

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 Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union Church and Cemetery
other names/site number Old Log Church and Cemetery

2. Location

street & number South side Lincoln Highway (U. S. Route 30), Schellsburg not for publication N/A
city or town Napier Township vicinity N/A
state Pennsylvania code PA county Bedford code 009 zip code 15559

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Andrew J. Macdonald 11/30/2004
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
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 commenting 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): _____	_____	_____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

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.)

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Date of Action

_____ 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): _____

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)

Ownership of Property		Category of Property		Number of Resources within Property		
(Check as many boxes as apply)		(Check only one box)		(Do not include previously-listed resources in the count)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	public-local	<input type="checkbox"/>	district	3	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	public-State	<input type="checkbox"/>	site	1		sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/>	structure			structures
		<input type="checkbox"/>	object			objects
				4	1	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

none

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER; log church

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/sandstone

walls WOOD/log; WOOD/weatherboard

roof METAL; ASPHALT

other

Refer to Continuation Sheet

Narrative Description

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

Refer to Continuation Sheets

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 person 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

1806-1860

Significant Dates

1806

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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 # HAER PA-605

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7 acres

U. S. G. S. Quadrangle: Schellsburg, PA

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	699890	4435749	3	17	700090	4435559
2	17	700119	4435691	4	17	699881	4435356

N/A 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 David L. Taylor, Principal

organization Taylor & Taylor Associates, Inc.

date May, 2004

street & number 9 Walnut Street

telephone 814-849-4900

city or town Brookville

state PA

zip code 15825

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 _____

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 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

**Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA**

Section Number 7 Page 1

7. Description

The Schellsburg and Chestnut Ridge Union Church and Cemetery occupy a rural 7-acre tract south of the Lincoln Highway (U. S. Route 30) immediately west of the south-central Pennsylvania village of Schellsburg, in Bedford County. The nominated acreage includes an 1806 log church surrounded by a historic burial ground and an 1860 sexton's house and its associated dependencies. Within the nominated area are three contributing buildings (the church, the Sexton's house, and one dependency), one contributing site (the cemetery), and the non-contributing garage. A commemorative cannon north of the church and a cast iron water pump beside the church are small-scale features not included in the resource count. A section of the cemetery north of the nominated tract, acquired after the period of significance, is not included in the nominated tract. The entire complex retains integrity.

The church (Resource No. 1; Photos 1-6) is a rectangular building built of hewn oak logs with faces approximately eighteen inches in height, chinked interstices, and steeple-notching joining the corners (Photo 5). The building is gable-roofed, with a metal roof, pediments clad in clapboard siding, and partial returns of the gable ends (Photo 3). A metal stove pipe penetrates the ridge line. The main entrance to the church is on the south gable end (Photo 4) with double doors articulated by a single vertical panel in each door. The doors retain historic escutcheons and the doorway is capped with a six-light transom. Above the door is a six-over-six window with historic sash. The north gable end (Photo 6) is penetrated by two windows on the ground floor and a single window centered above, about mid-way up the side. This single window is placed to allow natural light to enter the building behind the pulpit. The lateral elevations (east and west) each have two windows on the first story and two windows at balcony level. All fenestration is flat topped, with modest surrounds; nine-over-six wooden sash is employed on the first story and six-over-six wooden sash appears above.

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA**Section Number 7 Page 2

The church was originally built with exposed log exterior surfaces. The exterior remained exposed until 1881, when a cladding of weatherboard was installed.¹ Historic views of the building (Figs. 1-5), including post card views from the 1930s (Figs. 1, 3, 4, 5), illustrate the weatherboarded exterior surfaces, which also covered the windows on the north gable end. In 1936 this cladding was removed, the chinking and windows were repaired and three logs were replaced with logs from the nearby Ellenberger farm and from a barn on a farm owned by the Wilfong family.²

The church was built without a basement. The interior consists of a single room with plastered walls (Photos 7, 8) and a ceiling finished in flush-set boards. The original wooden pews are arranged in two rows of six pews each, about eleven feet in length and facing north on either side of an approximately five-foot central aisle (Photos 7, 8). The pews have curvilinear sides, unpadded wood seats, and high, straight backs. Two additional rows of pews are set at right angles to the other pews on opposite sides of the room near the north wall (Photo 7). A narrow double-run open-string stair, with five steps to a landing and three steps beyond, leads from the main floor of the sanctuary to an octagonal pulpit, approximately four feet in diameter, with paneled sides forty-three inches in height and seventeen inches wide, supported by an octagonal post fifty-three inches in height (Photo 9; Figs. 6, 7). In 1906, local historian E. H. Blackburn noted, "The peculiar wine-cup design [of the pulpit] no doubt came from some old Palatinate church, where it was used to symbolize the Eucharistic Cup."³ A slanted wood lectern is built into the pulpit. At the northwest corner of the main floor is a rectangular enclosure (Photos 7, 9), which by some accounts was used by the pastor's

¹Vaughn Whisker, "Schellsburg's Log Church," *Bedford Gazette*, December 2, 1995. Note: Whisker (1907-1992) penned a local history series entitled "Tales from the Allegheny Foothills" for the Bedford newspaper. The 1995 article was originally written in the 1970s, and with its publication Whisker noted, "the stories I have written were passed down to me by my father and aunts who as children attended church services with their parents." Interestingly, Whisker is buried in the Union Church Cemetery.

²Gilchrist, Annie M. "Old Church Restored to Original Appearance," undated newspaper clipping.

³*Ibid.* Note: The mention of the Palatinate may refer to the German ancestry of pioneer John Schell, whose grandfather, Michael Schell, emigrated from the Palatinate area of Germany to Philadelphia County in 1732. The areas in Germany known as the Palatinate were once ruled by a palatine count. The term is most often applied to the Rhine Palatinate which includes more than a quarter of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number 7 Page 3

family, while other accounts suggest that it was reserved for visitors or dignitaries, and other sources note that the space was also used for funerals, with coffins placed on a portable bier with handles.

