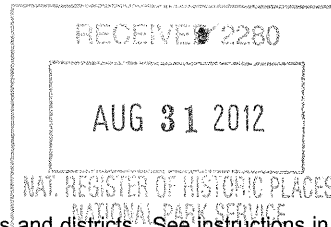


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



866

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church

other names/site number WA854

2. Location

street & number 120 Mount Beasor Road N/A  not for publication

city or town Sopchoppy  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Wakulla code 129 zip code 32358

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Barbara C. Mattick / DSHPO 8/29/2012  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
  - See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Edson W. Beall 10-17-12

Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Wakulla County, FL  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	total

**Name of related multiple property listings**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

EDUCATION: school

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE: frame vernacular

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation WOOD

walls WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other N/A

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History \_\_\_\_\_

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

c. 1903-1962 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

unknown/unknown \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1   6	7   3   9   4   1   6	3   3   3   1   5   8   2
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andrew Waber, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date August 2012

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Ruth Ann Williams

street & number 2402 Delgado Drive telephone 850-574-3366

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32304

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 MOUNT BEASOR PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH  
Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida  
Description

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**SUMMARY**

The old Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church, located in an unincorporated section of Wakulla County north of the town Sopchoppy, is a simple wood frame vernacular building. Constructed c. 1903, this building features a gable roof, a brick chimney, and wood block pier foundations. The main facade of the building has two doors accessed through an historic front porch covered by a gable roof extension. Fenestration consists of three wood frame 6/6 double hung sash windows on the east and west elevations and two 6/6 double hung sash wood windows on the rear (north) elevation. The interior has the original wood flooring. There are no permanent walls; the interior still remains a single open space consistent with its historic appearance as a church. This building has undergone some alterations, including the installation of a metal chimney adjacent to the historic brick chimney, the installation of a wood swing on the front porch, and the replacement of a window on the rear elevation with a small door. A small non-contributing wood picket fence surrounds the historic building. Just to the rear of the building is a non-historic two-story wood frame vernacular building connected to the church by a catwalk. This non-historic building is located a little off to the side and does not dramatically affect the integrity of the historic building. To the north of the church building is a structure historically used as a platform for the traditional Baptist river baptisms. The simple structure consists of two logs joined together in the middle of the river. Due to illegal deadhead logging, however, part of the structure has been removed and so therefore does not retain enough integrity to be considered contributing to the church. Also on the property are two small non-historic buildings, a tool shed and pump house, associated with the current use of the church building as a residence. Only the contributing church building and the noncontributing picket fence and two-story building are within the National Register boundary.

**SETTING**

The Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church is located north of the city of Sopchoppy in Wakulla County, Florida, in the area of Florida known as the Big Bend region. The closest major city is Tallahassee, the capital of the state of Florida, which is located roughly 38 miles to the north. Set within the Apalachicola National Forest, the Mount Beasor church was once a center of the small rural community of Greenough, which no longer exists today. The nature of the community today is still largely rural. A small two-lane unpaved road, Mt. Beasor Road, runs in front of the building and is a major aspect of the rural character of the setting (Photo #1). The property is also adjacent to the Sopchoppy River, which runs roughly north of the property, with the non-historic two-story building overlooking the river. A footpath also leads from the rear of the property to the river.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2 MOUNT BEASOR PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH  
Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida  
Description

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**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Exterior

The historic Mt. Beasor Primitive Baptist Church is a small single story wood frame vernacular building with a gable roof and wood block pier foundations (Photo #2). The roof, which is covered with wood shingle and asphalt, features a metal vent protruding from the north (rear) end of the building. Fenestration consists primarily of 6/6 sash windows which are either original to the building or historically consistent with the original fenestration of the building (Photos #3-4). A wood picket fence immediately surrounds the historic building.

The main (south) facade of the building features a simple attached porch, which consists of a wood platform accessed by concrete steps and is covered by a shed roof supported by simple wood posts. One of the most prominent elements of this building is the double entrance located on this elevation. These doors are simple wood paneled doors that still have their original fixtures (Photo #2).

The side (east and west) elevations of the building are plain and unadorned, with three 6/6 double hung sash wood windows on each side (Photos #5-6). On the east elevation, there are two chimneys that are adjacent to each other located just off center. One is a narrow, covered, brick chimney, and the other is a small metal chimney.

On the rear (north) elevation, there are two 6/6 double hung sash windows with metal lintels. One is located in the center of the elevation and the other is located on the west side of the elevation (Photo #7). At the east end of the north elevation there is a rear entrance there used to be a window. The window opening has been repurposed into a door that now provides direct access between the non-historic residence and the old church building by way of a catwalk that runs between the two buildings. The historic window opening size has been retained, so there is little impact on the integrity of the historic church building. A simple shed roof covers the rear entrance.

