

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rocky Run Methodist Church

other names/site number VDHR File No. 12-29

2. Location

street & number SR 616, 1.8 mi. E of jct. w/SR 46 not for publication N/A
city or town Alberta vicinity x
state Virginia code VA county Brunswick code 025 zip code 23821

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Juliet A. Warwick
Signature of certifying official/Title DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF SURVEY & REGISTER Date 6/5/95
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Signature of Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- x private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- x building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows include buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: Religious facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: Religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: sandstone
walls WOOD: weatherboard
roof METAL
other CONCRETE

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1857-1921

Significant Dates 1857

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Jefferson, Thomas (of Lynchburg)

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

- Primary Location of Additional Data
- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property 4 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	238180	4091150	2		
3				4		

 See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title James and Marilyn Melchor; Caroline C. Fisher (MWC)
organization _____ date February 1995
street & number 1218 North Fairwater Drive telephone _____
city or town Norfolk state VA zip code 23508-1115

=====
Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state VA zip code _____

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Rocky Run Methodist Church
Brunswick County, Virginia

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Rocky Run Methodist Church is located on Highway 616, 1.8 miles east of Highway Route 46 (Christiana Highway) in rural Brunswick County, Virginia. The original wood frame Greek Revival building was built in 1857 on a one-half-acre site and oriented on a north-south axis facing north. The original building is a two-room plan consisting of a narrow narthex and a nave. There is no balcony. In 1956-1957, a masonry addition was constructed attached to the south elevation of the building. The church is located on the crest of a hill and the property is bounded on the north by Highway 616 (Lew Jones Road), and on the east, south, and west by wooded areas that make up the rest of the approximately four acres that the congregation now owns. A rough gravel driveway leads up the hill to a parking area in front of the church. This parking area is designated by white painted markers. A privy is located some twenty-six yards southeast of the church. A cemetery is located on the south side of the building. A modern concrete block and tin pump house is located some twenty-eight yards northeast of the church.

Detailed Description

The original frame building, an example of Greek Revival architecture, was built in 1857. The one-foot-eight-inch foundation is constructed of uncoursed sandstone that has been heavily repaired with cement. The original mortar material appears to have been mud and rock chinking and is still visible in some areas. There are traces of lines scored in the sandstone, indicating the rustication of the foundation. Resting on this foundation is the braced wood frame with six-inch weatherboard cladding. Wooden shutters with moveable louvers flank each of the nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows. Narrow muntins divide the sashes into twelve-by-twenty-inch panes. A simple cornice decorates the eaves of the building and supports the standing-seam metal gable roof. An exterior electric light was added when the building connected to electric service.

The north gable end of the church is the principal facade. It has three bays; the center one is the entrance and the flanking ones are window bays. Engaged Greek Doric pilasters decorate the east and west corners of the facade. There is a partial entablature beneath the pedimented gable. An exterior light fixture extends from the center of the pediment. The facade is dominated by a Roman Doric distyle pedimented porch, which frames the paired, four-panel door church entrance. The porch has a solid masonry base with wooden columns supporting a full entablature and pediment; the porch roof is covered with tin cladding. The wooden columns have narrow strips of wood applied to simulate carved flutes. The name *Thos Jefferson* is carved into the base of the eastern column and *Rocky Run, 1857* is carved into the base of the western column. Tradition states that Thomas Jefferson of Lynchburg, Virginia, was the builder, although Lynchburg records have yet to yield any information on this person.

The east and west elevations are identical, and are marked by three symmetrically spaced double-hung sash windows. The north window on the west elevation has had some of the glass replaced. The proper size pane of glass was unavailable and a muntin was removed; a double-length pane now exists in place of the two original panes. The cornice is a wide, plain board. Narrow interior chimneys are visible from each elevation. They are constructed of brick laid in common bond.