Among the more interesting descriptions of the church is that appearing in Bedford County Judge William M. Hall's **Reminiscences and Sketches**, published in 1890. Hall describes the Union as

a queer old church, standing right in the midst of the encircling graves, with a wine-glass shaped pulpit just large enough to hold the preacher, who is shut in by a little door on which there is a wooden turn-bolt, as if there was danger of him escaping--a sort of cage. It is perched on a post and access is had by eight or ten steps, and the pews have high straight backs, and there is a pew for strangers and dignitaries just under the pulpit, where they once sat facing the congregation.⁴

Immediately inside the door, at the rear of the sanctuary, a double-run stair, with six steps to a landing and seven beyond, leads to a U-shaped balcony (Photo 10), which extends along the south, east, and west walls (Photos 7, 8, 11). The balcony is supported by octagonal wood posts with modestly-detailed capitals (Photos 7, 8) and has two rows of pews along each of its three sides.

The floors are of random-width soft wood, finished naturally (Photos 7, 8, 10). No modern utilities have been extended to the building. A historic cast iron stove provided heat to the property. The stove appears in one historic post card view of the church and in a c. 1901 drawing was used in conjunction with a commemorative celebration at the church (Fig. 6). The stove is in the possession of the cemetery association which owns the property, but, fearing theft, is not kept in the building.

Immediately north of the church is a water well with a concrete cap. The well is serviced by a cast iron hand pump. The Union Church is surrounded on all sides by its associated cemetery (Resource No. 2; Photos 12-14), which is included within the nominated area because of its long connection to the Union Church. The burial ground remains in use and contains the remains of hundreds who made the Schellsburg area home beginning in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Among those interred here are military

⁴Hall, William M. **Reminiscences and Sketches**. (Harrisburg: Meyers Printing House, 1890), 50-52.

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places**Continuation Sheet**

~~Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union~~
~~Church and Cemetery~~
~~Bedford County, PA~~

Section Number 7 Page 4

veterans representing nearly every conflict in which the United States participated, including eight American Revolution veterans, three from the War of 1812, one from the Mexican War, and seventy-nine from the Civil War. A paved access road leads southward from the old Lincoln Highway which was bypassed by a new section north of the cemetery. The access road turns to the east for about one hundred feet before turning northward and linking again with the old Lincoln Highway.

The art of tombstone-carving has been recognized for decades as one of the more distinctive of the folk arts⁵ and the marble, slate, and granite monuments are ornamented with traditional decorative motifs and epitaphs, both in English and in German (Photos 14-16). The stones are of various forms, including tablets (the most prevalent), simple obelisks, cross-vault obelisks, and blocks.⁶ In addition to their role as acknowledged artifacts of folk tradition, the stones also reflect the eventual Americanization of the Schellsbug pioneers: the marker over the grave of John Schell's mother is entirely in German, Schell's own marker is partly in German and partly in English, and those of Schell's children are entirely in English.

Along the old Lincoln Highway, near the north periphery of the cemetery, is an uncounted veterans' memorial cannon (Photo 24) resting within a star motif and surrounded by a flower bed. The cannon was placed there at an indeterminate time.

The church sexton lived in an 1860 wood frame house at the northwest corner of the nominated tract (Resource No. 3; Photos 20, 22, 23). The house rests on a stone foundation and is rectangular in form and sparsely detailed, with a three-bay facade and a roof configured with a gable on the rear (south) elevation and a hip on the north elevation. Fenestration is flat-topped and includes double-hung windows on the first story and single-hung windows on the second story. The topography around the house slopes steeply from north

⁵See David L. Taylor and Mary Helen Weldy, "Gone But Not Forgotten," *The Life and Work of a Traditional Tombstone Carver*, *Keystone Folklore* Vol. 26 (1976-1977), 14-33.

⁶The typology of tombstone form was developed by Richard Francaviglia and published in his "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 61 (1971), pp. 501-509.

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA**Section Number 7 Page 5

to south, with the result that the basement is above grade on the east, west, and south sides. A partially-enclosed hipped-roof porch is on the east elevation at basement level.

Two dependencies are associated with the sexton's house. West of the house is a non-contributing c. 1920 one-story garage (Resource No. 5; Photo 20) with a front-facing gable roof. Approximately ten feet southeast of the house is a contributing single-story wood dependency (Resource No. 4; Photos 20, 21, 22, 23) which may have been a summer kitchen or a storage building serving the cemetery.

The Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union Church and Cemetery occupies a rural tract in Napier Township, Bedford County. The old Lincoln Highway passes east-to-west between the nominated parcel and a later addition to the cemetery which is not part of the nominated tract. The access roadway running north-and-south through the cemetery is asphalt-paved (Photo 24); a small unpaved driveway (Photo 20) leads past the sexton's house to the garage. Historic photos and post card views (Figs. 4, 5) show the cemetery to have been enclosed within a picket fence. Local history writer Vaughn Whisker, cited earlier, reported

there were double gates through which funeral processions could pass. However, they were kept closed except on dates of funeral or parades. Visitors desiring to enter the cemetery had to climb steps up to a platform and step down on the inside. This arrangement was called a "tile."⁷

Neither the fence nor the gates are extant.

The periphery of the nominated area is wooded and the cemetery and lawns around the sexton's house are planted in grass and generally devoid of trees.

⁷Whisker, *Op. Cit.* The term "tile" may be a corruption of "stile," a set of double steps used in the English countryside to cross fences and hedgerows.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number 8 Page 1

8. Significance

The Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union Church and Cemetery are significant under National Register Criterion A for their association with the early nineteenth-century settlement of south-central Pennsylvania and under Criterion C for architecture, for the church's position as a well-preserved and distinctive example of log architecture dating from the first decade of the nineteenth century. The nominated property meets Criterion Consideration A, related to the nomination of religious properties, in that its significance lies in its architecture, viewed in purely secular terms and not based upon the evaluation of any particular religious doctrine. The property also meets Criterion Consideration D for cemeteries, in that, as noted in the National Register Bulletin, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, it is an example of those eligible cemeteries which have "achieved historic significance for their relative great age in a particular geographic or cultural context." The period of significance begins in 1806 with the original construction of the church and ends in 1860 with the incorporation of the Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union Cemetery Association and the construction of the Sexton's house. The nominated property retains integrity.

Bedford County was erected from Cumberland County in 1771 and was named for Fort Bedford, which was built in 1763 on the site of present-day Bedford which itself was incorporated as a borough in 1795. Portions of the Pennsylvania Road were completed through the county in the early 1790s, following the general path of the mid-eighteenth-century Forbes' Road and linking the Susquehanna River and Pittsburgh. About 1796, pioneer John Schell (1764-1835) emigrated westward to Bedford County from Montgomery County, near Philadelphia, acquired 1,500 acres, and established a farm. Schell erected an inn along the road (demolished 1958) and in 1808 laid out a town which he named Schellsburg (Schellsburg Historic District, NR 2001). The nominated tract is part of Schell's original holdings and lies immediately west of Schellsburg.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number 8 Page 2

The entirety of the Pennsylvania Road was completed in 1818 and in western Bedford County was known for a century thereafter as the Bedford to Stoystown Turnpike.⁸ With the development of the nation's first systematized network of transcontinental highway arteries in 1913, the 'Pike was designated the Lincoln Highway, and in 1925, in the wake of a federal government system of highway numbering, was designated U. S. Route 30. The original road serves as the northern boundary of the nominated property.

In 1806, two years prior to the platting of Schellsburg, the log church was built on Chestnut Ridge, on a six-acre tract of John Schell's holdings. The cemetery slightly pre-dates the church, since the first recorded burial was that of a child named Whetstone, who died in 1806 before the church was completed. Workmen placing a roof on the new building used their carpentry tools to hack a clearing in the underbrush and the child was interred in an unmarked grave.

At that time, the property lay in Bedford Township, from which was eventually erected Napier Township. On March 17, 1807, Schell recorded a deed conveying a tract of land for \$1.00, which was paid by the Lutheran and Reformed (also referred to in early writings as Calvinist) congregations. Other early congregations in Bedford County included Quakers and German Baptists, along with Presbyterians and Methodist Episcopalians.

Schell's instrument of conveyance noted that the gift was made "for and in consideration of the marked respect and veneration which I have for the Christian religion." The property was to be held in trust "for the erection of churches wherein may be preached and heard the Christian religion, also for the erection of school houses for the use of the members of said congregations." No school was ever erected on the tract; early local schools were built instead within the village of Schellsburg, which by the 1920s also had a Methodist, Presbyterian, German Reformed, and Lutheran church.⁹

⁸Bedford, the county seat of Bedford County, is located nine miles east of the nominated property, and Stoystown, in Somerset County, is fifteen miles to the west.

⁹George P. Donchoo, *Pennsylvania: A History* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1926) p. 1793.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

**Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA**

Section Number 8 Page 3

A "union" church--not limited to use by one particular denomination--Schell's church was initially used both by Reformed and Lutheran congregations. The initial subscription list, which accounted for \$196.92 in contributions from 50¢ to \$10.00,¹⁰ set forth the conditions of use:

Whereas, it has been agreed by the inhabitants of Bedford and St. Clair Townships that a meeting house is to be builded [*sic*] by subscription of said inhabitants . . . the said house to be 25 × 30 feet, two stories, with shingle roof . . . The subscriptions to be paid to John Schell, Tobias Hammer, George Rock, and John Mowry. The building is to be free to no other denominations than for the Calvinists and Lutherans, and traveling preachers shall have liberty to preach by application to the elders of said congregations.¹¹

Among the original families on the membership rolls were the families of John Schell, Tobias Hammer, Herbert Otto, and Peter Schell, John Mowry, Benjamin Bisel, John Fisher, Henry Darr, Abraham Whetstone, John Corley, and John Winegardner.

The church was erected at a cost of \$225.94½--during a time when half-cents were coined and served as legal tender. Four dollars of this amount was contributed by the Missionary Society of the Reformed Church.¹² The logs for the building were furnished by Schell, Mowry, Jacob Hillegas, and Benjamin Bisel, each of whom provided materials sufficient for building one side of the church. The church was not completely finished for several years. Until 1809, worshipers had no stove to keep them warm in the winter months, but instead brought "Dutch ovens" to church, full of hot coals.¹³ An 1809 subscription raised \$31.50 to purchase a stove for \$16.00 and associated metal work and blacksmithing. For several years the congregation sat upon logs. The pews were installed in 1812, when a pulpit accessed by stairs was also

¹⁰"Facts about the Old Log Church and Reformed Church," unsigned MS in possession of owner.

¹¹"That Old Landmark," Martinsburg (Pennsylvania) *Herald*, June 4, 1915, p. 1.

¹²"Facts . . .," *Op. Cit.*

¹³*Ibid.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number 8 Page 4

added, underwritten by another subscription, this time of \$29.63. A third subscription in 1814 enabled the construction of the balcony and several years later the walls were plastered. At that point, likely before 1820, the interior assumed its current appearance.¹⁴

Separate accounts report five or six Reformed pastors to have served the Union Church during its active years: John Dietrich Aurandt, who served under Gen. Anthony Wayne in the American Revolution, served the church between 1806 and 1811, perhaps as a missionary, since other records cite John Henry Gerhart as the first pastor. Gerhart served from 1812 to 1829 and was followed by Solomon K. Denius (1830-1834), George Leidy (served 1835-1843) and Jacob Ziegler (1844-1849). One account adds Henry Heckerman between 1850 and 1859. Lutheran pastors who served the church include Henry Hankes (served 1806-1813), John Dietrick Peterson (1813-1816), E. H. Tiedman (1816-1820), William Yeager (1822-1839) and Reuben Weiser (1841-1846).¹⁵

The village of Schellsburg grew significantly during the 1840s and 1850s and between 1843 and 1854 Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist and Presbyterian congregations built their own churches in the village.¹⁶ Historical accounts report that the Union Church ceased active use in 1852; the aforementioned Henry Heckerman was serving the Union congregation when a new Reformed Church was built under his direction within the village of Schellsburg.

By the late 1850s, the Union congregation was worshipping in Schellsburg. On November 19, 1859, the combined leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran and St. John German Reformed Churches met and

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵History of Bedford, Somerset, and Fulton Counties, Pennsylvania. (Chicago: Waterman, Watkins, & Co., 1884), p. 281.

¹⁶"Schellsburg Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1999.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number 8 Page 5

agreed to seek a charter for a separate organization to manage the historic church and cemetery. Twenty-seven members of the Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, and Methodist congregations served as incorporators of the Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union Cemetery Association. On March 17, 1860, the charter was approved by Governor William F. Packer and the following June the members of Schellsburg's churches met at the old log church and took part in services re-consecrating the cemetery under the new ownership. One local citizen named Bowser was not in favor of the incorporation of the association and started his own cemetery north of the Turnpike; Bowser's private cemetery was eventually integrated into the Union Church cemetery, but since it was not part of the original tract it is not included within the nominated area.

A 1915 local newspaper account noted that the church was vacant after 1850 and was only used for an occasional funeral service. The account continued:

But this old church is a sacred spot, sacred because of the history connected with it. There it has stood for 109 years. It has been the sacred retreat of hundreds who are now resting from their labors, whose remains are buried all around this old church, which stands there in the cemetery like a lonely sentinel keeping watch over the dead who lie sleeping around it.¹⁷

Concomitant with the 1860 incorporation of the Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union Cemetery Association, a home for the sexton/caretaker was built immediately west of the burial ground. Ludwig Nicodemus was engaged as the first sexton and began his duties in April, 1861.

Although the church was no longer in regular use, occasional celebrations and "homecomings" were held at the site. Illustrative is the reunion of the John Schell family held in 1901, which included a procession from Bedford to Schellsburg and ceremonies at the "Old Log Church."¹⁸ One of the largest commemora-

¹⁷Old Church Preserved," Martinsburg (Pennsylvania) *Herald*, May 28, 1915.

¹⁸Unattributed newspaper clipping, hand-dated June 14, 1901.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

**Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA**

Section Number 8 Page 6

tions was the church's 1906 centennial celebration which began with a parade westward to the church and cemetery from Schellsburg. The program from the event records religious services and music by a local band and choir including a "medley of old songs," prayers, an address by Hon. William P. Schell and a reading of historical notes compiled by Capt. A. E. Schell.¹⁹

With respect to the cemetery, this burial ground has remained in regular use since the first decade of the nineteenth century and its own cultural landscape is dotted with a variety of traditional tombstone forms. Many of the early stones were carved by a Juniata Township traditional tombstone carver, J. H. Boylan, who signed his work with his name and "S. C.," presumably signifying "stone carver." Judging from the dates on his work, he was practicing his art in the 1820s, '30s, and '40s.

One notable late twentieth-century tombstone consists of a granite tablet with the outline and text of the original monument which memorialized Frederick C. Goeb (1782-1829); the rear of the new stone notes that Goeb "published the first *Bible* west of the Alleghenies" in 1813 in Somerset, about forty miles to the west. Goeb's original marker was removed by the Somerset County Historical Society and is part of the organization's museum collection.

With respect to National Register Criterion A, the Union Church represents the area's initial period of permanent settlement and is reputed to be the oldest church in Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna River.²⁰ The building is clearly significant under Criterion C, as a distinctive and little-altered example of south-central Pennsylvania log architecture dating from the first decade of the nineteenth century.

¹⁹*Souvenir Program of the Anniversary Celebration of the "Old Church on the Hill,"* Bedford: Bedford Gazette, 1906.

²⁰Whisker, *Op. Cit.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number 8 Page 7

The Union Cemetery is significant and meets National Register Criterion Consideration D because of its age. It contains the graves of leading pioneers in the area, including the graves of pioneer settler John Schell and his family and of *Bible* publisher Frederick Goeb.

Viewing the Union Church in the context of other similar architecture in the region, this building occupies its original site and is essentially unaltered from the appearance it possessed at the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century. The largest concentration of log architecture in the county is at Old Bedford Village, but these properties have been relocated from their original sites and fail to retain integrity. The Bedford County Historic Sites Survey documented a variety of log buildings in the county, but none are churches and none can claim the untarnished integrity of Union Church. Many of Bedford County's log buildings are seriously deteriorated and have been clad in siding, ranging from early weatherboard to insul-brick and more modern siding materials. Typical examples from the survey include the Fox House at 110 Pond Lane, New Paris (tax parcel B7-13), which is clad in insul-brick. The J. Dull house at 125 Cuppet Road, New Paris (tax parcel C7-13) underwent several additions, and the Rowser house on Hinton Road (tax parcel C7-51) is clad in modern siding. The Bowers house at 183 Doylestown Road (tax parcel C7-88) includes an attached modern garage and an enclosed front porch. Two log houses, 3753 Pitt Street (U. S. Route 30) and 3592 Pitt Street (also, U. S. Route 30 and identified as likely being of log) are among the resources in the Schellsburg Historic District.

Among the earliest churches in the county is the Roman Catholic Church in Bedford which dates from 1817, nine years after the construction of the nominated church; it is of brick while the Union Church is of log construction. Some early churches existed with an adjacent cemetery and others did not. During the nineteenth century, many burials occurred in "family" cemeteries rather than in community burial grounds such as Union Cemetery. Aside from this, the significance of the Union Church is vested in its unaltered condition, inside and outside.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

**Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA**

Section Number 8 Page 8

Summarizing, the Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union Church and Cemetery meets Criterion A because of its position as a strong reflection of the patterns of early settlement of the south-central Pennsylvania frontier and meets Criterion C as a well-preserved example of log architecture from the first decade of the nineteenth century. While the church is no longer active, the building, its associated Sexton's house, and the cemetery retain integrity and are clearly important links to the cultural heritage of south-central Pennsylvania during the first decades of permanent settlement.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA**

Section Number 9 Page 1

9. Bibliography

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union
Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number 9 Page 2

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg
Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number 10 Page 1

10. Geographical Data

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Being that portion of the property depicted as Parcel 49, Map C8, filed at the Bedford County Assessment Office, Bedford County Court House, Bedford, Pennsylvania and lying south of the old Lincoln Highway.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the nominated tract incorporate that property which includes the Union Church, its associated cemetery, and the Sexton's house and its immediately associated dependencies. This nomination incorporates the original John Schell tract but not the addition to the cemetery north of the old Lincoln Highway which was acquired after the period of significance.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg
Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number Photography Log Page 1

Photography Log

All Photographs:

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA
David L. Taylor, 2003
Taylor & Taylor Associates, Inc., Brookville, PA

1. Northwest perspective, looking southeast across one of the interior access roads
2. Southeast perspective, looking northwest, showing main entrance, centered entrance door, cemetery, and some of the monuments
3. South gable end, detail, showing weatherboarded pediment of gable and multi-light sash which were uncovered in 1936 with the removal of the 1881 weatherboard cladding.
4. Main entrance, south gable end, showing double paneled doors, transom, log finishes, looking north.
5. Southwest corner, detail, looking northeast, showing steeple corner notching
6. North gable end, detail, showing fenestration (nine-over-six on first story and six-over-six behind pulpit), as well as pump serving the well beside the church
7. Interior, looking north, showing pews, floor finishes, "wine glass" pulpit, balcony and supports.
8. Interior, looking southeast, showing stairs to balcony, balcony supports, pews, floor finishes, etc.
9. Interior looking northeast, showing pulpit and access stairs and corner of box/pew in front corner of church
10. Interior, detail, looking southeast, showing pews.
11. Interior, balcony, looking east, showing balcony-level pews

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg
Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number Photography Log Page 2

12. Cemetery and overall site, looking south toward church from old Lincoln Highway, showing interior access road, monuments, terrain, etc.
13. Overall site, looking north from west side of church up the access road toward the old Lincoln Highway and the bypass above and to the north; the newer maintenance building at the left center is outside the boundaries of the nominated area
14. View across a portion of the cemetery, looking east and showing variety of tombstone forms
15. Typical early nineteenth-century tombstone in cemetery, looking east
16. One of the J. H. Boylan-carved tombstones from 1832, looking east
17. New tombstone for Frederick Goeb, face, looking east
18. New tombstone for Frederick Goeb, reverse face, looking west
19. Pump serving well adjacent to church, looking southeast
20. 1860 Sexton's House and dependencies, looking southwest from old Lincoln Highway
21. Dependency for Sexton's House, looking southwest
22. Sexton's House and dependencies, looking west from interior access road
23. Sexton's House and dependencies looking northwest from interior access road
24. View west toward Sexton's House, showing uncounted commemorative cannon, interior access road, and old Lincoln Highway

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg
Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number Illustrations Page 1

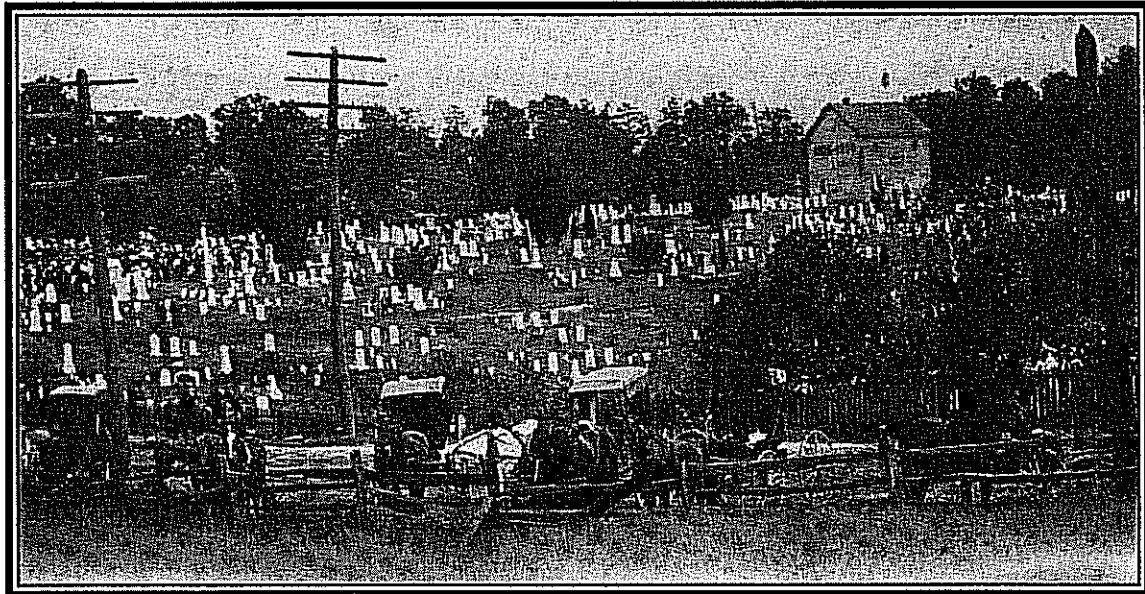


Fig. 1 This early photo of the Union Church and Cemetery illustrates the unpaved Bedford to Stoystown Turnpike (later the Lincoln Highway) in the foreground and the clapboard-sided church in the background.. The photo was not titled, but may depict a funeral or one of the early "homecomings" held at the site.



Fig. 2 Above is a view of the cemetery, showing a family plot enclosed in a cast iron fence; this fence is not extant, and like other such structures, may have been sold for scrap during a World War One or Two scrap drive.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg
Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number Illustrations Page 2

