

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC Jersey Settlement Meeting House

AND/OR COMMON
Jersey Baptist Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER N side SR 1272 0.2 mi. E of jct. with SR 1104

CITY, TOWN

Linwood

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

North Carolina

CODE
037

COUNTY
Davidson

CODE
057

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 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 Jersey Baptist Church, c/o Rev. Morris S. Hollifield, Pastor

STREET & NUMBER
Route 7

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

VICINITY OF

STATE
North Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Davidson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

STATE
North Carolina

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Ruth Little, Consultant

ORGANIZATION
Survey and Planning Branch

DATE
February 28, 1983

STREET & NUMBER
Division of Archives and History

TELEPHONE
919/733-6545

CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh

STATE
North Carolina

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

Jersey Baptist Church is a rectangular gable-front brick building, four bays long and two bays wide, built in the Greek Revival style in 1842-1843. The only major change in appearance occurred in 1897-1899 when the structure was extended one bay on the front (south) end and a beautifully detailed frame belfry was also added. About 1945 a pedimented portico was built. The robust simplicity of the warm red locally made brick walls and simple wooden trim are still the most dominant features of the sanctuary.

The walls of the original structure are laid in one-to-five common bond. The bricks from the original main facade were reused in the 1899 extension, beginning at the ground level and extending up to a height of about five feet on all three sides. Bricks manufactured in Salisbury, also laid in one-to-five bond, were used to complete the addition. The main facade has two separate entrance doors, each with eight flat panels. The doors may have been reused from the original facade but more likely date from the late nineteenth century remodeling. The door surrounds, however, have ovolo molded profiles and were apparently reused from the original facade. In 1897-99 all of the original rectangular window openings were replaced with Gothic arched openings and clear glass windows with molded surrounds were installed. Stained glass memorial windows were installed throughout the sanctuary in 1958. Above the main entrance doors, the Gothic arched stained glass lunettes contain the church name, Jersey Baptist Church.

The wide wooden boxed cornices with returns on the gable end of the main facade, date from 1899, but are probably a close facsimile of the original Greek Revival eaves treatment. The gable roof is covered with composition shingles. Directly behind the front gable is a sawnwork belfry, of delicate scale, added in 1899. The polygonal structure has a conical roof with a slender wooden finial, and the bell is enclosed by a balustrade featuring turned balusters. The lacey sawnwork brackets combine with the simple posts to mimic the Gothic arches of the doors and windows. The belfry adds a whimsical Victorian flourish to the sturdy Greek church.

The pedimented, three-bay Doric porch protecting the two entrances was added about 1945. Concrete columns rest on a slab concrete floor and support a pediment covered with aluminum siding and outlined by a boxed eave similar to that of the main roof. In the east elevation, just behind the main facade, is a marble cornerstone which lists the four major stages of building of the church complex: the sanctuary in 1842 and 1899, the Sunday School addition, at the rear, in 1933, and the Educational Building, extending to the east adjacent to the Sunday School addition, in 1951.

The interior originally contained a slave balcony, but this was removed when the church was extended in 1899. The sanctuary was probably completely remodeled at this time, and some of the 1899 features remain in spite of an interior redecoration in 1958. The plaster walls and plaster pilasters and architraves which articulate the corners and juncture of the walls and ceiling date from the late nineteenth century. The wood sheathed ceiling, from the same period, is now covered with plaster board. The pulpit, baptistry, and choir stalls at the north end of the church are 1958 replacements. The wooden Gothic style pews were acquired in the twentieth century from the First Baptist Church in Lexington

8 SIGNIFICANCE

____ NATIONAL

XX

____ 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 checked="" 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 1842-1843

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Jersey Baptist Church, established about 1755, is the oldest religious congregation in Davidson County. The handsome Greek Revival style brick meeting house, built in 1842-1843, is the oldest surviving church building in the county as well. The church was established by Particular Baptists who emigrated to the Yadkin Valley from New Jersey in the early 1750s. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the meeting house was used by local Presbyterians and Episcopalians as well as Baptists, and the designs of the gravestones in the churchyard dating from 1772 reflect this denominational diversity.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. Historically significant as the earliest church congregation in Davidson County, and regionally important as one of the earliest Baptist congregations in Piedmont North Carolina. Associated with some of the pioneering itinerant ministers of the conservative "Particular" sect of the Baptist denomination.
- C. Architecturally significant as the oldest surviving church building in Davidson County. The 1843 brick Greek Revival style meeting house is probably typical of many of the other nineteenth century church sanctuaries in the county which were replaced by twentieth century structures.

Eighteenth century records maintained by the Philadelphia Association of Baptist churches indicate that two Baptist ministers, John Gano and Benjamin Miller, were sent to Virginia in 1754 to minister to isolated Baptist settlements, and visited North Carolina during the same trip.¹ One or both of these men founded Jersey Church. No church records prior to 1784 have survived, and there are two major secondary sources for this period. According to Paschal's history of the Baptists in North Carolina, the first minister of Jersey Church was Benjamin Miller, who probably accompanied a number of members of Scotch Plains Baptist Church in New Jersey, where he was minister, to Davidson County in 1753 or 1754.² The only church history, by Garland Hendricks, 1964, cites entries in John Gano's journal indicating that he moved south to become Jersey's first permanent minister in 1757. Early in 1758 he bought land in Jersey settlement, and remained until 1760 when the increasing threat of Cherokee Indian attacks forced him to return to New Jersey.³

Gano was a strong supporter of the "Particular" or "Regular" Baptist sect, which followed conservative doctrines. The second early Baptist church in this section of the piedmont, Abbott's Creek Church, organized about 1756 in north Davidson County, belonged to the "Separatist" or "New Light" Baptist sect, an evangelical group which emerged in New England about 1740 and grew much more rapidly than the older sect because of their missionary fervor.⁴ Jersey Church declined to join the Sandy Creek Baptist Association, a Separatist association organized in nearby Randolph County in 1758, and instead joined the Charleston Association of Baptist Churches in 1759.⁵ By 1790, North Carolina had 94 Baptist churches with 7,503 members. The only other state in the country with more Baptists was Virginia, with over 20,000.⁶

In the early 1770s, the suppression of the Regulator movement, a revolt on the North Carolina frontier, disrupted the Yadkin Valley. Some Jersey Baptists were active, and Benjamin Merrill, one of the most prominent members of the congregation, was executed by Governor Tryon in 1771.⁷ However, some church activity continued in the 1770s, for the first deed for the church property was recorded in 1775. In this year William Frohock sold about 3 acres "including the Meeting House & Burying Ground near Swearing Creek" to the "trustees of the United Congregation, consisting of the Professors of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and the Baptists in the Jersey Settlement."⁸ Thus Jersey Church was a union church, used alternatively by several congregations.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6.5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 7	5 6 2 2 5 0	3 9 5 4 2 4 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

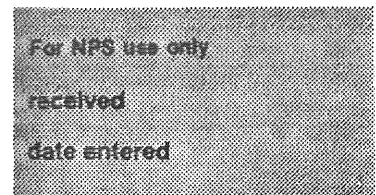
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 5 on Map 14, Davidson County Tax Office, bounded on the north by lot 3, on the east by lot 4, on the south by SR 1272 (Jersey Church Road) and on the west by lot 6, as outlined in red on map.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Jersey Settlement Meeting House



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On October 14, 1784, fourteen people met to constitute "the Church of Christ at the Jersey Settlement Meeting." These are the charter members of the reconstituted congregation after the disruption of the 1770s. This meeting is the first entry in the earliest extant church record book.⁹ Drury Sims, former pastor of the Rocky River Church in Chatham County, was made minister, and served until 1789. Meetings were held once a month, and by 1785 the congregation had thirty-eight members. A record entry in 1785 mentions "our meeting house," but it is not known whether this was the original structure or a new structure. This typical entry of Saturday, February 2, 1793, provides some insight into services:

After Divine worship a Door was opened for Experiences and 1st proceeded to the matter of Brother Cornelius Smith which was Joyntly agreed by the Church to stand still as a Refferance from last Meeting & after prayer to God Dismiss'd Meeting in Mutch love & Union.¹⁰

As early as 1793, a Negro slave, "Baird's Bob," was admitted to membership, and until 1893 blacks, both free and slave, formed a significant percentage of the membership. It is not known whether Presbyterians and Episcopalians referred to in the 1775 deed worshipped with the Baptists or used the meeting house on separate occasions.

Under the leadership of Pastor Thomas Durham from 1793 to 1808, coinciding in part with the Great Revival in the South, Jersey Church became one of the largest and most influential Baptist churches in the state. By the end of 1797 it had ninety-five members. Beginning with the Reeds Settlement Meeting in 1795, it established mission churches in nearby communities throughout the mid-nineteenth century. The church records note that in July 1800 the second known meeting house was constructed in a central meeting place "up near to Peter Owens."¹² No new church deed was recorded, and Owens owned land on Swearing Creek, so this new building must have been the same site as the previous church. The gravestones in the church cemetery date from 1772, indicating continuous use of the original site. By the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, Jersey Church had over 200 members.¹³

In 1842 this meeting house was replaced by the present brick church. The will of James Ellis, probated in November 1842, gives "to the trustees of Jersey Settlement Meeting House the sum of \$200 to help complete the church now in building."¹⁴ The entry in the church record book for Saturday, November 4, 1843 states that the church met for a prayer and sermon in the "New Brick Church" for the first time.¹⁵ The church acquired an additional one-half acre adjacent to the original tract during the construction of this new building, and the wording of the deed is identical to the 1775 deed, indicating that the church was still a united congregation of Baptists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians.¹⁶ The church historian concluded from studying the record books that the church became exclusively Baptist only after 1848.¹⁷

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Jersey Settlement Meeting House

For NPS use only
received
date entered

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The 1843 church building has undergone only one major architectural change. In 1897-99 it was extended one bay to the south, and a belfry added to the front gable end. The church has continued to thrive throughout the twentieth century, with several rear and side additions to house classrooms, and is currently one of the most active churches in south Davidson County.

Footnotes

¹Garland A. Hendricks, Saints and Sinners at Jersey Settlement: The Story of Jersey Baptist Church (Jersey Baptist Church, 1964), p. 2.

²George Washington Paschal, History of North Carolina Baptists (Raleigh: North Carolina Baptist State Convention, 1930), I, pp. 265-266.

³Hendricks, pp. 11-21.

⁴Paschal, p. 178.

⁵Hendricks, pp. 17-19.

⁶John Asplund, The Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination in North America to the First of November 1790 (1791), rpt. Baptist Banner, Goodlettsville, Tennessee and Church History Research and Archives, Lafayette, Tennessee, 1979, n.p.

⁷Hendricks, pp. 23-24.

⁸Rowan County Deed Book 8, p. 275.

⁹Jersey Settlement Meeting Record Book, 1784-1797. The Baptist Collection, Wake Forest University Library, Winston-Salem, N.C.

¹⁰Ibid., no page number.

¹¹Hendricks, p. 38.

¹²Typed transcription of the second Jersey Settlement Meeting Record Book, 1797-1852. The Baptist Collection, no page number.

¹³Hendricks, p. 51.

¹⁴James Ellis Will, probated November 1842. Davidson County Records, in State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

¹⁵Church Record Book, p. 42 (134).

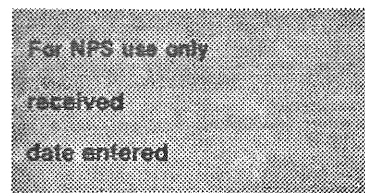
¹⁶Davidson County Deed Book 8, p. 463.

¹⁷Hendricks, p. 94.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
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Jersey Settlement Meeting House



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Asplund, John. The Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination in North America to the First of November 1790. 1791. rpt. Baptist Banner, Goodlettsville, Tennessee and Church History Research and Archives, Lafayette, Tennessee, 1979.

Davidson County Records. Deed Books, Wills. Microfilm copies, in State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Hendricks, Garland A. Saints and Sinners at Jersey Settlement: The Story of Jersey Baptist Church. Jersey Baptist Church, 1964.

Jersey Settlement Meeting Record Books, 1784 to 1852. Microfilm copies, in the Baptist Collection, Wake Forest University Library, Winston-Salem.

Paschal, George Washington. History of North Carolina Baptists. Raleigh: North Carolina Baptist State Convention, 1930, I.

Rowan County Records. Deed Books. Microfilm copies, in State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

MAP 14 LOT 5

193 AC.

JERSEY BAPTIST CHURCH
Davidson County, N.C.
Granting to: Southmont, N.C.

SWEARING

3
57.3 AC.

6
81.38 AC.

5
6.5 AC.
EXEMPT
JERSEY BAPTIST CHURCH

4
29.27 AC.

JERSEY

9
1.2 AC.
EXEMPT
JERSEY CHURCH
PARSONAGE

10
10 AC.

CHURCH

8
3.7 AC.

7
75.52 AC.

1272 ROAD

