

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery Listed in National Register

ATLANTA (January 7, 2009) –The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery, located in the vicinity of Portal, Bulloch County, was listed in the National Register on December 4, 2008. The property owner sponsored the nomination and a consultant prepared the nomination materials.

Constructed in 1881, the church is significant at the local level in the area of architecture as a good intact example of a late 19th-century rural church building with elements of the Greek Revival style. In Georgia, the Greek Revival style was applied to churches most often during the mid-19th century. This one-room, one-story, rectangular wood frame building has retained its essential form, massing, and floor plan since construction in 1881. The building's mass and proportions—along with the triangular pedimented front gable, the horizontal frieze board under the eaves, and the rounded portico columns—are elements associated with the Greek Revival style. As was the common practice for that time and denomination, the original façade had separate entrances for men and women. In 1945, the two historic entry doors were replaced with a single entrance. In 1959, an annex was built onto the south elevation of the church. This addition reflects changes in the size and variety of activities among the church's mid-20th-century congregation. Both the church and cemetery are still in use.

The cemetery is significant on the local level in the area of landscape architecture as a good example of an early 20th-century formal cemetery landscape laid out in the gridiron plan. Located on the south side of the building, the cemetery contains 328 marked graves as well as several dozen unmarked

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plots. The cemetery may have been used as early as 1841—dating back to an earlier church building—but the oldest known grave dates from 1902. Concrete slabs with engraved flat stone markers identify a number of gravesites. Some burial sites are contained within family plots separated from neighboring graves by natural stone curbing. Family plots are often covered with crushed stone.

The property is significant in religion at the state level as an excellent and rare surviving example of a Primitive Baptist church associated with one of the state's oldest Primitive Baptist congregations. In Georgia, Primitive Baptist churches represent a minority of the state's Baptist congregations and developed in predominately rural parts of the state. Unlike Missionary Baptists, the state's largest Baptist sect, most Primitive Baptist churches lack mission boards and rarely join state conventions.

The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. According to Richard Cloues, deputy state historic preservation officer, listing in the National Register recognizes a property's significance and ensures that the property will be taken into account in the planning of federally funded or licensed projects. In addition, owners of National Register properties may be eligible for rehabilitation tax incentives.

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources serves as Georgia's state historic preservation office. Their mission is to promote the preservation and use of historic places for a better Georgia. HPD's programs include archaeology protection and education, environmental review, grants, historic resource surveys, tax incentives, the National Register of Historic Places, community planning and technical assistance. For more information, call 404-656-2840 or visit their Web site at www.gashpo.org.

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Photo available from Helen Talley-McRae (helen.talley-mcrae@dnr.state.ga.us). Caption information: Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery, located in the vicinity of Portal, Bulloch County, was listed in the National Register on December 4, 2008. (Credit: Photo courtesy GA Department of Natural Resources/Historic Preservation Division.)