

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# 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 Grace Union Church and Cemetery  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number SW corner, junction of SR 1008 and SR 2030  Not for publication  
city, town Blackburn  vicinity  
state North Carolina code N.C. county Catawba code 035 zip code 28658

### 3. Classification

|   |  |                                     |                  |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Ownership of Property                       | Category of Property                         | Number of Resources within Property |                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> building(s)         | Contributing                        | Noncontributing  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <u>1</u>                            | _____ buildings  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State       | <input type="checkbox"/> site                | <u>1</u>                            | _____ sites      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal     | <input type="checkbox"/> structure           | _____                               | _____ structures |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> object              | _____                               | _____ objects    |
|   |  | <u>2</u>                            | <u>0</u> Total   |

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historic and Architectural Resources of  
Catawba County, N.C.

Number of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register 0

### 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  request for determination of eligibility 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  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

William S. Pinn April 3, 1990  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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 and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other. (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure

Funerary: cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social: clubhouse

Funerary: cemetery

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stucco

walls brick

roof metal

other stucco

stone (cemetery)

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**Grace Union Church** is located in rural south central Catawba County on a wooded knoll overlooking the intersection of SR 1008 and SR 2030. It is an 1857, one story, brick, Greek Revival style church. Grace Union is the only remaining mid-nineteenth century church structure known in Catawba County. While its Greek Revival design is unique in the county, it is related to a small group of pedimented temple form churches of the mid-nineteenth century found elsewhere in the Piedmont, including Back Creek Presbyterian Church (1857) in Rowan County and Centre Presbyterian Church (1854) in Iredell County. Grace Union Church's integrity is not severely jeopardized by alterations made in the 1940s. Despite some changes to the interior, door treatment and fenestration, the strong Greek Revival design remains intact.

The **Grace Union Cemetery**, immediately north of the church, predates the church, with its earliest legible gravestone exhibiting an 1822 date. The early stones are decorated with Germanic artistic designs. Though the cemetery has been in continual use to the present, the oldest stones are nearest to the church, and their integrity remains intact.

Grace Union Church

The Greek Revival character of Grace Union Church is accomplished through a boldly simple design, which successfully reduces the temple idiom to its most basic form. The red-painted common bond brickwork of the walls serves as a foil to the stark white trim. The features which give this rectangular church its distinctly classical appearance are the pedimented gable with plastered tympanum facing the road, the wide frieze which wraps around three sides of the building beneath the boxed cornice, and the equally wide stuccoed pilasters at each corner. By contrast, the rear of the building retains only a raked cornice and is otherwise devoid of Greek-inspired detailing. The rear wall is punctuated by two nine-over-nine sash windows flanking a single-leaf replacement door, while the side elevations are accented by three symmetrically placed nine-over-nine sash windows. While the

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facade now features a central double-leaf door flanked by nine-over-nine sash windows, these represent alterations made in the 1940s. Originally, the opposite scheme -- of a central window with symmetrically placed doors on either side -- was found at Grace Church. Completing the exterior design is the stuccoed water table which provides a visually heavy base for the building.

The interior of Grace Union Church is also a product of the early 1940s remodeling. It features a center-aisle plan with replacement pews, narrow oak flooring, plastered walls, celotex ceiling, an arch defining the chancel, and an enclosed classroom on either side of the chancel. At the same time that these alterations took place, a basement was excavated beneath part of the church for the installation of a heating system. The entrance to the basement and the brick chimney servicing the heating system are found on the south side of the building. The church building is presently used as a boy scout hut.

Grace Union Cemetery

The cemetery of Grace Union Church, bounded by the church on the south, SR 2030 on the north, woods on the west and an imaginary line parallel with the front of the church on the east, contains an estimated two hundred gravestones, arranged in relatively neat rows, dating from the early nineteenth century to the present. The oldest stones are situated in the area closest to the church. The earliest stone with legible markings appears to be that of Lieutenant John Hoyle, who was born on June 1, 1740 and died on September 1, 1822. However, some of the other remaining stones with no inscriptions or with non-legible inscriptions may predate Hoyle's stone. There are numerous stones dating from the 1820s through the 1860s. Some of the prominent local families represented at Grace Union Cemetery are the Anthony, Hoyle, Reinhardt, Warlick, Jarret (or Jerrett), Yoder, Whitener, Miller, Propst, Heavner, Cansler, Shuford, Weaver and Rudisill families.

