FHR-8-300 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

CE-73

1. Name

historic	Rock United Presbyterian Church (preferred)
and/or common	Rock Church; The Rock

2. Location

street & number	MD Route 273 at Rock Church Road,	n/a **not for publication**	
city, town	Fair Hill, Elkton X vicinity of	**congressional district**	First
state	Maryland **code** 24 **county** Cecil	**code**	015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	X both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	X religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	X not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name   1. Rock Presbyterian Church, Harold E. Diem, Pres. of Board of Directors
2. The Rev. Allen B. Yuninger, Pastor

street & number   1.   6137 Telegraph Road
2.   3301 Eingerly Road

city, town	Elkton X vicinity of	**state** Maryland 21921

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Cecil County Courthouse
street & number	East Main Street
city, town	Elkton **state** Maryland 21921

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Survey	**has this property been determined elegible?** ___ yes X no
date 1983	___ federal X state ___ county ___ local
depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle	
city, town Annapolis	**state** Maryland 21401

Condition

X excellent   ____ deteriorated   ____ unaltered
____ good   ____ ruins   X altered
____ fair   ____ unexposed

Check one
____ unaltered
X altered

Check one
X original site
____ moved   date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Rock Presbyterian Church is a rectangular building of uncoursed rubble construction, three bays wide by three deep, with a steeply-pitched slate-clad gable roof, located in the northeastern corner of Cecil County, Maryland. The building was originally constructed in 1761; its present appearance, reflecting Victorian Gothic influence, is the result of renovations carried out in 1872 and 1900. The entrance is centered in the south gable facade and consists of double doors in an arched opening. One-over-one sash windows in arched openings occupy each of the flanking bays. A shed-roofed porch with square posts spans the facade. Above the entrance, a circular stained glass rose window was inserted in 1872 or 1900. In the peak of the gable, a shuttered lancet window is surmounted by a datestone reading "A Presbyterian Church 1761." The side elevations hold tall 7/6 lancet windows of colored and etched glass with Gothic tracery in the upper sash in each bay. A small rectangular addition holding a recessed pulpit was made to the north end of the church in 1900. On the interior, a vestibule leads into the sanctuary, which has a raised gallery at the rear. The interior features rich Gothic detailing, including elaborately carved walnut trusswork, a walnut arch defining the pulpit recess, and a gallery rail with a lancet-arch motif; these elements date from the 1900 renovation, as do the pressed-metal ceiling and chestnut wainscoting. The pews of grained ash with walnut trim were installed in 1872. West of the church is a stone Session House; this 1½ story, gable-roofed building was originally constructed in 1762. It stands three bays wide by one bay deep, with a gabled stone vestibule projecting from the right-hand bay of its principal facade. The building retains considerable integrity despite a small frame addition to one end and the sheathing of the upper half-story in fishscale shingles. Also on the property is a modern white stucco Church House constructed in 1953, which does not contribute to the significance of the resource.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Rock Presbyterian Church as it stands today is a gothic stone building approximately 60 feet by 40 feet having three bays on each side, each of which contains a large arched window. The front is also a three bay facade. The church has a very steeply pitched slate roof which has under its peak on the front, a date stone reading "A Presbyterian Church 1761." Under the date stone is an arched window with shutters. Below the window and just above the porch roof is a circular stained glass (rose) window. The porch roof covers double entrance doors flanked by a window on each side.

At the rear of the building is a rectangular addition which houses the pulpit. The addition has a small arched window on each side and two small rectangular windows in the basement at the rear. Along the west side of the addition are large exterior basement doors.

