

= Capon Chapel =

Capon Chapel (pronunciation : / ˈkeɪpən / KAY @-@ pən) , also historically known as Capon Baptist Chapel and Capon Chapel Church , is a mid @-@ 19th century United Methodist church located near to the town of Capon Bridge , West Virginia in the United States . Capon Chapel is one of the oldest existing log churches in Hampshire County , along with Mount Bethel Church and Old Pine Church .

A Baptist congregation was gathering at the site of the present @-@ day church by at least 1756 . Primitive Baptist minister John Monroe (1750 ? 1824) is credited for establishing a place of worship at this site ; he is interred in the church 's cemetery . The land on which Capon Chapel was built originally belonged to William C. Nixon (1789 ? 1869) , a member of the Virginia House of Delegates ; later , it was transferred to the Pugh family . The first documented mention of a church at the Capon Chapel site was in March 1852 , when Joseph Pugh allocated the land to three trustees for the construction of a church and cemetery .

During the early years of Capon Chapel , no Protestant denomination was the exclusive owner or occupant , and the church was probably utilized as a " union church " for worship by any Christian denomination . Capon Chapel was used as a place of worship by Baptists until the late 19th or early 20th century . In the 1890s , Capon Chapel was added as a place of worship on the Capon Bridge Methodist circuit of the Southern Methodist Episcopal Church . As of 2015 , Capon Chapel remains a Methodist church , now a part of the United Methodist Church , holding Methodist services twice a month .

Capon Chapel 's cemetery is surrounded by a wrought iron fence made by Stewart Iron Works , and contains the remains of John Monroe , William C. Nixon , West Virginia House of Delegates member Captain David Pugh (1806 ? 1899) , American Civil War veterans from the Union and the Confederacy , and free and enslaved African Americans . Capon Chapel , along with its cemetery , was added to the National Register of Historic Places on December 12 , 2012 , in recognition of its representation of the rural religious architecture of the Potomac Highlands region , and for its service as an important rural church in Hampshire County .

= = Geography and setting = =

Capon Chapel and its associated cemetery are located to the east Christian Church Road (West Virginia Secondary Route 13) , approximately 2 @.@ 01 miles (3 @.@ 23 km) south of Capon Bridge and 1 @.@ 14 miles (1 @.@ 83 km) northeast of the unincorporated community of Bubbling Spring in southeastern Hampshire County . Capon Chapel is 894 feet (272 m) east of the Cacapon River , from which the church derives its name . The church and cemetery are situated atop a grassy hill on a 0 @.@ 96 acres (0 @.@ 39 ha) plot of land , at an elevation of 869 feet (265 m) , in a rural agricultural area within the Cacapon River Valley . Dillons Mountain , a forested and narrow anticlinal mountain ridge , rises to the west of the Cacapon River Valley , while the forested , rolling foothills of the anticlinal Timber Ridge rise to the valley 's east .

The church and cemetery are accessible through a gravel driveway to the north ; to the west , a cluster of tall oak trees blocks access to the road . Capon Chapel is landscaped with boxwoods on its north and south sides , a single holly on its east side , and forsythias along its west side . The Capon Chapel property consists of the church structure (c . 1852) , and its associated cemetery , which is enclosed partly by the historic wrought iron fence and partly by a chain link fence . A flagpole stands at the center of the cemetery 's eastern perimeter .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

The land on which Capon Chapel is located was originally part of the Northern Neck Proprietary , a

land grant that Charles II of England awarded to seven of his supporters in 1649 and renewed by an official patent in 1688 . One of these seven supporters , Thomas Colepeper , 2nd Baron Colepeper , acquired the entire area in 1681 ; his grandson , Thomas Fairfax , 6th Lord Fairfax of Cameron , inherited it in 1719 . Under Lord Fairfax 's ownership , the Cacapon River Valley was predominantly inhabited by English @-@ speaking settlers as early as the late 1730s . The majority of these settlers had come from Pennsylvania and New Jersey , many of whom were either Quakers or former Quakers who were attracted to the Baptist and Methodist denominations .

= = = Baptist affiliation = = =

The Baptists established the oldest extant churches in Hampshire County . After the end of the American Revolutionary War , Baptist preachers continued their attempt to gain a foothold in what is now the Eastern Panhandle region . During the Baptists ' early growth in Hampshire County , the best known Baptist ministers were John Monroe (1750 ? 1824) and Benjamin Stone (1743 ? 1842) . Monroe preached at the North River , Crooked Run , and Patterson 's Creek churches during the early 19th century . According to historians Hu Maxwell and Howard Llewellyn Swisher in History of Hampshire County , West Virginia (1897) , Monroe was a minister for Primitive Baptists , who were adherent to a strict interpretation of the Calvinist theology of the Kotocton Association . Monroe probably established a Baptist church on the site of the present @-@ day Capon Chapel , where he is buried in the church 's cemetery . However , other sources claim that a Baptist congregation began gathering at the Capon Chapel site as early as 1756 .

