

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church

Brogden vicinity, Johnston County, JT0948, Listed 1/31/2008

Nomination by Nancy Van Dolsen

Photographs by Nancy Van Dolsen, September 2007



Facade and side view



Rear and side view

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OMB No. 1024-0018

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church**
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number **9495 Brogden Road (approx. 1150 feet W of jct of SR 1007 and SR 2526)**
not for publication N/A city or town **Brogden** vicinity **X** state **North Carolina** code **NC** county
Johnston code **101** zip code **27577**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this **X** 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 **X** meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide **X** locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
4. 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 Keeper

Date of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register **N/A**

Name of related multiple property listing **N/A**

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: **Religion** Sub: **Religious Facility**
Funerary **Cemetery**

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: **Work in Progress** Sub:

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Early twentieth-century rural ecclesiastical

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation **BRICK**
roof **METAL**
walls **WOOD/weatherboard**
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| X | A | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. |
| | B | Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. |
| X | C | Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. |
| | D | Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. |

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| X | A | owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. |
| | B | removed from its original location. |
| | C | a birthplace or a grave. |
| | D | a cemetery. |
| | E | a reconstructed building, object, or structure. |
| | F | a commemorative property. |
| | G | less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE, EDUCATION, ETHNIC HERITAGE-AFRICAN AMERICAN

Period of Significance **ca. 1920-1957**
Significant Dates **ca. 1920**
Significant Person **N/A**
Cultural Affiliation **N/A**
Architect/Builder **Unknown**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **4.36 acres**

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	17	753250	3921420	3 _____
2	_____	_____	4	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title **Nancy Van Dolsen** date **23 September 2007**
street & number **1601 Highland Drive**
city or town **Wilson** state **NC** zip code **27893**
=====

Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name **Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church c/o Myrtle Sanders**
street & number **303 Pine Street** city or town **Smithfield** state **NC** zip code **27577**
=====

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Narrative Description

The Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church sits on a slight rise on the north side of Brogden Road (SR 1007), west of the junction with SR 2526. The church is located in a rural area, approximately three miles east of the village of Brogden in Boon Hill Township. The church is approximately thirty feet from the road, facing south. The area around the church is cleared, but to the north of the church is a wooded area where the church cemetery is located. To the north of the property line are also cultivated fields, while second-growth timber is located to the west of the lot. A farm lane runs to the east of the church, separating its parcel from a cultivated field.

Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church, ca. 1920, contributing

The Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church features a form once common for rural churches constructed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: frame, gable-front, rectangular buildings without adornment such as towers, stained glass, or decorative architectural trim. The church is a one-story, gable-front, three-bay, light timber frame building constructed ca. 1920. The building is sheathed in circular sawn weatherboards and stands on brick piers, approximately ten inches from the ground. A metal roof covers the church; the roof was replaced ca. 1940 after it had suffered hurricane damage. The building has exposed rafter tails and a simple rake board. The door on the façade was originally a six-horizontal panel door, which later had panes of glass inserted in the upper three panels. No steps lead up to the door. The door is flanked by six-over-six double-hung windows that are covered with one shutter composed of vertical boards nailed onto battens on the interior face of the shutter. The eave elevations are each three-bay, with windows that match those found on the façade. The central window on the west elevation was converted to a door. That door is missing, and the opening is covered with plywood. The window and door surrounds are simple flat boards, as are the corner boards.

The interior of the building has a wood floor that suffered some fire damage, in an area approximately two feet by three feet, caused by arson ca. 2004. The building is still structurally sound and retains integrity. The interior walls and ceiling are sheathed with plaster board, which may be original or may date to shortly after the building was constructed. A raised dais, approximately eight inches from the floor, is centered on the north end of the church. This dais in Primitive Baptist churches usually held a pulpit and chairs for the Elders of the congregation. Original slat backed benches remain inside the building.

Cemetery, contributing

The cemetery contains approximately forty marked burials, and perhaps as many as 150 unmarked graves. The area is now overgrown with small trees and ground covers, such as ivy and periwinkle. The earliest marked grave dates to 1910 and commemorates the life of Blaine Smith (1893-1910), the son of Nathan and Emily Smith. Most of the extant marked burials date

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National Park Service**

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between 1914 and 1939, and include members of the Atkinson, Bailey, Cox, Everette, Fowler, Hinson, Smith, and Stevens families. The markers include small metal nameplates that were provided by area funeral homes, as well as homemade concrete markers and large granite tombstones. A few tombstones are obelisks. The last interment was in 1987. Due to the vegetation covering the area, it is difficult to determine what pattern the placement of the markers may have, although most of the markers are placed in familial groups. Despite the overgrown nature of the cemetery, it retains integrity.