Interior

The interior of the building is a large open space with no permanent walls in place (Photo #8). The interior features wood flooring and hanging light fixtures. On the north end of the interior is an open kitchen consisting of a refrigerator, sink, oven, a countertop, and cabinets. The wood flooring in the rest of the interior remains uninterrupted. No walls separate the kitchen from the rest of the interior. A bathroom is located in the southwest corner (Photo #9). It is closed off from the rest of the interior by a non-permanent wood wall that extends slightly above half the height of the room. There are elevated bedding units in the west side of the interior, including one on top of the bathroom unit and one made from the remnants of the original pulpit from the

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 7 Page 3 MOUNT BEASOR PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH  
Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida  
Description

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including one on top of the bathroom unit and one made from the remnants of the original pulpit from the historic church (Photo #10). On the east side of the building is a furnace connecting to the metal chimney and a HVAC system (Photo #11).

**ALTERATIONS**

This building has undergone a number of relatively small changes since its construction. On the main (south) facade, a swing has been added to the front porch. On the east elevation, a metal chimney was added next to the preexisting brick chimney (Photos #4, 12). On the rear elevation, a window on the east side of the elevation has been converted into a rear entrance, connecting to a wood catwalk that leads to the noncontributing two-story building to the north (Photo #13). The original roofing material was wood shingles, which has since been covered over with asphalt shingles (Photo #14). The windows have been replaced on the building and a vent has been added to the roof. The interior of the building has been repurposed into a residence. A bathroom and kitchen have been added as well as an HVAC unit. Historically there was a potbelly stove placed in the center of the building which has since been removed. The pulpit, which was originally located on the north end of the building in front of the center window, has also been removed from its original location. A portion of it has been repurposed into furniture currently used in the building.

**NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

Located to the rear of the historic church building is a two-story residence constructed after the period of significance (Photo #15). Connected to the rear of the church via a wood catwalk, the building features a prominent screened-in porch that overlooks the Sopchoppy River which runs immediately north of the property. Resting on wood piers, this wood frame building is split-level, with the south end a half story taller than the rest of the building. The south end has a flat roof, while the north end has a shed roof. Fenestration consists of 6/6 double hung sash windows on the south end of the first story, 1/1 single hung sash windows on the east side of the first story, and 1-light, 2-light, and 1/1 windows on the second story. The interior is plain, with unpainted wood flooring, wood roof and wood ceilings on both floors. The second floor is accessed via a wood spiral staircase.

**RESOURCES OUTSIDE BOUNDARY**

Located to the north of the church building in the middle of the Sopchoppy River is the remnants of a baptismal structure historically associated with the traditional Baptist river baptisms (Photo #16). The exact date of construction for this structure is not known, but there was a reference to it made by former Florida Secretary of State R. A. Gray, who lived in Greenough from the late 1890s into the early 1900s. The original structure consisted of three logs pile driven into the river bottom and it was used as a platform by the minister during baptisms (Photo #17). Unfortunately, due to illegal deadhead logging, part of this structure was pulled out of the

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Section number 7 Page 4 MOUNT BEASOR PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH  
Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida  
Description

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river. As a result, it does not retain enough integrity to contribute to the property's significance. A foot trail leading from behind the church provides access to the structure (Photo #18).

There are two other noncontributing resources located on the property, a pump house and shed. The shed, located to the east of the church building, is a simple unadorned wood building with a shed roof and concrete slab foundation (Photo #19). The north side of the shed is open, supported by wood posts. The pump house is a simple wooden enclosure with a sheet metal roof resting on concrete block foundations (Photo #20). Both resources were built after the church was converted into a residence and are considered noncontributing due to their age.



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Section number 8 Page 1 MOUNT BEASOR PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH  
Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida  
Significance

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**SUMMARY**

The Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church (PBC) is being nominated for listing in the National Register for its local significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History and Criterion C as a property type. The church, which was built c. 1903, is one of the last remnants of the Greenough community. In addition to serving as one of the few public buildings in the community, it also served as a school and community gathering place and hosted religious services for several other denominations. As a member of the Beulah Primitive Baptist Association, the Mount Beasor Church also hosted camp revival meetings on a rotational basis, which were major events that attracted people from throughout the Big Bend region. With its simple unadorned appearance, its double entrances for men and women, a simple floor plan that does not provide for a piano or choir, and its raised center window on the rear (north) elevation, the church embodies several of the character defining features of Primitive Baptist churches.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

Greenough Community

The first settlers in the Greenough area arrived after the end of the Second Seminole War (1842). While the shipping areas along the Gulf Coast of Wakulla County have seen some form of settlement going back into the First Spanish Period, it was not until after 1842 that the interior region of the county was settled by families from South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. The first area settled west of the Sopchoppy River was Smith Creek. The first settlers of the area were farmers who were drawn to the region by the waterways that allowed for easier transportation of their goods to market. They quickly discovered, however, that the soil around Smith Creek was ill-suited for agriculture and instead moved east into the areas near West Sopchoppy and Greenough, which were higher in elevation and had drier soil.<sup>1</sup>

The community of Greenough emerged as a small collection of farmhouses in the 1840s. It was located at the crossroads of small dirt roads that linked several of the surrounding communities together. In 1869, Abraham Bradham built and operated a water-powered grist and saw mill in Greenough, which became a gathering place for area farmers. Sometime after 1880, the mill and surrounding property were acquired by William C. Rouse (1863-1936). Rouse, a native of Florida, was a state senator and at one time the largest landowner in Wakulla County. In the mid-1880s, a wooden swing bridge large enough for horse-drawn carriages and small vehicles was built near Rouse's mill, connecting Greenough to Ashmore Station and allowing for easier transportation for farmers on both sides of the river who were using Rouse's mill. The bridge, referred to as the Bradham Bridge in an early deed record to the Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church, was the first bridge built across

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman Ashmore, "Looking Back: Greenough," Wakulla Area Digest (March 1996), 13.