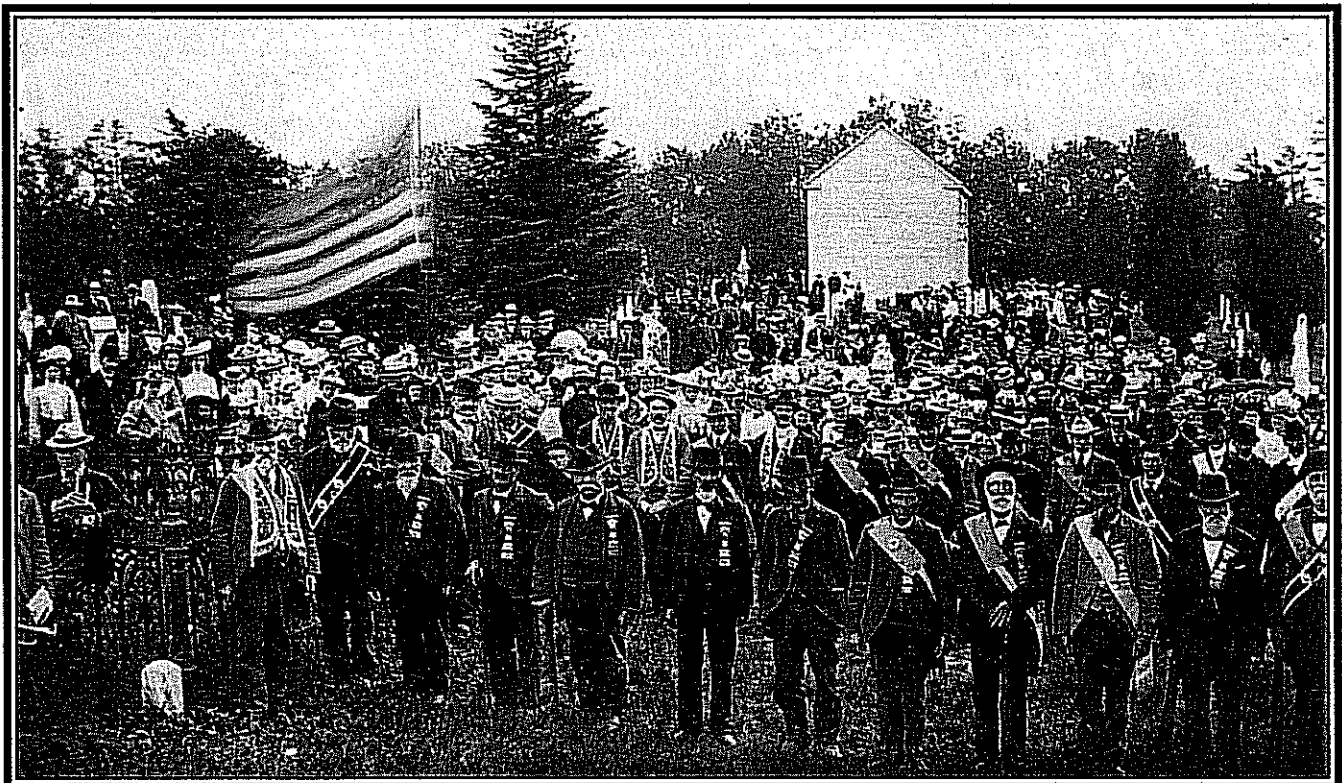


Fig. 3 Above is an unidentified commemorative event at the Old Log Church. The garb of the men in the front row suggests that it may be a Civil War veteran's reunion. The clapboard-sided church appears in the background.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg
Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number Illustrations Page 3



Fig. 4 This 1930s post card view of the Union Church and Cemetery shows the paved Lincoln Highway in the foreground along with the wood fence which surrounded the property for many years. This view dates from prior to the 1930s removal of the weatherboard siding and the exposure of the original log surfaces.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg
Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number Illustrations Page 4

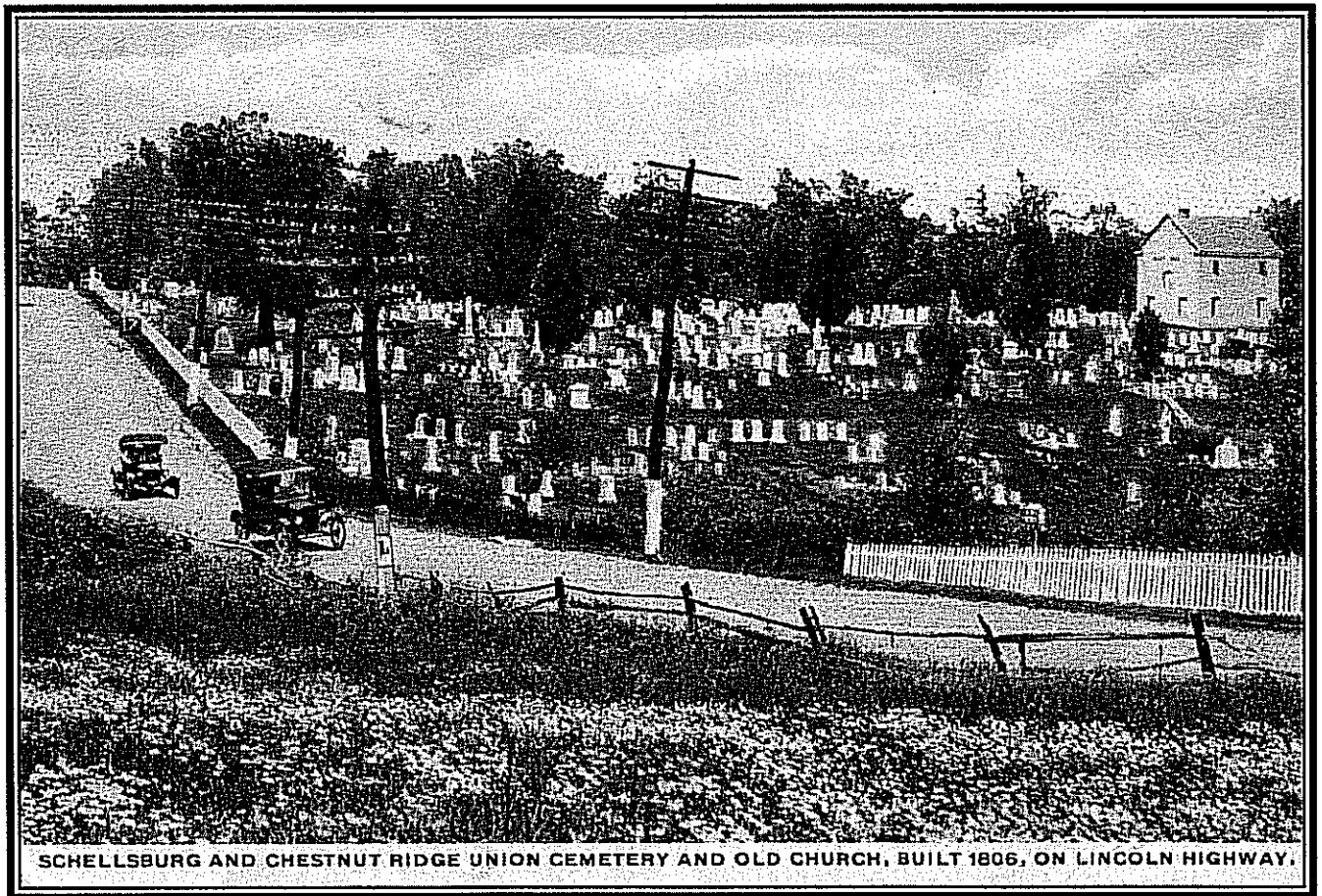


Fig. 5 Another 1920s-1930s post card view of the property, from a slightly different angle, again depicting the weatherboard-clad church and the picket fence along the Lincoln Highway.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg
Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number Illustrations Page 5

