

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **MAR 1 1985**

date entered **MAR 28 1985**

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

1. Name

historic Bear Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church

and/or common Bear Creek Community Church

2. Location

street & number Bear Creek Road N/A not for publication

city, town Mooresville X vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Marshall code 117

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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 Trustees of Bear Creek Church and James Orr Estate
c/o Mary Lynn Orr Collins

street & number Route 2

city, town Culleoka N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 38451

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marshall County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Lewisburg state Tennessee

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated at the headwaters of Bear Creek in an isolated valley near the Giles County border, the Bear Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church is a one story rectangular plan church constructed of brownish-red brick laid in American common bond. Built on a stone foundation, the most prominent feature of the church is a 1½ story bell tower that projects from the northwest corner of the gabled roof. This rectangular brick tower is surmounted by a polygonal steeple resting on a shallow pedimented base. Sheathed with pressed metal shingles and capped by a heavy decorative finial, the tower acts as a focal point of the church.

At the base of the tower is an entry delineated by a round arch with triple arch radiating voussoirs. This entry leads to a recessed porch and the main entry into the church. Consisting of two sets of double-leaf paneled doors, the main entry is similar to the entry located on the southwest corner of the front. The four bay front facade faces west towards Bear Creek Road. Two window sets of paired lancet windows with three lights each separated by a kite window are located on either side of a narrow brick pilaster. A smaller window set of similar design is located in the gable end. The facade is further delineated by a decorative string course of staggered sawtooth brick which extends around the building below the molded wooden cornice.

The north and south sides of the church are each five bays deep and divided by narrow brick pilasters. Pointed arch windows identical to those on the front occupy the central three bays. The rear or east side of the building features a small half-hipped roof extension, containing the chancel area, flanked by six-light lancet windows on either side.

The interior plan of the church is formed by an open rectangular hall with a small recessed chancel area at the east end. Pine floors laid east-west and beaded wainscoting of mixed woods that covers the walls to a height of approximately three feet comprise some of the interior woodwork. Interior window frames are delineated by chamfered rails and stiles, rectangular architraves with fluted connecting members and ball-and-target cornerblocks. The ceiling is particularly fine, featuring heavy fluted beams, beaded ceiling boards, and decorative pendants at the juncture of the beams. The church still contains its original oak pews and altar furniture. Both inside and out, the church has retained its architectural integrity.

The church is located at the bottom of a slight decline, in the midst of a two acre lot shaded by mature cedar trees on the south and old hardwoods in the yard. The ruins of a deteriorated privy and another frame outbuilding are located just south of the church building. Two old cemeteries are located adjacent to the church.

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 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 1897–98 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bear Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church, two miles south of the village of Mooresville in western Marshall County, is nominated under National Register criterion C for its architectural significance to the Mooresville community and western Marshall County. The structure is one of the finest examples of vernacular Gothic Revival architecture in the central highlands of southern middle Tennessee. It features a distinctive rectangular belltower entry surmounted by a polygonal steeple. Round arch entries, lancet windows and ornamental staggered sawtooth brickwork contribute to the outstanding design of the church. The interior is distinguished by decorative window architraves and an outstanding ceiling of patterned wood. Although no longer in active use, the church still retains its architectural integrity.

The Bear Creek Church was established in 1814 by the Rev. Samuel King, only four years after he and the Revs. Samuel McAdoo and Finis Ewing formed the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Rev. King became the first pastor of the Bear Creek Church. The newly formed church was the only house of worship for many years not only for the isolated Bear Creek community, but also for the village of Mooresville, two miles to the north, and for families living on the ridge along the Giles County border a mile to the south. It is the only church in the county known to have been organized by one of the founders of a denomination.

The date of the erection of the first church structure cannot be discerned. It probably was a rough log structure, as a tradition of the Orr family, whose members included one of the original church elders, holds that a barn on the nearby James Porter Orr farm was constructed from logs from the first church building. Camp meetings were held on church property from the congregation's organization in 1814 until 1860. In the seven years between 1826 and 1833 alone, there were 223 accessions recorded.

A brick church, the second church used by the congregation, was constructed about 1850 during the eighteen-year pastorate of the Rev. Henry B. Warren (1833–51). Accounts state that the church had a straight overhead ceiling supported by two large square columns in the center of the room. During the Rev. J.M. Brown's pastorate (c.1874–1901) the ceiling of the 1850 church was taken out and replaced by an arched ceiling. The modifications to the structure weakened the building severely and it was feared that the walls could no longer support the structure. In the 1890s the congregation voted to raze the structure.

A committee chaired by John A. Coffee, oversaw the construction of the present building. Constructed from materials obtained locally, the clay being dug nearby and bricks burned on the spot, the church was dedicated about 1898.

Regular services were held in the Bear Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church until 1932, at the end of the ministry of Reverend A.C. Stribling.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bear Creek Cemetery Association Records, copy available from South Central Tennessee Development District.
Interviews with Katherine Leford, Mary Lynn Orr Collins, and David Jeter, November, 1984.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 2 acres
Quadrangle name Campbell's Station, TN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>1,6</u>	<u>50,61,7,0</u>	<u>3,91,97,5,0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is bounded on the west by Bear Creek Road; north, south and east boundaries are property lines (it is rectangular in shape). This is all the property historically associated with the Bear Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

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

state	NA	code	NA	county	NA	code	NA
state	NA	code	NA	county	NA	code	NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Quin

organization South Central Tennessee Development District date _____

street & number P.O. Box 1346 telephone 615-381-2040

city or town Columbia state Tennessee 38402-1346

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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert E. Harper

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 2/21/85

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

[Signature] date 3-28-85
Keeper of the National Register National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration