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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sardis Presbyterian Church and Cemetery
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 7104 State Route 20 (GA 20) NW
city, town Coosa (X) vicinity of
county Floyd code GA 115
state Georgia code GA zip code 30129

(N/A) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	1	0
sites	1	0
structures	1	0
objects	0	0
total	3	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Entered in the
National Register

Edson W. Beall

1/12/05

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

W. Ray Luce

Signature of certifying official

11-23-04

Date

W. Ray Luce, Ph.D.
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

Edson H. Beall *11/12/05*

for

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

RELIGION/religious facility
FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions:

RELIGION/religious facility
FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Other: No Style

Materials:

foundation	stone
walls	wood
roof	tin
other	N/A

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Sardis Presbyterian Church and Cemetery (photograph 1) consists of an 1855 rural church and an adjacent cemetery established in 1836 (photograph 13). The property is located in a rural location in northwest Georgia. The church is a one story, woodframed, clapboard structure. The church is front-gabled with slightly overhanging eaves boxed in on the sides and has a stone foundation. There is a 1950s tin roof. The front facade has two symmetrical entrances, each with concrete steps and iron hand railings. The doors are wood with six panels and metal doorknobs. There is a sign above the entrances (photograph 2). The north-south elevations have four 9/9 windows each with c.1877 plantation-style shutters to protect the windows (photograph 5). There is a concrete block chimney on the east (rear) facade and a ground-level entrance for the antique furnace (photograph 6). On the inside, the church consists of one large room with original plank walls and ceiling, original kerosene chandelier light fixtures of wrought iron, now converted to electricity, hand-hewn pine pews, and original pine pulpit (photograph 8). There are other original or antique furnishings near the pulpit. There is a commemorative plaque to Rev. T. C. Crawford on the east wall (photograph 9). The silver communion service and baptismal dish are also original. The original floors were replaced in the 1950s. The church remains relatively intact with minor changes or upgrades through the years as mentioned. No longer housing an active congregation, it is maintained by the Sardis Preservation Society. The cemetery is to the north of the church and extends southwestward to the highway. The cemetery dates to 1836 and the congregation's founding. There is a four-foot-high stone wall on two sides with a wrought iron gate (photograph 22). There are approximately 235 burials. Native pines, oaks, and cedars are found throughout. The cemetery contains a variety of marked and unmarked

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graves. There is at least one lot with a historic iron fence that adjoins the stone wall (photograph 18). Markers are of marble and granite and many are upright and reflect a variety of funerary motifs that were in common use during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Several local residents who died in combat during the Civil War were buried here (photograph 21). The cemetery is considered a public cemetery and is still in use today.

FULL DESCRIPTION:

The Sardis Presbyterian Church and Cemetery are located in a rural area approximately 13 miles west of Rome on Georgia State Highway 20. The cemetery and church are situated on 6.2 acres of land at the southern foot of Turnip Mountain and due southwest of Judy Mountain, just outside the community of Livingston—the original county seat of Floyd County.

Built in 1855, the Sardis Presbyterian Church exemplifies the type of folk architecture prevalent throughout the United States between 1850 and 1890. Reminiscent of the Greek Revival movement that served as the dominant American architectural style from 1830 to 1850, vernacular churches such as the Sardis Church mimicked this style with architectural features such as a gable-front design and moderate to low-pitched roof. However, unlike their Greek Revival contemporaries, folk buildings built during this time generally lacked more elaborate architectural detailing, such as entry porches or accentuated doorways. Thus, the Sardis Church cannot accurately be classified as an example of Greek Revival architecture, but the date of its construction and its gable-front design suggest similarities with this popular style. (Photograph 1.)

The Sardis Church rests on a stone foundation and retains its original design as a one story, woodframed, clapboard structure. The church is painted white. Architectural details include c.1877 wooden plantation style shutters, painted green, that protect the windows on the north and south elevations. (Photographs 1 and 5.) The original doors have been replaced. A full-length chimney constructed of concrete blocks sits on the church's east elevation. (Photograph 6.) The church is a front-gabled structure with slightly overhanging eaves boxed in at the sides. (Photograph 1.) The cornice contains a clearly exposed fascia and shingle molding. The original roof, most likely built with wood shingles, has been replaced with tin. The interior of the church consists of one room with a rectangular floor plan measuring approximately 38' X 50'. (Photograph 8.) The church contains its original kerosene chandelier light fixtures, hand-hewn pine pews, and a pulpit also constructed of pine. A silver communion service and baptismal dish are also original. The chandeliers are made of wrought iron and have been converted for electricity. The original hardwood floors were replaced in the 1950s. Since 1990, responsibility for the routine maintenance and upkeep of the church has rested with the Sardis Preservation Society, a group of individuals affiliated with the church who have dedicated themselves to ensuring its preservation. Because of their efforts and contributions, alterations to the church have remained minimal as the church still stands today as an intact and well-preserved example of rural folk architecture.

