

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Hebron Methodist Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number N. side SR 1306, 1.7 mi. west of junction
with SR 1334 not for publication

city, town Oakville vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Warren code 185

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" 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 Hebron Methodist Church, c/o Mr. Gid W. King

street & number RFD 1

city, town Warrenton vicinity of state N. C. 27589

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number

city, town Warrenton state N. C.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Tar-Neuse Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975 federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Archives and History

city, town Raleigh state N. C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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

Hebron Methodist Church is located in rural northern Warren County on the north side of state road 1306. The four and a quarter acre churchyard is shaded by several large trees and is surrounded on three sides by woods.

Although it has received several additions, the small frame church is the best preserved of the three antebellum churches surviving in rural Warren County. The church was built ca. 1848-1849, probably by the Warrenton builder Jacob Holt, as a gable-roofed structure three bays wide and three bays deep. The church rests on a rubble stone foundation plastered and scored to resemble regularly-laid ashlar. Simple Greek Revival details of the original portion of the building include corner posts with molded caps, a wide frieze and projecting cornice, and large twelve-over-twelve sash framed with slender symmetrical moldings and cornerblocks with rondels. In 1886 the church was enlarged by extending the pedimented front of the church forward one bay. Ca. 1910 a small pedimented narthex with double doors and oval transom was added to the front of the church, and paired scrollwork brackets were attached to the cornice on the building's facade. At the same time that the narthex was added a small chancel was added between the two windows of the rear elevation. A narrow brick stove flue appears on each side of the church between the two inner windows.

The interior of the church is intact with a sheathed wainscot beneath plastered walls. The window frames feature symmetrical Greek Revival moldings with plain cornerblocks. There are three ranges of the original box pews; the side ranges butt into the walls while the center range is divided down the middle. The dark varnish of the woodwork appears to have been applied over the original wood graining. A slave gallery supposedly ran across the back of the church but was removed at the time of the 1886 addition, and no evidence of its form survives. The 1886 portion of the sanctuary also has a sheathed wainscot, but the window frames feature typical late-nineteenth century symmetrical molding and cornerblocks with rondels. The 1910 chancel is outlined by a wide rounded arch. The distinguishing feature of the interior is the treatment of the raised pulpit which projects out several feet into the sanctuary in front of the chancel arch. The pulpit is defined by a curved altar rail composed of pierced sawnwork slats; the design of these slats closely resembles the porch balustrades on several antebellum Warren County houses attributed to builder Jacob Holt. The lecturn features a wide shelf supported by boldly projecting brackets and is decorated with several motifs also found on the mantels of Jacob Holt-related houses in the county. Similar lecturns can be found in the Macon Methodist Church, Shady Grove Methodist Church, and the Warrenton Presbyterian Church, the latter church being attributed as the work of Jacob Holt.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1848-49 **Builder/Architect** Jacob W. Holt (?)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Hebron Methodist Church is a small country church that blends the straightforward Greek Revival style with Italianate details. It is the most intact of the three rural churches surviving from Warren County's antebellum boom years and was a focus of social and religious activity for the planter families who dominated the county's social and economic life. The congregation dates from as early as 1810, but the present structure reflects the county's 1845-1860 building boom, and it is probably the work of Warrenton builder Jacob W. Holt, the principal builder of the county's notable collection of Greek Revival and Italianate architecture in this period.

