was damaged by natural causes - then by a wind and hailstorm.

Again, the congregation faced the task of rebuilding. In the meantime, emergency arrangements were made for the Sunday School classes which had met in the building. Other churches offered their facilities, but the Education Commission accepted the Reverend and Mrs. Depros gracious offer of the parsonage. Sunday School classes were held throughout the house.

The damage turned out to be so great that the old sanctuary part had to be torn away almost completely before it was rebuilt on the same foundation. Since the building was no longer being used as the church sanctuary, it was thought that the roofline could be redesigned to be less costly and other changes could be made to meet our continuing needs and those of the community. architect, Charles F. Bowers of Frederick, was engaged to prepare plans for the restoration of the damaged building.

The exterior of the rebuilt portion was constructed of brick, whereas before the fire it was weather boarded. The tower over the vestibule was removed when the steep roofline was lowered. The partition was removed between the two large rooms and folding partitions were added.

The cost of the restoration was about \$31,010, including the architect's fee of \$1,335. The Souder Construction Company was the contractor. The amount received from the insurance company covering the damage was \$30,116.01. Again, there were many contributions of time and talent and also cash donations.

When the rebuilding was completed, there was still much to do to put the place back in order. Many volunteers helped to clean up the furnishings and to paint the rooms not damaged by the fire.

The Sunday School moved back into the building on April 21, 1968. Also, on that day a fellowship dinner and stewardship program were held in the renovated building. On May 5, 1968, Dr. Edward G. Carroll, our District Superintendent, conducted the dedication ceremony. About eight months after the fire, the restored building once again began to serve the church and the community. At this time the name was changed from the Educational Building to the Damascus United Methodist Educational Center.

ANOTHER MERGER AND NEW CHURCH NAME - 1967

The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church were united at the joint session of the two General Conferences beginning April 21, 1967, in Dallas, Texas. As a result of this merger, the name of our church was changed from The Damascus Methodist Church to the Damascus United Methodist Church.

YOKE MINISTRY WITH FRIENDSHIP CHURCH - 1969

In June 1969 our church, at the request of the Baltimore Conference, joined in a yoke ministry relationship with the Friendship United Methodist Church in the sharing of the minister. There is no organic union. This is a new type of ministry being implemented in several instances in our district. Friendship church, located between Damascus and Clagetsville, has about fifty colored members. Our two ministers take turns preaching at Friendship.

CHURCH ASSIGNED FULL-TIME CO-PASTOR - 1971

Before the Reverend Porter, our Assistant Pastor and Seminary Student had left Damascus to return to his home in Michigan, plans were being made for his replacement. The congregation decided that a full-time co-pastor was needed to share the many responsibilities of the church in a rapidly growing community.

In June 1971 the Rev. Donald S. Stewart was appointed to this position and he and his family came to Damascus to reside in the Ridge Road parsonage. They lived in the Ira Jones house on Main Street while much needed repairs were being made to the parsonage. Many improvements were made. The women's organizations of the church contributed new furniture. The Stewarts held an "Open House" on January 3, 1972, to which all the members of the congregation were invited.

PRESENT - 1972 - OUR SESQUICENTENNIAL YEAR

A record of our present is history in the future. We now have two full-time pastors, the Reverends Depro and Stewart, who share all the duties of the ministry. They take turns preaching at the 8:30 A.M. and 11:00 A.M. services at Damascus and the 9:30 service at Friendship. Also, we have a former minister in our midst, the Rev. A. Dean Kesler, who loved Damascus enough to return following his retirement. We are also fortunate in having a lay minister, the Rev. Leighton Bishop, who conducts a 9:40 A.M. informal worship service in the sanctuary. He started this service on January 16th of this year. He also conducts a men's Bible Study class at his home on Sunday evenings.

JUNIOR CHURCH

In addition to the three morning worship services, there are two Junior Church services. The J.O.Y. Circle of the Women's Society of Christian Service sponsors and arranges for a service for children 4 through 6 years of age. There is also a service for children in the second through the fourth grades. This service was started last year under the leadership of Dr. Craig Scott.

