

## CAPSULE SUMMARY

BA-3126

St. Stephen's A.M.E. Church

1601 Old Eastern Avenue

Essex, Baltimore County

Private

St. Stephen's first began in 1870 as a small congregation of a few members whom gathered in family homes to worship. The size of this congregation grew and by 1878 an official church was constructed to hold the worshipping members. This church was replaced in 1907 and again in 1972. It was under Reverend Reginald Boston that the congregation began to consider plans for replacing the wood-frame church of 1907. The current church was built in 1966 under the pastorate of Reverend Richard P. Hall. A total of 43 pastors have served St. Stephen's beginning in 1878. St. Stephen's African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church is not depicted on the 1915 Baltimore County Atlas other than as a 'colored school.' The cemetery is marked as adjacent to the school on the Bromley Atlas. Neither the school house nor the cemetery are depicted on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas of Baltimore County. The area became thickly settled sometime between the last quarter of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century.

St. Stephen's A.M.E. Church, built in 1966, is a one-story high church clad with a brick exterior capped with a front-gable roof typical of many African American churches throughout Baltimore County. It measures four bays deep and three bays across on the façade. The original church rests on a brick foundation and the roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles. The 1/1 windows are vinyl-sash and are visually supported with rowlock sills. Atop the roof is a pyramidal steeple. The façade has a central double-leaf entrance flanked by two 1/1 windows. A large multi-faceted addition was constructed on the rear elevation in 1994. This section of the church is constructed of concrete and rests on a concrete foundation.

A small cemetery stands to the rear (northeast) of St. Stephen's A.M.E. Church. The cemetery contains approximately 20 markers. Most of the headstones are flat markers while others are either upright or tilted. The oldest grave appears to belong to Johnson from the early 20th century. It is most likely that there are many interments in this cemetery that are unmarked, a common practice throughout Baltimore County African American burial sites. The last burial in St. Stephen's cemetery was in 1989.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-3126

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic St. Stephen's A.M.E. Church

other

### 2. Location

street and number 1601 Old Eastern Avenue not for publication

city, town Essex vicinity

county Baltimore County

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name St. Stephens A.M.E. Church

street and number 1603 Old Eastern Avenue telephone Not Available

city, town Baltimore state MD zip code 21221-2602

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse tax map and parcel: 90/524

city, town Towson liber n/a folio n/a

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District  
 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
 Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
 Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
 Recorded by HABS/HAER  
 Historic Structure Report or Research Report  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
			Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic		
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> funerary	2	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> government		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care		
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry		
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape		
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture		
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion		
		<input type="checkbox"/> social		
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress		
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
			<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>	
			0	

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## 7. Description

Inventory No. BA-3126

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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

St. Stephen's African Methodist Episcopal Church, at 1601 Old Eastern Avenue in Essex, was built in 1966. This one-story high church is clad with a brick exterior and features a front-gable roof typical of many African American churches throughout Baltimore County. It measures four bays deep and three bays across on the façade. The original church rests on a brick foundation and the roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles. The 1/1 windows are vinyl-sash and are visually supported with rowlock sills. Atop the roof is a pyramidal steeple. The façade has a central double-leaf entrance flanked by two 1/1 windows. A large multi-faceted addition was constructed on the rear elevation in 1994. This section of the church is constructed of concrete and rests on a concrete foundation.

A small cemetery stands to the rear (northeast) of St. Stephen's A.M.E. Church. The cemetery contains approximately 20 markers. Most of the headstones are flat markers while others are either upright or tilted. The oldest grave appears to belong to Johnson from the early 20th century. It is most likely that there are many interments in this cemetery that are unmarked, a common practice throughout Baltimore County African American burial sites. The last burial in St. Stephen's cemetery was in 1989.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-3126

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

<b>Specific dates</b>	1878,1907,1966	<b>Architect/Builder</b>	Unknown
<b>Construction dates</b>	1966, 1989		

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

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

St. Stephen's first began in 1870 as a small congregation of a few members whom gathered in family homes to worship. The size of this congregation grew and by 1878 an official church was constructed to hold the worshipping members. The first church was a log structure. The building was three bays wide, one story high, and contained a central entry. The double-leaf paneled wood door was illuminated with a two-light transom. Flanking the entrance were two 6/6 wood-sash windows. The façade was covered with weatherboard siding and the side elevations appear to have been clad with board and batten siding. The gable roof featured overhanging eaves and the parapet façade features scroll-sawn eave brackets. The Baltimore County Public Library Legacy Web has a photographic print of the 1878 log church.(1)

The founding members of St. Stephen's Church were George Howe, Charles Dutton, Daniel E. Camper, John H. Smith, Chales Hamilton, Charles Hawkins, Exeter Smith, John W. Smith, Daniel Evans, Charles Randall, George Young, Reverend and Mrs. Basil Brown, Reverend and Mrs. Washington Brown, Brother Lewis Price. By the end of the first decade of the 20th century Reverend James A. Briscoe, became the first full-time pastor for St. Stephen's Church. It was under his leadership that the log church was replaced.(2)

This church was replaced in 1907 and again in 1972. The new edifice in 1907 was a front-gable roof structure constructed of a wood-frame structural system. Measuring one-story high, three bays wide, and three bays deep this church was pierced with lancet-arched 2/2 wood-sash windows. The center entry was covered with a gable vestibule with a pointed-arch two-light transom and a double-leaf wood door. This church was clad with weatherboard siding. The roof features overhanging eaves, cornice returns, and a bell-tower. The Baltimore County Public Library Legacy Web has a photographic print of the 1907 church.(3)