Criteria Assessment:

- A. Associated with the establishment of the Methodist denomination in rural eastern North Carolina in the early nineteenth century.
- B. Associated with the life of Jacob W. Holt (1811-1880), an architect-builder of Warrenton with a regional reputation.
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles as adapted to a modest frame church; and is the best surviving example of the country churches built during Warren County's antebellum boom years to serve its plantation families.
- D. May be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

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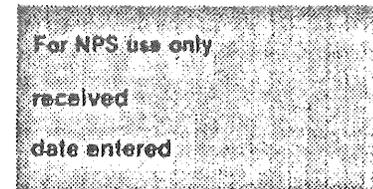
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Hebron Methodist Church is the best preserved of the three antebellum church structures surviving in rural Warren County; the Presbyterian Church in the county seat of Warrenton is the only other intact antebellum church in the county. Of the two other rural churches, the Shady Grove Methodist Church building has been remodeled for use as a residence, and Brown's Chapel Baptist Church, which originally resembled Hebron Methodist, has been extensively altered on the exterior. These three rural churches were built to serve congregations made up of the farmers and planters of the surrounding neighborhoods whose prosperity made Warren County the wealthiest county in the state by 1860.¹ The Methodist denomination has been active in Warren County since the eighteenth century, and Hebron Church, founded by 1810, is one of the oldest Methodist congregations in the county. Hebron Methodist Church is attributed as the work of Warrenton contractor Jacob Holt, and is perhaps his earliest documented commission yet discovered in Warren County.

Jacob W. Holt (1811-1880) was a native of Prince Edward County, Virginia, where his father was a carpenter. Holt moved to Warrenton in 1843 where he enjoyed a flourishing career as the community's leading contractor until the outbreak of the Civil War.² Holt's work ranged from simply-detailed vernacular structures to sophisticated dwellings and public buildings in the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. Holt was particularly noted for his highly personalized interpretation of the Italianate style which drew inspiration from current architectural pattern books, especially William Ranlett's *The Architect* (New York, 1849) and Samuel Sloan's *The Model Architect* (Philadelphia, 1852). Well patronized by the wealthy planters of Warren County, Holt built large dwellings in Warrenton and out in the county, as well as structures for clients in many surrounding counties in North Carolina and Virginia.³ By the time of the 1850 census, Holt's household included forty-two slaves and seventeen white carpenters, forming the largest workshop in the building trade in North Carolina.⁴

Holt's connection with the construction of Hebron Methodist Church is based upon architectural evidence as well as upon a recently discovered document dated 24 January 1849 and written by Holt to James Robertson to "Please pay N. Milam five dollars--the amount of your subscription to Hebron Church."⁵ Nathan Milam, John Boyd, and John E. Twitty composed the building committee for the church which was evidently paid for by funds subscribed by the church members.⁶ Milam was a large land and slaveholder who lived east of the church at "Millbrook," a handsome Greek Revival mansion built ca. 1848 which bears some resemblance to houses in Warrenton attributed to Jacob Holt. In 1856-1857 Holt built a large Italianate mansion, "Sylva Sonora," for John Boyd, also a wealthy planter.⁷ The simple Greek Revival details of the church's exterior and interior are typical for the period in Warren County, but the distinctive treatment of the pulpit also indicates Holt's involvement in the church's construction. The raised platform of the pulpit is defined by a curved altar rail formed of pierced sawwork slats with curvilinear profiles. These slats are identical with the rear porch balustrade of the Gloster-Crossan-Boyd House in Warrenton, built ca. 1850 and attributed to Holt's workshop.⁸ The lecturn behind the altar rail has a paneled base beneath a wide shelf supported by large brackets; similar lecturns can be found in the Macon Methodist Church, in Shady Grove Methodist Church, and in the Warrenton Presbyterian Church built in 1855, the latter church being attributed as the work of Holt.⁹ The decorative panels of the lecturn are repeated on the mantel of the Tom Rodwell House near Macon, and also beneath the windows of "Engleside" in Warrenton; both houses are thought to be the work of Holt.¹⁰ The interior of Hebron Church presents an almost unchanged picture of a simple but substantial place of worship representative of many rural churches in antebellum North Carolina.