Period | **Areas of Significance—Check and justify below**

Period	Areas of Significance			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture _X_	religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	_X_ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
_⸱_ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	humanitarian
_X_ 1800–1899	___ commerce	_X_ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1761; 1872; 1900   **Builder/Architect** Builder – Walker & Gibson
1900 architect – W. L. Plack

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)   Applicable Criteria: A, C

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

    Rock Presbyterian Church is significant for its association with early
Scotch-Irish immigration into northeastern Maryland, and with the concomitant
growth of the Presbyterian religion in the region. The congregation it serves
was organized in 1720, and utilized first a log structure, and later a frame
building to hold their services. The present stone building, the third to serve
the congregation, was constructed in 1761 and reflects the efforts of a mature,
established community. The church derives additional significance from its
architecture; in continuous use since its construction, the building has
undergone a series of renovations in response to the changing needs and tastes
of the congregation. Throughout these renovations, its basic form has been
preserved, so that it is still able to evoke a sense of its historic association
with early Presbyterianism, while reflecting the continuing vitality of an
active congregation. In its present form, the church is unique in northern
Cecil County in presenting an example of a carefully conceived and successfully
executed Victorian Gothic remodeling of a mid-18th century vernacular church
building. The Gothic detailing of the interior, including elaborately-carved
walnut trusses and gallery rail, is especially noteworthy.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

    On the east bank of Little Elk Creek in the northeast corner of Cecil County,
Maryland, not far from the Pennsylvania and Delaware lines stands Rock Presbyterian
Church and Rock Session House.

    During the first quarter of the eighteenth century successive waves of
Scotch-Irish Presbyterians immigrated to this area, taking up land and settling
here. At this time there were few and widely scattered Presbyterian Churches,
one being at New Castle, Delaware at Bohemia Manor, (extinct by 1740), and one
at Head of Christiana, now in Delaware, founded against opposition from the New
Castle Church, in 1707. Many of its members lived on the branches of Elk River
some distance away. These people were influential in founding Rock Church.

    About this time Presbyterianism enjoyed a tremendous growth and spread
rapidly with the founding, from 1720 on, of many new churches such as Rock, one
of the earliest and the mother church of New London Presbyterian Church, Penn.,
founded in 1726.

9. Major Bibliographical References

A Brief History of Rock United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Incorporating the 1872 "History" by Rev. John Henry Johns by Rev. Allen B. Yuniger
Land Records
Historical Society files
Other church histories

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _Approximately 3 acres_
Quadrangle name _Bay View, Maryland & Pennsylvania_   Quadrangle scale _1:24,000_
UMT References

A |1|8| |4|2|4|0|6|0| |4|3|9|4|8|5|0| B |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|
  Zone Easting   Northing   Zone Easting   Northing

C |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| D |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|

E |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| F |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|

G |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| H |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1

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   Mrs. Harold (Anne) Copley

organization   Cecil County Committee
                      Maryland Historical Trust   date   June 21, 1983

street & number   912 Appleton Road   telephone 301-398-3816

city or town   Elkton   state   Maryland 21921

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national   ____ state   _X_ 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____   10-13-83

title   STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER   date

GPO 938 835

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No.1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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received

date entered

Rock United Presbyterian Church
Continuation sheet Cecil County   Item number   7 and 10   Page   1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The Session House buit in 1762 is also of stone with a modern frame addition. The original part is 19 feet 6 inches by 29 feet 6 inches with an entrance hall of 6 feet by 4 feet in addition. The south front is three bays and the east side two bays. The interior is one large room except for the entrance and new addition. It has plastered walls.

The frame addition is 2 stories and is 2 bays on each side and was added on to the west side of the stone building. It is 13 feet by 19 feet 4 inches and has a bathroom and small stair case to the one room second floor. It is used for a kitchen.

Also on the grounds is a modern white stucco Church House. It was built in 1953 and is 80 feet long and 32 feet wide. It has two stories and is seven bays long and 4 bays wide. The front porch is 9 feet by 8 feet. Upstairs is a kitchen and dining room while Sunday School rooms, etc., are downstairs. This building is used for Sunday School, church suppers and other events.

