**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

**NAME**

**HISTORIC**

Philadelphus Presbyterian Church

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

**STREET & NUMBER**

Northwest side S.R. 1318, 0.4 mi. sw. of junction with N.C. 72

**CITY, TOWN**

Philadelphia

**STATE**

North Carolina

**CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRICT</td>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td>OCCUPIED</td>
<td>_AGRICULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUILDING(s)</td>
<td>PRIVATE</td>
<td>_UNOCCUPIED</td>
<td>_COMMERCIAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRUCTURE</td>
<td>BOTH</td>
<td>WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
<td>_EDUCATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITE</td>
<td>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</td>
<td>ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td>_ENTERTAINMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECT</td>
<td>IN PROCESS</td>
<td>YES: RESTRICTED</td>
<td>_GOVERNMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BEING CONSIDERED</td>
<td>YES: UNRESTRICTED</td>
<td>_INDUSTRIAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>_MILITARY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**NAME**

Philadelphus Presbyterian Church Congregation

**STREET & NUMBER**

**CITY, TOWN**

Philadelphia

**STATE**

North Carolina

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC**

Robeson County Courthouse

**STREET & NUMBER**

**CITY, TOWN**

Lumberton

**STATE**

North Carolina

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE**

**DATE**

**FEDERAL _STATE _COUNTY _LOCAL**

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**

**CITY, TOWN**

**STATE**
Philadelphus Presbyterian Church is a temple-form Greek Revival style frame building with a distyle-in-antis portico and a steeple. The rectangular structure, five bays wide and five deep, rests on a low brick foundation, is covered with plain siding, and capped by a gable roof covered with composition shingles.

Particularly impressive is the simple, forceful treatment of the main (south) gable end facade. Heavy Doric pilasters flank the blind bays which flank the portico, and fluted Doric columns support the portico. A three-part entablature, with a wide frieze, molded box cornice and molded eave, rest on this Doric order. The cornice treatment continues into the pediment, which has a lapped sided tympanum. In each side bay of the south wall of the portico is a single door, each with four flat panels, set within a symmetrically molded architrave with paneled corner blocks. An identical door is located in the west portico wall. Above each entrance is a six-over-six sash window with an identical architrave. The portico walls and ceiling are covered with wide flush sheathing, and the soffit of the entablature is flat-paneled. Astride the roof apex just behind the main facade stands the steeple, consisting of a vertical flush sheathed base, an intermediate stage with a louvered ventilator flanked by a pair of Doric pilasters in each face, and a high spire that flares slightly to the base, with a box cornice identical to the main block cornice and a metal finial.

The side and rear elevations contain windows with two-over-two replacement sash at both the lower and upper levels. Each window has a wide plain surround with a molded lintel and louvered blinds. The side cornice treatment is identical to that of the main facade. At each rear corner is a plain corner post. In the southernmost bay of the east side elevation is a door with four flat panels, opening to the gallery stair, with a surround identical to the side window surrounds. The rear elevation is finished like the side elevations, but lacks windows at the upper level. The rear gable end is not pedimented. The eave forms short returns.

The interior of Philadelphus Presbyterian Church corresponds closely to the other Greek Revival Presbyterian churches in this region. The sanctuary is finished with wide wooden flooring, a replacement vertically sheathed dado, a molded chair rail which appears original, plastered walls and a wide flush sheathed ceiling. All of the interior openings have a simple surround with a shaped strip edging. A gallery, reached by two stairs in the enclosed bays flanking the portico, extends along the south, east and west sides of the sanctuary. Tapered solid wooden Doric columns support the gallery, which is enclosed by a flat-paneled railing terminated by a shaped cornice and flat shelf. A low horizontally flush-sheathed wainscot with a shaped chair rail occurs at the gallery level. The pews have plain backs and seats and curvilinear arm rests. Two side aisles divide the pews into three sections, and a solid pew partition bisects the center section. In the northwest and northeast corners, flanking the pulpit which rests on a low platform against the north wall, are choir pews. The pulpit platform and pulpit appear to be of recent vintage.
The gallery stairs are nearly identical, each a wide spiral whose treads are mortised into a large polygonal newel. Each upper landing is protected by a railing with a polygonal handrail, rectangular balusters and a chamfered newel. The door opening into the gallery from each landing is a twentieth century replacement. The only difference between the stairs is that the west stairwell has a polygonal plastered wall, and that of the east stairwell follows the outline of the exterior wall surface.
PERIOD

