

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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 Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Rocky Spring Road, approx. 1/2 mile northwest of  not for publication  
city or town Funk Road, Letterkenny Township, Chambersburg  vicinity  
state Pennsylvania code PA county Franklin code 055 zip code N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.)  
DR. BRENT D. GLASS [Signature] 3/28/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION  
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 this property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

N/A  
site/inventory number

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
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)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

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

N/A

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

Religion/religious structure  
Funerary/cemetery

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

Religion/religious structure  
Funerary/cemetery

**7. Description**

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

Georgian

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other

**Narrative Description**

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

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

N/A  
site/inventory number

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

**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 a 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Exploration/Settlement

**Period of Significance**

1794-ca. 1900

**Significant Dates**

1794

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Beatty, Walter

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

N/A  
site/inventory number

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

**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 67) 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**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 approximately 2

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8	2 7 1 4 8 0	4 4 2 9 7 2 0
	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 Paula S. Reed, PhD, Architectural Historian  
 organization Preservation Associates, Inc. date May 20, 1993  
 street & number 19942 Lehman's Mill Road telephone 301-791-7880  
 city or town Hagerstown state Maryland zip code 21742

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

N/A  
site/inventory number

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

### 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 the SHPO or FPO)

name Carlisle Presbytery

street & number 50 Utley Drive telephone 717-737-6821

city or town Camp Hill state Pennsylvania zip code 17011

**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 to amend existing 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 the 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 Project (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

N/A  
site/inventory number

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

The Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church, dated 1794, is a four bay by six bay Georgian style brick building located in Letterkenny Township of Franklin County. It retains most of its original interior and exterior features and finishings including boxed pews, a wine-goblet pulpit and window frames, sash and shutters. The church stands on a knoll above a large spring amid farm and orchard land, approximately two miles northwest of Chambersburg in Letterkenny Township, Franklin County. It is adjacent to the boundary of the Letterkenny Army Depot. The site is occupied by large old trees and also contains a cemetery, contemporary with the church.

The church building is a one and a half story brick structure resting on limestone foundations. Its dimensions are 48 by 60 feet, with four bays across each gable end and six bays across the front or south elevation. The bricks are laid in Flemish bond at the front elevation, and common or American bond at the side and rear elevations. Set in the east gable is the date, 1794, in header bricks. The two gable ends are distinguished by pent roofs, a feature found rarely on 18th century buildings in Franklin County. All openings are lined with semicircular brick arches, except for the central window bay of the north elevation which is topped with a flat jack arch. This small, twelve over eight light window is located behind the pulpit. Other windows have fixed upper sash with twelve rectangular lights topped with fourteen wedge-shaped panes to form a fanlight. Moveable lower sash contain twelve panes. Two larger windows flank the small pulpit window. They each have 24 rectangular panes beneath the semi-circular fan. All windows are protected by pairs of two-layer shutters hung on strap hinges. The interior surface of the shutters, when shut consists of raised fielded panels with ovalo trim. The outer surface consists of vertical boards and battens. Shutters, sash, frames and most glass are original. Window and door frames are wide with ovalo trim and a carved central "keystone" at the top of each arch. A small semi-circular fanlight is located in the west gable.

Entrances are located in the east, west and south elevations. The south or front elevation has two entrances centered in two groups of three bays. The two gable ends each have an off-centered entrance off-set toward the north side of the building. All entrances have double-leafed paneled doors beneath semi-circular fanlights. The fanlights like those of the windows have 14 wedge-shaped panes.

The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The building has no chimney and appears never to have had one.

The interior of the church consists of one large room. The two south entrances lead into brick-paved aisles between rows of boxed

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Number 7 Page 2

N/A  
site/inventory number

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

pews accessed by small hinged doors. The aisles extend to a broad cross-aisle into which the east and west doors open. North of this aisle is the pulpit and additional boxed pews for elders and those being offered communion. The pews and enclosures are of pine with the enclosures embellished with raised fielded panels with ovalo trim. None of this woodwork has ever been painted. Many pew doors are labeled with painted names of their occupants.

The focal point of the interior is the "wine goblet" pulpit reached by a short flight of steps enclosed by a railing and balustrade. The suspended pulpit is octagonal and is trimmed with multiple ogee and ovalo moldings and a band of dentils. Above the pulpit is a sounding board with a curvilinear top and bands of dentiling and molding. The small window behind the pulpit has raised paneled jambs, molded crossettes and flanking paneling with chairrail and pilasters. The woodwork of the pulpit structure and paneling is painted a deep but bright prussian blue. The underside of the sounding board retains is original decoration, a painted star with arms half red and half white radiating out from the center of a black circle.

