

VLR-8/21/90 NRHP-1/3/91

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 White Oak Church
other names/site number White Oak Baptist Church, White Oak Primitive Baptist Church
DHR File 89-76

2. Location

street & number 8 Caisson Road N/A no? for publication
city, town Falmouth N/A vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Stafford code 179 zip code 22401

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> building
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<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>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>6</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Nams 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 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.

Angela C. Miller 11-28-90
Signature of certifying official Date
Director, 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.

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:) _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious facility

Domestic: secondary structure

Funerary: cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious facility

Domestic: secondary structure

Funerary: cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood: weatherboard

roof Metal

other Concrete foundation piers

Fieldstone foundation piers

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The White Oak Primitive Baptist Church is located at the intersection of Routes 603 and 218 in Falmouth, Virginia. The churchyard is a flat, one-acre plot of land bordered by roads to the north and east and by trees and bushes to the south and west. The date of construction is not known, although the documentary and physical evidence suggests a date as early as 1789 or as late as 1835. The church is rectangular in plan, has a braced frame structure covered with weatherboards, and is set on masonry piers. The roof is covered with standing-seam sheet metal. There is an antebellum shed extension on the west side of the church. The interior is plain and the space is undifferentiated, except for a small altar set against the east wall and a row of five wooden posts that delineate the juncture between the main building and the shed.

West of the church are three contributing outbuildings: a woodshed, the women's outhouse, and the men's outhouse. A graveyard is situated on the south half of the property and includes 126 gravestones dating from 1897 to the recent past. A small cluster of unmarked graves also is located between Route 218 and the northwest corner of the church. A small circular gravel parking lot is between the larger graveyard and the southern elevation of the church.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The White Oak Primitive Baptist Church stands on a level one-acre site in rural Stafford County. In plan, the church is a rectangle that measures approximately forty-two feet by thirty-two feet. The building is twenty-five-and-a-half feet tall. It has a one-story, four-bay, braced-frame structure that is covered in weatherboards.

The church is set on a number of concrete block, brick, and fieldstone piers. The piers are spaced at about six-foot intervals and stand a maximum of two feet high.

Weatherboards removed from the northeastern corner of the meeting-

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
c1789-1940

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.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

White Oak Primitive Baptist Church represents nearly two centuries of the history of the Primitive Baptist religion in Stafford County, Virginia. The Primitive Baptist faith is based on the precept that doctrine should only originate from clear, scriptural statements in the Bible rather than from human interpretations of the Bible. It is because the Primitive Baptists have continued to practice this theology that its adherents, to this day, do not believe in such things as Sunday school or missionary programs. The White Oak Primitive Baptist Church represents this two-hundred-year-old philosophy in two ways. First, the simple, unornamented design of the church reflects the conservative and nonhierarchical theology of the religion in its rural Virginia setting. Moreover, the facts that the exterior of the building has remained largely unaltered since its construction and that only extremely simple changes have been made to the interior symbolize the unchanging theology and steadfast adherence of church members to the beliefs of the Primitive Baptist faith.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The White Oak Primitive Baptist Church congregation traces its religious origins to a group of Baptists who settled in Maryland during the eighteenth century and established a number of associations and congregations in the Chesapeake region.¹ One of these churches was the Chappawamsic Church, established in 1766 in Prince William County.² A branch of this church was organized in Stafford County in 1771 under the name Potomac Church; the name was later changed to Hartwood Church.³ It is from the Potomac Church that the White Oak congregation was formed in 1789:

At a Church meeting held at white oak Meeting

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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:

Va. Dept. of Historic Resources

221 Governor St., Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.2 acres

UTM References

A

118	292	2410
Zone	Easting	Northing

42	41	61010
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C

--	--	--

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

D

--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the White Oak Primitive Baptist Church is shown as a solid and broken line on the accompanying map entitled "Plat of Survey." The map was drawn by John C. Russell and is dated June 12, 1951, and is located in the Stafford County Courthouse in Plat Book 1, page 156.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Church

