

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 Montgomery Primitive Baptist Church other names/site number 60-175

2. Location West side VA Rt. 624, 300 feet southwest of junction street & number with U.S. Rt. 460/11 city, town Merrimac state Virginia code VA county Montgomery code 121 zip code 24060

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes sub-headers for Contributing and Noncontributing resources.

Name of related multiple property listing: Prehistoric and Historic Resources of Montgomery County 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 1966, 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.

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register other, (explain):

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: nave plan

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: limestone

walls Wood: weatherboard

roof Metal: tin

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

This simple four-bay nave-plan church stands in a grove of trees in the midst of a dense commercial development along the principal route between the towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg. The weatherboarded structure features a central double door in the southeast gable end. The opposite end features a shed-roofed square apse. The roof is covered with stamped metal shingles. The clear glass windows incorporate six-over-six double-hung sash. An added concrete block flue rises on each side wall. The building is supported on stone piers with concrete block infill. Exposed rafter ends are visible below the eaves on each side wall. A sign above the door proclaims the church's name and the year 1922.

On the interior, unpainted, beaded, horizontal tongue-and-groove sheathing is found on the ceiling and walls. A raised dais is centered in front of the projecting apse. On it stands a pulpit fronted with two panels filled with diagonal tongue-and-groove boards. An upholstered bench fills the back wall of the apse. Simple wooden pews fill the space and a pair of woodstoves provide heat.

In a grove of trees standing to the northwest behind the church, a plain wooden preaching stand was constructed at approximately the same time as the church. The shed-roofed building has a metal roof and benches along three sides. A pulpit is built into the central bay of the front or southeast side of the building. Wooden bracketed supports for an outdoor table for use during meetings stand to the northeast of the church, and two noncontributing concrete-block privies are located west of the church.

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

Period of Significance

1922

Significant Dates

1922

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 Montgomery Primitive Baptist Church is eligible under criterion C as a good example of the regionally popular nave-plan form, and as one of very few structures in the region demonstrating the architectural expression of the Primitive Baptist Church's values. The church's basic form, simplicity, and ornament, and its extraordinary state of preservation, both on the interior and exterior, give it great interest on the otherwise commercially developed west side of U. S. 460.

Missionary and tract activities by the Baptist Convention were opposed by a large number of congregations throughout the nation in the early nineteenth century. This anti-missionary controversy compelled many congregations to withdraw over changes they felt compromised the Calvinist principles of the Baptist Church. By 1840, many of the oldest western Virginia churches had allied themselves with a group identified today as the Primitive Baptists. In the New River Association of the Baptist Church, only one out of the nine churches recorded in 1809 remained in the Missionary or Regular Baptist Church in 1892 (Semple, p. 349). Although many Regular or Missionary Baptist churches were founded and built during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the county, the Primitive Baptist denomination remained very strong until the early twentieth century. This congregation is one of several remaining in operation today. Other surviving Montgomery County congregations have replaced their earlier buildings with modern, but equally plain, structures.

Melanie Reid, in her paper about Primitive Baptist Church buildings, emphasizes the historical and theological context of the anti-missionary position. When compared to the well-financed modern denominations, she describes the Primitive Baptist churches as practicing a religion of spiritual simplicity. Most

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Reid, Melanie Sovine. "Neither Adding Nor Taking Away: The Care and Keeping of Primitive Baptist Church Houses." Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture. Vernacular Architecture Forum, 1982, p. 169-176.

Bugg, Mrs. J. A., Interview, June, 1989.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

221 Governor Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than two acres.

UTM References

A 17 552280 4115200
Zone Easting Northing

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at point A on the northwest side of VA Rt. 624, 300 feet southwest of the intersection of VA Rt. 624 and U. S. Rt. 460, proceeding northwest 202.5 feet along a lot line to point B, thence northeast 185 feet along a line corresponding to the preaching stand to point C, thence southeast 202.5 feet along a lot line to point D, thence southwest 185 feet along the northwest side of road to point of origin.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries were chosen to include the church, preaching stand, privies, and churchyard as defined by lot lines and road.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gibson Worsham
 organization Gibson Worsham, Architect date June 1988
 street & number Route 2, Yellow Sulphur Springs telephone (703) 552-4730
 city or town Christiansburg state Virginia zip code 24073