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Section 7 Page 2

Rocky Run Methodist Church
Brunswick County, Virginia

The south elevation of the church is obscured by the mid-twentieth-century addition. A portion of the original exterior can be seen beneath the eaves. The addition is built of concrete block. It extends from the original building thirty-two feet and is forty-two feet wide. The windows in the addition are four-over-six-light metal casement. Two entrances are present in the addition; one is located on the south elevation and one on the west elevation. There are two concrete block chimneys in the addition, located on the southwest and northeast sides of the roof ridge.

The interior of the original building is a two-room plan: a narthex and a nave. The height of both rooms is approximately sixteen and one-half feet. Entry into the narthex is through a set of double doors that retain the original hardware, consisting of a cast-iron lock, keeper, and hinges. The narthex is five and one-half feet long and extends the width of the church. The floor of the narthex is covered with narrow maple flooring, a change from the original flooring. Oral tradition states that a balcony was once located along the wall separating the narthex from the nave to accommodate seating for slaves. A definite disruption in the plaster and the presence of uncarved gravestones in the church cemetery appear to support this tradition. The walls of the narthex are covered in plaster and the ceiling is constructed of wide pine boards. Access to the loft is through a square opening in this ceiling. The room is illuminated by the two windows located on the facade. Aligned with each of these windows is a single door on either side of the narthex that permit access to the nave. Each individual door retains the original cast-iron lock, keeper, and hinges.

The nave has a double-aisle plan. The flooring is the same narrow maple found in the narthex. Wooden pews are located in the center of the nave and on each side of the aisles in an east-west pattern. The chancel and apse are located at the south end of the room. A single door flanks each side of the apse and leads into the addition. These doors were introduced during the 1956/57 construction of the addition. Several pews oriented on a north-south axis are located on either side of the altar at the south end of the church. The walls in this room are covered in plaster and are devoid of decoration. The molding in the nave is simple: plain boards surround the windows and door.

A recessed half-hexagon apse is located along the south wall. A two-over-two double-hung sash window is located in each of the east and west diagonals. The window molding is decorated with bulls-eye medallions in each corner. The area above the apse is gently arched and decorated pilasters support the arch. A square chancel extends from this wall. It is raised ten inches from the floor, creating a step/kneeling bench. The chancel is further distinguished from the remainder of the nave by a turned-baluster communion rail. Openings in the rail appear in the east and west sides of the chancel to allow entry to the altar area. A central altar is located seven feet from the rear wall of the apse. The ceiling, which has a deep cove, is covered with decorative stamped metal in imitation of coffering.

The former location of pot-bellied stoves and wood furnaces can be seen in the "hanging" chimneys that are located just to the north of the altar. These narrow chimneys extend out from the wall in a square shape that tapers off to an angle midway down from the ceiling. The floor is sagging on each side of the building in the area where the stoves were once located.

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**Rocky Run Methodist Church
Brunswick County, Virginia**

The nave is illuminated by four electric ceiling lamps and one chandelier. The chandelier was originally oil powered but was electrically wired when electricity was introduced into the building.

The doors on each side of the nave lead into the 1956/57 concrete-block addition. The molding surrounding these two added doors differs from the original molding elsewhere in the building. The windows in the apse were not infilled and some of the original weatherboards of the former south exterior are evident in the east hall of the addition. Three small church-school rooms, two restrooms, a kitchen, and a great hall are located in the addition. The walls in these rooms are painted masonry or masonry covered with plaster. Sheetrock cladding appears in some places. The ceiling is also covered in sheetrock. The floor is carpeted except in the restrooms and kitchen where vinyl floor covering is used.

A privy, a contributing resource, is located some twenty-six yards southeast of the building in the wooded area that surrounds the church. It is constructed of oak boards ranging from nine to twelve inches in width. The privy has a tin roof, but is in poor condition. The door hangs from its hinges precariously and the three-seater interior is full of refuse. This privy was constructed in the twentieth century and is the only privy ever to have been built on the property.

The cemetery, a contributing site, is located approximately twenty-three feet from the south elevation of the addition. It extends from the edge of the woods on the east to the edge of the woods on the west. The remains of an iron fence can be seen in the woods along the south and west boundaries of the cemetery. There are approximately forty-four carved gravestones, dating from 1909 to the present. Approximately seven uncarved gravestones representing slave gravesites are located at the west perimeter of the cemetery.