PRESENT MEMBERSHIP - 1972

The membership of the church as of January 26, 1971, consists of 968 members. There are 22 in the present confirmation class.

BUDGET - 1972

The budget adopted for our Sesquicentennial year 1972 totals \$70,480. Briefly, it includes:

Operating Expenses		\$23,500
Ministerial Support:		
Pastor: Salary	\$10,500	
Travel	1,000	
Pastor: Salary	8,000	
Travel	<u>1,000</u>	20,500
Benevolences and		
Conference Apportionments		12,480
Debt Payments		<u>14,000</u>
Total		\$70,480

The rising inflation of the last few years is reflected in the budget. Church expenses like other costs have risen sharply.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

At the present, as in the past, the interests of the church, school and community have been linked together. The church has cooperated with the school throughout the years in many events. The facilities of our Educational Center have been enjoyed by many community groups and organizations as a meeting place. In addition to church activities, other community groups presently using the building on a regular basis are as follows: Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Travel Club, Lions Club, Junior Girl Scout troop, Brownie troop, Homeowners Association, and the Damascus Ministerial Association. The building has been used for many other groups, including the American Field Service, Damascus Recreation Association, Jaycees, political groups, school organizations, Homemakers Club, Chess Club, the Damascus Whirlers and Twirlers Square Dance Club, and others. Many wedding receptions are held in the building - not only by members of our congregation, but also by those from other churches.

CHAPTER V
HISTORY OF OUR CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

LADIES AID SOCIETY

The first recorded women's group at our church was the Ladies Aid Society. It was organized at the home of Mary Mullinix in 1909 by our pastor, the Rev. William M. Hoffman. There were twelve present at the organizational meeting. (Mary Mullinix, now deceased, is the mother of present members Rose Watkins, Frances Scott, and William Mullinix.) The Ladies Aid Society was a very active organization. After the parsonage was built in Damascus in 1923, the Ladies Aid practically took over its maintenance and also assisted with the expenses of the church.

WOMAN'S SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Following the Methodist merger of 1939, the women organization of the church ceased to be called the Ladies Aid Society. The women held a charter meeting on September 13, 1940, when the group was renamed the Woman's Society of Christian Service. There were no circles at that time as exist today. However, a Missionary Study Group was formed under the leadership of Mrs. Sallye Day which met monthly in addition to the regular WSCS meeting.

As the church membership grew, circles were formed as the need arose. The WSCS now has three circles:

1. Esther Circle. This circle was named in honor of Esther Rice, the President of the WSCS when the circle was organized. Also taken into consideration was the fact that it was a Biblical name. The circle was originally formed for working women who could not attend the WSCS meeting during the day.

2. Mabel Wagner Circle. This day circle was named in honor of Mabel Burdette Wagner who grew up in Browningsville and attended the Damascus High School. She and her husband, Paul Wagner, are missionaries who served in India for many years. They are now stationed in Nepal.

3. J.O.Y. Circle. This was originally called the Young Adult Circle. The name has recently been changed to the J.O.Y. Circle. The letters stand for the fact that one should consider Jesus first (J), Others second (O), and Yourself (Y) last.

(A former circle named for missionary Vera Woodcock has been combined with other circles.)

In 1967 following the merger which resulted in the "United Methodist Church", the name was changed from "Woman's Society of Christian Service" to "Women's Society of Christian Service",

In the limited space of this paper, I could not even begin to include the many projects and activities of the WSCS over the years. They have assisted the church in every possible way - in debt reduction, church and parsonage maintenance expenses - the list could go on and on. They have had many fund-raising activities from apple butter boilings to church suppers. For the

past several years, they have served the bi-weekly dinners of the Lions Club in the Educational Center.

