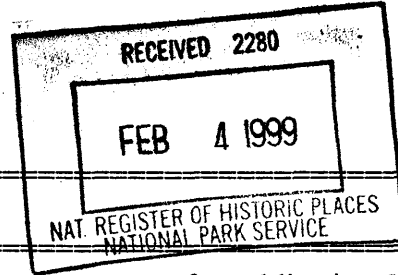


288

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property SAM BLACK CHURCH

historic name: Sam Black Church  
other name/site number:



2. Location

street & number: US 60 not for publication: N/A  
city/town: Smoot vicinity: x  
state: WV county: Greenbrier code: 025 zip code: 24977

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide x locally.

Susan M. Pierce 1/27/99  
Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau Date

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau Date

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper Edward H. Beall Date of Action 3/5/99

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): \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property:**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	<b>TOTAL</b>

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Sam Black Church  
Name of Property

Greenbrier County, WV  
County and State

---

---

**6. Function or Use**

---

---

**Historic Functions**

**Current Functions**

RELIGION: Church

RELIGION: Church

---

---

**7. Description**

---

---

**Architectural Classification:**

**Materials**

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY  
REVIVALS: Gothic Revival

Foundation: Concrete Blocks  
Walls: Wood  
Roof: Asphalt Shingles

**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.

**Sam Black Church**  
**Name of Property**

**Greenbrier County, WV**  
**County and State**

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or grave.

**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**

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1901-1947

**Significant Dates**

1901

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(See continuation sheets.)

Sam Black Church  
Name of Property

Greenbrier County, WV  
County and State

---

---

**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:**

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of Repository: Sam Black Church, Smoot, WV

---

---

**10. Geographical Data**

---

---

**Acreage of Property:** Approximately half acre

**UTM References**

Zone	Easting	Northing	Rupert Quad Map
17	532478	4194420	

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(See continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(See continuation sheet.)

Sam Black Church  
Name of Property

Greenbrier County, WV  
County and State

---

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

---

Name/Title: Katherine Jourdan

Organization: WVSHPO

Date: July 6, 1998

Street & Number: The Cultural Center 1900 Kanawha Blvd East Phone: 304/558-0220

City or Town: Charleston State: WV Zip: 25305-0300

---

---

**Property Owner**

---

---

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Sam Black Church  
c/o Mrs. Virginia Counts

Street & Number: HC 71 Box 125-A

City or Town: Smoot State: WV Zip: 24977

---

---

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Sam Black Church  
Name of Property

Greenbrier County, WV  
County/State

Section number      7              Page      1

---

Sam Black Church is sited off US 60 near Smoot, at a small crossroads. Constructed after a fire consumed the prior church across the side road, church members constructed the church in 1901.

The small one-story church is constructed of drop wood siding with a gable asphalt roof. Centered at the front is a square bell tower with paired entrance doors and a pitched transom with the inscription in stained glass reading "SAM BLACK/METHODIST CHURCH." A false gable with eave is over the door and above is a round spoke-like stained glass window. The top of the tower has a hip roof with open bell tower. The paired pointed arch opening has a low picket fence. The two sides of the tower have a single 1/1 double-hung sash window at the first floor level, and a shuttered vent opening at the level of the round window. To each side of the bell tower is a single window matching the four on the side elevations of the church. These windows are 2/2 double-hung sash with a small diamond in the pointed arch opening.

The roof edge has exposed rafter ends with a curved cut, and a deep fascia board. The rear of the church has a centered round stained glass window. A cement block chimney for the current furnace is off-center.

Handicapped accessibility has been provided by a ramp leading to the top of a flight of stairs to the front door. A concrete ramp also leads to the lower level and another doorway.

The church was originally constructed to stand on piers, but in 1947 the church was raised on the site for a concrete block foundation. On this lower level are two exterior doors, the front door having a gable overhang with knee brace. There are two small classrooms, a kitchen, storage room, restroom, a furnace area near the side rear door, and an open fellowship area. Stairs lead up to the rear of the sanctuary.

