**1 NAME**

**HISTORIC** Hawfields Presbyterian Church

**AND/OR COMMON**

---

**2 LOCATION**

**STREET & NUMBER** W. corner jct. NC 119 and SR 1981, north and south sides

**CITY, TOWN** Mebane

**STATE** North Carolina

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION** X VICIETY OF

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT** 6th

**CODE** 37

**COUNTY** Alamance

**CODE** 001

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**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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<th>CATEGORY</th>
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<th>STATUS</th>
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<td>Accessible</td>
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<td>Religious</td>
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<td></td>
<td>BEING CONSIDERED</td>
<td>Yes: Unrestricted</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
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**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**NAME** Hawfields Presbyterian Church, Rev. A. B. Plexico

**STREET & NUMBER** Route 1

**CITY, TOWN** Mebane

**STATE** North Carolina

**27302**

---

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.** Alamance County Courthouse

**STREET & NUMBER**

**CITY, TOWN** Graham

**STATE** North Carolina

---

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE**

**DATE**

**FEDERAL**

**STATE**

**COUNTY**

**LOCAL**

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**

**CITY, TOWN**

**STATE**
DESCRIPTION

The Hawfields Presbyterian Church complex, located in the rolling farmland of Alamance County, has been a focus of community life for generations; the accretive additions to the original church reflect the growth of the congregation and its activities. The small mid-nineteenth century brick church, carefully preserved by the congregation, is now part of an extensive composition of brick structures linked by passages and arcades. It is the southeast member of an inverted U-shaped arrangement with its western pendant a gymnasium built in brick in a temple form intended to complement the original building. To the rear of each of these is a two-story brick classroom building; that adjoining the original church was built in the early 1920s. An arcade links the two to the rear of an open courtyard. Rearward from the arcade extends a passageway leading to an educational building, a large brick cross-shaped structure dating from 1965. To the west of the gymnasium is a small, freestanding frame Session House, of mid-nineteenth century vintage; its facade is roughly parallel to the original church and gymnasium. Across N. C. 119 from the church complex is the cemetery, in which predictably many members of the congregation are buried, representing many generations of the community.

For the purposes of this nomination, the significant portions of the complex are designated as the original church building, the classroom to the rear of it, the Session House, and the cemetery. While the other more recent structures are integral to the continued use of the complex, and have been designed to complement the earlier ones, they do not possess historical significance.

The Hawfields Church building itself, erected in 1852-1855, is typical of substantial mid-nineteenth century churches of the region in its brick construction, simple temple form, and unpretentious Greek Revival detail. The brick is locally made, and, in a retardataire usage not unusual in North Carolina, is laid in Flemish bond. (The use of Flemish bond in better buildings continued well into the nineteenth century despite its general disuse past ca. 1830: one surmises that it may have been regarded as proper for good quality construction regardless of current trends.)

The building is three bays wide and six deep beneath a shallow gable roof. The main facade is pedimented, and the tympanum is outlined with a cornice featuring simple elongated rafter brackets. This underlines the pedimented as well and carries around the building, as the upper element of a broad, simplified frieze. The tympanum of the pediment is accented by a small louvered triangular-headed vent with applied decoration.

The brick walls are simply but decisively articulated by having all openings set into full-height recessed bays, creating a rhythmic procession of broad alternating pilaster strips and recessed strips. Windows are tall, containing sixteen-over-sixteen sash, with louvered blinds. These are set into simple mitered frames surmounted by flat arches accented with small keystones, and resting on plain stone sills. The central, front double door is similarly treated and has four tall panels per leaf beneath a tall paneled transom area that repeats the door treatment.
The early 1920s rear classroom addition, two stories high, is attached to the back wall of the church and extends only slightly along the side walls; it creates a T-shaped form. An obvious attempt was made to relate the two, through the repetition of red brick laid in Flemish bond, the use of a similar pediment at its rear elevation, and the employment of stone sills. The double, six-over-six sash are of institutional character suitable to its classroom use.

The interior of the original church building consists of a small entry hall across the front and large open sanctuary, with a raised pulpit at the end opposite the front entrance, long rows of pews, and a gallery along the entrance and flanking sides. In the entry area, a stair rises in the southeast corner to the gallery; it has a square-in-section newel with flat, faceted cap, rounded rail, and thin balusters rising from an open string. Baseboards here and throughout the church are simply molded. The pews are arranged in three sections, one in the center (thirteen rows), and one to either side beneath the galleries (fourteen rows on the west and twelve on the east). Choir seats are on the east side of the raised rostrum area. Pews are obviously old, possibly original. Of hand-planed wood, they have simple flat sides rising to curvilinear arm rests, and plain backs and seats. The pews in the galleries are also old, with slatted backs and curvilinear, solid sides. Rostrum seating is equally simple, with three large chairs and a pulpit.

The interior finish of the church is simply but carefully treated, and its preservation by the congregation is apparent. Ornate lighting fixtures, a central chandelier and sconces attached to the galleries' paneled balustrades, are described as original and recently electrified.

The walls are plastered and the ceiling finished with wood sheathing. Wide floor boards are covered by carpeting. Door and window frames are symmetrically molded with plain cornerblocks, typical of the mid-nineteenth century. The balustrade protecting the galleries is paneled with slightly raised rectangular panels, also original. The galleries are carried on slender metal columns, fluted, with graceful lotus capitals.

The small session house is one bay wide and two deep, with a broad overhanging gable roof pedimented at the ends. The building, set on piers of brick, is covered with plain weatherboards. A chimney occurs at the rear. The central front door has two long flat panels and it, like the windows, is set in a simple molded frame. Windows are protected with paneled shutters. The interior is finished with horizontal flush sheathing and has a plain post and lintel mantel.
Hawfields Presbyterian Church serves a congregation established in the mid-eighteenth century; the community had many Scotch-Irish settlers who came to North Carolina from the mid-Atlantic region. The church is an important reminder of the early composition and cultural development of the region. Visited by the well-traveled minister Hugh McAden in 1755, the church was formally organized soon after this; in 1765 Patillo became minister, one of four of his denomination in the colony. The present church, erected during the period 1852-1855, is a substantial brick temple-form structure, which has been well preserved. Nearby is a mid-nineteenth century frame session house, and across the road the congregation's cemetery. Despite additions to create an extensive complex, the nineteenth century buildings survive intact.

Criteria assessment:

A. Associated with the settlement of Piedmont North Carolina by people of Scotch-Irish descent in the mid-eighteenth century, whose communities often centered on Presbyterian congregations; with the increasing prosperity of North Carolina in the mid-nineteenth century, especially in the 1850s, which generated construction of many new and more substantial buildings; with the development and role of the Presbyterian Church of North Carolina.

B. Associated with the lives of early Presbyterian minister Henry Pattillo, minister William Paisley, and others; with the politically prominent Scott family including two governors, W. Kerr and Robert, and legislative leader Ralph.

C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of careful, substantial vernacular Greek Revival church architecture, and the regional retardaire use of Flemish bond brickwork.


The Hawfields Presbyterian Church building, completed in 1855 near Mebane in rural Alamance County, continues today to serve a congregation whose history extends from the middle of the eighteenth century. Beginning in the late 1730s the Hawfields region was populated largely by settlers of Scottish descent, who built up a close knit community centered around their church. Unlike the Highland Scots who arrived in the Carolinas by ship and settled in the region of the Cape Fear river, these Scotch-Irish came into North Carolina from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, through the Valley of Virginia into the Carolina back-country.

It is not certain when the Hawfields Presbyterian Church was established. However, in 1755 when Reverend Hugh McAdam visited North Carolina from the Synod of Philadelphia, he reported that he preached to "a considerable large congregation, chiefly Presbyterians" in a Hawfields church, probably a crude log building. The church was formally organized shortly after McAdam's visit. However, the church was unable to secure a full time minister until 1765, when Henry Patillo arrived from Virginia to take charge of the Hawfields, Eno, and Little River group of churches. At the time of Patillo's arrival there were only three other Presbyterian ministers in North Carolina.

