

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Frying Pan Meetinghouse
other names/site number Frying Pan Old School Baptist Church (1832)
Frying Pan Spring Meetinghouse (1988)

2. Location

street & number 2615 Centreville Road not for publication
city, town Floris vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Fairfax code 059 zip code 22070

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>4</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Walter C. Miller 20 Dec 1990
Signature of certifying official Date
Director, 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.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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 the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
RELIGION: religious structure
Funerary: cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
VACANT/NOT IN USE
Funerary: cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)
OTHER: Vernacular post-and-beam building

Materials (enter categories from instructions)
foundation Stone
walls Wood: weatherboard
roof Metal
other Brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Architectural Description

Summary Paragraph

The Frying Pan Meetinghouse is a small church located on a two-and-one-half acre site at 2615 Centreville Road in western Fairfax County, near Floris, Virginia. Situated on a gently rising knoll above Centreville Road in what was originally a rural landscape, the meetinghouse now faces a modern subdivision. Built between 1783 and 1791, the Frying Pan Meetinghouse stands on its original site and thus maintains the integrity of its original relationship to its cemetery, spring, and baptismal pond on Frying Pan Run. There have been no major structural changes or alterations to the meetinghouse since it was built with the exception of a nineteenth-century interior balcony and stairs. The materials and workmanship are of the plainest style. The building's simplicity--its lack of decoration and ornament--and its preservation are fully in keeping with the spirit and teachings of the early Baptist congregation that built it.

Architectural Description

The Frying Pan Meetinghouse is a one-room, one-and-a-half story, post-and-beam structure, nearly square in plan. The interior is plain and its space unrelieved with the exception of a balcony across the back wall; it is reached by a narrow set of enclosed steps. At the front of the room in the center is a raised wooden platform on which stands a wooden pulpit. Arranged in three sections divided by two aisles are twenty-nine plain, wooden, high-backed benches. Four large hand-hewn posts with chamfered edges stand among the benches in the center section of the room. (See the accompanying interior sketch plan for the exact location and dimensions of these features.)

The interior walls are plastered and painted white. Around the bottom half of the walls is white wooden wainscoting. The wooden ceiling is painted white. Heating is provided by two cast-iron, nineteenth-century, wood-burning stoves, one on either side of the room, connected to a pipe leading to a small brick chimney on the edge of the south roof. There is no evidence of an earlier fireplace.

The exterior walls are covered with four-inch lapped pine clapboards painted white. The plain, wood-frame roof is covered with standing-seam sheet metal. The stone foundation has been repaired in this century and metal vents have been added. The eight, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows could date from the original eighteenth-century construction period, as the handmade glass and sash construction reflect the techniques of that time. The four doors and related hardware appear to be replacements, added as part of

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nineteenth-century renovations. (See accompanying sketch plan for the exact location of doors and windows.)

Description of Contributing Resources

The cemetery that surrounds the meetinghouse contributes significantly to the site because it was the burying ground of most of the members of the church, including the black members. Church minutes that date back to 1791 document the deaths of members, while court depositions given by Henry J. O'Bannon and other trustees of the congregation in 1914 document the burial of blacks in the cemetery along with whites. In addition, the meetinghouse was used as a hospital following the Civil War skirmish at Dranesville in 1862, making it likely that Civil War dead are buried there too, although their graves are unmarked. The Frying Pan Spring and the stream on which the baptismal pond is located--the Frying Pan Run--also contribute to the site's significance. Again church records and court depositions document these features' use by members and show, in particular, the importance to their religious practice of the Frying Pan Run. One original boundary marker remains in place at the southwest corner of the property. Its function and location have been documented by various plats that have been made of the property beginning with one by John Lewis in 1827 and including one made to be used in the 1914 case. Also in O'Bannon's deposition for the 1914 case, he described the boundaries of the property in some detail. (The case was a boundary dispute between trustees of the congregation and the McNair family--owners of a neighboring farm--who had erected a fence to keep their cows from wandering off, that blocked congregation members' access to the Frying Pan Run and spring. The court decided in favor of the congregation and the McNairs had to take down the fence.)

Description of Noncontributing Resources

Outside and inside there are lights, a meter box, and a fuse box, showing that the building was electrified (ca. 1920) and the system upgraded in more recent times. There is neither water nor plumbing in the building. there are two cinger block outhouses on the site; they are listed as non-contributing structures. No hard surface walkways exist on the site, nor is the driveway area improved.

