



**North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office**

David L. S. Brook, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary

Division of Archives and History
Jeffrey J. Crow, Director

November 7, 2001

MEMORANDUM

To: William D. Gilmore, Manager
PEDA/NCDOT

From: David Brook *for David Brook*

Re: Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Replace Bridge #24 over
Halls Creek, B-4222, Pasquotank County, ER02-7978

We are in receipt of the above referenced report from Mary Pope Furr. The report meets our guidelines and those of the Secretary of the Interior. Having reviewed the report, we concur that the Halls Creek United Methodist Church is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places due to character altering changes since the 1950s.

The above comments are offered in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation at 36 CFR 800. If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Renee Gledhill-Earley at 919/733-4763. Thank you.

cc: Mary Pope Furr

bc: Brown/Montgomery ✓
Power/Wood
County
RF

	Location	Mailing Address	Telephone/Fax
Administration	507 N. Blount St. Raleigh, NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh 27699-4617	(919) 733-4763 • 733-8653
Restoration	515 N. Blount St. Raleigh, NC	4613 Mail Service Center, Raleigh 27699-4613	(919) 733-6547 • 715-4801
Survey & Planning	515 N. Blount St. Raleigh, NC	4618 Mail Service Center, Raleigh 27699-4618	(919) 733-4763 • 715-4801

**B-4222 · Replace Bridge 24 on SR 1140 over Halls Creek
Pasquotank County · Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report**

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT
REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 24 ON SR 1140
OVER HALLS CREEK
PASQUOTANK COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TIP NUMBER B-4222
STATE PROJECT NUMBER 8.2110401**

**Prepared for
Ramey Kemp and Associates, Inc.
Raleigh, North Carolina**

**Prepared by
Mattson, Alexander & Associates, Inc.
Charlotte, North Carolina**

20 September 2001

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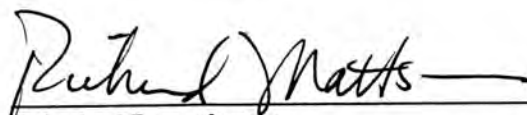
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**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT
REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 24 ON SR 1140
OVER HALLS CREEK
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20 September 2001


Principal Investigator _____ Date 9/20/01
Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.

**Historic Architectural Resources Date
North Carolina Department of Transportation**

**REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 24 ON SR 1140
OVER HALLS CREEK
PASQUOTANK COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TIP NUMBER B-4222
STATE PROJECT NUMBER 8.2110401**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 24 on SR 1140 over Halls Creek in Pasquotank County (Figures 1-3). The bridge has a sufficiency rating of 56.8 out of a possible 100, and is classified as functionally obsolete. One alternative was studied and is described below.

Alternative A replaces the existing bridge using an off-site detour to maintain traffic during construction. This alternative would provide a new structure that would have a forty-foot roadway width that includes two twelve-foot travel lanes with eight feet of lateral clearance on each side of the bridge. The new structure will have deck drains over the water. The roadway approaches would provide two eleven-foot travel lanes with eight-foot grassed shoulders. The roadway approach and bridge grades would approximately match existing bridge and roadway elevations.

