

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 3 1985

date entered MAY 2 1985

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

1. Name

historic Rockwell Universalist Church

and or common Same

2. Location

street & number Intersection of GA 53 and Rockwell Church Rd. N/A not for publication

city, town Winder  vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county Barrow code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input 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 Rockwell Universalist Church,  
c/o Mrs. Julia Lewis, Treasurer

street & number Route 4, Box 49

city, town Winder N/A vicinity of state Georgia 30680

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Barrow County Courthouse

city, town Winder state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Structures Field Survey:  
Barrow County, Georgia 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 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**

The Rockwell Universalist Church is a one-story, frame church with a traditional rural church floorplan. It retains its original metal shingle roof and weatherboarding. It contains one large sanctuary with two small auxiliary rooms behind the pulpit that are reached through a single door. The sanctuary opens through double doors onto the front porch which is inset and includes four columns that support the overhang of the gable roof. The building has a single, small brick chimney for the original heating mechanism. There are wooden benches or pews on the front porch and a modern wooden shelter with tables for "dinner on the grounds" some distance from the church. The sanctuary has been renovated with new wainscoting and contains the original pulpit and pews on either side of a central aisle. A new floor was laid over the old floor. Carpet was placed on top of the new floor in the aisles. The porch floor was cemented in 1925. The original Sunday School Room and pastor's study behind the pulpit were converted into a restroom and kitchen with modern paneling. A side entrance with a metal awning has also been added to the church. Within the past five years a sidewalk has been laid around the church merging with a new parking lot. Iron railings have also been added at both entrances. There is modern lighting, ceiling fans and an acoustical tile ceiling in the sanctuary. Amber colored glass window panes were added in 1972.

The church is situated in a rural setting at the intersection of two roads. There are residences nearby. The site includes a semi-circular drive, small shrubs near the church, some taller trees, and the shelter and table dating from 1959 in the far corner. There are no other outbuildings and no cemetery.

# 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/
<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 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** 1881 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Rockwell Universalist Church is significant in architecture as a good example of a rural, country church built in the traditional, simple Greek Revival style. This post-Civil War structure exemplifies the characteristics of earlier rural churches, including the use of wood, one room, and no ornamentation. It was also in keeping with the faith of the congregation not to have the church building decorated with any religious symbols or embellishments. The church is significant in religion as one of the few Universalist churches to ever exist in Georgia. The Universalists were a liberal protestant faith. Although they were the fifth largest denomination in the United States before the Civil War, in Georgia the denomination was quite small and was mostly located in rural communities. Universalists did not prosper in Georgia due to their lack of organization and official discipline and were overwhelmed by the popularity of the Baptists and Methodists who comprised over 90 percent of those identifying church affiliation in 1850 in Georgia. These areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register Criteria A and C.

### Historical Narrative

The Universalist faith began in America in 1770. By the end of the 18th century it began to be practiced in Georgia with its members being called "Hell-redemptioners." In 1802, the Mitchell brothers left the Methodist church and publicly avowed the Universalist faith. By 1825, Universalism was being preached in the state capital of Milledgeville, and several publications including a newspaper appeared in Georgia that espoused Universalism. It was the decade of the 1830s when the Universalists in Georgia formed churches and built church buildings. The first was in 1834 in Harris County, in west Georgia.

The Universalists were a liberal protestant body. In 1850 they were the fifth largest religious body in the United States, although they never reached that level in Georgia. The tenets of the faith challenged Calvinist orthodoxy with a democratic religious ideology which emphasized freedom of conscience and the separation of church and state. There were no hard-fast rules for becoming a member of the church or for organizing a society. "Good moral character" was the only real requirement and the group or society could be formed around a simple compact. Many of the societies had no minister, but met to study scripture, and were usually very small. They often met with discrimination from the predominant religions -- Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian.

In 1858, the Southern Universalists informally broke with their Northern counterparts over the question of slavery and established their own convention.

After the Civil War, Universalists did not flourish due to their lack of organization, their primary concentration in rural communities with no urban influence, and lack of discipline.

(Continued)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bullock, Harris, "Rockwell Universalist Church." Historic Property Information Form,  
October 8, 1979 based on church history by the late Grace House.