Some of the stones dating prior to 1870 have interesting designs reflecting Germanic artistic traditions. Most of these are vernacular Baroque pedimented forms carved by local craftsmen. Several types in particular can be noted. One type is characterized by curvilinear tops ranging from one simple curve to more elaborate multi-lobed curves. Examples include the stone of John Hoyle (1822), Elizabeth Anthony (1840), John Antho-

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ny (1831), Maria Eve Anthony (1828), Daniel Anthony (1844) and Anna Shuford (1834). Some of these display delicately incised curvilinear designs. Another type is found in the stones of the Propst family dating from around 1870. The tops of these move from the sides through a series of angles and curves to an upper peak. Several Shuford family stones from the 1830s and 1840s are elegant in their simplicity, and consist basically of a rectangle with a curved top slightly recessed from each side, the whole being outlined with an incised border following the shape of the stone. The stones of the Whitener children -- Catherine (1860), John (1860) and Francis (1864) -- and of John A. Jarrett (1857) and Linda E. Jarrett (1860) are quite similar in design. These stones are rectangular with concentric quarter circles at each upper corner and leaf and vine motifs elsewhere. These stones are attributed to the Caveny-Crawford Workshop of York County, South Carolina (See Property Type "Germanic Gravestone Design of Catawba County: 1750-1900.").

Grace Union Church embodies the bold and simple characteristics of the Greek Revival style as interpreted in some churches of the mid-nineteenth century in piedmont North Carolina. Grace Union Cemetery contains a collection of nineteenth century gravestones of artistic significance for their designs reflective of the Germanic background of the congregation.

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NOTE: One of the photographs used in this nomination was taken in 1979 and another in 1983. All resources have been thoroughly field checked by Barbara Kooiman in 1989 and have been determined to be unchanged from their appearance and condition portrayed in photographs taken prior to 1989.

**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)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

Art \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Period of Significance

1822 - ca. 1870 \_\_\_\_\_

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Significant Dates

1857 \_\_\_\_\_

1822 \_\_\_\_\_

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Cultural Affiliation

N/A

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\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Irby, Joseph (brickwork)

\_\_\_\_\_

Harrellson, Mr. (carpentry)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

**Grace Union Church and Cemetery** are significant resources in the Property Type "Religious Buildings and Sites in Catawba County: Churches," and meet the registration requirements for that property type under Criterion C, in the area of architecture, as the only mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival church known to remain in the county. Grace Union Church and Cemetery also meet the registration requirements for Criteria Consideration A and D, as religious properties which derive their primary significance from their architectural and artistic distinctions. Grace Union Church is related to the Historic Context "Religion in Catawba County: 1747-1939" as a fine representation of a union church, and <sup>for</sup> its importance and function to the German population of Catawba County. Grace Union Cemetery is related to Property Type "Religious Buildings and Sites in Catawba County: Cemeteries," and meets registration requirements for that property type under Criterion C for the artistic value of the gravestones, which reflect the Germanic influence of the congregations through the strong Germanic designs of the stones, dating from 1822 to circa 1870.

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Grace Union Church &amp; Cemetery, Catawba County, N.C.

Historical Background

The Germans who settled the western piedmont of North Carolina in the mid-eighteenth century came mostly from Pennsylvania along the Great Wagon Road. Divided primarily into three religious sects, Moravian, Lutheran, and Reformed, they shared a common origin, language, and cultural tradition. The Moravians formed a separate community while the Lutherans and Reformed usually settled together. Because of the sparse population and the scarcity of ministers, Lutherans and Reformed frequently erected a single house of worship known as a "union church" where the congregations alternated services.<sup>1</sup> Grace Church was begun in that tradition.

In 1796 German residents of the South Fork Valley of the Catawba River, in that part of Lincoln County that became Catawba County in 1842, held a meeting to discuss the need for a church and regular worship services.<sup>2</sup> Samuel Jarrett, a Lutheran, offered to sell a tract of land "for the purpose of building a house of worship thereon." On January 11, 1797, Jarrett transferred a fraction over three acres to John Yoder and John Huffman, trustee, for \$8.00.<sup>3</sup> Construction of a log church, 25 x 30 feet and two stories high, began soon afterwards. Local tradition claims that difficulties in obtaining materials and a shortage of labor delayed completion for two years but did not deter the people from their services.<sup>4</sup> The structure was named Grace Church and was served by the Reverend Johann Gottfried Arndt (Lutheran) and the Reverend Andrew Loretz (Reformed), pioneer ministers who served most of the German churches west of the Catawba River.<sup>5</sup>

Arndt and Loretz were close friends and colleagues who undoubtedly substituted for each other as the occasion demanded. Nevertheless, the two congregations were mutually separate though they shared a union church. They were held intact by the charisma of the two ministers and the power of their preaching. Arndt died in 1807 and Loretz in 1812; their passing nearly brought an end to the history of Grace Church.<sup>6</sup> The Lutheran congregation dwindled, many going to Zion, Daniel's, or Trinity churches. Efforts made to revive the congregation in 1820 and 1830 did little more than keep the spirit alive among the faithful few. When the Reverend Dr. A.J. Fox arrived in 1854, only thirty-eight Lutherans remained in Grace Church.<sup>7</sup>

The Reformed Congregation fared little better. For sixteen

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Grace Union Church & Cemetery, Catawba County, N.C.

years after Loretz's death, they had no minister. The arrival of the Reverend John G. Fritchey in 1828 promised a new beginning for the Reformed members. Fritchey, however, came from the North and his insistence that slaves be admitted to the church was not acceptable to many of his Southern congregations. Several families left and though a compromise was effected (slaves not admitted until all whites were seated), Fritchey had lost much of his influence. He left in 1838 and was succeeded by the Reverend John Crawford, but not until the Reverend Jeremiah H. Ingold came in 1856 did the Reformed congregation fully recover.<sup>8</sup>

With the arrival of Fox and Ingold in the mid 1850s, Grace began a new era as a union church. Both ministers encouraged their members to erect a new church to replace the log structure. Fox and Ingold had pulled new members into their respective congregations, and on August 8, 1856, the Lutherans and Reformed adopted a joint resolution: "Resolved that we build a new church edifice, and that it shall be a union church between the Lutheran and German Reformed congregations, provided each party pays one-half of the cost and that we raise the sum of \$1,200.00 by subscriptions and donations."<sup>9</sup> In this resolution, the present Grace Church was born.

Early in 1857 Joseph Irby was contracted to do the brickwork and a Mr. Harrellson for the carpentry. The cost ran to \$1,400.00 and a special collection was taken during the dedication service on June 13 so that Fox and Ingold could dedicate the new church free of debt.<sup>10</sup> For the next eighty-three years, Grace fulfilled the tradition of a union church, though there was some modification in 1934 when a merger created the Evangelical and Reformed Church in America.

By 1940 the Lutheran congregation had decided to build a new church across the road. In December the two congregations agreed to divide the property whereby the Evangelical and Reformed congregation became owner of the land on which the old brick church was located. The cemetery and a small parcel of land between the cemetery and driveway remained joint property.<sup>11</sup>

The Evangelical and Reformed congregation worshiped in the old church until 1971 when they built a new sanctuary. The structure was then sold to the Lutherans and is now used for church related activities such as sponsorship of a local Boy Scout program.<sup>12</sup>

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Grace Union Church & Cemetery, Catawba County, N.C.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, The History of a Southern State: North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 140-141, hereinafter cited as Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina.

<sup>2</sup>Col.: George M. Yoder, "History of Grace Lutheran Church, 1777-1889" (Typed copy of 1889 manuscript), 1, hereinafter cited as Yoder, "Grace Union Church." Manuscript in files of the Catawba County Historical Museum.

<sup>3</sup>Catawba County Deed Books. Office of the Register of Deeds, Catawba County Courthouse, Newton, Deed Book 18, p. 237, hereinafter cited as Catawba County Deed Book.

<sup>4</sup>Yoder, "Grace Union Church," 2.

<sup>5</sup>William L. Sherrill, Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina (Charlotte, 1937), 70; and Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, 141. See also Yoder, "Grace Lutheran Church," 2.

<sup>6</sup>Grace Church of the South Fork Charge of the Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (Newton: Sesquicentennial Committee, 1947), 3, hereinafter cited as Grace Church; and George H. Cox, The Beginners of the Lutheran Church in North Carolina (N.p., 1923), 9-10, hereinafter cited as Cox, Beginners.

<sup>7</sup>Yoder, "Grace Lutheran Church," 3.

<sup>8</sup>Grace Church, 3; and Banks J. Peeler (ed.), A Story of the Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (Philadelphia: Southern Synod, 1968), 260, 262, hereinafter cited as Peeler, Southern Synod.

<sup>9</sup>Resolution quoted in Grace Church, 5; and Peeler, Southern Synod, 262.

<sup>10</sup>Yoder, "Grace Lutheran Church," 3.

<sup>11</sup>Catawba County Deed Book 317, p. 611. See also Grace Church, 9.

<sup>12</sup>Catawba County Deed Book 960, p. 648.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See Continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 3.1 acres

UTM References

A 

|      |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 7 | 4       | 7 | 1 | 2 | 6        | 0 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Zone |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is all of lots 9A and 9B of block 7 on Sheet No. 6-J of the Catawba County tax maps.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Entire parcel historically associated with property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Barbara Kooiman, compiler; Laura A. W. Phillips, description; Jerry L. Cross, history.  
 organization Catawba County Historical Assn., Inc. date May 27, 1989  
 street & number Rt. 1, Box 76 AB. telephone 704/256-3040  
 city or town Conover state N.C. zip code 28613

