1. Name of Property

historic name    Pleasant Green Methodist Episcopal Church

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number    County Route 27/Seebert Road

city or town      Seebert

state    West Virginia    code    WV    county    Pocahontas    code    075    zip code    24946

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Signature of certifying official    Title    Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official    Date

Title    State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. 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):

Signature of the Keeper    Date of Action
5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Check as many boxes as apply.)</td>
<td>(Check only one box.)</td>
<td>(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x private</td>
<td>x building(s)</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public - Local</td>
<td>district</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public - State</td>
<td>site</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public - Federal</td>
<td>structure</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>object</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 2

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Functions</th>
<th>Current Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion/Church</td>
<td>Other/vacant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Classification</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-19th Century: Gothic Revival</td>
<td>foundation: Stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>walls: Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>roof: Metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other: Brick</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Narrative Description
See Continuation Sheets
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark “x” in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant 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.)

Property is:

- **A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- **X** Removed from its original location.
- **B** a birthplace or grave.
- **C** a cemetery.
- **D** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- **E** a commemorative property.
- **F** less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance
1888-1962

Significant Dates
N/A

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance:
See Continuation Sheets
Pleasant Green M.E. Church
Name of Property
Pocahontas County, WV
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
See 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 #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- X Other
- Pocahontas County Historical Society; Pocahontas County Historic Landmarks Commission; Marlinton Public Library.

Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  Approximately 1 acre

UTM References  Hillsboro, WVA Quadrangle, Datum 83

Zone 570990 4221865
Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is a rectangular lot that extends approximately 242 feet along the north side of County Route 27/Seebert Road, and approximately 250 feet deep, to the northeast. A wire fence line marks the western side of the property.

The boundary encompasses the church, parsonage, garage and cemetery and coincides with the church's legal boundaries in its entirety. The deed is recorded in the Pocahontas County Courthouse, Marlinton, West Virginia and it is Deed Book 112, page 72.

Boundary Justification

The boundary follows the property line of the original plot of land deeded for use as a church for African Americans. The church, parsonage, garage and cemetery are all encompassed within the boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jean Boger/Susan Critchley
organization Michael Gioulis Historic Preservation Consultant, Inc.
date July 1, 2012
street & number 614 Main Street
telephone 304-765-5716
city or town Sutton
state WV
Zip 26601

Photographs:
See continuation sheets
Location and Setting

The Pleasant Green Methodist Episcopal Church is located along County Route 27/Seebert Road, approximately one mile northwest of the community of Seebert in Pocahontas County, West Virginia. US Route 219 is approximately 1/4 of a mile northwest of the church with Hillsboro to the west and the county seat, Marlinton, to the east. Watoga State Park is just outside of Seebert to the east with the Greenbrier River separating Seebert and Watoga State Park.

The church is set in the midst of a grassy level lawn 55' back from County Route 27/Seebert Road with the cemetery located to the rear of the church. The cemetery ground slopes downward the further back you go to a small ravine. The church parsonage and parsonage garage are located directly south of the church along Seebert Road (Photo 1). A two-story, wood frame private residence is situated adjacent to the church lot to the north. There is no direct driveway to the church although there is a small short gravel driveway to the parsonage. The church faces southwest.

Pleasant Green Methodist Episcopal Church 1888 contributing building

Pleasant Green Methodist Episcopal Church is a one-story, front-gable building with a standing seam metal roof, clapboard siding, and a stone pier foundation, partially covered in some areas with metal or asphalt shingles (photos 1-3). It measures 26’ 8” by 34’ 3”. The church has a partial return cornice and clapboard siding with wide frieze and slender corner boards with simple caps (photos 2-4). A brick interior chimney extends through the roof on the southeast side (photos 1 and 3).

The building features a central entrance bell tower extending from the façade (photos 1-2). The original roof of the tower was lowered by about 6’ in c. 1985, but the original spire is still in place and intact (photo 3). A paneled, double-door entrance is topped by a pointed-arch, two-light transom (photos 5 and 7). Each side elevation of the vestibule includes a four-over-two, double-hung-sash, pointed-arch window (photos 2 and 8). A pent gable roof is above the entrance door and it separates the first floor from the upper floors of the bell tower. The bell tower contains pointed-arch vents with wood louvers on each side (photos 2-3). The original church bell is in the tower. The bell was donated by the Wesley Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church and dates to c. 1842.