See Continuation Sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Approximately 2 acres

Quadrangle name Winder North, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	7	2	4	9	4	6	0	3	7	6	9	2	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property is all that is currently associated with the church and that which has been associated with it for over fifty years. It is marked on the enclosed plat.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian

organization Historic Preservation Section,  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

date 2/28/85

street & number 270 Washington Street, SW

telephone 404/656-2840

city or town Atlanta

state Georgia 30334

## 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 Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 3/14/85

For NPS use only

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

*Entered in the*  
National Register

date

5/2/85

*for Melissa Byer*  
Keeper of the National Register

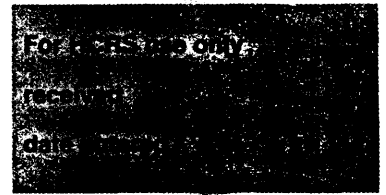
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

8. Significance

Historical Narrative

This particular church body arose in 1838 after the seeds of the faith were planted in the minds of local citizens by itinerant ministers from neighboring states and through several publications. When this church body was organized in 1839, it often met in private homes, schools and later under a brush arbor.

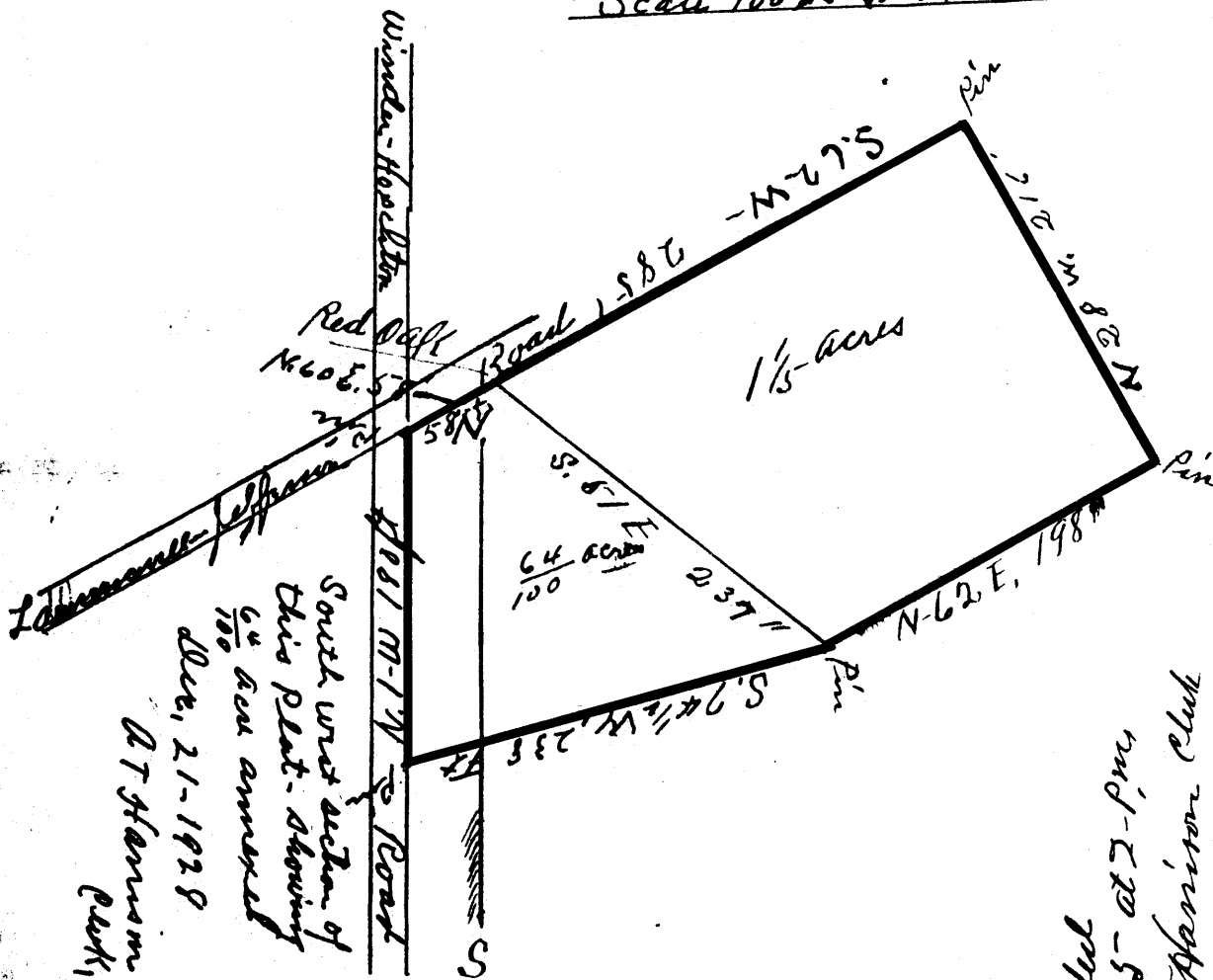
This church body was reorganized in 1867 and was named the First Universalist Church of Jackson County (the county at the time). Its members met in a school until the present church building was constructed in 1881. After it was constructed, it became known as Mulberry Church. In 1925, the church name was legally changed to "Rockwell" due to the nearby Rockwell School and Lodge across the road. Various activities were organized by church members, including a Young People's Christian Union and the Hill Mission Circle. It still holds an annual homecoming and has been the site of the Universalists' annual state convention at least every three to ten years since 1890.

