

1231

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Jenkins Lutheran Chapel and Cemetery

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 364 Shofner Bridge Road  not for publication N/A

city or town Shelbyville  vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Bedford code 003 \* zip code 37160

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert H. Kesper / R 9/15/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain:)

Edson W. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

10/17/97

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
1		structures
		objects
3	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions) ▾

RELIGION: church

FUNERARY: cemetery

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

RELIGION: church

FUNERARY: cemetery

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Gable-Front Form

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

foundation limestone

walls weatherboard

\_\_\_\_\_

roof metal

other wood, concrete

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** N/A

(Mark "X" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 year of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1886

**Significant Dates**

1886

**Significant Person**

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Shofner, Loton and Shofner, Jacob Morton

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):** N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

MTSU, Center for Historic Preservation

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel and Cemetery  
Name of Property

Bedford County, TN  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 5.5 acres

Shelbyville, TN 79NW

**UTM References**

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 556240 3924360  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Rebecca Smith and Kate Carothers  
organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date January 1997  
street & number P. O. Box 80, MTSU telephone 615-898-2947  
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

**Additional Documentation**

submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name c/o Mrs. R. B. Fort, Jr., President, Board of Directors of Jenkins Lutheran Chapel  
street & number 2544 US Highway 41A South telephone 615-684-5163  
city or town Shelbyville state TN zip code 37160

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN

## VII. DESCRIPTION

Jenkins Chapel and Cemetery are located five miles east of Shelbyville off New Tullahoma Highway on Jenkins Chapel Road. The building and cemetery are located on a small knoll off Jenkins Chapel Road. The construction of this vernacular building dates to about 1886 after the first building was sold to an African-American congregation and moved north two miles near Coldwell now known as Mullin's Chapel. The present church building was built by members of the congregation.

The building is an unadorned one story framed structure sitting on a limestone pier foundation which also has some pressed tin on the east and north elevations. The shape of the building is rectangular, roughly sixty feet long and thirty-six feet wide, with the long sides facing east and west. The high-pitched roof is composed of metal alloy and has small, slightly over-hanging eaves. The sides of the building are weatherboard that have been painted white. The east and west sides contain four sets of four-over-four double-hung sash windows, and are original to the building. The south side shows a recessed entrance leading into the interior of the church. The exterior of the church has been kept extremely close to its original appearance by the congregation. The roof was replaced with metal alloy in the early twentieth century, circa 1930, and the concrete steps and metal hand-rail were probably added at the same time.

The south facade contains three sets of original wooden doors and is also dominated by the high-pitched roof line that contains a slight gable hood with cap trim. Under this roof line begins the exterior weatherboard wall. In the center of this elevation is the recessed entrance to the church. The opening to the recessed entrance is adorned by a simple triangular pediment. A set of Cross and Bible wooden doors dominates the center of the recessed area and is topped by a multi-paned and colored transom. To the east and west of these center doors are single wooden doors that are also topped by an original multi-paned transom and also lead into the interior of the church. This elevation has a discontinuous frieze band across the gable front. A plaque stating the building's construction date as 1886 is located to the west of this recessed area. Concrete steps with a black metal handrail, added circa 1950s, lead from the recessed area to ground level. Covering the foundation is an open white lattice which was also added circa 1950s.

The north elevation is also dominated by the high-pitched gable roof line. Under this begins the exterior weatherboard wall that continues down to the limestone foundation that is covered by pressed tin. This elevation has no openings but also has a discontinuous frieze band across the gable front.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN

The east elevation is dominated by the metal roof with small slightly flared over-hanging eaves. Under this eave line begins the exterior weatherboard wall where four sets of original four-over-four windows appear. These windows contain their original glass. Window surrounds have a simplified triangular pediment.

The west elevation is also dominated by the metal roof with small over-hanging eaves. Under this eave line begins the exterior weatherboard wall where four similar sets of original four-over-four windows appear. These windows also contain their original glass and are also surrounded by simplified triangular pediments. On the north end of this elevation is a small outhouse which abuts the building and is only accessible from the exterior of the chapel. Roughly five feet long by four feet wide, it is still used as a bathroom and was added in the early twentieth century, circa 1930.

The interior of Jenkins Chapel has remained close to its original appearance with some changes for heating, lighting, and decorative purposes. The original gas heaters have been replaced with electric heaters and the Victorian light fixtures have been electrified. The church interior plan is based on the same rectangular design as the exterior with only one large room that is the sanctuary.

The primary entrance of the church, which is located in the center of the south facade, opens into the sanctuary. This area is one continuous space with the raised chancel centered at the north end. Eighteen original oak pews as well as the original pulpit, lectern, and altar are still intact and located in the main sanctuary. These pews sit on a red and black commercial grade carpet that was added in the 1970s and is typical for a modern church flooring. A commercial, textured wallcovering was also added in the 1970s and covers all four wall elevations of the church. An oak ceiling cornice molding was also added at the time of the 1970s renovation and was stained walnut to match the shutters. On the east and west wall elevations are the four sets of four-over-four windows that are covered by the original, walnut shutters. These shutters also retain their original hardware. The original bead board ceiling remains intact and has been painted white. The original Victorian ceiling light fixtures, that were once lit by gas were converted to electricity circa 1930. The double set of wooden doors and two single wooden doors are also original to the church and also contain a multi-paned and colored transom which is of special interest.

Located on the east elevation of the church lies the original cemetery where several graves display names important to the founding of Jenkins Chapel. The cemetery is roughly square and completely enclosed by an original circa 1890 wrought iron structure that has been painted black; it is a contributing site to the nomination (C).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN

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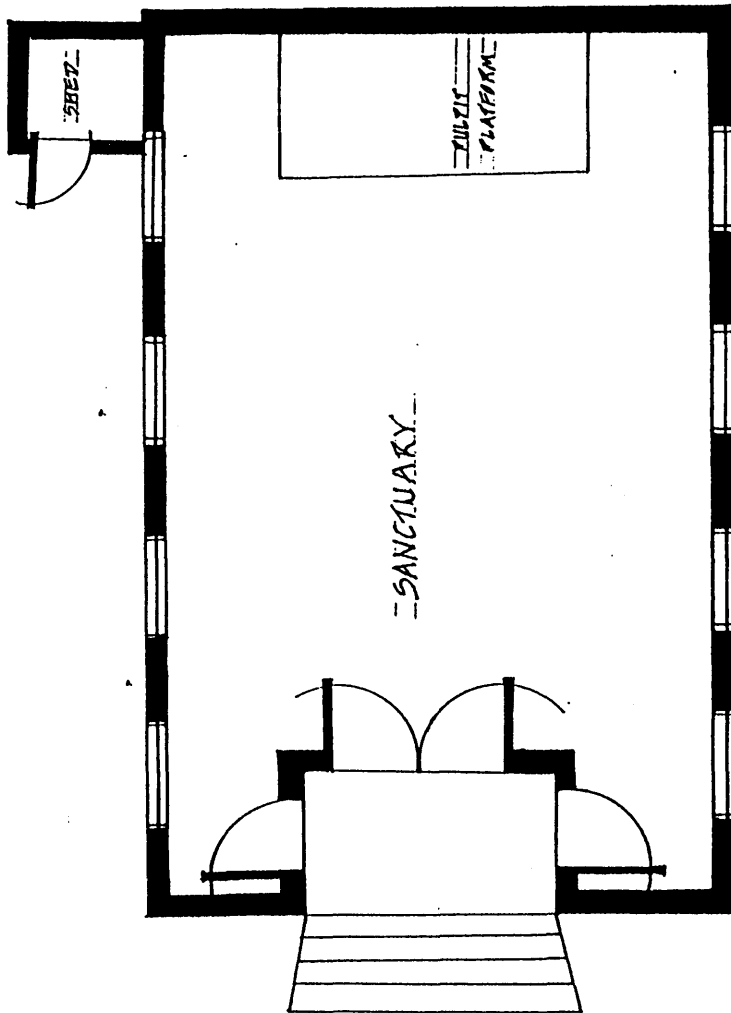
The site contains burials from the early 1800s, circa 1810, to the present day with the majority of the stones dating prior to 1946; it is a contributing site to the nomination (C). Several of the earlier graves have only a small headstone while parts of the other cemetery contains other gravemarkers that document local masonry skills as well as the ability of wealthier members of the congregation to purchase finely carved and designed stones from professional stonecarvers and gravemarker companies. There are eleven family plots that can be identified, ten marked by low concrete walls and one by a metal marker. The cemetery is of significance to the beginnings of Lutheranism in Bedford County and is also one of the oldest Lutheran cemeteries in Bedford County. The cemetery contains graves of many of the first settlers, their pastors, and their descendants into the mid-twentieth century including a foreign ambassador, Tennessee governor, and many local Bedford County leaders. Consequently, the cemetery, also, documents the settlement patterns of Lutherans in Bedford County.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN



JENKINS CHAPEL  
FLOOR PLAN



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN

## VIII. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel in Bedford County, Tennessee, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as a significant example of rural vernacular church architecture of the late nineteenth century. Built circa 1886, the church building was constructed to serve an expanding Lutheran community in Bedford County.

The church is named for William Jenkins. As more German Lutheran settlers began to arrive from North Carolina, including Michael Fisher, another Lutheran founder, a demand arose for a resident ordained pastor to lead a congregation of Lutherans. The North Carolina Synod, in May of 1824, licensed Reverend William Jenkins to lead the congregations of Bedford County. Reverend Jenkins, born in 1802 at Fredericksburg, Maryland, had been ordained on May 7, 1828, at the Union Church, Rowan County, North Carolina.

Jenkins made his way to Tennessee by horseback, stumbling upon a camp revival meeting near present-day Bell Buckle. It was at the meeting that Jenkins met Nimrod Burrows, who led him to the present site in Bedford County. Although no money was available to pay Jenkins, he agreed to serve as pastor to the new congregation of Lutherans. He made money by working in carriage and wagon-making. He built the second carriage in Bedford County for John Shofner for \$600.

Reverend Jenkins held his first service in October 1824 and his first communion service was held in March of 1825 at the original site of the first Shofners' Lutheran Church, about two miles south of the Jenkins Lutheran Chapel. Thirty-eight people were present at the communion service, five of whom were slaves. Jenkins served the Bedford County Lutheran parish until his death in 1877, with the exception of a four-year stint in Lovettsville, Virginia, sometime between the years of 1850-1860. Jenkins had served as pastor of three Lutheran churches, but he is known to have preached to as many as ten congregations.

As a historian of the Lutheran church in Bedford County noted,

Reverend Jenkins organized the congregation known as "Jenkins Chapel" sometime between the years of 1835-1845. It was originally called "Cedar Hill," standing about one mile west of the present church building on the plantation of Colonel Loton Shofner. About 1880 Cedar Hill church was sold to colored folk and removed to near Coldwell, where it is known as "Mullins' Chapel." The present building was dedicated by the Reverend John Boone in October 1886. "Uncle" Jeff King preached for many years at Cedar Hill as Reverend Jenkins accommodated other congregations. (Armstrong, VIII-101)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN

Even though Jenkins' death in 1877 ended his service to the congregation, the congregation remained known as "Jenkins Lutheran Chapel." When it built the present church in circa 1886, it kept the historic name and called the building "Jenkins Lutheran Chapel," a designation the congregation retains.

Jenkins Chapel is significant for its architecture because it is an extant example of a vernacular style used by the early Lutheran settlers of Bedford County. Jenkins Chapel is one of the oldest examples of vernacular church architecture in the county. The exterior of the church has been kept very close to its original appearance. The roof was replaced with metal in circa 1930, and the concrete steps and metal hand-rail were probably added at the same time. The interior of the church has also been carefully maintained, with some changes being made for heating, lighting, and decorative purposes. Overall, Jenkins Chapel has maintained the same appearance since its construction circa 1886, and it is a significant example of early church architecture in Bedford County. Loton Shofner (who donated the land) and Jacob Morton Shofner ( who lived at the end of Jenkins Chapel Road) were instrumental in building the church with the help of the congregation.

Surrounding Jenkins Chapel is a nineteenth century cemetery, used as a burial ground before the church was constructed. Gravemarkers date from circa 1840 to the present, although the majority date from the time of the church's construction, circa 1886, to the mid-twentieth century, circa 1950. The cemetery shows several prominent Lutheran family names, such as: Shofner, Cooper, Mullins, Wells, Bomar, and Miller. William Prentice Cooper, Jr., former Governor of Tennessee from 1939-1945 is buried in Jenkins Cemetery. These names represent those families who were instrumental in bringing Lutheranism to Bedford County. Many of the historic headstones exhibit Victorian design traditions. Mirroring the importance of family to the history of the church, most graves are arranged in large family plots, which in some cases are outlined by a low wall of limestone blocks, but that in other cases are defined by ornate cast-iron decorative fences and gates. A Victorian-styled iron fence encircles the entire cemetery and it was erected either at the time of the construction of the church building or shortly thereafter.

Compared to the earlier Shofners' Lutheran Church, the Jenkins Lutheran Chapel is a valuable historical and architectural document of how Bedford County Lutherans envisioned their church buildings in the late nineteenth century. The Shofners' Lutheran Church embraced Greek Revival style, a conservative architectural choice for the 1870s but one very appropriate to the church's role as the mother church of Middle Tennessee Lutheranism. Jenkins Lutheran Chapel, on the other hand, did not stand along a major road; it was located in a much more isolated settlement, near the farms of many prominent members. Like Shofners', its entrance illustrates the gable front form with white weatherboard exterior. Simplified classical ornamentation is noted on the windows

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

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 7

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN

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and entryway reflecting the influences of Shofners' Lutheran Church; nevertheless, the stylistic characteristics reflect a trend toward the rural vernacular church architecture of the late nineteenth century. Jenkins Lutheran Church was much more Victorian in its interior decorative treatment, a quality that the congregation has carefully preserved for one hundred years. Its understated elegance reflected the general conservative and traditional attitude of the congregation members.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   8  

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN

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## IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- "Lutheranism in Middle Tennessee." Private Collection. Shofner Lutheran Church, Bedford Co., TN
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- Blanks, James Rightman. The Shofner Family Genealogy. Utah: Family History Publishers, Date Unknown.
- Fort, Mrs. Robert. Interview, June 10, 1996, at her Shelbyville home, Bedford Co., TN. Notes in author's possession.
- "Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers." North Carolina and Tennessee Synods - 1773 - 1965." Date Unknown. Private Collection. Jenkins Chapel Lutheran Church.
- "Living History in Living Churches." Shelbyville Times-Gazette. September 18, 1950. Private Collection. Jenkins Chapel Lutheran Church.
- Norton, Herman A. Religion in Tennessee 1777-1945. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981.
- "Obituary of Reverend William Jenkins." Lutheran Observer. November 9, 1877. Private Collection. Jenkins Chapel Lutheran Church.
- Smith, Pastor Richard. "History of Jenkins Chapel Lutheran Church." Unpublished document. Ca. 1996. Jenkins Chapel Lutheran Church, Bedford Co., TN.
- "Three-Church Parish: In Bedford County Lutheranism began in Martin Shofner." Nashville Tennessean Magazine September 10, 1950. Private collection. Jenkins Chapel Lutheran Church.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 9

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN

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## X. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

### Verbal Boundary Description

This Tax Map for this nomination has the scale 1"=400'. This scale tax map is prepared by the Tennessee State Board of Equalization for rural areas. In the past, the Tennessee Historical Commission has used this scale map for nominations and has found that the 1"=400' adequately meets our office needs. The Tennessee Historical Commission does not have the facilities to prepare maps to the scale preferred by the National Park Service.

The nominated boundaries are those marked as parcel number 9, 2.5 acres and parcel number 10, 3 acres on the attached Bedford County Tax Map 96.

### Boundary Justification

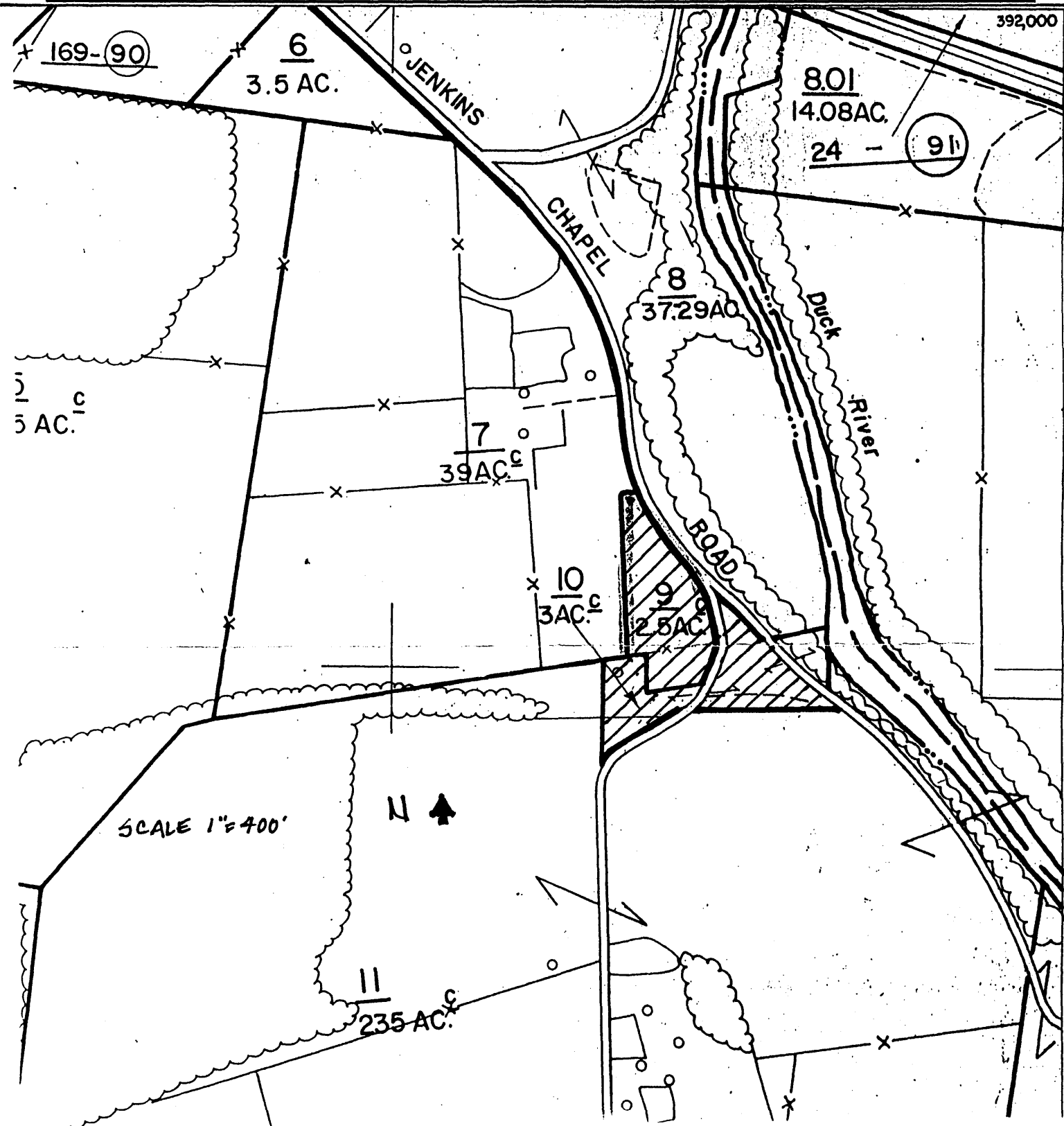
The nominated parcel is the site of the present and past Jenkins Lutheran Chapel and Cemetery.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 10

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number      photos      Page      11  
\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN

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## Photographs

By: Carroll Van West  
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation  
P. O. Box 80, MTSU  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
2941 Lebanon Road  
Nashville, TN 37243

Church, south facade, facing north  
1 of 16

Church, southeast elevation, facing northwest  
2 of 16

Church, east elevation, facing west  
3 of 16

Church, northeast elevation, facing southwest  
4 of 16

Church, northwest elevation, facing southeast  
5 of 16

Church, bathroom shed addition, northwest elevation, facing southeast  
6 of 16

Interior, sanctuary, facing southeast  
7 of 16

Interior, sanctuary, facing northwest  
8 of 16

Interior, light fixture, facing northwest  
9 of 16

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number      photos      Page      12

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Jenkins Lutheran Chapel & Cemetery  
Bedford County, TN

Interior, window shutter, facing west  
10 of 16

Interior, window shutter, facing northwest  
11 of 16

Church and Cemetery, facing northeast  
12 of 16

Cemetery, southeast elevation, facing northeast  
13 of 16

Cemetery, facing east  
14 of 16

Cemetery, facing southwest  
15 of 16

Cemetery, facing northwest  
16 of 16