The side elevations are identical, each with two symmetrically-placed windows that are nine-over-six, double-hung sash and original (photos 1-3). A metal fuel tank is situated on the southeast elevation of the church and provides fuel for the furnace (photo 3). The rear, or northeast elevation, includes no fenestration or ornamentation (photos 3-4). The date, “1888,” is inscribed into the southwest corner foundation stone on the front of the building.

Interior

The interior floor plan is typical of a church of this time period with the altar and railing along the rear, northeast, wall and the pews arranged in six rows to either side of a central isle behind a wood railing (photo 6). There is wood wainscoting up to the window sill height in the majority of the interior with paneling above that. A modern drop ceiling has been installed. Above the ceiling, tile can be seen the original plaster and wood lath. The floor is wood but is covered by carpeting in the altar section and vinyl tile in the seating section.

The window and door trim is simple pine and the doors, altar rail, and pulpits are black walnut (photos 7-8). The door includes bronze spring hinges. The rail and pulpits were donated by the Wesley Chapel Southern Methodist Church of Hillsboro and the oil lamps donated by the Presbyterian Church of Seebert, both donations occurred at the time of the church's construction or very early on. In addition to the original oil lamps are two modern electric fixtures over the center aisle. The newel posts for the altar rail are carved and fluted. There is a piano along the back, northeast, wall behind the pulpit and extra seating flanks the altar area.
Parsonage (photos 1 and 9)  
**ca. 1920**  
**contributing building**

The parsonage is a one-story, front-gable building. It has a concrete foundation, asbestos shingle siding, a modern metal roof with exposed rafter ends, and two interior red brick chimneys. A hip-roof porch with clapboard siding extends across nearly the entire façade and is supported by wood, square battered columns; the end posts are supported by brick. The porch has an enclosed rail and central entrance with concrete steps. Two-over-two, double-hung sash windows flank the central entrance. Three windows are situated on the side elevations. An open porch extends from the rear elevation.

Garage  
**ca. 1960**  
**non-contributing building**

The garage is a one-story, front-gable garage with a shed-roof addition on the side and rear elevations. It has roll roofing, asphalt shingle siding and a pier foundation. The one bay garage doors are vertical board siding. The building no longer retains integrity. The building was originally constructed for a picnic shelter and later enclosed for a garage.

Cemetery  
**ca. 1888**  
**contributing site**

The Pleasant Green Methodist Episcopal Church Cemetery is located to the rear of the church. It contains approximately 50 markers with a number of suspected unmarked graves. There are twenty-two (22) granite markers; nine (9) marble markers; fourteen (14) fieldstone markers; and five (5) concrete markers. Nineteen of the markers are illegible and there appear to be approximately ten (10) unmarked graves. There are a few footstones, a few double stones and two triple stones. There is one broken off concrete marker. Marker types include Die on Base, Tombstone, Bedstead, and some metal funeral home markers. There are also some stones, especially footstones, lying on the ground. (Photos 10-12) The cemetery served the church as well as the local African American community.
Statement of Significance

The Pleasant Green Methodist Episcopal Church is locally significant under Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage as an important vestige of the African American community in Pocahontas County from the late nineteenth century into the mid-twentieth century. The church served the local African American community from the time it was constructed in 1888 until c. 1976 at which time the congregation had become so small that it was unable to support the church. The congregation dissolved entirely in 1981. The period of significance is 1888, the date of construction, to 1962, the federally mandated fifty year cut-off period. This end date is used as the church continued to have significance in the African American community through the historic period. The church also meets Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties as it derives its significance from historical importance.

General History

The first white settlers to the Pocahontas County area arrived in 1749. However, settlement was slow throughout the following decades due to the threat of attacks by Native Americans. By the turn of the century the population began to grow. In 1821 the Virginia General Assembly created Pocahontas County. By 1830 the US Census recorded 2,542 residents in the county, including 244 African Americans.

