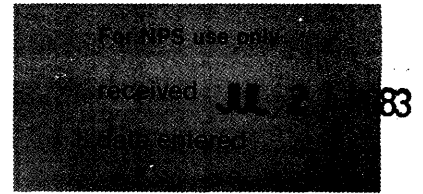


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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



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

1. Name

historic Harmony Grove Meeting House

and/or common Harmony Grove Church

2. Location

street & number off S.R. ^{I-79} 45/9 at Harmony Grove not for publication

city, town Harmony Grove vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state West Virginia code 54 county Monongalia code 061

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Trustees of Harmony Grove Church (currently, Willis Mundell, Inez Williams, Gladys Trickett)

street & number Route 2, Box 30

city, town Morgantown vicinity of Harmony Grove state West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Monongalia County Courthouse

street & number High and Walnut Streets

city, town Morgantown state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title West Virginia Historic Properties Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date May 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Unit, Department of Culture and History, Cultural Center, Capitol Complex

city, town Charleston state West Virginia

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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 Harmony Grove Meeting House, located three miles from Morgantown and about one-quarter mile from River Road in Harmony Grove, is a small wood frame building built in 1854. The building is 20 feet wide and 50 feet long and is one story in height. The church rests on a foundation of rough-cut stone blocks laid in roughly regular courses, although there is no clear ashlar pattern; some of the foundation stones have shifted or been dislodged, but these were repaired in the spring of 1983, using the "Preservation Brief" guidelines for the mortar. The floor joists are oak logs, rough hewn only on the top side; these are still in good condition. The wall treatment is beveled siding with endboards, and this has been painted white. The church has a standing seam tin roof, painted red, and has two brick chimneys; only one of the chimneys is still functional. Each of the long walls of the church has three gothic-arched 4/4 windows with wood surrounds. The single panelled front door is centered on the north wall and has a gothic-arched wood architrave, with a 2-light transom. In the gable on the north side is a 4-light semi-circular window with wood surrounds.

The interior of the church is panelled with horizontal wood siding, painted white, above a dark wood wainscoting with moulded chair rail. The altar area is on a raised platform at the south end of the building. The church is now furnished with pews, altar table, lectern/pulpit and other miscellaneous furniture. No date is known for the furnishings, but the pews are not attached to the wood floor. The church was heated by a stove and lighted by light fixtures hanging from the flat wood ceiling.

There appear to have been no alterations to the church. One old-time resident reported that an addition had been built on the church, but there is no architectural evidence for that, i.e. no scars on the building to indicate its removal and no evidence that the current building was constructed in 2 stages, so the resident may have been referring to the construction of the raised altar area, but that would have been a minor change.

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 checked="" 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 October 1854 **Builder/Architect** UNKNOWN

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Harmony Grove Meeting House, built in October 1854 for use by several denominations, is significant as the oldest unaltered church building in Monongalia County and as the best surviving structure in the small community of Harmony Grove, a dispersed farming community located about three miles from Morgantown; the oldest houses in the community have been altered, the c. 1871 school destroyed and the 1925 replacement heavily modified, and there were no commercial structures in the community, so the meeting house, also once used as a school, was the community center of the village, at least until paved roads first provided better access to Morgantown in 1932. The building housed religious services for Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodist Episcopalians, Methodist Protestants and Baptists, although it was primarily used by Methodists in the twentieth century.

The present site of Harmony Grove was first settled before 1800 by Isaac Van Camp of Virginia. He purchased 800 acres of land in what would become known as "The Old Camp Settlement." By 1922, Harmony Grove had grown to include about 30 families, one church and one school.