The interior of the church sanctuary has horizontal wood siding with vertical beaded wainscoting. Across the end of the room is a raised platform (one step) with an altar in front, and a pulpit behind the altar and low rail on the platform. Chairs are across the back wall and there are some side benches for the choir. On the back wall is a center stained glass circular window with wall sconces to each side and around the platform. The church has original wooden pews, with a low gothic arch design on the side supports. The windows are arched 2/2 double-hung wood sash with color in the upper lights/sash of orange, with green or yellow in the peak. The ceiling is unpainted tongue and groove wood siding in a gambrel shape, with drop lights and new fans. Also on the ceiling are the clear signs of wood in-fill marking a center flue for a former center pot belly stove. This stove was removed and the ceiling also bears the marks of the later two side stove vent holes. The entry has double doors with three vertical lights over three horizontal wood panels. The outer doors are doubled wood panel doors. In the vestibule is a bell pull rope.

Constructed just at the turn of the century, the church has been well maintained by its congregation. The building exhibits the original construction materials and interior design. A simple country church, the Sam Black Church well represents this type of country architecture found in Greenbrier County.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Sam Black Church  
**Name of Property**

Greenbrier County, WV  
**County/State**

**Section number**        8

**Page**        1

---

Sam Black Church is significant under Criteria C for Architecture, reflecting the time it was constructed in 1901 to the period of 1947, after it was raised onto a concrete block foundation. The church is a recognized landmark and has retained all its original materials of construction including its wooden interior walls, floor and ceiling.

The first church constructed in the community was known as the Otter Creek Church, built around 1850 on the north side of the small Otter Creek which is across US 60 from the current church. The land was donated by Christopher Burns, an early farmer of the rural area. The timber was cut from the land and the church was built of logs. Burns was superintendent of the first church and the Rev. Hedges, who owned a farm near Smoot, was one of the first Methodist circuit riders.

It was soon discovered that most of the members lived on the south side of the stream, after rising flood waters each spring prevented the members from using the bridge to attend services. The second Otter Church was built in 1882 on the south side of Otter Creek, high on a hill within a grove of trees. The previous acre of land was traded to Christopher Burns for the new two acre parcel. That church was also of wood and had two front doors and two interior aisles, with a Mr. Kessler acting as the building foreman. A fire caused the destruction of the church in 1900.

The following year, the present church was constructed on a half acre of land below the grove. The land was sold to the church by John Burns, son of Christopher Burns, for the fee of \$12. Church member Floyd Thompson, was building foreman for this new frame building. The building is well constructed with a center bell tower and entry, followed by a large open sanctuary with rear stairs to the lower level. A slight platform is against the rear wall with the altar in front of the pulpit. Each side of the church has four arched windows with colored glass. The exterior and interior materials of the church have not been altered except by the addition of a handicapped ramp. The interior of the church is quaint, with wooden tongue and groove boards as the floor, ceiling and walls. The wooden church pews also date to 1901.

After World War II, the members decided to raise the church and constructed a much needed basement for classrooms, and new furnace. The project was undertaken in 1947 by the Roy A. Jones Construction Company of Beckley. After the basement was completed, a plaque was placed during the dedication reading: "This Basement Honors The Boys of The Armed Serviced of World War II and Memorializes Orvil Bland, James Gladwell, Charles Hedrich, James Osborne, and Harold Reed," all former members.

After its construction, the name of the church was changed to honor a former local Methodist circuit rider, Samuel Black. Known for his Confederate sympathies from his correspondence, Black owned a farm near Rupert where he was laid to rest in 1899. Born in 1813, Black had been one of the early ministers traveling the circuit and preaching in different churches throughout the district. He preached in the Otter Creek Church during the 1880s and 1890s and his photograph still hangs in the church.

Built by local men and church members, the church retains its setting and integrity of construction. The building well represents the common frame form of church architecture found in Greenbrier County.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Sam Black Church  
Name of Property

Greenbrier County, WV  
County/State

Section number      9

Page      1

---

**Bibliography**

Fasick, Ralph N. A BRIEF HISTORY OF RUPERT, WEST VIRGINIA. E.J. Crichton, publisher;  
c. 1970

Scott, Eugene L. "Rev. Sam Black, Famed Circuit Rider", Beckley POST HERALD, April 8, 1946.