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Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida  
Significance

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the Sopchoppy River. This bridge was destroyed in the 1899 flood and was replaced with a similar bridge shortly afterwards that would remain in active use until 1936.<sup>2</sup>

There were three major events that brought about the end of the community of Greenough. In 1893, the Georgia, Florida & Alabama Railroad bypassed much of the western side of the Sopchoppy River and established a depot, which was originally named Sopchoppy Station. It was built across the river from what was then known as Sopchoppy. Sopchoppy Station was a small community of only a few houses prior to the arrival of the railroad. After the construction of the railroad, farmers wishing to bring their products to market using the railroad faced considerable difficulties doing so because of the need to cross the river by Greenough. In 1899, a hurricane struck the area, causing the Sopchoppy River to flood and destroying many buildings and farmsteads. Many residents simply decided to move across the river rather than rebuild, wishing to have easier access to the railroad. The old town of Sopchoppy ceased to exist and Sopchoppy Station became known as Sopchoppy. By the 1890s, the economy of the area had shifted primarily to turpentine, naval stores, and lumber production. As a result, a number of residents left farming to enter the more lucrative timber industry. Despite these challenges, the Greenough community still lingered as Rouse's mill continued to serve a number of residents still engaged in farming. Although the sawmill operation catered to the rapidly developing lumber industry, much of the business was sent downriver to Sopchoppy for easier transport. The last vestiges of Greenough began to disappear after the mill was burned down sometime prior to World War I. Although some farms and scattered residences remained, most of the population moved elsewhere, primarily to the new town of Sopchoppy.<sup>3</sup>

Origins of the Primitive Baptist Church

Both the Primitive and Missionary Baptist churches descend from the united Baptist church that resulted in the 1780s from the merger of two branches of Baptists who referred to themselves as Separates and Regulars. The Calvinistic Regular Baptists dated from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Separate Baptists, who originated in New England during the First Great Awakening, embraced many of the same basic principles of the Regular Baptists, but placed more emphasis on conversion experiences and immediate guidance from the Holy Spirit. Separate Baptists also shied away from an educated, salaried professional ministry. The united Baptist churches in the South tolerated some theological variety, but by the end of the Second Great Awakening in the early 1800s, a pronounced split appeared. Swept up in the spirit of the Second Great Awakening, a number of Baptist ministers and congregants sought to establish money-based missionary societies, independent of the local churches and associations. They also argued the need for a more professional, salaried ministry. The advocates of these new measures, the "missionary" Baptists, also began to downplay the Calvinist doctrines of election

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 13-14, 39; Freeman Ashmore, "Looking Back: Sopchoppy," *Wakulla Area Digest* (May 1996), 13; Elizabeth F. Smith, "The Settlement of Greenough and Mt. Beasor Church," *Magnolia Monthly*, vol. 9, no. 12 (December 1971),

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Significance

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and predestination. The conservative elements of the Baptist church, who became known as “primitive” or original Baptists, held a strong Calvinistic belief in the concept of predestination, and were opposed both to “missionary” methodology and ideology. They were also suspicious of missionary societies on the grounds that they went against Biblical teachings and created a larger authority outside the jurisdiction of local churches and associations, something they perceived as a violation of the autonomy long valued by Baptist congregations.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1820s, the schism between what would become the Missionary and Primitive Baptist churches began. In the beginning, the Primitive Baptist church was larger. The Missionary Baptist Church, however, aided by the creation of national and local missionary societies, quickly gained ground. The money and infrastructure provided by these societies allowed for fulltime circuit riding ministers, the creation of seminaries, and the establishment of mission churches. The Primitive Baptist Church, on the other hand, relied on itinerant ministers who were usually engaged in a fulltime occupation such as farming, which tied them down to one location for much of the year. With a few exceptions, these ministers were largely uneducated and unpaid. As a result, the Missionary Baptists experienced significant growth, especially in frontier areas, even in areas where the settlers adhered to Primitive Baptist ideology.<sup>5</sup>

Primitive Baptists in Wakulla County

Many of the settlers of Wakulla County originally came from areas that were strongly entrenched in the Primitive Baptist faith and many of them brought their religion with them. The first Primitive Baptist church in the Big Bend area and the second Baptist church in Florida was Hephzibah Primitive Baptist Church, located in Gadsden County, which was founded in 1824. This was followed by the establishment of Mt. Gilead in Jefferson County in 1826. Both churches were founding members of the Ochlocknee Primitive Baptist Association (PBA), which was founded in 1827 and became the first association to include the Big Bend area within its boundaries. Founded during the split between the Missionary and Primitive Baptist churches, the Ochlocknee association established itself as a hardline conservative group.<sup>6</sup>

However, like many areas on the frontier, the missionary efforts of the Missionary Baptists and Methodists were successful in the Big Bend area. The Missionary Baptist push into southwest Georgia and north Florida, initially slow during the 1820s and 1830s, was well established by the time settlement began in western Wakulla County. As a result, some of the earliest Baptist churches built in Wakulla County were actually Missionary Baptist churches. In the 1852 American Baptist Register, there were three member churches of the Missionary Baptist Florida Association from Wakulla County: Antioch, Bethlehem, and Bethesda Baptist churches. This would have a profound effect on the development of the Primitive Baptist Church in the county.

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<sup>4</sup> John G. Crowley, Primitive Baptists of the Wiregrass South: 1815 to Present (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1998), 1-17, 55-59.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 55-58.

<sup>6</sup> John G. Crowley, Primitive Baptists of the Wiregrass South: 1815 to Present, 68-75.

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Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida  
Significance

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Despite this initial slow development, there was some early Primitive Baptist expansion into Wakulla County. The 1833 Session of the Ochlocknee Primitive Baptist Association received the newly organized Humility Church at Shell Point, in then Leon, and later Wakulla County. Humility had 29 members in fellowship, her messengers to the Association being a minister, Edward C. Walker, and Nathaniel W. Walker.<sup>7</sup>

In 1872, the Ochlocknee Association removed Elam Church in Brooks County, Georgia, and Mt. Zion Church in Jefferson County, Florida, due to their willingness to accept Missionary Baptists as full members without rebaptism. In protest, a group of eight churches met at Beulah Primitive Baptist Church in Wakulla County, Florida, to form the Beulah Primitive Baptist Association. The Beulah association emerged as considerably more liberal, not only accepting Missionary Baptists without rebaptism, but also conducting official communications with the Florida Missionary Baptist Association and offering seats to their convention to Missionary Baptist ministers and association members. The strong Calvinist principles espoused by most Primitive Baptists and outright rejection of Arminianism and missionism was not shared by many Primitive Baptists in the Big Bend area due in part to the strong Missionary Baptist influence there. Members of the Beulah PBA also gradually started to adopt other aspects of Missionary Baptist churches, including adding musical accompaniment to religious services. As a result, the Primitive Baptist churches in the Beulah PBA became almost indistinguishable from their Missionary counterparts.<sup>8</sup>

Since its founding, the Beulah Primitive Baptist Association has continued to meet every year except in 1918, when the association meeting was shortened due to the Spanish Influenza Epidemic. The membership began to shrink by the 20<sup>th</sup> century, being confined to the Leon County and Wakulla County areas. By the late 1930s, there were only seven member churches, four of them in Wakulla County. Membership grew a little by the early 1950s to ten churches but by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, membership steadily declined. Today it has a membership of four churches, all in Wakulla County.<sup>9</sup>

Mount Beasor Missionary Baptist Church

The mother church of the Mount Beasor PBC was Mount Beasor Missionary Baptist Church (MBC), which was founded in what is now West Sopchoppy ca. 1853. The first minister was the Rev. George Washington Bostick, an early settler of the Smith Creek area. Bostick was also the minister of Mount Elon Baptist Church in Smith Creek (which is the oldest church still operating in Wakulla County), Bethesda Baptist Church, and Lake Jackson Church in Leon County. He is best known for his opposition of the Civil War, which he viewed as punishment for the sins of the both the North and South. The Mount Beasor congregation met in a small log

<sup>7</sup> John G. Crowley, Primitive Baptists of the Wiregrass South: 1815 to Present, 68-75; J. Lansing Burrows, ed., American Baptist Register for 1852 (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1853), 48; Ochlocknee Baptist Association, Minutes, 1833.

<sup>8</sup> John G. Crowley, Primitive Baptists of the Wiregrass South: 1815 to Present, 116-118.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 116-118, 184.

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Section number 8 Page 5 MOUNT BEASOR PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH  
Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida  
Significance

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building built shortly after their founding in 1854, which they continued to use until 1885, when it was replaced with a small wood frame building.<sup>10</sup>

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church

The Mount Beasor PBC was founded ca. 1874 by a group of congregants belonging to the preexisting Mount Beasor MBC who split from the parent church. The first pastor of the church was the Rev. Steven Calvin Revell (1828-1911), a native of Darlington, South Carolina, and a Confederate veteran who was formally baptized and ordained into the PBC in 1872. Revell would lead the church until his death in 1911. One of the early members of the congregation was a former slave by the name of Prince Sanders. Baptized and ordained by Revell, Rev. Sanders became the one of the first black Primitive Baptist ministers in Wakulla County, serving as pastor of Mount Trial Primitive Baptist Church near Buckhorn Creek. The Mount Trial PBC itself was organized in April 1882 as a presbytery of Mount Beasor, with the Rev. S.C. Revell and the Rev. John Piggott playing vital roles in establishing the church. Among the deacons of Mt. Beasor during this period were Hiram Reynolds (who served until his death in 1880) and Caswell Winburn (a deacon “for nearly 30 years” upon his death in 1905). Although not a charter member, Mount Beasor PBC would join the Beulah PBA in 1876. From a membership of only 33 in 1876, Mount Beasor grew to over 60 members by 1895, making it the largest congregation in the Beulah PBA.<sup>11</sup>