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Summary

The Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church meets National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and C for education, ethnic heritage, and architecture, as an excellent local example of a rural African American church. The Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church also meets Criteria Consideration A since its significance lies in its architecture and in its role in education and ethnic heritage. The Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church is an African American church whose congregation was founded in 1878. The original deed to the property was between William A. Smith, the property owner of the farm to the east of the church and a staunch Unionist during the Civil War, and “the Colored Primitive Baptist Church of Little River Association.” Recorded on September 9, 1879, the deed noted that the association “has no Church House in this Township and whereas they have no Burial Grounds for the members of the Congregation or the Colored people of the neighborhood, and whereas I [William A. Smith] desire that they should have a house of worship and a house where they may also educate their children and where the children of the Colored people of the Township may be educated and also have a Burial Ground where they may own and bury their dead.” William Smith deeded the congregation the property of one acre and thirty-two perches for one dollar. The congregation built the current church ca. 1920, and used it through the late twentieth century as a church. The appearance of the first building is not known. The present building was also used as a one-room school until the early 1930s, when African American children began to have transportation available to attend the Princeton Graded School (NR 2005) built in 1926. The property includes the church and the associated cemetery, which has approximately forty marked graves, but perhaps as many as 150 total graves.

The Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church remains virtually as it was built. The building is well preserved, and retains its siding, windows, door and window surrounds, dais on the north end, and benches. Only minor alterations have occurred, including minor damage to the floor caused by a small fire by an arsonist that burned a hole measuring approximately two-by-three feet, and some damage to the original (or very early) plaster board that sheaths the interior. The cemetery also retains integrity despite its overgrown aspect.

Historical Narrative and Education and Ethnic Heritage Contexts: Rural African American Churches, 1900-1930, Johnston County, North Carolina; Rural African American One-Room Schools, 1900-1930, Johnston County, North Carolina

Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church is located in Boon Hill Township, a rural area in the central portion of Johnston County. The county straddles the piedmont and coastal plain, and the area near Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church has rolling hills and geographic qualities of both regions. The county, formed in 1746, has a strong agricultural history, anchored in cotton, tobacco, soybean, corn, sweet potato, and hay cultivation, as well as the raising of beef cattle. It has

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always been among the top ten counties in the state in farm cash receipts. In the twentieth century, it has vied with nearby Pitt County as the top producer of tobacco, and cotton was a major cash crop from 1860 through 1940. By the early twentieth century, Johnston was annually one of the state's top cotton counties, usually ranked third behind Robeson and Cleveland counties.

Johnston County had the highest number of farms in the state in 1922: 7,026, with the average size just over twenty-five acres. The rate of tenancy greatly increased in the last years of the nineteenth century through the 1920s. In 1900, forty percent of the county's farmers were cash or share tenants; by 1922, over half of the county's farmers were tenants, and half of those moved yearly. Tenants throughout the county were both black and white. The congregation of the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church included many tenant and sharecropper families, as well as a few who owned their own farms. The 1880 census indicates that the Nelson Atkinson, Lewis Cox, and Monroe Atkinson families, all of whom were involved in the church, were tenant farmers and laborers who lived near each other.¹ In 1920, the Dallas Cox, Riggins Cox, and Ella Atkinson families were tenant farmers who also attended the church.² Most of those who attended lived near the church, within five miles or so.³

The congregation of the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church was established in 1878.⁴ Members of the Baptist faith dominated religious activity in Johnston County during the early years of settlement, through the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The Little River Church Association of the Baptist faith, which included Johnston County, was formed in 1760. The Association increased to five hundred persons within three years, and five meeting-houses were built by 1763.⁵

The Baptist faith split into two distinct groups between 1828 and 1833. The Primitive Baptists split from the main faith because they believed in predestination and that one could not become saved through good works, or missionary work. The Primitive Baptists believed that they were followers of the original or pure church, and followed the faith of the apostles. They rejected all aspects of religion that were not found in scripture—Sunday schools, Bible societies, seminaries, and missionary work. The Primitive Baptists believed that they were a continuation of the true

¹ Federal Manuscript Population Census, Johnston County, Boon Hill Township, 1880. Attribution of involvement in the church was determined through interviews with current members of the congregation, and/or by the burial of a person in the church cemetery.