Talbott, Billy Ray. "Sam Black Methodist Church." Manuscript, unpublished, 1961.

Donnelly, Shirley. "Sam Black Methodist Church." Paper Unknown, column printed May 9,  
1963. (handout by church).

Phipps, Sherry. "Black gives sermon in church that bears ancestor's name." THE REGISTER-  
HERALD, date unknown.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Sam Black Church                      Greenbrier County, WV  
Name of Property                      County/State

Section number      10                      Page      1

---

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

Certain piece or parcel of land being in the District of Meadow Bluff in Greenbrier County, WV, lying on the south side of the James River and Kanawha turnpike at the junction of the road leading from the old Slate Road at Audy Martins to said turnpike and bounded as follows: beginning at a stake in the fork of said road at turnpike and running a west direction along said pike ten poles; thence (turning south) through said John A. Burnse's land ten poles to stake; thence (turning east) ten poles to County Road; and into said road (turning north) to the beginning. Containing half acre of land.

**Boundary Justification:**

Deed of 21<sup>st</sup> June 1901 found in Deed Book 59, page 606.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Sam Black Church                      Greenbrier County, WV  
Name of Property                      County/State

Section number   Photo                      Page    1

---

Name                      Sam Black Church  
Address                      US 60  
Town                      Smoot, WV  
County                      Greenbrier County

Photographer:                      Jerry Martin

Date:                      August 1998

Negatives:                      Jerry Martin

Photo 1 of 6:    Front or North Facade  
                         Camera facing SW

Photo 2 of 6:    West Facade  
                         Camera facing E

Photo 3 of 6:    West and South (Rear) Facades, and small side lot  
                         Camera facing NE

Photo 4 of 6:    Interior - View of front of church  
                         Camera facing South

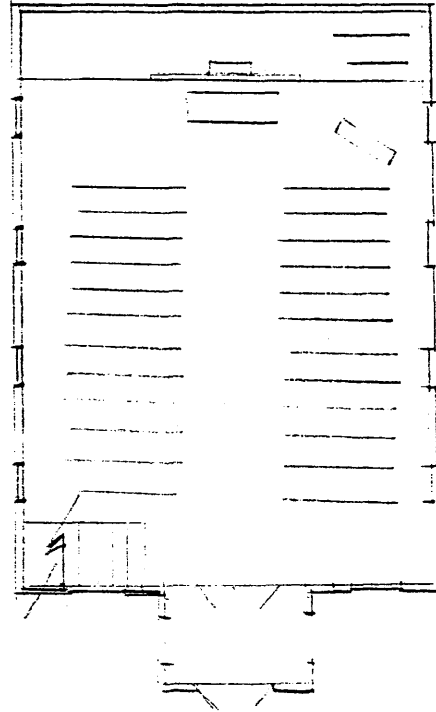
Photo 5 of 6:    Interior - View of rear of church  
                         Camera facing North

Photo 6 of 6    East Facade and setting on US 60  
                         Camera facing West

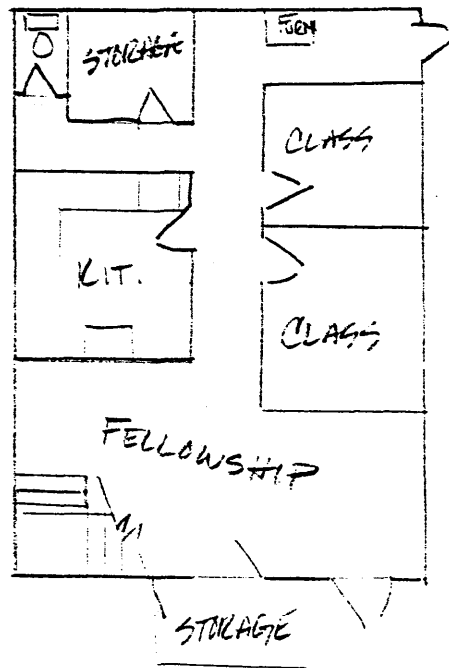
Sam Black Church  
US 60, Smoot, WV  
Greenbrier County

Floorplans Are Not to Scale

First Floor



Lower Level



Bill-120' 165'

This lot 165' x 165'

