PROPOSAL OF
1925 LANDERS CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH
1875 CEMETERY AND 1912 SCHOOL HOUSE
TO THE GASTON COUNTY HISTORIC PROPERTIES
REGISTER MAY 2005

GASTON COUNTY HISTORIC PROPERTIES COMMISSION

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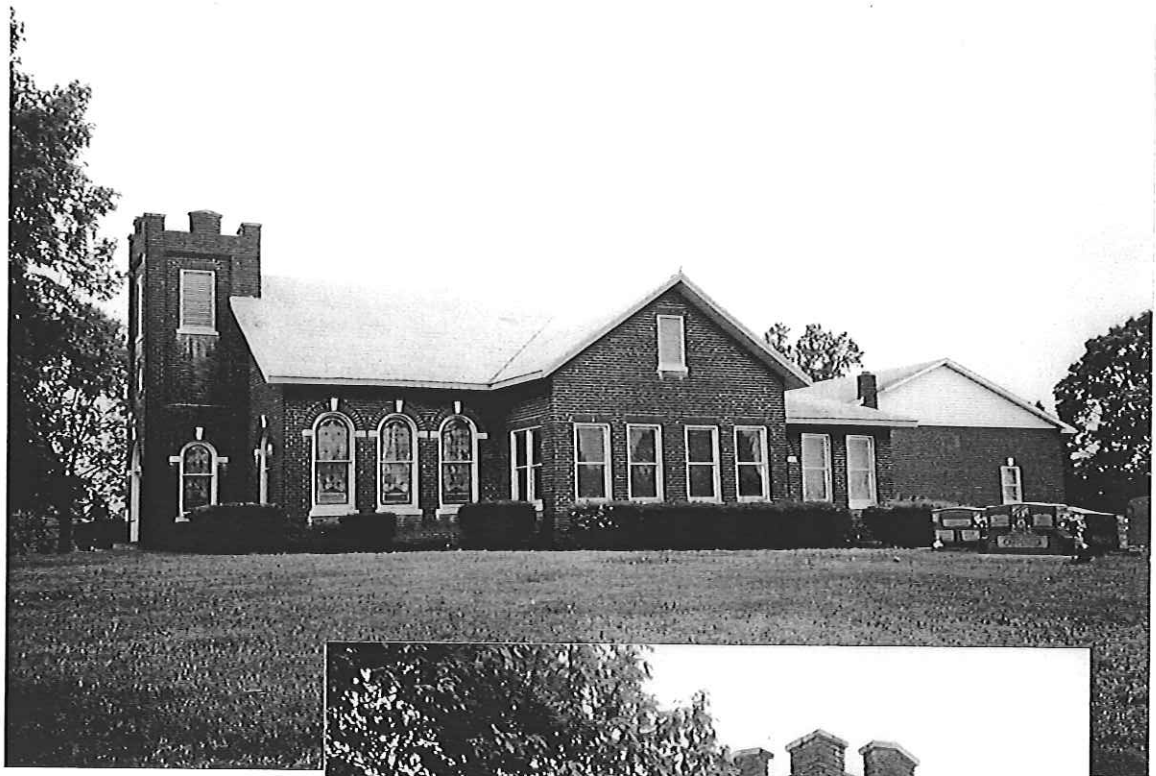
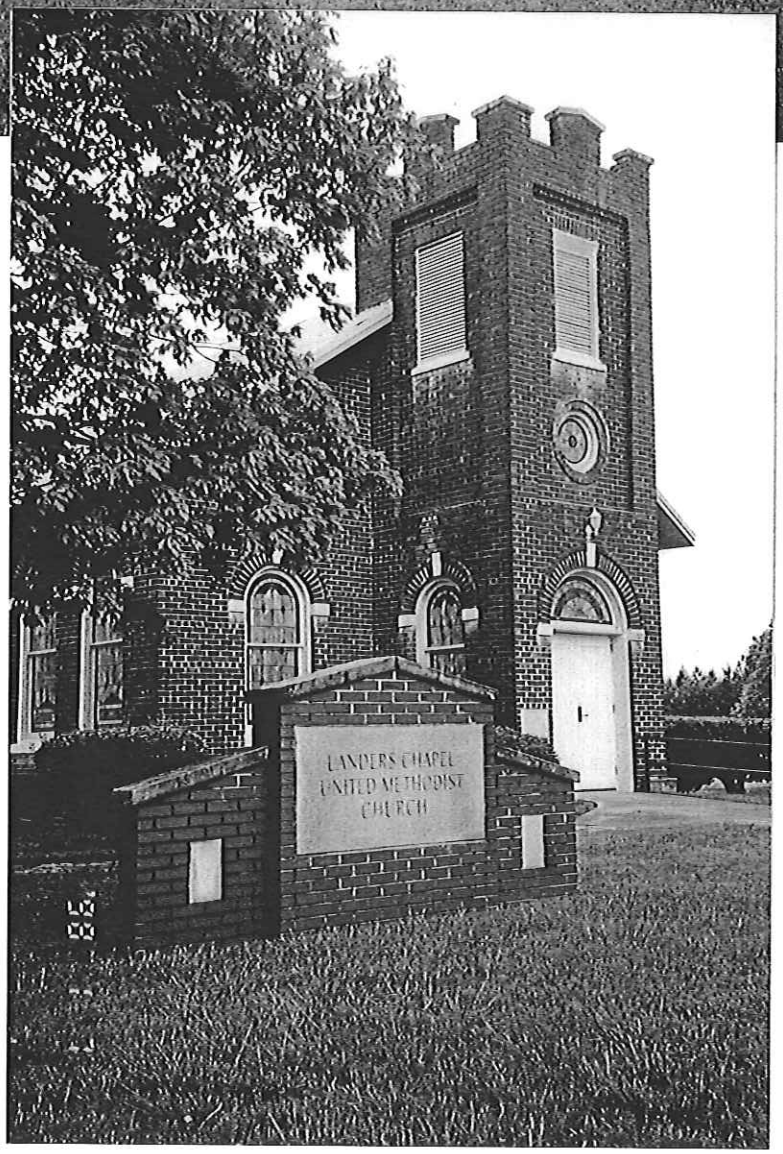
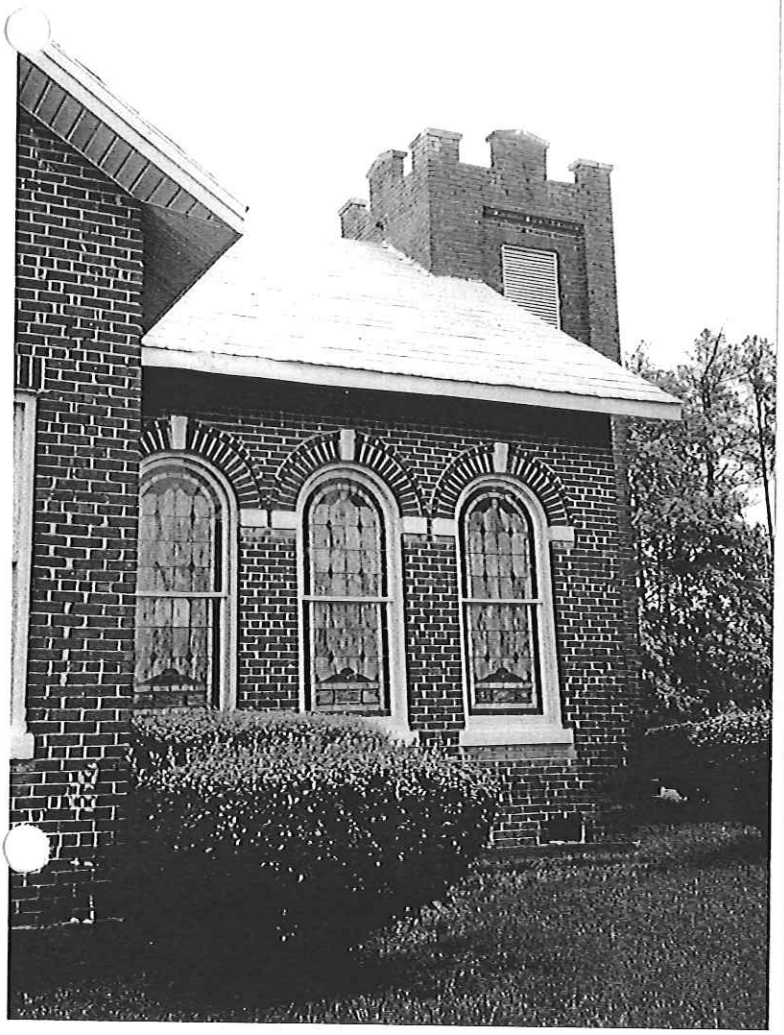
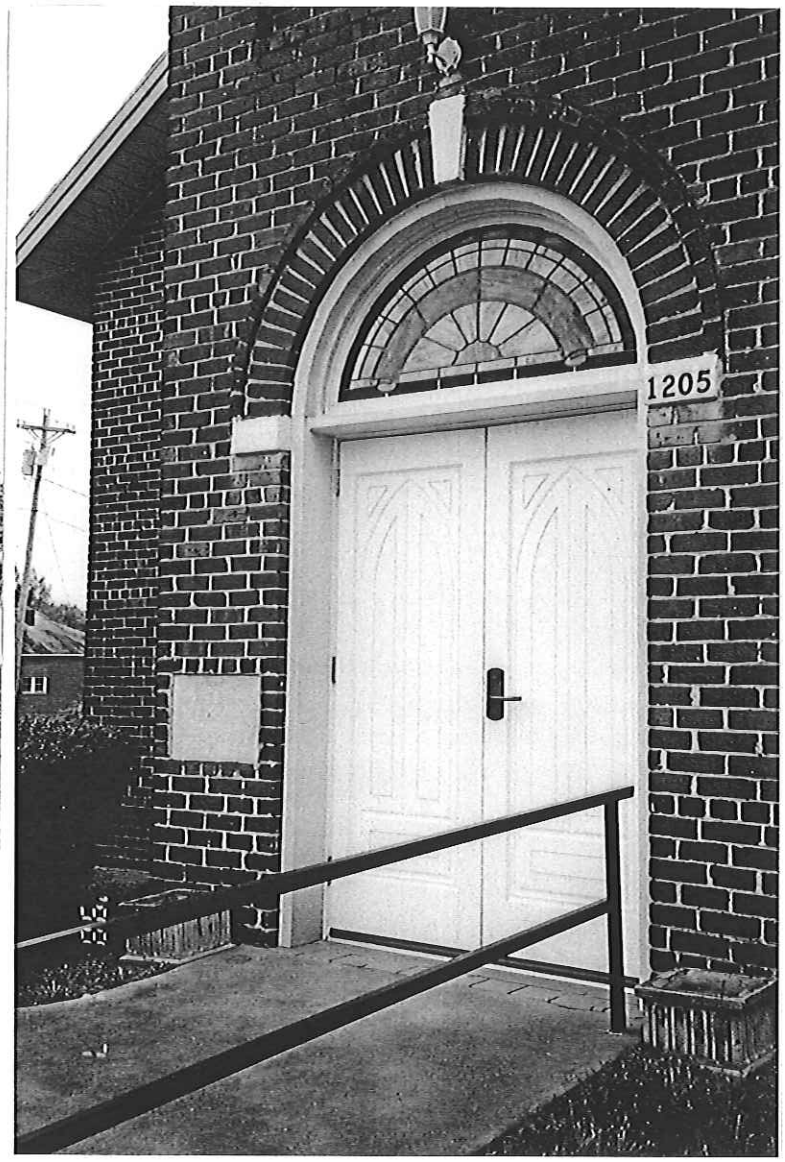