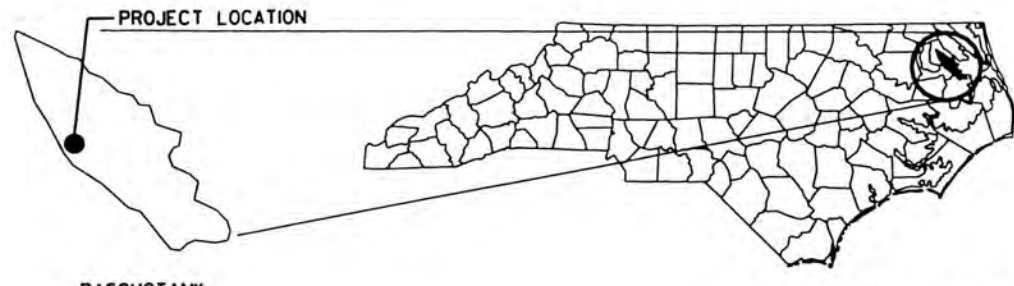
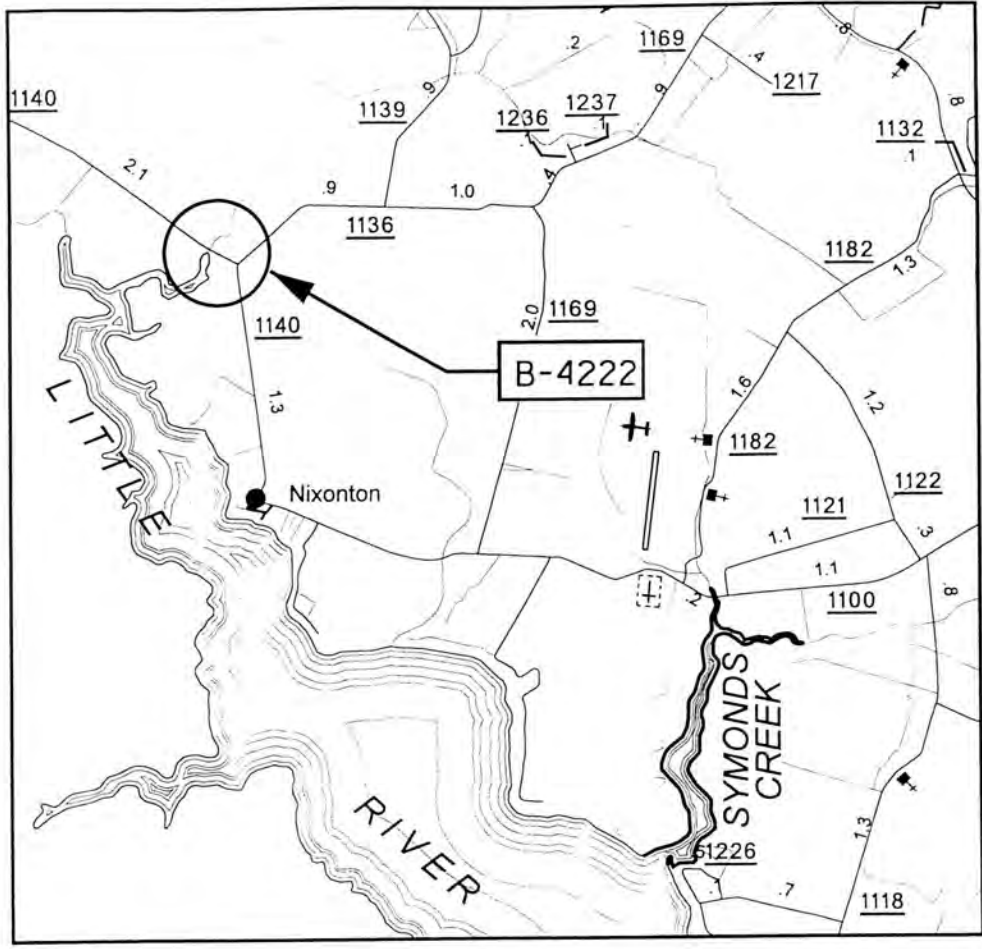
Purpose of Survey and Report

This survey was conducted and the report prepared in order to identify historical architectural resources located within the area of potential effects (APE) as part of the environmental studies conducted by NCDOT and documented by a Categorical Exclusion (CE). This report is prepared as a technical appendix to the CE and as part of the documentation of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended. Section 106 of the NHPA requires that if a federally funded, licensed, or permitted project has an effect on a property listed in or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation be given a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

Methodology

This survey was conducted and the report compiled in accordance with the provisions of FHWA Technical Advisory T 6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents); and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 800; 36 CFR Part 60; and Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources by NCDOT.

The "Final Identification and Evaluation" was conducted with the following goals: 1) to determine the APE, defined as the geographic area or areas within which a project may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist; 2) to identify all significant resources within the APE; and 3) to evaluate these resources according to the National Register of Historic Places criteria.



PASQUOTANK COUNTY

SCALE IN MILES



North Carolina Department of
 Transportation
 Division of Highways
 Project Development & Environmental
 Analysis Branch