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Details of the founding of Hebron Methodist Church are unknown. In 1771 James Walker deeded to forty-six subscribers "for the goodwill and love and affection he hath to said subscribers . . . one acre of Land concluding /sic/ the new meeting house on six pound waters. . . ."11 Since Hebron Church is located near the west bank of Six Pound Creek, it has been thought that the meeting house referred to in Walker's deed was a predecessor of the present church.12 Bute County, from which Warren and Franklin counties were formed in 1779, was an area of early Methodism in North Carolina. In 1774 Robert Williams, a Methodist minister in Petersburg, Virginia, established a preaching circuit which brought him south of the Roanoke River into Bute and Halifax counties, and in 1775 a "revival of religion spread through fourteen counties in Virginia and through Bute and Halifax counties in North Carolina."13 When the Roanoke Circuit of the Methodist church was established in 1778, it included Bute County.14 The Rev. Francis Asbury (1745-1816), the first American Methodist Bishop, traveled through North Carolina seventy-two times, and passed through Warren County at least five times, but he made no mention in his famous diary of the Hebron congregation. In June of 1780, however, Asbury preached at Hawtree's in Warren County; Hawtree Creek flows parallel to Six Pound Creek only three miles west of Hebron Church.15

In 1810 Sampson King deeded one acre of land to seven trustees of "Hebron Meeting House" in order that "they may build, repair, & keep in repair or cause the same to be done a house of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. . . ."16 It is unknown how long the congregation had been organized with the name of Hebron, or where the congregation worshiped prior to building the meeting house which was replaced by the present structure. The deed to the church land was witnessed by Henry Fitts, a lay Methodist preacher and the first known pastor of Hebron Church.

Fitts (1778-1847) was a wealthy planter and merchant whose house still stands a few miles south of Hebron Church. According to the Fitts family history, published in 1897, after Fitts married in 1798 "he engaged himself in farming in Warren County, and connecting himself with the Methodist E. Church, soon became a local preacher," and his home was the "headquarters for the ministers of the Methodist E. Church. . . ."17 The family history states that Fitts served for several years as a trustee of Randolph-Macon College, a Methodist college then located in nearby Mecklenburg County, Virginia, but the college history does not substantiate this claim. Two of Fitts's sons-in-law, Nathan Milam and Horace Palmer, however, did serve as trustees at Randolph-Macon.18 Milam and another son-in-law, John E. Twitty, also served on the building committee in 1848 for Hebron Church. Fitts's daughter, Susan Twitty, founded the church Sunday school sometime before 1854. According to one account, Mrs. Twitty "had a two-horse wagon driven over the neighborhood, sometimes going herself in this way to persuade the children to come to Sunday school. Here she taught them the catechism, read the Bible to them, and in many instances taught them the alphabet and how to read."19 The same account states that services were held once a month at the church for slaves. In addition to his church activities, Henry Fitts served in the state senate in 1809, attended the 1840 National Democratic Convention in Baltimore as a delegate, and in 1842 was elected a member of the Council of State.20 Fitts was also a justice of the county court for many years.21

After the death of Henry Fitts, Hebron Church did not have a full-time minister, but was served by a number of circuit ministers. The Methodist church in North Carolina

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was organized into various districts, which usually included several counties, and the districts were subdivided into circuits or charges made up of several churches. Once a year the General Conference of the Methodist church appointed a new presiding elder of the district and new circuit ministers. Warren County was usually in the Washington District, and Hebron Church was on the same charge as the Methodist churches in Warrenton and Macon. The most prominent of the ministers who served the church after Henry Fitts was the Rev. Dr. William Closs (1809-1882). Dr. Closs served the church and the district as presiding elder many times from 1853 until 1873. He was prominent in the affairs of the Methodist church on a state level; serving as a trustee of both Randolph-Macon College and Greensboro Female College, and was a member of the General Conference's committees on memoirs and education.²² Dr. Closs was also a member of the conference committee which oversaw the acquisition of the Warrenton Female College in 1853 by the Methodist Conference.²³ In 1866 Closs was honored by his selection to chair the annual meeting of the General Conference.²⁴ Other ministers who served the church along with Dr. Closs included Junius P. Moore, R. A. Willis, T. R. Reeks, S. V. Hoyle, J. R. Griffith, and R. O. Burton.