PREHISTORIC
_1400-1499
_1500-1599
_1600-1699
_1700-1799
_1800-1899
_1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

ARCHÉOLOGIE-PREHISTORIC
ARCHÉOLOGIE-HISTORIQUE
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
OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES
1858-1861

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Philadelphus Presbyterian Church, one of the most handsome examples of Greek Revival religious architecture in North Carolina, was built between 1859 and 1863 and has recently been restored. The temple-form building with a distyle-in-antis Doric portico is the most academic of the distinctive group of southeastern North Carolina Greek Revival style Presbyterian churches erected during the mid-nineteenth century, by the descendants of the Scots immigrants who settled the area.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Upper Cape Fear River valley was settled by Scots immigrants, who established Presbyterian congregations and later built modest churches; these were still later replaced by more ambitious Greek Revival style buildings.

Like the other Presbyterian churches in North Carolina founded in this period, Philadelphus Church began as occasional worship services held by itinerant ministers passing through the community. The congregation was apparently formally organized before 1795, for the Orange Presbytery records began in this year and do not note the church's beginning after that date. The 1854 church history, a part of the session minutes, states that the congregation's first communion service occurred in 1799 "in a tent created for the occasion." Daniel Brown, the first permanent pastor, began his ministry ca. 1803, and the first church building, located behind the Neil McNeill home on Richland Swamp, was probably erected at this time. The four-acre tract on which the church was built was donated by Hugh Brown, but was not deeded to the church until 1850, many years after Brown had moved to Tennessee.

By 1859 the church members decided to construct a new sanctuary, and tried to acquire additional land adjacent to the existing church building because they considered the four-acre tract too small. This was impossible, and in 1859 the church bought from John McArthur a nearby larger tract which bordered Richland Swamp and the road from Lumberton to Carthage like the original tract. The 1862-1863 financial report of Philadelphus Church, recorded in the session minutes of 1863, includes the item "Building church $824.25." The 1863 session minutes also include a list of the 52 persons who contributed to the "building and furnishing of the new Philadelphus Church," the largest single contribution being $160 given by Daniel McCallum. According to local tradition, Gilbert P. Higley, who moved from Hartford, Connecticut, to Robeson County, married, and remained, was the architect and contractor of the building. The 1850 census records for the nearby Lumberton District of Robeson County list a G. P. Higley (sic), age 35, a carpenter, born in Connecticut. Below the listings of his wife and children are the names of three young carpenters, Thoma Massa, Rauson Pitman, and Wiggins Roberts, who apparently resided with Higley. Higley's Connecticut background may have influenced his use of the in-antis portico of the church—a rare in North Carolina but quite common in New England.
An item culled from the October 29, 1865, session minutes is indicative of the post Civil War attitudes of the Philadelphus Church congregation:

Resolved that this session will encourage the colored people, who are now freed men, to attend worship here and receive religious instruction as usual; and when they give satisfactory evidence of a change of heart, and desire a communion with the church, they shall as formerly be admitted to the sealing ordinances of the church.

J. McCallum Clerk

The church and cemetery to the rear, whose oldest inscribed marker is dated 1867, are in continuous use and are well-maintained.

1Philadelphus Church Records, Session Minutes, 1865., p. 175.
"Sketches of Philadelphus Presbyterian Church" manuscript, written by church historian Fodie Buie and others in 1961.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Philadelphus Church Records. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina: Session Minutes 1863-1879.
Robeson County Records, Robeson County Courthouse, Lumberton, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, 1850 Census Book).
Robeson County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, 1850 Census Book).

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 7
L&L: 34° 45' 52" 79° 10' 49"

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A
B
C
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Research and architectural description by Ruth Little-Stokes, survey specialist

ORGANIZATION
Division of Archives and History

DATE
22 July 1975

STREET & NUMBER
109 East Jones Street

TELEPHONE
919/829-7862

CITY OR TOWN
Raleigh

STATE
North Carolina

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL __ STATE ___ LOCAL X ___

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 22 July 1975

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
Philadelphus Presbyterian Church
North Carolina

N.C. Highway Commission map (no USGS map available)
scale: \( \frac{\frac{1}{4}}{\frac{1}{4}} \): 1 mile
date: 1974

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>