Guion Griffis Johnson, in Ante-Bellum North Carolina, maintains that the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina "enjoyed a prestige far out of proportion to the number of its followers largely because . . . its ministers had a reputation for education and leadership."1

Patillo epitomized this type of minister. He was an outstanding preacher, an educator of note, an author, and a Latin scholar. His Geographical Catechism, published in 1796 by Abraham Hodge of Halifax, was the first textbook published in North Carolina. Patillo became the religious leader of the area, and was largely responsible for the establishment of the Orange Presbytery, which had its first meeting on September 5, 1770, in Hawfields Church, with Patillo as moderator.

Patillo resigned from Hawfields in 1773. He was replaced in 1775 by John Debow, who nursed the church through the revolution, and who was, according to the Reverend William Henry Foote, responsible for a "revival of religion and a goody number" of additions to the church. Debow left in 1783 and was replaced by Jacob Lake in 1784 and by William Hodge in 1793. William Paisley replaced Hodge in 1801.

During Paisley's tenure at Hawfields, the state and nation were swept by a tide of religious fervor known as the Great Revival. Paisley and Hawfields were at the forefront of this movement in the state, and hosted one of the first camp meetings in the state.
When Paisley left Hawfields in 1818 it had an enrollment of approximately 130. His replacement Ezekial B. Curry, who remained pastor until 1842, succeeded in almost doubling the enrollment. Anderson G. Hughes succeeded Curry, and during his stay it became obvious that new facilities would be needed. The early facility used by Hugh McAden in 1755 had been replaced by a new building around 1771. This building was enlarged and then replaced in the early nineteenth century, most likely during the early years of Paisley’s ministry.

During most of the nineteenth century Hawfields church and the community of farmers it represented had enjoyed a period of prosperity and stability. This stability can be demonstrated by the fact that when Hughes died in 1873, Hawfields had been served by only three pastors in a period of over seventy years. The coming of the railroad to the area in the early 1850s increased the prosperity of the area, and it was the sentiment of the membership of the church that they have a church "more in keeping with the times."

Work on the new church building began in 1852 on land donated to the church by Thomas White. The church was finished in 1855 at a cost of approximately $6,700. One proud member referred to the new building as "one of the finest churches in the state." Much of the work involved in the construction of the church was donated by its membership. The bricks were handmade and burnt at the Craig brickyard near Hillsborough, and were hauled to the building site by members of the church. Much of the timber for the church was supplied in a similar manner.

The Hawfields area was relatively undamaged by the Civil War, but during Reconstruction was a hotbed of Ku Klux Klan activity. By 1875 membership had bottomed out at only 150 members. In spite of its difficulties the church remained active and strove to regain its pre-war prominence. In 1866 it appointed its first board of deacons, in an attempt to relieve the pastor of some of his duties. In 1870 the Orange Presbytery celebrated its centennial at Hawfields. Anderson Hughes died in 1873, after thirty years at Hawfields, and was replaced by Calvin N. Morrow, a graduate of the Bingham School, the University of North Carolina, and the Union Theological Seminary at Hampden-Sydney College. Morrow revitalized the church's educational programs, and arrested the decline in membership. By 1880 the congregation had increased to 189.

Morrow resigned in 1882 due to ill health and was replaced by Samuel Hall Chester, who became the first minister to reside in the Hawfields manse. All of the previous ministers had owned their farms, and had supplemented their ministerial income by farming. In 1884 it was decided to purchase the Morrow property in Mebane for the permanent use of the minister. Chester left Hawfields in 1889 and became an important national figure in the missionary movement for many years.
During the twentieth century Hawfields has continued to grow. Its 1900 enrollment of 225 was increased to 305 in 1940, and reached 400 in the early 1950s before leveling off. The old Morrow property was replaced by a new manse in 1903. In 1914 an association was formed to ensure permanent upkeep of the cemetery. The church building was enlarged in 1926, with the addition of a Sunday school annex, and a fellowship building was erected in 1951. Hawfields was named Rural Church of the Year by the North Carolina State Grange in 1956, the same year which saw the completion of the church's third manse. In 1957 Hawfields became the first Presbyterian church in the state to formally integrate.