It remains a small, but active, congregation, and one of the few remaining in Georgia.



Plat Rockwell Church.

Scale 100 ft to 1 inch



South west corner of  
this Plat. showing  
6 1/2 acrs annexed  
Dec. 21-1928  
A T Harmon  
Cork,

Rockwell Universalist  
Church Lot. One and

One and One Fifth Acres

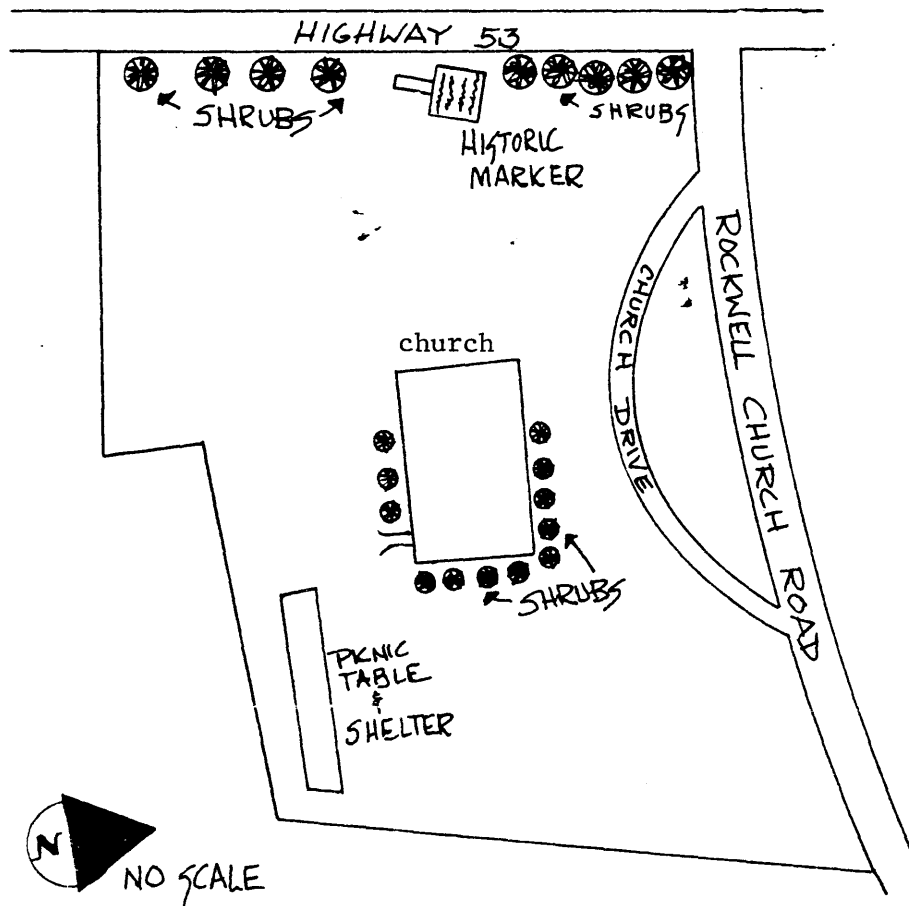
Scale 100 Feet to Inch.  
Surveyed April 7<sup>th</sup> 1925  
L A House, Svr's

Filed & Recorded  
April - 9<sup>th</sup> 1925 - at 2 - P.m.  
A T Harmon Club

PLAT MAP

Rockwell Universalist Church  
near Winder, Barrow County, Georgia  
Scale: 1" = 100'  
Source: Recorded Plat from Barrow  
County Superior Court records.  
Date: 1925  
Key: The nominated property is marked  
with a heavy black line.

# ROCKWELL UNIVERSALIST CHURCH



## SITE PLAN

Rockwell Universalist Church  
near Winder, Barrow County, Georgia  
Scale: not to scale  
Source: Drawn by Jeanne M. Strong  
Date: 1983  
Key: The property shown is the nominated  
property with some of its landscaping  
features.