LANDERS CHAPEL
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

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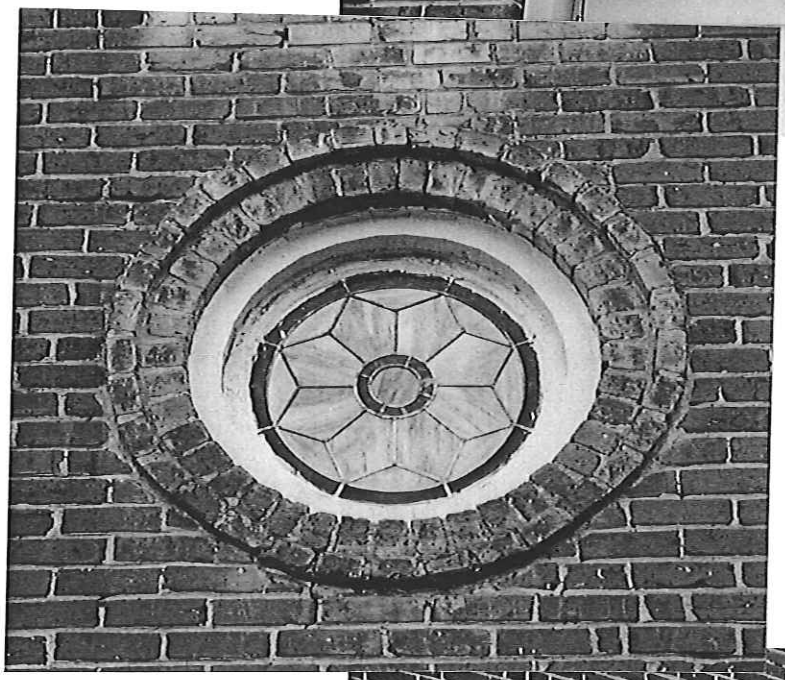

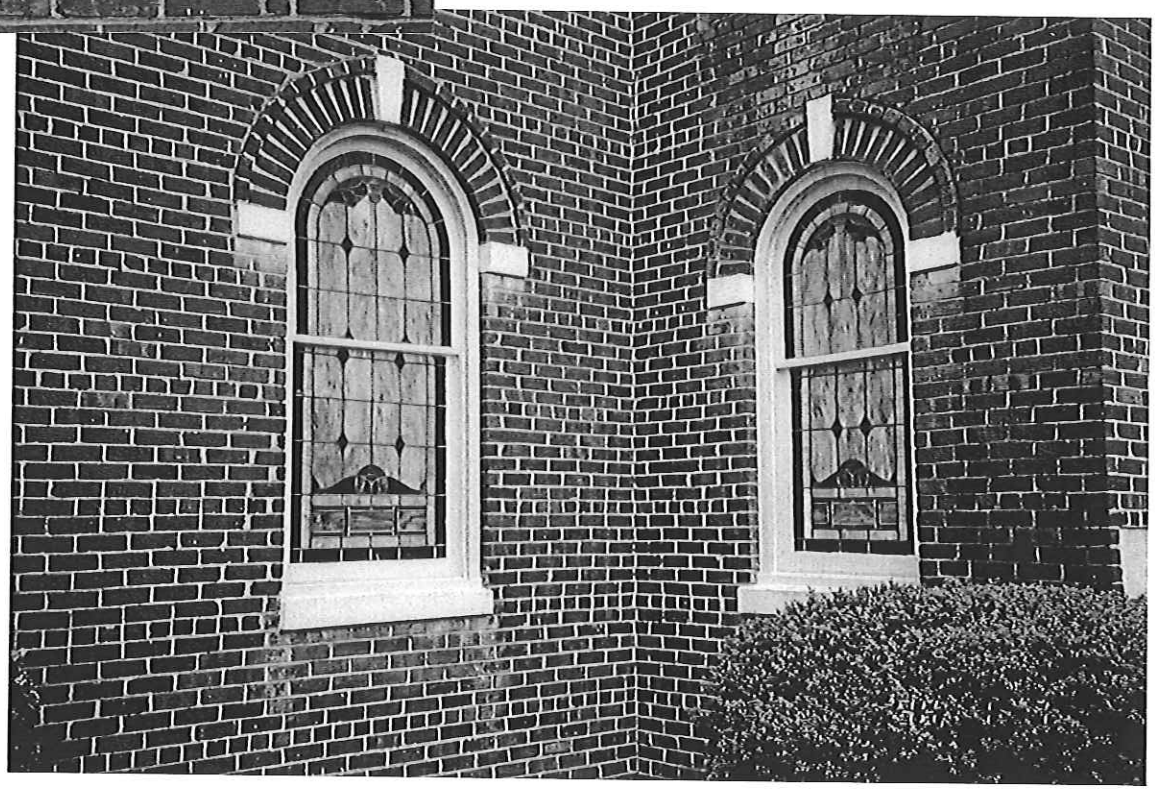

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Deed History – the Schoolhouse Tract

1. Willaree Tate to the trustees of Landers Chapel Methodist Church, 2 tracts totaling 1.78 acres by deed dated September 5, 1972 and recorded September 13, 1972 at Book 1090, page 374 Gaston County Registry.

2. Gaston County Board of Education to Willaree Tate, 2 tracts totaling 1.78 acres by Deed dated July 22, 1943 and recorded December 31, 1943 at Book 440, page 360 Gaston County Registry.

> ** *Interestingly, Willaree Tate (single) conveyed a life estate in the 2 tracts described above to C.D. (Clarence) Tate and Violet Tate by Deed December 4, 1943 and also recorded December 31, 1943 at 440/332. Other deed references indicate that Clarence and Violet were still alive in 1960, but that C.D. Tate was a widower by 1967. No death records exist in Gaston County for either Clarence or Violet Tate, nor does any conveyance of their life estate interest in the above tracts. Thus presumably full title to the property passed back to Willaree Tate by operation of the death of Clarence Tate between 1967 and 1972.*

3. J.E. Senter and wife to Gaston County Board of Education, 1 tract containing .78 acres recorded at Book 124 page 270 Gaston County Registry.

4. Jacob E. Senter and wife, Sarah to Gaston County Board of Education, 1 tract containing 1 acre by deed dated August 29, 1906 and recorded September 3, 1906, Gaston County Registry.

It is not possible to conclusively determine where Jacob Senter received the 1.78 acres on which the present Landers Chapel Schoolhouse sits. The earliest reference to Senter property is a deed from John Carpenter to Jonas Senter for 6 acres dated February 11, 1851 and recorded at Book 13, page 582 of the Gaston County Registry. It is possible that the 1.78 acres came from this 6 acre tract. Jonas Senter later became incompetent and had a guardian appointed on August 8, 1891, but no record of his death or disposition of his estate pursuant to the incompetency proceedings exists. It is further worth noting an early reference to property adjoining the lands of Jonas Senter and "the school house" tract in an unrelated deed from 1897 recorded at Book 36, page 142 of the Gaston County Registry.

Deed History – the Church Tract

1. Marcus L. Carpenter to M.L. Carpenter, Col. Wm. Morris, Moses Stroupe Jun (this name is hard to read in the deed and therefore is taken from the historical description prepared by Robert C. Carpenter), Oliver Davis, and Jackson Falls, Trustees, 2 acres "in trust that said premises be used, kept, maintained, and disposed as a place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church South," by deed dated March 11, 1875 and recorded October 24, 1891 at Book 19 page 584 Gaston County Registry.

