

RECEIVED 2280

NOV 26 2008

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions and guidelines for "Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECEIVED 2280

AUG 27 2008

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

967
historic name Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Metter-Portal Highway and Westside Road
city, town Metter (X) **vicinity of**
county Bulloch **code** GA 031
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30450

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	1	0
sites	2	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	3	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

William C. Luce

8-19-08

Signature of certifying official

Date

for W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

Patrick Anderson
Keeper of the National Register

12/4/2008
Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

RELIGION: religious facility
FUNERARY: cemetery

Current Functions:

RELIGION: religious facility
FUNERARY: cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

Materials:

foundation BRICK
walls WOOD: Weatherboard
roof ASPHALT
other N/A

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery is located in the vicinity of the small, rural town of Portal (Bulloch County) in southeast Georgia (Photographs 1, 2, 3, 4). Portal is approximately 13 miles northwest of the county seat of Statesboro. This one-room, one-story, rectangular wood-framed building, with Greek Revival-style elements, has retained its essential form, massing, and floor plan since construction in 1881. In 1959, the congregation built an annex onto the rear of the 1881 church building. The cemetery, located on the south side of the building, contains 328 marked graves as well as several dozen unmarked plots (Photographs 21, 22, 23, 24, 25). The first recorded burials in the cemetery date from 1902. Gravesites are identified by concrete slabs with engraved flat stone markers, and some burial sites are contained within family plots separated from neighboring graves by natural stone curbing. Both the church and the cemetery are still in use. The landscape also contains a creek where the church baptized its members for more than 50 years.

1881 CHURCH BUILDING

The church is a single-story, rectangular wood-framed meetinghouse that is five bays long and three bays wide with a tetrastyle portico across the front gable (Photographs 3, 10). The main building is clad in weatherboard siding. The church's 1881 front (north) façade has been altered. Originally, the church had two individual entry doors (Attachment 2). In 1945, the two front entrance doors, indicated in the historic pictures, were removed and replaced by two wood double-hung windows. A double entry door was installed in the center at this time and the congregation added a window to the building's triangular pedimented front gable. Each door contains nine glass panes and has three horizontal panels in the lower portion. The glass transom above the entrance door is divided into four

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

equal panes by vertical wood muntins. All of the church's windows and doors were replaced in 1945 and again in 2004. The extant shutters were added during a recent renovation. The building rests on a painted brick foundation. A historic wood fence surrounds the church's north, east, and west sides. The fence is approximately two feet tall with wooden slats evenly spaced every four inches.

The church has elements of the Greek Revival style. The façade has a triangular pedimented front gable with rounded portico columns, corner pilasters, and a horizontal frieze board under the eaves that encircles the entire building. The portico has wood latticed fencing across its front and sides with an entry gate located in the middle (Photographs 3, 7, 8, 10).

The 1881 church building's interior has retained its essential form and floor plan (Photographs 14, 15, 16, 17, 18). The apse is still in its original location. The nave was altered in 1945 when the congregation replaced the single row of pews that was situated between the two separate doors with two individual rows of pews with a central aisle centered by a new double entry door. The apse is flanked by four pews on each side. These pews are reserved for elders of the church and used to perform the sacrament of foot washing which is still practiced in many Primitive Baptist churches. A similar arrangement exists at the **Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church** located in Quitman (Brooks County) (Attachment 3). That church was placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004. The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church's historic interior walls have been covered with fiberboard along the walls and ceiling. The historic heart pine flooring was replaced in 1945.

1959 ANNEX BUILDING

In 1959, the congregation added a rectangular concrete-block annex to the rear of the 1881 church building (Photographs 11, 12, 13). The addition of this annex altered the church from an I-shaped building into a T-shaped building. The annex's gabled roof runs perpendicular to the church building's gabled roof. The annex has entry doors on the east and west sides of the building. The space is divided into two rooms. The eastern section of the annex is a large open space used for a variety of church activities. The western section of the annex contains a kitchen and restrooms. The annex's dropped ceiling is covered with acoustical tiles and a series of fluorescent lighting fixtures. The concrete floor is covered with linoleum (Photographs 19, 20). The addition of the annex did not affect the historic apse at the south end of the original church (Photographs 15, 19, 20).

