

2/5/73

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER SEP 22 1972	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Rock Springs Camp Meeting Ground

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
West side of SR 1373, 0.5 miles north of intersection with Highway 16

CITY OR TOWN:  
Lincolnton vicinity (Ninth Congressional District, The Hon. C. R. Jonas)

STATE North Carolina	CODE 37	COUNTY: Lincoln	CODE 109
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Western North Carolina United Methodist Church c/o Bishop E. G. Hunt, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
310 Cole Building, 207 Hawthorne Lane

CITY OR TOWN: Charlotte	STATE: North Carolina	CODE: 37
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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Lincoln County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Lincolnton	STATE: North Carolina	CODE: 37
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**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  Federal     State     County     Local

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: North Carolina  
COUNTY: Lincoln  
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DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Rock Springs Camp Ground, a well-known Methodist August camp meeting complex located in a wooded plot near Rock Spring, consists of 288 numbered wooden "tents" placed in two and a partial third concentric square rows enclosing a large grove approximately two hundred and fifty feet wide. In the center of the oak-planted square is the "arbor," a roofed shelter with open sides under which the camp meetings take place. An alley breaks the squares at each corner and in the center of each side. Wooden privies, numbered to correspond to the tents, stand in rows several hundred yards behind the tents. The spring is located a short distance from the grove.

The arbor, which was constructed for the camp meeting of 1832, probably predates all existing tents. The focus of camp activity, it is a rectangular structure with a deep hip roof featuring a ventilation cap at the apex. Hand-hewn mortise-and-tenon roof timbers, which are exposed, rest on inner and outer rows of upright posts braced with plain brackets. The roof, originally covered with boards, was shingled in the mid-nineteenth century, and received its present standing-seam tin roof in the late 1860s. The camp bell is located in the west end of the ventilation cap. Inside the arbor, at the west end is a raised platform containing a pine pulpit with pine slat choir seating occupying the rear portion of the platform. A large open area separates the pulpit platform from the congregation seating which consists of three sections of pine slat pews, capable of seating 1,000, divided by two side aisles. The mourner's bench (also known as the seeker's bench or the "anxious seat") is placed before the pulpit. The hard clay ground is covered with straw.

The frame tents, each one designed to house a single family, are numbered from one to 288, and vary greatly in age and condition. The tents are built as row houses, sharing party walls. Each tent is a one-story frame structure nearly square in plan. The name "tents" indicates the derivation of these structures from the earlier makeshift tents of cloth, pine bark, and other materials. These portable tents were gradually replaced by permanent "tents." Each tent conforms closely to a standard form although, having been constructed by an individual family, it exhibits minor variations.

The typical tent has a gabled main block with a shed room in the rear, covered by an extension of the main roof or by a separate roof. The main facade is sheltered by a shed porch either bracketed out from the facade or supported on plain posts. An open lean-to porch extends from the rear of many tents. Flush sheathing covers the main facade of the typical tent, and the sides and rear are covered with weatherboards. Beneath the front eaves several weatherboards form ventilation louvers, and the siding beneath the side eaves is spaced loosely for the same reason. The main facade has a side entrance with a vertically sheathed door, and beside the door is a long bench bracketed out from the wall surface. The front porches of the tents form a continuous protected promenade said to be enjoyed particularly by young campers in the evening.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
North Carolina	
COUNTY	
Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	SEP 22 1972

(Number all entries)

7.

The crude interior of the typical tent features a hard clay floor covered with straw or sawdust, unfinished walls, and an open loft, reached by a ship's ladder stair which ascends in the front left corner of the main block, which is a single room. A large platform elevated above the straw-covered dirt floor serves as a base for sleeping pallets. The stair well is surrounded by a plain railing. The loft is only partially floored, and is protected at its outer edge by a simple railing. An opening in the rear wall of the main block, sometimes containing a vertically sheathed door, leads to the rear shed room. This room, furnished with built-in benches and shelves and containing an open pass-through shelf in the rear wall, serves as the eating area.

Tent No. 1 traditionally is believed to be the oldest standing tent. It is thought to be the sole tent remaining from the original building activity at Rock Springs, which occurred several years after the lots were laid out and sold in 1830. The structure is built, as were all of the original permanent tents, of squared saddle-notched logs. No mortar seals the interstices. The upper wall surfaces are sided. The vertically sheathed door in the front central entrance is hung on a wooden pegged hinge. The other original tents, many said to have been burned during the Civil War, have been replaced.

