

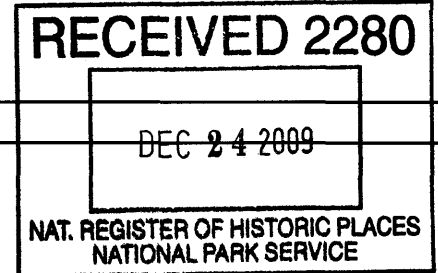
1301

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Beulah Grove Lodge No. 372, Free and Accepted York Masons/Pleasant Grove School
other names/site number Pleasant Grove Colored School



2. Location

street & number 2525 Old Lower River Road
city, town Douglasville (X) **vicinity of**
county Douglas **code** GA 097
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30134

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| buildings | 1 | 0 |
| sites | 0 | 0 |
| structures | 0 | 0 |
| objects | 0 | 0 |
| total | 1 | 0 |

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Richard Leves

12-16-09

Signature of certifying official

Date

Dr Dr. David Crass
Acting Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Edson H. Beal *2-3-10*

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

for

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

Current Functions:

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

NO STYLE

Materials:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| foundation | STONE |
| walls | WOOD: weatherboard OTHER: tarpaper |
| roof | ASPHALT |
| other | N/A |

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Beulah Grove Lodge No.372, Free and Accepted York Masons/Pleasant Grove School is located approximately 6.2 miles south of the city limits of Douglasville, off Fairburn Road, a major exit on Interstate 20 west of Atlanta. The building is located immediately across the road from the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, which was rebuilt after a fire in 1981, and the cemetery. The building is a rectangular, two-story, wood building with a gable roof. Red tarpaper siding was added in 1962 over the vertical board siding. Stacked rocks provide the foundation; the joists are hand-hewn support beams. In some instances, the original wood remains encased in its bark. Entrance stairs are concrete block. In 1962 the windows were replaced and stored inside the building. On all elevations, the first floor door and window openings have rough-cut wood surrounds.

On the front façade, or south elevation, there is a single wood door and a single one-over-one, double-hung window on the first floor. A single window opening is centrally located on the second floor on this façade (photograph 1).

The east and west elevations have two window openings on the first floor and two on the second floor. Windows are one-over-one, double-hung, sash windows (photographs 2-4).

On the back or north elevation, there is a cement step and one door encased in a wood frame. The original housing for a light fixture is centrally located several feet above the door. Wood in the gable is laid horizontally and is much narrower than the vertically hung boards of the rest of the building (photographs 5 and 6).

Section 7—Description

The interior consists of a single room on each floor. The first floor, where school was held, retains its flushboard walls and ceiling. Remnants of white paint remain on the walls (photograph 7). The floor is covered with plywood (photograph 9). Two of the wooden lodge benches remain inside the building (photograph 8). The opening for the staircase is located in the northeast corner, however the stairs are no longer extant (photograph 13). There are no finished walls or ceiling on the second floor where the Masons met. The wood floor appears to be intact (photographs 10 and 11).

The lodge/school is part of a two-acre property owned by the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. The property is split by Lower River Road, which makes a curve to the south at the lodge/school building. The church is located on the west side of the road across from the lodge/school. The church burned in 1981 and has been rebuilt. On the north side of the road is the Pleasant Grove Cemetery, which is shaded by a canopy of about a dozen trees. Moss and native fern grow from these mature trees. A wooded area borders the lodge/school building's west side. The immediate surrounding area on the building's south, east, and north sides has been cleared and maintained for easy access. The land on which the building sits is relatively flat. The surrounding landscape is still fairly rural with some nearby development.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE
EDUCATION
ETHNIC HISTORY-BLACK
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance:

c.1910 -1959

Significant Dates:

c.1910 – date of construction

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

N/A

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Beulah Grove Lodge No.372, Free and Accepted York Masons/Pleasant Grove School is significant at the local level as a good example of a rural African-American school and lodge, which has served as an educational and social center for the surrounding rural community since its construction c.1910.

Section 8--Statement of Significance

The Beulah Grove lodge/school is significant in architecture as a Masonic lodge and school that was built by lodge members c.1910 and which retains the historic school space on the first floor and the lodge room on the second floor. The building retains most of its original materials, including the wood floors, wood walls, and stacked rock pier supports. The overall form and appearance is similar to other extant rural buildings of this type.

The lodge/school is significant in ethnic heritage-black and social history for its use as an African-American lodge and school. Churches, schools, and lodge halls offered important venues for social gatherings for the African-American community. This was a rural community where most of the residents were sharecroppers. Masons were commonly the community leaders, such as preachers, teachers, and businessmen. Jack Smith, who donated the land, was believed to be a member of the lodge. Members of the adjacent Pleasant Grove Baptist Church's Board of Deacons were trustees for the lodge. Lodge members provided help for those requiring assistance with basic needs. The building was used for lodge activities until the 1950s when the members joined another lodge due to dwindling membership at Beulah Grove. The lodge was also used by the Order of the Eastern Star, a predominately female Masonic order.

The building is also significant in education for its use as a school by the community until the mid-1930s. From the end of the Civil War until the 1930s, most of the African-American children in Douglas County attended a church or lodge-affiliated school such as this. Education of black children was largely a community responsibility. School buildings were constructed by volunteer labor and maintained by the local African-American community. In rural areas in Georgia, most schools were provided by churches or lodges; by 1915 about the time this building was constructed, less than 40 percent of buildings used for education of African-American children were publicly owned. Generally, rural primary schools were one-room buildings with one teacher for all ages.

National Register Criteria

A – The Beulah Grove Lodge No. 372, Free and Accepted York Masons/Pleasant Grove School is significant in the areas of education, ethnic heritage-black, and social history for the role it played as a community landmark building during a time of segregation in Georgia in the early 20th century. The building provided a schoolroom for local African-American children at a time before public school integration. This building served many community functions including as a meeting place not only for the Free and Accepted York Masons, but also for the Order of the Eastern Star.

C – The Beulah Grove Lodge No. 372, Free and Accepted York Masons/Pleasant Grove School is significant in the area of architecture as a good local example of a rural lodge and school building that retains most of its character-defining features.

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance runs from the construction of the building around 1910 to 1959, the end of the historic period, because it was continuously used during that time.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

There is only one contributing resource, the lodge/school building.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

NOTE: The following description was prepared by Gwen Sommers Redwine and edited by Lynn Speno, Historic Preservation Division. "Beulah Grove Lodge No. 372, Free and Accepted York Masons/ Pleasant Grove School," Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, May 27, 2008 on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

According to Carole Merritt's *Historic Black Resources*, a 1984 context for the evaluation of African-American resources in Georgia, lodges played a prominent role in the African-American community behind family, church, and school. Many of the lodges were small independent organizations, which functioned largely as mutual aid societies. Most lodges originated in churches and, in rural areas, lodge meeting halls were located near the church. Their headquarters were two-story frame structures, unpainted, without a ceiling, and with unfinished interior walls. Generally, the lodge met on the second floor and the students used the first floor as classroom space. Rural lodge membership has declined due to the availability of commercial insurance, the failure of some societies to meet their benefit obligations, and migration to urban areas.

The records and original charter for Beulah Grove Lodge No. 372 burned in the home of H.B. Lindley around 1996, but Albert Lindley, lodge member and deacon at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, believes the lodge was founded in the late 1800s around the time of the founding of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in 1881. Lindley estimates the school/lodge was built around 1910. Lindley's uncle and the church's earliest board of deacons were lodge members and trustees for the lodge.

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Jack Smith, an African-American landowner, provided the land for the church and lodge/school around 1881, according to oral history passed down in Albert Lindley's family. An 1868 deed recorded Jackson Smith's purchase of 50 acres of land from John Townsend for \$110 dollars in Land Lot 135, District 1, and Section 5. Around 1910, John Love, a lodge member and area builder, led the effort to build the lodge/school building. John Love was a cousin of the Lindley family. Lodge members and members of the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church constructed the building. In 1923, NPS

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church received two deeds from Jack Smith's estate for its current two acres including the ½ acre on which the building now sits. For many years, and sometimes today, the property is referred to as the "Jack Smith" church or the "Jack Smith" cemetery or "over at Jack Smith."

There were several African-American communities in Douglas County around the turn of the 20th century. According to Judge James, a Douglas County native, there was a concentration of black families that lived in north Douglasville and a concentration in Winston. In the southern part of the county where the lodge and school are, the area was largely rural and families did not live in neighborhoods, but were dispersed throughout the area. There were at least three small communities, but almost everybody lived in "share" (croppers) houses. There was "Horace Richardson Place," owned by a white landowner; "Will Love Place," owned by an African American; and "Jack Smith Place," the community in which this building was built.

Masonic History

Masonic orders existed all across America. It is estimated there are over 4,500 active lodges worldwide in parts of Canada, Liberia, and the Caribbean Islands. The birth of black Masonry began in Boston, Massachusetts, with a freed black man named Prince Hall. Sometime during the early 1700s, it is believed, but not documented, that Prince Hall was born to an English white father, Thomas Prince Hall, and to a black woman of French descent. It is known that he was influential and highly respected. As a free black man, Hall played a prominent role during the Revolutionary War. Sources say he fought on the American side during the war and that he was a skilled artisan who worked with leather. Evidence of this exists today in a bill of sale, dated April 1777 from Hall to the Boston Regiment of Artillery, in which Hall itemizes five leather drumheads. This document is housed within the state of Massachusetts archives.

Historical accounts say that Prince Hall could have fought in the Battle at Bunker Hill. It was during the Revolutionary War in Boston, Massachusetts, that Hall and 14 other freed blacks were initiated into British Army Lodge #441. When the British army left Boston, Lodge #441 granted Hall and his brethren limited Masonry status. They could meet, they could go in procession on Saint John's Day, and they could bury their dead along with all of the accoutrements associated with a Masonic funeral. They could not, however, confer degrees or perform any other higher echelon levels of Masonry work. Almost ten years later, Hall petitioned the Grand Lodge of England for a charter.

The charter was granted in 1784 and the charter to African Lodge #459 became the first recorded document of African-American Free Masonry in America. It exists today housed within a safe deposit

Section 8--Statement of Significance

box in a downtown Boston bank. During the ensuing years and at least one split, the lodge became known as African Grand Lodge #1. Prince Hall was its first Grand Master and remained so until his death in 1807.

According to Rev. Michael Springer, the historian for black Masonry in Douglas County and the current District 10 Deputy Grand Master, the grand lodge of Georgia was named Smooth Ashlars Grand Lodge of Georgia. The dictate from Smooth Ashlars was that lodges be formed 15 miles east, west, north, and south of each other in designated districts. In the west, the lodges were organized in the 10th district of which Rev. Springer's maternal great-grandfather, D. Pitts, was its first Senior Warden. His father, Willie Clyde Springer, was its third District Deputy Grand Master. District 10 includes Carroll, Paulding, Haralson, and Douglas counties. Three subordinate lodges were formed in Douglas County: King Solomon; Widow's Son Lodge #4 (meaning fourth oldest lodge in Georgia); and the Beulah Grove Lodge #372.

The Beulah Grove Lodge was active beginning around 1881, when Pleasant Grove was founded, to around the mid-to-late 1950s. In the 1923 deed of the property to the church, A. L. Cochran, B. D. Duncan, J. H. Bennett, S. M. Duncan, and Mose Lindley are listed as trustees for the lodge and school. Mose Lindley is Albert Lindley's uncle. We know from Albert Lindley that these men were Masons and members of the lodge.

Johnny Lindley, first cousin to Albert Lindley, is a member of the lodge. Albert and Johnny are 61 and 76 years old respectively. Johnny Lindley, interviewed on June 9, 2008, said he joined the lodge in 1957 and that by then members were no longer using the lodge hall but had begun meeting across the street at the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. At that time, James A. Bridges was the Worshipful Master, H. B. Lindley was its Senior Warden, and Thomas Hutchinson was the Secretary. He said his grandfather, Will Lindley, and his father, Roy Lindley, were both Masons, and he remembers them meeting there. Will Lindley and Mose Lindley were brothers. Also Grady Hindsman recalled that George Bridges and Buck Abbot were members of the Beulah Grove Lodge.