1902 CEMETERY

The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church cemetery is located behind the southern end of the church building (Photographs 21, 22, 23, 24, 25). The first recorded burial in the cemetery took place in 1902. The cemetery contains 328 marked graves as well as a number of unmarked plots that may date to as early as 1841. The cemetery does not have a formal entrance or any fencing or walls that surround the site. The congregation erected a chain link fence around the cemetery in 1955, but that fence was removed in 1974. Visitors can access the cemetery using two drives located along the cemetery's eastern and western border. The border of the cemetery is bounded to the south and east by a heavily wooded area. There are no trees or plantings located among the burial plots. The cemetery's terrain slopes downward at a slight angle toward the site's southern boundary. The area

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

containing most of the graves is flat. As documented in *Preserving Georgia's Historic Cemeteries*, in Georgia, "there are four basic ways in which cemeteries were laid out." This cemetery was laid out using a gridiron plan that created an orderly, geometric appearance with clear divisions of space between the site's five major sections. The site contains a representative sample of several markers and monument types commonly found in Georgia cemeteries. As documented in *Preserving Georgia's Historic Cemeteries*, "Common in Georgia are carved upright gravestones (headstones and footstones), monuments, sculpture, . . . box and slab graves, commemorative markers (most often associated with military events . . .), and sometimes just rough, natural fieldstones placed at the heads of graves. . . . Most [markers and monuments] in Georgia are made of stone, either granite or marble." Most of the markers and monuments in this cemetery are made of granite. The granite markers contain a number of inscriptions such as "A Devoted Wife and Mother," "Sweetly Resting at Last," "A Devoted Husband and Father," "Faithful to Her Trust Even Unto Death," and a variety of Biblical verses and religiously themed poetry. The cemetery contains the graves of several founding members of the church. The cemetery is still in use by members of the Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church.¹

BAPTISMAL SITE

The church property is bounded to the west by Upper Lott's Creek. The creek is approximately 15 feet wide and waist deep. Prior to the mid-20th century, the church baptized members in the creek. The creek once had a baptismal shed that sat along the creek bank. There members would change into their white linen baptismal clothes prior to descending into the creek. Primitive Baptists are dunkers—they submerge worshippers in the water during baptism. During the mid-20th century, church members stopped using the creek during baptismal ceremonies. Baptisms are now held inside the sanctuary (Photographs 26, 27).

¹ Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, *Preserving Georgia's Historic Cemeteries*. 2007.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
RELIGION

Period of Significance:

1881—1959

Significant Dates:

1881—Date church was constructed.
1902—Date of first burials in church cemetery.
1959—Date church annex was constructed.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion "C" at the local level of significance in the area of architecture and landscape architecture because it is a good example of a late-19th-century rural church building with elements of the Greek Revival style and because it is a good example of an early 20th-century cemetery landscape. The property meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion "A" at the state level of significance in the area of religion as an example of a Primitive Baptist church associated with one of the oldest Primitive Baptist congregations in Georgia. The period of significance is from 1881 to 1955. The period of significance includes the construction of the church (1881), opening of the cemetery (1902), and construction of the annex (1959).

Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery is significant in the area of architecture at the local level of significance because it is a good example of a late-19th-century rural church building with elements of the Greek Revival style. The Greek Revival style was the state of Georgia's first statewide architectural style. In Georgia, that style was applied to churches most often during the mid-19th century. Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church is a good example of the Greek Revival style because of the building's mass and proportions, triangular pedimented, front gable, horizontal frieze boards under the eaves, and rounded portico columns.

Several alterations made to the building after its initial construction reflect significant adaptations made to 19th century church buildings to conform to the changing needs of 20th-century congregations. The historic building had two separate entry doors located along the façade. Throughout the 19th century and until the early 20th century, Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church members were segregated by gender during worship services. Men would customarily enter the nave using the door located on the right hand side of the building. Women would customarily enter the nave using the door located on the left hand side of the building. The church's original floor plan lacked a central aisle. The original floor plan called for multiple long rows of pews that fit between the church's two separated entry doors without a central aisle. The custom of segregating sexes during religious worship services was common among many pre-20th-century Christian denominations. Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church, like most of the state's churches, abandoned this practice sometime during the early 20th century. In 1945, the church replaced its long rows of pews that filled the space between the separated entry doors with rows of pews divided by a central aisle. When the church altered its pews, the function of its two separate entry doors became obsolete, thus necessitating the alteration of the building's façade with the addition of a double-door entryway that connected to the interior central aisle. The original bays that once contained the separated doors now contain a double-hung window apiece.

In 1959, the congregation added a concrete-block annex building to the rear of their 1881 church building. During the mid-20th century, numerous congregations throughout the state chose to increase their interior space by attaching an annex to their existing building. This adaptation occurred during a period when air-conditioning was becoming a standard part of life in the South. The ability to condition the temperature of an interior space led many congregations to move traditionally outdoor activities such as dinner on the grounds and foot washing inside where members

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

could be more comfortable. The 1959 annex reflects how changes in technology altered a congregation's use of exterior space in favor of more comfortable interior settings to hold their various activities.

Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery is significant in the area of landscape architecture at the local level of significance because the cemetery is a good example of a formal early 20th-century cemetery landscape. This turn-of-the-century cemetery clearly expresses the aesthetic principles related to funerary design for that period, through such features as the overall plan, landscaping, and grave markers. "Cemeteries," as documented in *Preserving Georgia's Historic Cemeteries*, "are among Georgia's most important historic resources. . . . They are places of education and learning. . . . cemeteries also disclose how we look at death, who we see as responsible custodians of graves—families, governments, churches, or private associations, and how this has changed over time. They reveal what we see as appropriate ways to plan and layout cemeteries, including how we delineate individual lots, and what we view as appropriate markers." In Georgia there are four basic ways in which cemeteries were laid out. The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church cemetery was laid out in a gridiron plan. A gridiron layout creates an orderly environment and is more commonly used on flatter terrain.² The gridiron layout creates individual plots of graves that sometimes reflect periods of burials at a particular cemetery. Most graves within a single portion of the gridiron plan were added to the cemetery during the same period of the landscape's development. The cemetery contains an assortment of markers and monuments that are common in Georgia such as carved upright gravestones (headstones and footstones), monuments, sculpture, box and slab graves, commemorative markers (associated with plots that contain the remains of veterans of the American Revolution, Civil War, World War I, World War II, and Korean War), and rough, natural fieldstones placed at the head of graves. The cemetery also has a number of family burial plots that are separated from neighboring burials by a low granite boundary wall and covered with loose granite stones. The first recorded burials in the cemetery date from 1902, although a number of unmarked graves scattered throughout the site date from an earlier period. Prior to the late-20th century, a majority of cemeteries in the state were located on either privately owned land or land owned by churches. The location of a cemetery on the same property as a church reflects the religious practices and affiliation of many of those who are buried there. They entrusted the church with the responsibility of providing a secure and maintained environment that would serve as their final resting place. During the late-20th century, changes in the church membership and the rise of private cemetery businesses led to a decline in the number of new cemeteries created on land owned by churches. While burials still take place in numerous church cemeteries throughout the state, the number of new church cemeteries has declined. The cemetery is still in use today by members of the Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church.

The property also contains the historic baptismal site used by the church from 1881 until the 1950s. Baptism was one of the most important sacraments administered by the Primitive Baptist Church. Baptism was a prerequisite for membership in the Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church. For nearly seven decades, the church baptized its members in the waters of Upper Lott's Creek. Baptism was also practiced as an outward display of repentance from members seeking a spiritual

² Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, *Preserving Georgia's Historic Cemeteries*, 2007.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

cleansing. During the mid-20th century, the church stopped holding baptisms outdoors. Baptisms are now held inside the sanctuary.

Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery meets National Register Criterion "C" at the state level of significance in the area of religion because it is an excellent and rare surviving example of a Primitive Baptist church associated with one of the oldest Primitive Baptist congregations in the United States and Georgia. The generally accepted date of the founding of the Primitive Baptist faith in the United States is 1832. In that year a small group of Old School Baptists split from the Missionary Baptists at Black Rock, Maryland. In Georgia, however, a schism erupted within the Hephzibah Association, Richmond County, in 1828 when anti-mission churches withdrew their membership from that body and reformed as the United Baptist Association—later renamed the Canoochee Association. While the Canoochee Association did not refer to itself as a Primitive Baptist association, its followers soon thereafter adopted that name as a similar break affected numerous churches throughout the country during the 1830s. Primitive Baptist congregations that formed during the antebellum period were referred to commonly as Old Line Primitive Baptists. The Upper Lott's Creek congregation formed in 1832 under the leadership of Absalom Parrish. The congregation was then known as Parrish's Meeting House, but its original members changed the congregation's name in 1841 when an accidental fire destroyed their first meetinghouse. The extant church was constructed in 1881 by that same Old Line Primitive Baptist congregation as it neared its 50th anniversary.