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Catawba County Deed Books

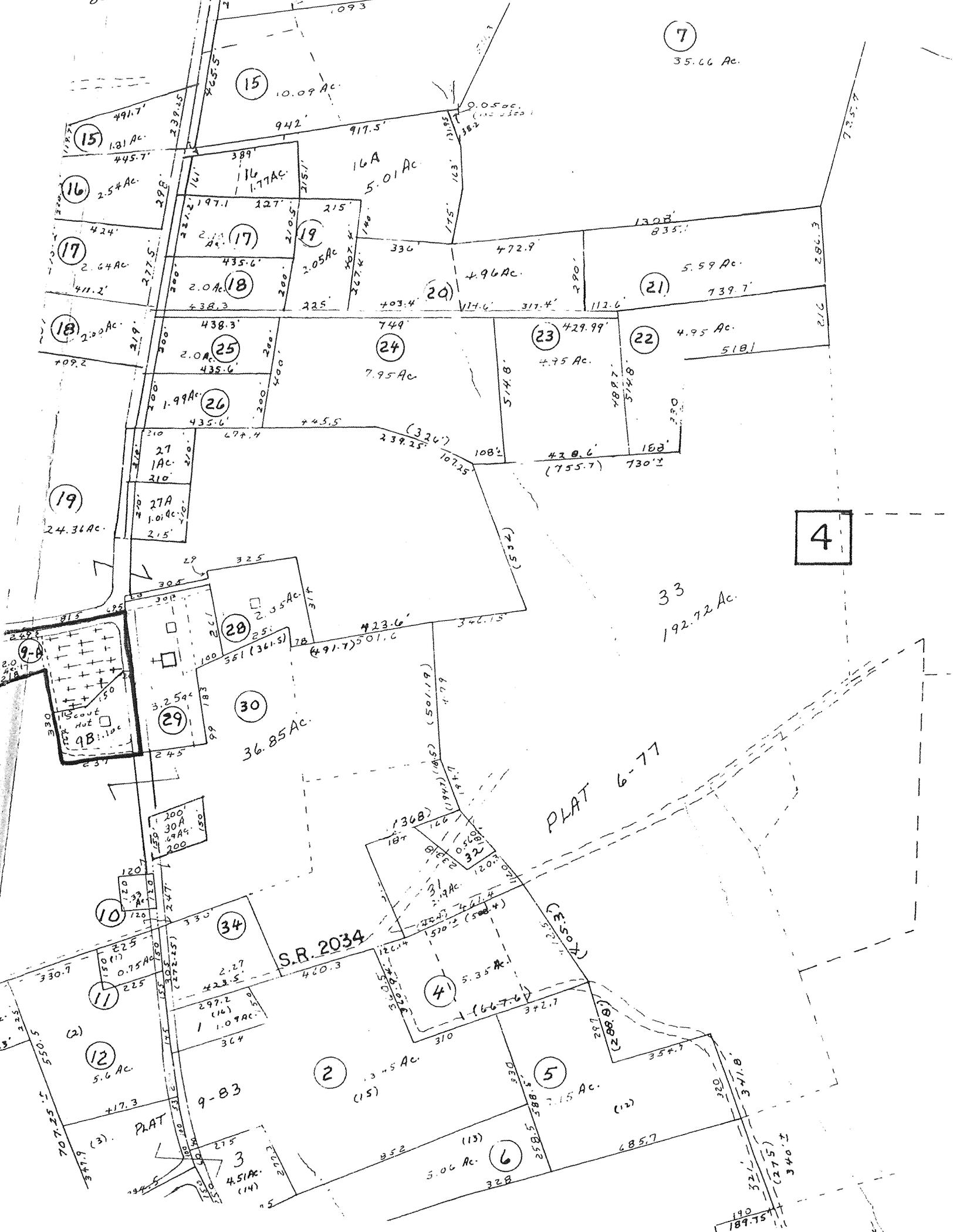
Cox, George H. The Beginners of the Lutheran Church in North Carolina. N.p., 1923.

Grace Church of the South Fork Charge of the Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Newton: Sesquicentennial Committee, 1947.

Lefler, Hugh Talmage and Newsome, Albert Ray. The History of a Southern State: North Carolina. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973.

Peeler, Banks J., ed. A Story of the Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Philadelphia: Southern Synod, 1968.

Yoder, Col. George M. "History of Grace Lutheran Church, 1777-1899." Typed copy of 1899 manuscript in Catawba County Historical Museum.



7

35.66 Ac.

15

10.09 Ac.

15

1.31 Ac.

16

2.54 Ac.

17

2.64 Ac.

18

2.00 Ac.

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2.00 Ac.

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1.99 Ac.

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27A

1.01 Ac.

27B

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2.35 Ac.

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36.85 Ac.

31

561 (361.5)

32

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192.72 Ac.

34

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16A

5.01 Ac.

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21

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PLAT 6-77

S.R. 2034

PLAT 9-83

PLAT 7-80

9-83

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