Although the tents vary greatly in age and condition, the weathered patina of the wood complex gives it a homogenous appearance which belies its accretive growth. No ornamentation distinguishes one tent from another, but the minor differences exhibited within the over-all standardization provide variety. Occasional tents are free-standing, placed with the gable to the front. Some of the main facades are covered with large flush wood shingles, and smaller wooden shakes cover some porch and main roofs. On either side of the central facade entrance of tent number 64 is a sash window covered by louvered shutters. Number 69, the only painted tent, has a concrete floor. Two adjoining tents in the first row, numbers 68 and 69, have garret-level porches (upper galleries) enclosed by simple railings and supported by plain posts. Number 147 is a gable-to-front structure with no eave overhang. The walls of tent number 150 are board-and-batten.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |   |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The development of individual camp meeting sites is obscured within the spontaneous, simultaneous growth of the Great Revival Movement throughout the frontier areas of the United States in the early nineteenth century.

The camp meetings fulfilled a need for fellowship in the lives of the settlers who infiltrated the frontier areas. Western Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina were especially fertile breeding grounds for these religious revivals. As recorded by a contemporary observer, the behavior of the participants swept up by religious fervor was often quite strange. A contemporary observer of camp meeting conduct wrote:

To see those proud young gentlemen and young ladies dressed in their silks, jewelry, and prunella, from top to toe take the jerks would often excite my risibilities. The first jerk or so you would see their fine bonnets, caps and combs fly and so sudden would be the jerking of the head that their long loose hair would crack almost as loud as a waggoner's whip.

This Christian frontier crusade was most actively carried by the Methodist Church, and in 1790, Daniel Asbury, a young Methodist circuit rider from Fairfax County, Virginia (related by marriage to the great Methodist bishop, Francis Asbury), was sent to North Carolina to form the Lincoln Circuit which included Lincoln County and several adjoining counties. Herbert Asbury, the bishop's biographer, stated that in 1794, the members of Rehoboth Congregation in Lincoln County, which was organized by Daniel Asbury, held a camp meeting in the forest near the church which was so successful that it continued for several days, resulting in more than three hundred converts. According to Mrs. Gabriel Sigmon, a campgoer and author of the "History and Traditions of Rock Springs Camp Ground," this camp meeting moved to Robey's Camp Ground near Denver in Lincoln County three years after its establishment. Mrs. Sigmon stated that the camp meeting moved for the third and last time in 1828, when the Third Quarterly Conference of the Lincoln Circuit designated Rock Springs as the site of a permanent camp meeting. The journal of Bishop Asbury, who traveled continuously through North Carolina spreading the Methodist gospel during these years, provides verification for the early history of this camp meeting, for the bishop mentioned a visit to "Daniel Asbury's meeting house" in Rehobeth in 1794, a visit at the home of Daniel Asbury in Lincoln County in 1799, and a stop at "Robey's" in 1814.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Asbury, Herbert. A Methodist Saint: The Life of Bishop Asbury. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927.  
 Carroll, Grady L. E. Francis Asbury in North Carolina. Nashville, Tennessee: The Parthenon Press, no date.  
 Graber, Paul Neff. The Romance of American Methodism. Greensboro: The Piedmont Press, 1931.  
 Johnson, Guion Griffis. "The Camp Meeting in Ante-Bellum North Carolina," The North Carolina Historical Review, Vol. X, No. 2, April, 1933.  
 Lincoln County Records, Lincoln County Courthouse, Lincolnton, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroup: Deeds).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	35°	32'	25"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	81°	01'	40"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Eight Acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Survey and Planning Unit Staff

ORGANIZATION: State Department of Archives and History DATE: 17 February 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: 109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**      **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name H. G. Jones

Title Director, State Department of Archives and History

Date 17 February 1972

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

Robert M. Lewis  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 9/22/72

ATTEST: William M. Sturtevant  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE North Carolina	
COUNTY Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER <b>SEP 6 1972</b>	DATE

(Number all entries)

8.

