

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 an 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 Southern Methodist Church Building

other names/site number Upshur County Historical Society's History Center

2. Location

street & number 81 West Main Street ☒ not for publication

city or town Buckhannon ☒ vicinity

state West Virginia code WV county Upshur code 097 zip code 26201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

William G. Kanner 6/1/92
Signature of certifying official Title Date

State of 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 the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1

**Southern Methodist Church Building/Upshur County History Center
Buckhannon, WV****Description**

The Southern Methodist Church Building/Upshur County History Center is a simple one story, wooden frame structure located at 81 West Main Street, Buckhannon, WV, within 1000 feet of the courthouse square. Originally built in 1856 as a church by the Methodist Episcopal South (Southern Methodist), it was then purchased by the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1891. It was this congregation that made considerable changes to the interior and added the front structures. In 1968, the structure was sold to the Church of Christ (Christian) and then sold to The Upshur County Historical Society in 1986 to be used as a History Center, museum, and archives.

The original structure has a rectangular plan, approximately 45 feet by 33 feet, of Greek Revival style, and gabled roof with return cornices on the back end. Three gothic arch windows are located on each side wall, non continuous sandstone blocks are used as foundation and the exterior walls are covered in weatherboard. The front entrance faces Main Street, with double doors and a repeat of the gothic arch window above them. The interior walls are plastered to the top of the wooden wainscot. The building is of post and beam construction.

In 1891, the second congregation did extensive alterations to the interior of the building and added a vestibule which is approximately 9 feet by 14 feet, and a bell tower three stories tall with a floor space of approximately 8 feet by 10 feet. Possible changes to the exterior front end may have included the removal of the return cornices and the addition of dentils along the gable. Stained glass windows were installed in the original openings and additional stain glass windows were placed in the rear wall (large gothic arch window), a quatrefoil window in the front gable end, and gothic arch windows in the bell tower room. Interior changes at that time included vaulting of the ceiling of the original structure room to a height of 18 feet. This ceiling is constructed of narrow tongue-and-groove wood sheathing, varnished, and contains a decorative frieze as well as wooden turn buckles serving as wall supports. Areas on either side of the altar contain varnished

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**Southern Methodist Church Building/Upshur County History Center
Buckhannon, WV**

wood gothic arch motifs in the choir area and storage room. It appears that the varnished poplar flooring and the painted wooden seats are from this era.

Since 1986, The Upshur County Historical Society has been in the process of restoring the entire structure to its 1890's characteristics. On the exterior, a new roof was installed using approved materials. Work has also included the removal of two intrusive interior structures added during the 1960's, one in the main room and one in the vestibule. Recent changes also include quarry tile floor covering in the vestibule and the installation of a handicapped accessible bathroom in the bell tower area. Extensive work was done to restore the plastered walls, all approved against the standards set by the Secretary of the Interior.

In 1986, the structure ceased being used for religious services. At that time The Upshur County Historical Society proposed using the building as its History Center to house meetings, archives, and museum exhibits. Its location near the heart of town, its historical significance within the greater downtown historic area, and its proposed use, causes this building to take on even a greater significance. Its immediate area is in a residential and small business location. Since the major portion of thru traffic has now been removed by the interstate by-pass, this building's location is in a much quieter district.

Statement of Significance

The Southern Methodist Church Building/Upshur County History Center is significant for both its architectural representation and its role in local Civil War military history. This building was used for ecclesiastical purposes from its construction in 1856 until it was purchased by the Historical Society in 1986. Architectural changes made during this period were all within recognized ecclesiastical styling. During Civil War local engagements, this building played the most significant role of all such structures in the county. This building, through its proposed future uses, will continue to reflect both its architectural and historical significance.

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Buckhannon, WV**Historical background and significance:

Located on Main Street (originally known as the Parkersburg-Staunton Turnpike, the main thoroughfare from Virginia, across the mountains, to western Virginia), this building, one of only two churches ever located on Main Street and the only remaining one, is the oldest ecclesiastical structure still in existence in the city of Buckhannon. Built in 1856 by the Methodist Episcopal South (Southern Methodist) Church on the lot bordering the grounds of the Buckhannon Academy (the first institution of higher learning in Upshur County, 1847-1866) the structure reflects a Greek Revival architectural style. This style is still evident today in the original rectangular section commonly referred to as the main room. Elements of Greek Revival are still in evidence on the exterior of the building with its return cornices, flush siding on the rear gable end, its original gable roof pitch, and the non continuous sandstone block foundation.

