

ST. MARY'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
(Silver Run Lutheran Church)
3978 Littlestown Pike
Westminster
Carroll County
Maryland

HABS MD-1298
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
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ADDENDUM TO:
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
FIELD RECORDS

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ADDENDUM TO ST. MARY'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

HABS NO. MD-1298

Location: 3978 Littlestown Pike, Westminster, Carroll Country, MD 21158

St. Mary's Evangelical Lutheran Church is located at latitude: 39.683883, longitude: -77.04632. The coordinate represents the north buttress of the bell tower. This coordinate was obtained June 28, 2011 by plotting its location on Google Maps. The accuracy of this coordinate is +/- 30 feet. The coordinate's datum is WGS84 (NAD83). St. Mary's Evangelical Lutheran Church's location has no restriction on its release to the public.

Significance: St. Mary's Evangelical Lutheran Church is a stone Gothic Revival structure built 1894-1895. It was designed by regionally significant architect J. A. Dempwolf of York, Pennsylvania.

Description: The gray stone and Hummelstown brownstone building with Peach Bottom slate roof was designed in the Gothic Revival style. It is asymmetrical and every elevation is different. The front (east) façade includes a four-stage bell tower at the north corner above the main entrance; a J. A. Dempwolf signature stone can be seen on the west elevation of the bell tower. A front gable with large gothic-arch windows centers this façade and is surmounted by a cupola used to vent the interior of the church. To the south is an octagonal end projection with single gothic-arch windows on each face. The north side elevation includes the tower at the east corner, complete with a signature stone, an off-center front gable with gothic-arch windows, a rear entrance with loggia, and a smaller front gable with half timbering. The south side elevation includes the octagonal projection at the east corner, a large, but plain front gable with an oculus window at the peak, and three sets of gothic-arch windows. The rear (west) façade includes a rear entrance at the south corner, a front gable with half timbering and a series of gothic-arch windows in the center, and a side gable section with plain, double-hung windows.

The interior plan includes three main rooms on one level. Upon entering through the front (northeast) vestibule is the main auditorium, which is situated on a north-south axis. The rear pews, separated by one aisle, are parallel to the altar and the front pews are separated by two aisles and arched towards the altar. The entire

auditorium is sloped down toward the altar and the vaulted ceiling includes exposed wood trusses. To the east of the altar is an octagonal room which includes the organ; a vestry, with exterior entrance, is located to the west of the altar. The second main room is the Adult Sunday School Room. It is situated to the west of the auditorium and is separated from it by moveable glass partition walls. Its floor is not sloped. The third room is an Infant School Room. It is located to the north of the Adult Sunday School Room and is separated from it by a set of moveable glass partition walls. A small vestibule connects the three main rooms at the north elevation.

History: After separating from a larger group, the Reformed congregation made plans to build a new church in the Silver Run community. The newly-formed group hired the J. A. Dempwolf architecture firm of York, PA to design the stone church in early 1894 and awarded the construction contract to John W. Eline. The cornerstone was laid on July 8, 1894 and was finished for the dedication on May 20, 1895. The final cost was about \$16,000.

John Augustus (J. A.) Dempwolf (1848-1926) was born in Brunsick, Germany and emigrated to the United States with their parents and siblings in 1867. The family settled in York, Pennsylvania. Nineteen at the time of his emigration, Dempwolf found work at the P.A. and S. Small Milling Company in York and became interested in building construction. In 1869 he was apprenticed to carpenter William Gotwalt of York. A year later, Dempwolf was employed in the York planing mill of building contractor Nathaniel Weigel, whom Dempwolf would later employ as contractor for many of his buildings. While employed in the planing mill he made a majority of the details for St. Paul's Lutheran Church in York, which was designed by architect Stephen D. Button of Philadelphia.

In 1871 he moved to New York City where he worked as a foreman during the day and took classes at night. In 1873, Dempwolf graduated from a two-year architectural drawing and design course at the Cooper Union Institute. "The Union," offered an excellent education to the children of immigrants and the working class. The co-ed night classes were first held in the applied sciences and architectural drawing. After graduation, Dempwolf superintended the construction of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston, Massachusetts. The Gothic-Revival church was designed by Brooklyn-based architect Patrick Keely in 1866. Primarily known for designing over six-hundred churches and one-hundred institutional buildings, Keely trained many future architects as prolific church designers as well.

In 1874, J. A. Dempwolf returned to York to design his first church, St. John's German Lutheran Church, at the behest of his father, Carl Dempwolf, Sr. This was the first building that former employer Nathaniel Weigel would build with J.A. After construction was completed, Dempwolf moved to Philadelphia to work in the architectural firm of Stephen D. Button. Button had received a commission for buildings for the Centennial Exhibition Philadelphia would host in 1876. Dempwolf had planned to stay in Philadelphia, but returned to York in 1876 to begin his own firm at the request of York philanthropist Samuel Small, Sr. He opened an architecture office in Small's Cassat Building in York's Continental Square, which he would occupy for a full fifty years until his death. A significant amount of work would later come to the firm through the Small family and other elite York county families, including the Pfaltzgraff family, the Appel family, the Schmidt family, and the Glatfelter family.

The Dempwolf firm also included J. A.'s younger brother Reinhardt and son Frederick. The legacy of the Dempwolf firm included buildings in ten states, including New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia, Indiana, North Carolina, and Colorado. It is conjectured that the firm designed over six-hundred buildings during its tenure including public, buildings, businesses, factories, schools, churches, residences, hospitals, and outbuildings.

Also important to the Dempwolf story is a series of signature stones which can be seen on some of their buildings. The stones are seen in a variety of materials, including terra cotta and brownstone, and are usually placed on a side elevation. It is theorized that the stones were placed on buildings of which the firm was most proud, such as St. Mary's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Sources:

Cybularz, Rebecca Morrish. "A Survey of the Ecclesiastical Architecture of the J.A. Dempwolf Architecture Firm, York, Pennsylvania." *Master's Thesis*. Clemson University and The College of Charleston: April 2010.

Heltibridle, Mary E. *St. Mary's Lutheran Church and Her People, 1762-1962*. Silver Run, MD: unpublished pamphlet, 1962.

Houghton, Osgood & Co. "St. Mary's Lutheran Church, Silver Run, MD." *The American Architect and Building News* (12 April 1894), 23.

St. Mary's Lutheran Church file. "Payment Certificates." *Office of J.A. Dempwolf, Architect.*
1894-1895.

York County Heritage Trust Library & Archives. "Dempwolf Architectural Collection." *Vertical File 34195.*

Historian: Rebecca Cybularz, 2011

Project

Information: Documentation, including field drawings and photographs, was completed by Rebecca Cybularz and Trevor Thomas in May and June 2011. Final measured drawings and historical report were completed by Rebecca Cybularz in June 2011. The documentation was submitted to HABS as part of the 2011 Holland Prize competition.