Increased settlement and the arrival of other religious denominations in the Cacapon River Valley were further facilitated following the completion of the Northwestern Turnpike in the 1830s , which connected Parkersburg with Winchester . A small community began to develop near the turnpike 's Cacapon River crossing , 2 @. @ 01 miles (3 @. @ 23 km) north of Capon Chapel 's present @-@ day location . The community later became the town of Capon Bridge .

The land on which Capon Chapel was built belonged to William C. Nixon (1789 ? 1869) , a member of the Virginia House of Delegates . Nixon 's mother @-@ in @-@ law , Elizabeth Caudy (1773 ? 1816) , was the first person to be buried in the church 's cemetery . While various sources estimate that Capon Chapel was built around the 1750s , there is no physical or documentary evidence to support this claim . The first documented mention of a church at the Capon Chapel site was in March 1852 , when Joseph Pugh allocated 88 and one @-@ half poles , or approximately 0 @. @ 55 acres (2 @, @ 200 m2) , to three trustees : David Pugh , another David Pugh , and Robert Pugh . The Pugh family , which was of Welsh descent , were early settlers in the Cacapon River Valley , and were one of the families that came from Wales through Pennsylvania in the late 17th century . The grant 's deed told the trustees to conceive " a Graveyard and for a house for the Public Worship of Almighty God for the use of all orthodox Christians " , and specified that the land was only to be used for religious worship and " for no other purpose " . The deed further stipulated that inheritors of the land had to be Pugh 's descendants .

During the church 's early years , no Protestant denomination was the exclusive owner or occupant of Capon Chapel , which indicates that the church was probably utilized as a " union church " for worship by any Christian denomination . Since no single denomination oversaw the church during this early period , few records of its early activities and construction exist . Later records suggest that Capon Chapel was used as a place of worship by Baptists until the late 19th or early 20th century . While it remains unclear why or how the church became associated with the Baptists , its use by the denomination is possibly associated with the Second Great Awakening , a Protestant revival movement during the early @-@ to @-@ mid 19th century that gained momentum throughout the United States . According to the December 1904 issue of The Baptist Home Mission Monthly , the Baptist Little Cacapon Church contributed one dollar to the general fund of Capon Chapel , demonstrating that the Baptist community still continued to operate from or associate with the church in 1904 .

= = = Methodist affiliation = = =

In addition to the Baptist faith , Methodists started coming to the Cacapon River Valley during the latter half of the 18th century . Methodist Episcopal Church circuit rider Francis Asbury traveled through the Capon Bridge area in 1781 . In 1890 , the Southern Methodist Episcopal Church established its presence in the Capon Bridge area under the leadership of G. O. Homan . According to Maxwell and Swisher , the Capon Bridge Methodist circuit consisted of the following places in 1897 : Capon Bridge , North River Mills , Green Mound , Augusta , Sedan , Park 's Hollow , Sandy Ridge , and Capon Chapel . Capon Chapel was not commonly used as a Baptist place of worship by the early 20th century , and developed into a permanent stop along the Capon Bridge Methodist circuit , which later grew to include Central Church at Loom and Bethel Church at Neals Run . In 1976 , the circuit 's pastor was Thomas Malcolm .

Capon Chapel remains a Methodist church , now a part of the United Methodist Church . As of 2015 , Capon Chapel 's congregation numbers five . The church 's Methodist circuit pastor is M. Christopher Duckworth ; and it offers services four Sundays a month . A small group of committed congregants maintain the historic church and cemetery grounds . Brenda Hiatt is the church 's caretaker , as of 2015 . Throughout its existence , Capon Chapel has been known by various names , including " Capon Baptist Chapel " and " Capon Chapel Church " .

= = = Preservation = = =

According to the church 's caretaker , Brenda Hiatt , the church 's roof and siding were installed around 1900 . A wrought iron fence , made by Stewart Iron Works in Cincinnati , Ohio , was installed around the church 's cemetery . Electrical conduits were added to the interior of the church when it was electrified around 1930 , and further electrical updates were made in 2011 . The church 's perimeter foundation of concrete blocks replaced the original stone piers in the early 1970s , and its wide , heart pine plank floors were sanded and re @-@ lacquered . Around 1990 , the Stewart Iron Works fence and gate were restored by White ? s Ornamental Ironworks .

In 2008 , following surveys of historic properties throughout the county , the Hampshire County Historic Landmarks Commission and the Hampshire County Commission embarked upon an initiative to place structures and districts on the National Register of Historic Places . The county received funding for the surveys from the State Historic Preservation Office of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History . Capon Chapel was one of the first of eight historic properties to be considered for placement on the register . The other seven properties were Fort Kuykendall , Hickory Grove , Hook Tavern , North River Mills Historic District , Old Pine Church , Springfield Brick House , and Valley View . According to the Hampshire County Commission 's compliance officer , Charles Baker , places of worship were not typically selected for inclusion in the register ; however , Capon Chapel and Old Pine Church were exceptions , because both " started out as meeting houses " . Capon Chapel is among the earliest existing log churches in Hampshire County , along with Mount Bethel Church and Old Pine Church . Capon Chapel was added to the National Register of Historic Places on December 12 , 2012 , in recognition of its representation of the rural religious architecture of the Potomac Highlands region , and for its service as an important rural church in Hampshire County .