The division among Baptists that evolved during the antebellum period was a significant development in the history of Georgia. The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist congregation played a significant part in the growth of an antimission movement that splintered the antebellum era Baptist faith into several fragmented sects. Old Line Primitive Baptists were among a larger group of dissenters who, during the 19th and 20th century, chose to break with the state's Missionary Baptist majority. The antebellum schism evolved in part due to a debate among slaveholders over whether or not to proselytize among African slaves and whether or not Baptist missionaries should be sent overseas in search of new converts. Old Line Primitive Baptists believed that sending missionaries among slaves and foreigners would dilute the Baptist faith and introduce new customs and ideas that might challenge older more established practices. Most antebellum Old Line Primitive Baptist followers either did not own slaves or at most owned only a few. A majority of its members were small landholding whites and poor whites who at times found themselves to be culturally, as well as economically and politically, at odds with affluent slaveholders—many of whom were Missionary Baptists. Large slaveholders saw proselytizing among slaves as a means of achieving greater control over their chattel property, as well as a means of responding to criticism stemming from Northern evangelicals claiming that slavery was an immoral institution because slaveholders did not care about a slave's soul. The split among Old Line Primitive Baptists and Missionary Baptists therefore represents a major divisive issue among the state's antebellum-era white Baptists.³

The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church developed during the antebellum period in Bulloch County. Bulloch County's white antebellum population contained a sizeable number of large

³ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Antimission Movement in the Jacksonian South: A Study in Regional Folk Culture," *Journal of Southern History* 36 (November 1970), 501-29.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

slaveholders and elite planters. Throughout the South, in areas where large plantations comprised the bulk of a county's total arable land, white households that either did not own slaves or owned only a few, were forced to subsist on less suitable agricultural lands and often struggled to obtain cultural, economic, and political autonomy from their wealthier neighbors. During the antebellum period, the formation of a new church was roughly equivalent to the founding of a new community. When the Parrish Meeting House congregation organized and built their first church their actions were a clear sign of their desire to create a degree of social and cultural space between themselves and their wealthy neighbors who were predominately members of local Missionary Baptist churches. Antebellum churches served many roles of self-governance within rural communities. Free from the local elite, Old Line Primitive Baptists could discipline themselves in a manner they deemed appropriate without interference. Old Line Primitive Baptists would also claim to be the protectors of the true Baptist faith that had been despoiled by local elite Missionary Baptists. In a social environment built upon a shared notion of racial supremacy among whites—thereby making any perceived criticism of slavery a direct threat to the entire community—the creation of a new church and the development of independent Baptist sects were some of the few available means of non-elite whites to contest the actions of the local elite.⁴

Over the years about 90 other Old Line Primitive Baptist associations have existed for varying periods of time. Many have emerged because of internal struggles concerning the extent of divine sovereignty and the purpose of preaching, the propriety of declaring bankruptcy, the necessity of footwashing, the power of associations, divorce, and membership in secret societies. Although no state structure exists, limited cohesion is achieved by the wide circulation of several popular Old-Line Primitive Baptist newspapers and by correspondence among various associations.

Today, the Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist congregation has operated continuously for over 176 years. The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church houses one of the oldest extant Primitive Baptist congregations in the United States and Georgia. The building is one of only 34 Primitive Baptist churches recorded in the Georgia Historic Resources Survey, which includes over 67,000 historic resources in the state of Georgia. Several Primitive Baptist churches recorded in that survey predate the Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church, but none of them have such an extended association with one of the oldest Primitive Baptist congregations in the nation. When listed, the Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church would become the oldest Primitive Baptist church listed in the National Register of Historic Places that maintains a current association with its founding congregation.

⁴ Eugene Genovese, *Roll! Jordan, Roll!: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: 1976); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Antimission Movement in the Jacksonian South: A Study in Regional Folk Culture," *Journal of Southern History* 36 (November 1970), 501-29; Mark V. Wetherington, *Plain Folk's Fight: The Civil War and Reconstruction in Piney Woods, Georgia* (Chapel Hill: 2005).

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

National Register Criteria

Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion "C" at the local level of significance in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture because it is a good example of a late-19th-century rural church building with elements of the Greek Revival style and because the cemetery clearly expresses the aesthetic principles related to funerary design for early 20th century Georgia, through such features as the overall plan, landscaping, and grave markers.

Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion "A" at the state level of significance in the area of religion because of the role that the Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist congregation played in the early development and continuing history of the Primitive Baptist sect in Georgia.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery meets National Register Criterion Consideration "A" as a religious property that derives its primary significance from architectural distinction and historical importance. The church meets National Register Criterion "C" in the area of architecture at the local level of significance because it is a good example of a late-19th-century rural church building with elements of the Greek Revival style. The church derives its primary significance from architectural distinction and historical importance. The church meets National Register Criterion "A" in the area of religion at the state level of significance because of the building's continuous association with a congregation that played a major role in the early development of the Primitive Baptist sect in Georgia. This church had a direct association with historical events that led to the founding of Primitive Baptist churches in Georgia. The development of the Primitive Baptist Church in Georgia is a theme in the history of religion that has received scholarly recognition. For additional information regarding the church's significance consult this nomination's statement of significance.

The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Church and Cemetery meets National Register Criterion Consideration "D" as a property that contains a historic cemetery that is significant in the area of landscape architecture because it clearly expressed the aesthetic principles related to funerary design for that period, through such features as overall plan, landscaping, and grave markers. For additional information regarding the cemetery's significance consult this nomination's statement of significance.

The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Church and Cemetery meets National Register Criterion Consideration "G" as a property that contains a historically significant building that has achieved significance within the last 50 years. The church annex building was constructed in 1959. That building is significant in the area of architecture because it embodies changes in the location of the church's social and religious activities during the mid-20th century. For additional information regarding the annex's significance consult this nomination's statement of significance.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance is from 1881 to 1959. The church was constructed in 1881. The cemetery's first recorded burials took place in 1902. The church annex building was constructed in 1959. The period from 1881 to 1959 represents several major developments that fundamentally transformed the church's physical appearance and surrounding landscape.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

Church: Contributing Building
Cemetery: Contributing Site
Baptismal Site: Contributing Site

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church congregation is one of the oldest Primitive Baptist congregations in the state of Georgia. The Primitive Baptists emerged in Georgia and elsewhere as a distinct denomination during the early 19th century in response to the growing importance of missionary efforts in the Baptist church. The Primitive Baptists opposed such efforts, embracing a more conservative theology that relied upon such established ideas and traditions as the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and a literal interpretation of the Bible. In 2005, there were approximately 12,000 Primitive Baptists in Georgia and about 425 churches serving them.

In Georgia, disagreements among Baptists over foreign missionaries began in 1819 when the Piedmont Association resolved to have "nothing to do with missionaries." In 1829, the state's first schism erupted within the Hephzibah Association, Richmond County, when anti-mission churches withdrew their membership from that body and reformed as the Canoochee Association.

The formation of the Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church congregation predates the construction of the extant church building. The congregation was organized by an act of the Canoochee Baptist Association on September 22, 1832, during a meeting held at the Hines Meetinghouse located in Emanuel County, Georgia. During the first decades of its existence, the church was first known as Parrish's Meetinghouse. The congregation's first meeting was held less than one week following the Canoochee Association session. The first Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church building was constructed in 1831. This building was located about one and a half miles east of the extant church.

The church joined the Canoochee Association at the session held at Nevil's Creek (Bulloch County) in 1833. At that time the church had 12 members. The church routinely sent messengers (delegates) to the Canoochee Association meetings. The church's membership had grown to 48 members by 1838.

In 1841, a fire destroyed the Parrish Meeting House. According to local tradition, the meetinghouse stood in the woods without any fence around it. The hogs and goats slept underneath the building

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

and raised so many fleas that no one could sit still and listen to the monthly sermon. In order to resolve the problem, Absalom Parrish, a founding member of the congregation, scattered a thin layer of fresh pine straw under the church (Attachment 1). He then set fire to the straw hoping to destroy the fleas. Minutes later the entire meetinghouse was engulfed in flames.

The congregation built a new log building on the site of the extant church building. The log church housed the congregation for four decades. In 1881, the extant building was constructed. During the late-19th century and throughout most of the 20th century, the Primitive Baptist church has witnessed a number of schisms resulting from internal disagreements ranging from the role of women in congregations to a church's decision to join a state convention. Despite these disagreements, during the late 19th century Primitive Baptist membership in the United States rose from 68,000 to 121,000.

In 1902, the church opened a cemetery to the rear of their 1881 building. The church had once used the property as a cemetery during the mid-19th century, but no records or grave markings remain from this period. Like most church cemeteries, this site contains the remains of hundreds of deceased church members. As of 2008, the cemetery contains 328 grave markers.

In 1959, church members built a concrete block addition to the rear of the 1881 building. The addition marked a period of transition within the church's history as events and ceremonies that had once been held outside were moved inside. For example, the rear addition is now the location where the church holds a majority of their dinner on the grounds. Communal meals, decoration-day ceremonies, and other fellowship activities are now held in the annex.