While most African Americans arrived in the region as slaves, a few were free and some were given their freedom, usually at the death of their owner and so stated in a will. The 1830 Census recorded 17 free blacks and the 1840 Census recorded 19. Documented cases include Benjamin Warwick, freed by Jacob Warwick's 1818 will for saving his life.1 Elizabeth E. Rhodes, freed by the will of Martin Dilly in 1852, and John Wesley, freed by Adam Arbogast upon his death in 1852. Other free blacks prior to the Civil War included Abraham Freeman and John Lewis.

When the new state of West Virginia was formed in June 1863, Pocahontas County fell within its boundaries. Slavery, however, was not completely abolished in the new state until the ratification of the 13th Amendment in 1865 at the end of the Civil War. After this, several additional African American families moved into the county. Some included Henry Brown (ca. 1865), James Jackson (1867), Harry McDowell (1868), Joseph Wilson (1873), James Harris (1877), J. Madison Boggs (1882), and Henry Woodford (1885), as well as the Wheeler and Knight families.

As industries grew in the decades following the war, new opportunities arose. In West Virginia, coal mining became one of the primary industries with African Americans making up approximately twenty percent of the state's miners. In Pocahontas County, however, timbering was the primary industry, spurred first by the completion of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway to nearby Greenbrier County in 1869 and then its completion to Marlinton and Cass in Pocahontas County in 1900. Many of the first African Americans to arrive in large numbers came as part of the crews constructing the rail lines in the last decades of the nineteenth century.2 Others arrived in Pocahontas County to work in the timber industry and tanneries. The West Virginia Tuberculosis Sanitarium at Denmar, and agriculture, to a lesser extent, also drew black residents to the county.

Segregation forced the newly arriving black population to establish their own churches and attend separate schools. Schools and churches exercised a strong influence on the communities. Schoolhouses were gathering spots and were often used for social activities in addition to their educational purposes. Sometimes they also served as the community’s church.

---

1 William T. Price, Historical Sketches of Pocahontas County West Virginia (Price Brothers, 1901; reprint, Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1990), 608 (page references are to reprint edition).
The first African American church building in the county, the Rising Zion Baptist Church in Marlinton, was built in 1879. Prior to that date, services were held in an old log school building, most likely the Jericho Hollow Colored School (non-extant). Their final move was opposite the Marlinton Depot in 1911 when they built the Rising Zion Baptist Church. The church was constructed by Reverend I.M. Goodwin and James Morris with funds donated by both white and African American residents. Reverend Goodwin led the church congregation for over forty years. He also traveled to other areas and churches, including the Cass Baptist Church, to preach and raise funds.3

Other than the Rising Zion Baptist Church, other churches serving African American communities included the Pleasant Green M.E. Church (1888) in Seebert, the Macedonia Baptist Church (1902) and Wilson Chapel (1905) in Brownsburg, Stewart Chapel (date unknown) in Marlinton, Frank African Methodist Church (date unknown) in Frank, Cass Baptist Church in Cass (1917), and Brush Run Church of God (1922).4 Only the Wilson Chapel and Pleasant Green Church are extant. Wilson Chapel is vacant and in poor condition on the exterior; the interior condition is unknown.

The Macedonia Baptist Church was organized in 1902. B.W. and Maud E. Vaughn donated a quarter acre of land in 1907 to church trustees, Andy Wheeler, J.A. Peters, William Walker, and B.W. Vaughn. Fundraising for this church followed the same pattern as for Rising Zion. They received money through donations from both black and white residents, as well as through fund raising efforts such as church suppers and subscriptions. By 1940, however, the number of congregation members was declining and they met only once a month. Church members included the Boggs, Peters, Jackson, Martin, McDowell, Knight, and Tibbs families.5

The other church in Brownsburg, Wilson Chapel, was a Methodist congregation. The building used for Wilson Chapel was first a school building moved next to the Brownsburg School in 1905 to be used as the church; it is not known where the building was moved from. Prior to 1905, the Methodists worshipped with the Macedonia Baptist Church. The deed for the land was given to the church by Joseph Wilson on October 2, 1903 to church trustees. Trustees included William Wilson, Price Graves, Amos Jackson, Amos Crawford, and C.W. Wilson. The lot consisted of one acre and the deed stipulated that a church must be built within five years of January 1, 1904. If the church was not built within that time period, the conveyance would be invalid. The church bears the namesake of the Wilson family who sponsored the construction of the church. They included Joseph Wilson, Billie Wilson, Liza Wilson, and Melissa Wilson. The church has handmade seats, a coal stove, an organ, and electric lights. Wilson Chapel is a one-story, front-gable building with a central tower with pyramidal roof and is covered with clapboard siding. It is no longer in use. The other Brownsburg church was demolished.6