The front façade consists of two symmetrical entrance bays, both containing concrete steps and iron hand railings leading up to the doors. (Photograph 2.) The doors are made of wood and contain six

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panels and metal doorknobs. A sign stating "Sardis Presbyterian Church Established 1836" is centered on the façade, resting slightly above the entrance bays. The entire façade consists of white horizontal wood siding.

The south elevation consists of four symmetrical bays. Each bay contains the original 9/9 double-hung sash windows in wooden casements with wooden sills underneath. Green plantation style shutters installed c.1877 surround each window. (Photograph 5.) The entire elevation consists of white horizontal wood siding.

The east elevation consists of one bay on the lower level that has been dug out from the church's foundation. (Photograph 6.) This area contains an antique wood furnace that is no longer in use. A piece of plywood serves as the door to the lower level. The church's main level on the north elevation consists of two symmetrical window bays. Each bay contains 9/9 double-hung sash windows in wooden casements with wood sills underneath. Both windows are protected by wooden plantation style shutters on either side. A full-length chimney constructed of concrete blocks rests on the elevation's far left side. The entire elevation consists of white horizontal wood siding.

The east elevation consists of four symmetrical window bays. Each bay contains the original 9/9 double-hung sash windows in wooden casements with wood sills underneath. Wooden plantation style shutters, painted dark green, surround each window. The entire level consists of white horizontal wood siding. (Photograph 5.)

The interior of Sardis Church is one room deep and consists of a linear rectangular floor plan. The room measures approximately 38' X 50'. The original hardwood floors were replaced in the 1950s. The wrought iron kerosene chandeliers and light fixtures along the walls are original. (Photograph 8.) The three rows of hand-hewn pine pews and the two communion benches are also original. A red carpet lies directly in front of the center row of pews and leads to the pulpit. A restored Victorian-era couch has been placed in front of the pulpit along with a wooden communion table. (Photograph 10.) The pulpit consists of a four-paneled piece of hand-hewn pine with wooden columns on either side and two wooden steps on either side. A wooden offering table sits to the right of the pulpit. To the left of the pulpit is an antique bookcase made from pine wood and consisting of a pair of two-paneled glass doors and a broken pediment at the top. (Photograph 9.) Directly behind the pulpit are two hand-painted religious symbols covered with red fabric. Other antiques consist of a small organ that has been restored and sits to the right of the pulpit, and the original silver communion service and baptismal dish. While such items as the communion table, offering table, and organ were added later on in the church's existence, these items did not diminish the architectural integrity of the church. Rather, they can be viewed simply as modern contributions (although all of these items are antiques) that were used to enhance a traditional style of worship. While minimal alterations have been made over Sardis's 145 year existence, they have been made out of necessity to ensure the church's preservation.

The Sardis Presbyterian Church Cemetery is adjacent to the Sardis Presbyterian Church. The cemetery was established in 1836, at the same time the Sardis Presbyterian Church congregation

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was founded. It contains 18 rows of grave markers for approximately 235 individuals buried in the cemetery. Since the founding of the church, the cemetery has remained a public cemetery (as opposed to a church-members only cemetery) and is still in use today. (Photographs 13 through 23.)

The cemetery sits on approximately two acres of land directly north of the Sardis Presbyterian Church building and extends southwestwardly to Georgia State Highway 20. It is enclosed on each side with a four-foot-high stone wall. (Photographs 14, 15, and 16.) This wall is very rare as it is known that many cemeteries had such walls but they were replaced by later fencing, and thus this one's continued existence is an important reminder of early 19th century funerary customs. A wrought iron gate in the south wall provides an entrance to the cemetery. (Photograph 22.) Another wrought iron gate, measuring approximately 8 feet square, encloses the Morton family lot which includes a small number of grave markers inside the cemetery along the south wall. (Photograph 18.) Native pine, oak, and cedar trees--the latter traditionally associated with cemeteries and often planted on purpose as part of cemetery landscaping---are interspersed throughout the site.