Deed History – the new cemetery tract

1. Ann Spargo Withers and husband, James Fred Withers, to Betty Faye Mosteller, Eddie McAlister, Robert Beam, Trustees of the Landers Chapel United Methodist Church, 2 tracts containing 0.85 acres and 0.7 acres adjoining the lands of the Landers Chapel United Methodist Church and Betty Mosteller, by deed dated June 29, 1976 and recorded July 26, 1976 at Book 1192, page 332 Gaston County Registry.

2. Ann Spargo Withers received the above property through the estate of Grafton St. Lenard Spargo, who died July 22, 1967.

3. Grafton Spargo inherited the land from his grandfather, Noah Carpenter. In his will filed at the State Archives, Gaston County, NC Noah Carpenter 1918, Noah gave land to "his grandson Grafton Spargo.

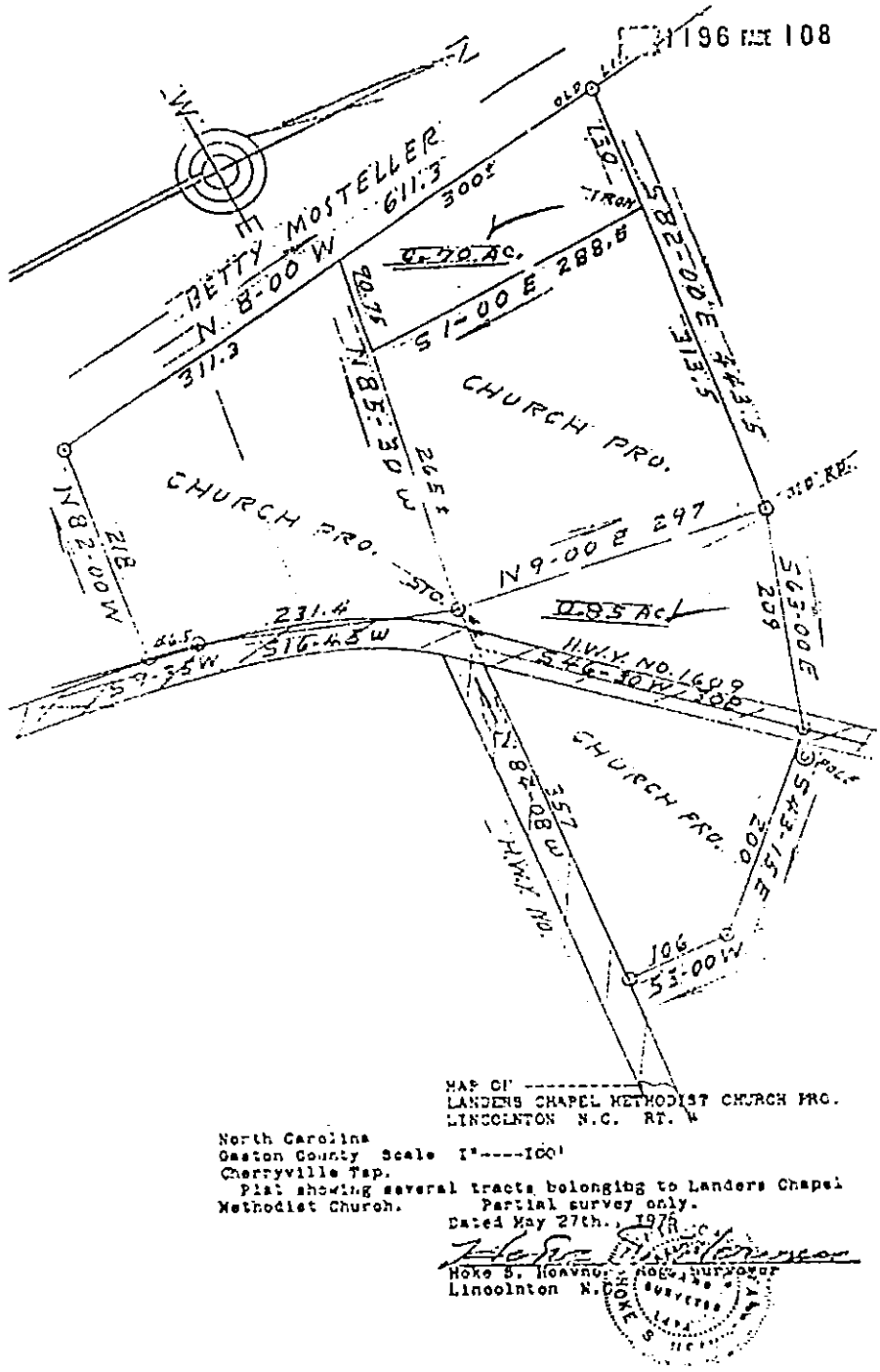


Figure 1. Tax map of the Landers Chapel United Methodist Church property for 1976.

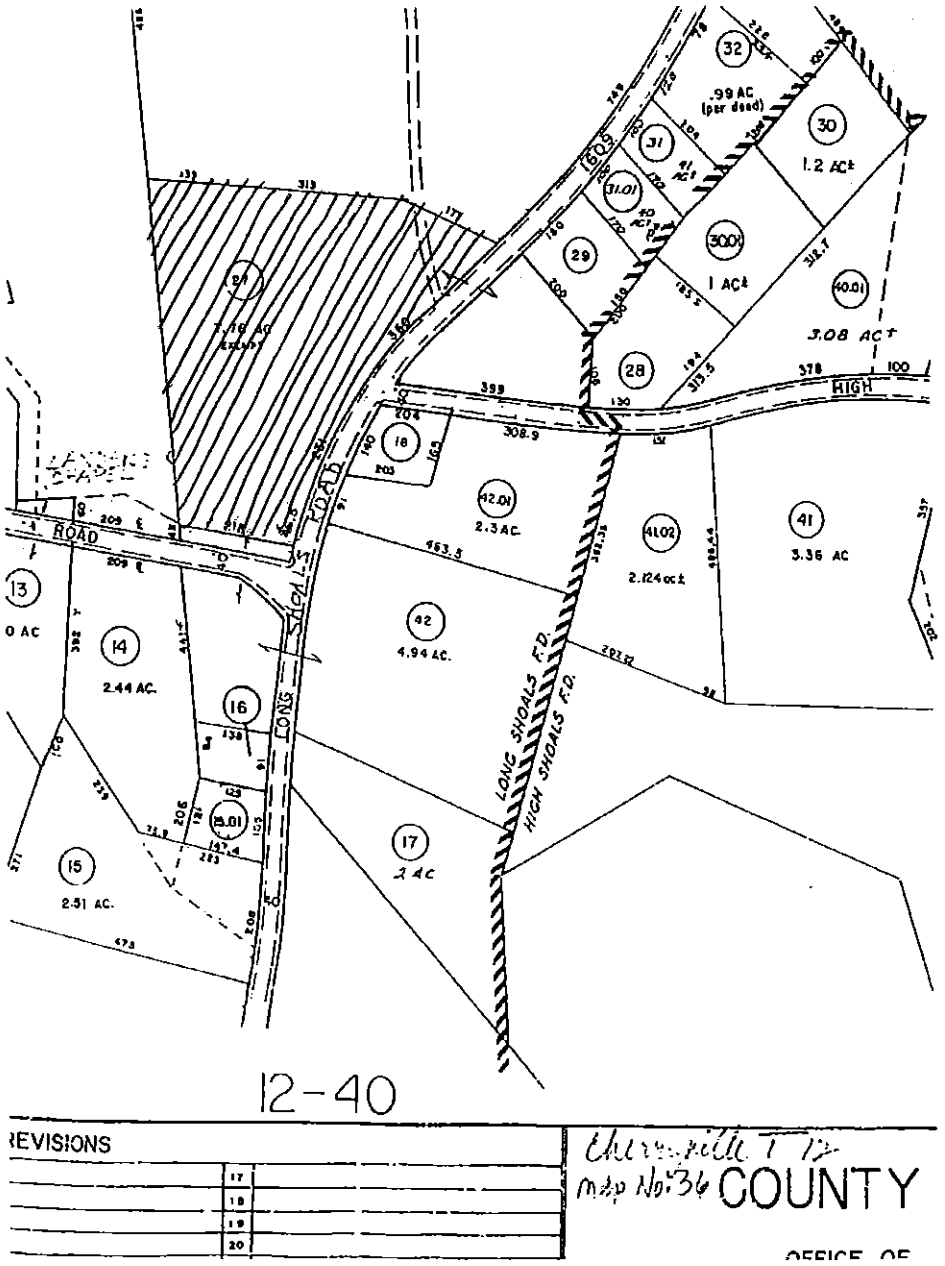
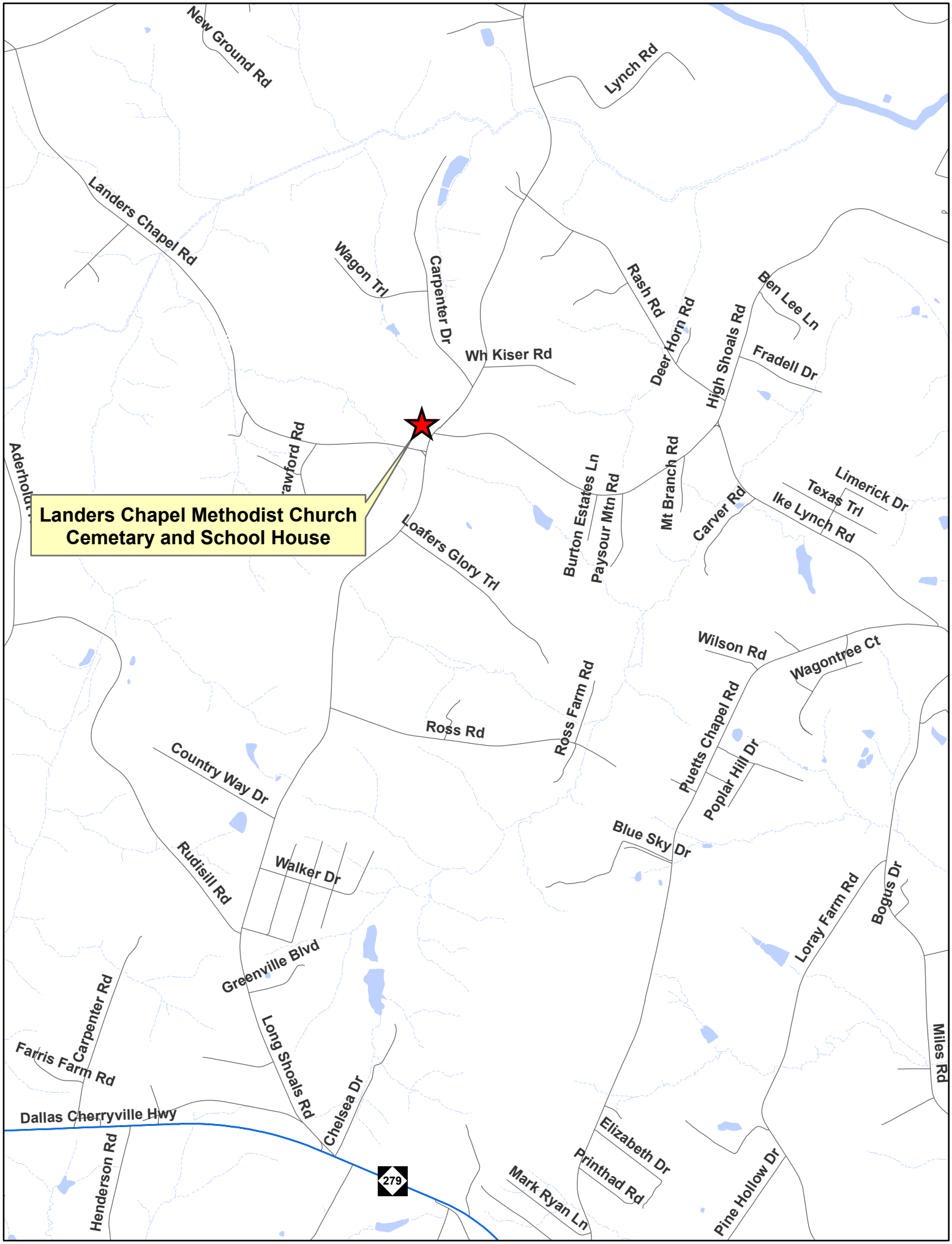


Figure 2. Current tax map of Cherryville Township containing the Landers Chapel United Methodist Church property.


Landers Chapel Methodist Church
Cemetary and School House
New Ground Rd
Lynch Rd
Landers Chapel Rd
Wagon Trl
Carpenter Dr
Rash Rd
Deer Horn Rd
High Shoals Rd
Ben Lee Ln
Fradell Dr
Wh Kiser Rd
Aderholt
Crawford Rd
Burton Estates Ln
Paysour Mtn Rd
Mt Branch Rd
Carver Rd
Ike Lynch Rd
Texas Trl
Limerick Dr
Loafers Glory Trl
Wilson Rd
Wagontree Ct
Ross Farm Rd
Ross Rd
Puetts Chapel Rd
Poplar Hill Dr
Country Way Dr
Blue Sky Dr
Rudisill Rd
Walker Dr
Loray Farm Rd
Bogus Dr
Greenville Blvd
Carpenter Rd
Long Shoals Rd
Farris Farm Rd
Chelsea Dr
Miles Rd
Dallas Cherryville Hwy
Elizabeth Dr
Printhad Rd
Mark Ryan Ln
Pine Hollow Dr
Henderson Rd
279

Landers Chapel Methodist Church, Cemetery, and

School House

By

Robert C. Carpenter

The Landers Chapel Methodist Church community was originally settled by early pioneers of German language extraction. These early settlers valued education and many originally belonged to Lutheran and Reformed congregations.

By 1835 Emmanuel Carpenter, grandson of a Swiss-German pioneer, began a subscription school about one mile southeast of the present location of Landers Chapel Church and School. This first school was tuition based. Farmers from the community sent their children to be educated at the school.[1] The tradition of having a school in the community continued for years afterward.

About the same time as the creation of Emmanuel Carpenter's subscription school, citizens of the community came together to form a Methodist Church. Methodism, borne out of the Pietist movement, embraced much of Piedmont North Carolina. The emotional aspect of a religious conversion experience and an emotional worship service became accepted and preferred by many people.

In the early 1760's to 1770's the early German settlers held worship services about 4 miles to the south at the gap of Pasour Mountain at a union church where Lutheran and Reformed services were held. Prior to the American Revolution Rev. John Frederick Doubbert (variously spelled Du Pert, Doubber, Dubber, etc:) led these services.

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[1] Robert C. Carpenter, *Carpenters A Plenty*, (Baltimore, Md.: Gateway Press, Inc., 1982, repr. 1993), pp. 478-483 describes Emmanuel Carpenter and prints various documents uncovered in private hands.

Apparently he was a Reformed minister. Other German religious leaders in the community held Anabaptist beliefs and Lutheran beliefs. Sometime after 1825 the Lutheran and Reformed Church, which had then come to be known as Long Creek Congregation, experienced trauma. It is believed that the church either burned or fell into disrepair. By 1830 Lutheran services were being held in the homes of community leaders. With the death in 1831 of Rev. David Henkel, prominent Lutheran minister of the area, religious leadership became compromised.[2]

Around 1835 the community constructed a log church near the present location of Landers Chapel Church and School. This church served as the meeting place for both Lutherans and a fledgling new congregation of Methodists. This log church was located to the south of the present Landers Chapel School House near the road from Landers Chapel to Crouse.[3] It was a union church of Lutheran and Methodist congregations.

The Methodist congregation was formed by Samuel Lander Sr. Lander was a full-time carriage maker and part-time preacher. He is credited with forming Landers Chapel in present northern Gaston County and McKendree Methodist Church, which is located about four miles north of Lincolnton. Both churches were about 8-10 miles apart with Lincolnton being located in the middle.[4]

Landers Chapel Methodist Church was first mentioned in Methodist records in 1856. On January 19, 1856, the Lincolnton Methodist Circuit accepted a new church. The original congregation was made up of 26 whites and "12 colored", most likely slaves. The notation in the Minutes is as follows:

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[2] Robert C. Carpenter, *The History of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church*, (Gastonia, NC: American Graphics and Printing Co., Inc., 1990), pp. 5-9, 12-23.
[3] William L. Carpenter, *Landers Chapel A Church and A Community 1835-1991*, (Shelby, NC: Riviere Printing Co., 1992), pp. 11-12.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

"Including an appointment taken in on the Yorkville road 7 miles from Lincolnton & 8 miles from Dallas, first organized by Bro. Lander and by him presented, worthy the oversight of the Pastor of the Circuit. The name proposed is Lander's Chapel – 14 Probationary white members compose this Society."[5]

The Lutheran contingent of the union church was led by Rev. Adam Miller. Miller had assumed leadership of the congregations of Rev. David Henkel after his death. Rev. Adam Miller became a prominent leader in the Lutheran Tennessee Synod. In 1845 Rev. Miller was accused of fathering an illegitimate child. He removed himself (was removed) as a minister in the Lutheran Tennessee Synod. Miller continued to preach and to profess his innocence. In 1848 Miller was instrumental in forming a rival Lutheran body. The Tennessee Synod Re-organized became the governing body for the Lutherans worshipping at the "Old Log Church". Emmanuel Carpenter, the schoolmaster, was an important leader of the Lutheran congregation.[6]

In 1858 the Lutheran portion of the union church decided to pursue a separation with the Methodists. There is no documented reason for this decision. It may be assumed that the Lutherans wanted to separate for doctrinal reasons. The Lutherans of this period repudiated the union church arrangement and instead preferred a single church of Lutheran only. The Lutheran minister was Rev. George L. Hunt, who had succeeded Rev. Adam Miller. The members of the church appointed a committee to "decide upon a location" for a new church, which would be distinctively Lutheran. A list of 30

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[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
[6] Carpenter, *History of Bethel Lutheran Church*, pp. 26-33.

communing members is recorded for 1858. Two years later on March 6, 1860, William Sloan deeded three acres to "John Pasour, Jonas Senter, and Emanuel Carpenter Trustees of the Lutheran religious Society". This is the present location of Bethel Lutheran Church, which is about 3 miles south of Landers Chapel.[7]

While the union church arrangement between Lutheran and Methodist ended with the move of the Lutheran Church, the community farmers knew one another well and often exchanged members between the two churches. Sometime in the middle 1850's Landers Chapel was moved to the Dallas Circuit of the Methodist Church. Quite a number of ministers served the congregation from the 1850's until 1869. Most served only one year. It is unclear why the tenure of the preachers was so short. It is also unclear how often Rev. Samuel Lander Sr., the church's founder, preached at Landers Chapel during these years. He most likely preached occasionally until his death in 1864.[8] Landers Chapel remained a community meeting place even with the departure of the Lutheran congregation.

