

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

For NPS use only

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

received

date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Brush Creek Salems Church

and or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number RD 10, Brush Creek Rd.,

N/A not for publication

city, town Hempfield Twp.

N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

code 21

county Westmoreland

code 129

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name United Church of Christ

street & number RD 10, Brush Creek Rd.

city, town Irwin

N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds, Westmoreland County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Greensburg

state PA 15601

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

(a) W. PA Architectural Survey, 1932-35 (c) Westmoreland Co. Site Survey 1979-81  
title (b) W. PA Guidebook Survey, 1974-76 has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date see above  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records (a) W. PA Historical Society, (b) Univ. of Pittsburgh  
(c) Westmoreland Co. Courthouse

city, town (a) & (b) Pittsburgh, (c) Greensburg

state PA

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

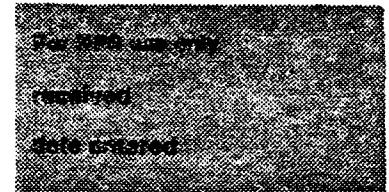
Brush Creek Salems Church consists of a contributing, rectangular building constructed in 1816-1820, and a non-contributing rectangular building erected in 1958 and attached to the original building by a twenty foot connecting way. The original building is a two-story, gable roofed edifice built of brick with Georgian ornamentation. The 1958 building is a one story, gable roofed brick building constructed in a style sympathetic to the original building. The Brush Creek Salems Church possesses excellent integrity. It sits atop a small ridge with open fields to the east and west, a large cemetery to the north, and several non-contributing buildings to the south.

The 1816-1820 building is topped by two interior end chimneys on the south and north gable ends. A third exterior chimney centered on the west facade rises through the cornice on that side. A boxed cornice with returns frames the slate roof. Arched attic louvers pierce the top of each gable end. Three bays of arched, double hung windows on each gable end open to the interior second story gallery. Five bays of identical windows punctuate the second story of the east facade, and two identical second story windows flank the central chimney on the west elevation. The second story sash are surrounded by smooth sandstone sills, and wood frames with keystone decor beneath segmental brick relieving arches. Spaced at a considerable distance beneath the second story windows are first floor windows and entrances. On the east facade four double hung rectangular windows flank a pedimented entry. Two identical windows flank an identical entry on the south end. Two windows pierce the north gable end on either side of the connecting way, and two more windows punctuate the west elevation on each side of the central chimney. An entry identical to those on the east and south facades opens to the connecting way on the north elevation. All first floor windows feature smooth sandstone sills, plain wood frames, and segmental brick lintels. The entrances have double doors with four molded panels flanked by similar paneled reveals. Fanlights surmount the doors. Pilasters, a sandstone stoop, and a keystone arch beneath a denticulated pediment with rosettes surround the doors and fanlights.

The interior of the church is two stories in height, with a second story gallery running along the east, south and north walls. The gallery is oriented toward the first floor chancel located against the west wall. The gallery contains wooden pews that slant down to a paneled rail. Six evenly spaced fluted square columns support festooned carrying beams at the front edge of the gallery. Stairs with walnut banisters and turned spindles descend from the gallery to the main floor in the southeast and northeast corners. On the main floor wooden pews oriented

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

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



Continuation sheet Brush Creek Salems Church Item number 7 Page 2

toward the chancel are located beneath the gallery on the south and east sides. An 1870 Victorian Gothic organ with a walnut case and bench and eleven decorative pipes sits beneath the gallery on the north side. The chancel is surrounded by a semicircular walnut rail with turned spindles. A rectangular paneled pulpit occupies the chancel. Identical double doors with wooden beaded molding and keystone arch above a fanlight are centered in the north, east and south walls. Beaded molding surrounds the deeply inset windows on the main floor and gallery. Brass chandeliers hanging from the underside of the gallery and from the ceiling above the chancel light the interior.

The 1958 building is connected to the north side of the original building by a gable roofed connecting way that has plain double doors on its east side. The 1958 building has an asphalt shingle roof framed with a boxed cornice that is very similar in appearance to the cornice on the 1816-1820 building. A single exterior chimney rises on the north side of the 1958 edifice. Double hung rectangular windows with wood frames and brick sills pierce each elevation and echo the first floor windows on the original building. A porticoed porch with smooth pillars and boxed cornice shelters double doors on the east gable end of the 1958 building. This building contains classrooms, an office and a social hall arranged on both sides of a central hallway.

The 1816-1820 building has experienced few major changes. The original wine glass pulpit was replaced with the current pulpit in 1864. Pews on the east and north sides of the main floor are reproductions that replaced the deteriorated original pews. The chandeliers, which were installed in 1970, are facsimilies of the originals. The exterior of the 1816-1820 edifice remains largely unaltered from its original appearance. The 1958 structure does not detract seriously from the exterior appearance of the original edifice since the newer building was constructed in a sympathetic style and with similar materials.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1816-1820 **Builder/Architect** Jacob Dry

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Brush Creek Salems Church possesses architecture that is distinctive among churches constructed in western Pennsylvania before 1850. It is the only known example of a brick church with Georgian ornamentation built in western Pennsylvania before the mid-nineteenth century. Brush Creek Salems Church also contains a floor plan and highly detailed wood work that are rarely found in pre-1850 churches in western Pennsylvania.