In this small, country churchyard the majority of grave markers follow a traditional pattern of design comprised of granite or marble stone markers ranging in height from 10 inches to five feet, with the name of the deceased engraved on one side. The markers vary in design from upright markers that are plain to many with traditional burial symbols on them. One in photograph 13, foreground, has a finger pointing toward heaven. One monument is in the shape of a broken column. (Photograph 18.) Another is designed to represent a small obelisk with an urn representing an ancient burial container on top. (Photograph 20.) The two Confederate soldiers, the Bales brothers, have matching monuments with crossed swords carved into them, a military motif reflecting their deaths in Civil War battles. (Photograph 21.) Many have curved tops, others are scalloped. Many burials have both a headstone and a foot stone marking the exact length of the casket. There is one marker which stands out as much larger, in both height and pattern of design. The marker of Samuel Cone, located in Row 18 of the cemetery along the east wall, stands just over six feet in height with a three-foot wide stone foundation. (Photograph 17.) Columns support a triangular stone with the letter "C" engraved in the center. Intricate ornamental carvings fill in the rest of the stone. Resting atop the triangular stone is another stone ornament similar to the one found between the two columns. Designed in 1848, the marker's columns and elaborate design are reminiscent of the architectural detailing found on most Greek Revival buildings of the mid-nineteenth century.

There is a baptismal pool (photo 12) that is southeast of the church at the edge of the forest.

Maintained with funds from the Cemetery Committee of Sardis Presbyterian Church, the cemetery remains in use today.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture
Art
Exploration and Settlement
Religion

Period of Significance:

1836-1954

Significant Dates:

1836, 1855

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Unknown

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Sardis Presbyterian Church and Cemetery represents one of the oldest Presbyterian congregations in northwest Georgia. It is directly associated with an early 19th century Presbyterian mission to the Cherokee Indians which appears to have been at least partially located on this site. It also contains an excellent mid-19th-century rural church and cemetery.

The Sardis Presbyterian Church is significant in architecture because the church is an excellent example of an antebellum rural church that retains its simple one-room form, interior and exterior materials, entrances, stone underpinnings, original pews, and other furnishings. These churches were once common but are now relatively rare—only 42 antebellum rural churches are identified in the Georgia Historic Resources survey to date; with 40% survey coverage, this suggests that approximately one hundred such churches still exist statewide, or fewer than one per county. They are generally woodframed and weatherboarded, with a rectangular plan, one story high, with a gable roof. Entrance to the building is generally through one or two doors in one gable end. The side walls generally feature large, usually clear-glass sash windows. The interior generally consists of a single open space, sometimes with a (slave) gallery at one end, containing the pews, aisles, pulpit, and choir area. The interior is usually finished with simple wood boards. Most (two thirds) of these churches have little or no architectural ornamentation, although some have architectural details derived from the Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, occasionally the Italianate styles. The Sardis Presbyterian Church is an excellent, early, and highly intact example of this important type of rural historic religious building in Georgia which retains virtually all its character-defining features and materials.

The cemetery is significant in art because of the variety of tombstones that reflect the local stone masons' vernacular style as well as other high style markers, such as that of the Cone family from the 1840s. There are markers that reflect specific symbols related to death, such as the one with the finger pointing toward heaven. Others have symbols reflecting the life or death of the deceased, such as the crossed swords on the twin monuments to the two Bales brothers who were killed in battle during the Civil War. Several are obelisks, others just good examples of a local stonecarver's craft with fine lettering on a flat tombstone surface.

The church and cemetery are significant in exploration and settlement and religion because of their origins in the earliest days of the county's being open for white settlement at the time the Cherokee Indians were being forcibly removed in the 1830s. The site is reputed to have been used earlier as a mission to the Indians, the Turnip Mountain Mission, established by Presbyterians in pre-removal days and which was part of a major influx of Presbyterians to the area, leading to the early establishment of the Cherokee Presbytery, and then the Sardis Presbyterian Church in 1836. Presbyterians were very rare in Georgia compared to the Baptists and Methodists which according to the 1850 census constituted over 90 percent of the identified religious affiliations in Georgia with Presbyterians and all other faiths constituting the rest. Thus a Presbyterian church in rural north Georgia being established on the frontier shortly after the removal of the Cherokee Indians was a rare situation.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

National Register Criteria

The Sardis Presbyterian Church and Cemetery meet National Register Criterion A because as a Presbyterian institution that began within the first five years of the areas being open for white settlement, the property exemplifies one of the broad patterns of American history, migration to new territory and the settlement thereof with the continuing of already established institutions, in this case a Presbyterian church. The cemetery was created early on as a public, community burial ground, a necessary cultural spot reflecting the permanent nature of the settlement.

The church and cemetery also meet National Register Criterion C because the church itself is a good example of a rural church built c.1855 that retains much of its original design, workmanship, furnishings and feel. The cemetery reflects a variety of funeral and burial customs with tombstones carved and erected contemporary with the death of the deceased, and made of marble and granite, and reflecting various popular burial motifs of the various eras. Because of the rather isolated nature of this spot, the cemetery reflects a much more rural character, with its stone wall, simple iron gate, and lack of any modern features. The stone wall itself is a very important element reflecting early 19th cemetery burial customs.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

This property meets Criteria Consideration A because, although a religious institution, it is primarily significant for its architecture and retains its original form, massing, materials, and furnishings as well as for its historical importance as a Presbyterian church on the frontier and for maintaining its cemetery associated with the church and as a community cemetery that has been in use since the 1830s with the earliest marked grave dating from 1841.

