State of North Carolina
Division of Archives and History

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

X MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME
HISTORIC
Ebenezer Methodist Church
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
West side SR 1008, .5 miles north of jct with SR 1975, near New Hope Township, near Bells

CITY, TOWN
Bells

STATE
North Carolina

CITY, TOWN

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC
Chatham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
Rt. 2, Box 203

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Pittsboro,

STATE
N. C.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Greensboro,

STATE
N. C.

NAME
Ebenezer Methodist Church c/o Mrs. Roscoe Wilson

STREET & NUMBER
Rt. 2, Box 203

ORGANIZATION
Urban Research Associates

STREET & NUMBER
1301 Cornwallis Drive

NAME
Ray Manieri

DATE
July 1, 1983

TELEPHONE

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TELEPHONE
The Ebenezer Methodist Church is a simple rural Gothic Revival chapel probably constructed during the late nineteenth century. It is a one-story, one by four bay weatherboard structure set in a small grove of pine trees on S.R. 1008. The church has a steeply pitched gable roof of tin and lancet windows with modest tracery. The church's cemetery is located just to the north of the chapel.

Its most dominant feature is a single-stage entrance tower which projects from its gable front. This tower features a double-leaf entrance topped by a Gothic arch containing an interesting quatrefoil design. A small pent roof shelters the entrance. Lancet windows with Gothic hood molds appear on each side of the tower at the first story. Louvered lancet window openings occur on each side at a higher level. A steep, bellcast, pyramid roof caps the steeple. This roof contains dormered vents, decorated with louvers and trefoil designs. A heavy, turned, wooden finial sits atop the pyramid roof. Large lancet windows illuminate the chapel's remaining sides. A small, gabled, weatherboard addition extends from the Chapel's rear and a modern cement block ell extends northward from the chapel's rear.

The interior of the Ebenezer Methodist Church maintains much of its original character. Original multi-paneled doors survive, as does the original wainscoting and chair rail. All interior doors and windows have plain surrounds. The interior walls have interesting horizontal, grooved paneling. Seating for the church's congregation is provided by heavy wooden pews. A heavy, paneled wooden railing creates a chancel area by separating the pulpit, piano, and choir pews from the rest of the congregation.
PERIOD
PREHISTORIC
1400-1499
1500-1599
1600-1699
1700-1799
1800-1899
1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW
- ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
- ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
- AGRICULTURE
ARCHITECTURE
ART
COMMERCE
COMMUNICATIONS
- COMMUNITY PLANNING
CONSERVATION
ECONOMICS
EDUCATION
ENGINEERING
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
INDUSTRY
INVENTION
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- LAW
LITERATURE
MILITARY
MUSIC
PHILOSOPHY
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
RELIGION
SCIENCE
SCULPTURE
SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
THEATER
TRANSPORTATION

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1890

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ebenezer Methodist Church, one of the oldest Methodist congregations in the New Hope Creek area, was established in 1827. It has occupied several different structures since its establishment. The present church building dates from about 1890 and allegedly incorporates part of the previous church building constructed in 1867. As a result of the construction of the B. Everett Jordan Dam, the church was moved two miles north of its original site to its present location in the late 1970s. The present church structure is particularly interesting as a well-preserved example of Gothic Revival motifs on a simple frame chapel. In this respect it is unusual for Chatham County, where most rural chapels do not reach its level of expression of the Gothic Revival style.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

A. Associated with the development of Methodism in North Carolina during the late nineteenth century.

C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of vernacular Gothic Revival, ecclesiastical architecture, as that style developed in the rural areas of central North Carolina during the late nineteenth century.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although the Ebenezer Methodist Church was established as early as 1827, the present church structure dates from about 1890. The church's worship services were first held in a small log chapel, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This structure has now fallen into ruin.

The original log church was used by both black and white members of the congregation for many years, but because of the growth of the congregation and the desire for more modern facilities, other church buildings were constructed. The second church structure, located across SR 1008 from the previous site of the present church structure, was constructed between 1830 and 1840 and given to the congregation's black members, which left Ebenezer Church to establish their own congregation after the Civil War.

Although the establishment of the Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church, reduced the membership of Ebenezer Church by almost one-half, a new church building was constructed in 1867. Church tradition states that this third structure was used for several decades and then incorporated into the construction of the present chapel about 1890.

It is not known why a new structure was built about 1890; but it may have been necessitated by the growth of the congregation or the desire for more modern facilities as the rural congregation became more prosperous. Church oral tradition claims that local craftsmen used to create the Gothic Revival motif of this small frame chapel. Timber for construction of the new building, which incorporated the 1867 chapel, was cut from nearby forests and floated down local rivers to the site of the church.

Ebenezer Methodist Church has experienced several physical changes during the twentieth century. A rear addition, forming two Sunday School rooms was added in 1914 and a cement block ell added in 1948. During the late 1970s, construction of the B. Everett Jordan Dam threatened the church and it was moved to its present location on SR 1008 two miles north of its former site. After its relocation, a new masonry block addition was added to the church and a frame and block shelter constructed to its rear. The church cemetery was also relocated to the new site.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approx. 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

<table>
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is located on the west side of SR 1008, .5 of a mile north of its junction with SR 1975 and consists of the area upon which the church is located. See sketch map.
NOTES

1. "Ebenezer Church, County Landmark", The Pittsboro Herald, August 9, 1972, p. 2.


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

"Ebenezer Church, County Landmark." Pittsboro Herald, August 9, 1972.

