

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number East side of NC 301 0.5 mile south of
junction with SR 2268 not for publication

city, town Hope Mills x vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Cumberland code 051

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church

street & number Box 473

city, town Hope Mills vicinity of state North Carolina 28348

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Cumberland County Courthouse

street & number P.O. Box 2039

city, town Fayetteville state North Carolina 28302

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Cumberland County Historic Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Archives and History
Survey and Planning Branch

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church, built in 1855, embodies the distinctive characteristics of mid-nineteenth century rural North Carolina church architecture. Associated with the mill community of Rockfish Factory, an important antebellum textile concern, the two-story gable-end frame building with double front entrances exhibits features of the vernacular Greek Revival. This influence is especially apparent in the pedimented gable front which alludes to Greek temple forms. Big Rockfish Presbyterian is one of five churches in Cumberland County to follow the prevailing vernacular architectural traditions of mid-century.

The two-story frame church has a three-bay front, four-bay sides, and a gable roof. The gable front is defined by means of a pediment which is flushed sheathed in the tympanum interrupted in the center only by a fanlight with keystone. The fanlight is an earlier, typically Federal feature and its presence on an 1855 Greek Revival church indicates a stylistic holdover. The remainder of the building is sheathed with plain weatherboards, although corner boards have a simple quarter round bead finish. Skirting the roofline is a typical plain boxed cornice.

Fenestration is typically Greek Revival. The end bays of the three-bay front contain entrances on the first floor, while remaining front, side, and rear bays contain 12/12 window sash with louvered shutters. Entrances consist of double doors, each with two recessed panels, a five-light transom, and a simple two step surround. These surrounds, common to county structures built mid-century, match those which hold the window sash.

Evidence of more recent exterior improvements include square brick chimney stove stacks located between the third and fourth bays of each side and asphalt shingling on the roof. A one story cinder block education wing and fellowship hall has been added to the south side in a sensitive manner that in no way compromises the integrity of the original. The church, along with the rear cemetery, is surrounded by thinly scattered longleaf pine and turkey oak growth which shields it from busy Highway 301.

The interior of Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church also follows the traditional plan of mid-nineteenth century rural North Carolina churches. It consists of three component parts: a narthex accessible through the double front entrances, the sanctuary, and a gallery surrounding all sides except the front. Staircases leading to the balcony are usually present at the narthex ends, and in this case are enclosed and consist of winders making a complete half turn in the course of their ascent.

Interior finish is neat but plain. Wide pine flooring is found throughout. Wainscot in the narthex sanctuary and gallery consists of horizontal boards with a simple chair rail, while that facing the gallery has rectangular recessed panels. The gallery is supported by seven octagonal columns. Pews with

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double-curved ends are still located in their original positions on the stepped levels of the gallery and in sections on the sanctuary floor. Side aisles divide the sanctuary into three zones, the largest being the center which has double pews with a divider down the center and the smallest being those on the sides which are simply rows of single pews. The raised pulpit area at the front also has shallow rows of benches for the session and choir facing its sides.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1855 **Builder/Architect** John McDonald

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church (1855) is a frame gable-front church which, with its double front entrances, interior floor plan with narthex, nave, raised chancel and gallery, and vernacular Greek Revival finish, follows the rural church architectural traditions of mid-nineteenth century Cumberland County and North Carolina. The church originated in Rockfish Village, an important antebellum mill community about seven miles southwest of Fayetteville, and developed, like many rural churches, from a tradition of periodic revivals and regular Sunday Schools held in the vicinity. Big Rockfish Church, which still houses a small but active congregation, is an inheritor of the typical rural church practices and architectural traditions of antebellum Cumberland County.

Criteria Assessment

- A. Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church is associated with the rural church practices and traditions of antebellum Cumberland County.
- C. Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church (1855) follows the rural church architectural traditions of mid-nineteenth century North Carolina with its frame gable-front construction, double front entrances, interior floor plan with narthex, nave, raised chancel, and gallery, and vernacular Greek Revival finish. It also illustrates the common practice of having a nearby cemetery plot containing graves of church and, in this century, community members.

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Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church
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Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church originated in the vicinity of Rockfish village, a milling community located approximately seven miles southwest of Fayetteville, during the early antebellum period. The village grew alongside the Rockfish Manufacturing Company established by Charles Peter Mallett on Big Rockfish Creek. Commencing operations in 1836, the water-powered textile mill, equipped with 4,500 spindles and 100 looms, became the state's largest in the antebellum period.¹ Because of the extensive Scottish settlement, Presbyterian influence was present in the area at a very early date.

The church, organized as the Presbyterian Church of Rockfish Factory on 8 December 1844, grew out of two longstanding traditions. The first was the conducting of a regional Sunday School on a regular basis to serve area residents. John McDonald, a carpenter who later was to become an elder of the Big Rockfish Church and to supervise its initial building efforts, conducted the Sunday School in a schoolhouse about four miles south of the present-day church. Two services were held each Sunday which were open to members of all denominations in a wide geographic area. If an itinerant minister could be obtained, a preaching service took the place of a Sunday School session.²

The other tradition out of which Big Rockfish Church grew was that of period revivals. Presbyterian-sponsored revivals occurred in Rockfish as early as 1835. Under the pastorate of Rev. James W. Douglass of the First Presbyterian Church of Fayetteville and the church session, meetings were held at Daniel McNeill's place called "Ardlussa" on Big Rockfish Creek. Three meetings held on 28 June, 19 July, and 31 August, 1835 at this place alone resulted in the examination and receiving of fifty persons.³ Added to that number were twenty-eight more persons received at nearby locations before the close of the revival season.⁴

Those attending both the Sunday School and the revivals made the decision to form a church and chose Rockfish village as the most central location. Forty-three persons of various denominational backgrounds signed a petition to organize the "Presbyterian Church of Rockfish Factory" and presented it to the sixty-third session of the Fayetteville Presbytery on 4 November 1844. The petition was granted and three Presbytery representatives, Rev. Simeon Colton, Rev. Hector McNeill and Rev. A. Gilchrist were appointed to organize the church on 8 December 1844.⁵

The church was duly constituted by Simeon Colton in December and elders were nominated and elected immediately thereafter. Colton, originally a New England Congregationalist minister and educator, associated himself with the Presbyterian Church after moving to Fayetteville in 1833. He served as headmaster of the Donaldson Academy from 1833 to 1846 and was active in the Fayetteville Presbytery. During that time, Rev. Colton also pastored churches including that at Rockfish from 1844 to 1846.⁶

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The congregation met first in the Rockfish factory and then in a separate edifice in Rockfish village during its early years. Because they shared the building with other congregations which caused scheduling problems, the Presbyterian church relocated to a site about two miles east on Republican--later the Lumberton--Road.⁷ Henceforth known as the Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church, the vernacular Greek Revival Church was erected in 1855 under the supervision of carpenter-elder John McDonald and his apprentice on a five acre tract of land.⁸ Three-fifths of the original tract on the east side of the main north-south road was donated by David Murphy and the remainder by Hector McNeill, both of whom also functioned as trustees of the Church.⁹ In 1884, an additional eight acre parcel was conveyed by David Murphy to the church trustees making the site of the edifice and rear cemetery total approximately thirteen acres.¹⁰

Very little has occurred to alter the physical character or general makeup of the Big Rockfish Church since the antebellum period. It continued to receive members largely from the Rockfish village-(after 1885, Hope Mills)-vicinity. The church was the mother of three others: Sherwood (1874), Hope Mills (1893), and Mars Hill, a black congregation.¹¹ It celebrated its centennial year in 1944 with a general overhaul of the church, which included painting and repair, replacing the roof, constructing new brick steps and flues, and installing electric lights, all made possible by generous donations.¹² An L-shaped cinder block education wing was added to the south side of the church in the early 1950s.¹³ The building, situated on sandy soil and surrounded by some of its original long-leaf pine vegetation, still houses a small but vital congregation today.

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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REFERENCE NOTES:

¹Richard W. Griffin and Diffie W. Standard, "The Cotton Textile Industry in Antebellum North Carolina, Part II: An Era of Boom and Consolidation, 1830-1860, "The North Carolina Historical Review, XXXIV (April, 1951), 144.