This property also meets Criteria Consideration D for the cemetery, which is a very distinctive and relatively intact rural church cemetery with its original four-foot-high stone wall, informal landscaping, and variety of tombstones and other grave markings reflecting the earliest popular commemorative markers in granite and marble.

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance runs from the creation of the congregation and the establishment of the cemetery in 1836 until 1954, the end of the historic period, as the church continued through then as an active congregation.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

There is one contributing building, the church, one contributing structure, the baptismal pool, and one contributing site, the cemetery.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

Prepared by Mark Grindstaff, consultant, for the property owners.

Located approximately 13 miles west of Rome on Georgia State Highway 20, the Sardis Presbyterian Church and Cemetery are nestled on the outer edge of the Coosa Valley in Floyd County, just a few miles east of the Alabama state line. The church and adjacent cemetery are situated at the southern foot of Turnip Mountain and due southwest of Judy Mountain just outside the community of Livingston—the original county seat of Floyd County.

The current building housing the Sardis Presbyterian Church sits on a tract of land formerly occupied by a mission house established for religious and educational instruction to the Cherokee Indians in the early 1820s. The Presbyterian Church had organized a congregation in Floyd County as early as 1832, and had for many years before that time set out to preach the Gospel to the Cherokees living in the region. In 1821, Reverend Elizur Butler and his wife Ester established a mission at Coosa, now recognized as the oldest religious mission in Floyd County. Beginning in 1822, the Reverend S.J. Mills labored more than a year endeavoring “to teach the [Cherokees] the way of salvation,” and in 1823 Mr. John C. Ellsworth, a prominent member of the American Board of Foreign Missions, established a mission on the Sardis Church site known as the Turnip Mountain Mission. Although the geography of the area consisted of numerous hills of considerable elevation, Ellsworth found a substantial supply of land level enough for the accommodation of a small mission establishment. In collaboration with the Cherokee Indians inhabiting the area, he immediately began development of the area by constructing a number of log buildings to be used for a variety of purposes, including a schoolhouse, kitchen, and storehouse. In addition, two acres of land were cleared for agricultural use, and a nearby spring furnished an abundance of pure water. The mission’s name was changed in 1824 to “Haweis” in honor of an English benefactor who made several monetary contributions to the various programs implemented by the American Board of Foreign Missions. Both Reverend Butler and Mr. Ellsworth continued to play significant roles in the operation of the mission until 1830, when Butler was arrested by the state of Georgia in 1830 for objecting to state laws which he believed were hostile to the Cherokees. He was sentenced to four years in prison and eventually served over two years in the Georgia State Penitentiary at Milledgeville, then the state capital, before his release by order of the United States Supreme Court. After his arrest, the name of the mission was changed once again to “Missionary Station,” and Butler passed control of its operations to Dr. and Mrs. Hugh Quin. Under their control, the mission broadened the focus of its operations by expanding its ministry beyond the Cherokees to include all citizens in the area. Using many of the same recruitment techniques employed by Baptists and Methodists to establish congregations, Missionary Station organized camp meetings and camp grounds that attracted several people from the surrounding communities. Within the next few years, Missionary Station, still under the leadership of Dr. Quin, succeeded in establishing a number of small congregations in the region, both for white citizens and the Cherokees. With mission work in the area proving to be successful, the Quins moved elsewhere to continue their ministry, leaving behind a legacy that would contribute to the eventual development of the Cherokee Presbytery—a group whose affiliation with the

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Presbyterian Church was constituted by the Synod of Georgia in 1843. With the operations at Missionary Station continuing to prosper around the surrounding area, a number of new congregations originated throughout Floyd County. By 1836, the site of the former mission station became home to one of these congregations, officially recognized as the Sardis Presbyterian Church. (No above-ground remains of the mission station exist today, and no historic archaeological investigations of the mission site have been done to date.)

Sardis Presbyterian Church was organized in November 1836 under the leadership of John Warnick, who served as the church's first pastor. The congregation consisted of thirteen members (seven men and six women, not including the pastor, most of whom were originally from the Goshen Church in Lincoln County, North Carolina) who constructed a building (no longer extant) for worship services that same year. The building consisted of log walls covered with ordinary boards. While the congregation could not afford to build an elaborate church building, enough money was raised to pay for the planks necessary for the flooring, roof, and a few seats. From 1836 to 1840, Warnick served as pastor of the church, whose membership during those four years nearly doubled. From 1842 to 1844, Reverend John McKorkle from Virginia served as pastor of the church. Under his leadership Sardis continued to prosper as several new members joined the church during his tenure. From 1844 to 1855, Sardis continued to grow under the leadership of two more pastors: Reverend J. M. Caldwell and Reverend James Gamble.