During the early 1900s, African-American families could depend on lodge members for donations of food, money, and labor. The lodge met the basic needs for blacks during a time when Jim Crow laws and other forms of discrimination precluded blacks from receiving education and in many instances proper medical attention. Lodge members were also involved in the church, as being a member of a church was a requirement for being a Mason. Meetings and initiation rites were held on the second floor of the lodge.

Order of the Eastern Star

The Order of the Eastern Star, a mostly female Masonic order, also used the lodge for their meetings. The Order of the Eastern Star is a fraternal Masonic organization with both men and women as members, but women have the primary active roles. Locally, the Order of the Eastern Star is an extension of each of the subordinate lodges. For instance, Willie Clyde Springer, who was the Most Worshipful Master of Widow's Son #1 Lodge, organized its complimentary order, naming it

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Shining Star #105 in 1983. However, he said there was at least one Masonic order comprised only of women that preceded this. *The Heroines of Jericho* was a vibrant female Masonic order that was active during the 1940s up to the early 1980s. Today, it is no longer active because, according to Springer, its "members died out."

According to 89-year old Evelyn Love Hughes, who grew up in the Deerlick Park area of Douglasville, when she was around 14 years old, she remembered going to Pleasant Grove with her uncle, John Bennett, who was a deacon and Mason at Pleasant Grove and her aunt, Josephine Bennett, a Worthy Matron of the Order of the Eastern Star. During this time, around 1930, the lodge was active. Her aunt assumed that she would follow her into the order and paid her fees until she became of age. When she did become of age, Hughes said she did not join for fear of the initiation rites. She explained, "We could hear them holler from that building. I was afraid of it." Mrs. Hughes recalled that Helen Love Lindley, Albert Lindley's mother, served as secretary. Her great-aunt, Fannie Love Ellerson, also was a member. She was her grandmother's husband's sister. Other members included Della Lindley, who was married to Mose Lindley. According to the church history, Della Lindley also served as clerk for Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in 1881. Mrs. Hughes recalled other member's names including Mrs. Abbot, Mrs. McLarring, and Mrs. Bridges.

End of Beulah Grove Lodge

Sometime during the late 1970s or early 1980s, members of the Beulah Grove Lodge #372 ceased meeting at this location. According to Albert Lindley, activity ceased because most of the older lodge members passed away and interest waned. Because their membership had decreased, they started meeting with another lodge, Widow's Son Lodge #4. Rev. Michael Springer, Deputy Grand Master, District 10, of Douglasville, Georgia, says that Georgia's lodge was the Smooth Ashlars Grand Lodge of Georgia with its headquarters on Auburn Avenue in Atlanta. The date of October 3, 1895, appears on the charter for Widow's Son Lodge.

The Pleasant Grove Baptist Church used the building as an extension of its fellowship hall after 1975 until 1998. Since that time, it has been used for storage. The building was also used for church services when the church burned in 1981.

Pleasant Grove School

According to *Historic Black Resources*, a context for the evaluation of African-American resources in Georgia, rural primary schools were usually one-room wood buildings. The education of black children was largely a community responsibility. School buildings were constructed by volunteer labor and maintained by the African-American community. By 1915 in rural Georgia, less than 40 percent of buildings used for education were publicly owned. Most were affiliated with a church or lodge. Many had unfinished walls, no ceilings, and were unpainted. Most did not have adequate heating, water, or sanitary facilities. Blackboards were generally pine boards that were stained black. Desks were often rough-hewn straight-back benches.

Section 8--Statement of Significance

In this part of Douglas County, there were two other churches within a five-mile radius of Pleasant Grove: Andrews Chapel Methodist Episcopal and Liberty Grove Methodist Episcopal. These churches also served as schools.

According to local resident, Grady Hindsman, some of the students who attended Pleasant Grove Colored School were Virge, Rosa, and Ezra Lindley, and Louise Stephens Shackelford. Hindsman remembered that about 30 students attended the school and that first through seventh grades were taught. He remembered two teachers, one of whom was a Mr. Touchstone.