Speaking of apple butter boilings, the following is an interesting news item from the *Montgomery County Sentinel* dated October 14, 1960:

“The WSCS of the Damascus Methodist Church is having its annual apple butter making on Friday, October 14, at the church. The ladies peel the apples the day before, and on the big day the fires are started at 5 a.m. Five or six large kettles are kept boiling all day, and everyone takes turns at stirring. Lunch is served in the parish hall. It is a happy day for all and anyone who has not seen apple butter made in the truly old-fashioned way is invited to go by and see this event. They will make between 160 and 175 gallons of apple butter. Shortly after 3 p.m. the apple butter will be ready and may be purchased at \$2.50 per gallon, \$1.25 per half gallon, 65 cents a quart and 35 cents a pint. It is requested that purchasers will bring their own containers if possible.”

WESLEYAN SERVICE GUILD

This year in February the Guild celebrated its 26th anniversary at a banquet at the Educational Center. In 1946, Adeline Purdum, then President of the WSCS, organized the Wesleyan Service Guild. Carolyn Mullinix was the first President. The Guild was an organization for “gainfully employed women”. However, at Damascus it was formed of employed women plus others who found it inconvenient to attend the day meeting of the WSCS (before there was a night circle of the WSCS). The contributions of the Guild in Christian service have been numerous. One of the principal fund-raising activities is a fall bazaar, the proceeds from which are applied toward the church debt and other worthy causes.

SOCIAL CLUBS

2 x 2 Club - This Club was organized in 1962 as a young couples club. The Young Adult Sunday School Class recognized the need for a social fellowship group for the growing number of interested young adults in the church. Bob Fulton created the name for the Club, referring to the “Couples” and to Mark 6:7, “and he . . . began to send them forth by two and two . . .”.

The Club is now open to anyone who wishes to participate in its activities. There is no formal membership. The Club has enjoyed progressive dinners, theater, swimming and bowling parties, and many other social events. Although mainly a social organization, the Club undertakes special service projects. The group has made many contributions, financial and otherwise, to the church. A main fund-raising activity is an annual church auction.

“Delta Sigma Kappa” Another social club of record is “Delta Sigma Kappa (or Damascus Social Club)” organized in 1938 which “directed its appeal to the younger married couples”. The first President was Garner Duvall.

EPWORTH LEAGUE AND METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

The Epworth League, predecessor of the present Methodist Youth Fellowship, was organized in our church before any of our older members can remember. It could possibly have dated back to 1892 when the General Conference adopted the new organization. We know it existed in the early 1900's at our church as indicated in the following excerpt from the Damascus news in the *Montgomery County Sentinel* on January 18, 1907: “The meeting of the Epworth League Sunday evening was especially entertaining. The leader was Mr. John T. Baker whose topic was ‘Secret Communion with God’”.

There must have been a period of inactivity because there is a record that Epworth League groups were later organized. A Junior High (also called Intermediate) League was formed during the pastorate of the Reverend Main (1929-34). A Senior High Epworth League was formed in July 1934 during the pastorate of the Reverend Brown. George Boyer was the first President of this group and Everett Jones was Vice President.

After the Methodist merger in 1939, the name was changed to the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF). Since then, there have been periods when there have been from one to three MYF groups. The first Junior MYF group was organized in 1952 by Ruby Hyatt.

At the present time we have two groups - a joint Junior High-Senior High MYF and a Junior MYF.

Back in the 1930's the Epworth League had an orchestra which performed on numerous occasions. One of the activities sponsored by the MYF for several years was the Easter Sunrise Service. The first one was held in 1956 on the site purchased for the new church.

CHOIRS

Our present Senior, Gospel and Carol choirs, now under the direction of Donald Murphy, have given us many moments of listening pleasure at our regular worship services, at the Easter and Christmas services, and on other occasions.

Senior Choir - The beginning of the Senior Choir (also has been called Chancel Choir in the past) is not known. However, the following excerpt from an article in the *Community Reporter* dated December 18, 1932, tells us something about the early choir in our church:

“. . .Another [recalls the fine choir of Damascus church, usually led by Brother Jerry Burdette, composed of choice voices trained by Professor Walker. Professor G. W. Walker is credited with developing a group of young people whose proficiency in singing made it possible for the minister to call for any selection from the hymnal with the assurance that it would be correctly rendered”.

