

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

NAME

HISTORIC

Frenchman's Mountain Methodist Episcopal Church-South and Cemetery

AND/OR COMMON

Cato United Methodist Church and Cemetery

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Cato Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Cato

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

Arkansas

CODE

05

COUNTY

Pulaski

CODE

119

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC
 PRIVATE
 BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
 IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES RESTRICTED
 YES UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Trustees, Cato United Methodist Church

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 600 (312 West Pershing Blvd.)

CITY, TOWN

North Little Rock, VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Pulaski County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Markham & Spring Streets

CITY, TOWN

Little Rock

STATE

Arkansas

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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 Cato Methodist Church, a small frame structure of simple lines, was constructed in 1880 under the direction of a local contractor named Wilkerson. The present frame building replaced a log church which was built about 1872 and burned in 1880.

Originally the church was of two storeys with a steep gable roof and boxed cornices with returns. The upper floor was used by the local Masonic Lodge and the lower floor housed the Methodist congregation. In 1945 the upper storey was removed.

The present structure is one storey and measures approximately 30 feet x 60 feet. The building is sheathed in its original clapboard and has a low-pitch gable roof with exposed rafters. Projecting above the ridge line at the east end of the roof is a small bell tower with a high hip roof and a wooden finial.

The simple lines of the building are broken only by door and window openings. Both the north and south elevations have four double-hung windows set in simple wood frames. Two separate entries are symmetrically situated on the east elevation, and originally provided separate access for the men and the women and children. Plain wooden porches with low gable roofs and exposed rafters cover these twin entries. Like the bell tower, these porches were added during the 1945 remodeling of the church.

The simplicity of the structure is continued on the interior. The single open room is lined with narrow flushboard above vertically paneled wainscot. Simple moulding surrounds the window and door openings. The original floor was covered in 1945 with narrow planks set in a diagonal pattern. Aisles leading from each entry divide the simple pews of wide-plank pine into three sections. A small raised platform with railing projects from the west wall and encloses the minister's pulpit.

Lying due south of the church is the cemetery. Enclosed by a wire fence, this grassy area contains a large number of simple gravestones and monuments erected in the cemetery during the past century.

This simple church and cemetery, still on the original site, represents a significant part of rural Arkansas history.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
1-99	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
100-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
1700-1753	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
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 1880 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Wilkerson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This old church was organized in 1872 by the first settlers who moved to the southern Faulkner County/northern Pulaski County area just after the War Between the States. It was the typical Methodist Circuit Rider's Church and was on the same circuit with several other churches.

The Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Company donated and deeded the property to the trustees, John J. Jagers, Noel Beasley and William D. Springer, of the Frenchman Mountain Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and their successors and assigns forever in a deed dated May 2, 1874. Its cemetery dated back to 1873 when Mrs. Watt Caples was buried there. The first church building was a log structure, but it was lost by fire in 1880. The present building, which originally contained an upper storey as a Masonic Lodge, was built in the style of the 1880's in rural Arkansas

The church was remodeled in 1945 and the upper storey removed. The original interior is still complete with pine pews that contain boards as wide as 24 inches. The original two separate front entrances were retained when the church was remodeled, one for the men and one for the women and children.

For 90 years, the church served as the community center for the Cato community, which is one of the oldest settlements in Faulkner and Pulaski Counties. When the Camp Robinson reservation was taken over by the army in 1940, it left the church in a small pocket and the community of Cato cut off from its direct routes to North Little Rock. Indeed, it forced the largest group of families that supported the church and community out of the area entirely. The church then declined and is now inactive except for occasional fellowship services and for the annual "Homecoming" held each first Sunday in June. At this annual event money is raised to maintain the old building and cemetery, which are in good condition at present. The property is in the charge of four trustees who are appointed by the Charge Conference of the Bethel United Methodist Church located about 4 miles east of Cato.

The chairman of the trustees has a file containing all the church rolls and "Quarterly Conference" records back as far as 1873. The Daughters of the American Revolution has copied these books of records and cross-indexed the names of the members in those early days.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Although revered as a shrine in the hearts of all those who worshiped there or whose ancestors did and spoke so many times of the little white church, the main historical significance of the old church and cemetery is that it is a rare and perfect example of the old circuit rider's church which was so very important in settling this part of the United States, and indeed the whole country.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Cato Methodist Church Celebrates 75th Anniversary." Arkansas Methodist, June 19, 1947, pp. 8-9.
 "Cato United Methodist Church Bulletin," 100th Anniversary Homecoming, June 4, 1972. On file with Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.
 Quarterly Conference Records, Bartlett Circuit, Little Rock District, ... Methodist Episcopal Church, South, March 1873-1906. On file with Cato Trustee William H. Burgin, North Little Rock, Arkansas.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY five acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	5,6,7,1,6,0	3,8,6,5,1,0,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

S. H. Burgin, Chairman of Trustees, Cato Methodist Church

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Dianna Kirk, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program 6-8-76

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

300 West Markham

501-371-1639

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Little Rock

Arkansas

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

Anne Bartley

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

6-8-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

EST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