The Harmony Grove Meeting House was built in 1854 by the Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists in the Harmony Grove community, nine years after the old local Presbyterian Church ("Burnt Meeting House") was destroyed by fire in 1845. Some of the members of the "Burnt Meeting House" joined others on Dents Run to build the Sugar Grove Church (since altered), while others became part of the Harmony Grove congregation. The original record of the church, dated October 8, 1853, states that "a meeting of the subscribers of said church for the purpose of selecting a site and adopting laws and regulations by which said organization should be governed and maintained. . . . This house is to be used for the worship of God and to be a union meeting house." Rawley Evans became the first president of the Harmony Grove Meeting House, with Ulysses Camp as the first secretary; the first trustees were Jessie Holland, Rawley Evans and John Camp, Sr. The subscribers to the meeting house, as they were identified in the constitution and by-laws of the organization, purchased land from Rufus Cox "at the forks of the road, one leading to Evans Ferry and the other to Kern's Mill."

The constitution and deed also stated the conditions for the use of the building. The first resolution of the constitution stated that Roman Catholics were prohibited from using the structure, not a surprising statement in mid-nineteenth-century America. The second resolution stated that Methodist Episcopalians and Methodist Protestants could use the church on the first Sunday of each month, "the Presbyterians old side and the Cumberland Presbyterians" on the second Sunday, and the "Baptist Reformed" on the third Sunday. The fourth and fifth Sundays were "to be left open to any Protestant Minister of good standing in his own church." Finally, the church was to be used as a school during week days. None of these provisions would have been unusual in a rural area, where denominations could not afford to build separate churches, where congregations were served by circuit riders, and where it would have been wasteful to build two public buildings, one for worship on Sunday and one for education during the week.

It should be noted that the deed signed between Cox and Holland, Camp and Evans, as trustees of the "Harmony Grove Schoolhouse" in September 1854 gave the land to the trustees "and their successors in office for the use of Public worship and school." According to the constitution of the group, the subscribers were to meet and elect a replacement "if any of the trustees should

9. Major Bibliographical References

see attached continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Morgantown South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 17 586700 4381020
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification From deed: "Beginning at a stone in the road leading from Evan's ferry and running W 6° N 5½ poles to a chestnut. Thence S 15 W 9 [½?] p. to a birch. Thence E 20 S 11 p. to a maple thence N 7½ E 9/25 ps to the beginning. Containing 92 rods more or less." Note that these directions are not given in normal metes & bounds terminology.

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

state	code	county	code
<u>NA</u>			
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

<u>Dorothy J. Moore</u> name/title <u>sec.-treas., Harmony Grove Comm. Assoc.;</u>	<u>Dolores Fleming</u> Graduate Assistant and	<u>Barbara Howe</u> Asst. Professor
<u>Harmony Grove Community Association</u> organization	<u>May 1983</u> date	<u>West Virginia University History Department</u> date
<u>Route 2, Box 30</u> street & number	<u>(304) 293-2421 (Fleming, Howe)</u> telephone	<u>(304) 292-7946 (Moore)</u> telephone
<u>Morgantown</u> city or town	<u>West Virginia</u> state	

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

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 13, 1983

For NPS use only

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

Dolores Byers Entered in the National Register date 9/16/83
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**

Harmony Grove Meeting House

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

die or remove." This deed still seems to govern the ownership of the property and has never been superceded by another instrument, i.e., one conveying the property to the Methodist Conference. The residents of the community have now organized as the Harmony Grove Community Association, with three trustees for the church and three for the community, to assume ownership of the property and manage the restoration of the structure.

While the official records of the church note that it could have been used as a school as early as 1854, it seems to have been part of the school system for the county only after 1864. In that year, Grant District was divided into 12 districts, including Harmony Grove, with 2 more added in 1871 and 1872. Lillie Low (1864-65) and Henry L. Cox (1867-70) were the first 2 teachers identified for the school. In 1871, the Board of Education purchased land immediately to the east of the church and built a wood frame school that later was torn down. The present buff-brick school was built in 1925 and has been heavily altered for commercial use. Thus, if the church was used for school purposes after 1871, it was only on a temporary basis.

A variety of denominations continued to use the church until about 1910, including Old Side Baptists, Baptist Revivals and Church of the Brethren. Methodism became the prevailing denomination, probably due to that group's well-known unique ability to serve residents of isolated rural areas through circuit riders and lay leaders. After 1913, there is a continuous list of Methodist preachers available, first as Methodist Episcopal, South, and, eventually, as Methodist and United Methodist. These preachers served short terms on the circuits including Harmony Grove. The last of these preachers closed the church in 1979, and it has been vacant ever since, although efforts are now underway to restore it.

Throughout its years as a church and school, the Harmony Grove Meeting House has been a center for community activities, and the recent restoration efforts are part of that community focus. In the past, the building sheltered parties, spelling bees, corn huskings, quilting bees, apple parings and cider parties, typical activities to draw together residents of isolated West Virginia communities. The green between the school and church was the scene of weddings, picnics, quilting bees and festivals. Before the road to Morgantown was paved in 1932, Harmony Grove was a remote community, so the church served as the social center, as it did in many rural areas.

Finally, some documentation is obviously needed for the statement that this is the oldest unaltered church in the county. Dr. and Mrs. Gideon S. Dodds surveyed Monongalia County's churches between 1949 and 1954, publishing their findings in The 175th Anniversary of the Formation of Monongalia County, West Virginia and Other Relative Historical Data (1954). They identified 19 churches that could pre-date Harmony Grove or be contemporary with it. However, all have been torn down, scheduled for demolition or remodelled. The 19 are: Avery Methodist, Bethel Methodist, Calvary Methodist, Drummond Chapel Methodist, Eden Methodist, Fairview Methodist, Fletcher Methodist, Forks of Cheat Baptist, Goshen Baptist, McCurdysville Methodist, Mt. Harman Methodist, Mt. Hood Methodist, Pleasant Valley Methodist, Riverseam Methodist, Sugar Grove Presbyterian, Wadestown Methodist, Wesley Methodist, Woodland Methodist, and Zion Methodist. Zion Methodist, built in 1839 and probably unaltered, is being sold and is scheduled for demolition in the summer of 1983. Thus, it would appear that Harmony Grove is the oldest unaltered church in the county. Please note that Forks of Cheat is currently the oldest congregation, not the oldest church building.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

Harmony Grove Meeting House

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

Collection of 13 original notebooks, tablets and notes, August 1853-1963, belonging to teachers, students and parishioners of the Harmony Grove Sabbath School, in files of Mr. and Mrs. Willis Mundell.

"Constitution of the Harmony Grove Meeting House," typescript transcription by Mabel R. Michael of original constitution and by-laws in possession of Gilla C. Willis on 17 March 1962.

Core, Earl L. The Monongalia Story: A Bicentennial History. Vol. 3. Discord. Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Printing Co., 1979.

Gilbert, Blanche E. "Harmony Grove." 1922 local history typescript by a teacher at Harmony Grove School, in files of Harmony Grove Community Association.

"Harmony Grove United Methodist Church." Morgantown Dominion-Post Panorama. 27 March 1983.

Interviews with long-time residents of the community: Clyde Brand, Lucille Brand, Hazel Brock, Russell Brown (College Park, Maryland), Mabel Michael (Goldsboro, North Carolina), Mrs. Guy Morris (Ohio), Mr. and Mrs. Willis Mundell, Eunice Rich, Orza Talbot, Marion Tapp. Note, it appears that members of the community association interviewed every member of the community over the age of 80 that they could locate.

List of Pastors of Harmony Grove Church, typescript list in files of Harmony Grove Community Association.

List of School Teachers at Harmony Grove from 1864-1933, typescript list in files of Harmony Grove Community Association.

Monongalia Historical Society. The 175th Anniversary of the Formation of Monongalia County, West Virginia and other Relative Historical Data. Morgantown, W.Va.: Monongalia Historical Society, 1954.

Monongalia County Deed Book 21 (old series), pp. 117-118.

Wiley, Samuel T. History of Monongalia County, West Virginia. Kingwood, W.Va.: Preston Publishing Co., 1883.

See bibliography

3-300A
(78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

7/21/83

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Harmony Grove Meeting House--Sketch Map of Deed Description scale: 1"=20 poles

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