The First Baptist Church of Cass was organized in 1917 by Rev. Goodwin. Originally, services were held outside within a grove of trees and later moved into the Cass Colored School. Rev. Goodwin preached in the church on the second Sunday of each month and Reverend Tyson, once a month. As with many of the other communal buildings within African American communities, the church/school was a social center serving as a church, a Sunday school, a Baptist Young Peoples Union, and the Women's Missionary Society. They regularly contributed money to a flood relief fund and to organizations assisting the poor and also sent money to Africa. The West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company of Cass donated land to the African American community for use as a cemetery between Deer Creek and Cass, gave the Cass church $10 annually, and paid their light bill. The Cass Company Store also donated money to the church. By 1941, the congregation still did not have a church building of their own and eventually the congregation dissolved. Member names included Parks, Tyson, Hunter, Gilbert, Scott, Davis, and Crews families.7

---

3 WV Writer's Project February 14, 1941. Mt. Zion Baptist Church - (Colored) - Marlinton.
4 "The Black Community in Pocahontas County," Community Discussion Meetings Summary Booklet, West Virginia Committee for the Humanities and Public Policy Grant, 1976.
5 WV Writer's Project November 29, 1940. Macedonian Baptist Church - Brownsburg - Colored.
6 WV Writer's Project November 29, 1940. Brownsburg Methodist – Colored, and "The Black Community in Pocahontas County."
7 WV Writer's Project February 14, 1941. First Baptist Church of Cass - (Colored).
Pleasant Green Methodist Episcopal Church

The first African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church was organized in Philadelphia in the late eighteenth century and largely shares the same doctrine as the Methodist Episcopal Church. The A.M.E. Church first arrived in western Virginia to assist slaves following John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859. They continued to send assistance throughout the Civil War. From that time to the early decades of the twentieth century, a number of A.M.E. churches were established in West Virginia. The West Virginia Conference of the A.M.E. Church was established as a separate district in 1908 and included all of West Virginia except for Jefferson County which is considered part of the Virginia Conference. By 1926, the denomination peaked in West Virginia with 64 churches including 2,298 members.8

The Pleasant Green Methodist Episcopal Church was built in the decades following the Civil War when the A.M.E. Church was growing rapidly in West Virginia. The location was the site of the Pleasant Green School. Like other schools, the building also served as a church and served in this capacity until the church was constructed. Ten years later, ca. 1898, students were transferred to the newly constructed Seebert Lane Colored School located a quarter mile west on Seebert Road.9

W.L. and M.L. McNeel, prominent local white residents, sold the land to the original trustees, George Lee, C.W. Lee, E.N. Grant, W.D. McCoy, and Henry Anderson, for $30. Half of that amount was donated back to the church. The deed stated that the land was to be used for a school and/or a church. The first pastor, Reverend Ben Perkin, helped to build the church. Though it was built in 1888 and opened in 1889, it was not dedicated or fully paid for until 1909.10 Some of the original church members included individuals by the surname of Pryor, Lee, Anderson, Thompson, Stewart, Grant, Lacy, Tibbs, Bolden, Jackson, Scott, and Taylor. By 1940, the church had approximately 25 members.11

A cemetery behind the church includes the grave of “Eddy” Washington, a local African American cook who worked at Watoga State Park. “Miz Eddy” was a well-known African American figure in the local community. She had first worked in the Elkins home of future West Virginia Governor, Wallace "Wally" Barron, when he was a child. When he was convicted and sent to prison during his term as Governor, “Miz Eddy” stated “I always knew that little shave tail would get into something he couldn’t get away with.”12 Also buried in the cemetery is Gordon Scott, the state’s first African American Superintendent of a State Park. He first worked at Watoga State Park and became the Superintendent of Droop Mountain Battlefield in 1957, serving until his death in 1959.