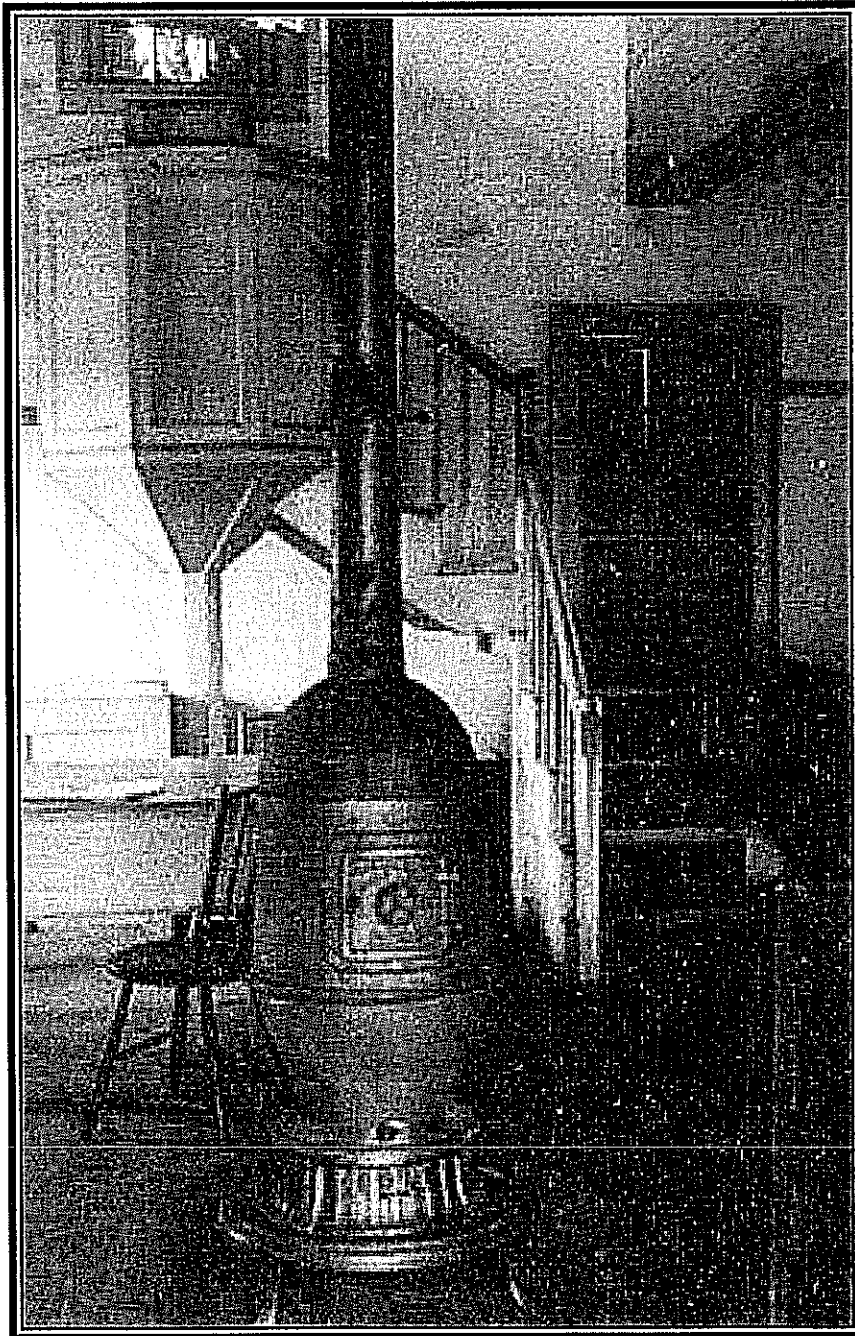


Fig. 6 At the left is an early photo of the interior of the church, showing the stove which heated the building as well as the "wine glass" pulpit and balcony railing.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg
Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

