

MAY 29 1985

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HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

HISTORIC PRESERVATION UNIT
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE & HISTORY
THE CULTURAL CENTER
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25305

(Staff Use Only)

File No:
Theme(s):
Neg No(s):
USGS Quad:
UTM Ref: see Item #6

DISTRICT: SITE **BUILDING** STRUCTURE: OBJECT

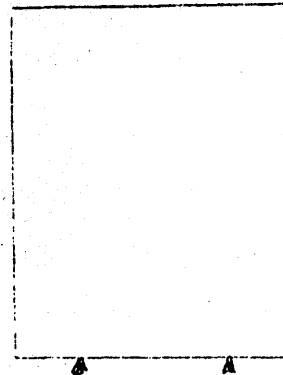
- NAME(S) historic/common: Old Propst Church
South Branch
- LOCATION street/road: County Route 21/9
city/town: Brandywine Vic.
(incorporated/unincorporated)
- USE/FUNCTION present: Church (occasional)
original: Church
- OWNER/ADDRESS present: Lutheran Churches
Mountain Parish Area
Franklin, WV
original:
- PHOTO/SKETCH OF:

(public/private
restricted)

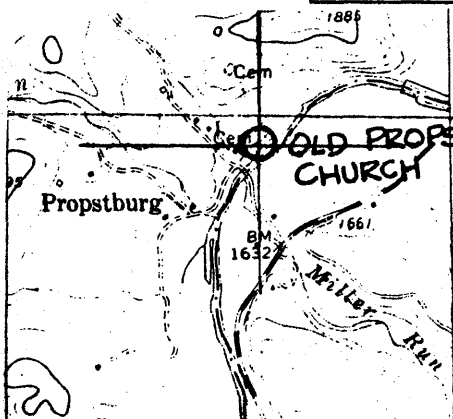
(public/private)

(phone no.)

7. PLAN (include approx. dimensions):



6. LOCALE/ENVIRONMENT (map)



UTM REF
17/651800 | 427341C

SUGAR GROVE
QUAD

8. (A.) ACREAGE (approx):

Approximately 1 1/2 acres

(B.) VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nominated area consists of a rectangular area bounded on the southeast by the South Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac River and on the southwest by a county road. Beginning at a point on the north edge of the road and the west bank of the river and extending 300' to the northeast and 200' to the northwest, to include the church and cemetery.

Survey Region: _____
Planning District: _____
N/A

COUNTY: _____
Pendleton

PROPERTY NAME: Old Propst Church

9. DESCRIPTION (clarify as appropriate):

<p>a. <u>Exterior Fabric</u></p> <p>stone _____</p> <p>brick _____</p> <p>concrete _____</p> <p>stucco _____</p> <p>weatherboard <u>X</u></p> <p>clapboard _____</p> <p>board & batten _____</p> <p>shingle _____</p> <p>other _____</p>	<p>b. <u>Structural System</u></p> <p>masonry _____</p> <p>frame <u>X</u></p> <p>log _____</p> <p>metal _____</p> <p>other _____</p> <p>foundation <u>stone</u></p>	<p>c. <u>Roofing Material</u></p> <p>wood _____</p> <p>metal <u>Standing seam</u></p> <p>slate _____</p> <p>tile _____</p> <p>asphalt _____</p> <p>composition _____</p> <p>other _____</p>
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<p>d. <u>Associated Structures (use/type):</u></p> <p>outbuildings <u>None</u></p> <p>dependencies <u>None</u></p> <p>other <u>cemetery</u></p>	<p>e. <u>Integrity (include dates):</u> <u>renewed, 1969-73</u></p> <p>original site/relocated <u>N/A</u></p> <p>alterations <u>siding replaced</u></p> <p>additions <u>None</u></p>
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<p>f. <u>Condition:</u></p> <p>excellent <u>X</u></p> <p>good _____</p> <p>fair _____</p> <p>deteriorated _____</p> <p>abandoned _____</p>	<p>g. <u>Threats:</u> <u>None</u></p>
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10. SIGNIFICANCE (use attachment sheet if necessary): The Old Propst Church is significant as representing