A deed of August 7, 1830, records that Joseph Mathias Mundy deeded 40 acres of land to the Rock Springs Camp Ground trustees for Methodist use. The original handwritten account book that recorded the first sale of lots to individual owners of May 15, 1830, is extant and indicates that the site was divided into squares, each containing twenty-two lots. The inner section of lots--consisting of the east square, north square, west square, and south square--was sold in 1830. Lot number one, for example, was sold to Philip Whitener and Mecon Shelton for \$1.25, with the remaining lots sold for similar prices. Several years passed, however, before permanent shelters were erected. The arbor (or "harbour" as it is spelled in the original record book), which was constructed in 1832 for \$255, was built before any of the tents. The camp ground was incorporated in 1851, and a self-perpetuating board of trustees was established.

Rock Springs Camp Ground is not only the earliest camp meeting organization in North Carolina and possibly one of the earliest in the country, but is also one of the few camp meeting sites in the state which is still active. The camp meeting occurs during the first week in August each year, and appears to have lost none of its vitality, for new tents are still being added. The Rock Springs Camp Ground complex is an embodiment of the communal religious spirit which is still in existence in the Piedmont and western areas of North Carolina.



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
North Carolina	
COUNTY	
Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
SEP 24 1972	

(Number all entries)

9.

Lincoln County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroup: Deeds).  
Sherrill, William L. Annals of Lincoln County North Carolina. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1967.  
Sigmon, Mrs. Gabriel. "History and Traditions of Rock Springs Camp Ground." no publisher, no date.







NEGATIVE NUMBER N-71-12-439  
PHOTOGRAPHER Randall Page  
PHOTO DATE 1-72  
SUBJECT Rock Spring Camp Ground.

Lincoln Co.

9/22/72 d.o.e.

439 (6)

**PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

FROM STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
ARCHIVES AND HISTORY  
RALEIGH, N. C.

**FEB 8 1972**

PRINT BY NORTH CAROLINA  
MUSEUM OF HISTORY

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)*

STATE	
North Carolina	
COUNTY	
Lincoln	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
SEP 22 1972	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**1. NAME**

COMMON: Rock Springs Camp Meeting Ground  
AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:

SR 1373

CITY OR TOWN:

Lincolnton vicinity

STATE:

North Carolina

CODE

37

COUNTY:

Lincoln

CODE

109

**3. MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE:

State Highway Commission

SCALE:

1"/1 mile

DATE:

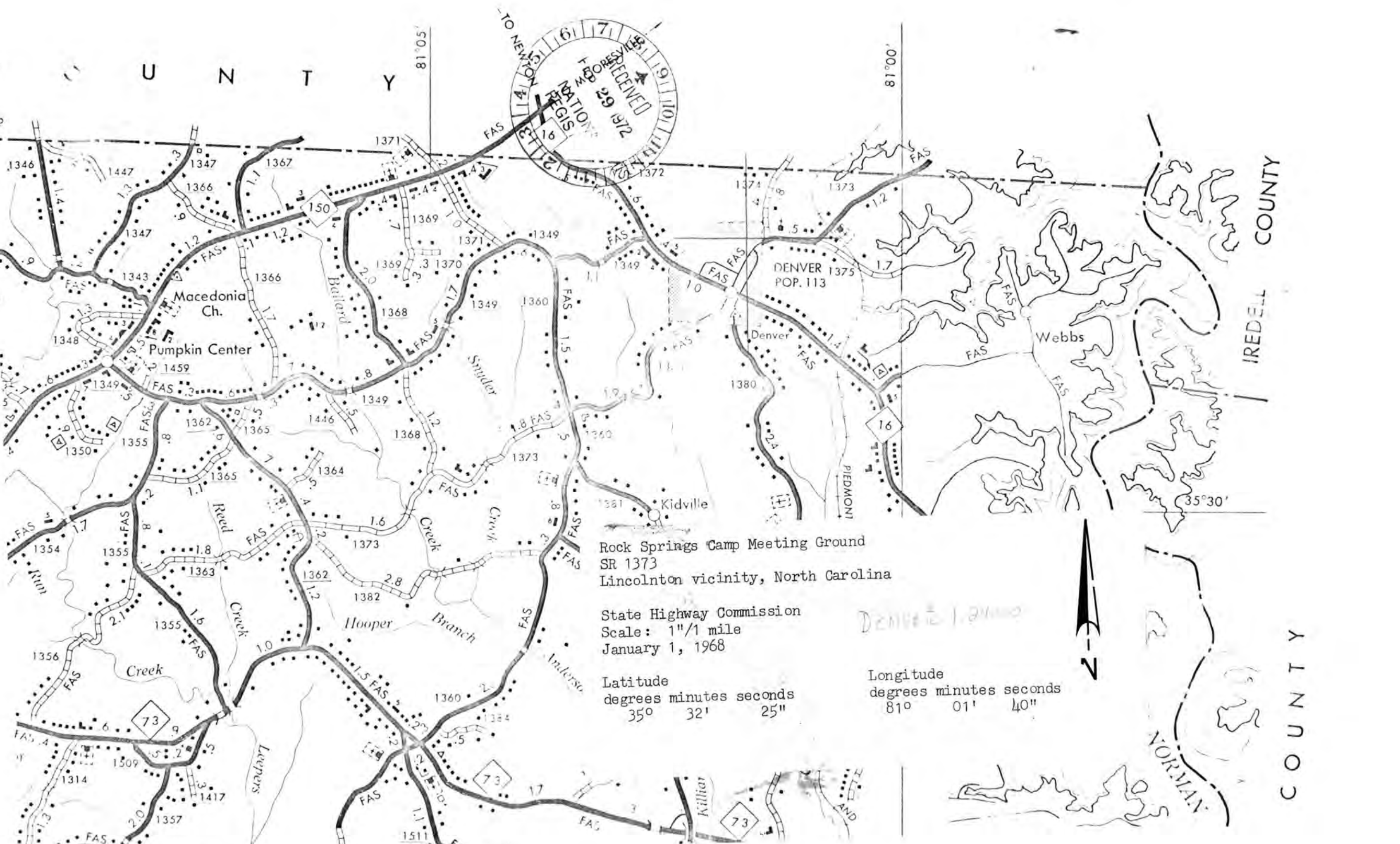
January 1, 1968

**4. REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.





TO NEWTON  
 FOREST REGION REGIS.  
 MAR 29 1972  
 FORESVILLE

Rock Springs Camp Meeting Ground  
 SR 1373  
 Lincoln ton vicinity, North Carolina

State Highway Commission  
 Scale: 1" / 1 mile  
 January 1, 1968

Latitude  
 degrees minutes seconds  
 35° 32' 25"

Longitude  
 degrees minutes seconds  
 81° 01' 40"

DENVER 1.2 MI



IREDELL COUNTY

NORMAN COUNTY

35°30'

81°00'

81°05'

C O U N T Y

1346 1447 1347 1366 1367 1371 1372 1373 1374 1375 1376 1377 1378 1379 1380 1381 1382 1383 1384 1385 1386 1387 1388 1389 1390 1391 1392 1393 1394 1395 1396 1397 1398 1399 1400 1401 1402 1403 1404 1405 1406 1407 1408 1409 1410 1411 1412 1413 1414 1415 1416 1417 1418 1419 1420 1421 1422 1423 1424 1425 1426 1427 1428 1429 1430 1431 1432 1433 1434 1435 1436 1437 1438 1439 1440 1441 1442 1443 1444 1445 1446 1447 1448 1449 1450 1451 1452 1453 1454 1455 1456 1457 1458 1459 1460 1461 1462 1463 1464 1465 1466 1467 1468 1469 1470 1471 1472 1473 1474 1475 1476 1477 1478 1479 1480 1481 1482 1483 1484 1485 1486 1487 1488 1489 1490 1491 1492 1493 1494 1495 1496 1497 1498 1499 1500 1501 1502 1503 1504 1505 1506 1507 1508 1509 1510 1511 1512 1513 1514 1515 1516 1517 1518 1519 1520 1521 1522 1523 1524 1525 1526 1527 1528 1529 1530 1531 1532 1533 1534 1535 1536 1537 1538 1539 1540 1541 1542 1543 1544 1545 1546 1547 1548 1549 1550 1551 1552 1553 1554 1555 1556 1557 1558 1559 1560 1561 1562 1563 1564 1565 1566 1567 1568 1569 1570 1571 1572 1573 1574 1575 1576 1577 1578 1579 1580 1581 1582 1583 1584 1585 1586 1587 1588 1589 1590 1591 1592 1593 1594 1595 1596 1597 1598 1599 1600