Professor Walker was a teacher of music and an organ salesman who lived in Browningsville. He conducted “singing schools” in churches throughout the area. The “singing schools” date back to the early days of Methodism. At the time our first church was built in 1822, the Methodist Discipline read, “Let it be recommended to our people, not to attend the singing schools which are not under our direction.”

Carol Choir - The Carol Choir (formerly called Junior Choir) was organized under the leadership of Mrs. James Lovett on October 1, 1959. This choir is for ages through the 6th grade.

Gospel Choir - The Gospel Choir (formerly called Chapel Choir) was organized by Mrs. Lovett in July 1961. This choir is for the 7th through the 12th grades.

There are reports of junior choirs in the 1930’s, one led by Henrietta Baker, and a later one led by Mabel Fairchild (Veitch). She once took her choir to sing over the radio station in Frederick. Also there was a Junior Choir during the 1950’s under the direction of our organist, Hazel Jones (organized in 1953).

Wesleyan Service Guild Glee Club - This was sometimes called the Guild Glee Club and sometimes the Guild Choir. It was organized in 1951 under the direction of Elmyra Burdette. The Glee Club sang once a month at worship services and on other occasions. It was active until the late 1950’s.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

The first Vacation Bible School was held at our church in 1929 during the pastorate of the Reverend Main. For many years the Salem and Damascus churches operated a joint Bible School. Sometimes it was held at the Damascus High School and sometimes at the church in the 1930's. Since 1969, the Damascus and Friendship churches have held a joint Bible School at the Damascus church.

CHURCHWIDE SCHOOL OF MISSIONS

The Churchwide School of Missions is held annually during the late winter months for four consecutive Sunday evenings with a snack supper followed by classes for all age groups. The earliest record of a School of Missions is 1954. Since that time, many inspiring programs have been held covering many countries of the world. The theme for this our Sesquicentennial Year is "The Face of New Africa."

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our church has a very active Sunday School. Presently, Sunday School classes are being held in both church buildings and in the basement of the Church Street parsonage. We do not have a record of the beginning of Sunday School at our church. However, the Bethesda United Methodist Church at Browningsville has a record that a Sunday School was organized there on August 13, 1843. Since we were on the same circuit, possibly we had a Sunday School about the same time also. The Methodist Discipline, however, provided for the religious education of children almost as far back as the beginning of American Methodism.

The older members (younger ones also) remember that Sunday School at the Damascus church was a very important part of their early education. Before 1932, when the first Sunday School wing was added to the church, the classes were distributed throughout the sanctuary in small groups. Most of the time was spent in listening and discussion because there was no space for crafts or similar activities. However, there was time for fun on other occasions such as the Sunday School picnics and the annual trips to the Braddock Heights amusement park. The Sunday School prepared and presented the program in the church on Children's Day, Christmastime, and on other occasions. There was always a record attendance and parents left delighted in the pleasure of seeing their children assuming their place in the work of the church.

CHAPTER VI
HISTORY OF BOYER CHAPEL AND CEMETERY

BOYER CHAPEL

The stone chapel at the rear of our Educational Center was built in 1954 to memorialize the life of Dr. George M. Boyer, a civic leader and practicing physician in the Damascus area for about fifty years. He was a trustee of the school for forty-seven years and a trustee of our church for fifty years. He died on September 21, 1956, at the age of 84 and was buried in a vault in the floor of the chapel.

The chapel was presented to the church by his son, Dr. M. M. Boyer, who has provided a perpetual Memorial Fund for its maintenance supervised by a Board of Trustees appointed by the church. The chapel may be used for formal religious services.

The chapel was built on land acquired from Druid Clodfelter who resides next door to the Educational Center. On November 20, 1958, Dr. M. M. Boyer and Druid Clodfelter and wife joined in a deed to convey the chapel and property (.1072 acres) to the church. Burial space is reserved for the Clodfelter family in back of the chapel and the floor of the chapel is reserved for the Boyer family.

The Men's Bible Class met weekly in the chapel in the 1950's.

Mrs. Annie Boyer, widow of the late Dr. George M. Boyer and a member of our church, is now 95 years old.