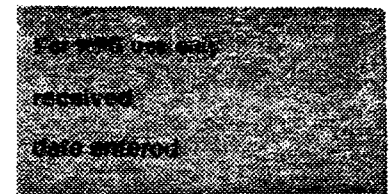
The nominated church's exterior stands out among brick churches erected before 1850 in the western part of the state. Brick churches were first built in western Pennsylvania shortly after 1800. The Brush Creek Salems Church, constructed between 1816 and 1820, was one of the first brick churches built in Westmoreland County. By 1850 at least thirty four brick churches that still stand were constructed in twenty-six counties west of the Alleghenies. All but two of these thirty four churches either are unadorned vernacular buildings or have some Greek Revival ornamentation. One church, the Independent Congregational Church built in 1835-1836 in Meadville, Crawford County, is a sophisticated example of the Greek Revival style. Only Brush Creek Salems Church features exterior Georgian ornamentation, particularly in the richly detailed entranceways.

Brush Creek Salems Church also contains an unusual floor plan. Most churches constructed before 1850 in western Pennsylvania are one story buildings with a center door and aisle or two doors and aisles. Pews in these churches are arranged in front of the pulpit and face in one direction toward the pulpit. Brush Creek Salems Church, on the other hand, contains two floors. The inclusion of a second floor gallery in this church accounts for the unusual distance between first and second story windows. Pews surround and face the pulpit from three sides. Only one other area church approaches the interior arrangement found in Brush Creek Salems Church. The Mennonite Church near Harmony, Butler County is a one-story building with pews that also surround the pulpit on three sides.

In addition to its other distinguishing features, Brush Creek Salems Church has wood work that is distinctive among pre-1850 churches in western Pennsylvania. Jacob Dry, the German builder of this church, used gouges and other simple tools to execute delicate details, particularly in the balcony front and supporting beams and columns. The carrying beams, for example, are festooned with a continuous diamond pattern running beneath stylized garlands that alternate with vertical gouged grooves. The columns feature finely carved fluting. Few other

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

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



Continuation sheet Brush Creek Salems Church

Item number 8

Page 2

pre-1850 churches in western Pennsylvania have such delicately executed wood work. Indeed, in architectural drawings in his book The Architectural Heritage of Early Western Pennsylvania, Charles Stotz devoted more attention to the wood work found in Brush Creek Salems Church than he did for any other church in western Pennsylvania.

Brush Creek Salems Church was first organized about 1773 by a German Reformed congregation and a Lutheran congregation. The two groups built a log meetinghouse in 1797. The cornerstone of the nominated church was laid in 1816. The Lutheran group separated from the Brush Creek Salems Church in 1836 and built another church elsewhere. The German Reformed Church (now part of the United Church of Christ) has occupied the building ever since. In 1958 the German Reformed congregation constructed the one story building, the only major addition made to the original brick building in its 167 year history.

<sup>1</sup>These thirty four churches were surveyed in A Guidebook to Historic Western Pennsylvania by George Swetnam and Helene Smith (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976). This book is the single most comprehensive survey of buildings in the state's western counties.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.11 acres

Quadrangle name Irwin

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	7	6	1	4	0	0	0	4	4	6	3	8	5	0
Zone		Easting					Northing							

B 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

C 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

D 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

E 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

F 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

G 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

H 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Helene Smith & George Swetnam/William Sisson

organization Westmoreland Co. Hist. Soc./PHMC

date 11/84, 2/87

street & number Box 104A, R.D. 3/3rd & North St.

telephone (412) 832-7767

city or town Greensburg/Harrisburg

state Pennsylvania

# 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 LARRY E. TISE, STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

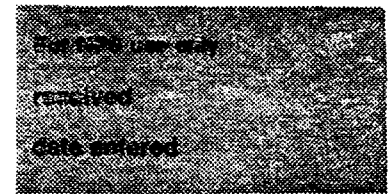
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Brush Creek Salems Church

item number 9

Page 1

A Brief History of a Frontier Church. (Irwin, PA.: Brush Creek Salem United Church of Christ, 1982).

Albert, George Daklas. History of the County of Westmoreland, Pennsylvania. (Philadelphia: 1882), pp. 530, 612, 723.

Heissenbuttal, Ernest G. Baptisms, 1792-1939, Brush Creek Evangelical Lutheran Church, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. (Pittsburgh: 1975), Vol. 1.

Pittsburgh Synod Congregational Histories. (Warren, Ohio: 1959).

Hare, Clyde, ed., Luke Swank, (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Institute Museum of Art, 1980).

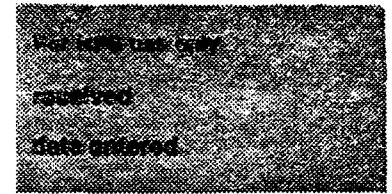
History of the Reformed Church... Westmoreland Classis. (Philadelphia: 1877).