= = Architecture = =

Capon Chapel is a single @-@ story , rectangular , front gable log building , covered with white @-@ painted wooden clapboard siding , and topped with a green standing seam metal roof , along with metal snow guards .

= = = Exterior = = =

The church 's main façade is located on its east side , facing toward Timber Ridge , and away from the Cacapon River and Christian Church Road . The east side consists of a front gable façade of

white @-@ painted clapboard siding . The church has one entryway , which is a centrally @-@ located , four @-@ paneled wooden door , topped by wooden dentil molding and a rectangular , four @-@ light transom window . The transom is the only window on the church 's east side . Unpainted wooden railings are on each side of the entryway . The clapboard siding on the church 's east side is horizontal , and varies between 5 and 7 inches (13 and 18 cm) in width . The overhanging eave of the church 's roof is accentuated by a single wooden drop pendant at the top of the gable . The modern electricity meter is located to the right of the main entrance . The non @-@ loadbearing concrete block perimeter wall on this side is concealed by a stone veneer .

The west elevation is covered with white @-@ painted clapboarding and is undecorated , with the exception of an off @-@ center concrete block chimney and a single drop pendant similar to the one located at the top of the gable . The concrete block perimeter foundation is visible on the south side of the church , as is the metal embankment doors that allow access to the church 's basement .

The church 's north and south sides consist of two symmetrically placed six @-@ over @-@ six double @-@ hung sash wooden windows , along with operable green @-@ painted louvered wooden window shutters . The clapboard sidings vary between 3 and 6 inches (7 @-@ 6 and 15 @-@ 2 cm) in width . At the base of the church 's north side , concrete blocks are visible under the foundation . On the church 's south side , a small strip of the roof 's eave confirms the original location of the chimney .

= = Interior = =

The interior of the church consists of a large , open floor plan , with wooden pews lined perpendicular to the north and south sides , thus creating a central aisle . The altar is a small wooden pulpit , which serves as a lectern that is accessible by a small wooden step ; the altar is accented by a large wooden backdrop of casing with dentil molding . Each of the church 's interior walls is covered with pine wainscot panelling and wallpaper , and topped with wooden crown molding . Wooden swag moldings accentuate the four symmetrically @-@ placed six @-@ over @-@ six double @-@ hung sash wooden windows , the doorway 's wooden casing , and the transom window . The wooden pews are simple , with cushions added for comfortable seating . The original ceiling is obscured by a dropped ceiling , which also conceals the electrical conduits for the church 's brass chandeliers . Prior to the church 's electrification , kerosene lanterns were used for light , and the lanterns remain in the church for decorative purposes . The church 's floor consists of the original heart pine planks . Concrete blocks and cut stone border the building 's perimeter to prevent animals from entering the church 's crawl space . Within the crawl space , log carrier beams support the building , on which the bark remains extant .

= = Cemetery = =

The cemetery is less than an acre in size and is located to the immediate east of the church , surrounded by a wrought iron fence manufactured by Stewart Iron Works . As of 2012 , the cemetery contains approximately 270 interments , including John Monroe (1750 ? 1824) , Virginia House of Delegates member William C. Nixon (1789 ? 1869) , West Virginia House of Delegates member Captain David Pugh (1806 ? 1899) , American Civil War veterans from the Union and the Confederacy , and free and enslaved African Americans . Gertrude Ward (1896 ? 1988) , a local historian and orchardist , is also interred in the cemetery . Captain David Pugh was an elected representative Hampshire County , who voted to secede from the Union in 1861 .

Older gravestones in the cemetery are generally cut from limestone , and the gravestones placed after 1900 are predominantly made of polished granite . Most of the gravestones have weathered significantly . The gravestones are generally rounded or rectangular in shape , and are placed on small stone foundations . The gravestones of prominent local leaders are more ornate in character , including that of Captain David Pugh and his family , who are buried under a large obelisk that lists the names of his three wives and their respective children . Nixon 's gravestone is deteriorating due to advanced weathering ; it is made of limestone and contains a carving of an open book . Following

the purchase of a rectangular land tract around 1990 , the cemetery was expanded on the east side . This section of the cemetery is excluded from the church 's historically @-@ recognized boundaries , as it was not associated with the church during the period of its greatest significance .

The cemetery perimeter is lined on three sides by a cast wrought iron fence , accessible by a gate 3 feet (0 @.@ 91 m) in width at its western entryway . The wrought iron fence is 4 feet (1 @.@ 2 m) in height , and has approximately 1 @-@ inch (2 @.@ 5 cm) diameter tubular fence posts , which are supported by three horizontal metal rails . The fence posts are capped with white @-@ painted stylized arrows , with a ball at the tip . A shield with the emblem reading , " The Stewart Iron Works , Cincinnati , Ohio " , is emblazoned on the fence 's gate . The cemetery 's eastern extension is surrounded by chain @-@ link fencing .