CEMETERY

Our century-old cemetery, adjoining the Educational Center, is a historic monument to our past. Take a leisurely walk there and look at the names on the tombstones. You will be reminded that these are the members who worshipped in one or more of our four church buildings. The names on the oldest tomb stones are especially significant because these are some of the families who attended our first church on Mullinix Mill Road. (Many of the early members had been buried in family cemeteries.)

A fund has been established for the perpetual care of the cemetery under the supervision of a Board of Trustees appointed by the church. In addition to the regular fund, which is in the Bank of Damascus, there are two trust funds which have been given for the benefit of the cemetery. One is in the Savings Institute of Sandy Spring and the other is in the Mt. Airy National Bank.

APPENDIX

MINISTERS AND ASSISTANT MINISTERS OF OUR CONGREGATION

1822 – 1972

Listed below are made, even though the year until the annual the years the appointments were ministers served into the next conference as held.

(The maximum tenure of ministers in the Methodist Episcopal church was two years until 1864, three years until 1888, and five years until 1900. The time limit was removed in 1900.)

Montgomery Circuit:

1822	William Butler John G. Watt	1831	Andrew Hemphill J.L. Gibbons	1841	Isaac Collins J. H. Brown
1823	C. Frye J. Paynter	1832	Andrew Hemphill W. O. Lumsden	1842	J. M. Jones R. M. Brent
1824	C. Frye W. L. Gibson	1833	P. D. Lipscomb W. O. Lumsden	1843	B. Barry J. M. Jones
1825	Tobias Reiley W. H. Chapman	1834	P. D. Lipscomb D. Thomas	1844	H. Holland J. T. Phelps
1826	W. H. Chapman J. G. Watt	1835	J. Larkin E. Miller	1845	H. Holland J. W. Start
1827	C. Reynolds J. G. Watt	1836	J. Larkin W. T. Norfolk	1846	W. H. Enos J. S. Gorsuch
1828	C. B. Young	1837	James Reiley J. H. Young	1847	W. H. Enos G. Cross
1829	Basil Barry J. Reed	1838	James Reiley Thomas Myers	1848	William Hank W. H. Chapman
1830	Basil Barry J. L. Gibbons	1839-40	Richard Brown	1849	J. Monroe C. G. Linthicum

1850	G. W. Israel S. Cornelius	1863	S. V. Leech C. H. Mytinger	1878- 79	Emory Buhrman T. E. Peters
1851	G. W. Israel	1864-65	W. H. Holliday B. B. Shipley	1880	R. R. Murphy T. E. Peters
1852-53	J. W. Cullum B. O. Brown	1866	J. W. Start E. E. Shipley	1881	R. R. Murphy L. C. Morgan
1854	J. M. Grandin B. P. Brown	1867	J. W. Start G. W. Hobbs	1882	R. R. Murphy E. L. Watson
1855	J. M. Grandin L. D. Herron	1868	J. D. Still G. W. Hobbs	1883	William R. Gwinn E. L. Watson
1856	C. A. Reid L. D. Herron	1869-70	J. D. Still D. M. Browning	1884- 85	William R. Gwinn A. H. Thompson
1857	C. A. Reid G. R. Jefferson	1871-72	Harrison McNemar J. S. M. Haslup	1886	Thomas J. Cross A. H. Thompson
1858- 59	Samuel Cornelius W. E. Magruder	1873	Harrison McNemar P. Vondersmith	1887	Thomas J. Cross L. D. Herron (Retired, Supply)
1860	J. L. Gilbert A. B. Dolly	1874	T. Marshall West	1888	Thomas J. Cross L. D. Herron (Retired, Supply)
1861	L. L. Gilbert S. H. Cummings	1875-76	T. Marshall West C. T. Weede	1889	Thomas J. Cross Robert M. Moore L. D. Herron (Retired, Supply)
1862	S. V. Leech R. N. Baer	1877	Emory Buhrman A. Bielaski		

Laytonsville Circuit:

1890-91

C. L. Pate

1898-1901

John H. Marsh

1913-16

John E. Fort

1892

Albert H. Zimmerman

1902-05

W. P. West

1917-20

Charles F. Boss, Jr.

