(Rev. 10-90) NPS Form 10-900 NRH 3/30/7

OMB No. 1024 0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

I hi.; 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). Usea typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property		
historic name Slate Mountain Presbyterian Church and other names/site number 031-5005		
2. Location		
eet & number 2121 Lonesome Dove Drive not for publication		ot for publication
state Virginia code VA county Flowd	code063	Zip <u>24073</u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certification		
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preserve nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and profession propertyX meets does not preet the National Register Conationally statewideX locally. (See continuation should be considered to the National Register Conationally statewide Note that the National Register Conationally statewide Note that National Register Conational Regis	e documentation standards for regional requirements set forth in 36 riteria. I recommend that this properties in the commend of the commend o	istering properties in the National CFK Part 60 In my opinion, the
Virginia Department of Historic Resources State or Federal agency and bureau In my opinion, the property meets does not mee for additional comments)	t the National Register criteria	. (_ See continuation sheet
Signature of commenting or other official	Date	
State or Federal agency and bureau		100
4. National Park Service Certification		
8. hereby certify that this property is:		
—— entered in the National Register —— See continuation sheet.	Signature of Keeper	
determined eligible for the National Register		
 See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register 	Date of Action	
other (explain):		

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Slate Mountain Presbyterian Church and Cemetery Floyd County, Virginia

5. Classification	
Ownership of Property (Check as ma	ny hoxes as apply)
x private	ny boxes as appry)
public-local	
public-State	
public-Federal	
public Tederar	
Category of Property (Check only on	e box)
x building(s)	,
district	
x site	
structure	
object	
Number of Resources within Proper	fw.
ivaliser of resources within 1 toper	· y
Contributing Noncontributing	
_1	
1sites	
0 0 structures	
0 0 objects	
Number of contributing resources prev	iously listed in the National Register <u>0</u>
	ng (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Reverend Robert Childress Pres	
6. Function or Use	
Historic Functions (Enter categories f	
	Sub:religious facility
funerary	<u>cemetery</u>
Current Functions (Enter categories f	
	Sub:religious facility
<u>tunerary</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
7. Description	
Architectural Classification (Enter ca	tegories from instructions)
Gothic Revival	
Sounc Revival	
Materials (Enter categories from instru	actions)
foundation <u>concrete</u>	
roof <u>asphalt</u>	
walls stone	
other	
~ ·····	

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

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8. Statement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the proper	tv for
National Register listing)	•
_x_A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patte	rns of
our history.	
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
_x_C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction	
represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant	ıt 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.)	
x_ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	
B removed from its original location.	
C a birthplace or a grave.	
_x_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) Religion, Social History, Architecture	
Period of Significance1932-1956	
Significant Dates1932;1951	
Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A	
Cultural AffiliationN/A	
Architect/BuilderN/A	
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation she	eets.)
9. Major Bibliographical References	
Bibliography	
(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	

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X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources
10. Geographical Data
Acreage of Propertyapproximately one acre
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
<u>1. 17 554223 4070265 </u>
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: Randle Brim, John Kern, and Michael Pulice
Organization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources date December, 2005
street & number: 1030 Penmar Ave SE telephone 540-857-7586
city or town Roanoke state VA zip code 24013
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)
, and the same of
Property Owner
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)
name Rev. Stuart Lee Childress (contact)
street & number 30 Lynn Drive telephone
city or town Ararat state VA zip code 24053

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Summary and Site

The Slate Mountain Church and Cemetery are prominently sited within Rock Castle Gap, on a southerly-sloping hillside among a grove of white pines, on the west side of Rt. 728 (Rock Church Road), and 3/10 of a mile north of the intersection of 728 and 758 (Willis Road). The elevation of the site is between 3100 and 3200 feet above sea level. The church grounds and cemetery are within Floyd County, but the Floyd-Patrick county line follows the road. The Blue Ridge Parkway itself is about 3/10 of a mile to the north, on the opposite side of the hill, but National Park Service land, including the parkway and the Rocky Knob National Recreation Area partially surrounds the church grounds to the north and east. Immediately to the west of the church is a 3301 foot high hilltop and in the distance to the northwest is Hog Mountain, reaching 3574 feet in height.

Description

The Slate Mountain Church consists of a one-story gable-fronted rectangular form (60' by 29'6") with a roughly square (7' by 9') bell tower centered on the building's front (south) elevation and a granite date stone at the southeast corner. The bell tower is the main architectural character-defining element and the only feature of the church derived from Gothic architecture. It features the segmental-arched opening leading to the church's entrance, which has an identical segmental arch and stained glass lighted transom. Perhaps three-fifths of the way up the tower is a circular stained glass window, less than two feet in diameter, in which the cames (slender grooved lead bars used to hold the panes together) form the likeness of Jesus. A few feet above the window is a triangular-arched aperture, about 3 feet tall and 2 feet wide, with a blocky precast concrete sill. The top of the tower consists of pointed, ramped parapet walls interrupted at each corner by short, square stone columns. Crenelates, consisting of sharp white quartzite rocks pointed upward, spaced at even intervals, line the top of the parapet and corner columns. The building was erected on a concrete block foundation, and has walls of light wood framing covered with a thick quartz and quartzite fieldstone exterior veneer. A few large, well-formed, faceted quartz crystals also appear among the rocks. Some others are cobble-shaped but are extremely clear, transparent quartz. On both long sides of the building (east and west) are two stone buttresses with sloped concrete copings at the top, alternating with the three windows. The rear (north) elevation, now obscured by a modern frame addition, had no fenestration. The medium-pitch gable roof is covered with brown/tan-colored asphalt shingles. The interior is an open nave plan,

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entered via a vestibule, with transepts toward the rear. A choir loft in the front of the church can also be accessed by a stair in the vestibule. The interior walls of the sanctuary are treated with unpainted pine wainscoting and drywall above. The pews face the dais and podium at the rear of the building. A polished granite cornerstone on the front elevation--southwest corner--reads "Slate Mountain Presbyterian Church, 1932-1982."

The cemetery, situated along the east side of the church, appears to have fewer than 100 graves, all marked with granite gravestones from the 1930s and thereafter. There is no fence surrounding the cemetery like most of the other Rock Churches. The cemetery is historically significant as part of the church's story and thus is considered a contributing site.

8. Statement of Significance

Summary and Justification

Slate Mountain Presbyterian Church is one of the six Childress rock-faced churches located in the Virginia counties of Floyd, Carroll, and Patrick, built between 1919 and the early 1950s by Presbyterian minister Robert W. Childress. The six churches are significant in their embodiment of Appalachian patterns of Presbyterian religious worship and Presbyterian social activism in western Virginia. The churches also tell the story of the remarkable ministry of Robert W. Childress, who brought spiritual faith and social awakening to the people of the central portion of the Blue Ridge Province in Virginia. As such, Slate Mountain Church is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Religion and Social History, and under Criterion C for its unique architecture. The period of significance is from 1932, the year of its construction, to 1956, the year of Robert Childress's death.

Historical Background

Slate Mountain Presbyterian Church, five miles southeast of Buffalo Mountain, began as a mission of Buffalo Mountain Church. About 1930 Bob Childress began holding services and Sunday school at a one-room school in the Slate community near Rock Castle Gap, five miles southeast of Buffalo Church. In June 1932 Childress reported to the Buffalo Mountain session that he had baptized fourteen people at Slate Mountain. Slate Mountain elder Ted Sutphin remembers building the fieldstone church in 1932. Slate Mountain members dug creek bed sand Section __8__ Page __3_

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from Burks Fork, hand-screened the sand to eliminate the gravel, and shoveled the sand into trucks for delivery at the church site. Bob Childress's son Conduff hauled the fieldstone for the church by truck. The 18-inch-thick walls required a great deal of mortar. Beautiful crystal quartz rocks were placed on both sides of the front entrance to the church; one came from the family farm of Cecil Cock.¹

In 1939 Slate Mountain Church organized as an independent Presbyterian church with Bob Childress as pastor. Slate Mountain session minutes in November 19, 1939, recorded Sam Underwood, William Underwood, and Ted Sutphin as elders; Ron Belcher, Virgil Belcher, and Luther Wood as deacons; and Luther Wood as treasurer. At that first Slate Mountain session, Bob Childress requested and received permission to spend the entire Sunday school offering of \$2.61 "for the benefit of the convicts as a token of sympathy on their behalf for Thanksgiving." Randle Brim comments on the generous social outreach and compassion of this Thanksgiving gift to prisoners at the Convict Camp at Meadows of Dan located nearby, two and a half miles south of Slate Mountain Church. The gift of the whole church collection came at the height of the Great Depression and the donation came all in coins; it was a big and later day when the first person put a dollar bill in the Slate Mountain collection plate.²

During World War II Slate Mountain Church sponsored two outpost Sunday schools: Mayberry Sunday School, which was conducted by Luther Wood and enrolled sixty students; and Stamping Birches Sunday School, which had fifty pupils. Slate Mountain Church must have grown in membership as well as outreach because session minutes for spring 1951 recommended construction of a three-room addition to the rear of the 1932 church building. Ted Sutphin borrowed \$4,000 from Joseph Sowers of Floyd County Bank. Lendell Craig quit school at 16 to work on the Slate Mountain Church addition, which included the rear cross-gable wing and the bell tower. After two weeks of training from Fred Shelor, Craig cracked the fieldstone rocks so they could be mortared in place to form a flat exterior surface. Rev. Bob Childress suffered his first stroke in 1951 during the period of construction on the addition to Slate Mountain Church.³

Endnotes

- 1. Brim, *Simple Pleasures*, September 2004. All distances from Buffalo Mountain are given here in aerial, not driving, miles.
- 2. Ibid; Brim, personal communication, September 2005.
- 3. Ibid.

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9. Bibliographical References

Abingdon Presbytery, Wytheville, Virginia. Published minutes, 1916-1944.

Brim, Randle. "Slate Mountain Church Sits Proudly." *Mount Airy News*, Simple Pleasures section. Vol. IX, No. 6, September 2004; 21, 24, 26-27, 30.

Brim, Randle.

April 2005, personal communication, Stuart, Virginia.

September 2005, personal communication.

September 2005, digital annotation of articles in Simple Pleasures, July- Dec. 2004.

September 2005, digital images of session minutes for Bluemont, Slate Mountain, Dinwiddie, Buffalo Mountain, and Willis Churches.

Davids, Richard C. *The Man Who Moved a Mountain*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970. Paperback edition, 1972.

Slate, Richard, elder of Dinwiddie Presbyterian Church since 1947. Personal communication, September 2005.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated parcel includes only the church and cemetery and the immediate grounds around them, as shown on the accompanying GIS-produced aerial image. The following UTM points designate the boundary polygon as it is being nominated: 1. 17 554223 4070265 2 17 554301 4070263 3. 17 554277 4070202 4. 17 554218 4070224

Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel boundary corresponds exactly to that of the original church and cemetery parcel.

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