After the Civil War Hebron Church was supported by the same local families of its antebellum congregation, and despite the shattered economy of the region, the church continued to prosper. By 1886 it was necessary to enlarge the church by extending the front wall out several feet. In 1887 a church library was established with "religious books and stories of moral good triumphing, with evil leading to downfall and damnation."²⁵ The church was the scene for many revivals, usually lasting ten days or longer with services conducted outdoors to accommodate the crowds.

General conference reports from 1873 to 1915 show that Hebron Church was one of eight Methodist churches in Warren County whose combined memberships varied between 500 and 600.²⁶ By 1926 Hebron Church had 145 members and was on the Warrenton circuit along with churches in Macon and Warren Plains.²⁷ In 1955 the church was placed on the Macon charge. The present membership numbers sixty-three with services held twice a month. Hebron Church continues to play an important role in the religious life of its community in rural Warren County. Its well-preserved church building, a county landmark and an early attributed work of the builder Jacob Holt, still admirably serves the congregation as a place of worship.

The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often evident only in the archeological record. Therefore, archeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time, no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

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NOTES

¹Dwight B. Billings, Jr., Planters and the Making of a "New South" (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 48; in 1860 the county's aggregate personal and real property value per free person was \$3,092, the highest in the state.

²Jacob Holt's career is thoroughly presented in Catherine W. Bishir, "Jacob W. Holt, An American Builder" Winterthur Portfolio 16 (Spring 1981), 1-31, hereinafter cited as Bishir, "Jacob W. Holt." The author has relied upon this article as well as the files for Warren County in the Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

³Bishir, "Jacob W. Holt," 3.

⁴Bishir, "Jacob W. Holt," 4.

⁵This document was found in a large collection of papers pertaining to the prominent Robinson family of Warren County; the author was furnished a copy by the owners Mr. and Mrs. Willie T. Robinson of Macon, Warren County. The author wishes to acknowledge Mrs. Robinson's help in locating the deeds to Hebron Church and providing copies of other materials relating to the church. Mrs. Robinson is the current president of the Warren County Historical Association.

⁶Mrs. W. Howard (Mary Twitty) Palmer, "History of Hebron Church," manuscript, 1935, p. 1, copy in the files of the Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Palmer, "Hebron Church." Mrs. Palmer's history is the best source of information on the early years of the church as the surviving church records only date from the 1890s. It is thought that Mrs. Palmer wrote her history from personal recollections and traditions of church members rather than from church records.

⁷Bishir, "Jacob W. Holt," 16, fn. 37.

⁸See the file for the Gloster-Crossan-Boyd House and the Warrenton Historic District in the Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh. The altar rail is also similar to the porch railing at Buxton Place and Engleside, two other Jacob Holt-related houses in Warren County.

⁹Bishir, "Jacob W. Holt," 23.

¹⁰See files for the Tom Rodwell House and Engleside, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

¹¹John Walker to Sanders Walker, et al, 23 February 1771, Bute County Deeds, Book 3, p. 261, microfilm copy, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh. Warren and Franklin counties were formed from Bute County in 1779.

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¹²Other Methodist churches in Warren County which claim to date from the eighteenth century are Shocco Springs, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem.

¹³W. L. Grissom, History of Methodism in North Carolina from 1772 to the Present Time (Nashville, Tenn.: Smith & Lamar, 1905), 44, 64-65, hereinafter cited as Grissom, History of Methodism; Grady L. E. Carroll, Francis Asbury in North Carolina (Nashville, Tennessee: Parthenon Press, 1964), 40-44; hereinafter cited as Carroll, Francis Asbury.

¹⁴Grissom, History of Methodism, 64-65.

¹⁵Carroll, Francis Asbury, 36. Local tradition claims that Asbury preached at Hebron, but there is no mention of Hebron in Asbury's famous diary.