1893-95

D. Benton Winstead

1906-08

Jacob E. James

1921-22

Norris A. Lineweaver

1896-97

Thomas J. Cross

1909-12

William M. Hoffman

Damascus-Salem Charge:

1923-24

Norris A. Lineweaver

1934-39

Raymond Hunter Brown

1925-28

John H. Esaias

1940-41

J. Elmer Benson

1929-33

W. Clark Main
(Came Dec. 1928)

1942-47

Jacob E. Snyder

1948-50

A. Odell Osteen

Damascus Station Appt. 1951

1951-53

A. Odell Osteen

1954-60

A. Dean Kesler

1961-66

Frank Depro

1967-70

Frank Depro
Robert Porter

1971 – Present

Co-ministers
Frank Depro
Donald S. Stewart, Jr.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Scharf, Thomas J., *History of Western Maryland*, Vol. I, Phila. 1882

Garber, Paul Neff, *The Methodist Meeting House*, N.Y., 1941

Montgomery County Land Records

County Wills, Administrations and Accounts

County and State Court Records

Miscellaneous newspapers, including *Community Reporter*, December 30, 1932.

Doctrines and Discipline of M. E. Church

Conference Minutes

State Department of Education, Baltimore - Mount Lebanon School record begins in 1869.

Montgomery Circuit Record Books:

1. 1857-1871

2. 1879-1892

(These two books are in custody of Bethesda Church, Browningsville. These records are also on microfilm at Hall of Records, Annapolis. Photocopies of some of the pages have been made for the Damascus church records.)

Laytonsville Circuit Records

(Custody of St. Paul's Church. Also on microfilm at Hall of Records.)

Class Book of Damascus M. E. Church:

This book was presented recently to our church by Nathan Reed Warthen, grandson of Nathan B. Warthen, Class Leader. Inside of cover is a note dated Feb. 14, 1870, from Pastor-in-charge Jas. D. Still stating, "Remember to Observe Friday before each Quarterly Meeting with fasting and prayer for the Peace of Zion."

Notes by Nathan J. Burdette – 1899

(Courtesy of Maxwell Burdette, grandson)

Article by Joyce Mullinix:

"Old Mt. Lebanon School House", March 21, 1946

Records at Damascus Church:

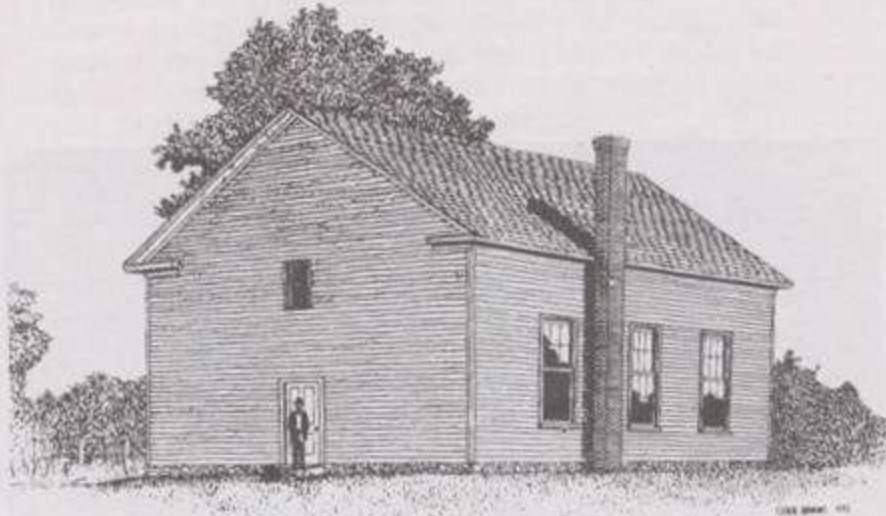
Quarterly Conference Reports; Correspondence; Official Board Minutes; WSCS minutes.