Stotz, Charles M. The Architectural Heritage of Early Western Pennsylvania. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1936), pp. 21, 170, 216, 237-241.

Swetnam, George and Smith, Helene. A Guidebook to Historic Western Pennsylvania. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976).

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



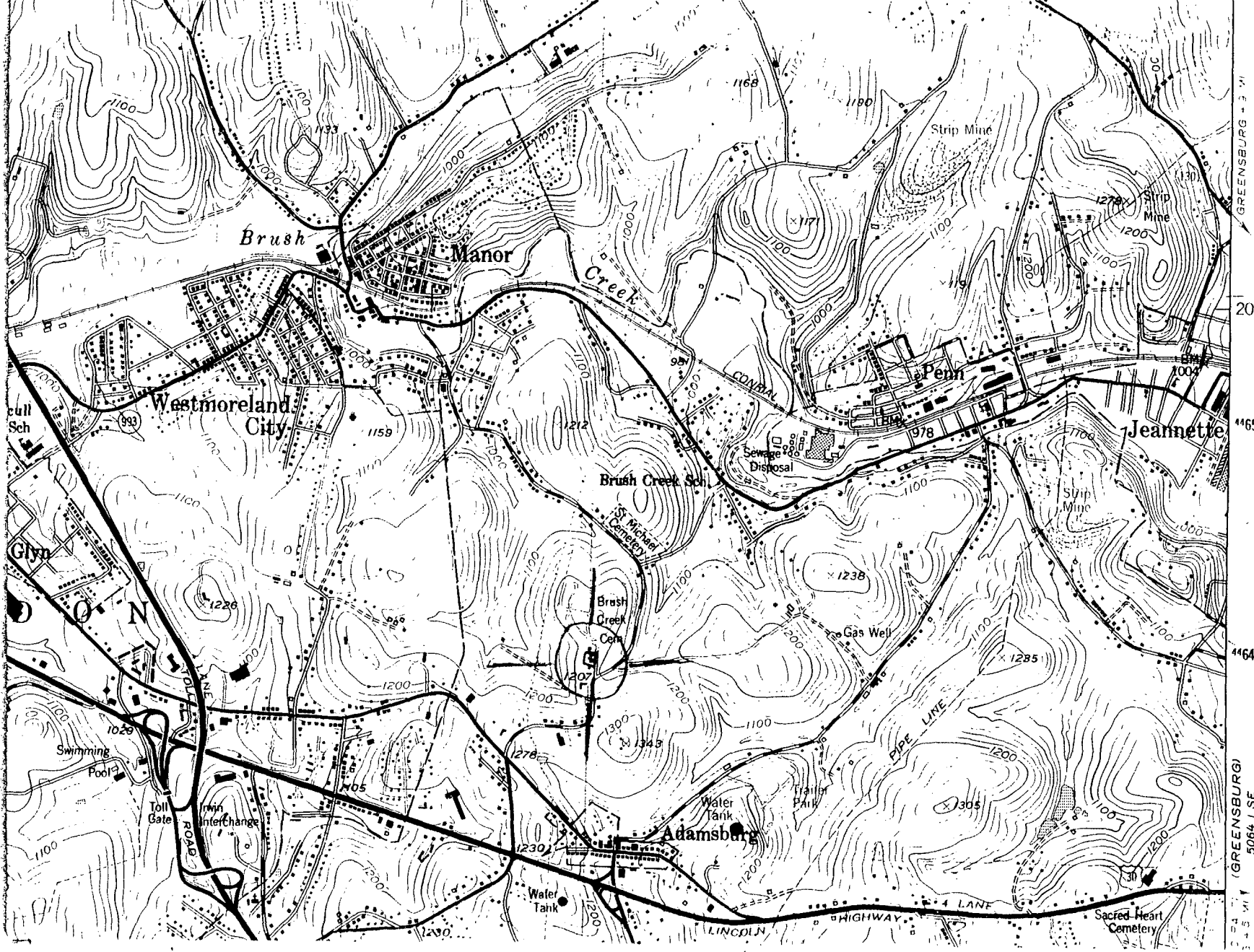
Continuation sheet Brush Creek Salems Church Item number 10

Page 1

From the junction of a dirt driveway and a private un-named cement road fronting the church, then proceeding west by north along the south side of the driveway to a point even with the rear of a parking lot; then proceeding south by west 180 feet to a line of maple trees; then proceeding east by south 231 feet to the cement road; then curving generally north along the west edge of the cement road to the point of beginning.

This boundary contains the contributing building, the attached non-contributing building, and immediately adjacent land. It excludes vacant land to the east and west, a non-contributing cemetery to the north, and non-contributing buildings to the south.





BRUSH CREEK SALEMS CHURCH  
Westmoreland County  
Irwin Quadrangle  
Zone 17  
E614000 N4463850

(GREENSBURG) 5066 / SE