Hindsman related that there were several one-room, one-story schools in the area and that they were called "the red school houses," except for the Pleasant Grove Colored School that they knew was a lodge and school. According to Hindsman, these schools were in areas close to where people lived. He said there were one or two in Winston and one each in Villa Rica, Austell, Lithia Springs, and Carrollton. He said everyone walked to school and some had to walk miles to get to school. Included in historian Fannie Mae Davis' book on Douglas County is a republished newspaper account from *The Weekly Star* in 1881 describing B.M. Traynor teaching at Liberty Grove to 79 "scholars."

Hindsman attended Will Love School, named for the African-American man who donated the land. It was located about three miles from the Beulah Grove School. He described it as a one-room building made out of wood. He said some of the students who attended the Will Love School included Sam and Pete Love; Isaac, Wilburn and Coreen Barge; and Raymond and Howard Bradfield. There were two teachers, but he only remembers Ms. Ruby Long. As with Pleasant Grove, he estimates about 30 students attending.

These schools existed around the turn of the 20th century and continued through the 1930s. In 1937, Hindsman said he no longer attended the school. His sister, Catherine Wynn, said that a public school in Douglasville, Hutcheson Elementary and High School, was built for black children in 1934. She attributes the demise in those earlier schools to the building of the Hutcheson School and to the school-busing program that was implemented at that time. During this time, the church and the school were the hub of activity within the African-American community. For instance, Ms. Evelyn Love Hughes, who attended Andrews Chapel, often performed in plays at the other two churches. Ms. Hughes said the Christmas programs were most memorable for her because she remembers they would go "caroling" at night dressed in disguises and it was fun when the folks tried to guess who they were.

Grady Hindsman recalled the Friday night fish fries. Hindsman said that the fish fries were held every Friday at the little red schools and that church also was held in some of the little red buildings.

This building retains its place as a community landmark building. It is believed that National Register listing will provide impetus and funds for long-term maintenance and rehabilitation.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Redwine, Gwen S. "Beulah Grove Lodge No. 372, Free and Accepted York Masons/Pleasant Grove School." *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, May 2008. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A

- () **preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- () **preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**
date issued:
- () **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:

- (X) **State historic preservation office**
- () **Other State Agency**
- () **Federal agency**
- () **Local government**
- () **University**
- () **Other, Specify Repository:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 717080 Northing 3732020

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the immediate setting of the building at the corner of Old Lower River Road. The boundary follows the right-of-way of Old Lower River Road on the west and north and follows the property line on the south for 100 feet and then extends north to the right-of-way along the east boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Lynn Speno, Survey and Register Specialist
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 254 Washington Street, Ground Level
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** December 2009
e-mail lynn.speno@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title Gwen Sommers Redwine
organization N/A
mailing address 6830 Quail Place
city or town Douglasville **state** GA **zip code** 30135
telephone N/A
e-mail N/A

- () **property owner**
- (X) **consultant**
- () **regional development center preservation planner**
- () **other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Pleasant Grove Baptist Church
organization (if applicable) N/A
mailing address 2525 Lower River Road
city or town Douglasville **state** GA **zip code** 30134
e-mail (optional) N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: The Beulah Grove Lodge No. 372, Free and Accepted York
Masons/Pleasant Grove School
City or Vicinity: Douglasville vicinity
County: Douglas
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: April 2009

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 16

1. South façade of building; photographer facing north.
2. South and east elevations; photographer facing northwest.
3. South and west elevations; photographer facing northeast.
4. West elevation; photographer facing east.
5. North and east elevations; photographer facing southwest.
6. North elevation; photographer facing south.
7. First floor schoolroom; photographer facing south.
8. First floor, lodge bench; photographer facing east.
9. First floor schoolroom; photographer facing north.
10. Second floor lodge meeting room; photographer facing south.
11. Second floor lodge meeting room; photographer facing north.
12. Second floor lodge meeting room; photographer facing east.
13. Second floor lodge meeting room; photographer facing north.
14. South and west elevations; photographer facing northeast.
15. South and west elevations from the cemetery; photographer facing northeast.
16. South and west elevations from the cemetery; photographer facing east.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)