Conversations with Church members and others (some now deceased)

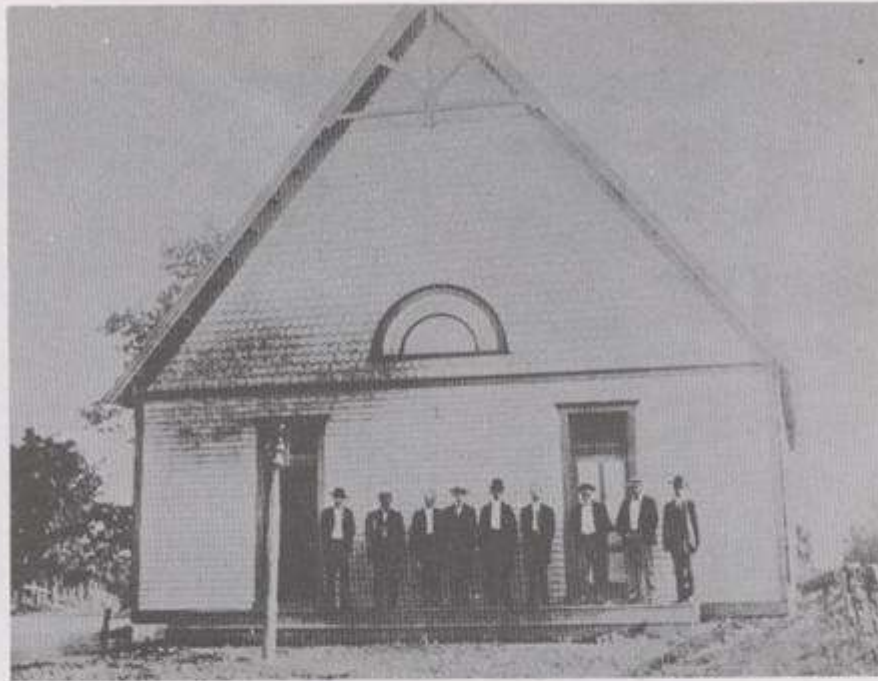
PICTURES



FIRST CHURCH 1822 - 1869
*This photograph was taken in the late 1800's
after the building became a public school.*



SECOND CHURCH 1869 - 1899
*Sketch by Steven Hawkins from description
given him by Bradley Woodfield.*



THIRD CHURCH - Built 1899
Dedicated January 21, 1900



THIRD CHURCH (1899) WITH LATER ADDITIONS
*Became Educational Building in 1961 when
fourth church was built.*



FOURTH CHURCH
Built 1960-1961



RESTORED EDUCATIONAL CENTER
*Dedicated May 5, 1968. The old church (1899),
with later additions, was damaged by fire in
1967 and rebuilt.*



RIDGE ROAD PARSONAGE (*Built in 1923*)
Residence of the Rev. and Mrs. Donald S. Stewart, Jr.



CHURCH STREET PARSONAGE (*Built 1967*)
Residence of the Rev. and Mrs. Frank Depro

IN APPRECIATION

To the Reverend Edwin Schell of the Methodist Historical Society., Baltimore, for his advice and help.

To those who have shared their memories of the past.

*To Joe Rice who is giving up much of his spring vacation to print and assemble this booklet
in time for distribution on Sesquicentennial Sunday, April 9, 1972.*

*To those of the Damascus United Methodist Church who requested that I
write this History – for their support and confidence in me.*

PRAYERFULLY, WE FACE THE FUTURE.

This history was originally written by Janie W. Payne in 1972. It was scanned into the computer and converted to Microsoft Word format by Stephen Ricketts in 2002.

^[1] There has been some question as to whether the church in Damascus was built in 1869 or 1870. Evidence is over whelming that the date was 1869. One of the references is Thomas J. Scharf's "History of Western Maryland" published in 1882 which states, "The church edifice, a frame structure, was built in 1869." page 725.

^[2] A deed dated May 6, 1955, was for 8 acres, but a later confirmatory deed dated August 21, 1960 corrected the amount to 8.4474 acres after a survey was made.