A small, noncontributing, pump house was built about twenty-eight yards northeast of the building when the addition was built. The four-foot by eight-foot building is constructed of concrete block and has a gable roof covered with tin. A well is located on the north side of the pump house.

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Rocky Run Methodist Church
Brunswick County, Virginia

Summary Statement of Significance

Rocky Run United Methodist Church is a finely crafted example of Greek Revival architecture in a rural setting. Fluted Roman Doric columns (with wooden strips nailed on to create flutes,) engaged Greek Doric pilasters, and a porch with a partial entablature and pediment characterize the building. Though all early church records have been destroyed, the date 1857 and the name *Thomas Jefferson* are carved in the columns, giving a positive date of construction and the builder's name. Both the interior and exterior survive with only minor modifications to the original design.

Statement of Significance

Rocky Run Methodist Church, named for the nearby Rocky Run Creek, is built on an approximately one and one-half acre parcel of land given by Mary E. C. Gilliam in 1856 specifically as the location of a new Rocky Run meetinghouse.¹ In 1919, an additional 2.38 acres were purchased from E. P. Barrow.² In 1921, S. L. Barrow and others gave an additional one-third acre to extend the cemetery.³ The original meeting house stood on the opposite side of Highway 616, slightly west of the present church. There are no records in existence prior to the mid-twentieth century; therefore, the exact date when the Rocky Run congregation began to meet is unclear. But in a will dated May 16, 1806, George Trotter left "one half acres whereon the meeting house stands . . . for the use of the meeting house."⁴ Additionally, older members of the present congregation recall the local lore of the founding of the Rocky Run Methodist Church. As was the custom in rural Southside Virginia, the meetinghouse was used by the entire community for diverse purposes--religious, social and political. It came to be established as a Methodist congregation for two reasons. The other established churches in the area were too far away geographically for active participation. The residents of the area wanted to be able to worship closer to home. Secondly, according to custom, the locals decided on the denomination to be joined; they chose Methodism. As a religious entity, it became part of the Methodist circuit and was served by a circuit rider minister.

The church was built by Thomas Jefferson, of Lynchburg. His name, *Thos Jefferson*, is carved in the base of the east porch column. *Rocky Run, 1857* is carved in the base of the west porch column. According to a letter published in the *Richmond Advocate* in 1857, plans of the church were secured by Mr. Jefferson from a Methodist church in either Petersburg or Richmond. The same letter stated that the funding needed for construction was donated by Colonel I. Trotter, in memory of his parents, who were among the first Methodists in Brunswick County.⁵ Though not himself a member of the Rocky Run congregation, Trotter had supported the Methodist ministry in the Brunswick circuit throughout his life.

The Brunswick circuit was the first Virginia Methodist circuit.⁶ It was created the year after the first Methodist conference in America, which was held in 1773. Minutes from the Methodist Conference of 1776 stated that the Brunswick circuit had 1,611 members of the total Virginia membership of 2,456 individuals. The circuit extended from the James River in the south with no east or west boundaries.⁷

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Rocky Run Methodist Church
Brunswick County, Virginia

Just before the construction of the new church in 1857, the Rocky Run congregation had a membership of 130 people. The nave of the building served both the Sunday School and the worship service. The children of the Sunday School gathered in different sections of the nave for their activities. Some rural churches divided the nave by use of curtains for the Sunday School activities, but Rocky Run did not follow this practice. By the mid-tewntieth century, the growing congregation decided to improve the original building with practical additions. The 1956/57 construction provided much-needed space for the Sunday School, as well as indoor restrooms, a small meeting area and a kitchen. The addition was completed in time for the centennial celebration of the Rocky Run Methodist Church.⁸

ENDNOTES

1. Deed book 37, page 4. Brunswick County, Virginia.
2. Deed book 72, page 438. Brunswick County, Virginia.
3. Reverend H. F. Turner, "West Brunswick Circuit." *Richmond Christian Advocate* (21 June 1934): 30.
4. Will book 7, page 177. Brunswick County, Virginia.
5. William G. Gross, "Rocky Run Church, Brunswick County, Virginia." *Richmond Advocate* (June 1857).
6. William Warren Sweet, *Virginia Methodism: A History*. (Richmond, Virginia: Whitten and Shepperson, 1955), 59.
7. *Ibid.*, 70.
8. Personal communication, Blanche Daniel and MAude Daniel.