The site is well endowed with a variety of mature deciduous trees, mostly oaks and locusts. Four magnificent oaks are located at the rear of the meetinghouse.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Ethnic Heritage:Black

Period of Significance

1783-1791
1791-1867

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Frying Pan Meetinghouse is significant to the local history of western Fairfax County, Virginia, primarily because the structure is the one remaining, largely unaltered, local example of eighteenth-century, vernacular, ecclesiastical architecture. Constructed between 1783 and 1791 by an unknown builder, the church possesses a remarkable degree of architectural integrity and serves as a tangible reminder of the important role the Floris community played in the history of western Fairfax County between 1791 and 1867 as a focal point for religious and community meetings for both local whites and blacks. After 1867, blacks in the area organized their own Baptist congregation and in 1882 constructed Mount Pleasant Baptist Church on nearby Coppermine Road. The property also includes a cemetery, spring, baptismal pond (on Frying Pan Run), and, at its southwest corner, an original stone boundary marker. Apart from its historic religious function the Frying Pan Meetinghouse and associated features, all of which remain in a nearly perfect state of preservation, form a rare surviving eighteenth-century rural environment in western Fairfax County.

Historical Background

The Frying Pan Meetinghouse, which takes its name from nearby Frying Pan Run, is located at 2615 Centreville Road, near the intersection of Ox Road and Centreville Road in western Fairfax County, Virginia. Originally surrounded entirely by a rural landscape, the meetinghouse stands today on a two-and-one-half acre site surrounded entirely by suburban development.

Robert Carter, who was the land agent for the proprietor of the Northern Neck (Thomas Fairfax, sixth baron Fairfax of Cameron), encouraged the settlement of the area in the 1720s to secure workers for a copper mine that he wished to establish on Frying Pan Run. A patent was granted to Robin Carter in 1728. Although by the time of Robert Carter's death in 1732, the mining scheme had failed, a few settlers remained in what was then a remote location in western Prince William County. When in 1742 Fairfax County was formed, it included this area.

A Baptist congregation was organized at nearby Bull Run by Elder Richard Major in 1775. Some members of this congregation wrote to Robert Carter requesting his permission to build a meetinghouse on two acres of land he owned near Frying Pan Spring, and to use some of See continuation sheet his pine trees in its construction. Carter agreed on February 25, 1783.

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Elder Richard Major was the first pastor of Frying Pan, serving from 1791 to 1797. He was succeeded by Elder Jeremiah Moore, who served from 1797 to 1815. John Davis, an English traveler who passed through the community in 1801, wrote that the village consisted of "four log huts and a meetinghouse."¹

The Frying Pan Meetinghouse is the only known church to have been built in Floris until the late nineteenth century. There is no other church in the Floris area that resembles it in style. It was built by members of its congregation with no help from an architect or professional builder.

Frying Pan Meetinghouse and site are very significant to the history of the local black community. It was customary for eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Baptist congregations to include blacks as members. From 1791 to 1867, free blacks as well as slaves became members of Frying Pan. They spoke of their religious experiences in congregational meetings, were baptized in Frying Pan Run, and were buried in the cemetery. By 1840 Frying Pan had twenty-nine black members and thirty-three white members.² Frying Pan is therefore a rare, documented site related to the religious life of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rural blacks as well as whites.

In 1984, Arthur L. Carter of Manassas, Virginia, the last surviving member of the congregation, deeded the church and property to the Fairfax County Park Authority. The building is not now open to the public. If and when funds become available to bring the structure up to county code for public buildings and to provide for appropriate interpretation, the meetinghouse may be opened as a museum.

Today the Frying Pan Meetinghouse and its site are also important because they form an intact eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cultural landscape. The meetinghouse stands on its original foundation, surrounded by its graveyard, near the Frying Pan Spring and a short distance from the Frying Pan Run, where many of its members were baptized. The structure and site can continue to yield important information about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century community and religious life if that relationship remains undisturbed. The entire site, not just the building, was used in early, rural Baptist religious practice: the meetinghouse for worship and association meetings; the graveyard for burials; the spring for fresh water for the members and the horses that carried them; the stream for baptism; and the yard for tethering horses. The Frying Pan Meetinghouse and site were used this way from the late eighteenth century to at least the late nineteenth century.

ENDNOTES

¹John Davis, Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America During 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801 and 1802. New York:Henry Holt and Company, 1909. p. 374-75.

²Frying Pan Church Minutes. MICR VREF 929.FRYI. Fairfax County Library.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Davis, John. Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America During 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801 and 1802. New York:Henry Holt and Company, 19
Frying Pan Baptist Church vs McNair. Chancery File No. 288. Fairfax County Archives. Fairfax County Court House, Fairfax, Virginia.
Journal Messenger, Manassas, VA. "Manassas Man Deeds Historic Church" September 9, 1984. p. A7.
MICR VREF 929.3755 FRYI. Frying Pan Baptist Church. Loudon County, Virginia, Minutes 1791-1875. Fairfax County Central Library, Virginia Room Collection Fairfax, Virginia.
Pentecost, Julian. "Virginia Baptist and Religious Freedom" Religious Herald 1986. pp. 4-7.
Semple, Robert B. A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia. Richmond, VA:Pitt & Dickinson Publishers, 1984.
Western Fairfax County Survey Report, Part II. Fairfax County, VA:Heritage Resources Branch, 1984.