²Mrs. A.D. Cashwell and Mrs. Irene Rasmussen (compilers), with the help of a concise historical sketch compiled by Mrs. Lauchlin McDonald in 1930, "The First One Hundred and Ten Years of Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church, 1844-1954" (Privately printed, RFD 1, Hope Mills, North Carolina), 1, hereinafter cited as Cashwell and Rasmussen, "Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church."

³Harriot Sutton Rankin (compiler), History of First Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville, North Carolina (Fayetteville: By the author, 1928), 18, hereinafter cited as Rankin, First Presbyterian Church.

⁴Rankin, First Presbyterian Church,

⁵Peter MacQueen, Jr., "The Ancestors and Descendants of Peter MacQueen" (Privately printed, 1976), 70.

⁶Susanne A. Colton to Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church, unpublished document, Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church, Box 473, Hope Mills, North Carolina, 28348.

⁷Cashwell and Rasmussen, "Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church," 2-3.

⁸Cashwell and Rasmussen, "Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church," 3; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Cumberland County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 57, microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy, Cumberland County Core Collection, Anderson Street Library, Fayetteville, North Carolina.

⁹Hector McNeill to Neill G. McNeill, 27 November 1855, Cumberland County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Cumberland County Courthouse, P. O. Box 2039, Fayetteville, Book 53, Page 468, hereinafter cited as Cumberland County Deeds; Cumberland County Deeds, Book 53, Page 469; Cumberland County Deeds, Book 53, Page 470.

¹⁰Cumberland County Deeds, Book 81, Page 299.

¹¹Cashwell and Rasmussen, "Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church," 5-6; unpublished church records, Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church, Box 473, Hope Mills, North Carolina, 28348.

¹²Cashwell and Rasmussen, "Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church," 10-11.

¹³Cashwell and Rasmussen, "Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church," 14.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 13.08 acres

Quadrangle name St. Paul's

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UTM References

A

1	7	6	8	9	4	2	10	3	18	6	19	5	13	10
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B

1	7	6	8	9	7	4	10	3	18	6	19	5	15	10
Zone	Easting			Northing										

C

1	7	6	8	9	7	2	15	3	18	6	19	3	17	15
Zone	Easting			Northing										

D

1	7	6	8	9	3	15	10	3	18	6	19	3	17	15
Zone	Easting			Northing										

E

Zone	Easting			Northing										

F

Zone	Easting			Northing										

G

Zone	Easting			Northing										

H

Zone	Easting			Northing										

Verbal boundary description and justification

As outlined in red on topographic map 244-D.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Jasperse, Principal Investigator

organization Consultant for Survey and Planning Branch date November 20, 1982

street & number Division of Archives and History telephone 1-919-733-6545

109 E. Jones Street

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 William S. Price, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date June 2, 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

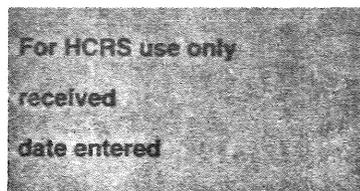
date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church



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Bibliographical References

Cashwell, Mrs. A.D. and Rassmussen, Mrs. Irene, compilers, with the help of a concise historical sketch compiled by Mrs. Lauchlin MacDonald in 1930 .

"The First One Hundred and Ten Years of Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church, 1844-1954." Hope Mills, N.C.: Privately printed.

