

State of North Carolina
Division of Archives and History

Chatham COUNTY

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Merry Oaks QUAD

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Ebenezer Methodist Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER West side SR 1008, .5 miles north of jct with SR 1975,
near New Hope Township, near Bells

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Bells

VICINITY OF

Fourth

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

037

Chatham

037

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input 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 type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | n/a <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Ebenezer Methodist Church c/o Mrs. Roscoe Wilson

STREET & NUMBER

Rt. 2, Box 203

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Apex

VICINITY OF

N. C.

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Chatham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Pittsboro,

N. C.

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ray Manieri

July 1, 1983

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Urban Research Associates

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1301 Cornwallis Drive

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Greensboro

N. C.

7 DESCRIPTION

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE 1973 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Ebenezer Methodist Church is a simple rural Gothic Revival chapel probably constructed during the late nineteenth century. It is a one-story, one by four bay weatherboard structure set in a small grove of pine trees on S.R. 1008. The church has a steeply pitched gable roof of tin and lancet windows with modest tracery. The church's cemetery is located just to the north of the chapel.

Its most dominant feature is a single-stage entrance tower which projects from its gable front. This tower features a double-leaf entrance topped by a Gothic arch containing an interesting quatrefoil design. A small pent roof shelters the entrance. Lancet windows with Gothic hood molds appear on each side of the tower at the first story. Louvered lancet window openings occur on each side at a higher level. A steep, bellcast, pyramid roof caps the steeple. This roof contains dormered vents, decorated with louvers and trefoil designs. A heavy, turned, wooden finial sits atop the pyramid roof. Large lancet windows illuminate the chapel's remaining sides. A small, gabled, weatherboard addition extends from the Chapel's rear and a modern cement block ell extends northward from the chapel's rear.

The interior of the Ebenezer Methodist Church maintains much of its original character. Original multi-paneled doors survive, as does the original wainscoting and chair rail. All interior doors and windows have plain surrounds. The interior walls have interesting horizontal, grooved paneling. Seating for the church's congregation is provided by heavy wooden pews. A heavy, paneled wooden railing creates a chancel area by separating the pulpit, piano, and choir pews from the rest of the congregation.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

_____ NATIONAL _____ STATE X LOCAL

| 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/HUMANITARIAN | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1890

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ebenezer Methodist Church, one of the oldest Methodist congregations in the New Hope Creek area, was established in 1827. It has occupied several different structures since its establishment. The present church building dates from about 1890 and allegedly incorporates part of the previous church building constructed in 1867. As a result of the construction of the B. Everett Jordan Dam, the church was moved two miles north of its original site to its present location in the late 1970s. The present church structure is particularly interesting as a well-preserved example of Gothic Revival motifs on a simple frame chapel. In this respect it is unusual for Chatham County, where most rural chapels do not reach its level of expression of the Gothic Revival style.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

A. Associated with the development of Methodism in North Carolina during the late nineteenth century.

C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of vernacular Gothic Revival, ecclesiastical architecture, as that style developed in the rural areas of central North Carolina during the late nineteenth century.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although the Ebenezer Methodist Church was established as early as 1827,¹ the present church structure dates from about 1890.² The church's worship services were first held in a small log chapel, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.³ This structure has now fallen into ruin.

The original log church was used by both black and white members of the congregation for many years, but because of the growth of the congregation and the desire for more modern facilities, other church buildings were constructed. The second church structure, located across SR 1008 from the previous site of the present church structure, was constructed between 1830 and 1840 and given to the congregation's black members, which left Ebenezer Church to establish their own congregation after the Civil War.⁴

Although the establishment of the Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church, reduced the membership of Ebenezer Church by almost one-half, a new church building was constructed in 1867.⁵ Church tradition states that this third structure was used for several decades and then incorporated into the construction of the present chapel about 1890.⁶

It is not known why a new structure was built about 1890; but it may have been necessitated by the growth of the congregation or the desire for more modern facilities as the rural congregation became more prosperous. Church oral tradition claims that local craftsmen were used to create the Gothic Revival motif of this small frame chapel.⁷ Timber for construction of the new building, which incorporated the 1867 chapel, was cut from nearby forests and floated down local rivers to the site of the church.

Ebenezer Methodist Church has experienced several physical changes during the twentieth century. A rear addition, forming two Sunday School rooms was added in 1914 and a cement block ell added in 1948.⁸ During the late 1970s, construction of the B. Everett Jordan Dam threatened the church and it was moved to its present location on SR 1008 two miles north of its former site. After its relocation, a new masonry block addition was added to the church and a frame and block shelter constructed to its rear.⁹ The church cemetery was also relocated to the new site.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Adams, W. H., et al. Archaeological Investigations of Ebenezer Log Church and Vicinity. Submitted to the Army Corps of engineers, August 15, 1979.
- Clegg, Mrs. Bynum. Interviewed February 14, 1983. Mrs. Clegg is Church Historian.

continued on attached sheet...

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approx. 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|----------|------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 17 | 68,03,10 | 3,95,53,10 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is located on the west side of SR 1008, .5 of a mile north of its junction with SR 1975 and consists of the area upon which the church is located. See sketch map.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory--Nomination Form**

| |
|------------------|
| For NPS use only |
| received |
| date entered |

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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NOTES

1. "Ebenezer Church, County Landmark", The Pittsboro Herald, August 9, 1972, p. 2.
2. Mrs. Bynum Clegg, interviewed February 14, 1983. Mrs. Clegg is church historian.
3. W. H. Adams, et al, Archaeological Investigations of Ebenezer Log Church and Vicinity, submitted to the United States Army Corps of Engineers, August 15, 1979.
4. "Ebenezer Church County Landmark", The Pittsboro Herald, August 9, 1972, p. 2.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. "The History of Ebenezer Church", Pittsboro Herald, January 31, 1973 p. 10.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Mrs. Bynum Clegg, February 14, 1983.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

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"Ebenezer Church, County Landmark." Pittsboro Herald, August 9, 1972.

Hadley, Wade H. Jr., et al. Chatham County, 1771-1971. Durham: Moore
Printing Company, 1971.

"The History of Ebenezer Methodist Church." Pittsboro Herald, January
31, 1973, p. 10.

MERRY OAKS QUADRANGLE
NORTH CAROLINA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5285 IV SW
(GREEN LEVEL)

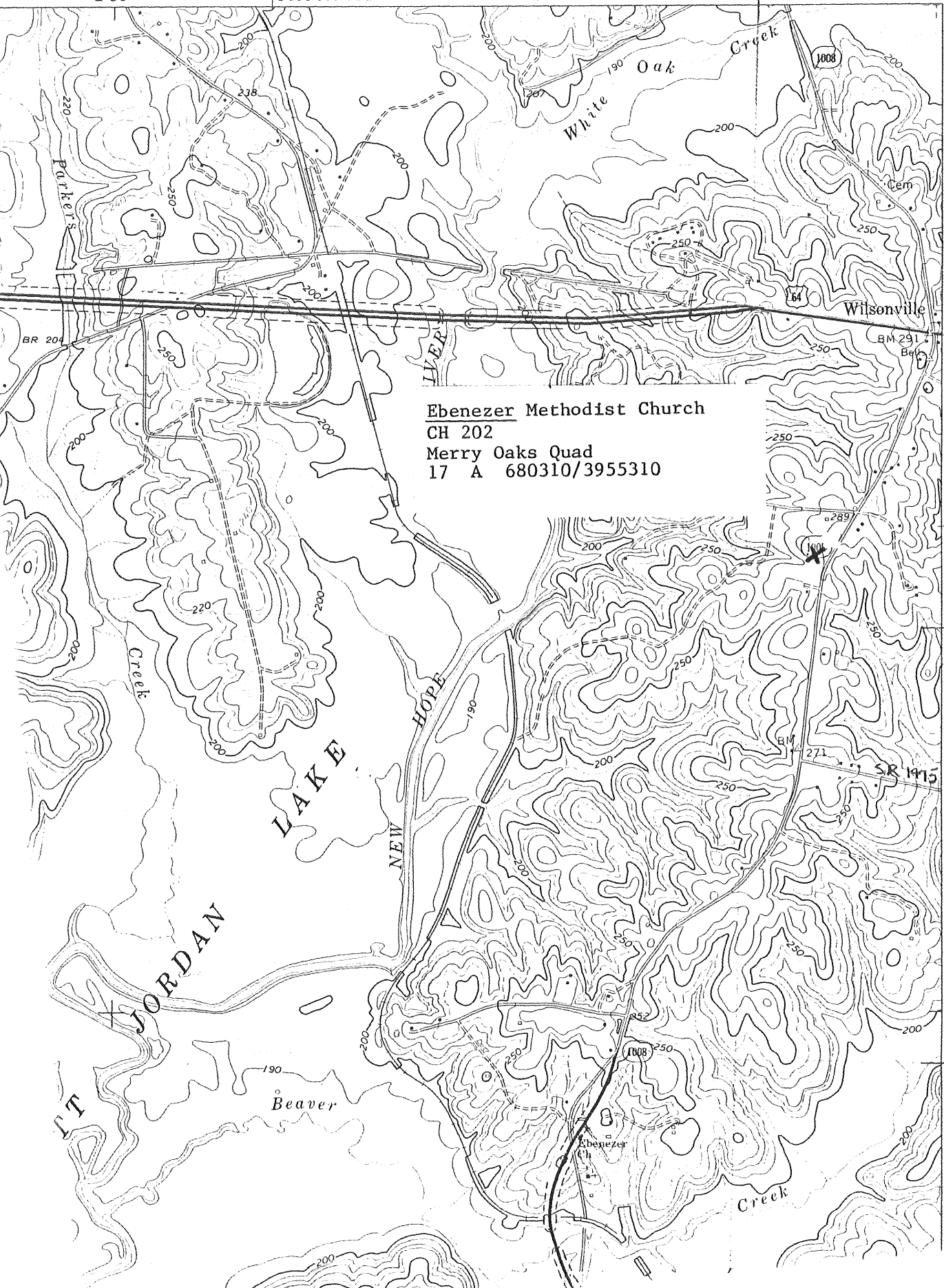
2'30"

1 990 000 FEET

679

680

79°00'
35°45'



Ebenezer Methodist Church
CH 202
Merry Oaks Quad
17 A 680310/3955310

13 MI. TO U.S. 1
RALEIGH 24 MI.

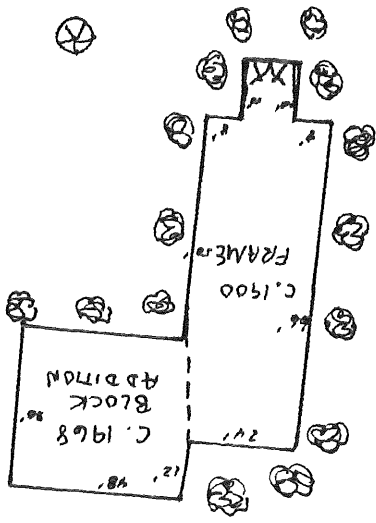
720 000
FEET

42'30"

3953

US 64

DIRT ROAD



SR 1008

SR 1975

Ebenezer Methodist Church
Bells vicinity
Chatham County

