

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS 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 Ruble Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Junction of Co. Rt. 34/1 and 34/2 not for publication

city, town Burning Springs vicinity of congressional district Third

state West Virginia code 54 county Wirt code 105

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name French Robinson

street & number Washington Street

city, town Elizabeth vicinity of state West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wirt County Courthouse

street & number Court and Washington Streets

city, town Elizabeth state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ruble Church (1854) is a rectangular, single-story, gable-roofed log structure measuring fifteen feet by twenty-five feet. The building stands in a clearing on a remote, forested hilltop (elevation 1045 ft.) in the Burning Springs vicinity of Wirt County, West Virginia.

Examination of early surviving photographs of the building indicate that only minor changes have affected the original fabric. Its well-preserved condition and recognition as a significant historic landmark in West Virginia suggest some measure of security for the Ruble Log Church. Nevertheless, while intermittent services held in the building by various nonsectarian users insures a small measure of upkeep, the edifice is empty throughout much of the year and must rely upon the assets of a sound roof and still plumb, heavy log walls for its future preservation.

Hewn logs, twelve to fifteen inches square, rise from stone supports in eight courses from sill to top log on each of the building's four sides. Notching of the jointed log walls is half-dovetailed and is fairly deep accounting for the rather tightly fitting logs. Chinking is composed of stone fragments, short split boards, and clay. Adz or broadaxe marks are still clearly discernible on all of the log surfaces.

Finishing or facing boards around the door and window openings are of relatively recent origin, while braced window shutters on each of the two windows per side wall appear to faithfully duplicate the originals. A rear wall window, shuttered like the others, provides light for the church pulpit, and is in line with the building's single doorway. The flush door is of laminated construction and is of very recent provenance.

The roof covering is of galvanized sheet metal with raised seams which replaced an original surface of rive-split wooden shingles. Framed gables are sided with weatherboarding and enclose a low, unused loft. An early photograph shows the entrance elevation clad entirely in weatherboarding, a not uncommon feature of log buildings. A single facade was often so treated as an insulating factor against the frigid blast of prevailing winter winds.

The Ruble Log Church is in rather good condition, and appears on the exterior much as it looked following construction. Sill logs exhibit deterioration, however, and chinking material has disintegrated and fallen away from the building in many places.

Interior features of the building replaced rough, original surfaces which included "pieceth" windows and what has traditionally been referred to as log puncheon furniture. The tongue-and-groove board wainscoting, walls, ceiling, and pulpit are of uncertain date, though a period of construction of the early 20th or late 19th century seems very likely. The center aisle is flanked by plain benches with simple wooden backs, apparently of late manufacture. The gray-painted pulpit is positioned on a low dais and is flanked to the right by an old upright piano. Kerosene lamps attached to the walls and a pot-bellied stove still provide lighting and heating for the church.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 1854

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ruble Church is significant because it exhibits the well-preserved craftsmanship of pre-Civil War hewn log construction in an original rural West Virginia setting. The building is also significant because it was built as a philanthropic gesture by a locally prominent individual to serve the local religious and educational needs of a wilderness area in mid-19th century West Virginia.

The single-crib plan Ruble Church retains much of its original rustic integrity partly because it was never used as a domicile and therefore resisted the natural evolution of additions and alterations, and because its remote location made the importation of newer and more convenient building materials more difficult. The exception in this instance is the standing-seam sheet metal roof which became a nearly universal roofing medium for log building in the United States when highway construction in the 20th century permitted easy accessibility of the convenient material to builders. Solid, plumb walls and deep, half-dovetailed notching attest to the skill of the builder who understood the nature and strengths of wood well enough to create a lasting structure. One of the best preserved log buildings in western West Virginia, and one of the area's oldest buildings still in public use, the church is viewed as a significant historical landmark by the populace of Wirt County.

A Burning Springs native and a later resident of Williamstown, West Virginia, Dr. J.K. Roberts, wrote a brief history of Burning Springs in which the following story was related:

"Sometime prior to the Civil War, when Burning Springs was still a wilderness, Aaron S. Ruble, a very pious and good man, feeling the need of a place of worship had, through his influence, a log church built. It was named the Ruble Church after its founder and is still known by that name."

The log church was constructed by area settlers who were assisted, it was reported, by Aaron Ruble's two daughters. The land for the church was given by landowner William Petty in an official transaction before Aaron Ruble who was then a Wirt County justice of the peace. The deed, recorded November 20, 1854, specified that the site was to be used for a church, and that the church was to be available as a place of worship to all denominations. Regarding this matter, Robert's history reported: "The old deed for the site of the Ruble Church plainly stipulated that the land was to be used for a church to house the worship of God by all congregations, except the northern Methodists."¹ The discord over Northern-Southern sympathies in Protestant denominations prior to the Civil War is here vividly and rather amusingly evident.

¹ The deed actually records that the church was free to all but those of "Northern Principles".

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Ruble Church, Wirt County, West Virginia

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Surrounding the church immediately to the north and west is a cemetery, the oldest graves of which appear to date from the 1857-58 period. Weeds and other low vegetation have obscured the small, weathered markers.