Macedonia Ch.  
 Pumpkin Center

DENVER 1375  
 POP. 113

Denver

Webbs

Kidville

1346 1347 1348 1349 1350 1351 1352 1353 1354 1355 1356 1357 1358 1359 1360 1361 1362 1363 1364 1365 1366 1367 1368 1369 1370 1371 1372 1373 1374 1375 1376 1377 1378 1379 1380 1381 1382 1383 1384 1385 1386 1387 1388 1389 1390 1391 1392 1393 1394 1395 1396 1397 1398 1399 1400 1401 1402 1403 1404 1405 1406 1407 1408 1409 1410 1411 1412 1413 1414 1415 1416 1417 1418 1419 1420 1421 1422 1423 1424 1425 1426 1427 1428 1429 1430 1431 1432 1433 1434 1435 1436 1437 1438 1439 1440 1441 1442 1443 1444 1445 1446 1447 1448 1449 1450 1451 1452 1453 1454 1455 1456 1457 1458 1459 1460 1461 1462 1463 1464 1465 1466 1467 1468 1469 1470 1471 1472 1473 1474 1475 1476 1477 1478 1479 1480 1481 1482 1483 1484 1485 1486 1487 1488 1489 1490 1491 1492 1493 1494 1495 1496 1497 1498 1499 1500 1501 1502 1503 1504 1505 1506 1507 1508 1509 1510 1511 1512 1513 1514 1515 1516 1517 1518 1519 1520 1521 1522 1523 1524 1525 1526 1527 1528 1529 1530 1531 1532 1533 1534 1535 1536 1537 1538 1539 1540 1541 1542 1543 1544 1545 1546 1547 1548 1549 1550 1551 1552 1553 1554 1555 1556 1557 1558 1559 1560 1561 1562 1563 1564 1565 1566 1567 1568 1569 1570 1571 1572 1573 1574 1575 1576 1577 1578 1579 1580 1581 1582 1583 1584 1585 1586 1587 1588 1589 1590 1591 1592 1593 1594 1595 1596 1597 1598 1599 1600

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1511 1512 1513 1514 1515 1516 1517 1518 1519 1520 1521 1522 1523 1524 1525 1526 1527 1528 1529 1530 1531 1532 1533 1534 1535 1536 1537 1538 1539 1540 1541 1542 1543 1544 1545 1546 1547 1548 1549 1550 1551 1552 1553 1554 1555 1556 1557 1558 1559 1560 1561 1562 1563 1564 1565 1566 1567 1568 1569 1570 1571 1572 1573 1574 1575 1576 1577 1578 1579 1580 1581 1582 1583 1584 1585 1586 1587 1588 1589 1590 1591 1592 1593 1594 1595 1596 1597 1598 1599 1600

# National Register of Historic Places

## Note to the record

Additional Documentation: 2017

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



Section Number 1, 3, 4 Page 1 Rock Spring Camp Ground, Additional Documentation  
Lincoln County, North Carolina

[Note: Only amended items and the required NPS certification are included below.]

**1. Name of Property:** Rock Spring Camp Ground, Additional Documentation

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification:** As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant locally.

*Heerin Perry*, SHPO  
Signature of certifying official/Title

2/20/2017  
Date

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 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:) *Accept Additional Documentation and name change*

*Joe Suber*  
Signature of the Keeper

4.17.2017  
Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 2 Rock Spring Camp Ground, Additional Documentation  
Lincoln County, North Carolina

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### 7. Integrity Update

The following is an update of the current appearance, condition, and integrity of the Rock Spring Camp Ground property. It is necessitated by the occurrence of three fires at the camp ground since its listing in the National Register in 1972.

The fires – on October 30, 1973, January 26, 1981, and April 17, 1981 – damaged or destroyed numerous tents in several sections of the camp ground. None of the fires affected the central arbor. The attached plan of the camp ground, Fig. 1: Fires at Rock Spring Camp Ground, identifies the locations of the three fires.<sup>1</sup> The location of the 1973 fire, indicated by the number 1 and a dashed line encompassing the burned tents, shows that that was the most destructive blaze, damaging or destroying ninety-five of the 258 tents (approximately thirty-seven percent), mostly on the north side, but somewhat on the east and west sides, too. The number 2 and a solid line identify the location of the January 1981 fire, which damaged or destroyed sixteen tents on the east side of the camp ground. The fire of April 1981 damaged or destroyed twenty-six tents, two of which were replacements of tents burned in the 1973 fire. The location of that fire, at the southwest corner of the camp ground, is shown on the map by the number 3 and a solid line.