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Section 9 & 10 Page 6

Rocky Run Methodist Church
Brunswick County, Virginia

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brunswick County, Virginia. Deed book 37, page 4. Deed book 72, page 438.

Brunswick County, Virginia. Will book 7, page 177.

"Brunswick - Mecklenburg Methodism. *Richmond Christian Advocate* (21 June 1934).

Gross, William G. "Rocky Run Church, Brunswick County, Virginia." *Richmond Advocate* (June 1857).

Sweet, William Warren. *Virginia Methodism: A History*. Richmond, Virginia: Whittet and Shepperson, 1955.

Turner, H. F., Reverend. "West Brunswick Circuit." *Richmond Christian Advocate* (21 June 1934): 30.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries for Rocky Run United Methodist Church are shown on the plot of parcel 29 as recorded in book 1, page 12 of the Land Tax Records of Brunswick County, Virginia.

Boundary Justification

The four acre lot of land was deeded to the trustees of Rocky Run United Methodist Church in part as one and one-half acres from Mary E.C. Gilliam on September 19, 1856 as recorded in Deed Book 37, page 4; 2.38 acres were purchased from E.P. Barrow in 1919 as recorded in Deed Book 72, page 438 and an additional one-third acre was a gift from S.L. Barrow in 1921.

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**Rocky Run Methodist Church
Brunswick County, Virginia**

PHOTOGRAPHS

Rocky Run United Methodist Church
Brunswick County, Virginia
VDHR File # 12-29

All photographs were taken by Kenneth Lopez in March 1991. Negatives are on file with the VDHR collection at the Library of Virginia.

1. View of: sign; facing east
Negative Number: 14071, frame 16
Photo 1 of 18
2. View of: north elevation; facing south
Negative Number: 14071, frame 24
Photo 2 of 18
3. View of: north elevation; facing south
Negative Number: 14073, frame 15
Photo 3 of 18
4. View of: porch on north elevation; facing south
Negative Number: 14073, frame 18
Photo 4 of 18
5. View of: north and west elevations; facing southeast
Negative Number: 14071, frame 23
Photo 5 of 18
6. View of: north elevation; facing southwest
Negative Number: 14071, frame 25
Photo 6 of 18
7. View of: south elevation; facing northeast
Negative Number: 14073, frame 3
Photo 7 of 18
8. View of: west elevation; facing east
Negative Number: 14071, frame 22
Photo 8 of 18
9. View of: sandstone foundation on north elevation; facing south
Negative Number: 14073, frame 10
Photo 9 of 18
10. View of: west column of porch; facing northwest
Negative Number: 14072, frame 25
Photo 10 of 18
11. View of: north window on west elevation; facing east
Negative Number: 14073, frame 12
Photo 11 of 18
12. View of: interior entry doors of north elevation; facing northwest
Negative Number: 14071, frame 26
Photo 12 of 18

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Rocky Run Methodist Church
Brunswick County, Virginia

13. View of: nave; facing south
Negative Number: 14071, frame 10
Photo 13 of 18
14. View of: sanctuary; facing north
Negative Number: 14071, frame 11
Photo 14 of 18
15. View of: close-up of apse; facing south
Negative Number: 14072, frame 1
Photo 15 of 18
16. View of: newel post of communion rail; facing northwest
Negative Number: 14071, frame 12
Photo 16 of 18
17. View of: exposed weatherboard in addition; facing north
Negative Number: 14072, frame 12
Photo 17 of 18
18. View of: privy; facing east
Negative Number: 14071, frame 19
Photo 18 of 18