Emmanuel Carpenter, schoolmaster, maintained a subscription school from 1835 in his home or nearby. In 1858 the first school building at Landers Chapel was destroyed by fire. Sometime afterward he began to teach in either the "Old Log Church", which at that time served both Lutheran and Methodist congregations, or in a separate log school house. He continued to teach school in the old church building after the Lutheran contingent left. The connection between church and school remained constant for a number of years.[9]

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[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
[8] Carpenter, *Landers Chapel*. pp. 14-16.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 17. *Gaston County's School Educational Heritage*, Brumley Printing Company, Gastonia, NC. The two sources disagree about the location of the school building.

The "Old Log Church" had begun to deteriorate to the point that the membership of Landers Chapel Methodist Church considered constructing a new church building. In 1873 the church members constructed a clapboard church building, which would have been an improvement over the old log structure. A major concern of the Dallas Methodist Circuit involved the need for new church buildings during this period and also that the Circuit has legal ownership of the land. No deed transaction has surfaced involving the "Old Log Church". It most probably rested upon the land of Newman Alexander. Alexander, had married Catherine Carpenter, and purchased in 1834 a 150 acre tract from his brother-in-law, Thomas Carpenter. In 1854 Alexander sold this land to E. C. Evans. When Evans died in 1859, the land went to Emmanuel Aderholdt. Throughout all these transactions no mention of a church has been found. It is possible that Alexander may have been a Methodist and encouraged the creation of a Methodist Church upon his arrival to the area. It should also be noted that when Thomas Carpenter, brother-in-law of Newman Alexander, moved to Blount County, Tennessee he helped found a Methodist Church there.[10]

The need for the congregation to have a legal deed to the property of their new church became apparent. In 1875 Marcus L. Carpenter, lay preacher and leader of Landers Chapel Church, deeded two acres to "(M. L. Carpenter, Col. Wm. Morris, Moses Stroup Jun., Oliver Davis, & Jackson Falls.) Trustees of the church property in Dallas Circuit North Carolina Conference, of the Methodist Episcopal Church South." The deed was a gift "for the use of religious worship". The land would be sufficient for a cemetery. Apparently members of the church had been buried in local family cemeteries prior to this date. The earliest marked tombstone in the cemetery was "Margaret T. K.

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[10] Carpenter, *Landers Chapel*, pp. 20-25. Carpenter, *Carpenters A Plenty*, pp. 179-182.

Rhyne, daughter of T. L. Rhyne, born December 30, 1873, died July 22, 1875". While there are a number of unmarked graves, it is assumed that burials at the church did not start until the land was properly deeded. There are a total of 266 graves as of 1991 cemetery census.[11]

The congregation held obvious pride in their new church building. The new church also became the site of Sunday Schools. These new church meetings were held in the summers. In 1890 Landers Chapel had 98 church members, 7 Sunday school officers and teachers, and 83 Sunday school participants. In 1887 the church also organized its first women's organization: "Women's Missionary Society". Previously in 1873 a congregational son became licensed as a local preacher. He was Marcus L. Carpenter, who had deeded the land for the church and cemetery. The congregation also experienced financial difficulties during these years. In 1890 Landers Chapel was one of two churches which failed to reach its financial goal for the circuit.[12]

Landers Chapel School continued to serve the community during these years. It is assumed that the "Old Log Church" or another log structure served as the school building even after the construction of the new church and until a new school building was built. In the spring of 1882 a new school building was constructed. It was located about one eighth of a mile northeast of the present church building near the residence of Henry and Carrie Pasour. Trustees for the school were Julius Alexander, Henry Kiser, and Zachary T. Pasour. Sidney Mauney taught summer school in the new school building. Various teachers served the school during this period, including teachers from the community such as William Kiser, David Froneberger, Luther M. Kiser, Luther Pasour, Rufus

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[11] Carpenter, *Landers Chapel*, pp. 26-28.
[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 29-35.

Carpenter, and Augustus B. Kiser. In 1906 a clapboard school building was constructed. The school was located on a lot next to Landers Chapel Church. The Gaston County Board of Education purchased the land from Jacob E. and Sarah Senter for $10. This frame structure consisted of two rooms and the school employed two teachers for the first time. This new frame school served the community well until a newer brick building replaced it.[13] The reason for the replacement remains unknown.

In 1912 construction began on the fifth and final schoolhouse in the Landers Chapel area. This brick veneer school held four rooms. The imposing structure was also located beside Landers Chapel Church and is the current school building. The school taught all grades through high school. The grade configuration continued until 1922. In that year a new high school was constructed in the community. It was named Tryon School and was located across the road from the location of the old Tryon Courthouse site. The new high school consolidated a number of smaller schools in the area. High school students no longer attended Landers Chapel but attended Tryon High School some five miles away.[14]

The consolidation process continued. In 1938 construction began on a newer elementary school adjacent to Tryon High School. This newer elementary school, Tryon Elementary School, replaced a number of small elementary schools like Landers Chapel. In 1940 the WPA constructed school opened and Landers Chapel Elementary School closed its doors to students.[15]

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[13] *Ibid.*, 17. Clyde V. and Alna L. Kiser, ed., *Kiser-Carpenter Chronicle*, (Privately published: Bessemer City, NC 1983), pp. 143-145. Amy Carpenter and Robert C. Carpenter, "The History of Tryon School and Community", in *The Gaston County Historical Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1985, p. 4. *Gaston County's Educational Heritage*. Gaston County, Register of Deeds, Book 440, p. 360.

[14] Oscar Lee Kiser, "The Growth and Development of Education in Gaston County", (Master's Thesis: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Chapel Hill, NC, 1928, p. 61.

[15] Amy Carpenter and Robert C. Carpenter, "History of Tryon School".

While Landers Chapel School building no longer served students, it remained a viable structure. It became a home for a family. On July 22, 1943, the Gaston County Board of Education sold the property to Willaree Tate for $700.00. Ms. Tate used the building as a family dwelling until September 5, 1972 when she sold the property to the Trustees of Landers Chapel United Methodist Church. The school building and 1.7 acres of land were purchased for $20,000 of which $1000 was returned to the church for repairs. The church conference voted in favor of the resolution with 44 in favor and 17 opposed.[16]

The church appointed Norman Rash to head a committee to repair and renovate the old school building so that the congregation might use it as a fellowship hall and for other uses. In 1978 the building was officially designated the Richard Smith Sr. Fellowship Center, named after a member who had contributed much time and energy toward its completion. Following the renovation the church used the old school building as was intended. In addition the building was used as the voting place for the Landers Chapel precinct. Other community activities included community Halloween festivals, dinners, and Christmas Parties.[17]

While Landers Chapel School converted from a Gaston County public school to a private residence and then to Landers Chapel Church property, the congregation continued to grow. The membership recognized the need for a new church building at about the same time the new school building was built. While reasons for a new church are not fully understood, it may be surmised that the frame church building had grown old, had little room for Sunday School rooms or fellowship activities, and was too small

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[16] Carpenter. *Landers Chapel*, pp. 54-55. See Chain of Title for details concerning land transfers.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

for the growing congregation. The congregation wanted a more modern looking building. In fact they wanted a brick veneer building like the schoolhouse. The Rev. J. E. B. Houser was instrumental in leading the congregation through the building process. In 1922 Rev. Houser began clamoring for a new church building and committees were appointed the next year to begin the process. Members were asked to subscribe starting on August 12, 1923. On December 8, 1924, the first work on the new church building began. Church members built the church. Timber was cut from the members' land; sand was hauled from local creeks. Brick was hauled and walls erected. On July 15, 1925, the first service was held in the new brick church, the funeral of long time member Julius Alexander. On September 12 of the same year the cornerstone was laid with various church documents and memorabilia included in it.[18] The new church building was a source of pride for the congregation and community.

The immediate area had become recognized as the Landers Chapel Community. This designation certainly involved the church and school located close together. But other organizations found a home here: 4-H club, Extension Home Demonstration Club, Farmer's Union, election polling place, day care center and Baptist Church. Across the road a cotton gin served the local farmers and a small store was located a short distance to the south. The community could come to this general area for most of their needs. The church was constructed well. The logs were sawed into timbers by the members, who put them into place. Sand came from nearby streams; brick and mortar was shipped by rail to Long Shoals and carried overland. The interior walls were plaster; the roof was covered with tin shingles (the Dallas shingles made locally). In addition to the sanctuary, Sunday School rooms were added in the rear. Chimneys were constructed so that a large

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

wood burning stove would provide heat in the winter.[19] The new church truly added to the growing Landers Chapel Community.