The exact dates of construction for the first meeting places for Mount Beasor PBC are not known. The first permanent meeting place was in a log building built near the location of the present church building. The land on which the present building is located was donated to Mount Beasor PBC by William C. Rouse in 1896. The dates given for the construction of the current church building are conflicting, with the dates ranging from 1896 to 1903. According to Everett McKinsey, the church was there at least before he was born in 1922. The church felt the effects of the Sopchoppy flood and the ensuing exodus to the south. By 1905, the membership dropped to just 38 people. By the 1910s, church membership would start to steadily increase again as families grew.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Mildred Louise Syfrett, WPA Historical Records Survey Church Inventory Form: Mt. Besor [sic] Baptist Church, 1938; Elizabeth F. Smith, “The Promised Land,” *Magnolia Monthly*, vol. 11, no. 1 (January 1973), 10.

<sup>11</sup> Mildred Louise Syfrett, WPA Historical Records Survey Church Inventory Form: Mount Besor [sic] Primitive Baptist Church, 1938; Mt. Trial Primitive Baptist Church, “Mount Trial Primitive Baptist Church History” [unpublished manuscript], 1; Beulah Primitive Baptist Association Minutes, 1876, 1880, 1895, 1905, 1911.

<sup>12</sup> Freeman Ashmore, “Looking Back: Greenough,” *Wakulla Area Digest* (March 1996), 13-14; William R. Rouse and Lenora Rouse Warranty Deed to Mount Beason [sic] Primitive Baptist Church, November 3, 1896, in Wakulla County Probate Records; Beulah PBA Minutes, 1905; Everett McKinsey interview by Peter Williams, December 2011.

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Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida  
Significance

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During its long history, the church was the center of much activity. It served at various times as a schoolhouse, meeting hall, and as a gathering place for the local Methodist church. One of the major social events in the community was the foot washing ceremony, which was held annually on the first Sunday of July in the Mount Beasor church. A major ceremony amongst Primitive Baptists, this ceremony was open to people of all denominations and attracted visitors from throughout the county. The foot washing ceremony was the highlight of a large three-day meeting. The participants were separated by gender, with two rows of men and women facing each other seated on opposite sides of large basins of water that were brought into the church. They would then take turn washing each other's feet, with men washing other men's feet and women washing other women's feet.<sup>13</sup>

Another important Baptist ritual is river baptisms. The Mount Beasor congregation utilized the adjacent Sopchoppy River to hold their baptisms. In a spot in the river just to the north of the church, the congregation installed a wooden apparatus that was used by the minister for support while performing the baptismal ceremony, which involved full immersion in the river. This structure was vandalized in June 2012; as a result, only a portion of it still exists. Its exact age is not known, but in the memoirs of former Florida Secretary of State Robert A. (R.A.) Gray, who lived in Greenough in the 1890s and early 1900s, there is a reference to this structure made while he was living there. To accommodate the crowd for these ceremonies, a picnic table area was placed near the river that has since been removed. The Mount Beasor congregation also held annual church association meetings on the second Sunday of October. As a member of the Beulah Primitive Baptist Association, the church also hosted the annual meetings of the association on a rotational basis. These meetings were larger in scope than the footwashing ceremonies, attracting groups of people from throughout the region from both Florida and Georgia.<sup>14</sup>

Former Florida Secretary of State R.A. Gray's father, the Rev. William J. Gray, was a Methodist minister who resided at the time in the old parsonage originally built for Mount Beasor. Rev. Gray was a circuit rider, ministering to multiple Methodist congregations in Wakulla County, Greenough being one of them. Gray and his sons were also schoolteachers in the community. While it is not known for certain whether he taught school in the Mount Beasor church building, it is known that the Methodists used the church building whenever the Primitive Baptists were not using it, an arrangement that was followed until the Methodists managed to acquire land for their own church building.<sup>15</sup>

After the initial decline in membership following 1905, the Mount Beasor PBC actually grew despite the general decline of the community of Greenough. Following the death of the Rev. S.C. Revell, the next pastor of the church was his son, the Rev. George W. Revell. The Rev. G.W. Revell remained the pastor of the church

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<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth F. Smith, "The Settlement of Greenough and Mt. Beasor Church,"; Ashmore, "Looking Back: Greenough," 33.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.; Everett McKinsey interview; Wyatt Revell, interview by Andrew Waber, April 26, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Ashmore, "Looking Back: Greenough," 16, 19.