During the height of local battle activity of the Civil War, this building played a significant role on the evening of August 30, 1862. The building had previously been commandeered as a commissary (as had most such structures throughout the area) by the Federal command and contained "thousands of pounds of bacon, thousands and thousands of bushels of oats and corn", as well as "hundreds of sacks of green coffee." The evening battle became a Confederate victory and the captured Federal troops were first "marched to the courthouse where a guard was placed over them." "The 'Rebels' found the arms and ammunition left by the Federals in the basement of the courthouse which was the depot of supplies, piled them in the street and burned them. At numerous points on Main Street bonfires were built and guns, goods, furniture, boxes, wagons and every description of personal property was added as fuel to the blaze during the night. After the arms had been destroyed the prisoners were taken to the Southern Methodist Church on West Main Street" and the supplies that had been stored there were "taken into the street and burned by the prisoners." Confederate General A. G. Jenkins' field report noted that "We then commenced the work of destruction, at which the whole command labored assiduously until midnight, having destroyed everything of value, we took up our lines of march for Weston" (Hornbeck).

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Buckhannon, WV**

During the years following the Civil War, this building (no longer being used by the original congregation) fell into disrepair. By 1887, the second congregation, the Protestant Episcopal Church (of the Transfiguration), had begun using the building as their worship center. In 1891, this congregation purchased the building from a 'Special Commissioner of the Court' and began an extensive renovation of the existing structure. Between the years of 1891 and the consecration of the facility on October 11, 1903, various changes and additions were made creating a blend between the original Greek Revival styling and a late Victorian Gothic style.

During the time that an overall late Victorian Gothic styling was created, the following changes were made: the vestibule and bell tower rooms were added to the Main Street end of the original structure, stained glass windows were installed, the ceiling in the main room was vaulted, along with other interior style changes. It is possible that minor alterations were also made to the exterior of the original structure. Changes that were made during this twelve year period are all in evidence in the structure as viewed today.

Since 1986, when the building was purchased by The Upshur County Historical Society and ceased to be used for religious purposes, major restoration efforts have been made to restore the structure to this late Victorian Gothic style. These restoration efforts have conformed to the Secretary of Interior Standards and West Virginia Historic Preservation Officer guidelines.

Summary Statement of Projected Use

The Upshur County Historical Society proposes to use The Southern Methodist Church Building/Upshur County History Center to house meetings, archives, and exhibits. In addition to these specific uses, the Historical Society also will use the concept behind historical property restoration, register listing, and the use of historical properties, as an educational tool in association with this specific property.

Bibliography

Cutright, W.B. History of Upshur County. Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Company, 1907, reprint, 1977.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9,10 Page 5

**Southern Methodist Church Building/Upshur County History Center
Buckhannon, WV**

Hornbeck, Betty. Upshur Brothers of the Blue and the Gray. Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Company, 1967.

Buckhannon Delta, December 21, 1892. Buckhannon, WV.

Upshur County Court Records: Deed Book B, page 434; Deed Book 2, page 425; Deed Book 201, page 40. Buckhannon, WV.

Giffin, Beatrice Arnold. WPA Project, Upshur County, West Virginia, file folder "Buckhannon Church of the Transfiguration, Prot. Episcopal". unpublished, UCHS Document Repository, Buckhannon, WV, 1938.

Verbal boundary description

Beginning at a stake corner to Heavener lot, thence N 20 W 70½ feet to a stake, thence S 67½ W 55 feet to a stake, thence S 21 E 72 feet to Main Street, thence with said street N 72 E 55½ feet to the beginning, containing less than one acre. Upshur County Tax Map 3, parcel 25.

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Southern Methodist Church Building/Upshur County History Center.

Southern Methodist Church Building

Upshur County, WV

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	117	566360	4316110
	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 Amy W. Tenney, President/Noel W. Tenney, Corr. Sec.

organization The Upshur County Historical Society date April 6, 1992

street & number 81 W. Main St.P.O. Box 2082 telephone (304) 472-2738

city or town Buckhannon state WV zip code 26201

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Southern Methodist Church Building
Name of Property

Upshur County, WV
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 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)

Military

Architecture

Period of Significance

1856-1903

Significant Dates

1856, 1862, 1891-1903

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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:

Upshur County Historical Society

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)	
☒ private	☒ building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
☐ public-local	☐ district	1	0
☐ public-State	☐ site	0	0
☐ public-Federal	☐ structure	0	0
	☐ object	0	0
		1	0
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property 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)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
RELIGION/religious-facility	WORK IN PROGRESS/RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
Greek Revival	Sandstone
LATE VICTORIAN Gothic	foundation
	walls Weatherboard
	roof ASPHALT
	other

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

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
REPRESENTATIVE
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
AND OTHER STATES