By 1853, the church's continued growth warranted the construction of a new building. Rather than add to the existing log structure, the church unanimously agreed to the construction of a new building on a parcel of land adjacent to the original building. Five acres of land for the new building and cemetery was acquired from Dennis S. Brown and conveyed to the Trustees of Sardis Church on July 9, 1853, for the sum of \$100.00. Construction of the new one-room church, a one-story, front-gabled structure with clapboard siding, was completed in 1855.

Detailed records of the church's operations from 1855 to 1863 are non-existent. In the 1866 Session Book of Sardis Presbyterian Church, it explains that "It has been the misfortune of Sardis Church to lose their sessional records during the progress of the late war." These lost records contained an account of the organization of the church along with details of its progress and various church activities from its establishment through 1863. However, information from the 1989 *Chattooga County Historical Society Quarterly* confirms that Reverend Thaddeus Constantine Crawford served as pastor of Sardis Church for 23 years (1855-1878). A well-educated and highly dedicated minister, Crawford left his home in Statesville, North Carolina, in 1846 to preach and teach school in the Gore community of Chattooga County, Georgia, just north of this area. He was instrumental in the establishment of the first high school in the county located at the Bethel Presbyterian Church. In addition to founding and teaching in the school, Crawford was elected minister of Bethel Presbyterian Church in 1847, where he served for 38 years until his death in 1885. In 1855, he took on additional duty as minister at Sardis Presbyterian Church. According to the Bethel minutes, the 15 miles between the two churches was usually covered by horseback. However, during the Civil War (1861-1865) Crawford found it safer to walk across the mountains for fear that his horse would be stolen.

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This information from the Chattooga County Historical Society is the only known information regarding the operation of Sardis Church from 1855 to 1863.

While records of church activities at Sardis during the Civil War years have been lost, information from the Georgia State Archives provides evidence that a company of infantry known as the "Sardis Volunteers" formed at the church on May 9, 1861. Among the officers was First Lieutenant Alfred F. Bale, a prominent citizen in the Rome area during this time. In 1862, the Sardis Volunteers were transferred from the infantry to a cavalry battalion where Bale became Captain of Company C. A year later, the Sixth Georgia Cavalry was organized, and Bale was promoted to Major. His older brother Charles was also an officer in the cavalry unit. On December 24, 1863, Alfred Bale was killed in a skirmish near Dandridge, Tennessee. His body was promptly returned to the Sardis Church for burial. The following year Charles Bale was killed in action at Resaca, Georgia, and also returned to Sardis Church to be buried next to his brother. Their grave markers survive in the Sardis Church cemetery to this day. Other individuals buried in the Sardis Cemetery that fought in the Civil War include D. A. Williamson, a member of Company H—6th Georgia Regiment, and C. C. Williamson, a sergeant in Company H—6th Georgia Regiment. Both were members of Sardis Presbyterian Church.

During the Reconstruction Era, Sardis Church continued its operations, adding a Sunday School program on May 2, 1875, that lasted until 1941. The church continued to attract more people as well, and by 1877, the church roll showed 173 members. Even during an era of tense racial hostility from which many southern churches were not immune, session records show that Sardis Church opened its doors to African-Americans on several occasions, granting them use of the session house and church grounds to hold their own worship services and recreational activities up through the turn of the century (c. 1900).

1877 also saw church members calling for minor alterations to the interior of the church. A session held July 1 shows members considering "The propriety of having some changes made in the arrangement of the pulpit and seats of the church." Upon unanimous approval, the pulpit was moved from the original front of the church to the back with the pews also being reversed (this is the present day set-up). A close look at the north elevation of the church today reveals what was possibly the original entrance to the church. Since most settlers in the area settled on the east bank of the creek beyond the church, it is likely that such an arrangement was more convenient as settlers crossing the creek would immediately be facing the original entrance.

After Reverend Crawford's departure from the church in 1878, church membership at Sardis began to decline considerably well into the 1940s. Several members migrated west to other churches as agricultural activities in the area declined rapidly. Farm families, their lives altered considerably after the Civil War, sought out new economic opportunities in newly developed towns and larger cities. Church demographics at Sardis also indicate that many of the founding members passed away during the later part of the nineteenth century. By 1892, under the leadership of Dr. D.L. Buttolph, church membership fell to 82 members. Many attempts at recruiting new members, such as the organization of periodic "revivals" at the church, never reached the levels of success that Sardis's

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leaders had hoped for. Church membership continued to dwindle, and by 1907, the church roll showed only 34 members.