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During the early years the Ruble Log Church also served as a school. Among the teachers were David Roberts, Zachariah Hickman and John R. Pell. The importance of the building, which was only several ridges away from one of the nation's earliest oil and gas producing fields of the 19th century, was emphasized by its siting on a mountain top at the forks of several unimproved roads serving scattered settlers.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Deed Book 1, p. 569, Wirt County Commission, Elizabeth, WV,
West Virginia Centennial Church Report. "Ruble Church".
WVU Library, West Virginia Collection, A&M 1667.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Girta, WV

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	7	4	7	3	3	2	0	4	3	1	6	8	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Centered on a parcel bounded on the south by the edge of Co. Rt. 34/1, on the east by the edge Co. Rt. 34/2, and by the outermost edge of a cemetery to the north and west of the church.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian

organization Department of Culture & History date December 10, 1980

street & number The Cultural Center, Capitol Comp. telephone 304/348-0240

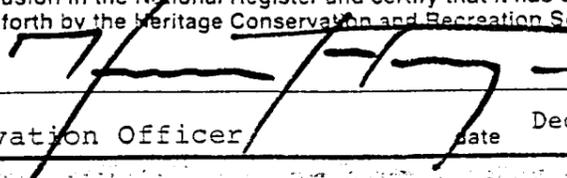
city or town Charleston state West Virginia

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date December 7, 1981

For HCERS 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

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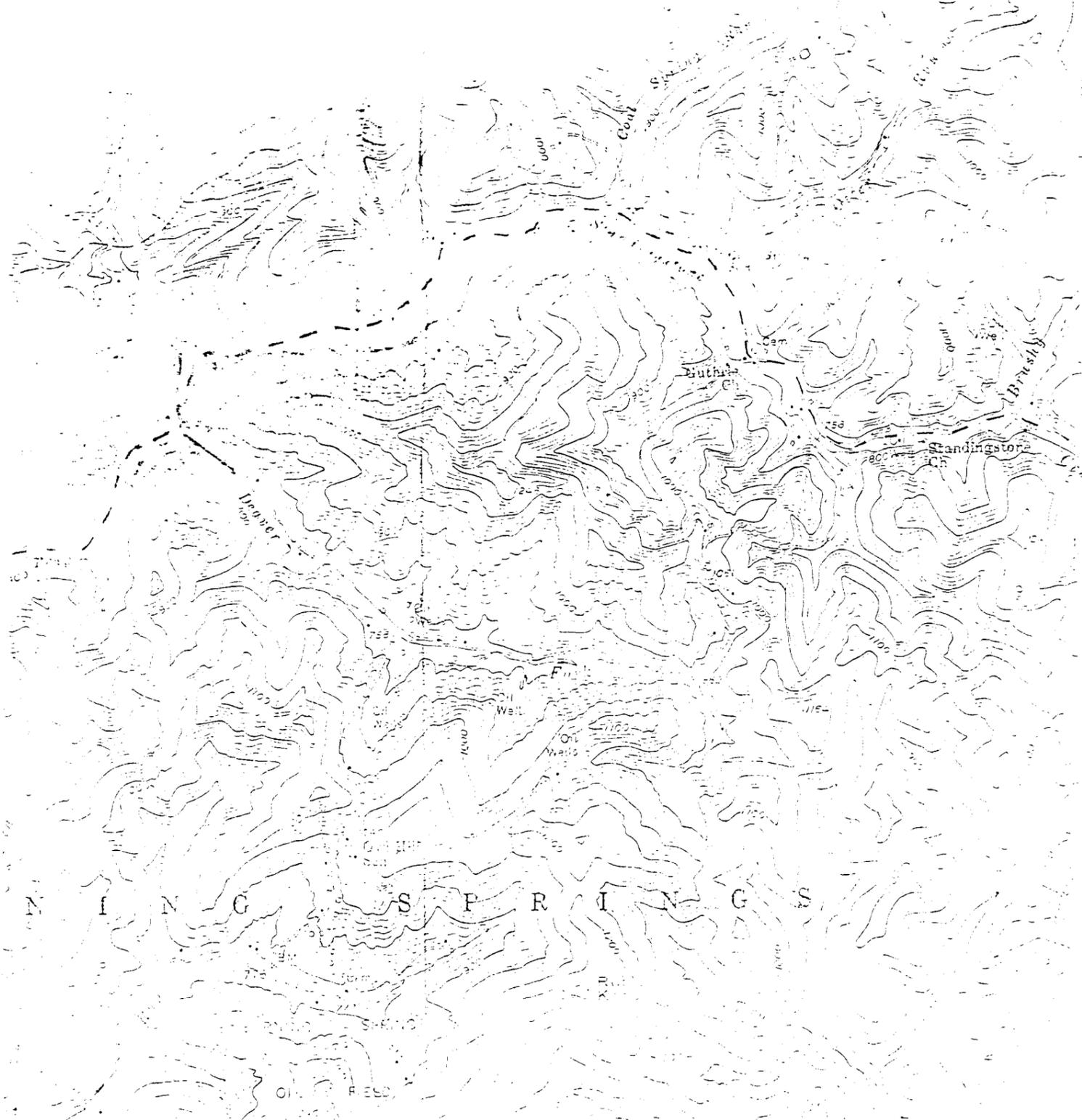
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White, Helen M. "Burning Springs Church, One of Area's Oldest
Building s." Parkersburg (WV) News, March 7, 1965, p. 21.



RUELE CHURCH
COUNTY ROUTE 34/1 NORTH OF
BURNING SPRINGS, WIRT COUNTY

GIRTA 75 U.S.G.S. QUAD
NOT FIELD CHECKED