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

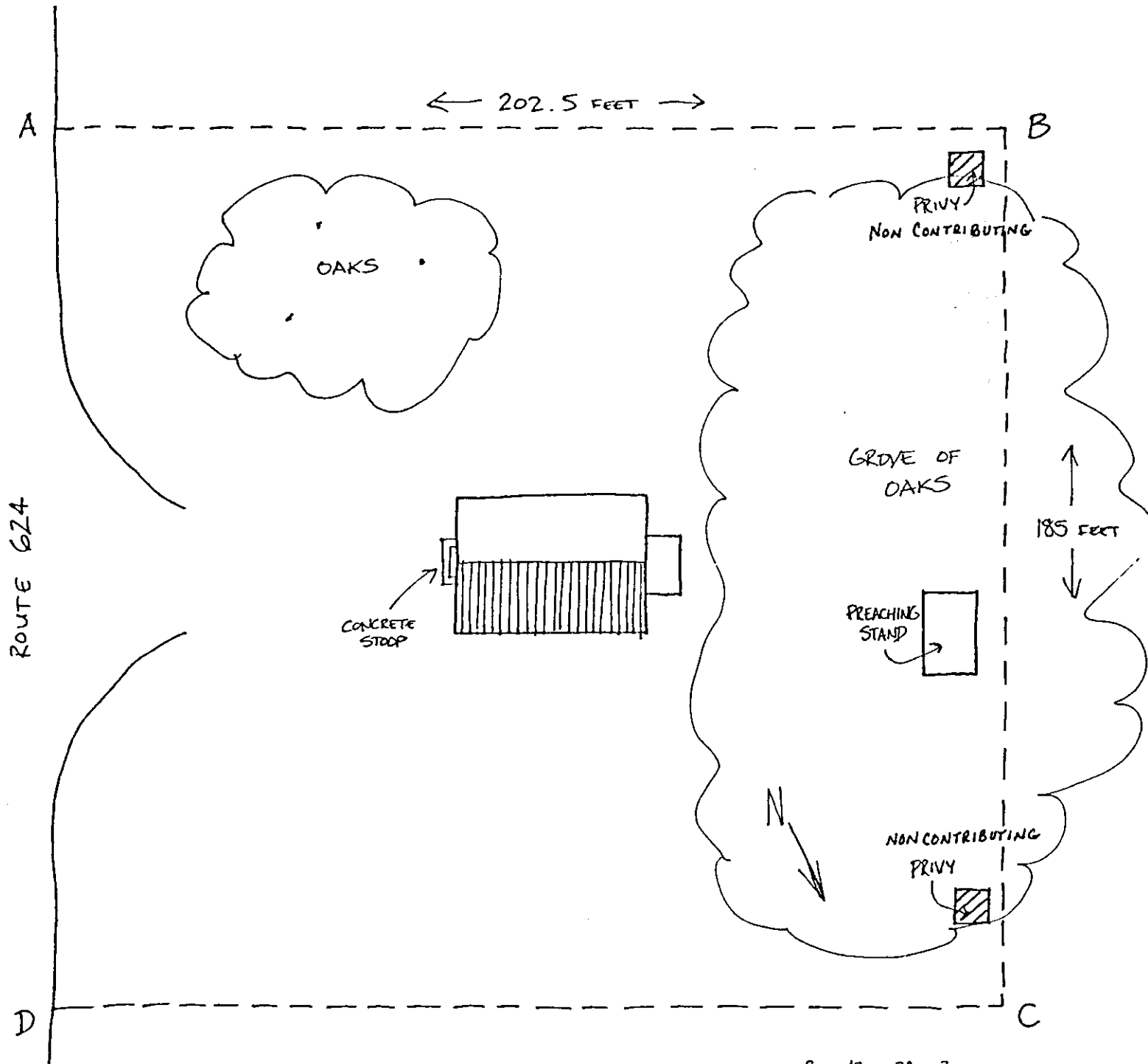
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Prehistoric and Historic
Resources of Montgomery County
Montgomery Primitive
Baptist Church, 60-175

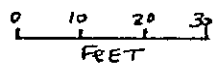
Primitive Baptist churches proclaim the founding of their congregations in a sign over the front door, underlining their devotion to the continuity of their spiritual kingdom on earth and reminding them of the "good old way." The building itself is the physical manifestation of their spiritual lives. The sense of continuity with the past, accentuated by the church's vigorous refusal to alter any part of its Calvinist belief system, is manifested in a careful maintenance of the existing fabric of their intentionally austere church buildings, being careful to follow their avowed plan around principle of "neither adding nor taking away." This dogged refusal has led to the extraordinary state of preservation of the building, its well maintained grounds, and the contrast between it and almost all other small twentieth-century churches of similar size and form, which have almost invariably been abandoned, added to, heavily altered, or converted for other functions.

Montgomery Primitive Baptist Church was established in 1922, and the building was built that year. John Henry Strickler gave the lot to the congregation for \$1.00. A Mr. Sowers hauled the lumber from nearby Floyd County. The church has been the site of many services and an important landmark along U.S. Route 460. In recent years the congregation has diminished and now holds services infrequently.



60-175 MONTGOMERY PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

G. WORSHAM
K. MARTIN 10/07





4117
4116
4115
4114
4113

ELLETT 0.3 MI.
(IRONTO)
4958 III NE

Montgomery
MIDWAY PRIMITIVE
BAPTIST CHURCH
17 552300 4115200

ELIJAH MURDOCK
FARM
10' 17 552570 4113455

PIPELINE

WOLFOK AND WESTERN
Wilson Creek
PIPELINE

Merrimac

Yellow Sulphur Springs

Yellow Sulphur

Montgomery

Roselaw Memorial Cemetery

High Top Mission Ch

Jennelle Cem

Water Tank

New Hope Ch

Cem

Cem

BM 2083

BM 2144

BM 2135

BM 2099

BM 1569

Alleghany Ch

Knob