

VLP- 12/2/86
NRHP- 4/2/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Cypress Grove Christian Church

and or common Snowville Christian Church (Preferred) (DHL File No. 77-6)

2. Location

street & number St. Route 693

NA not for publication

city, town Snowville

NA vicinity of

state Virginia

code

51

county

Pulaski

code

77

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Snowville Christian Church

street & number St. Route 693

city, town Snowville

NA vicinity of

state Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pulaski County Courthouse

street & number Second Street

city, town Pulaski

state Virginia 24301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

(1) Pulaski County Reconnaissance
title Level Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1985

federal state county local

depository for survey records Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond

state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	date NA
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Summary Description

The Cypress Grove Christian Church is situated on the main road, St. Route 693, near the southwest end of the town of Snowville on a bluff above the Little River, in the hilly southeastern corner of Pulaski County.

The church takes a form typical among churches in nineteenth-century Pulaski County. It is a frame church, with a gabled roof. Three windows or bays punctuate the long side walls, while a symmetrical pair of doors gives entry to the church in the pedimented principal facade. The interior and exterior are ornamented with pattern-book Greek Revival columns and pilasters; and the principal facade is topped by an octagonal bell tower. The nominated property consists of one contributing building, the church.

Architectural Analysis

Cypress Grove Christian Church is a frame church measuring forty by sixty feet. The principal or northwest facade is pierced by two two-panel doors, each with a Greek Revival surround incorporating flanking pilasters. Windows above each door provide light to the vestibule inside. Large pilasters are applied to the corners of the front wall and support a pediment and entablature. The pediment is filled with flush boards. The side walls each contain three windows in tall vertical openings which light the main floor and the gallery above. Six over six double-hung sash windows at the lower level are separated by a panel from the fixed six light sash at the upper level. Some of the early blinds remain intact, having been nailed in place in recent decades. A one-story frame addition made in the 1970s to the rear contains a meeting room, baptismal pool, kitchen, office, and bathrooms. The southeast gable of the church, where it appears above the addition, is weatherboarded like the rest of the church, and the edge of the roof is trimmed with early tapered rake boards. The church is supported on a coursed rubble foundation. There is no basement. Both the church and the addition have modern standing seam metal roofs. On the apex of the roof near the northwest front stands an octagonal louvered bell tower with a bell-shaped roof. The corners are formed like pilasters with necking and a capital, and a sawn bracket supports the cornice at each corner.

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1864 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Statement of Significance

The Cypress Grove Christian Church represents the principal church in the industrial town of Snowville. The church is significant within the context of New River area architecture as understood in the 1985 Pulaski County reconnaissance survey. The structure, which dates from the end of the Civil War, is similar in many respects to rural nave-plan churches popular in the New River Valley during the nineteenth century, but differs in its greater scale, elaboration, and detailing. The church is an important document of the importance of Snowville as a manufacturing and population center in the nineteenth century. The church was founded as one of six churches in the region by the charismatic religious leader and doctor Chester Bullard, who lived in Snowville. Bullard developed and propounded a personal concept of Christianity, but by circa 1840 had united his churches with the Christian Church/Disciple of Christ movement headed by Alexander Campbell.

Historical Background

The church at Snowville was founded by Chester Bullard. Bullard was born at Framingham, Massachusetts in 1809 and died in 1893 at his home in Snowville. He came to Montgomery County at the age of seventeen in connection with the immigration of his sister and her husband Asiel Snow. In 1830 Snow and his relatives from Massachusetts founded a manufacturing center near an existing mill privilege on the Pulaski County side of the Little River. Bullard felt drawn by the revivals then occurring and the growth of the emotionally fervid Methodist and Baptist denominations. He developed an independent interpretation of scripture, drawing on Methodist and Baptist beliefs in adult baptism by immersion and in the operation of faith in effecting salvation. He founded a number of churches in the area before 1840. His followers were known as Bullardites. He had at the same time studied medicine with Henley Chapman, developer of and physician at the New River White Sulphur Springs, and practiced healing as well as preaching. In 1839 Bullard became interested in the doctrines expounded by Alexander Campbell, founder, with his father, of the Disciples of Christ or Christian Church in the first decades of the nineteenth century. After a meeting with Alexander Campbell in 1840, Bullard united his churches with those of Campbell and Barton W. Stone, who had in 1832 united a portion of his Christian Church with Campbell's followers.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Radford South, Virginia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>17</u>	<u>539120</u>	<u>4098550</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification VBD: Beginning at a point on the E side of VA 693 located approx. 2100' NE of the intersection with VA 665; thence approx. 150' SE; thence approx. 100' NE; thence approx. 150' NW; thence approx. 100' SW to the point of origin
JUSTIFICATION: The bounds have been drawn to encompass the church and lot upon which it stands

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	NA	code	county	NA	code
state	NA	code	county	NA	code

11. Form Prepared By

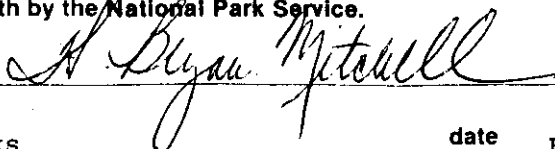
name/title	Gibson Worsham - Historical Architect		
organization	Gibson Worsham, Architect	date	July 1986
street & number	Yellow Sulphur Springs, Route 2	telephone	(703) 552-4730
city or town	Christiansburg	state	Virginia 24073

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title H. Bryan Mitchell, Director
Division of Historic Landmarks

date February 26, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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SNOWVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, PULASKI COUNTY, VA
Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7

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The interior of the main body of the church is entered through a full-height vestibule at the northwest end. The vestibule has a winding stair at each end by which access to the gallery is gained. The stair rail is created by vertical boards rising from the floor below. A closet is located under each stair. The main entry doors are hung on unusual wrought iron butt hinges with heart shaped elements. Molded raised two-panel doors corresponding to the exterior entry doors lead into the sanctuary, where they flank the pulpit dais, so that in effect the church is reversed in plan from every other church in the Pulaski County area. Until the additions to the southeast were made in the 1970s, there was no door at the back of the church. Three Tuscan columns support the gallery along each side of the church and a single column in the rear center supports it where it crosses the rear of the church. Each of the seven columns is turned with a slight entasis and stands on a plain molded plinth. The walnut columns have never been painted. The front wall of the gallery is treated as a continuous cornice, with details for all the classical elements apparently drawn from mid-nineteenth-century pattern book sources. The gallery floors and undersides slope. The church interior was originally entirely plastered, but the ceilings throughout were given acoustical tile treatment instead of plaster repair in recent decades. All doors and window trim in the interior is square and plain. There is a 13-inch high square baseboard.

Furnishings also include the late-nineteenth century chandeliers in the sanctuary and early pews. The walnut pulpit and dais as well as the communion table all date from early in the building's history. Each, including a pair of small candlestands or podiums flanking the central pulpit, are panelled, with diagonally faceted panels. The dais is painted but the movable elements are unpainted. The dais is constructed on two levels. The large lower level holds the communion table and two chairs, while the upper level supports the central pulpit and the two flanking podiums. Recently added chairs to the rear of the pulpit replace a mid-nineteenth-century sofa now in the vestibule.

The ceiling of the church is supported on pairs of hewn joists mortised into a central beam spanning the length of the church. The roof is carried on circular sawn common rafters supported on a purlin in the mid-point of each slope. The purlins and a ridge beam rest on five large kingpost trusses, each consisting of a hewn kingpost mortised into and bolted to the lateral central beam mentioned above, a pair of diagonal struts from the kingpost bracing two hewn principal rafters, and two members mortised into the central beam to form the bottom chord of the truss. A pair of wrought iron tie rods carry tensile forces between the mid-point of the principal rafters and the bottom chord. The common rafters are at a slightly steeper slope than that of the truss.

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2)

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SNOWVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, PULASKI COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #2

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Over the vestibule, the roof structure is considerably different. The trimmed sapling rafters in this area are not supported by any purlin, the purlins stopping short of this bay. Instead, the pair of rafters making up each roof slope is supported by a small strut resting on the joist below. The tower on the roof above is supported on an octagonally arranged group of posts resting on beams spanning the vestibule bay in both directions.

The anomalies in the roof structure suggest that the roof was entirely rebuilt during the late nineteenth century. Since the structure around the bell tower is clearly of earlier date than the rest of the roof, it would seem that rebuilding the roof around the pre-existent bell tower was impractical. Additional evidence of alterations is given by a series of smaller beams corresponding to the present bottom chord truss beams. These beams are just to the southeast of each of the larger beams and are bolted to the central beam by angle irons. Mortices in the central beam at the same points suggest former kingposts. Unlike the smaller beams, the larger beams have been inserted into the evenly spaced rhythm of the ceiling joists.

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Division of Historic Landmarks Survey File No. 77-6
State 1986
221 Governor Street, Richmond, VA 23219

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

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SNOWVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, PULASKI COUNTY, VA

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The church was organized as New Salem Church in 1836-37. The present structure was built in 1864 on the site of a previous sanctuary on land belonging to Dr. Bullard at the southwest end of the town of Snowville.¹ The church was known as Cypress Grove Christian Church during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, but today is called the Snowville Christian Church.

There are few rural churches from this period outside the large towns in Pulaski or neighboring Montgomery counties of larger scale or finer detail. The brick Methodist Church in Newbern built in 1860 is almost identical in several respects, including the double entry and the octagonal bell tower. In most other respects the Snowville Church is similar to the smaller nave-plan churches of both counties from the 1840s to the 20th century recorded in recent surveys. Many of the churches are three bays in length and feature a single door in a plain weatherboarded gable end. While some feature a pediment or pattern book details, none are so large or as well preserved.

¹ No church records survive from the period of the church's building, hence no references to a builder or designer. Local tradition ascribes the construction to Asiel Snow and his family, founders and developers of Snowville.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

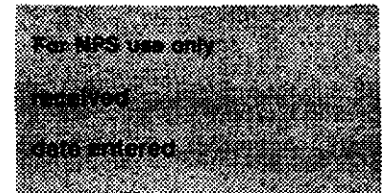
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SNOWVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, PULASKI COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #4

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Major Bibliographical References

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Curtis, Claiborne. "Account of the Reformation of Southwest Virginia" typescript in archives of Snowville Christian Church, 1847.

Hodge, Frederick Arthur. The Plea and The Pioneers in Virginia. Richmond, Virginia: Everett Waddey Co., 1905, pp. 200-205.

Hughes, Nancy. "Snowville Christian Church has given 150 years of worship, friendship." Roanoke Times and World News. June 26, 1983, p. NRV-4.

Hundley, W.R. "Snowville". The Radford News Journal, August 6, 1931.

Mead, Frank S. Handbook of Denominations in the United States. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951, p. 69.

Power, F.D. ed. "Autobiography of Chester Bullard" Christian Standard, Vol. XXIX, No. 11, March 18, 1893, p. 210.

Richardson, Mrs. Roy. "Snowville Christian Church", (Radford) News Journal. July 24, 1958, p. 1.

Worsham, Gibson, et al. Pulaski County Reconnaissance Level Survey. Pulaski: County of Pulaski, 1985.

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Radford South, VA 1965 (PR 1970,
1977)

SNOWVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,
Pulaski County, Virginia

UTM References: 17/539120/4098550