The nomination of the White Oak Primitive Baptist/encompasses a 1.2-acre lot of land known as parcel 55 G-10A on the Stafford County Land Plat Map. The present boundaries include the church, three contributing outbuildings, and two cemeteries that have historically been a part of the White Oak Church, and represents the one acre that was deeded by John Moncure to the church on September 8, 1835.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Eirik Harteis/John S. Salmon (Historian, Va. Dept. of Historic Resources)

organization Center for Historic Pres./Mary Washington Coll. date 30 July 1990

street & number Mary Washington College telephone (703) 899-4037

city or town Fredericksburg state VA zip code 22401

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

house exposed a juncture between an original stud and an original downbrace. This butt joint was secured with a machine-headed cut nail of the sort known to have been produced and used from the late 1830s through the 1850s. This bit of hardware suggests that the building may have been constructed sometime after John Moncure gave the property to the congregation in 1835. It must be noted, however, that a Civil War-period woodcut shows that this part of the church sustained some damage during the war; it is therefore possible that the nail may be indicative of postwar repairs. This same investigation of concealed building fabric also revealed that the framing members of the church are all pit sawn and hewn, forms of preparation that are characteristic of the eighteenth century but that are known to have persisted in the Chesapeake until after the Civil War. A close look at the original studs further established that only one set of cut lath nails survive along their inner surface. This indicates that only one generation of plaster predates the present matchboard sheathing on the interior of the meetinghouse. Because the earliest surviving trim on the interior has Italianate profiles, it seems likely--although not certain--that the White Oak Church was not sealed with interior finish until 1867, when a stray note at the back of a surviving minute book records that \$230 was paid for "Work done on White Oak Church." It is important to note that although the meetinghouse was used sparingly from 1861 to 1868, renovation and repairs during that period are likely to have been carried out. Finally, an unobstructed look at the church framing revealed that the church has received three generations of siding. The first, of course, dates from the antebellum period of construction. The second generation most probably occurred after the Civil War when the White Oak congregation was revived and the building was returned to civilian use. The third period of sheathing dates from the twentieth century, for the weatherboards all are secured with wire nails.

The principal entrance to the church is on the four-bay south gable end. The main opening has two doors, each with four raised vertical panels. This entrance is flanked by two windows in the main block of the church and another in the shed addition. At the entrance is a poured concrete step. The date 1943 is inscribed in the tread. The windows on the lower level have six-over-six double-hung sash that measure twenty-eight inches wide and forty-eight inches high. Each window also has a pair of green louvered shutters. A fixed nine-pane-sash window above the entrance is the only other opening on this elevation. Above the doorway is a sign that reads "White Oak Primitive Baptist Church \ Organized 1789." Along with the main portal, there are two other entrances: one on

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

the west elevation that opens into the rear of the church and one on the south elevation. Each of these openings is served by a five-paneled door.

The east elevation of the church has four wood-framed windows. There are two at the same lower level as the windows on other elevations. The top two windows have four-over-four double-hung sash that measure two feet wide and five feet high, are spaced closer together, and have but one louvered shutter each.

The gable roof of White Oak Primitive Baptist Church rises from boxed eaves to its apex at a forty-five degree angle. The thirteen-foot shed extension has a roof angle of thirty degrees. The roof is covered with standing-seam sheet metal.

The one-room interior of the church is dominated by the paneled wooden altar, which rests upon a small platform. It is situated beneath the upper two windows of the east elevation so that the sunlight shines down upon it. The altar is painted white and has no ornamentation.

Simple, black-painted pews are arranged parallel to the altar through the church, except for three rows beside the altar that are perpendicular to it. In the middle of the church and interrupting the placement of the pews are two wood-burning cast-iron stoves. They are located to the north and south of a brick chimney flue that rises from about the center of the main block of the church. The addition was once separated from the main part of the church by a low partition set between the five timber posts. The partition was removed sometime after 1868.

The present floor of the church is made of three-inch strips of wood that run north and south, as well as east and west. The strips converge to make a cross pattern on the floor. An earlier floor in the church was made of wide wooden planks.

The interior walls of the church are covered in four-inch-wide vertical tongue-and-groove wood paneling. This matchboard paneling, which is carried from the floor to the ceiling, was probably installed in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The existence of a nine-pane window above the main entrance, which is presently concealed from the interior of the church by the ceiling, suggests that the existing ceiling is lower than the original one. There are six oil lamps on the interior walls of the church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

West of the structure, in the churchyard, are three contributing outbuildings. The woodshed, which is approximately seventy-five feet from the church, is the nearest of the three. Originally a privy and moved here from another site, it measures about six feet by seven feet and is nearly ten feet tall. It has the same type of weatherboards as the church and it is set on concrete piers. The roof slopes to the west and is covered in sheets of asphalt. The single entrance is on the east elevation and has a door with two panels: the top panel is a louvered screen. The only window is on the west elevation. It is composed of three louvered vertical sections. Green ceramic tiles on the interior walls date from the time when this woodshed was a privy.

Approximately six feet southwest of the woodshed is the women's outhouse. Measuring nearly seven feet by five-and-a-half feet, the women's outhouse is almost eight feet tall. It is similar to the woodshed in color and in the type of weatherboards, as well as in its masonry pier foundation. Its shed roof is also covered in sheets of asphalt. There is a batten door on the south elevation, above which is a screened vent. Inside the privy is one wooden commode with three holes.

Twenty feet to the northwest of the women's outhouse is the men's outhouse, which measures six feet by nine feet and is approximately eight feet tall. The exterior of the privy is covered in vertical siding that is, in turn, covered with painted Masonite boards. The roof of the privy slopes to the north and is covered in sheets of asphalt. The privy has a screened opening in the north elevation, and there is a wooden batten door on the south elevation. The interior of the outhouse contains one wooden commode with two holes.

The graveyard that dominates the south half of the property has 126 marked gravestones that date from 1897 to 1986. A majority of the granite, sandstone, and marble gravestones are unexceptional examples of the sorts of funerary monuments that survive in any cemetery of similar age. But there are significant exceptions. One of these, erected to memorialize a young man known for his love of hunting and fishing, is a stone carved to resemble a tree stump against which leans a rifle and beneath which lies a rod and reel.

In the northwest corner of the White Oak Church cemetery is a series of three graves marked only by wooden posts bearing copper plates that once were painted with the names and dates of the deceased. Among the plates, only the name Cox is still legible.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

This group is significant because it represents a once common but impermanent method of marking graves with wooden posts or boards. Because wood is less durable than stone, these grave markers rarely survive.

Finally, the White Oak cemetery is distinguished by an exceptional group of forty-four gravestones that have been embellished according to the twentieth-century technique of sandblasting granite or marble around templates cut from copper or some other durable material. The result is a series of stylized images that symbolize triumph over death, including doves, crowns, wreaths, stars, palm fronds, gates of heaven, and the City of God. Other images such as hearts, clasping hands, flags, mason's tools, and--in one case--a guitar representing the one played by a deceased boy, emphasize worldly accomplishments and bonds of affection.

In all cases, there are individualized variations of design that suggest handcraftsmanship--at least in the execution of the templates--as well as a distinctive style that makes apparent some continuity of workmanship. The date range of the sandblasted stones, however, suggests less the work of a single gravestone maker than the work of a specific shop where the same templates repeatedly were used, copied, and modified. The earliest of these sandblasted stones memorializes a death in 1906 and is the only one to date from the first decade of this century. That the next earliest stone dates from 1912 suggests this 1906 outlier was commissioned some years after the death of the child whose grave it marks. It clearly is part of this distinctive sandblasting tradition, for the ivy pattern of its design exactly matches that employed on several later stones. During the second decade of the twentieth century, eight stones were executed in this decorative sandblasting tradition. Fifteen stones were erected in the White Oak cemetery during the 1920s and another twelve were added in the following decade. That only two sandblasted stones were added during the 1940s may suggest a decline in the popularity of these sandblasted embellishments, or it may reflect a decline in the size of the congregation. An additional four stones executed in the same style appeared in the cemetery as recently as 1987. These two monuments may well represent an isolated revival of the decorative tradition, for both are placed near earlier stones with similar designs that memorialize members of the same family. None of these forty-three sandblasted stones has a visible maker's mark, although the stonemasons involved were probably local, and a modest level of investigation of local cemeteries and surviving business directories should bear fruit.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5

A small number of gravestones are located outside the cemetery, between Route 218 and the northwest corner of the church. No dates are discernible on these stones.