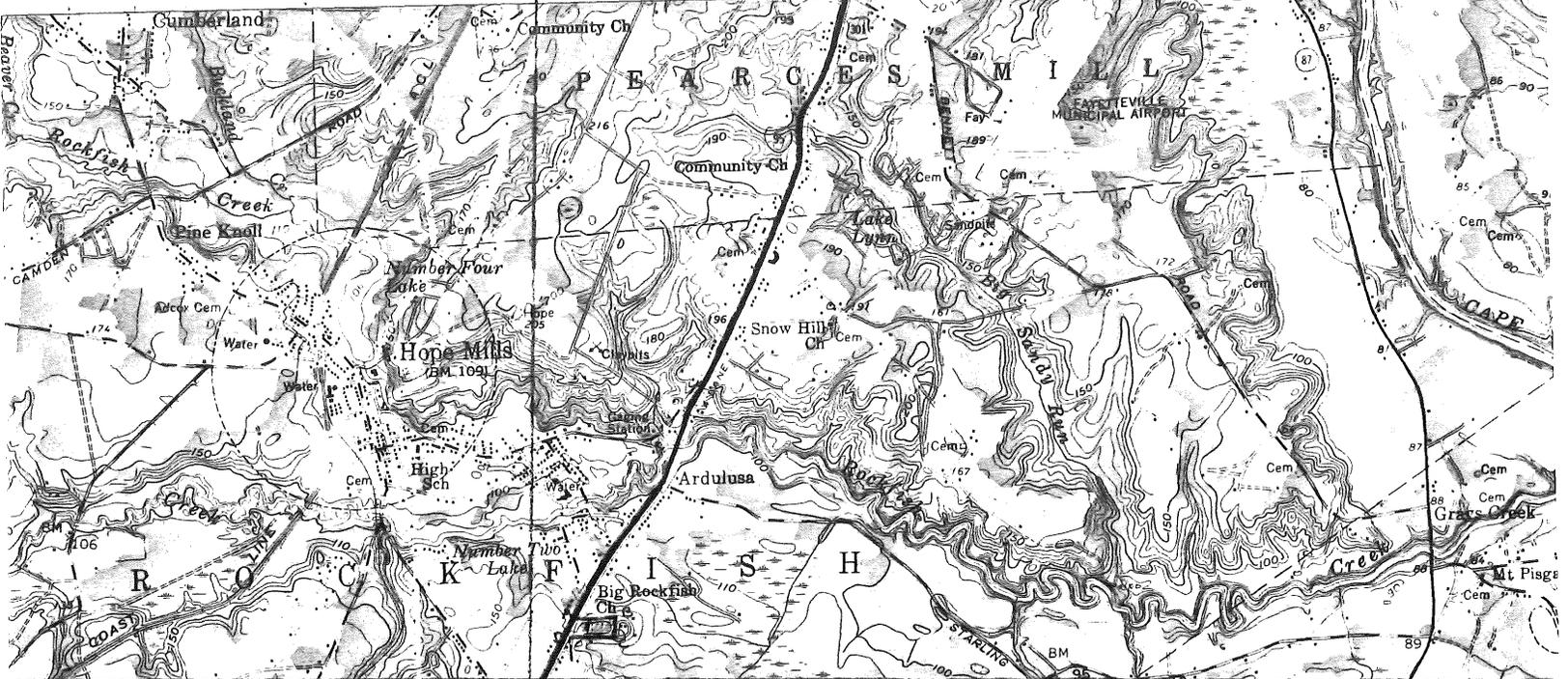
Cumberland County Records: Deeds.

Griffin, Richard W. and Standard, Duffee W. "The Cotton Textile Industry in Antebellum North Carolina," Part II: An Era of Boom and Consolidation, 1830-1860. The North Carolina Historical Review 34 (April, 1951), 139-40, 144.

Hope Mills, N.C. Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church, RFD 1. Susanne A. Colton, unpublished document on Simeon Colton.