By 1930 Landers Chapel Methodist Church reported 103 members, a fairly high number as compared to other rural Methodist congregations. The need for a fellowship hall became an issue for the congregation in the 1950's. The discussions were heated with older members opposing the church acquiring debt. On October 25, 1952, the building plan for a fellowship hall was approved with only 18 no votes out of 55 total cast. Members once again supported the effort by cutting timber and assisting with construction. Seth Lumber Company received the construction contract and the addition was completed in two years. The new addition included a basement fellowship hall, a kitchen, office, indoor toilets, and 10 classrooms. On May 30, 1954, the congregation used the addition for the first time. The addition matched the church sanctuary since it was brick veneer and attached to the church building.[20]

In 1959 the congregation approved interior renovation of the sanctuary. Other improvements during these years included paving the parking lot and addition of bathrooms in the basement fellowship hall. The church also acquired additional property during this period. As previously discussed in 1972 the church acquired the Landers Chapel Schoolhouse property and began using the schoolhouse for various church and community functions. In 1959 the S. L. Carpenter estate gave the church as a gift land across the road where the cotton gin had been located. Additional land was also purchased from the Henry Payseur estate. The membership hoped to construct a parsonage on this property at a future date. In 1976 Ann Spargo Withers gave a tract of

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[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 37-41.
[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 51-54.

land to the church on the northeast side of the church property which would allow for cemetery expansion and give the church a buffer against development. In 1979 the congregation improved the cemetery by planting grass and limiting burial privileges. By this time the church property had grown from two acres to more than six acres.[21] The church holdings include the church and educational building, the Landers Chapel School, and the large cemetery.

The Landers Chapel Church property holds unique historical value. It re-creates a social and religious order of a by-gone era. The membership of the Landers Chapel Methodist Church has wrestled with growth and how to address issues in our changing landscape. Farmers no longer dominate the membership. Children often go to college not to return to their ancestral homes and church membership. Landers Chapel congregation has taken at least three stands since 2001 on how the schoolhouse will be used to serve the church's ministry. The first vote in 2001 was to demolish the building. One year later the Landers Chapel Church Conference allowed interested citizens to raise money to stabilize the school. Fund raisers including suppers, gospel sings, and yard sales, coupled with individual donations, met the goal of $15,000 raised locally. The Duke Foundation had committed $90,000 over three years for restoration of the school. On January 2, 2005, the church conference met and voted 26 against continuing with the renovation project and 14 to continue. Subsequent Administrative Council minutes reflect that the $15,000 will be held for at least three months to determine what to do with the funds.[22]

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[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 54-56.

[22] Church documents in possession of Rev. Duane Flynn, Landers Chapel Methodist Church.

This historic designation by the Gaston County Historic Preservation Commission involves the church, school, and cemetery. It includes the land owned by Landers Chapel Methodist Church. Designation signifies the significance of church, school, and cemetery as they relate to each other. Each hold historical and cultural significance and are due recognition.

Architectural Description

Site Description

The Landers Chapel Schoolhouse is set back about 75 yards from the northwest side of the intersection of Long Shoals Road and High Shoals Road, and is built on a hillside. The thinly treed lot is level with the road to the front of the schoolhouse. The lot drops at a 45 degree angle towards the rear of the property. The front of the building is one story while the rear is two story. An unpaved circular driveway arches in front of the schoolhouse. The Landers Chapel Schoolhouse faces southeast toward Long Shoals Road. There is a square brick structure (less than four feet high) to the west side of time schoolhouse, possibly an abandoned well. Other buildings, located on the plat, are the Landers Chapel United Methodist Church, a small metal covered shelter to the rear of the church, and the Landers Chapel United Methodist Church Cemetery.

Physical Description

The present church structure is the third to house the Landers Chapel congregation established in 1835. This Gothic Revival church was built in 1925 and dedicated May 29, 1927. The brick church has a cruciform plan with a cross gable and patterned tin shingle roof. [xix] A turreted central entrance tower projects from the gable front. Arch-headed windows and a fanlight above the entrance are found in the first stage of the tower. The second stage contains a rectangular ventilator on each side with a circular window above the entrance. Windows in the main block of the building are accented by brick hoodmolds, and rectangular windows are found in the side wings and rear of the church. A two-story (southeast or front facing façade) semi-subterranean brick block was added at the rear in 1950 to house classrooms. The cemetery nearby contains notable stones of the mid-to-late nineteenth century. [xx]

The Landers Chapel Schoolhouse is built in common bond brick with the sixth course headers. It is five bays wide with a central hip dormer projecting from the low hip roof. Two interior chimneys pierce the roof. The central three bays are sheltered by a hip roofed porch supported by square piers and contain the front entrance at the center. The rails that run along the steps leading to the porch are black wrought iron and are most probably replacements. The porch is supported by four square wooden columns.

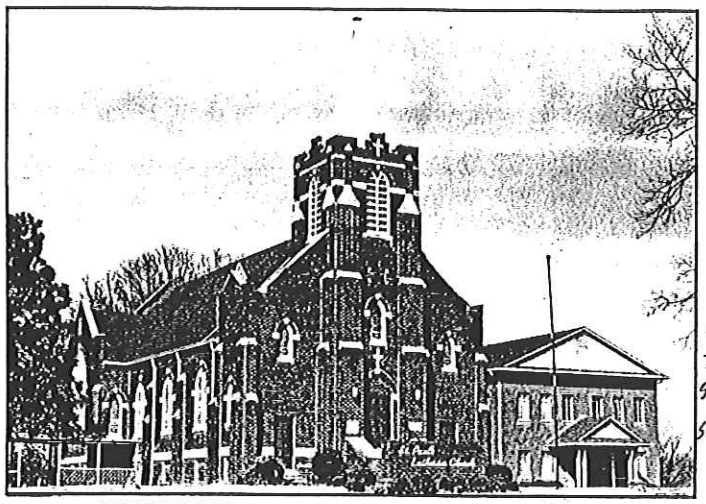
The glass paned front door is flanked by 4/1 shuttered windows and pairs of 4/1 shuttered windows to the left and right. The building faces south. The front door is a 15 pane glass door set within a wooden frame. The hip roof is unusual in that it has a rectangular dormer window (4 pane) and also has a smaller roof atop.

To the west side of the structure we find a flagstone covered balcony surrounded by a wrought iron railing, most probably a later addition. To the right of the door, covered by an exterior steel screen door, is a single 4/1 window, and to the left are two paired 4/I windows. On the lower level of the west side is a metal door.

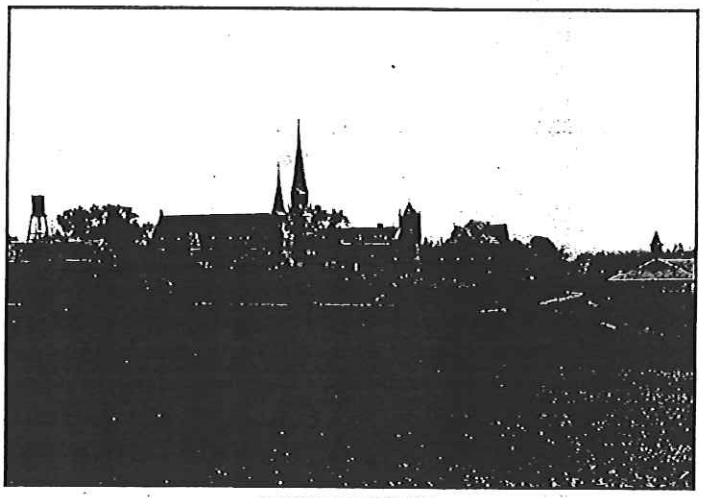
The rear of the schoolhouse (north side) shows dramatic signs of change. The upper portion contains a large area of major brickwork replacement. There is one remaining pair of 4/1 window. The lower rear level also shows clear signs of brick replacement in window casements with only one door remaining.

The east side of the schoolhouse structure also bears evidence of replacement brick work. There is one 4/1 window and a paired 3/3 set of windows.

Evidently two classrooms occupied the front of the building adjacent to the front door and central hall. The large room across the rear was used as an auditorium and gymnasium on the upper level. It is not clear what the lower level was used for, but it may have been for storage.

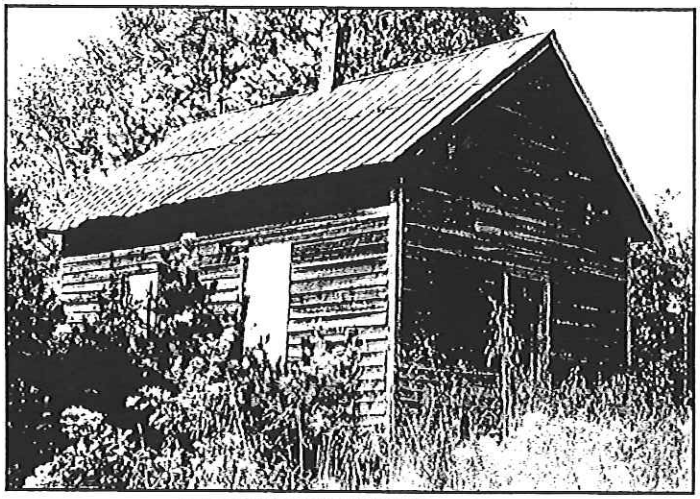


SAINT PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (CHERRYVILLE TOWNSHIP)



BELMONT ABBEY COLLEGE

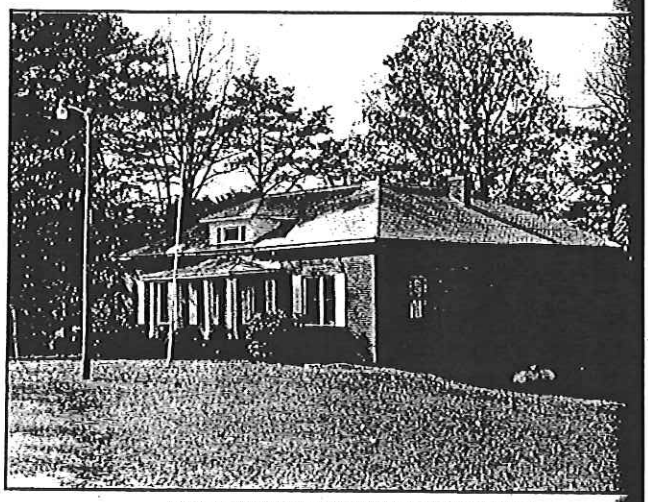
later to be known as Belmont Abbey College, on a farm north of the present city limits of Belmont. Catholicism was unusual in piedmont North Carolina, and a college in such an undeveloped setting as 1870s Gaston County was most unusual. The college flourished and in 1892 saw the construction of the imposing brick Gothic Revival church which dominates its surroundings. Belmont Abbey also provided Gaston County with one of its few early local architects in Michael Joseph McInerny, O.S.B. (1877-1963), who designed most of the school's twentieth century structures as well as designing a large portion of nearby Sacred Heart College (see Belmont essay).