Although just over half of the tents were lost in the fires of 1973 and 1981, the overall integrity of the camp ground – in terms of its location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling, and association – has been retained to a relatively good degree. This level of integrity is due to the physical character of the tents and to the organic process of building and rebuilding the tents over 187 years or, as the 1972 National Register nomination calls it, the “accretive growth” of the tents. That nomination documents well (p. 2) the physical character of the tents and their evolution as simple structures that replaced the cloth tents or brush shelters first used by camp meeting attendees. Several comments in this additional documentation nomination serve to reinforce and add to the points made in the original nomination.

Following the typical pattern of house building in frontier areas, the first-built tents were of log construction, but they were soon replaced by frame tents, which came to predominate. When built, tents were meant to be permanent structures. However, because they were inhabited only during the annual one-week camp meeting, they were not constructed with the same care and finished character of year-round houses. Thus, they looked, and still look, more like shacks than houses.

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<sup>1</sup> Terry Brotherton, *Rock Spring Campground Vol. II 1970-2002: A Continuing History of the Campground Including Amusing Facts and Anecdotes*. N.p.: Terry Brotherton, 2003: 726. Brotherton took a previously drawn plan of the camp ground (source and date unknown) and added to it dashed and solid lines indicating the locations of the fires, along with a map key.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 3 Rock Spring Camp Ground, Additional Documentation  
Lincoln County, North Carolina

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Although some tents were built as free-standing structures, most are attached buildings that share common interior walls, thus providing more available space at the camp ground for the construction of additional tents. The tents form long rows, three deep on all but the west side of the central square, where there are only two rows. Because of the contiguous arrangement of frame tents in rows, any fires tended to burn multiple tents, and if there was a wind, the damage could be considerable. However, once the rubble was cleared, owners rebuilt their easily constructed tents in time for the next camp meeting. Currently the camp ground has 260 tents.

Throughout the camp ground's history, tents have been built and rebuilt, whether due to general expansion of the housing facilities or to replace earlier tents that had deteriorated or burned. As the original nomination notes, when new tents are built, they conform closely to the standard tent form, though usually with minor variations, so that the camp ground has retained its historic appearance, even after the fires of 1973 and 1981. The fact that the tents at Rock Spring Camp Ground are unpainted contributes to the homogenous appearance of newer tents alongside older tents, because within several years of being built, new tents take on the same weathered appearance of their predecessors. Most tents now have concrete, rather straw-over-dirt, floors and, as was true in 1972, some have an upper-level gallery, many of which are likely additions.

A 2016 comparison of tents built after the 1973 and 1981 fires (photos 3 and 4) with tents of older dates of construction (photos 1, 2, and 4) shows that the tents have some variety – as would be expected of structures built by different owners – while maintaining an overall continuity of appearance. All the tents – older and newer – shown in the photographs are unpainted, have side-gable roofs with some variations in height between tents, walls with slatted ventilation, and long runs of front porches. Photo 4 shows that upper-level galleries were present before and after the 1973 fire.

Rock Spring Camp Ground is a rare historic property in North Carolina, being the oldest of only several surviving religious camp grounds that continue to hold annual camp meetings. Two of the others – Ball's Creek and Tucker's Grove – are both listed in the National Register and both have lost and rebuilt tents due to fires. Rock Spring Camp Ground lost a considerable number of tents in the fires of 1973 and 1981, but those tents were rebuilt in time for the next camp meeting. The combined tents – older and newer – stand in their original location in rows surrounding the central camp ground square with its 1832 timber-frame arbor. The setting remains rural and largely wooded. The design of the tents reflects the slow evolution of a traditional building form over more than a century. The workmanship remains that produced by relatively unskilled labor working quickly on habitations meant to be lived in during one week out of the year. Physically, the arbor and surrounding tents maintain the feeling of the historic religious camp meeting ground, and as an active camp ground, Rock Spring retains its camp meeting ground function until the present.