Another set of session records documenting church activities from 1908 to 1938 were destroyed when the estate of W. Q. McCarver burned in 1938. Mr. McCarver was elected clerk of Sardis Church in 1908 and kept records for the church in his home. However, the closing of the Sunday School program in 1941 suggest that membership at Sardis continued a downward trend from the turn of the century to the eve of World War II. The church remained operational, however, and became the site of many community functions in addition to acting as a place of worship. In 1949, when the community high school burned down, the church opened its doors to the senior class of Coosa High School, allowing them to hold a Baccalaureate and Graduation service in the church.

The following decade saw more renovations to the church. Deteriorating conditions warranted the replacement of the original hardwood floors. A coal furnace was also added to the cellar level of the church in the early 1950s. Other renovations included painting the exterior of the church and replacing the original wood-shingled roof with tin during the summer of 1956.

Membership decreased to six members in 1973, and in 1979 only two members remained at Sardis Church. The two remaining members petitioned the Cherokee Presbytery at its spring meeting in Summerville, Georgia, "that Sardis Presbyterian Church be dissolved as a congregation of the Presbytery; that the two remaining members be dismissed to churches of their choosing, and the property be retained by the Presbytery." On May 6, 1979, this resolution was read to the congregation of friends and members of Sardis. The property was then leased to the Cemetery Committee so that services could be continued twice a year. On October 30, 1990, the Cherokee Presbytery deeded, with the right of reversion, the church building and its contents (with the exception of the cemetery) to the Sardis Preservation Society. Today the society remains active in preserving the architectural and historic integrity of Sardis Church. Two church services are still held annually on the first Sundays in May and October with an average of 65 people attending these services. During the 1995 Christmas season, a two-day Christmas open house was observed with over 250 guests attending. The church is maintained solely through donations to the Sardis Preservation Society and through the efforts of volunteer workers in the community. Under the leadership and care of Society members Bettie Daniel and Mary Frances Wilson, the Sardis Presbyterian Church continues to be a well-preserved example of rural folk architecture in Floyd County. However, the congregation's rich history, from the site's early importance as a mission to Native Americans, to its Civil War heritage, and ultimately its significance in shaping the cultural and religious identities of many individuals throughout the region, is equally important. Not only is Sardis one of the oldest churches in Floyd County, it also serves as a testament to how a group of citizens can come together to ensure that their heritage is preserved.

Established by the first Sardis congregation in 1836, the cemetery consists of approximately 235 grave markers with the oldest marker dating from 1841 and belonging to Reverend James Harvey McCarver. Most of the markers, however, date from the Reconstruction period just after the Civil War through the early twentieth century, with a small number dating back to the 1940s. There are a

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

number of markers for Confederate Veterans of the Civil War who are buried there. Among those are the Bale brothers, who both died during the Civil War as mentioned above and were buried here, side by side. Their grave markers can be found in Row 11 of the Sardis Cemetery. The cemetery also contains the grave markers of eleven other Civil War veterans who fought for the Confederacy. They include Alvin Cone, K.W. Berryhill, John Wood, John Bouchillon, Dr. John Farill (a surgeon in the C.S.A.), J.A. Comer, William D. Comer, Robert Bruce McCarver, Frank Weathers, and C.C. Williamson. Thus, the Sardis Cemetery serves as the burial site for a number of Sardis Volunteers who came from the Coosa area and its immediate surroundings.

Also significant to the cemetery are three grave markers believed to be the ancestors of a family that contributed to the organization of a Cherokee mission near the site of the Sardis Church and cemetery during the 1830s, as discussed above. In the Sardis Cemetery, the grave markers for three members of the Quin family are found. The markers of Sari Anne Quin, Orpheus Quin, and Dr. Langdon C. Quin are all found in Row 8 of the cemetery. Thus, not only does the cemetery retain a degree of local historical significance for its affiliation with the Civil War, it also maintains direct ties with a family responsible for the operations of a Cherokee mission located on the present site of the church and cemetery.

The Sardis Church Cemetery is locally important for serving as the burial site for both individuals associated with the Church's founding and local citizens who fought in the Civil War. Maintained by funds from the Cemetery Committee of Sardis Church, the cemetery is still in use today although the most recent grave marker dates back to 1964.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Abbott, Nell. *Within Our Bounds: A History of the Cherokee Presbytery, 1844-1974*. Rome, Georgia: The Cherokee Presbytery, 1975.

Floyd County. "Superior Court Deed Book H," 1853, p. 744.

_____. "Superior Court Deed Book 1115," 1990, p. 370.

_____. Tax Map, No. 852-856.

Ivy, J. Swanton. *Churches of the Cherokee Presbytery, 1833-1950*. Available through the Cherokee Presbytery, Rome, Georgia: 1947.