¹⁶Sampson King to John Milam, at al, 19 September 1810, Warren County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Warren County Courthouse, Warrenton, Book 22, p. 22, hereinafter cited as Warren County Deeds. By 1937 the church had lost its record of title to the land, and the surrounding property owners deeded the 4.25 acres of the church site to the church trustees, see Helen R. Plamer et al, to James R. Robinson, et al Trustees, 22 May 1937, Warren County Deeds, Book 144, p. 94. According to a recent history of the Methodist denomination in North Carolina, Methodism was not firmly established in the state until 1815. In the post-Revolution years the Methodists in the state numbered less than 12,000. The first period of real growth for the church was the decade from 1800 to 1810, and the founding of Hebron Church may have been a part of this expansion. See Larry E. Tise, "North Carolina Methodism From the Revolution to the War of 1812," in Methodism Alive in North Carolina, edited by O. Kelly Ingram (Durham, N. C.: The Duke Divinity School, 1976), 33-48.

¹⁷James Harris Fitts, Genealogy of the Fitts or Fitz Family in America (Albany, N.Y.: Brandow Printing Company, 1897), 64-65, hereinafter cited as Fitts, Fitts Family.

¹⁸Richard Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, Virginia (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1898), 156-158.

¹⁹Palmer, "Hebron Church," 1.

²⁰Fitts, Fitts Family, 64-65; John L. Cheney, Jr., ed., North Carolina Government, 1585-1974, A Narrative and Statistical History (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), 177, 256. Fitts's brother Oliver served as attorney general of North Carolina from 1808 to 1810.

²¹Fitts, Fitts Family, 65.

²²Journal of the Forty-sixth Annual Session of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Shelby, N. C.: Babington & Roberts, 1883), 38, hereinafter the conference journal will be cited as Journal, with the appropriate year. The 1883 journal reference is to Closs's obituary. For further information on Closs see the journals for 1853, 1854, 1857, 1860, 1866, and 1863.

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²³Journal, 1853, pp. 21-22; Journal, 1854, p. 33.

²⁴Journal, 1866, p. 24.

²⁵"History of Hebron Methodist Church Dates Back to 1771"; Henderson Daily Dispatch,
14 February 1979.

²⁶Journal, 1873-1875, 1877, 1879-1880, 1882, 1899, 1901, 1911-1915.

²⁷Journal, 1926, p. 175.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 4.25

Quadrangle name South Hill SE

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	7	6	11	1	1	6	10	4	10	4	14	1	1	10
Zone	Easting					Northing									

B

Zone	Easting					Northing									

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification No tax or plat maps of the property exist. The boundaries of the property being nominated are described in a deed executed on 22 May 1937, as recorded in Warren County Deed Book 144, page 94. A copy of the deed is included with the nomination.

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 Marshall Bullock, Research Branch

organization Division of Archives and History

date November 5, 1982

street & number 109 E. Jones Street

telephone 919 733-6545

city or town Raleigh

state N. C. 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 J. Price, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date October 20, 1983