See continuation sheet

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 # 70
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Fairfax County Park Authority
Division of Historic Preservation

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.517 acres

UTM References

A 18 | 290820 | 4312680
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____ | _____ | _____

B _____ | _____ | _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____ | _____ | _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of Frying Pan Meetinghouse is shown as the solid black line on the accompanying plat entitled "Plat Showing Boundary Survey, Frying Pan Baptist Church, 1984."

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the land and resources that historically have been associated with the property.

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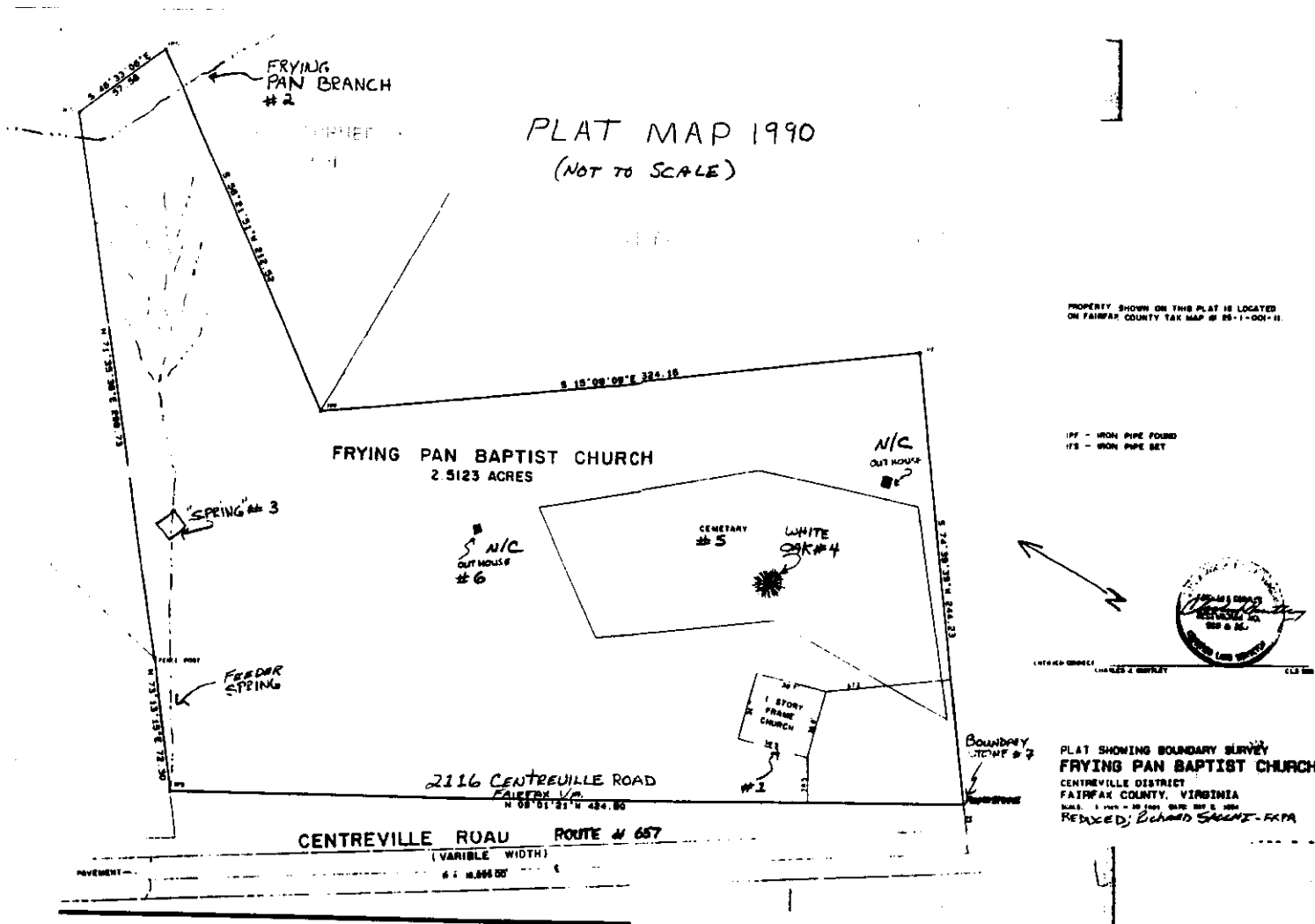
11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary McCutchan Kell & Richard Sacchi, Administrator Cultural Resources
 organization Fairfax County Park Authority date August 24, 1990
 street & number 3701 Pender Drive telephone 703-378-2535
 city or town Fairfax state VA zip code 22030

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HERNDON QUADRANGLE
VIRGINIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