Hawfields has also made its contributions to the political life of twentieth century by way of the Scott family, long time members of the church. Robert Walter Scott, a nineteenth century elder of Hawfields served five terms in the General Assembly, was a member of the North Carolina Board of Agriculture from 1901 to 1929, a trustee of North Carolina State College, and a forceful advocate of scientific agriculture. Three of his sons have held positions of leadership in the state. W. Kerr Scott served as governor of North Carolina from 1949 to 1953, and was a United States senator from 1954 until his death in 1958. His term as governor was characterized by his "forceful, aggressive leadership," and a massive program to build roads, improve port facilities, and, in general improve the state's economic condition. Ralph H. Scott is a long time member of the State Senate, and served as the President Pro-Tem of the Senate. Henry A. Scott, like his two brothers an elder at Hawfields, has served as a member of the board of trustees of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University, and as a member of the Alamance County board of education. Kerr Scott's son, Robert W. Scott was governor from 1969 until 1973, during which time he continued the progressive tradition of the Scotts, with particular emphasis on economic development and education.

James Leyburn, in his study of the Scotch-Irish in America, states that: "The Presbyterian Church was . . . for many Scotch-Irish pioneers the one effective social institution in the community, a real focus and center of community life." The Scotch-Irish settlers of the Hawfields region used their church to maintain a strong social identity many years after they had been assimilated into the culture around them in other respects. The importance of the church in the life of the community can be seen in the fact that as the community expanded, Hawfields served as the mother church for seven area Presbyterian churches. With the memory of two hundred years of religious, social, and political contributions as its legacy, Hawfields survives today as an effective, modern church.
FOOTNOTES


3 Turner, Church in the Old Fields, pp. 50-51. The other three Presbyterian ministers in North Carolina at that time were James Campbell, Hugh McAden, and Alexander Craighead.


5 Turner, Church in the Old Fields, pp. 70-75.

6 Turner, Church in the Old Fields, pp. 67-68.

7 Turner, Church in the Old Fields, pp. 79-80.


9 Turner, Church in the Old Fields, pp. 91-92, 99.

10 Turner, Church in the Old Fields, pp. 104-105. Foote maintains that Hawfields hosted the first camp meeting in the South in 1801. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 227. Although this claim may be extravagant, Johnson confirms that Paisley was a seminal figure in the evangelical movement in the state. Johnson, Ante-Bellum North Carolina, pp. 378-381.

11 Turner, Church in the Old Fields, 115, 124, 137-142.

12 Turner, Church in the Old Fields, pp. 109-110.

13 Turner, Church in the Old Fields, p. 148.

14 Turner, Church in the Old Fields.


17. Turner, Church in the Old Fields, p. 149.

18. Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, pp. 495-496.


20. Turner, Church in the Old Fields, pp. 166-171. After leaving Hawfields Chester became Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church, and after that Secretary of Foreign Correspondence for the Presbyterian Church.


23. Turner, Church in the Old Fields, p. 192. Four Hawfields pastors are buried in the cemetery. They are John Debow, Ezekial Curry, Anderson Hughes, and N. N. Fleming. Also buried at Hawfields is former North Carolina governor, W. Kerr Scott. The Second Hawfields Burying Ground: 1783-1975 (Privately published, 1975), pp. 4-6.


27. Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, pp. 626-627.


29. Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, pp. 701-702.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Approx. 9 acres
UTM REFERENCES

| C | 1,7 | 652,4 [1]6,0 | 31,9 [9]1,3 [5]0 |

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

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME/TITLE: Description prepared by Catherine W. Bishir, Head, Survey and Planning Branch, and Michael Souther, Survey Specialist; Significance prepared by Jim Sumner, Researcher

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION
THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:
NATIONAL __ STATE X LOCAL __

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER