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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED DEC 2 9 1976
DATE ENTERED ... 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Bethesda Presbyterian Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
State Highway #332, 3 1/2 miles northeast of McConnells

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
McConnells   X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
#5

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
South Carolina	045	York	091

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X_OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X_PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	X RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X_YES: RESTRICTED (exterior)	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__ YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Bethesda Presbyterian Church

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
McConnells   X VICINITY OF

STATE
South Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.   York County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
Congress Street

CITY, TOWN
York

STATE
South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE
1973   __FEDERAL X STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS   South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN
Columbia

STATE
South Carolina

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Bethesda Presbyterian Church is a typical rural brick church in an expanded meeting house form. Built in 1820 Bethesda is a two-story structure with gable roof. The north or front facade features a recessed double door with projecting brick steps and rail. On either side of the entrance is a 2/2 window. Flat arches with brick voussoirs are found above both entrance and windows. On the second story level above the entrance is a fanlight; on either side of this are semicircular arched stucco panels in which fanlights were originally enclosed.

The east or left facade of the church features nine 2/2 windows (5 on the second level; 4 on the lower) and a side entrance. The right facade has nine 2/2 windows and a connecting enclosed loggia leading to the church's educational building. (In 1947 ground breaking was held for an educational building at Bethesda. This two-story brick structure houses classrooms and an assembly room. Its style conforms with that of the original church building.)

The rear facade features a small brick wing which serves as the session room and provides an area into which the pulpit platform has been recessed. This wing is characterized by a gable roof with interior chimney. The wing's west facade contains 3 windows; two are 9/9 and one is a 6/4 arched window. The east facade is defined by a central door with a two-light transom which is flanked by a 9/9 window on the left and an arched 6/4 window on the right.

Church records describe Bethesda and the early changes made to the structure: "In 1820 the present house of worship was reared at a cost of five thousand dollars. After about twenty years, on account of some defect in the original construction, two of the walls were taken down and rebuilt. About seven years since, in 1857 [?] additional repairs were made upon the Chh [church] to the amount of a thousand dollars. So that today the congregation has a beautiful brick building - sixty feet by forty-two - neatly plastered and painted in the inside--with three aisles & three galleries--so that six hundred worshippers can be comfortably accommodated within the building."[1]

Other records indicate alterations to the church in 1882. At that time an extension back of the pulpit was added; new gallery posts, windows enlarged, and new pulpit furniture. Work was also done to the building in 1917 which consisted of new brick steps, new doors, and concrete stucco in window reveals.

Interior: Interior consists of double aisle configuration with side aisles under the gallery. The gallery is supported by square columns of ca. 1882 vintage on the first level and original octagonal columns on the second level. A simple wooden

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[1] Reverend John S. Harris, MS Historical Sketch Bethesda Church, n.d., [p. 81].

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW		
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	X_RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X_ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X_1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES   1820   BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

One of the oldest churches in the South Carolina Upcountry, Bethesda Presbyterian Church is also one of the four original Presbyterian churches in the state's old York District. Early church records have been lost; however, the tradition is that a mission (church) existed as early as 1760 and that Bethesda was formally organized about 1769 or 1770. In 1794 Robert B. Walker became Bethesda's first permanent pastor and served the church for 40 years. It was during his ministry that Bethesda experienced the effects of the Second Awakening.

In 1800 the first camp meetings were held in Kentucky, and Reverend Walker, hearing of this new movement, traveled to the area. Upon his return to Bethesda, he began conducting similar meetings -- a practice continued by the congregation until 1864. Reverend John S. Harris, minister of the church from 1856-1863, described Bethesda as having "a dozen or more tents for the annual encampments, as practiced for sixty years and a large and substantial arbor having capacities for two thousand persons..,"[1] (The arbor was used until 1879; it was later sold and moved.)

Throughout its history, Bethesda's membership has been comprised of individuals actively involved in community affairs. Names associated with the church, such as Bratton (Brattonsville Historic District, NR), Moore, Neely, Harris, Byers, and Williamson, are also associated with the history of much of York County.

Also significant within its own right is Bethesda's cemetery. Among those buried there are veterans of the American Revolution, Mexican War, Civil War, and both World Wars.

Bethesda, which today has a membership of approximately 318, still serves as an active seat of Presbyterianism in this rural area of South Carolina.

Architecture: Bethesda's present structure, built in 1820, is the third building associated with the church. Bethesda represents the typical rural brick church in an expanded meeting house form. The interior reveals a double-aisle configuration with side aisles under the gallery. The gallery is supported by square columns of ca. 1882 vintage on the first level and original octagonal columns on the second level. Although Victorian motifs have been added both to the interior and exterior, the basic architectural integrity of the church has been retained.

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[1] Reverend John S. Harris, MS Historical Sketch Bethesda Church, n.d., [pp. 81, 83].

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hollis, Daniel W., and Julien, Carl. Look to the Rock: 100 Ante-bellum Presbyterian Churches of the South. Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1961.

Howe, George. History of the Presbyterian Church of South Carolina. Vol. I. Columbia, S.C.: Duffie & Chapman, 1870.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ___ ca. 6 ___

Longitude: 81° 10' 34"

UTM REFERENCES

Latitude: 34° 53' 53"

A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

(Assistance: Debbie Steverson; Catawba Council)

NAME / TITLE

Mary Ann Eaddy & Steve Smith, Historic Preservation Division

ORGANIZATION

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

DATE

November 18, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1430 Senate Street

TELEPHONE

(803) 758-5816

CITY OR TOWN

Columbia

STATE

South Carolina

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___   STATE ___   LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE   Charles E. Lee, State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 12-6-76

GPO 892-453

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railing encases the gallery with the original heart pine boards on the floor.
The narthex wall dates from 1917 but the original gallery stairs are intact.

Other 1882 alterations include the semicircular-arched pulpit niche, the
pews with scroll motifs and the widened windows with 2/2 sash. The pulpit
furniture and lighting fixtures also date from 1882.

Surroundings: The church property also includes a fellowship hall (1 story
brick structure adjacent to the original church) and the church cemetery.
The cemetery consists of over one thousand graves.

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     South Carolina since 1850. Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan Co., 1926.

Harris, Reverend John S. MS Historical Sketch Bethesda Church, n.d.

Petty, Mrs. George B., Jr., and Hoyt, Reverend Samuel B. "Historical
     Sketches of Bethesda Presbyterian Church." McConnells, S.C., 1960.
     (Mimeographed).

Williamson, Rebecca. Church historian, Bethesda Presbyterian Church,
     McConnells, S.C., 21 January 1976