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Lincoln County, North Carolina



Fig. 1. Fires at Rock Spring Camp Ground. (Terry Brotherton, *Rock Spring Campground*, Vol. II: 726.)



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National Park Service

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Rock Spring Camp Ground, Additional Documentation  
Lincoln County, North Carolina

### 8. New Name Documentation

In 1972, the camp ground property was listed in the National Register under the name "Rock Springs Camp Meeting Ground." During the process of preparing a boundary increase nomination for the property in 2016, it became apparent that the camp ground has been called by a variety of similar names throughout its history, for example: Rock Springs Camp Meeting Ground, Rock Springs Campground, Rock Springs Camp Ground, Rock Spring Campmeeting, Rock Spring Campground, and Rock Spring Camp Ground. In common usage, the camp ground is currently, and probably always has been, called by slightly different names, and therefore clarifying the camp ground's historic name, for the record, became important. To this end, research to discover historic references to the camp ground name was undertaken.

Long-time camp ground historian Terry Brotherton, who has published two expansive volumes of camp ground history, has asserted to camp ground trustees and other camp meeting attendees that the proper name is "Rock Spring" not "Rock Springs."<sup>2</sup> According to Brotherton, although the camp ground has more than one spring, there is only one rock spring, where the water comes forth from the rocky hillside. The rock spring was the reason this site was chosen for the camp ground.

Research uncovered several historic documents assigning the name of the camp ground. Interestingly, when Joseph M. Monday sold approximately forty-five acres on August 7, 1830, to Freeman Shelton, Richard Proctor, and James Bivings in trust for the Methodist Society of the Lincoln Circuit, neither a camp ground nor a name for a camp ground was mentioned.<sup>3</sup> However, in 1830, 1831, and 1832, at least, the quarterly meeting conference of the Lincoln Circuit was held on a date during the first week in August at "Rock Spring Camp Ground."<sup>4</sup> Twenty years later, when the camp ground incorporated on January 28, 1851, the North Carolina General Assembly ratified an act establishing "Rock Spring Camp Ground" and incorporating trustees for it.<sup>5</sup> Again, in 1871, when the North Carolina General Assembly ratified another act incorporating a board of trustees for the camp ground (apparently an amendment and expansion of the original 1851 act) "Rock Spring Camp Ground" was the name recorded in the official document. A century and a quarter later, in 1996, the same name was being used officially. At that time, the

<sup>2</sup> Terry Brotherton's two volumes are *Rock Spring Campground Vol. 1 1794-1969* (2002) and *Rock Spring Campground Vol. II 1970-2002: A Continuing History of the Campground Including Amusing Facts and Anecdotes* (2003). In his writing, Brotherton combines "Rock Spring" with the one-word "Campground." Butch Ross, *Conversations with Laura Phillips*, September 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Lincoln County Deed Book 34: 303.

<sup>4</sup> Brotherton, *Rock Spring Campground Vol. 1*; 97, 102, 104. In his book, Brotherton includes photocopies of the handwritten pages from the conference minutes.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter CCLIX, *Laws of the State of North Carolina, passed by the General Assembly at the Session of 1850-'51* (Raleigh: Star Office – T. J. Lemay, State Printer, 1851), 629.

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Lincoln County, North Carolina

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trustees of "Rock Spring Camp Ground" were the grantor in a deed conveying a small portion of the property to the East Lincoln Water and Sewer District.<sup>6</sup> These historic documents demonstrate the retention of the name "Rock Spring Camp Ground" for more than one-and-a-half centuries and therein justify changing the historic name of the property in the National Register to "Rock Spring Camp Ground."

### 9. Bibliography

Brotherton, Terry. *Rock Spring Campground Vol. I 1794-1969*. N.p.: Terry Brotherton, 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Rock Spring Campground Vol. II 1970-2002: A Continuing History of the Campground Including Amusing Facts and Anecdotes*. N.p.: Terry Brotherton, 2003.

*Laws of the State of North Carolina, Passed by the General Assembly at the Session of 1850-'51*, Chapter CCLIX. Raleigh: Star Office – T. J. Lemay, State Printer, 1851.

Lincoln County Records, Deeds.

*Private Laws of the State of North Carolina, Passed by the General Assembly at Its Session 1870-'71*, Chapter LXXXVII. Raleigh: James H. Moore, State Printer and Binder, 1871.