The next building undertaken by St. Stephen's Church was in 1918 to construct a parsonage under the directorship of Reverend P.O. Bundick. It was under Reverend Reginald Boston that the congregation began to consider plans for replacing the wood-frame church of 1907. The current church was built in 1966 under the pastorate of Reverend Richard P. Hall. A total of 43 pastors have served St. Stephen's beginning in 1878.(4)

The Pastors of St. Stephen's Church include: (5)

Rev. Charles Young

Rev. William Walters

Rev. James E. Williams

Rev. Chris Jones

Rev. James H. Robinson

Rev. James T. Morris

Rev. L.M. Beckett

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No BA-3126

Name St. Stephen's A.M.E. Church

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

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Rev. James T. Gilmore  
Rev. Don Draper  
Rev. J. Brantly  
Rev. J. H. Martin  
Rev. Joseph Nicholas  
Rev. M.W. Travers  
Rev. Henry Dutton  
Rev. Sam Butler  
Rev. J.H. Robinson  
Rev. P.H. Grinage  
Rev. John H. Porter  
Rev. James A. Briscoe  
Rev. T.Sinkfield  
Rev. J.R. Nelson  
Rev. R.A. Green  
Rev. J.W. Armstrong  
Rev. P.H. Green  
Rev. P.O. Bundick  
Rev. William Chew  
Rev. F.L. Hertzfeld  
Rev. J.J. Baker  
Rev. A.A. Murray  
Rev. P.R. Jackson  
Rev. Joseph Gwynn  
Rev. J. Dutton  
Rev. W.J. Dunlap  
Rev. W. Pickett  
Rev. Olen Molock  
Rev. M.B. Simpson  
Rev. C.E. Johnson  
Rev. Reginald Boston  
Rev. Richard P. Hall  
Rev. Oscar Christmas  
Rev. Frederick O. Murphy  
Rev. Dr.  William A. Gray, III

The African Methodist Episcopal Church was started in 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This church was established by African American congregates that seceded from St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Richard Allen (1760-1831), the founder of the newly established church, was born a slave in 1760 and purchased his freedom prior to 1780. It was in 1780 that Allen began preaching and then in 1799 he was officially ordained a minister. The Blacksmith Shop Meeting House was the first church that was organized by Allen and other African American men that left the St. George's M.E. Church. Sited on 6th Street between Lombard and Pine Streets in Philadelphia, the first A.M.E. Church was established and has remained since. The first church was called the Bethel A.M.E. Church beginning in 1791. The African Methodist Episcopal denomination was officially organized in 1816 in Philadelphia and Allen was elected as the first Bishop of the General Conference. Eighteen active Bishops reside over the conferences of the A.M.E. Church and more than a million members are in the church throughout the United States, Canada, South America, West Africa, South African, and the West Indies.(6)

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No BA-3126

Name St. Stephen's A.M.E. Church

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

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St. Stephen's African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church is not depicted on the 1915 Baltimore County Atlas other than as a 'colored school.' The cemetery is marked as adjacent to the school on the Bromley Atlas. Neither the school house nor the cemetery are depicted on the 1877 Hopkins Atlas of Baltimore County. The area became thickly settled sometime between the last quarter of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century.(7)

### ENDNOTES

1. Baltimore County Public Library, "Churches-Methodist-Essex," Baltimore County Legacy Web [home page on-line]; Available from <http://external.bcpl.lib.md.us/hcdo/cfdocs/photopage.cfm?id=18512>; Internet accessed; 10 July 2003.
2. Written unpublished history of St. Stephen's Church provided by a current member of the congregation, (August 18, 2003).
3. Baltimore County Public Library, "Churches-Methodist-Essex," Baltimore County Legacy Web [home page on-line]; Available from <http://external.bcpl.lib.md.us/hcdo/cfdocs/photopage.cfm?id=16199>; Internet accessed; 10 July 2003.
4. Written unpublished history of St. Stephen's Church provided by a current member of the congregation, (August 18, 2003).
5. Written unpublished history of St. Stephen's Church provided by a current member of the congregation, (August 18, 2003).
6. Kristie Baynard, "Lomax African Methodist Episcopal Church," National Register Nomination. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond: April 2003.
7. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland (Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877); Map of Baltimore County (Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915).

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. BA-3126

See continuation sheet.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 1.40 acres

Acreage of historical setting Unknown

Quadrangle name Middle River, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

St. Stephen's A.M.E. Church is located at 1601 Old Eastern Avenue in Essex in the Fifteenth District of Baltimore County. It has historically been associated with tax map 90 and parcel 524 since the construction of the first church in 1878.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Kristie Baynard, Architectural Historian

organization EHT Tracerics

date 7/10/2003

street and number 1121 Fifth Street, NW

telephone 202-393-1199

city or town Washington

state DC zip code 20001

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

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

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville MD 21032  
410-514-7600

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-3126

Name St. Stephen's A.M.E. Church

Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 1

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Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.

Baltimore County Historic Inventory, Office of Planning, Towson.

Baynard, Kristie. Lomax African Methodist Episcopal Church, National Register Nomination. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond: April 2003.

Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. A History of Baltimore County. Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.

Roberts, Keith. A History of the Back River Neck Peninsula. Baltimore, MD: Best Press, 1993.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men. Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

Sidney, J. C. Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys. Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.