In the cross aisle are an 18th century communion table and two cast iron wood stoves which appear to date from the 1790s period. The stove pipes which appear to be original disappear into holes in the ceiling and, according to tradition, the smoke was simply released into the attic since there was no chimney. The only access to the attic is by a narrow, split rail ladder near the south wall; the ladder is propped against a small rectangular opening in the ceiling.

The floor of the aisles is of brick paved while that of the pew areas is of pine. The ceilings are coved on all four sides. The walls and ceilings are plastered, except for the paneled area around the pulpit.

The church appears to be in excellent condition with an extremely high level of architectural integrity and an unusually high degree of original fabric and finishes remaining. Although the Rocky Spring Church was built during the Federal period, its stylistic influence is clearly Georgian. The massive raised, fielded panels and bold moldings of the pulpit area and boxed pews as well as the window trim and detailing are characteristic of the Georgian style. The church has had very few alterations, none of which have diminished the building's architectural integrity. Changes include replacement of the roofing material with asphalt shingles and construction of mid-20th century brick steps and railings leading to the entrances.

Adjoining the church yard is a large cemetery enclosed on three

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Number 7 Page 3

N/A  
site/inventory number

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

sides by an early 20th century poured concrete wall and on the fourth side, nearest the church with an iron railing. The cemetery contains the remains of several early Franklin County families of Scotch-Irish descent including the Reverend John Craighead who was pastor of Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church from 1768 to 1799 and was leader of the congregation during construction of the present church building. Also buried at Rocky Spring Cemetery is Sarah Wilson, founder of Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Many graves are enclosed with elaborate wrought iron fences. The oldest dated stone is from the 1780s and is of slate with a carved death's angel symbol. Several graves are marked by unidentified field stones. These may be the oldest, associated with the first church on the site. Most of the tombstones date from the mid 19th century although a few are as recent as the 1930s.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

N/A  
site/inventory number

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Section Number 8 Page 1

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Meets criteria A, C

The Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church, built in 1794, and cemetery are significant as elements of settlement period history of Franklin County and the Cumberland Valley as depicting the strong presence of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. This church was one of at least four established by Scotch-Irish settlers in the lower Cumberland Valley in the 1730s. In all cases, original log churches were replaced by more substantial structures in the late 18th or early 19th centuries. Rocky Spring is the least altered of those remaining churches and the only one constructed of brick. The church building is particularly significant as the only known remaining 18th century brick church building in Franklin County. It survives with a remarkable degree of integrity including original windows, sash, shutters and interior finishes. Of special significance is the wine goblet pulpit with its sounding board. Rarely does an 18th century church interior remain intact for two centuries without refinishing or updating to accommodate changes in style, size, or in religious practice. The church is a rare example of Georgian-influenced Prebyterian Church design in the lower Cumberland Valley. Since this resource is exceptional for its architectural integrity, and is significant for its association with settlement history, it meets criteria considerations for religious properties.

Historical Context

Most of the Cumberland Valley was initially settled almost entirely by "Scotch-Irish." These were actually Scottish people who had settled in the north of Ireland under the rule of James I of England in the 17th century. By the early 18th century many had immigrated to America and to Pennsylvania in particular. Nearly all of these people were Presbyterians and they established churches in the areas where they settled.

Early settlements between the Susquehanna River and the Maryland line occurred in the 1730s, when the Cumberland Valley was opened for settlement. By the 1750s, further encouragement for the Scotch-Irish to settle the Cumberland Valley occurred when the proprietary government instructed its agents to try to send Irish settlers to Cumberland County (then encompassing all of the Cumberland Valley) and Germans to York County because of cultural friction between the two groups. Consequently the strong German Colonial-period and early Republic influence is found in York and eastern Adams Counties in Pennsylvania and adjoining Frederick, Washington and Carroll Counties in Maryland, while the Scotch-Irish were prevalent in the Cumberland

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

N/A  
site/inventory number

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Section Number 8 Page 2

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

Valley. The majority (although not all) of the German-Swiss influence in the Cumberland Valley occurred in the early 19th century and later.

The Scotch-Irish settlers of the Cumberland Valley are traceable today through the location of their early churches. Presbyterians, they established churches at Rocky Spring, Falling Spring, Greencastle (Moss Spring), Mercersburg, Welsh Run and other locations.