BLACK SCHOOLHOUSE (CHERRYVILLE TOWNSHIP)

Rural education in Gaston County in the late nineteenth ce generally took place in small frame buildings of one or two ro These small schoolhouses were scattered across the countrysid reflecting the county's growth between 1880 and 1900, numbers increased from 65 to 101.[103] Very few of these stru have survived, and many have been moved and put to use as outbuildings, disguising their original function. The two k schoolhouses dating from the turn of the century are the Schoolhouse and Hickory Grove School (both Cherryville Towns

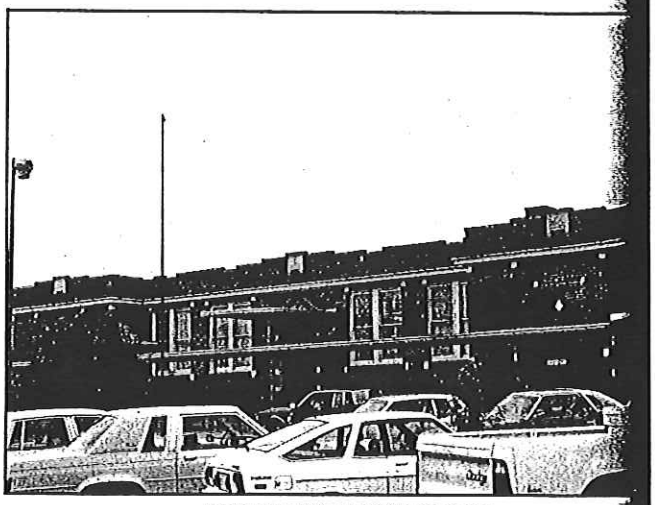
The decade after 1910 was one of significant growth in N. Carolina public schools. A tax was levied to enable scho to lengthen their terms and laws were enacted requiring s school attendance.[104] Several rural schools of the early 1910s have s survived, the least altered being the Lander's Chapel School (Cher Township), built in 1912. Two teachers taught thirty students o



LANDER'S CHAPEL SCHOOL (CHERRYVILLE TOWNSHIP)

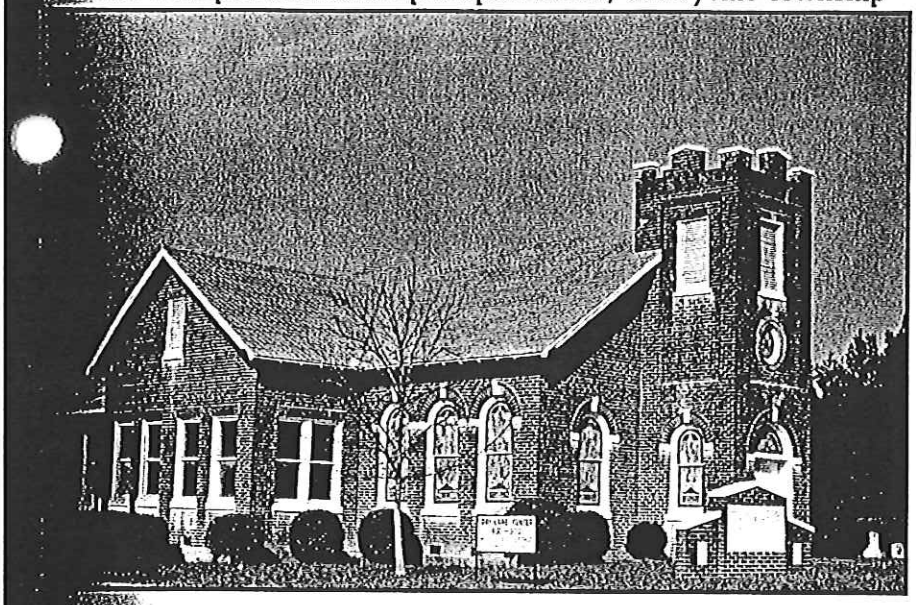
ages six to fourteen in two classrooms and a large room which s served as a combined auditorium/gymnasium. The brick building has a low hip roof with a central hip dormer and is of almost identical d design to the Willis School (Dallas Township).

The early 1920's saw dramatic changes in public educat North Carolina. Rural schools across the state were consolida to countywide school systems at the encouragement of the which made available $10,000,000 in loans to the counties fo construction of new schools.[105] Gaston County had a large bu program in the 1920's, which resulted in the erection of brick s buildings all across the county. In the urban and rural areas



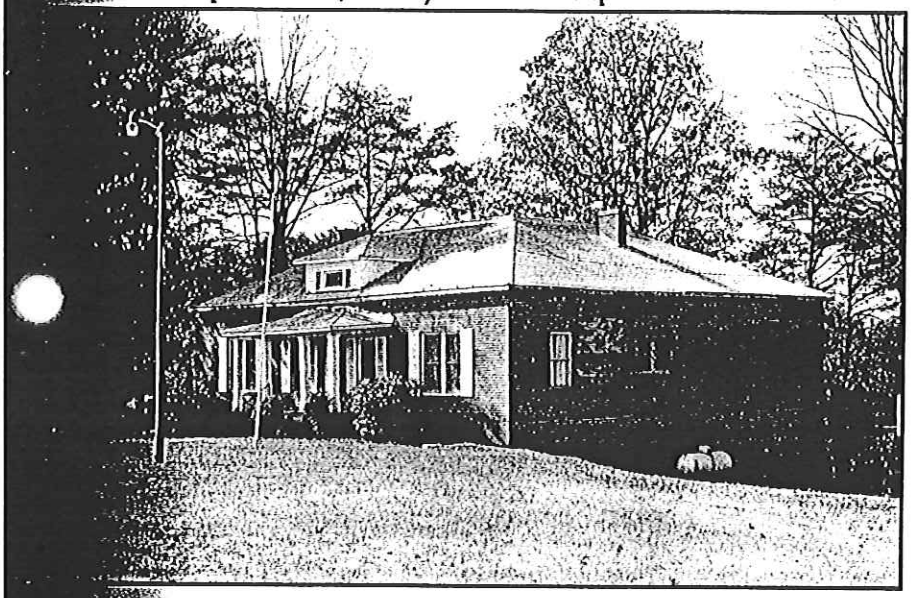
ROBINSON SCHOOL (GASTONIA TOWNSHIP)

18 Lander's Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church, Cherryville Township



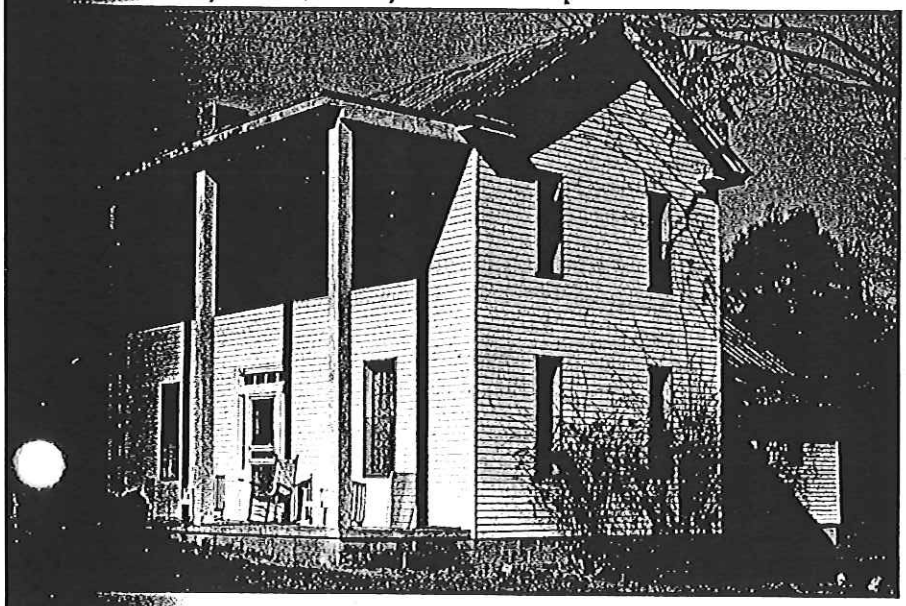
The third structure to house the Lander's Chapel congregation established in 1835, this Gothic Revival church was built in 1925. The congregation met first in a bruch arbor on this site, and later in a plank church. The brick church has a cruciform plan with a cross gable, patterned tin shingle roof. A turretted central entrance tower projects from the gable front. Arch-headed windows and a fanlight above the entrance are found in the first stage of the tower. The second stage contains a rectangular ventilator on each side, with a circular window above the entrance. Arch-headed windows accented by brick hoodmolds are used in the main block of the building, while rectangular windows are found in the side wings and rear of the church. A one-story brick block was added at the rear in 1950 to house classrooms. The cemetery nearby contains notable stones of the mid-to-late-nineteenth century.