The churchyard itself is a flat, grassy, square plot of land that is a little larger than an acre. It is bordered to the north by Route 218, to the east by Route 603, and to the south and west by trees and undergrowth. A small circular gravel parking lot branches off from Route 603 and is located between the church and the larger graveyard. The outline of an earlier road also appears in this area. Behind the church are several piles of limestone; they are the remains of the original piers that were replaced with masonry piers earlier in this century.

Eirik Harteis

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

House on Saturday Octobr. 24th 1789, the Said Church was then Constituted and Declared Independant of all others Believing and Holding Forth the doctrine of Election and the Final preseverence of the Saints to which Covenant we all agree this 31st of October Same date Praying that God would preserve us and Keep us from all evil Amen.⁴

The congregation chose a deacon and a pastor--Andrew Leitch--on 31 October 1789; Leitch was "ordained and publicly de[c]lared a Regular minister of the gospel in the baptis profisscon" on 11 May 1790. White Oak Church joined the Ketocton Association in 1791 and was dismissed from the association in 1809 to join the Goshen Association.⁵

In the 1820s and 1830s the Baptists in Virginia confronted several new religious concepts that caused them to divide into several sects. Among the issues that divided them were Sunday schools, the missionary movement, membership in temperance societies, and the reform movement led by Alexander Campbell. Some Baptists accepted the new ideas while others rejected them and adhered to what they believed were the practices of the early or primitive church as described in the Bible. Such "Old School" Baptists came in time to be called--and to refer to themselves as--Primitive Baptists, including the congregation at White Oak Church.⁶

A few years later the congregation came into legal possession of its own site and structure. On 8 September 1835 John Moncure, of Stafford County, deeded to the trustees of the White Oak Primitive Baptist Church "the Meeting House & one acre of Land attached thereto, which Said Meeting House is upon the Land purchased by the Said Moncure from Thomson & Wife."⁷ Whether the church presently standing is the meetinghouse referred to in the deed, or the meetinghouse mentioned in the minutes in 1789, or a church constructed after 1835, has not been determined.⁸

It is certain, however, that the trustees of the church wanted to maintain custody of the property despite the outcome of the various controversies swirling through the faith. At their insistence the deed specified that the property was to be held by the trustees

or the Survivors or Survivor of them as trustees or Trustee for the Sole use and benefit of the regular Baptist Church of Christ at

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

White oak Stafford County Virginia, holding and Maintaining the important Doctrines of the existence of three equal persons in the God Head, Eternal and Personal election, The absolute and eternal predestination of all things, The Etonement of Jesus Christ for the Elect only, Particular redemption, Free Justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, Efficacious Grace, The direct and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, Effectual calling, Believers baptized, Baptism by Immersion only, The Lords supper a previledge perculiar to Baptized believers regularly admitted to Church fellowship, The final perseverance of the Elect to Glory, the resurection of the Dead, the future Judgment, The Eternal happiness of the righteous and everlasting Misery of the Wicked, The obligation of every intelligent Creature to love God according to the just requisitions of his holy Law, The Holy Scriptures is the Sufficent certain and infallible rule of all, Saving Knowledge faith and Obedience.⁹

The trustees wrote Moncure shortly after they took possession of his gift, to give him their "unfeigned thanks" and to explain the "strictly novel circumstances of inserting our articles of faith in the deed":