McCollum, Louise. "The Reverend Thaddeus Constantine Crawford," *Chattooga County Historical Society Quarterly* (1989), 10-11.

Northwest Georgia Historical and Genealogical Society Quarterly, "Sardis Presbyterian Church," (April 1973).

Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Georgia Supplement, Volume 143.

Records from the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. Montreat, North Carolina.

Rome News Tribune. December 13, 1953; June 10, 1956; and April 2, 1972.

Sardis Presbyterian Church. Session minutes, 1866-1889. On file at the Sardis Preservation Society, Rome, Georgia.

Sardis Preservation Society. "History Profile: Sardis Presbyterian Church," unpublished collection of documents on file at the Sardis Preservation Society, Rome, Georgia, 1990-2000.

Stacy, James. *A History of the Presbyterian Church in Georgia*. Elberton, Georgia: Press of the Star, 1912.

Walker, Charles. *Cherokee Footprints, Volume 2: Home and Hearth*. Privately printed by Industrial Printing Service, Canton, Georgia: 1989.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9--Major Bibliographic References

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued
date issued:
- 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.2 acres.

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 649326 Northing 3792565

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is marked on the enclosed tax map.

Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel is all that is owned by the owners at this location and contains the church, cemetery, and historic setting.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 47 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 414-H
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** September 1, 2004
e-mail ken_thomas@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title Mark Grindstaff
organization self-employed
mailing address 5241 Shasta Way
city or town Marietta **state** GA **zip code** 30062
telephone N/A
e-mail N/A (information as of October 2001 when draft prepared)

- () **property owner**
- (X) **consultant**
- () **regional development center preservation planner**
- () **other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Mrs. Mary Frances McCarver Wilson, President
organization (if applicable) Sardis Preservation Society
mailing address P.O.Box 374
city or town Coosa **state** GA **zip code** 30129-0374
e-mail (optional) N/A

Note: The Sardis Preservation Society owns the church and the cemetery.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Sardis Presbyterian Church and Cemetery
City or Vicinity: Coosa vicinity
County: Floyd
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: April 2003

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs:

1 of 23: Front (west) facade, with cemetery on left; photographer facing northeast.

2 of 23: Front (west) facade, detail of entry doors; photographer facing east.

3 of 23: South facade, showing shutters open; photographer facing north.

4 of 23: South facade, showing shutters closed; photographer facing north.

5 of 23: South facade with closed shutters and chimney on rear or east facade; photographer facing north/northwest.

6 of 23: East (rear) facade and north facade with cemetery on the right; photographer facing southwest.

7 of 23: Interior of church showing one entry door and historic pews; photographer facing northwest.

8 of 23: Interior taken from entry doors looking toward altar/pulpit area; photographer facing southeast.

9 of 23: Interior, facing pulpit and altar area from center of pews; photographer facing east.

10 of 23: Interior, close up of pulpit/altar area with antique furnishings; photographer facing southeast.

11 of 23: Interior, view from rear/pulpit/altar area toward entry doors (closed); photographer facing west.

12 of 23: Baptismal pond area at rear of church property, church in background; photographer facing northwest.

13 of 23: Cemetery showing wall and church in rear; photographer facing southeast.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

14 of 23: Cemetery from north side of the church, showing stone wall; photographer facing northwest.

15 of 23: Cemetery taken from the middle of the burial area; photographer facing northwest.

16 of 23: Cemetery taken from north side of church showing the stone wall; photographer facing north.

17 of 23: Cemetery showing the Cone monument; photographer facing east.

18 of 23: Cemetery showing entry gate to the fenced-in Morton lot; photographer facing north.

19 of 23: Cemetery taken from in the middle of burial area; photographer facing northwest.