Presumably because of their experience of having been transplanted from Scotland to Ireland, and having endured a great deal of unrest there, the Scotch-Irish once transplanted again to Pennsylvania were generally an independent culture. Unlike many of the more pacific German immigrants, the Scotch-Irish tended to be enthusiastic supporters of the colonies' independence in the Revolutionary War. The prominent role played by Scotch-Irish congregations in the Revolution is illustrated by the activity that occurred at Rocky Spring Church where nearly all men of the church, including the Pastor joined George Washington's army.

Resource History

The Rocky Spring Church was organized in 1734 or 1738 (depending upon the source) by the Presbytery of Donegal. It was among the first churches to be established in what was then Cumberland County which included the entire Cumberland Valley. The section of the valley where this church is located was opened for settlement in 1736. Scotch-Irish settlers were encouraged to locate in the Cumberland Valley and apparently were kept separate from Germans to avoid cultural friction. Consequently the majority of early settlers in Franklin County were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who formed congregations like the one at Rocky Spring.

The original church on this site was a log structure which due to growth of the congregation was replaced by the present building in 1794. The pastor at the time was the Reverend John Craighead. Rev. Craighead, according to tradition, led almost the entire male congregation to fight in the American Revolution, joining the army under the command of Washington in New Jersey in July, 1776. "Mr. Craighead accompanied them as chaplain and with his company was made prisoner at Long Island or Fort Washington."<sup>1</sup> The [Rocky Spring] congregation alone furnished one general, four colonels, twelve

<sup>1</sup>Rev. William L. Mudge, "The Rocky Spring Church and the Revolutionary Period," address delivered Sept. 30, 1919. p. 11.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Number 8 Page 3

N/A  
site/inventory number

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

captains and other officers to the Revolution.<sup>2</sup>

Although the church had in the 18th century a membership of over 300 heads of families, by 1919 there was only one surviving member of the congregation. The waning congregation during the 19th century led to the church's preservation by removing the need for expensive renovations or expansions.

The present church building, dated 1794, was constructed by Walter Beatty. He seems to have been a prominent contractor in the Chambersburg area, having built Franklin County's first court house 1790-93. This 18th century court house no longer stands but is described as a brick structure with brick paved floors, heated by two ten-plate iron stoves similar, perhaps, to Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church.

Resource Analysis

As the least altered 18th century Prebyterian Church remaining in at least the lower section of the Cumberland Valley, and the only known brick one, the Rocky Spring Church is unique in representing the settlement history of the valley. Although it is the second generation church on its site, no first generation churches are known to remain. It appears that most of the first generation churches were replaced about the same time as Rocky Spring's: Falling Springs replaced its original log church with a frame one in 1767 and replaced that one with the present stone one in 1803; Mercersburg's stone church was built in 1794, the same year as Rocky Spring; Greencastle's second generation church was constructed about 1828. Unlike Rocky Spring, these churches have been altered to various degrees. Rocky Spring, because its membership declined through the 19th century, instead of growing, was not altered, giving it special architectural significance.

Although 1736 is the effective date of initial settlement, the period of significance for this nomination begins with 1794, the date of the present church building, and extends to about 1900 when membership declined to the point that the church was no longer used regularly. The DAR began maintaining the church in 1919.

The church is worthy of recognition as a rare architectural specimen in Franklin County and for its association with a congregation that was active in settling and shaping the history of Pennsylvania in the revolutionary and early republican period. It

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Number 8 Page 4

N/A  
site/inventory number

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

represents as well the role of the Scotch-Irish and the importance of their cultural group as settlers of the Cumberland Valley in the 18th century.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Number 9 Page 1

N/A  
site/inventory number  
Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property  
Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

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N.P.: John M. Pomeroy, 1877.

Mudge, William L., Rev. "The Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church and the  
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Warner, Beers & Co., Pub. History of Franklin County, Pennsylvania.  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

N/A  
site/inventory number

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Section Number 10 Page 1

Franklin County, Pennsylvania  
County and State

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:**

The boundary is described as follows: beginning at a point on the south side of Rocky Spring Road, at the northwest corner of the cemetery and following the north, east and south walls of the cemetery, then continuing in a westerly direction with a fence line, and following said fence line to Rocky Spring Road, then continuing with the south side of the road to the place of beginning.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nominated area includes all of the Rocky Spring Church property held by the Carlisle Prebytery to include the church, its grounds and the cemetery.

Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church  
Letter Kenny Twp.  
Franklin Co., PA.

CHAMBERSBURG QUADRANGLE  
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