<p>a. Architect/Builder/Engineer: <u>Eugene Keister, builder</u></p> <p>b. Style/Period: _____</p> <p>c. Date(s): <u>1887</u> <u>(used until 1892)</u></p>	<p>the first Lutheran Church in Pendleton County. It is actually the third church building erected on a 3½ acre tract conveyed by John Michael and Catherine Propst in 1769. The first two churches, of log construction no longer stand. This building is a simple, traditional frame structure with two entrances in its gable wall.</p>
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11. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Adapted from survey data compiled by Nan Stevens, Region VIII Planning and Development Council, P.O. Box 887, Petersburg, WV in 1983.

Hively, Earl, Rev. Old Propst Church, 1973.

12. FORM PREPARED BY Paula S. Reed DATE September 1984

a. Address	<u>207 S. Potomac Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740</u>
b. Organization	<u>Preservation Associates, Inc.</u>
c. Phone no.	<u>(301) 791-7880</u>

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DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE & HISTORY
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1. Name(s) Historic/Common: Old Propst Church

4. Ervin Propst
Box 327
Franklin, WV 26807

10. Significance, continued

The present church illustrates the evolution of the Lutheran place of worship on this property. Many of the earliest settlers of the South Branch Valley were people of German decent who came to the Valley from established settlements in Pennsylvania, or directly from Germany. The association of this property with the predominant group of settlers in the South Branch Valley is important to an understanding of cultural attributes and the general historical background of the area.

Architecturally, the present building represents only the most recent phase of the Lutheran Church's use of this land. In terms of its design, however, the church is notable for its traditional appearance. Its plainness, two front entrances, simple windows and raised goblet-shaped pulpit are characteristic of much earlier church architecture. In form, this building is probably not unlike its two predecessors on the property. The Propst Church's visual link with the past helps it to convey the early history of the site and the vernacular building preferences of the congregation. It definitely is outside the mainstream of late 19th century church architecture.

The site of the church was deeded by one John Michael Propst in 1769 to "the members of the congregation of the Lutheran Church at the South Fork of the Potowmack". The Old Propst Church is directly linked, therefore, to one of the oldest sites of religious settlement in what is now West Virginia. John Michael Propst, who died in 1789, lies in the adjacent cemetery that also contains graves dating from the late 1700's and early 1800's.

The latest of the site's church buildings, the present Old Propst Church, was built c. 1887 to the specifications and plans of Eugene Keister (1850-1925), a noted Pendleton County builder, contractor and carpenter. Mr. Keister built many of the county's finest frame residences, schools and churches. Among the many specifications for Pendleton County buildings produced by Mr. Keister, those for the Old Propst Church are the only ones that are known to have survived to the present day (1985).

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1. Name(s) Historic/Common: Old Propst Church

12. Chalkey, Lyman: Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia.
3 volumes Rosslyn, Virginia: The Commonwealth Company. (111,502)

- Heal, Ruth K. A Pendleton County Builder and His Houses. Charleston,
West Virginia: Charleston Printing Company, 1984, pp. 5-7; 23; 63.

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The Old Propst Church is significant because the nearly century-old frame structure contains several features of architectural significance that relate to the German heritage of Lutheran Pioneers in Pendleton County and the South Branch Valley. Still found in the church building is a goblet-shaped pulpit into which the minister ascended by means of a 5-stepped stair. The pulpit was a feature of earlier church buildings. Another significant feature is the "wall of partition" resulting in the construction of two separate front door entrances to the church through which male and female worshipers might separately enter.

Keisters are known to have settled in the Brandywine area of Pendleton County as early as 1753. Interestingly, it was one Eugene Keister (1850-1925) who built the present Propst Church in 1887 from specifications that survive among papers owned by family descendent, Ruth K. Heal. Keister was Pendleton County's most prolific 19th-century builder; the Old Propst Church is regarded as an important surviving example of his carpentry and building skills.