The cemetery includes several gravestones fastened with eye bolts (a fastener with a loop on one end and threads on the other). Some oral history contends that a bolt without a chain represents freedom. One link represented an individual who was born into slavery. Two links represented a person born free who was enslaved and remained enslaved for the rest of their life and three links represented a lifetime spent in slavery.13

Summary

The only other A.M.E. church known to have existed in Pocahontas County was located in Frank but is non-extant. Of the churches that served African Americans in Pocahontas County, the only two that remain are Wilson Chapel in Brownsburg and the Pleasant Green M.E. Church. Both still had active congregations in 1976 but soon their membership

---

9 Ruth Taylor, interview by author, winter 2011/2012.
10 WV Writer's Project. December 6, 1940. Pleasant Green M.E. Church - Colored.
12 Ruth Taylor interview.
declined and both sit empty today, vestiges of the early black population who served the regional industries of timber and railroad.

The Pleasant Green Methodist Episcopal Church is eligible under Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage and Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties. The property is a significant building, reflective of the segregated society that developed after the American Civil War in American society and persisted through the twentieth century. Though the tower roof of the church has been altered, the property retains sufficient integrity to convey its local significance.
Bibliography: works cited/referenced


“The Black Community in Pocahontas County,” Community Discussion Meetings Summary Booklet, West Virginia Committee for the Humanities and Public Policy Grant, 1976.


Curry, C.A. *The Churches of Pocahontas County*. Unpublished manuscript.


*In Loving Memory Little Levels: The Sixth in a series of cemetery listings in Pocahontas County, West Virginia*. Marlinton, W.Va.: Pocahontas County Genealogy Group, 2011.

Johnson, Pastor Frank K. *The History of Wesley Chapel Methodist Church*. Unpublished manuscript.


McNeal, Moffett, President of the Pocahontas County Historic Landmarks Commission. Interview by author. Winter 2011/2012.


Pocahontas County Census Records, 1830, 1840, 1850, and 1860.

Pocahontas County Deeds and Records.


Puffenberger, Hubert and Gerry. Interview by author. August 10, 2011.


Triplett, Jimmy. *An Introduction to West Virginia Ethnic Communities*. West Virginia Division of Culture and History. Unpublished manuscript.

*West Virginia Writer's Project* 1940-1941.
Brownburg Methodist - Colored. November 29, 1940.
First Baptist Church of Cass - (Colored). February 14, 1941.
Macedonia Baptist Church - Brownburg - Colored. November 29, 1940.
Minute Books of the Board of Education of the Various Districts. March 12, 1941.
Minute Books of the Board of Education of the Various Districts. March 14, 1941.
Mt. Zion Baptist Church - (Colored) - Marlinton. February 14, 1941.
Pleasant Green M.E. Church - Colored. December 6, 1940.


**Internet Websites**


Photographs

Pleasant Green Methodist Episcopal Church
Seebert vicinity, Pocahontas County, WV
Photographer: Michael Gioulis, Jean Boger, and Susan Critchley
Date Photographed: Winter 2011/2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 12 Overall site looking northwest.
2 of 12 Front, south, and side, west, elevations looking northeast.
3 of 12 Side, east, and rear, north, elevations looking southwest.
4 of 12 Rear, north, elevation looking south.
5 of 12 Entrance door detail from the exterior, looking north.
6 of 12 Altar area detail on the interior looking north.
7 of 12 Entrance door detail from the interior, looking south.
8 of 12 Entrance/bell tower looking east.
9 of 12 Parsonage looking northeast.
10 of 12 Cemetery detail.
11 of 12 Gordon E. Scott monument detail.
12 of 12 Monument detail showing eye bolt.
Photo 1:
Overall site looking northwest.

Photo 2:
Front, south, and side, west, elevations looking northeast.
Photo 3:
Side, east, and rear, north, elevations looking southwest.
Photo 4:
Rear, north, elevation looking south.

Photo 5:
Entrance door detail from the exterior, looking north.
Photo 6:
Altar area detail on the interior looking north.
Photo 7:
Entrance door detail from the interior, looking south.

Photo 8:
Entrance/bell tower looking east.
Photo 9:
Parsonage looking northeast.

Photo 10:
Cemetery detail.
Photo 11:
Gordon E. Scott monument detail.

Photo 12:
Monument detail showing eye bolt.