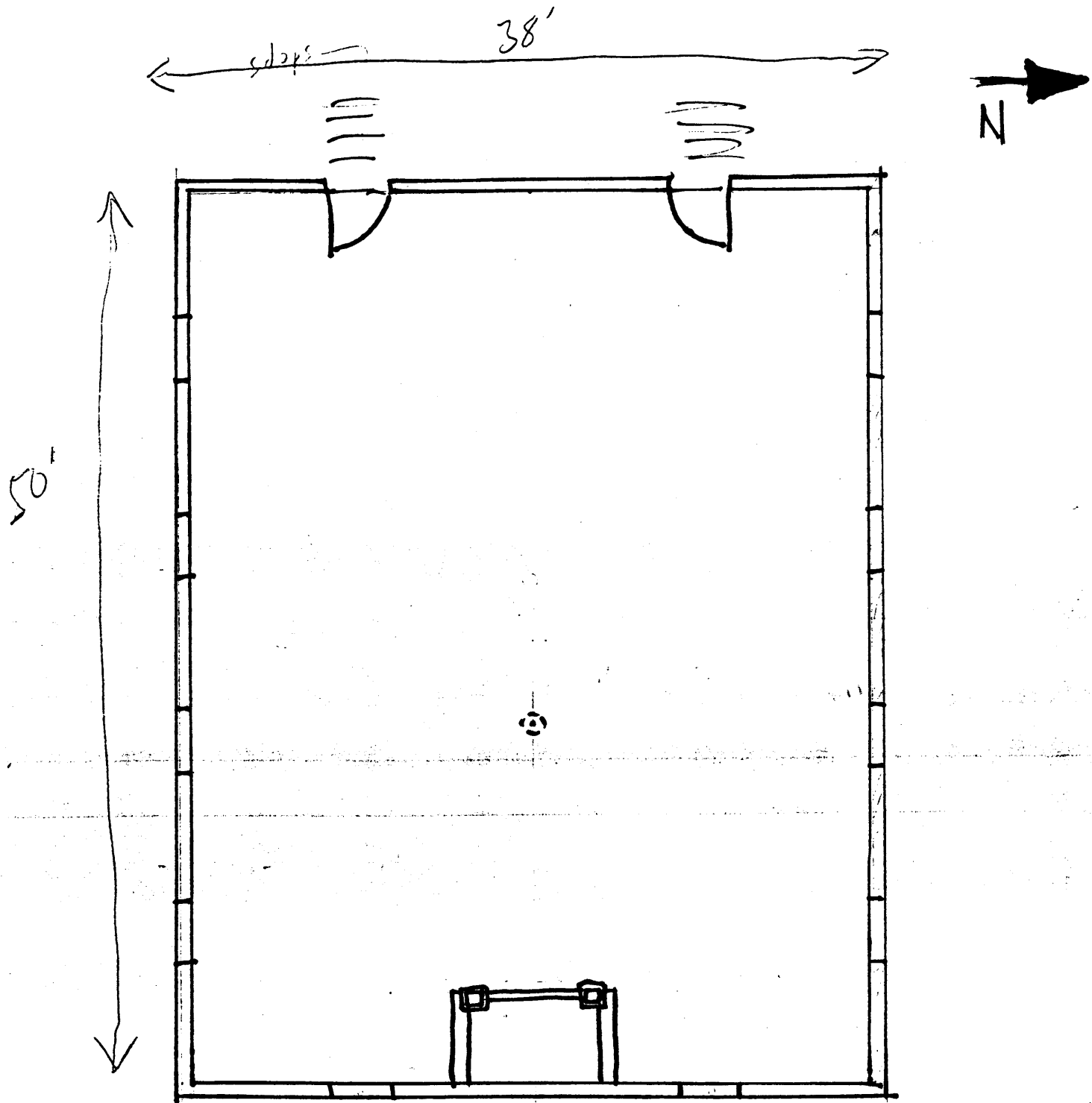
20 of 23: Cemetery taken from middle of burial area; photographer facing northwest.

21 of 23: Cemetery showing the twin monuments of the Bale brothers; photographer facing northwest.

22 of 23: Cemetery showing entry gate along the south wall; photographer facing north.

23 of 23: Cemetery, detail of oldest marked grave dating from 1841; photographer facing northwest.

(HPD WORDPERFECT form version 11-03-01)




Chimney?

Floor Plan of Sardis Church

**SARDIS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND CEMETERY
FLOYD COUNTY, GEORGIA**

FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: NOT TO SCALE

NORTH: 

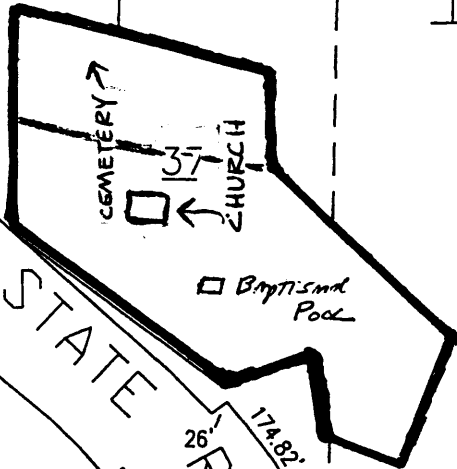
SOURCE: DRAWN BY MARK GRINDSTAFF

SEE MAP C13



36
118.45 Ac±

107



STATE ROAD

130'

26'

174.82'

30.02'

20

15.15'

100'

767.9'

395.98'

193.57'

34

36.7 Ac±

**SARDIS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND CEMETERY
FLOYD COUNTY, GEORGIA
NATIONAL REGISTER MAP**

SCALE: 1" = 300'

NORTH: ↑

NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY:

SOURCE: FLOYD COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR'S OFFICE