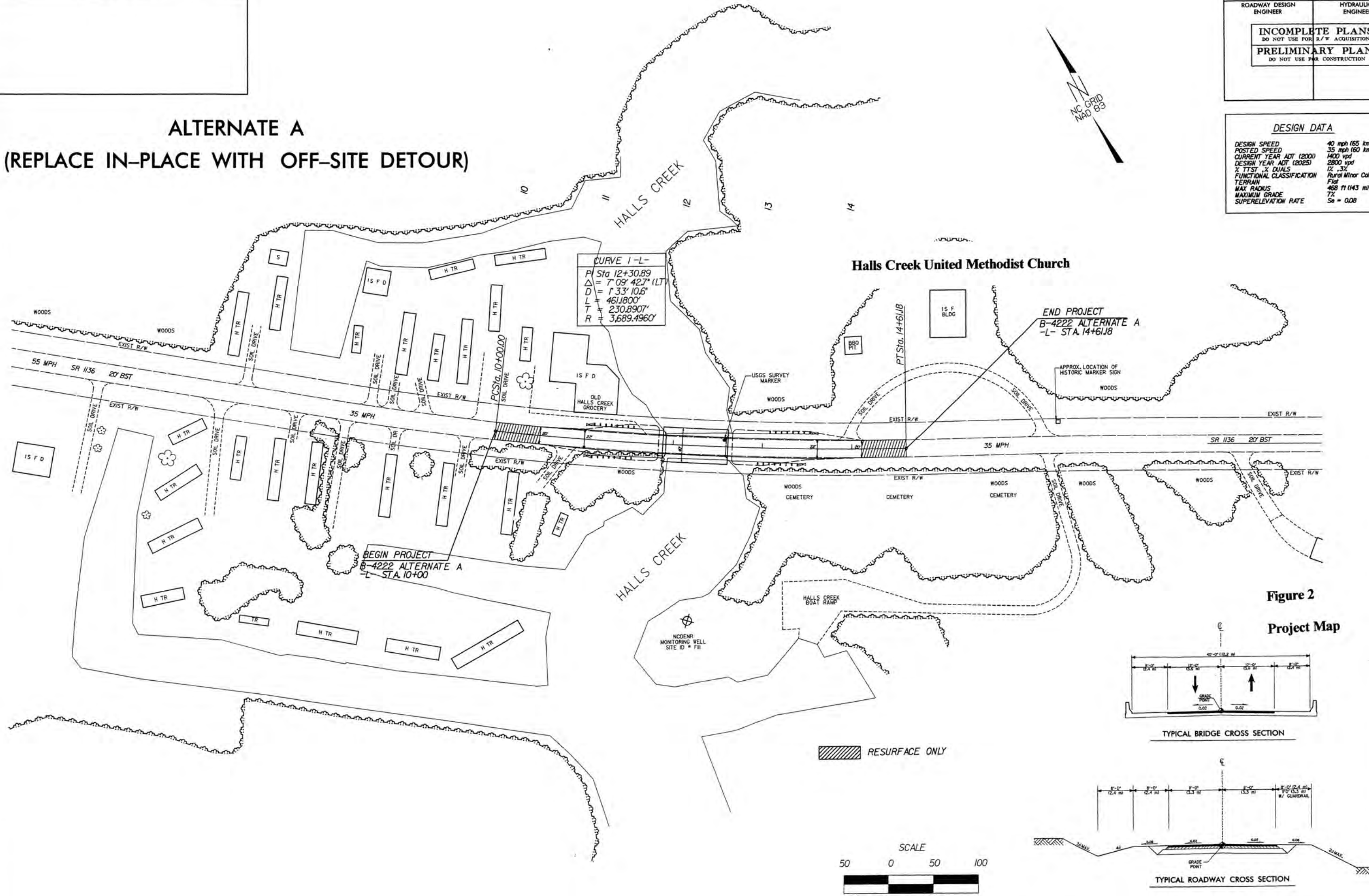
FIGURE I
 AREA LOCATION MAP
 BRIDGE NO. 24
 ON SR 1140
 OVER HALLS CREEK
 PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
 TIP PROJECT B-4222

RW SHEET NO.	
ROADWAY DESIGN ENGINEER	HYDRAULICS ENGINEER
INCOMPLETE PLANS DO NOT USE FOR R/W ACQUISITION	
PRELIMINARY PLANS DO NOT USE FOR CONSTRUCTION	

DESIGN DATA	
DESIGN SPEED	40 mph (65 km/h)
POSTED SPEED	35 mph (60 km/h)
CURRENT YEAR ADT (2001)	1400 vpd
DESIGN YEAR ADT (2025)	2800 vpd
% TTST % DUALS	1% .3%
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION	Rural Minor Collector
TERRAIN	Flat
MAX. GRADE	4.68% (14.3 m)
MAX. SUPERELEVATION RATE	7%
	Se = 0.08



ALTERNATE A (REPLACE IN-PLACE WITH OFF-SITE DETOUR)



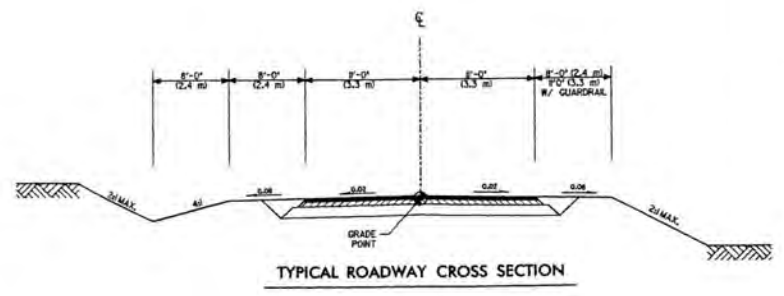
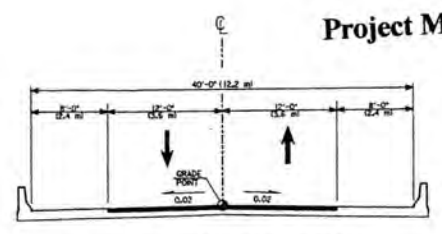
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 $T = 230.8907'$
 $R = 3,689.4960'$

Halls Creek United Methodist Church

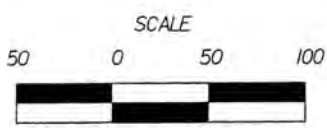
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 B-4222 ALTERNATE A
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BEGIN PROJECT
 B-4222 ALTERNATE A
 -L- STA. 10+00

**Figure 2
Project Map**



RESURFACE ONLY



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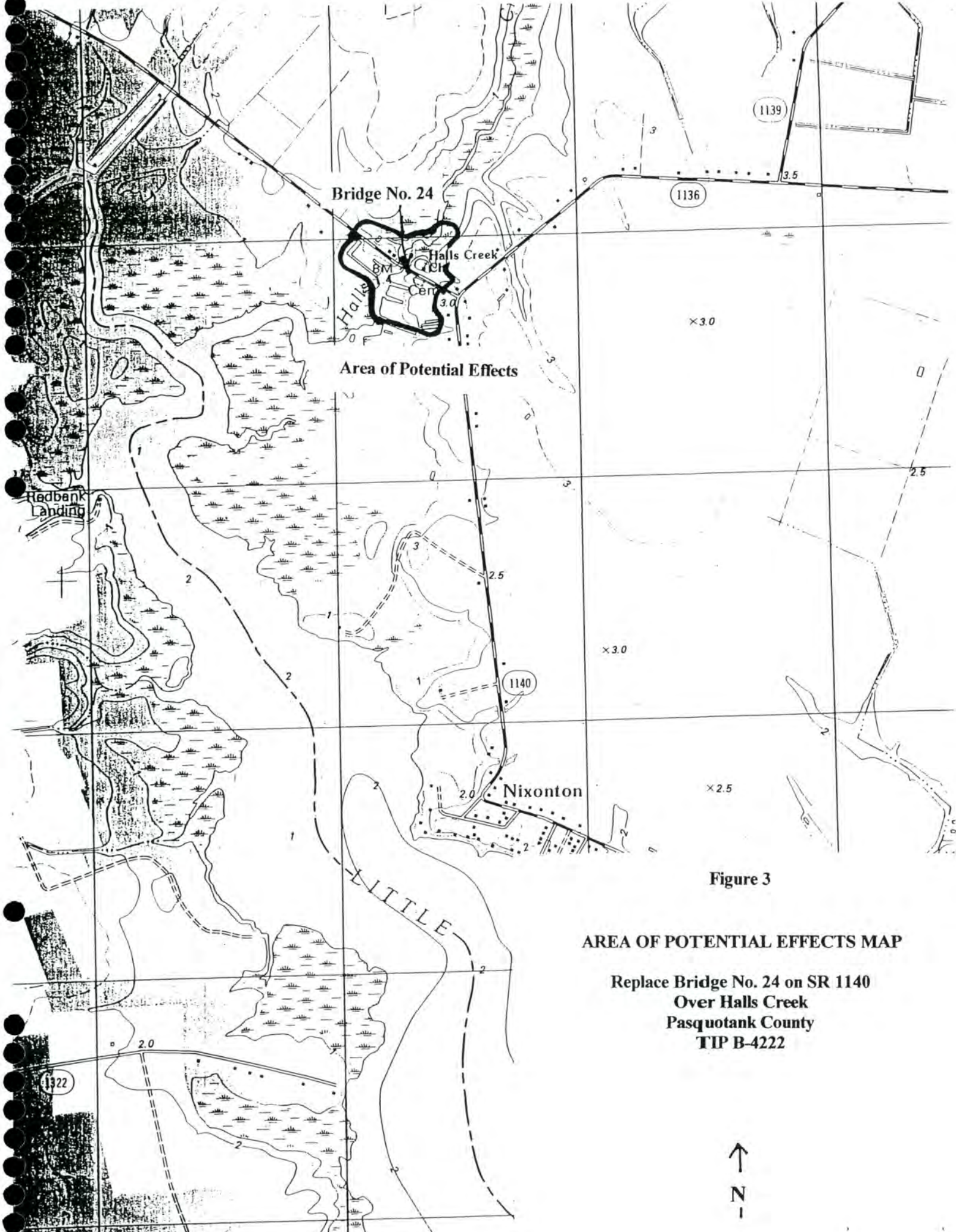


Figure 3

AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS MAP

**Replace Bridge No. 24 on SR 1140
Over Halls Creek
Pasquotank County
TIP B-4222**



The methodology consisted of background research into the historical and architectural development of the area and a field survey of the APE. The field survey was conducted in July 2001, to delineate the APE and to identify all properties within this area, which were built prior to 1950. The boundaries of the APE are shown in Figure 3. The APE is defined by modern construction, topographical features, and sight lines, and one hundred percent of this area was surveyed.

Thomas R. Butchko's 1989 study, *On the Shores of the Pasquotank, The Architectural Heritage of Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County*, provided historical and architectural background information. Butchko's comprehensive, countywide architectural inventory included Halls Creek United Methodist Church within the APE.

Summary Findings of the Survey

The project area follows SR 1140 across Bridge No. 24 over Halls Creek, which flows into the Little River in rural Pasquotank County. A trailer park stands on the west side of the creek, and Halls Creek United Methodist Church stands on the east side. Woodlands line Halls Creek except where acreage has been cleared in recent decades for boat landings. The crossroads hamlet of Nixonton is located south of the APE along the Little River. One property, Halls Creek United Methodist Church (ca. 1827) was identified within the APE and evaluated in the "Property Inventory and Evaluations" section of this report. This antebellum church has been significantly altered in recent decades and is therefore not recommended as eligible for the National Register.

Properties Listed on the National Register

None

Properties Listed on the North Carolina State Study List

None

Properties Considered Eligible for the National Register

None

Properties Considered Not Eligible for the National Register

Halls Creek United Methodist Church

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ESSAY

Early Settlement to the Civil War

In common with the Albemarle region as a whole, the area that is now Pasquotank County developed steadily through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Settlers of mostly English origin streamed southward from Virginia into this area during the colonial period, and in 1738 Pasquotank County was formed. In 1756, the county seat was established on the Pasquotank River at the plantation of Thomas Relfe, near the present southern limits of Elizabeth City. The newcomers oriented their farms and small trading communities to the Albemarle Sound, which marked the southern boundary of the county, and to the county's navigable rivers and streams. In 1746, Zechariah Nixon's river landing on the Little River south of the APE became the county's first sizable trading center. Incorporated as Nixonton, this bustling port by the 1800s boasted the county courthouse, a jail, and some twenty residences (Lefler and Newsome 1963: 72-74; Butchko 1989: 7-13; Bishir et al. 1996: 109-110).

Typical of the region, the production of naval stores, timbering, and farming constituted the foundation of the county's economic development. Farmers raised grains and livestock for market, while the extensive forests yielded vast quantities of lumber, barrel staves, shingles, and naval stores (tar, pitch, and turpentine) for export to England and the West Indies (Lefler and Newsome 1963: 74; Butchko 1989: 8).

The opening of the Great Dismal Swamp Canal in 1805 boosted economic growth and especially the emergence of Elizabeth City as Albemarle's leading trading center. The canal connected Elizabeth City on the Pasquotank River to the port of Norfolk, Virginia, and urban markets to the north. Elizabeth City became the county seat in 1805 and by the 1830s contained shipyards, warehouses, fisheries, tanneries, and sawmills near the waterfront. The city flourished in the ensuing decades before the Civil War, its population growing from 400 in 1830 to 1,800 in 1860 (Bishir et al. 1996: 98-99).

The greater access to far-flung markets made larger farms and commercial lumbering and naval stores production more profitable, which encouraged slave ownership. Between 1790 and 1860, the percentage of county slaveholders possessing ten or more slaves increased from sixteen to twenty-seven percent, while thirty-seven planters owned twenty or more slaves. By the end of the antebellum era, the county contained nearly 9,000 residents, half of whom were black (Butchko 1989: 14).

During the antebellum period, the Episcopal, Methodist, and Baptist denominations became firmly established in Pasquotank County. The Methodists built churches at Halls Creek (within the APE) in 1784, Newbegun and Newland in 1791, and Nixonton in 1792. With growing congregations, the church buildings at Halls Creek and Newbegun were replaced with larger, classically inspired structures in the 1820s. The Baptists organized churches at Knobbscrook (now Elizabeth City First Baptist) in 1786 and at Flatty Creek in 1789. In the 1850s, the members of Flatty Creek Baptist Church erected a substantial Greek Revival church (later enlarged in the 1890s). By the 1850s, Baptist congregations also opened churches in the communities of Berea and Ramoth-Gilead in northern Pasquotank County. In 1826, the organization of Christ Church in Elizabeth City announced the presence of the Episcopal Church in the county (Butchko 14-16, 32).

Civil War to the Present

In February 1862, Union troops defeated a greatly out-numbered Confederate force south of Elizabeth City. Shortly thereafter, the Great Dismal Swamp came under Federal control, thus constricting trade throughout the region. In the war's aftermath, trade and shipping plummeted and significant new construction virtually ceased. In 1867-1868, the only rural store or industry recorded in *Branson's Business Directory* was the William Pallin and Brothers Steam Mill in Nixonton. With the loss of slave labor, tenant farming rose in the postwar decades. By the 1910s, nearly half of the county's farmers were tenants or sharecroppers (Branson 1867-1868; Butchko 1989: 33-35; Bishir et al. 1996: 98).

By the late nineteenth century cotton emerged as the county's main money crop. In 1880 farmers planted cotton on 4,000 acres, and cotton acreage rose to over 10,000 by the 1920s. In addition to cotton, Pasquotank County farmers cultivated quantities of corn and Irish potatoes, and by the late 1920s the county led the state in the amount of acreage devoted to the potato crop (2,771 acres) (Butchko 1989: 35).

As the county recovered from the Civil War, Elizabeth City became a thriving trading hub in the region. The coming of the Elizabeth City and Norfolk Railroad in 1881 linked the city by rail to Norfolk and spurred the construction of new sawmills, cotton mills, and related factories along the rail corridor and the Pasquotank River. In addition, improved local boat service and roadways strengthened the role of Elizabeth City as a market town. The city rapidly grew from 2,300 residents in 1880 to 6,348 in 1900. Between 1865 and the Depression, the lumber industry expanded to become the city's leading industry. In 1915, the city's saw, lumber, and planing mills employed over 1,000 workers. By the early twentieth century, a substantial business district was taking shape along the riverfront while the leading merchants and industrialists built houses on the adjacent streets near the courthouse. Along newly platted blocks immediately to the east, developers built closely arranged dwellings for the growing middle and working classes (Butchko 1989: 162-163; Bishir et al. 1996: 98-100).