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Significance

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until the early 1920s, when the Rev. John McKinsey became minister. The membership of the church grew from 64 people in 1910 to 92 members shortly after McKinsey assumed his position in 1924. By now, Mount Beasor was clearly established as the largest white Primitive Baptist church in Wakulla County, which it would remain until well after the congregation moved into Sopchoppy. In 1917, there was a brief relapse as Mount Beasor was not listed on the membership rolls of the Beulah Primitive Baptist Association, but it rejoined the following year and has been in the association ever since. By 1933, Mount Beasor was the largest congregation in the Beulah PBA with 88 members. Membership took a sharp jump in 1941 with the baptism of over 30 people, driving the total number to 120. Two years later in 1942, membership would reach 126 before beginning a period of gradual decline.<sup>16</sup>

McKinsey remained pastor of Mt. Beasor until 1947, when the Rev. Nat W. Ward took over. Under Ward, Mount Beasor began meeting twice a month for regular services (the first Sunday of every month and the Saturday before). Prior to this, the church had been meeting just once a month. After Ward left in 1953, Mount Beasor went through a few ministers before the Rev. Cortez White assumed the position in 1957. He would be the last pastor to lead the congregation in Greenough. Under White, the congregation began meeting three times a month, with the extra meeting being on the third Sunday night of every month. There were youth meetings before evening services and Bible classes held before morning services. Reflecting the Beulah PBA's more lax attitude towards church choirs and musical accompaniment during services, the Junior Choristers were formed and performed before each Sunday service. Another important group within the congregation was the Sisters of Dorcas, a women's auxiliary that was instrumental in conducting the youth programs and prominent church gatherings. Membership continued to decline during this period, with the total number of congregants falling to 93 at the beginning of White's tenure. By 1963, membership stood at 77 congregants. Despite this, the church still remained the largest church in the Beulah PBA.<sup>17</sup>

With most of the membership living in the town of Sopchoppy, which was cited as a major reason why a number of members were inactive, the Mount Beasor congregation decided to move to a more central location. Fundraising for the new building began in 1963, when the Junior Choristers donated the initial \$22 towards a building fund that would reach over \$3,300 by 1967. Shortly afterwards, the congregation moved into the new building at 29 Winthrop Avenue, Sopchoppy, Florida, where they remain today. The original property was sold to the Roddenberry family before being acquired by the Williams family in the late 1960s and converted into a private residence. A two-story wood frame building connected to the historic church building by a catwalk was added to the rear of the property sometime after the Williams family acquired it. The historic integrity and open space of the interior was maintained, with no permanent walls or partitions added.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Beulah PBA Minutes, 1905, 1910, 1912, 1917, 1918, 1933, 1940, 1942.

<sup>17</sup> Beulah PBA Minutes, 1947, 1953, 1957, 1963; Mt. Beasor Primitive Baptist Church, Letter to Membership, undated [c. 1968].

<sup>18</sup> Mt. Beasor Primitive Baptist Church, Letter to Membership.

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Significance

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Architectural Context

Most Primitive Baptist churches, especially those built in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, are small rectangular buildings usually constructed of wood or brick. This is tied to the Primitive Baptist belief that churches serve merely as meetinghouses, with adornments viewed as being detrimental to true spiritual worship. This belief resulted in the construction of simple buildings, that were to remain as true to their original forms as possible, even to the point of resisting the addition of modern amenities. The services were usually separated by gender. The building layout usually reflected this, with separate entrances and separate seating areas for men and women in the congregation. A major aspect of Primitive Baptist church services was the complete lack of musical instrument accompaniment, with songs sung a capella. As a result, there was usually no accommodation in the floor plans for musical instruments or choirs seen in many other churches. While most white Primitive Baptist congregations still uphold the old customs of no instrumentation, the white Primitive Baptist churches in Wakulla County today allow for musical accompaniment. Originally, however, the churches in Wakulla County did not allow for instruments and the layout of the older churches reflect this.<sup>19</sup>

Architectural Significance

The Mount Beasor PBC possesses several character-defining traits of a Primitive Baptist church. The unadorned Frame Vernacular building still features the separate entrances used by the men and women of the congregation. Despite being converted into use as a private residence, the interior still remains a single open space with minimal ornamentation. The original pulpit, although now incorporated into a bunk bed, is still in the building. The pulpit was originally located by the center window on the north end of the church. Like many other Primitive Baptist churches, this church originally had two sets of removable benches flanking a center aisle leading up to the pulpit. The benches have since been removed but were never permanently affixed to the floor. On the surrounding property, the original foot trail leading to the spot in the river where the baptisms were held is still there, as are the remnants of the wooden support structure placed in the middle of the river by the congregation to provide support for the pastor while he was conducting the baptisms.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Marilyn Joyce Segal Chiat, America's Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1997), 248; Holly L. Anderson and Andrea L. MacDonald, National Register of Historic Places nomination for Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church (2004), 7-8; Melanie Sovine Reid, "Neither Adding not Taking Away": The Care and Keeping of Primitive Baptist Church Houses," Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture vol. 1 (1982), 169-176; Crowley, Primitive Baptists of the Wiregrass South: 1815 to Present, 184.

<sup>20</sup> Wyatt Revell interview.



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Crowley, John G. Primitive Baptists of the Wiregrass South: 1815 to Present. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1998.

McKinsey, Everett. Interview by Peter Williams, December 2011.

Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church. Letter to Membership [undated], ca. 1968.

Mount Trial Primitive Baptist Church. "Mount Trial Primitive Baptist Church History" [unpublished manuscript].

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Bibliographic References

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        . WPA Historical Records Survey Church Inventory Form: Mount Besor [sic] Primitive Baptist Church, 1938.

William R. Rouse and Lenora Rouse Warranty Deed to Mount Beason [sic] Primitive Baptist Church, November 3, 1896, in Wakulla County Probate Records.

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Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida  
Geographic Data

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### **BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated property is located at 120 Mt. Beasor Road in Wakulla County, Florida. It is within a larger parcel with the following legal description: 34-4S-3W PARCEL IN SE 1/4 OF SEC 34 CHURCH PROPERTY UNNUMBERED LOT IN SUBDIVISION OR 23 P 290.

The boundary of the nominated property is shown on the attached sketch map, and described as follows: from a point of beginning northeast of the non-contributing two-story building, the boundary runs southwest approximately 121 feet to the north side of Mount Beasor Road. The boundary then runs northwest approximately 64.5 feet along the north side of Mount Beasor Road to a point southwest of the non-contributing picket fence. The boundary then extends to the northeast adjacent to the west side of the picket fence approximately 110.5 feet to a point northwest of the non-contributing two-story building. The boundary then extends southeast approximately 70 feet to the point of beginning.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary includes property historically associated with the Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church.

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**LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

1. Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church
2. 120 Mount Beasor Road, Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida
3. Andrew Waber
4. September 2011
5. Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation, R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, FL
6. View of Mt. Beasor Road, facing northwest
7. Photo 1 of 20

**Items 1-5 are the same for the following photographs, except where noted**

4. August 2012
6. View of main (south) facade, facing northeast
7. Photo 2 of 20
  
3. Nell Revell
4. ca. 1963
6. Historic view of Revell family standing in front of window on side elevation
7. Photo 3 of 20
  
3. Nell Revell
4. ca. 1963
6. Historic view of east elevation, facing north
7. Photo 4 of 20
  
6. View of west elevation, facing southeast
7. Photo 5 of 20
  
6. View of east elevation, facing northwest
7. Photo 6 of 20
  
6. View of rear (north) elevation of church building and non-contributing building, facing southeast
7. Photo 7 of 20
  
6. View of north interior wall of church building, facing northeast
7. Photo 8 of 20

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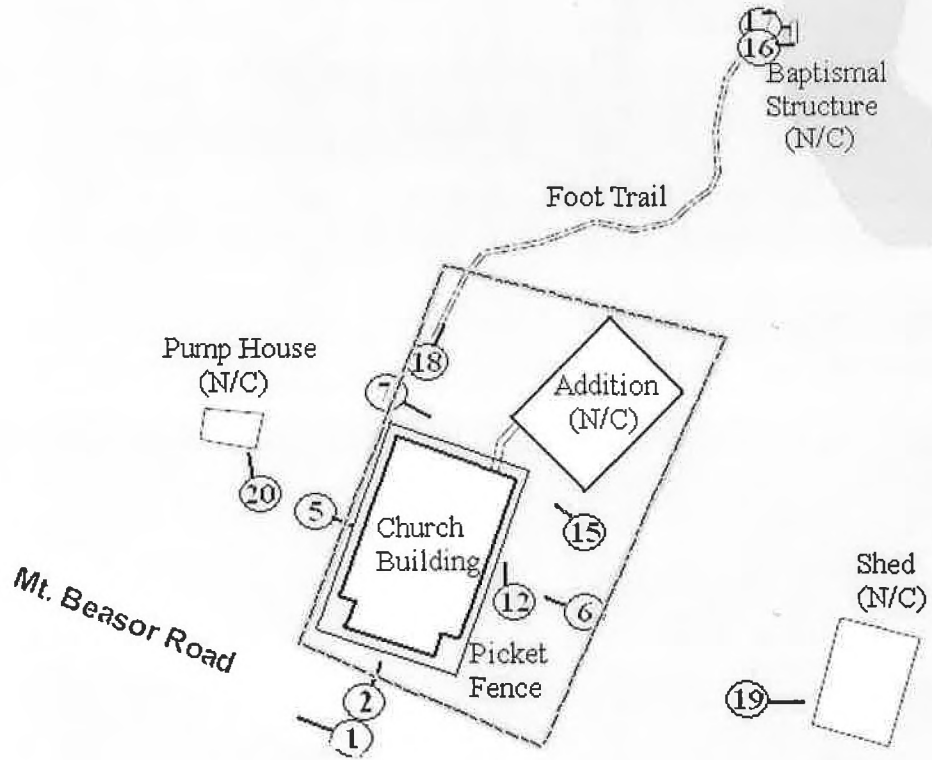
- 6. View of bathroom partition, facing northwest
- 7. Photo 9 of 20
  