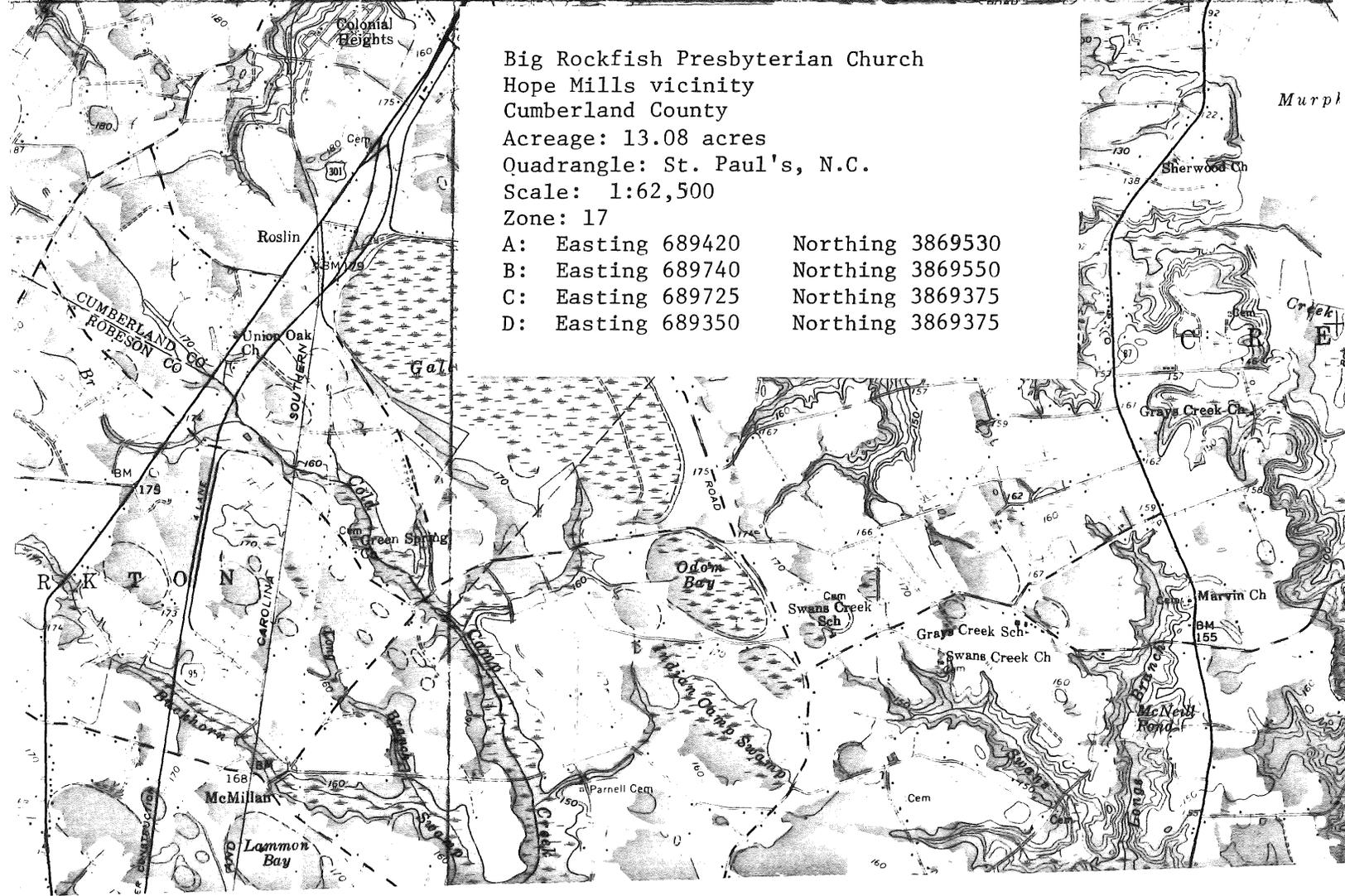
MacQueen, Peter, Jr. "The Ancestors and Descendants of Peter MacQueen." Privately printed, 1976.

Rankin, Harriot Sutton, compiler. History of First Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville, North Carolina. Fayetteville, N.C.: By the Author, 1928.



Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church
Hope Mills vicinity
Cumberland County
Acreage: 13.08 acres
Quadrangle: St. Paul's, N.C.
Scale: 1:62,500
Zone: 17

A: Easting 689420	Northing 3869530
B: Easting 689740	Northing 3869550
C: Easting 689725	Northing 3869375
D: Easting 689350	Northing 3869375



Big Rockfish Presbyterian Church
Hope Mills vicinity
Cumberland County

Acreage: 13.08 acres

Quadrangle: St. Paul's, N.C.

Scale: 1:62,500

Zone: 17

A: Easting 689420 Northing 3869530

B: Easting 689740 Northing 3869550

C: Easting 689725 Northing 3869375

D: Easting 689350 Northing 3869375