Historically, the adjacent cemetery is significant as one of the oldest burying grounds in eastern West Virginia. When the "three and one-half acres" were deeded by John Michael Propst and his wife, Catherine, in 1769, for use by the Lutheran Church, they became the center of the Propst homestead that was to be known throughout succeeding generations as "Propstburg". The grounds of the church are thus distinguished for their historical associations as the "mother church" in the Pendleton County region and for playing an important part in the early settlement of the county.

The Old Propst Church has been honored with several designations—notably with a West Virginia Historic Highway Marker. In 1940, the Mountain Area Lutheran Ministers Conference erected a huge stone upon which was placed a bronze marker dedicated to the Propst Church, 1769, and its first residence pastor, Reverend Peter Mischler (1772-1811) (see photo). In 1963, the church was declared a West Virginia Centennial Church.

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Bibliography (annotated)

Chalkley. Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia. (Records of Augusta County, Virginia, 1745-1800)

V.3, p. 502. Deed from Michael Propst and wife to the commissioners of the Lutheran Church on the South Branch of the Potomac. (See xerox copy attached. The Book and page number for this deed are not given on West Virginia Antq. sheets).

Augusta County Deed Book 16, p. 477. I have written for a copy of this Deed.

Other references to Michael Propst noted in Chalkley:

Vol. 1, p. 41 - August 28, 1750. Added to tithables (420) ... Michael Props (sic).

Order Book No. 7, p. 97. April 5, 1762 - (all) Received certificates of Naturalization ... Michael Props ...

Order Book No. 16, p. 182. November 15, 1774 - (19) Michael Props exempted from levy.

HISTORIC RECORDS SURVEY. Pendleton County. Box 228. Folder - Pendleton County Church Deeds. An additional Deed for Church property - Pendleton County Deed Book No. 25, p. 437 - 5/28/1884. Grantor, Samuel H. Propst to Church Trustees, Valentine Swadley, Morgan Propst and Chapmen Propst. Location - Propst Church.

Deed Book No. 25, p. 455. 6/6/1884. Adam Kiser, Sr. to Congregations of Wilfong Church; Propst Church; Propst School House. Location - Wilfong. For Parsonage - Lutheran Minister.

List of Church Property. Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1 Lot, Propstburg. Value of Lot - \$50. Value of Buildings - \$500. Not dated.

W.Va. Antiquities Comm. sheets, p. 3 Statement - "This is the site of maybe the oldest church in West Virginia and possibly the oldest Lutheran Church in the church."

Wayland. A History of Rockingham County, Virginia. Page 61 - Agreement Between the Reformed and Lutheran Congregations worshipping in the Peaked Mountain Church: Rockingham County, Virginia, October 31, 1769. In the name of the Triune God and with the consent of the whole congregation, we have commenced to build a new House of God, and it is by the help of God, so far finished that the world may see it. ... Done in Augusta County, at the Peaked Mountain and the Stony Creek churches, on October 31st, Anno Comini, 1769. (From the Records of the Peaked Mt. Church. Translated and Published by W.J. Hinke and D. E. Kemper, 1905 - William and Mary Quarterly). This information seems to negate the claim of the Propst Church being the oldest Lutheran Church in the church. In reference to the Propst Church being the site of "maybe" the oldest church in West Virginia - Cassell, Finck and Henkel, editors. History of the Lutheran Church in Virginia and E. Tennessee. p. 254 - Martinsburg and Shepherdstown ... both appear to have been organized about 1750 St. Peters Lutheran Church, Sheperdstown - it is believed the Lutheran people had a House of Worship at Sheperdstown as early as 1750. ...

Page 257 - The Smithfield parish, consisting of Smithfield, fifteen miles southwest of

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Shepherdstown, Gerrardstown, seven miles southwest of Martinsburg, and Stone Chapel had its place on the roll of the old Virginia Synod until the early years of the present century. Smithfield, preaching point, Paul Henkel having preached here in January, 1783 and repeatedly thereafter. ... The Church built in 1798, is yet standing, but not in regular use.

The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. V. 2, page 410 - reference is made to the Congregations of Shepherdstown and Winchester in June, 1769.

Cassell, Finck and Henkel. History of the Lutheran Church (1930) page 187. Madison County. Hebron, near Madison the oldest congregation in the Synod, worshipping in the oldest Lutheran Church in regular use in America, had its beginning with the landing of twenty distitute German families on the Virginia Coast in 1717. They became indentured servants of Governor Alex. Spottswood ... and spent eight years of hard service on his land and in his iron works at Germanna ... Having satisfied their obligation to him they took up land on the Robinson River and the White Oak Run, where they built their homes, and the following year /1726 ?/ a log church, known as the German Chapel.

A&M 1667. Churches, West Virginia. Centennial Church Reports. (W. Va. Coll. WVU Library) "An iron plaque is located in the cemetery at the place of the first church on a large boulder telling that the Rev. Peter Mischler was the first resident pastor."

The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. Vol. 2, pp. 405-409 - record of some interesting sidelights on the background of Peter Mischler.

Cassell, Finck, and Henkel. History of the Lutheran Church ... pp. 89 and 93 - List of Churches, October 1809.

West Virginia Writers' Project. Pendleton County. Box 73, Folder Religion. (ca. 1941-42) Mrs. Elsie Boggs of Franklin is named as source of information.

Historic Records Survey. Pendleton County.

County Court Order Book No. 1, p. 43. Court held for Pendleton County, 8/3/1789. Last will and testament of John Michael Props (sic) Dec'd. was proved by the oaths of Peter Mishler, Peter Mishler, Peter Hoover and William Ward, witnesses thereto and ordered recorded. (The H.R.S. does not have the abstracts of the Pendleton County Wills for 1789. This Book may still be in the Pendleton County Courthouse. The Will may contain some reference to the Church.

Morton, Oren F. A History of Pendleton County, West Virginia. pp. 339-359.

Morton. Handbook of Highland County and Supplement to Pendleton and Highland County Histories. p. 51. 1747-1748. Moravian Missionaries visited the South Fork ... pp. 60-61 ... third visit, November 1749 ... Saturday night they lodged with Michael Propst ...

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Bibliography (annotated) (continued)

- Other sources: Chalkley. Records of Augusta County, Virginia, 1745-1800.
Peyton. History of Augusta County, Virginia.
Waddell. Annals of Augusta County, Virginia, 1726-1871.
Morton. A History of Pendleton County, West Virginia, Handbook of
Highland
Kercheval. A History of the Valley of Virginia.
Swem. Index To Virginia Records.
Tappert & Doberstein, Trans. The Journals of Henry Melchior
Muhlenberg.
Cassell, Finck, and Henkel. History of The Lutheran Church in E.
Tenn. and Va.
Waldkoenig. The Religious Practices of Lutheran Families in W.
Penna. (Thesis)
Schuricht. History of the German Element in Virginia.
Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. Vols. 6, 9, and 10.
Wayland. A History of Rockingham County, Virginia.

(In Mss. Section-Historic Records Survey, Pendleton County.

of W.Va. Coll.)-West Virginia Writers' Project, Pendleton County.

WVU

- A&M 1626. Kellogg, J.M. (Ruhlman Family and German Settlements)
A&M 928. Genealogies. (Waggoner Family.)
A&M 1191. Morton, O.F. Papers and notes on County Histories.
(Source for the use of the word "Record" in re. Propst Church on
page 123 Pendleton County History.)
Pendleton County Court Records, A&M 1667. Churches, W.VA.
A&M 528. McCoy
Family Papers, Pendleton County, A&M 1293. Virginia Records.
A&M 1114. C.W.
Hawley Papers - Propst Family.