After the Second World War, improved roadways signaled the beginning of significant changes in the county. The construction of US 17 through the heart of the county brought the tourist trade. Numerous motor courts were constructed along the highway in the 1940s and 1950s, including Whispering Pines, Bob's Motor Court, and Sunny Acre Motel, which still survive. New highways also encouraged the expansion of commercial farming, and during the 1970s and 1980s, corporate farms cleared vast amounts of forestlands for corn, soybeans, and wheat. It is estimated that between 15,000 and 20,000 acres of woodlands were cleared in this period to increase the amount of cleared farmland by nearly one-third (Butchko 1989: 52).

Agriculture remains the county's economic mainstay. Today local farmers raise quantities of Irish potatoes and cabbage, and the county's production of soybeans ranks among the top ten counties in North Carolina. Pasquotank is also a statewide leader in sorghum. While the southern, northern, and northwestern portions of the county remain rural and agricultural, the outskirts of Elizabeth City are becoming increasingly suburban. In recent decades Elizabeth City and its environs have experienced significant development pressure from the rapidly expanding Virginia metropolises of Virginia Beach and Chesapeake. Concurrently, Elizabeth City's scenic location along the Pasquotank River (part of the Intercoastal Waterway along the North Carolina coast) has attracted both seasonal visitors and permanent residents (Butchko 1989: 52).

PROPERTY INVENTORY AND EVALUATIONS

Properties Evaluated Intensively and Recommended Not Eligible for the National Register

Halls Creek United Methodist Church

Northeast side SR 1140, just east of Halls Creek and approximately 0.3 mile west of SR 1136
Nixonton vicinity, Pasquotank County

Setting

Halls Creek United Methodist Church is sited in a clearing on the northeast side of two-lane SR 1140 just east of Halls Creek. A small abandoned cemetery (approximately five to ten headstones) surrounded by a simple iron fence is located in dense overgrowth on the south side of SR 1140. On the east side of the property stands a Daughters of the Revolution commemorative marker. The granite tablet marks the site of the First Albemarle Assembly. It reads, "The First Albemarle Assembly Met Here, Feb. 6, 1665. Erected by Sir Walter Raleigh Chapter, Daughters of the Revolution, June 11, 1910." A modern trailer park is located on the west side of Halls Creek.

Evaluation of Integrity (Plates 1-9) (Figure 4)

Constructed in 1827, Halls Creek United Methodist Church is a traditional gable-front rural church that has been significantly altered since the 1950s. The frame building retains its original, simple gable-front form, four bays deep with a classical pediment across the front. Although the building remained little changed until the mid-twentieth century, it underwent numerous alterations after suffering damage from Hurricane Hazel in 1954. The original two front doors on the main elevation were replaced by the existing central entry sheltered by the replacement gable-front porch. The existing colored-glass windows were also installed and the original first-floor windows on the front replaced with two smaller windows. The rear educational wing was also added, and brick flues erected on the side elevations. Although the principal investigators were not able to gain access to the interior, it too was remodeled in 1954. A center-aisle plan replaced the original two-aisle plan, and the former slave gallery at the rear was enclosed and a wider stairway constructed (Butchko 1989: 100).

The Ruritan Club of Pasquotank County acquired the building in the 1990s and installed vinyl siding throughout the exterior. The small collection of headstones on the south side of SR 1140 was inaccessible, but the stones appear to be simple granite markers that date from the nineteenth century. The iron fencing is rusted but intact. In addition, a cluster of approximately five simple headstones is located at the edge of the overgrowth just south of the fenced cemetery. These are later stones that date from the mid-twentieth century.

Historical Background

The Methodists enjoyed a strong early presence in Pasquotank County. Francis Asbury, one of the first two bishops in the American Methodist Church, made numerous visits to this region during his travels through the South in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For example, in January 1784 Asbury preached at the Winfield Courthouse near present-day Elizabeth City and

afterward traveled to Nixonton (south of the APE), where he critically stated, “Spiritous liquor is, and will be, a curse to this people” (quoted in Butchko 1989: 15-16). His visits spurred the formation of congregations at Halls Creek (1784), Newbegun (1791), Newland (1791), Nixonton (1792), and Elizabeth City (1804).

The evangelical fervor of the Great Revival that swept Pasquotank County and the state in the early nineteenth century encouraged Protestant churches to construct more substantial houses of worship that embodied their enlightened spirituality. The great majority of congregations opted for new gable-front church designs with either two front doors and a pair of aisles or one door and aisle. The gable-front design was well suited for the prevailing Greek Revival style, which often featured front-facing pedimented gables inspired by the Grecian temple. During this period of evangelicalism and rapid growth, many Pasquotank churches built new, gable-front sanctuaries with classical elements, including Halls Creek United Methodist (1827), Newbegun United Methodist (1827), Union United Methodist (1826), and Flatty Creek Baptist (1850s) (Butchko 1989: 32, 128; Bishir 1990: 180-190).

The earliest deed associated with the organization of the Methodists at Halls Creek dates from 1819. In that year an acre of land was purchased on “the main road to Halls Creek Bridge. . . for the purpose of building a Methodist Meeting house” (quoted in Butchko 1989: 100). According to tradition, the congregation erected a log house of worship across the road from the present church. In March 1827, the present church site was acquired and the frame, classically inspired building probably constructed. The church remained active until the 1990s, when the building was purchased by the local Ruritan Club for a meeting hall.

Evaluation of Eligibility

Halls Creek United Methodist Church does not retain sufficient integrity for National Register eligibility under any criterion. Although the pedimented gable-front form remains intact, its original architectural fabric has been substantially altered since 1954. The windows and doors have been altered and sometimes reconfigured, the exterior has been covered with vinyl siding, and the interior extensively remodeled.

Pasquotank County contains better-preserved examples of gable-front church architecture from the antebellum period. Flatty Creek Baptist Church in Salem Township is considered to be “the finest antebellum church in the county” (Butchko 1989: 115). Built in the 1850s, this two-bay by four-bay frame church includes a pair of double-leaf doorways, tall six-over-six windows with original louvered blinds, and gable returns. The interior retains its original double-aisle plan. Partially remodeled in the late nineteenth century, the interior finish includes diagonally laid beaded boards and a lectern with a sawnwork balustrade. In addition, both Newbegun and Union United Methodist churches are antebellum gable-front churches that retain key original elements while undergoing remodeling in the 1920s (Butchko 1989: 115-116; 123, 128).

Located on the south side of SR 1140, opposite Halls Creek United Methodist Church, the small fenced cemetery is not considered individually eligible under any criterion. It is abandoned and inaccessible, and the headstones visible from the road appear to be simple, traditional granite markers that do not warrant eligibility for their design significance. Moreover, the cemetery is not known to be associated with individuals whose activities were demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context.

Figure 4

HALLS CREEK METHODIST CHURCH

PROJECT AREA: SITE PLAN

(not to scale)

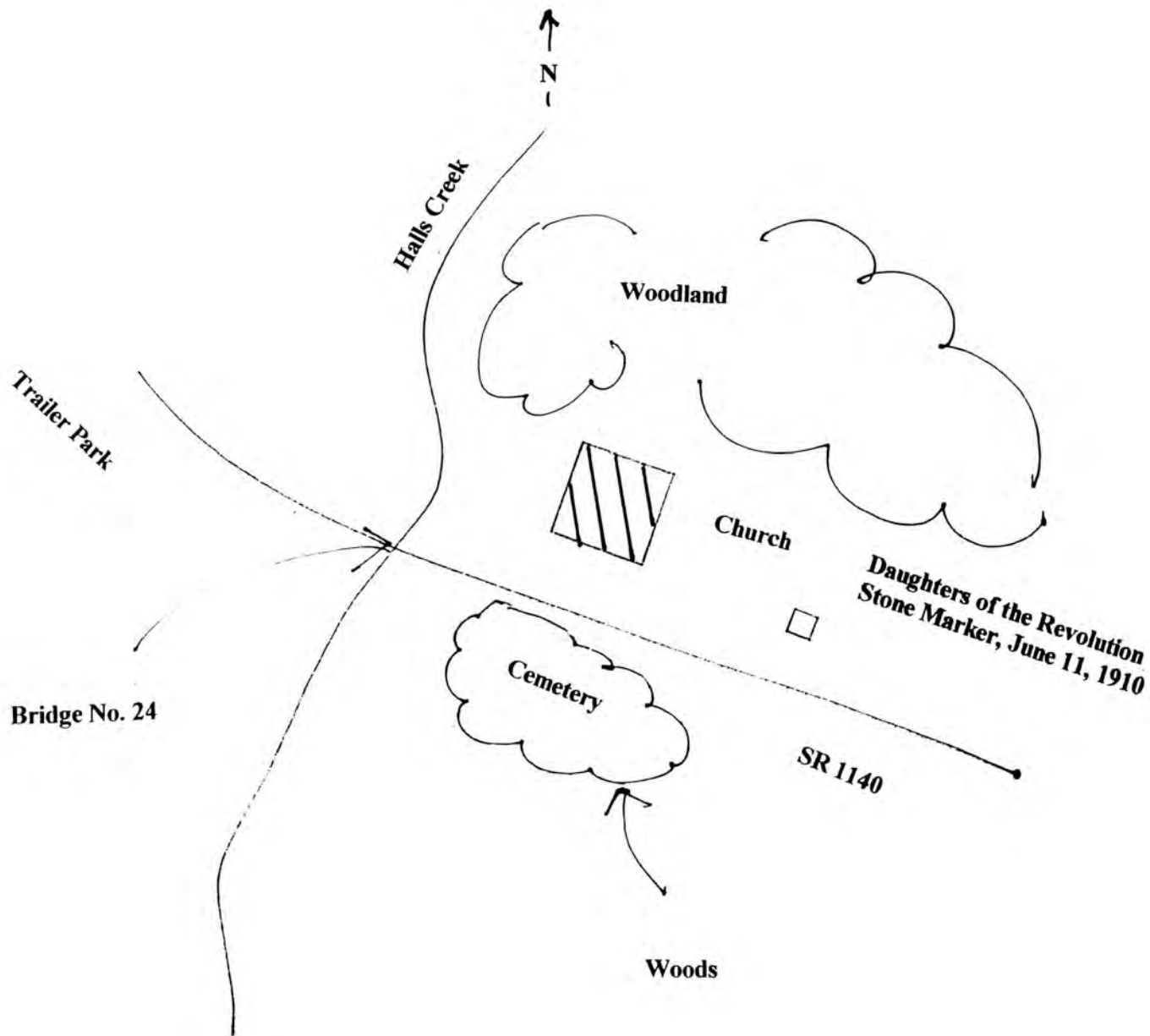




Plate 1. Halls Creek United Methodist Church, Main Elevation, Looking North.



Plate 2. Halls Creek United Methodist Church, Looking Northwest.

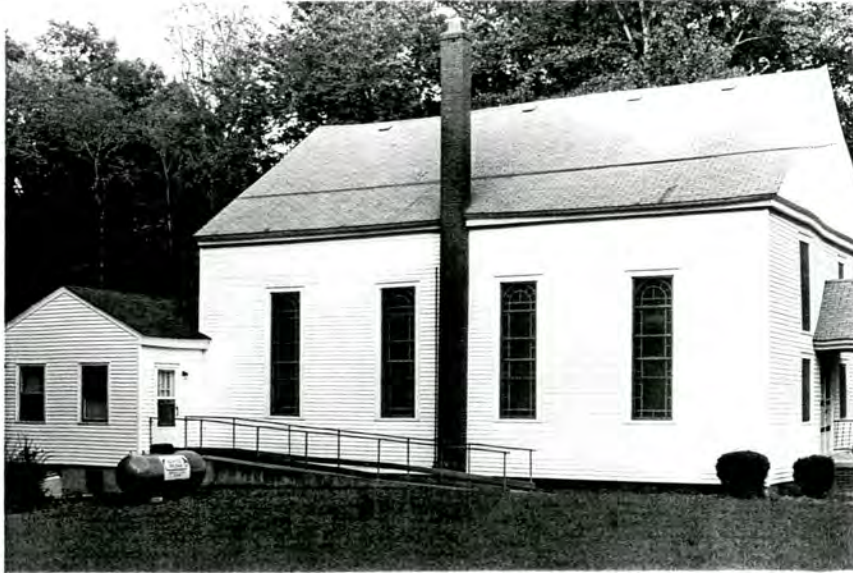


Plate 3. Halls Creek United Methodist Church, West Elevation, Looking East.



Plate 4. Halls Creek United Methodist Church, Looking Northwest.



Plate 5. Halls Creek United Methodist Church, Right-of-Way, Looking East.

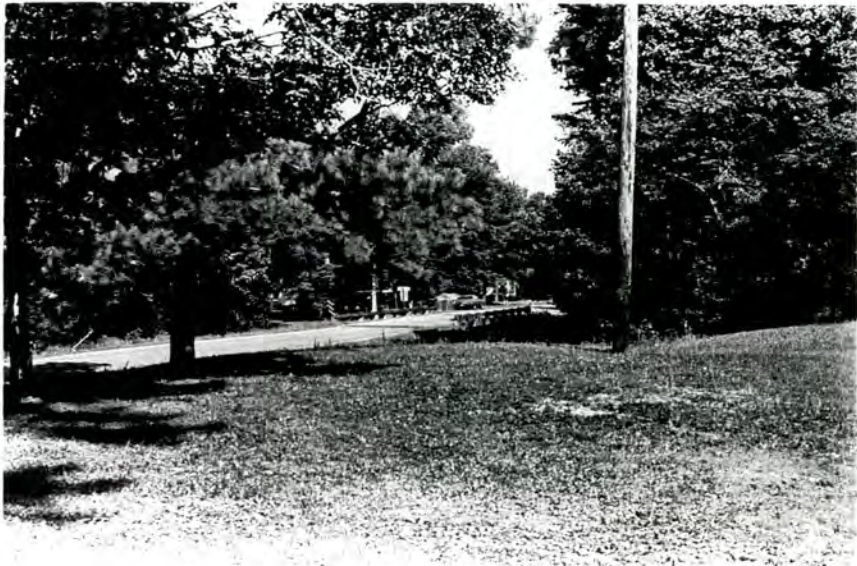


Plate 6. Halls Creek United Methodist Church, Looking Southwest Towards Bridge No. 24.



Plate 7. Halls Creek United Methodist Church, Looking South Across SR 1140 Towards Densely Wooded Cemetery Site.



Plate 8. Daughters of the Revolution Commemorative Marker, Looking Northeast.



Figure 9. Flatty Creek Baptist Church.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bishir, Catherine W. *North Carolina Architecture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Bishir, Catherine W., et al. *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Branson, Levi. *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory*. Raleigh: J. A. Jones Publishing, 1867-1868.
- Butchko, Thomas. *On the Shores of the Pasquotank: The Architectural Heritage of Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County, North Carolina*. Elizabeth City: Museum of the Albemarle, 1989.