- 6. View of former pulpit, facing northwest
- 7. Photo 10 of 20
  
- 6. View of furnace, facing southeast
- 7. Photo 11 of 20
  
- 6. View of exterior brick and metal chimneys, facing north
- 7. Photo 12 of 20
  
- 6. Interior view of rear kitchen area entrance, facing northeast
- 7. Photo 13 of 20
  
- 3. Nell Revell
- 4. ca. 1963
- 6. Historic view of main facade, facing north
- 7. Photo 14 of 20
  
- 6. View of non-contributing rear building, facing northwest
- 7. Photo 15 of 20
  
- 4. August 2012
- 6. View of remnants of baptismal structure in the Sopchoppy River, facing east
- 7. Photo 16 of 20
  
- 6. View of baptismal structure prior to vandalism, facing east
- 7. Photo 17 of 20
  
- 6. View of foot trail leading to baptismal structure, facing northeast
- 7. Photo 18 of 20
  
- 6. View of non-contributing shed, facing east
- 7. Photo 19 of 20
  
- 6. View of non-contributing pump house, facing northwest
- 7. Photo 20 of 20

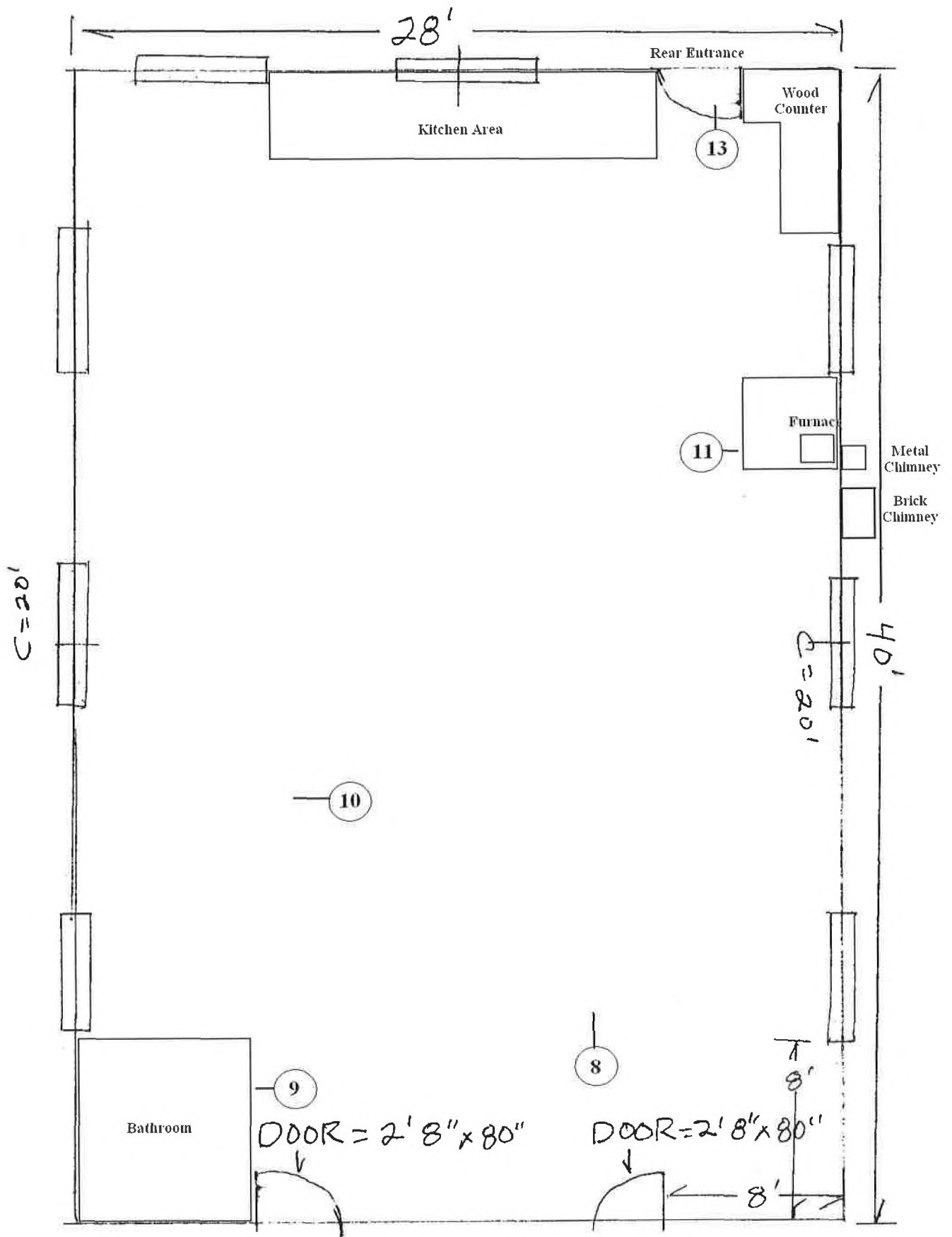
# Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church 120 Mount Beasor Road Sopchoppy, Wakulla County, Florida



Apalachicola National Forest

Sopchoppy River





NOT TO SCALE  
 WINDOWS = 32" X 65"



Google earth



Mount Beasor Primitive Baptist Church  
30.091992° -84.515750°