

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC

O'Kelly's Chapel
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER West side NC 751 at Chatham-Durham County line near Farrington

CITY, TOWN

Farrington

VICINITY OF

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fourth

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

037

COUNTY

Chatham

CODE

037

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" 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
	<u>n/a</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ

STREET & NUMBER

PO Box 2410

CITY, TOWN

Burlington

— VICINITY OF

STATE

NC

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Chatham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

STATE

NC

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ray Manieri

July 1, 1983

ORGANIZATION

Urban Research Associates

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

1301 Cornwallis Drive

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Greensboro,

STATE

NC

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

A good example of a modest rural chapel with Gothic Revival features, O'Kelly's Chapel is distinguished by the steeply pitched roof and lancet windows which characterize that style. Presenting an excellent picture of how that style developed in the rural areas of North Carolina during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the simple frame church follows a gable front orientation with a three bay facade accented by a central entrance and cornice return.

Resting on a slightly raised foundation of brick piers, the chapel is a one-room structure, its stark simplicity relieved by a handsome entrance which consists of a multi-paned, double leaf doorway crowned by a large Gothic transom with intersecting tracery. Tall, narrow Gothic windows flank the entrance and similar windows with modest tracery also illuminate the Chapel's side elevations.

The chapel's interior, which was restored during recent years, adds to its overall rustic appearance. Wide flush-mounted wooden planks form the interior walls, floor, and ceiling. A small raised platform elevates the lectern at one end of the chapel and an elaborately carved pump organ enhances the chancel area. This vernacular effect is completed by the plain window and door surrounds and hand carved pews of dark red wood.

SIGNIFICANCE

____ NATIONAL

____ STATE

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 checked="" 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. 1900

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

O'Kelly's Chapel is one of the best examples of a small rural Gothic Revival Church in Chatham County. It is unusual in that it was constructed without a belfry, a feature that characterizes most rural churches in the county. It also has not been extensively remodeled as have many other, older rural churches in Chatham County. The chapel is identified with Reverend James O'Kelly and the establishment of the Christian Church in North Carolina.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. Associated with the development of the Christian Church from the Methodist Episcopal Church during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
- B. Associated with the life of Rev. James O'Kelly, an influential Methodist minister and church leader in southern Virginia and central North Carolina in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. O'Kelly eventually became the founder of the Christian Church movement.
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of vernacular Gothic Revival church architecture.

The O'Kelly's Chapel is named for Reverend James O'Kelly, influential Methodist minister and founder of the Christian Church movement during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

O'Kelly, who had served as an itinerate Methodist preacher in eastern Chatham County during the 1770s,¹ became a respected leader of the Methodist Episcopal Church in southern Virginia during the decade following the American Revolution.² Because of his differences with other church leaders concerning church government and administration, O'Kelly left the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1794 to found a movement which became known as the Christian Church.³ He moved to north-eastern Chatham County in 1797, purchased a small farm, and established the first Christian Church in the South.⁴ O'Kelly continued to lead his church and preach throughout northeastern Chatham County until his death in 1826.⁵

Several different worship structures have occupied the site of James O'Kelly's first Christian Church. According to local church tradition, the present chapel, the fourth structure to occupy the site, was constructed during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. During the early years of the twentieth century the church had an active membership comprised of families from northeastern Chatham County and the southern section of nearby Orange and Durham counties.⁶ Two sister churches, one in Durham and one in Chapel Hill, were formed from the membership of the present O'Kelly's Chapel during the early 1900s.⁷ The chapel's membership began to decrease during the 1950s and by the 1960s ceased to be an active congregation. Although the chapel is no longer used, except for an occasional spring worship service, members of its two sister congregations are involved in its upkeep and preservation.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Barrett, Rev. J. Beessley, The Centennial of Religious Journalism.
Dayton, Ohio: The Christian Publishing Company, 1908.
- Hadley, Wade H., Jr., et al. Chatham County, 1771-1971. Durham:
Moore Printing Company, 1971.

. . .Continued on additional sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	117	6'8151610	3970780	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is located on the west side on US 751 at the Durham-Chatham county line and consists of an area of approximately two acres upon which the chapel and its adjacent cemetery are located, as shown on Chatham County tax map #0716.

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. Wade H. Hadley, Jr., et al. Chatham County 1771-1971, (Durham: Moore Publishing Company, 1971), p. 256.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Durwood T. Stokes and William Scott, A History of the Christian Church in the South.
6. Rev. William Smith, interviewed February 4, 1983.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

**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 9

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MacClenny, W. E. The Life of Rev. James O'Kelly. Raleigh: Edwards
and Broughton Printing Company, 1910.

O'Kelly Chapel Highway Marker File. Research Branch, North Carolina
Division of Archives and History.

Smith, Rev. William. Interviewed February 4 1983.

Stokes, Durward and William T. Scott. A History of the Christian
Church in the South.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

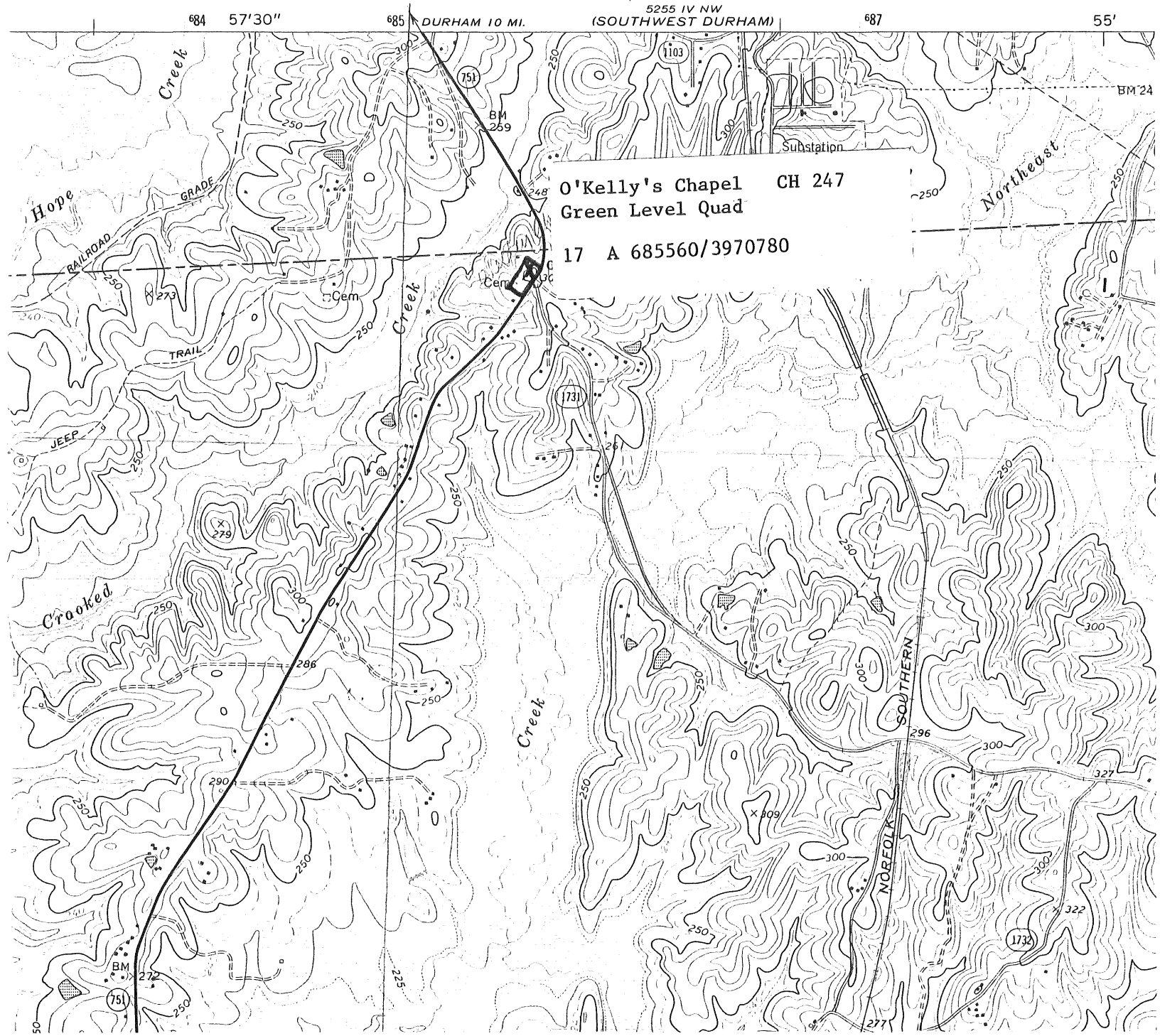
5255 IV NW
(SOUTHWEST DURHAM)

684 57'30"

685 DURHAM 10 MI.

687

55'



O'Kelly's Chapel CH 247
Green Level Quad

17 A 685560/3970780

O'Kelly's Chapel
CH 247
Tax Map #0716

