

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina
COUNTY: Cumberland
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Old Bluff Presbyterian Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
End of S.R. 1709, 0.4 mi. from junction with S.R. 1802

CITY OR TOWN:  
Wade vicinity

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
Seventh

STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37 COUNTY: Cumberland CODE: 051

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Mrs. Donis L. Williams, Clerk of the Session

STREET AND NUMBER:  
P. O. Box 26

CITY OR TOWN:  
Wade

STATE:  
North Carolina

CODE:  
37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Cumberland County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Fayetteville

STATE:  
North Carolina

CODE:  
37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal  
 State  
 County  
 Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)			(Check One)	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Old Bluff Presbyterian Church, located on the high east bank of the Cape Fear River near the small town of Wade in Cumberland County, is a large Greek Revival temple-form building. A wealth of intricate wooden detail, concentrated on the main (east) facade, ornaments the plain wooden surfaces. The well-proportioned two-story building, five bays wide and five deep, is set on low brick piers with later brick infilling. Plain lapped siding covers the structure.

The main facade is distinguished by a one-story, three-bay tetrastyle porch in antis and by the forceful pediment, with deep overhanging eaves. The porch is treated as an interior room. The wall surfaces have a flat-paneled wainscot beneath a plain chair rail and vertical flush sheathing, and the ceiling is board-and-batten. Leading from it are two entrances, each consisting of a double door, with six flat panels per leaf. Each door is surmounted by a four-pane transom and surrounded by wide fluted architraves with pierced corner blocks. Between the entrances is a nine-over-nine round-headed sash window with a fluted architrave, surmounted by a pierced keystone. The porch posts have cornice caps. The two outer posts are flat-paneled on the outside faces, while the inner posts are flat-paneled on both outside and inside faces. Flanking the porch, in the outer bays of the facade, are single six-panel doors with three-pane transoms set within wide plain surrounds with a plain strip border, pierced corner blocks, and a pierced lintel band. These doors open to the gallery stairs. The second story of the facade contains a central round-headed window identical to the center first-story window. The other bays at this level have nine-over-nine sash windows with architraves like those of the doors flanking the portico but lacking the pierced lintel. The wide overhanging boxed eaves are accentuated with a flat-paneled frieze, a pierced dentil course, a band of lozenge-and-square motif course, and an ovolo molding. The flat-paneled frieze carries into the flush-sheathed tympanum, which is also outlined by a pierced molding. In the center of the tympanum is an unusual triangular window with multiple panes and a pierced dentil course sill. The windows which illuminate the side elevations at both levels are like the second-story facade windows. The rear elevation windows are also identical, with the exception of the center bay window of the second story, which is like the center facade windows but has a fluted keystone. The roofline treatment of the sides resembles that of the facade but lacks the lozenge motif. The rear gable end is outlined by a plain flush raking cornice and has eave returns. A small exterior brick chimney has been added to the rear elevation.

The original interior fabric of Old Bluff Presbyterian Church is virtually intact. The pulpit is located at the west end opposite the entrances, and a gallery extends around three sides. The spaciousness and lightness of the interior is accentuated by the inventive Greek Revival woodwork. The plaster walls, the gallery, and the board-and-batten ceiling are painted white, and the pine floor is unpainted. The first-story windows and the second-story windows of the rear elevation, above the pulpit, are set within wide plain surrounds with a narrow strip border and plain corner blocks. The round-headed window in the east wall has a wooden keystone. The second-story windows have plain surrounds. The glass panes throughout the building are covered with white paint in a wave pattern, apparently

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finger-painted. A geometric border scratched in the paint with a sharp instrument finishes each pane. This treatment, which appears to have been done some years ago, was perhaps intended to simulate etched frosted glass. The side sections of the galleries are supported on Doric posts, the rear section rests on the ceiling joists of the recessed portico, and the upper level of the gallery has an identical range of posts. Each post, like the portico posts, is flat-paneled on the outer face. The balustrade is formed of wide overlapping boards, giving the appearance of being flat-paneled. The pulpit, constructed of hand-planed pine with a molded base and cornice, is set on a low flat-paneled platform. The pews, replacements of the originals, are arranged in three sections, divided by two aisles. Flanking the pulpit platform are pews for the choir. Two oil lamps are suspended from the ceiling over the center section. Two cast-iron stoves occupy a space in the center section.

The only access to the gallery is through the side facade doors. The stair hall on each side of the recessed portico originally contained a stair ascending in a single flight to the gallery. The present double-flight stairs are later additions, and are the only significant alteration of the original church fabric.

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian            | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |                                      |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Bluff Presbyterian Church congregation is the oldest organized Presbyterian congregation in the present boundaries of Cumberland County. Old Bluff Church, an essentially unaltered vernacular Greek Revival building of considerable distinction, is a shrine for descendants of the Scottish Presbyterian settlers along the Upper Cape Fear River. The building is one of the best examples of the delicate, attenuated Greek Revival idiom typical of the Presbyterian churches built by these settlers in the mid-nineteenth century.

Old Bluff Church is one of the three mother churches in the Upper Cape Fear River Valley, a region settled by Scottish immigrants in the eighteenth century. Bluff, Barbecue, and Long Street churches were organized in 1758 following visits by the noted evangelist Hugh McAden to the Scottish settlers in this Sandhills area of North Carolina. The earliest deed for church land was in 1761, when Neill McNeill gave to Hector McNeill and Alexander McAlister for five shillings and "the consideration of having the Gospel expounded" one acre of land on the west side of the Cape Fear River "whereon is built and erected a Meeting House as the same now stands." The earliest deed for church land at the present site was in 1791. John MacNeill, owner of a large tract of land on the Cape Fear River known as the "Bluff," sold to Farquhard Campbell and Alexander MacAlister, representatives of the congregation of the Bluff Meeting House, a two-acre tract on the east side of the northwest branch of the Cape Fear River for five shillings, containing the "meeting house now standing on the same." This meeting house was probably the log building referred to in an address by James Banks delivered at the centennial celebration of Bluff Church on October 18, 1858. Tracing the first hundred years history of the church, he stated that the first church building was built on the west bank of the Cape Fear, opposite the present church, and the second building was built on Smith's Creek and was known as "Roger's Meeting House." The third church was "a log house erected on the site now occupied by the new and beautiful church just dedicated to the Most High."

The "new and beautiful" church referred to is the present church building in the Greek Revival style. It had apparently been dedicated a short time before the centennial, and must have been constructed in the mid-1850s. The large two-story frame building was an ambitious undertaking for a congregation which had hitherto met in a log building. The charm

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of Old Bluff Church lies in the vernacular imitation of academic Greek Revival elements with available tools and materials, exemplifying the diffusion of the style in North Carolina. Especially distinctive is the contrast of the small-scale, rather delicate detail with the bold geometric forms of the building.

In 1908 the congregation erected a more conveniently located church building at nearby Wade. This church, known as Bluff Presbyterian Church, continues to be active. The old church building, however, is maintained through a trust fund established in 1963, and is the site of an annual homecoming.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research and architectural description by Ruth Little Stokes, survey specialist.  
 Cumberland County Records, Cumberland County Courthouse, Fayetteville, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).  
 Cumberland County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).  
 Cates, John. The Story of Fayetteville. Raleigh, North Carolina: Litho Industries Incorporated, 1972, second edition.  
 Records of the Bluff Presbyterian Church. (Records of the Centenary Celebration.)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	LONGITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds		LATITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	LONGITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 , "	0 , "	35 ° 11 ' 02 "	78 ° 43 ' 25 "		
NE	0 , "	0 , "				
SE	0 , "	0 , "				
SW	0 , "	0 , "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 9½ acres

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Survey and Planning Unit

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History      DATE: 4 March 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh      STATE: North Carolina      CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: Thornton W. Mitchell

Title: Acting Director, Division of Archives and History

Date: 4 March 1974

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