Section Number Illustrations Page 6

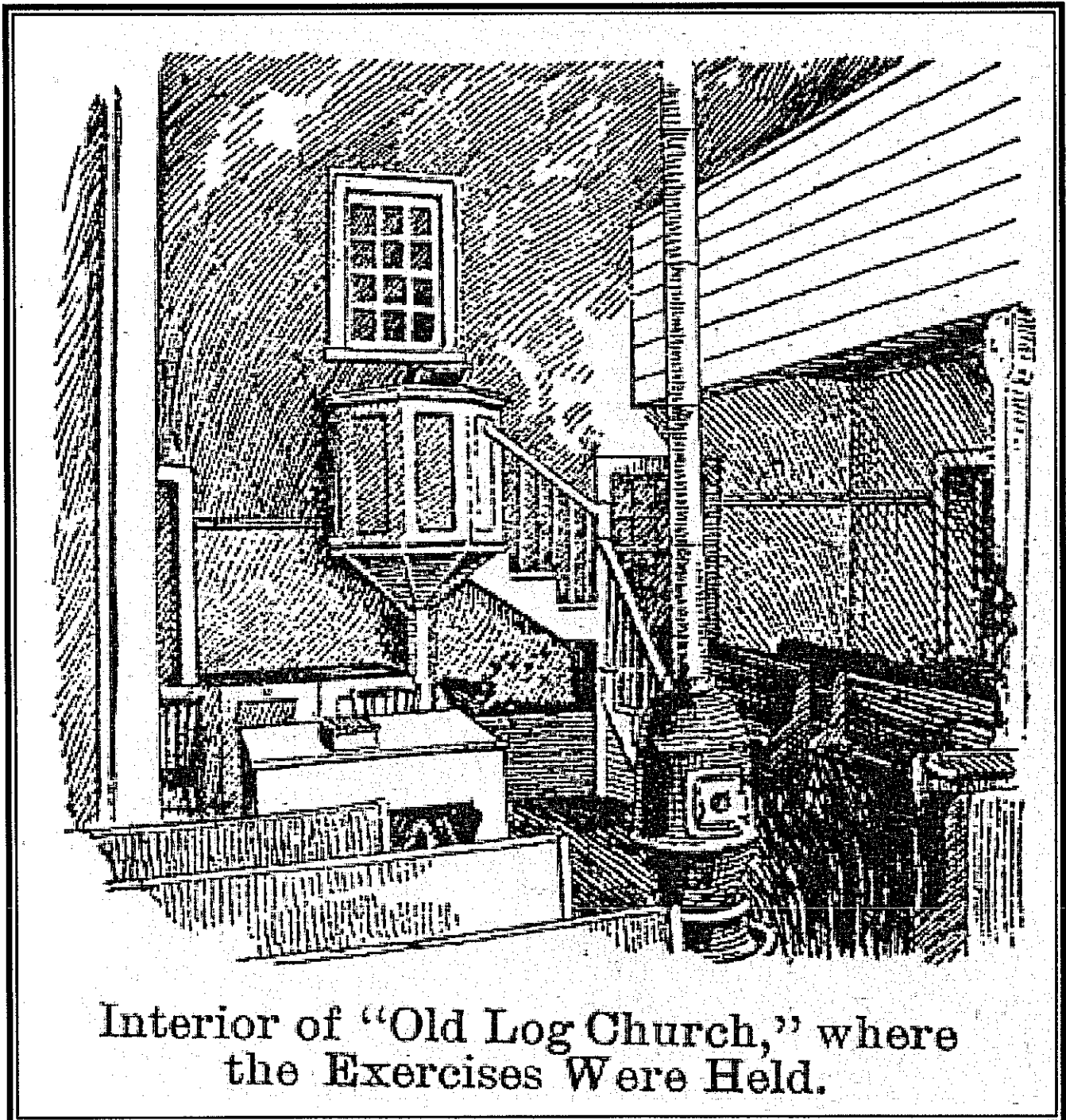


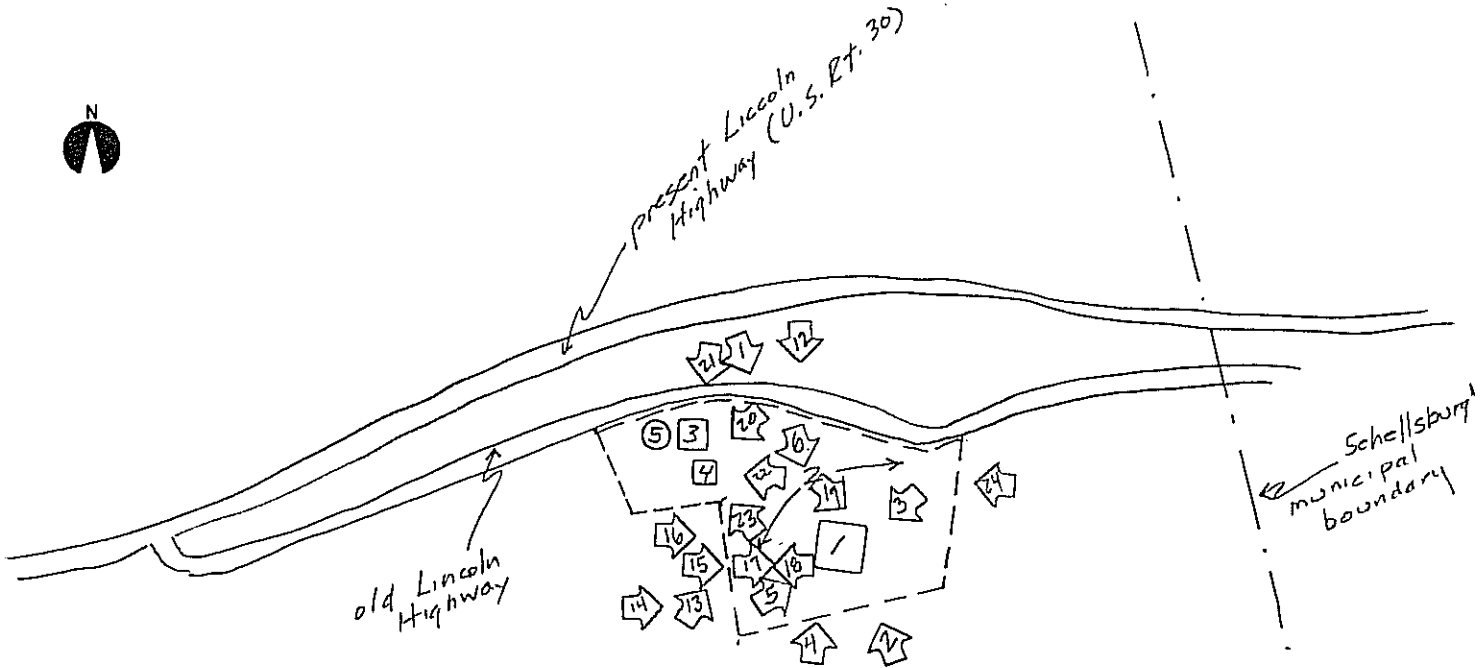
Fig. 7 This drawing appeared in a c. 1901 commemoration which took place at the church and shows clearly the original stove and the "wine glass" pulpit.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chestnut Ridge and Schellsburg
Union Church and Cemetery
Bedford County, PA

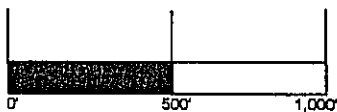
Section Number Site Plan Page 1



**CHESTNUT RIDGE & SCHELLSBURG
 UNION CHURCH AND CEMETERY**
 Bedford County, PA

Prepared by
TAYLOR & TAYLOR ASSOCIATES, INC.
 Historic Preservation & Community Development Specialists
 9 Walnut Street
 Brookville, PA 15825
 814-849-4900
 August, 2004

PHOTOGRAPHY MAP



Legend:

Boundary: - - - - -

Contributing Resources

Non-contributing Resources

Photo Number & Camera Orientation

RESOURCES

1. Church
2. Cemetery
3. Sexton's house
4. Outbuilding
5. Garage