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

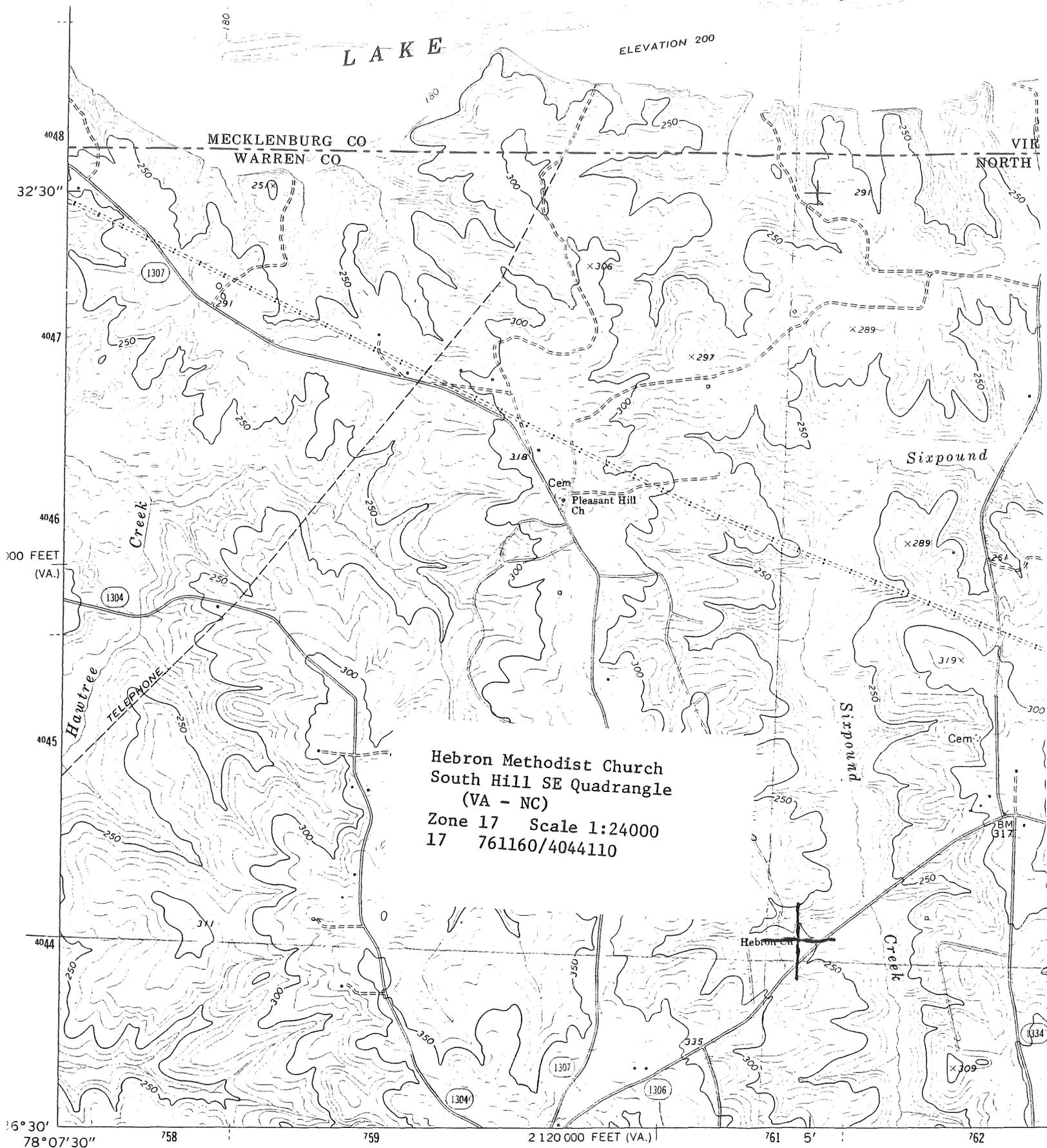
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- Billings, Dwight B., Jr. Planters and the Making of a "New South." Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979.
- Bishir, Catherine W. "Jacob W. Holt, An American Builder." Winterthur Portfolio, 16, Spring 1981, 1-31.
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- Palmer, Mrs. W. Howard (Mary Twitty). "History of Hebron Church." Manuscript, 1935. Copy in files of Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.
- Robinson Family Papers. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Willie T. Robinson, Macon, North Carolina.
- Warren County Deeds, microfilm, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.



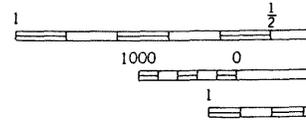
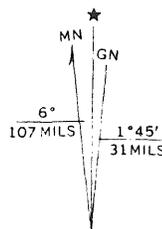
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1968

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
 10,000-foot grids based on Virginia coordinate system,
 south zone, and North Carolina coordinate system
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
 zone 17, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