We learn from the experiences of other Churches of like faith and order with us that no Church property whatever is Safe to Such Churches by being deeded for the benefit simply of the 'The Baptist or the Regular Baptist Church' because there are a great variety of Baptist Churches in our country all of which are liable to and occasionally changes in principle or that it frequently occurs in the laps of a few years that the body which formerly held the true faith now hold sentiments diverse therefrom though they still retain (but unjustly) their primitive name and in almost every such case the scisma-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

ticks and apostates are the majority and under our Church government which is strictly republican, Equal representation in Church as well as in State being our motto, they carey their points, bear rule and so hold the property to which the Minority of necessity must submit. But in the present case if all the members of our Communion were in time to appostatise from our present faith except but one, that one could hold the property, as he would be not by numbers or any other Influence Whatever, but upon Principle, Strictly the Church for whose benefit the property was dedeed.--The Church whose traits of Character are recorded in the deed and by which lineaments she is Identified and Known.¹⁰

The congregation remained steadfast in its faith throughout the controversies of the 1830s and indeed for much of the remainder of the century, under the leadership of Elder John Clark. From 1830 until his death on 9 November 1882, Clark served as pastor of the church. According to the official church history, he "traveled and preached widely, founded the paper ZION'S ADVOCATE, and wrote the church's covenant."¹¹

Early in his long ministry Clark himself became controversial. At first he stood firmly within the defensive lines drawn by his Old School brethren. On 29-30 October 1836, for example, he served as the clerk when the conservative Virginia Corresponding Meeting was organized at Occoquan Church. At the meeting six Primitive Baptist churches--Occoquan, White Oak, Frying Pan, Mount Pleasant, Fredericksburg, and Bethlehem--reaffirmed their opposition to the New School and their adherence to primitive principles. Soon, however, Clark himself began espousing what some considered "ridiculous theories" in Zion's Advocate, which he had founded in 1854. To his opponents the most alarming of his theories was that after accepting Christ and turning "from the love of sin to the love of holiness," "the soul was born again." As Clark himself put it:

It is clear that the same identical individual that was born, is born again; that existed, exists again. . . . Now to be a man he must have been born once which is of the flesh--and this is to be born the second time, or again;

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

and it is the same man, that was born the first time, that is born the second time.¹²

Most of Clark's contemporaries could not accept his theory of what seems much like present-day "born-again Christianity."

The church building suffered some damage during the Civil War but survived, although church records note in 1868 that no regular meetings were held at White Oak Primitive Baptist Church from December 1861 to February 1868. Because White Oak Church is located between Fredericksburg and Belle Plains, the Rappahannock River port at which Union supply ships were unloaded, it was subject to periodic occupation by Union troops. In July 1862, for example, a large contingent of Union troops camped in the vicinity of White Oak Church before and after the Battles of Fredericksburg in 1862 and 1863. On 4 July 1862 the brigade commanded by Brigadier General Abner Doubleday, which was camped between the church and the Rappahannock River, celebrated the "national anniversary" with speeches and other festivities. Those festivities, according to local tradition, included a baseball game between the commands of Brigadier General Philip Kearny and Colonel Joseph J. Bartlett. If true, this would have been the first baseball game in Virginia and one of the first known games played in the country. On 10 December 1862, just before the First Battle of Fredericksburg, the parts of pontoon bridges stored by the Union army at the church were ordered forward to the Rappahannock River. The United States Christian Commission also used White Oak Church until 3 May 1863 as one of a series of stations from which it distributed copies of the New Testament to every regiment in the Union Army.¹³

The war brought other than troops and slight damage to the church. Before the Civil War, black members of the White Oak congregation sat in the back of the church behind a three-foot partition that was secured between timber posts.¹⁴ This partition kept them separated from the main space of the church and also required that they enter the church through the back door. After the war, in May 1868, the congregation decided that all black members "who desired Separate orgin[iz]ation Should be dismissed from This Church."¹⁵ Some of the blacks who were dismissed established their own congregation called the Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church, which is also located in Stafford County. The other dismissed black members established a church in Alexandria, Virginia.¹⁶

In 1868 the congregation of the White Oak Primitive Baptist Church

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

also considered whether the church should be used as a school. Church records report that rather than using the church building the members decided that a shed located on the property should be used for this purpose. Nothing is mentioned as to whether the teachings of the school were affiliated with Primitive Baptist doctrine. No records or traces of the shed are to be found today; however, the structure used during the same period as a school on the grounds of the Salem Baptist Church, located to the west of Fredericksburg, can serve to suggest what the shed may have looked like.¹⁷