² Federal Manuscript Population Census, Johnston County, Boon Hill Township, 1920.

³ Lois A. Lewis, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, 21 September 2005. Mrs. Lewis and many members of her families attended the church and went to school there in the 1920s.

⁴ Lois A. Lewis, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, 21 November 2005; Myrtle Sanders, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, 21 November 2005.

⁵ Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*;

http://www.pbministries.org/History/S.%20Hassell/church_of_god_23.htm; accessed May 12, 2007.

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faith and that the missionary Baptists were introducing a new doctrine into religion.⁶ The Primitive Baptist church thrived during the nineteenth century, but was always outnumbered by the “missionary” Baptists. In 1860, in North Carolina, there were 780 “missionary” Baptist churches and only thirty-seven Primitive Baptist congregations.⁷ The Primitive Baptist congregations increased after the Civil War, having 311 congregations with 11,740 congregants by 1896.⁸

After the Civil War, the Primitive Baptists wrestled with how to treat the newly freed African Americans who worshipped in their churches. Separate African American congregations were established, but some African Americans chose to continue worshipping with the white congregations they had joined prior to the war. In 1871, the Jamesville Primitive Baptist Church in Martin County brought up the issue for discussion in their Association meeting (the Kehukee Association); the Elders of that congregation wrote asking “whether colored members should be dismissed to churches of their own color, to which all of them might become attached, or remain as they were with the white members.” The matter was referred to the churches to consider and to report at the next Association meeting. At the meeting in 1873, the Association “decided that the colored people should remain as they are.”⁹ This decision was unusual; many separate African American Primitive Baptist congregations were established in North Carolina and throughout the South. In 1907, the African American Primitive Baptists established their own organization which became the National Primitive Baptist Convention.¹⁰

In Johnston County, the Little River Association of the Primitive Baptist Church divided into a white and a “Colored” Association. The African American Primitive Baptists who resided in the Brogden and Princeton areas of Johnston County formed their own congregation in 1878: the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church. The congregation received a gift of land for a church, cemetery and school in 1879 from William A. Smith (1828-1888). Smith was a native of Warren County; in 1856, he married Polly Ann Peacock Atkinson (1828- ?), the widow of Elijah Atkinson, a wealthy plantation owner in Boon Hill Township, Johnston County. Polly Ann Atkinson had

⁶ Center for Historic Preservation. *Powerful Artifacts: A Guide to Surveying and Documenting Rural African-American Churches in the South*. (Murfreesboro, Tenn.: Middle Tennessee State University, 2000) 23; J.V. Kirkland & C.B. Hassell *A Condensed History of the Church of God*, ca. 1896, <http://www.reformedreader.org/history/condensedhistory.htm>; accessed May 12, 2007.

⁷ Stanley L. Little and Jerry Cross. National Register of Historic Places nomination for the (former) Jamesville Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery, Martin County, N.C., 1984.

⁸ Kirkland and Hassell.

⁹ Cushing Biggs Hassell, *History of the Church of God From the Creation to ca. 1885*, Revised and Completed by Elder Sylvester Hassell, (1886); http://www.pbministries.org/History/S.%20Hassell/church_of_god_23.htm; accessed 17 May 2007.

¹⁰ Website of the National Primitive Baptist Convention, “History,” <http://natlprimbaptconv.org/web04/inside/History.html>; accessed 10 May 2007.

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four daughters with Elijah Atkinson: Francis, Nancy, Jane, and Zelma, all of whom inherited land and slaves from their father. William A. Smith owned twenty-four slaves in 1860, but became an ardent Unionist during the Civil War. By 1879 he saw the need of the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church congregation and deeded them land.

In the deed of September 7, 1879, Smith noted that “the Colored Baptist association aforesaid has no Church House in this Township and whereas they have no Burial Grounds for the members of their Congregation of the Colored People of the neighborhood, and whereas I desire that they Shall have a house of worship and a house where they may also educate their Children and where the Children of the Colored people of the Township may be educated and also have a Burial Ground where they may own and bury their dead.” Smith gave the parcel for the consideration of \$1.00 to the congregation.¹¹ The congregation erected a church building and created a cemetery at the northwest corner of the lot. The appearance of the first church building is not known.

The lack of school that Smith mentioned in the deed for the African American children of the community was not unusual in rural North Carolina during the late nineteenth century. In 1881, there were only sixteen school buildings for African American students in the entire county.¹² The North Carolina public school system had officially segregated the races in 1875, declaring that there should be separate but equal educational facilities for white and black children. Not until 1910, however, did public elementary schools for blacks begin receiving state funds in North Carolina. In 1913, further recognizing the need to improve schools for black students, North Carolina established the office of supervisor of rural elementary schools to promote the education of African American children. In 1921, a separate agency, the Division of Negro Education, was created to further advance public education for black students.¹³ A survey in the early 1930s conducted by the Division of Negro Education found that some black classrooms had sixty to one-hundred students, that only half of the schools stayed in session for the full school year, and that only seven percent of black students attended high school.¹⁴

For the school year 1908-1909, in Boon Hill Township there were three schools each with one teacher operating for African American children, including one in the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church while there were eleven schools (including one with two teachers, another with three) for the white children in the township.¹⁵ In October 1919 the Johnston County “colored

¹¹ Johnston County Deed Book B4:28, 29.

¹² Edgar T. Boyette, “Growth and Development of Education in Johnston County,” M.A. Thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1927; 33.

¹³ Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, Flora H. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992) 154, 155.

¹⁴ Crow, 135.

¹⁵ J. P. Canaday, Superintendent, *Annual Report, Superintendent of Schools, 1908-1909 Johnston County, North Carolina* (Charlotte, N.C.: Press of Queen City, Printing, 1909) 30, 33.

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Supervisor," Mrs. Laura J. A. King, reported that "several colored school districts were without any school buildings."¹⁶ The County Superintendent was instructed to "investigate carefully the needs of the colored schools of the county, and as soon as the finances of the County would permit, plan to erect several colored school buildings."¹⁷ That year, the Johnston County school district did build one African American school with funds from the Rosenwald Fund, a one-teacher school in the Hodges Chapel district.¹⁸ The African American children of the Brogden area continued to attend school in the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church building.

The Johnston County Board of Education used aid from the Rosenwald Fund to build three schools between 1920 and 1924, a nine-teacher school (high school in Smithfield) in 1921-1922, and two three-teacher schools in 1923-1924 (Kenly and Short Journey).¹⁹ The African American students in the Brogden area continued to attend school on the Shiloh Church property, now in their new church building, which was erected sometime around 1920. In 1924, a number of white citizens complained that tax dollars paid by whites were being used to build schools for African Americans, so on July 30, 1924 the Board of Education adopted the following policy, "Now be it ordered that all of the special tax that is paid by the Negro race be kept separate and put into a fund to be known as "Building Fund for The Colored Race," and that be used by this Board to aid in the construction of School houses for the Negro race in the County."²⁰

A little over a year later, on September 7, 1925, a group of African American citizens approached the County Board of Commissioners, rather than the Board of Education, to petition for a new school building in Princeton, since "the present one-room building is inadequate . . . they are no longer able to rent buildings for school purposes."²¹ The Board of Commissioners ordered the Board of Education to build a new school in Princeton. The Board of Education agreed to construct a building, a "Plan No. 6-A, Rosenwald School," with two stipulations, the first being that "the Negro citizens of said district contribute in cash one thousand dollars (\$1000.00), and "that the Negro race would not ask for a longer term of school than six months for a period of ten years after the erection of said building."²² These stipulations were never required for the construction of schools for white children in the county. They also decided that "it would be more economical to build said building of brick veneer instead of wood as the

¹⁶ Johnston County Board of Education Minutes, October 6, 1919.

¹⁷ Johnston County Board of Education Minutes, October 6, 1919.

¹⁸ Thomas H. Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* Vol. LXV, No. 4, October 1988: 436.

¹⁹ Hanchett, 36.

²⁰ Johnston County Board of Education Minutes, July 30, 1924.

²¹ Johnston County Board of Education Minutes, September 7, 1925. It is not known why the group approached the County Board of Commissioners, but it may be because they felt that the Board of Education would not be supportive of their petition. The appearance of the one-room building is also not known.

²² Johnston County Board of Education Minutes, September 7, 1925.

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Rosenwald plans call for, and instructed the Superintendent to have the County architect prepare plans and specifications for the same at once.”²³

Children near the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church continued to attend school there into the early 1930s, when bus transportation to the Princeton Graded School became available. The church and school building was the educational, and religious center for the local African American community during the first half of the twentieth century. In the community, the church functioned as the center of life, with religious services, social activities, and teaching of their children, all held within this building. After the school was moved to Princeton, the church still remained the center of religious and social life for the families who lived in the immediate area.²⁴

The cemetery was used throughout the twentieth century. The earliest marked burial extant dates to 1910 and commemorates the life of Blaine Smith (1893-1910), the son of Nathan and Emily Smith. Most of the extant marked burials date between 1914 and 1939, and include members of the Atkinson, Bailey, Cox, Evrett, Fowler, Hinson, Smith, and Stevens families. Burials continued at this cemetery until 1987.²⁵

Religious services were held into the mid-twentieth century, but with greater access to education, many African Americans from the community were able to acquire jobs in other states and moved away from Johnston County. Church services were held in the building into the late 1950s or early 1960s. The disuse of the building for services after the 1960s is not unusual; the number of active Primitive Baptist congregations throughout North Carolina has been dwindling for many years. In 1990, only 151 congregations with a total of 3,508 adherents remained active in the state. The current generation, some of whom attended this church, and others whose parents attended the church, are working on the restoration of the church and the cemetery.

Architectural Context: Rural Primitive Baptist Churches in Johnston County, North Carolina, 1900-1930

The Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church was constructed ca. 1920, and remains virtually as it was built. The building is well preserved, and retains its siding, windows, door and window surrounds, dais on the north end, and benches. Only minor alterations have occurred, including minor damage caused by arson, which burned a hole measuring approximately two-by-three feet, and some damage to the original (or very early) plaster board that sheaths the interior.

The austere appearance and lack of ornamentation exemplify the form that most Primitive Baptist churches took during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to

²³ Johnston County Board of Education Minutes, September 7, 1925.

²⁴ Lewis, Interview.

²⁵ Lewis, Interview ; Sanders, Interview; Marian H. McLarin, Letter to Nancy Van Dolsen, June 21, 2007.

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architectural historian Scott Power, an “austere appearance became the preferred design for most Primitive Baptist churches constructed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”²⁶

Primitive Baptist churches, especially without significant alterations such as vinyl siding or brick veneer, survive in limited numbers in eastern North Carolina. Six Primitive Baptist churches in Martin County, all associated with white congregations, were added to the National Register in 2005. Bear Grass Primitive Baptist Church (ca. 1879) in Bear Grass, Martin County is a one-story, unadorned, gable-front frame church, similar to the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church, but it has two doors on the façade and is much larger. The Red Banks Primitive Baptist Church (NR 2000), south of Greenville in Pitt County is also a simple one-story, gable-front frame church, but it too has two front doors and is larger than the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church. In Johnston County, the Hannah’s Creek Primitive Baptist Church (NR 1990), near Smithfield, is a simple, gable-front frame church, larger than the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church. The Little Creek Primitive Baptist Church, near Clayton in the western part of the county, was constructed in 1889 as a frame, gable-front church with a central entrance, similar to the Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church, but the building was veneered in stone in the 1960s. The most comparable surviving Johnston County Primitive Baptist Church is in Meadow Township and belongs to the Reedy Prong congregation. The ca. 1915 simple, gable-front frame building with weatherboard siding and a central entrance has a form similar to Shiloh, but it is larger, and has a double-door entrance, rather than a single door.

Church buildings are of particular importance to those of the Primitive Baptist faith, representing, as historian Melanie Sovine Reid has noted, “the Heavenly realm and its sacred qualities here on earth.” The Primitive Baptists also believe that it is essential to keep the integrity of the spiritual faith and to not adapt “religious belief of behavior to the prevailing winds of time.” For this reason, Primitive Baptist congregations have hesitated to change the design of their buildings and think carefully before making any alterations to existing buildings.²⁷

²⁶ Scott Power, ed. *The Historic Architecture of Pitt County, North Carolina*. (Greenville, N.C. :Pitt County Historical Society, Inc., 1991) 148.

²⁷ Melanie Sovine Reid. ““Neither Adding nor Taking Away””: The Care and Keeping of Primitive Baptist Church Houses.” In Camille Wells, ed. *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture I*. (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1982) 171-172.

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Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church
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Verbal Boundary Description

The historic boundary is Johnston County NC Pin 263000-43-1872.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the land historically associated with the church, and includes the church and the cemetery.