While Rock Church and the Session House, the two historic buildings on the site, were built in 1761 and 1762 respectively they have been renovated from time to time. Even though they have been changed from the original Colonial arrangement to simple Gothic with some Victorian features, these renovations have achieved significance in their own right. The site also contains a huge oak tree and outcroppings of Port Deposit gneiss from which the church gets its name, Rock.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Boundaries of the nominated property are indicated by the bold line on the attached map labeled National Register Boundary, drawn to the scale of 1"=200'.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries, defined by property lines on the north and east and by public roadways on the south and west, encompass Rock Church and Session House within their immediate setting.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
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Continuation sheet Rock United Presbyterian Church
Cecil County, Maryland   Item number   8   Page   2

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

Rock Church has been called by several names: Elk, Upper Elk, New Erection on the branches of the Elk River, and Elk River. On September 5, 1803 an act of the General Assembly gave it its name and constitution.

Its first meeting house was of log and stood at what is now called Old Stone Graveyard, Lewisville, Pennsylvania. The second of clapboard and no longer standing, was built at the present Sharpes Cemetery after the church split in 1741, to the Old and the New sides.

The distinguished Reverend James Finley of the well known family of Presbyterian ministers and brother of the Reverend Samuel Finley who served as president of Princeton University, caused the congregations to reunite, at which time, 1761, the third and present building was built. This building was changed somewhat in 1844, then extensively in 1872 and in 1900 under the ministry of the Reverend William J. Fitz-Simmons it was renovated to bring it to its present appearance. The architect was W. L. Plack of Philadelphia and the builders were Walker and Gibson.

Elk River or Rock Church was first served by supply ministers but in October of 1724 the Reverend Joseph Houston accepted the call as its first minister. Later under the ministry of the Reverend J. R. Milligan, the short-lived, 1889-1905, Rock Academy was founded.
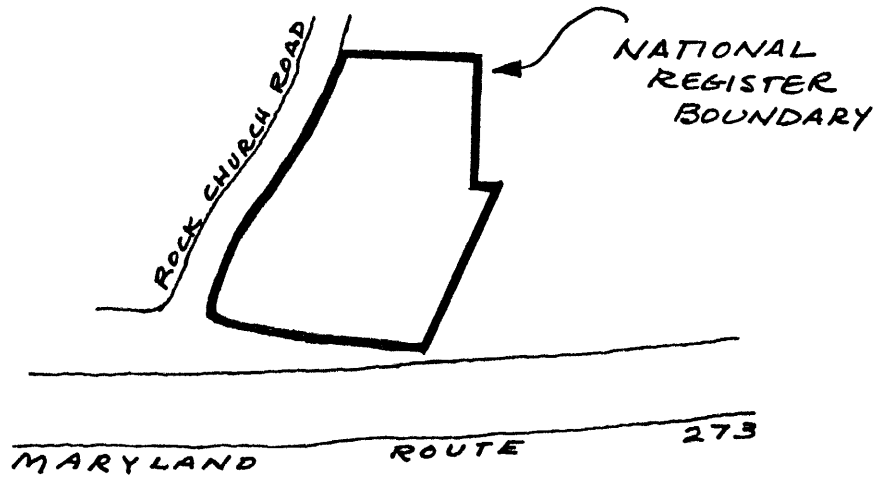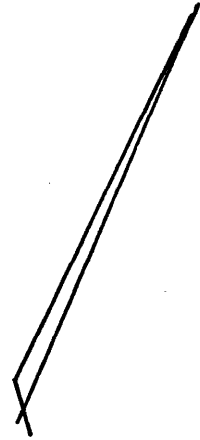
Some revolutionary war figures who served as elders were: Amos Alexander, William Mackey, Col. Samuel Maffit and Dr. Abraham D. Mitchell. The Reverends James Latta, James Dunlap and Joseph Alexander, well known ministers, were sons of Rock Church families.

Rock Session House was built in 1762. It, too, has undergone several renovations to bring it to its present looks. Built as a meeting room for the session, it has also been used by the Reverend Alexander McDowell and other ministers as a school house even before Rock Academy used it for that purpose. Presently it is used for session meetings, a choir robing room and for various small social functions.

Also on the site is the Church House a modern (built in 1953) stucco building used as a Sunday School and for church suppers and other such functions.

CE-73

ROCK UNITED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

NATIONAL
REGISTER
BOUNDARY

ROCK CHURCH ROAD

MARYLAND   ROUTE   273

SCALE: 1" = 200'