The condition of the church building after the Civil War seems to have been quite fragile. Former soldiers and relatives of the Fifteenth New Jersey Regiment who camped around the church during the Civil War reported distress at finding the building abandoned and dilapidated upon a later visit. Accordingly, they made repairs and organized a Sunday School there.¹⁸

The oldest marked grave at the White Oak Primitive Baptist Church is dated June 11, 1897. On 25 September 1905, the church purchased an adjacent parcel of land for "use as a cemetery" from Gordon and Krissey Sullivan. William Redman sold the church a narrow strip of land adjacent to the cemetery in October 1953. This purchase brought the size of the church property to its present 4,212 square feet.¹⁹

Today the White Oak Primitive Baptist Church meets twice monthly and has a membership of twelve people. The service consists of a period of hymn-singing followed by a sermon and a short business meeting. Through the years the congregation has maintained the simplicity and forthrightness of its faith and service as well as the integrity of the building in which it worships.

Eirik Harteis/John S. Salmon

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6**ENDNOTES**

1. Robert B. Semple, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1894), 375-380, 406.
2. James R. Kosch, History of White Oak Primitive Baptist Church, 1789-1989 (Westland Printers, Inc., 1989), 6.
3. Semple, Baptists in Virginia, 386.
4. White Oak Primitive Baptist Church, Stafford County, Minute Book, 1789-1831, Misc. Reel 564, p. 1, Archives Branch, Virginia State Library and Archives (VSL&A).
5. Ibid.; Semple, Baptists in Virginia, 406.
6. Kosch, History, 7.
7. Minute Book, 1827-1870, Misc. Reel 564, pp. 101-103, VSL&A.
8. The church members believe that they "meet in the original building at the same location" as in 1789 (Kosch, History, 13). In the 1835 deed, Moncure mentioned that he bought the property from "Thomson." Although the Stafford County deed books for the period have been destroyed, there is an extant county minute book that contains a reference to this transaction (Stafford County, Minute Book CC, 1830-1835, Reel 9, p. 414, VSL&A): on 8 December 1834 "An Indenture of bargain & sale from James E. Thompson & Caroline M. his wife & John T. Daniel" to John Moncure was ordered recorded. The Stafford County land tax books for 1834 and 1835 (Records of the Auditor of Public Accounts, VSL&A) also suggest that a church existed before the gift from Moncure. In 1834 James Thompson owned a 712-acre tract at White Oak with \$200 worth of buildings; in 1835 this was in the possession of John Moncure, who had sold off several parts of the tract (what he had left had no buildings, according to the tax books). A value of only \$200 in 1835 indicates a modest structure or structures such as this church and associated outbuildings or, as the 1835 letter to Moncure put it, "our Meeting House . . . with all its appurtenances." Once the property had been transferred by Moncure to the trustees, of course, it was no longer subject to taxation and therefore vanished from the tax books. None of the foregoing documents, however, proves or disproves any particular date of construction (or

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7

possible reconstruction) for the building that now stands at White Oak. Obviously some structure was there in 1789; some building stood there in 1834-1835; and there is a record of repairs to some structure beginning in 1851, in the second minute book. Are the documents all referring to the same building, or to several different buildings constructed at different times? The documentary evidence is inconclusive. Likewise, the architectural evidence is ambiguous; an examination of one of the church's structural members in the spring of 1990 revealed a machine-cut nail dating from the late 1830s to 1850s. Whether or not this single specimen is sufficient to assign a post-1835 construction date to the present building is a matter of some debate. Most likely a resolution of this issue must await further architectural investigation.

9. Minute Book, 1827-1870, Misc. Reel 564, pp. 101-102, VSL&A.

10. Ibid., 104-105.

11. Kosch, History, 14, 19.

12. W. M. Smoot, Reminiscences of the Baptist of Virginia (n.p.: 1902), 21, 40-41; Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1958 and 1971), 1:978.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 2

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4245

4244

(PASSAPATANZY)
5560 IV SE

PASSAPATANZY 3.2 MI.
1/6 MI. TO U.S. 301

4241

17'30"

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