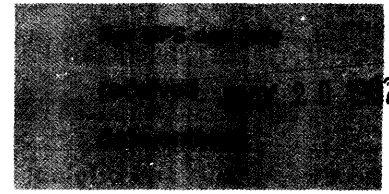


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic Richland Baptist Church

and/or common

2. Location

*Richland Rd.*

street & number Richland Church Road south of Interstate Highway 16 N/A not for publication

city, town Jeffersonville  vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state Georgia code 013 county Twiggs code 289

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Richland Restoration League, c/o Mrs. Nancy Kitchens

street & number Route 1, Box 500

city, town Dry Branch  vicinity of state Georgia 31020

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Twiggs County Courthouse

city, town Jeffersonville state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Structure Field Survey:

title Twiggs County has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

city, town 270 Washington Street, SW Atlanta state Georgia

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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

Richland Baptist Church is a small, mid-1840's, Greek Revival style church located in rural Twiggs County, Georgia. The nominated property contains a small historic cemetery associated with the church. The three and one half-acre site is cleared in the immediate vicinity of the church and cemetery and wooded elsewhere.

The church is rectangular in plan, two stories high and gable roofed. It is built with a heavy timber frame, resting on a brick foundation, sheathed with weatherboards. Corners are finished with pilasters. The front facade features a full width, Doric style pedimented portico with four square columns. The front, except in the pediment area, is sheathed with flush siding. Entrance to the sanctuary is gained through four front doors which are paired and located between the two outer columns on each side. The two outer doors provide access to one-run, closed stairways that lead to the balcony area; the inner doors open directly to the aisles of the church. Three small second-story windows are centered over the two inner doors. The five-panel doors and windows all have simple wood surrounds. The side elevations feature five windows covered by two-story louvered shutters. In each, twelve over twelve sash are separated vertically by a wooden panel. A door is located between the fourth and fifth windows on each side. The rear has two twelve-over-twelve triple hung sash.

The church interior is one open room, a variation on the simple meetinghouse type. Original hand-planed plank pews remain, arranged in three rows separated by two aisles. Interior walls are plastered and have horizontal plank wainscoting below. The pulpit is located on a raised dias in front of the central area of the rear wall which is framed by an entablature resting on pilasters. The pulpit, flanked on both sides by railings, is presently a dark Empire style table which contrasts dramatically with the white painted interior; the original is said to have been a simple marble-topped table. A balcony, built for slaves, runs along the two sides and across the rear. It was originally hung from iron rods that are suspended from the roof trusses. When the church was restored in 1948-1949, five columns were installed under the balcony because its weight had caused a serious sag in the roof. Other repair work undertaken in 1948-1949 included the replacement of one column and the porch floor, new full width steps, and, on the interior, the replacement of the original fixtures and the installation of electric wiring.

To the east of the church is located an historic cemetery with stones dating back to 1831. It contains a variety of monuments, family plots fenced with elaborate cast iron fences, and simple markers laid out in an informal way with little order. No interments have taken place in the cemetery for many years, but it is still considered to be active. Non-historic picnic tables to the southwest of the church and two 1960's wood-framed privies to the rear are the only other structures on the property.

(continued)

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The three and one half-acre church property lies to the northside of Richland Church Road. The grounds are flat within the church clearing but slope away steeply to the rear. The surrounding woods contain many varieties of hardwood and softwood. In the cemetery area are located white cedar, magnolia and white oak trees, often associated with cemetery landscaping. Spanish moss, found very infrequently in Twiggs County, has been introduced as a further landscaping element. The property is located in an isolated part of the countryside on a low ridge top between two creeks.

BOUNDARY

In the absence of historical and environmental boundaries, the boundaries of the nominated property coincide with the current legal description of the property. This property, consisting of 3.57 acres, was most recently described in a plat map accompanying a Continental Can Company Deed of Gift dated October 28, 1965. Unfortunately, even this plat does not clearly delineate the property lines, and surveyor's field markings cannot be readily identified. Therefore, the boundaries shown on the attached maps should be considered as approximations of the actual 3.57 acre tract.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The Historic Preservation Section has determined that the photographs taken in November, 1980 still represent the character and appearance of the property. No significant changes have been made since that date.

## 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** Ca. 1844-1845      **Builder/Architect** Attributed to "Mr. Sessions"

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Richland Baptist Church is architecturally significant as a fine and virtually unaltered example of the Greek Revival style country church built in Georgia during the antebellum period. It is the only example of such a church in Twiggs County. In terms of religious history, the church is significant as the historic home of one of Twiggs County's earliest religious congregations. These areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register criteria A and C.

The church is an excellent example of the antebellum, Greek Revival style of architecture as interpreted by a carpenter-builder. The building, with its simple massing, Doric style portico, square columns, unembellished entranceways and plain entablature, lacks the refinement and elaboration of high style Greek Revival structures; nonetheless, it is a sensitively designed, finely proportioned structure. The church is of particular interest for two reasons: The architect's method of hanging the balcony from iron rods suspended from the roof trusses is an unusual engineering feature, and the church and its site exhibit an unusual degree of integrity. Very few alterations have been made to the interior or the exterior of the structure and there are absolutely no intrusions to the immediate site or surrounding area. The church and its cemetery lie undisturbed in the countryside much as they did when the church was built and the congregation was active.

The architect of Richland Baptist Church is said to be a "Mr. Sessions of Virginia", to whom nearly a dozen other buildings, mostly plantation houses, in Twiggs and the surrounding counties have been attributed. Among these are Gleesom Hall at Wimberly Plantation and Hollywood, both in Twiggs County. Extensive research has failed to turn up significant information about Mr. Sessions, but he clearly played an important role in the architectural history of the area.

As a religious organization, Richland Baptist Church dates back to 1811, just two years after the establishment of Twiggs County in 1809. The church is significant as the historic home of one of Twiggs County's earliest religious groups. The granting of a constitution to Richland Baptist Church in 1811 was followed, in 1813, by the construction of the first church on the property, believed to have been a simple log building. The present church is the third building to be located on the site. Constructed in Ca. 1844-1845, it was built in response to the rising prosperity of the Twiggs County plantation owners and the rapid influx

(continued)

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED  
UTM NOT MARKED

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.57 acres

Quadrangle name Marion, GA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 17 274780 3612720  
Zone Easting Northing

B           
Zone Easting Northing

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Section 7 for verbal boundary description and justification.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title A) John Linn Hopkins, Historic Preservation Planner  
B) Carolyn Brooks, National Register Researcher

organization A) Middle Georgia APDC  
B) Historic Preservation Section, Ga. DNR date February, 20, 1982

street & number A) 600 Grand Building  
B) 270 Washington Street SW telephone A) 912 744-6160  
B) 404 656-2840

city or town A) Macon  
B) Atlanta state Georgia

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 4/30/82

For NPS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>William H. Brannan</u>	date <u>6-22-82</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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of new settlers into Twiggs County during the 1840's. The subsequent history of the congregation is significant as an example of the fate of many small, rural religious groups throughout Georgia. The church was active during the second half of the nineteenth century, but as the plantation economy withered after the Civil War and nearby Jeffersonville, the County Seat, gained prominence as a population, social and economic center, the church membership dwindled. In 1911 the last pastor resigned, and the church closed its doors. As with many old inactive churches, descendants of earlier members banded together to preserve the church. In 1928 an informal group made basic repairs to the abandoned church, and in 1948-1949, third and fourth generation families associated with the church formed the Richland Restoration League, a non-profit organization whose sole purpose was to "restore, repair, improve, rebuild, maintain and preserve" the historic church. This group is still active.

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