Lander's Chapel School, Cherryville Township

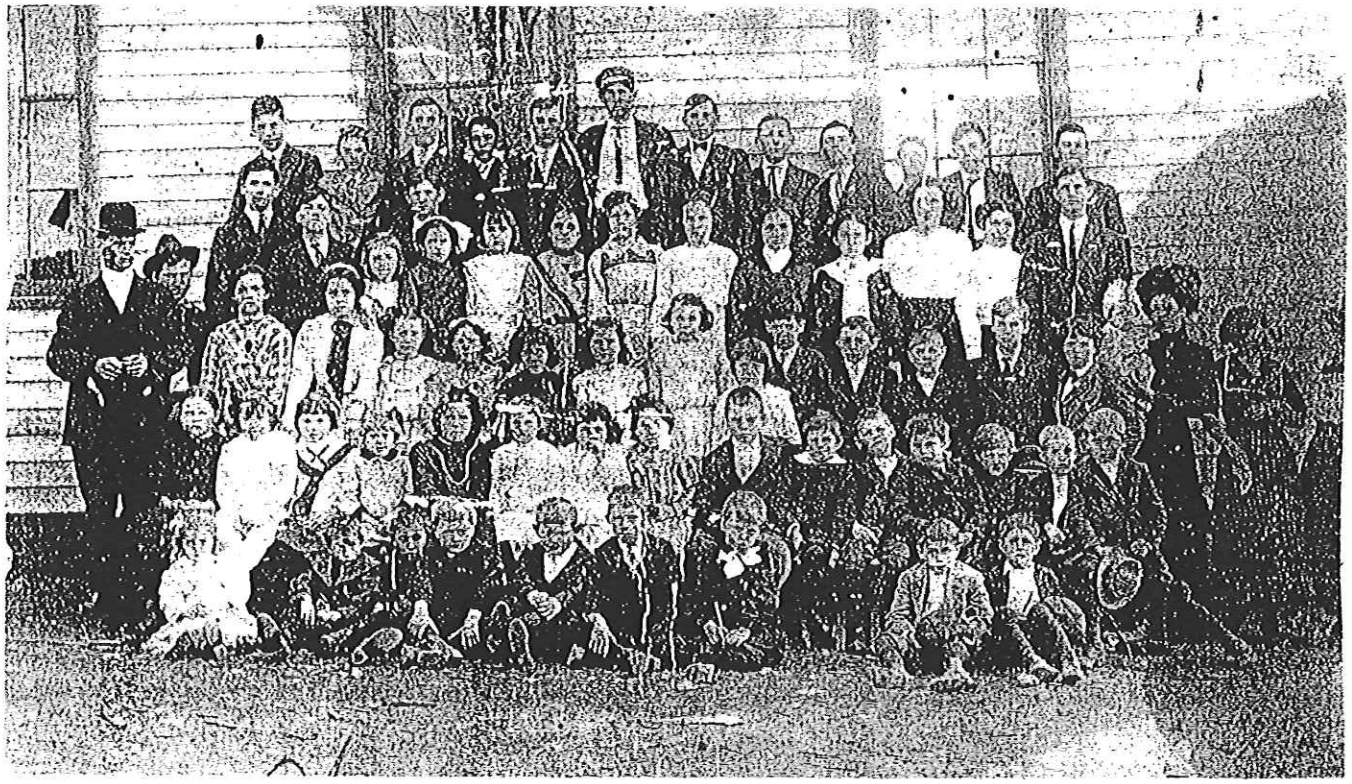


Built in 1912, this small brick schoolhouse is typical of Gaston County's rural schools of the early twentieth century. Two teachers and about 30 students of ages 6-14 occupied the two classrooms at the front of the building. The large room across the rear was used as an auditorium and gymnasium. Built on a hillside, the front of the building is one story, while the rear is two stories. It is five bays wide, with a central hip dormer projecting from the low hip roof. The central three-bays are sheltered by a hip roofed porch supported by square piers.

16b Mauney House, Cherryville Township



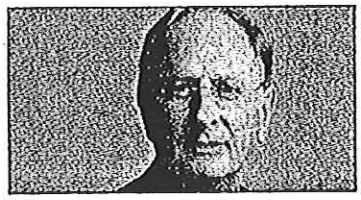
Built by Caleb Mauney in the last quarter of the 19th century, this two-story three-bay frame house is typical of the simple farmhouses of the late 19th century. The central entrance is framed by sidelights and a transom. The two-story portico is a recent addition. Long narrow window openings are typical of the period. The interior has flush board walls and ceilings, and simple mantels are found in each room. A log smoke house stands behind the house.



Landers Chapel School 1912

The year was 1912 when the above students of Landers Chapel School posed for this picture. Two classes met in the old one-room schoolhouse and Leonard Paysour said it was his first year of school. Forest Crouse and Miss Mundy were the teachers.

COMMENTARY



Joe DePriest

This old house is a keeper

Not every old building is worth saving. The ones that make the cut have to do more than look pretty.

The two-room 1912 school beside Lander's Chapel United Methodist Church in northwest Gaston County probably wouldn't be standing if the church hadn't bought it in 1972. And the building probably wouldn't have been a restoration project if the church hadn't wanted to grow. That's why the old school is worth saving: Its transformation into a community center can help a rural church survive.

You have to hand it to Lander's Chapel church. They have a big job ahead of them. Restoring a two-room school might not seem all that complicated, but it is. The church is small, only 140 members, most of whom are over 60 and on fixed incomes.

Pastor Duane Flynn said the church needs more programs to attract young families, but there's no room. Building a new fellowship hall from scratch would cost about $1 million; restoring the old school from $150,000 to $300,000. Either way, it's a big financial commitment for a small congregation.

They could keep their money and let things ride, but Flynn said the church would eventually die. And this church wants to live.

It's been around since 1835 in the heart of a farm community between Cherryville and High Shoals. The school was a community hub until it closed in the early 1940s and was used as a residence. Four other two-room schools were built in the county. Three are gone and the other remodeled into a private home.

Lander's Chapel School still looks the same on the outside as it did when it was a school. The church plans to retain that look during the restoration project.

The church and the school tied the community together in the past, and they can keep doing that in different ways as the community changes.

Lander's Chapel hopes to get one-third of the restoration money from grants, and the rest from private donations. In February, they voted to raise $15,000 to stabilize the school. So far, they've taken in $9,000 from bake sales, yard sales and donations.

On Saturday, they hope to raise another $9,000 at a gospel and bluegrass concert. George Hamilton IV and the Cockman Family are among acts performing for free.

It's risky sinking all that money into an old school building, but it's a good investment in that one little corner of Gaston County. We could use more investments like that.

Joe DePriest: (704) 868-7745;
jdepriest@charlotteobserver.com

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office
Peter B. Sandbeck, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

Office of Archives and History
Division of Historical Resources
David L. S. Brook, Director

May 27, 2005

Lucy Penegar, Chair
Gaston County Historic Preservation Commission
737 Ferguson Ridge Rd.
Gastonia NC 28052

Re: **Landmark designation report for Landers Chapel Methodist Church, Cemetery, and School House, 1205 Long Shoals Road, Gaston County**

Dear Ms. Penegar:

Thank you for the landmark designation report for Landers Chapel Methodist Church, Cemetery, and School House. We have reviewed the information and offer the following comments in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 160A-400.6.

Built in 1925, Landers Chapel Methodist Church is the third sanctuary of a Methodist congregation founded in 1835 by Samuel Lander Sr. The brick building was erected by members of the congregation and is a well-preserved rural church of the early twentieth century distinguished by handsome brickwork, arched windows, a cruciform plan, and a prominent crenellated front entrance tower. The cemetery contains graves of church members dating to 1875. The adjacent Landers Chapel School was built in 1912 as a public school, but was an outgrowth of private subscription schools that had been conducted in the community since the 1830s. The building became a private residence after public schools were consolidated in 1940, and was purchased by the church in 1972 for use as a fellowship hall and community center. The brick building contained two classrooms in front and a combination auditorium and gymnasium across the rear. The exterior is well-preserved and an excellent example of a small rural public school of the period. Together, the church, cemetery, and school retain the once-common pairing of churches and schools and represent the character of rural life in Gaston County in the early twentieth century. The report provides the Gaston County Historic Preservation Commission and the Gaston County Board of Commissioners adequate information to deem that Landers Chapel Methodist Church, Cemetery, and School House have the requisite special significance and integrity for landmark designation.

Landmark designation means the community recognizes this property as an important historic resource worthy of preservation. Any substantial exterior design changes to a designated landmark are subject to the design review procedures of the preservation commission. Owners of designated landmarks that are subject to property tax may apply for annual deferral of fifty percent of the property taxes for as long as the property is designated and retains significance and integrity.

Please note that if the Board of Commissioners wishes to extend the preservation commission's design review authority to significant features of the interior, the owner must give written consent. The designation ordinance must specify the features and describe the nature of the Commission's design review authority over them.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the report. Our comments are advisory only. Once the necessary public hearing or hearings have been held, the Board of Commissioners may proceed with the designation decision.

When the Board of Commissioners has concluded its action on the designation ordinance, please complete and return the confirmation form enclosed with this letter.

Should you have any questions about our comments, please feel free to contact me at 919-733-6545.

Sincerely,

Michael T. Southern, Supervisor
Survey and Planning Branch
State Historic Preservation Office

MTS/dc

Enclosures