### 11. Form Prepared By:

Name/title: Laura A. W. Phillips, Architectural Historian

Organization: N/A

Street & number: 59 Park Boulevard

City or town: Winston-Salem

Date: November 21, 2016

Telephone: 336/727-1968

State: NC    Zip: 27127

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<sup>6</sup> Chapter LXXXVII, *Private Laws of the State of North Carolina, passed by the General Assembly at Its Session 1870-'71* (Raleigh; James H. Moore, State Printer and Binder, 1871), 152; and Lincoln County Deed Book 929: 844.

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Lincoln County, North Carolina

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### Photographs

The following information applies to all nomination photographs.

- 1) Rock Spring Camp Ground (Additional Documentation)
- 2) Denton, Lincoln County, North Carolina
- 3) Laura A. W. Phillips
- 4) October 20, 2016
- 5) CD:NCHPO, Raleigh, NC
- 6-7)
  - 1: Tents pre-dating fires of 1973 and 1981. Rear of second row of tents on south side of arbor, ascending from #90, view to east.
  - 2: Tents pre-dating fires of 1973 and 1981. Front of second row of tents on south side of arbor, ascending from #92, view to southeast.
  - 3: Front of first row of tents on east side of arbor, ascending from #23, view to northeast. Tents #23 and #24 built after fire of 1/1981; remainder of row built after fire of 10/1973.
  - 4: Front of second row of tents on east side of arbor, ascending from #116, view to northeast. Tents #116-#119 built after fire of 10/1973; tents #120 to end of row predate fire of 10/1973.





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National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.



ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NORTH CAROLINA

Date Entered SEP 22 1972

Name

Location

Rock Springs Camp Meeting Ground

Lincolnton vicinity  
Lincoln County

Also Notified

Hon. Sam J. Ervin, Jr.  
Hon. B. Everett Jordan  
Hon. Charles R. Jonas

Director, Southeast Region

HR NRowland:mm 9/27/72

State Liaison Officer  
Dr. H. G. Jones  
Director, Department of Archives and  
History  
State of North Carolina  
Post Office Box 1881  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

PROPERTY

Rock Springs Camp 75001277  
Misty Ground STATE N.C.

DATE OF RECEIPT

2/29/72

YES

NO

NUMBER

REGISTER SEP 22 1972

DATA PAGE

LINCOLN

PHOTO (S)

PHOTO DESCRIPTION (S)

MAP (S)

MAP DESCRIPTION (S)

LOGGED

ACKNOWLEDGE

2/29/72



RESUBMIT

REVIEW

HISTORIAN

OK means  
9/6/72

ARCHEOLOGIST

ARCHITECT

Wow - I didn't know anything like this file existed.

OK Chambers  
9-6-72

ASST. KEEPER

OK Rapp  
9/14/72

KEEPER

Wm  
920

WRITER/EDITOR

OK  
9/8/72

DIRECTOR, OAHP

EDITORIAL PROCESSING, EDITOR

Federal Registry Entry

10-2-72

Annual Edition Entry

Logged

SEP 22 1972

Card

SEP 22 1972

COMMENTS:

WORKING NUMBER 2.2972.297

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

C. R. Jones



**North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
State Historic Preservation Office**

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Roy Cooper  
Secretary Suzi Hamilton

Office of Archives and History  
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

February 20, 2017

Ms. Stephanie Toothman, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
U. S. Department of the Interior  
1201 Eye Street, NW (2208) Eighth Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Re: Rock Spring Camp Ground Additional Documentation and  
Rock Spring Camp Ground, Boundary Increase – Lincoln County, North Carolina

Dear Ms. Toothman:

Enclosed please find the Rock Spring Camp Ground Additional Documentation and the Rock Spring Camp Ground Boundary Increase National Register nominations for your approval. As regards the additional documentation form, we are requesting that the historic name given the property in the original nomination, Rock Springs Camp Meeting Ground, become the "Other name" in the NRIS database.

We trust you will find the nominations to be in order. If you have any questions please call Claudia Brown, Survey and National Register Branch head, 919-807-6573.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Cherry".

Kevin Cherry, Ph.D.  
State Historic Preservation Officer

KC/avs

Enclosure

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 3/3/2017      Date of Pending List:      Date of 16th Day:      Date of 45th Day: 4/17/2017      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      4/17/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.