The sacrament of baptism was also moved indoors during the mid-20th century. Prior to this change, the church held its baptisms in Upper Lott's Creek. Baptism was the central sacrament of the church. New members were required to be baptized prior to joining the congregation. Today, baptisms are held inside the sanctuary.

In Georgia, Primitive Baptists represented approximately 15 percent of the state's Baptists during the start of the 20th century. However membership has declined sharply since and a 2000 Census report placed state membership at less than 6,000 followers belonging to 216 churches.⁵ Today, Primitive Baptists represent fewer than five percent of the state's Baptists. Throughout the church's history, the building has held religious worship services as well as hosted numerous social gatherings. Since 1881, the congregation has held services at the church on the fourth Sunday of every month and the Saturday before.

⁵ Robert Gardner, "History of Baptists in Georgia," [On-line Publication], www.tarver.mercer.edue/archives/GaBaptists, accessed May 28, 2008.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Crotwell, Richard. "Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery." Historic Property Information Form, September 24, 2007. On file at the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Gardner, Robert. "History of Baptists in Georgia." [On-line Publication], www.tarver.mercer.edu/archives/GaBaptists. Site accessed on May 28, 2008.

Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. "The Antimission Movement in the Jacksonian South: A Study in Regional Folk Culture," *Journal of Southern History* 36 (November 1970), 501-29.

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

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued
date issued:
- 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, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 15 acres.

UTM References

A)	Zone 17	Easting 408486E	Northing 3594939N
B)	Zone 17	Easting 408605E	Northing 3594960N
C)	Zone 17	Easting 408663E	Northing 3594998N
D)	Zone 17	Easting 408463E	Northing 3594984N

Verbal Boundary Description

The proposed National Register boundary includes 15 acres owned by the Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church. The property is bounded to the west by Upper Lott's Creek, to the northwest by Metter-Portal Highway, and to the north by Westside Road.

Boundary Justification

The proposed National Register boundary includes 15 acres owned by the Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church that is historically associated with the church.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office**name/title** Keith S. Hébert**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources**mailing address** 34 Peachtree Street, N.W.**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303**telephone** (404) 651-5568 **date** 04/28/2008**e-mail** keith.hebert@dnr.state.ga.us**Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)** () not applicable**name/title** Richard Crotwell**organization** N/A**mailing address** 605 Carolyn Street**city or town** Metter **state** GA **zip code** 30439**telephone** (912) 685-7688**e-mail** N/A() **property owner**(X) **consultant**() **regional development center preservation planner**() **other:****Property Owner or Contact Information****name (property owner or contact person)** Lorine Hendricks**organization (if applicable)** N/A**mailing address** 2239 Hendricks Road**city or town** Metter **state** GA **zip code** 30439**e-mail (optional)** N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Upper Lott's Creek Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery
City or Vicinity: Portal
County: Bulloch
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: 03/12/2008

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 27

1. Main Building, Exterior; photographer facing southwest.
2. Main Building, Exterior; photographer facing southeast.
3. Main Building, Exterior; photographer facing south.
4. Main Building, Exterior; photographer facing south.
5. Main Building, Exterior; photographer facing south.
6. Main Building, Exterior; photographer facing south.
7. Main Building, Exterior; photographer facing south.
8. Main Building, Exterior; photographer facing west.
9. Main Building, Exterior; photographer facing west.
10. Main Building, Exterior; photographer facing west.
11. Annex Building, Exterior; photographer facing southwest.
12. Annex Building, Exterior; photographer facing southwest.
13. Cemetery and Annex Building, Exterior; photographer facing north.
14. Main Building, Interior; photographer facing south.
15. Main Building, Interior; photographer facing south.
16. Main Building, Interior; photographer facing south.
17. Main Building, Interior; photographer facing north.
18. Main Building, Interior; photographer facing west.
19. Main Building, Interior; photographer facing north.
20. Main Building, Interior; photographer facing west.
21. Cemetery, Exterior, photographer facing north.
22. Cemetery, Exterior, photographer facing west.
23. Cemetery, Exterior, photographer facing northeast.
24. Cemetery, Exterior, photographer facing west.
25. Cemetery, Exterior, photographer facing northwest.
26. Creek, Exterior; photographer facing west.
27. Creek, Exterior; photographer facing south.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)

**UPPER LOTT'S CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH AND CEMETERY
BULLOCH COUNTY, GEORGIA**

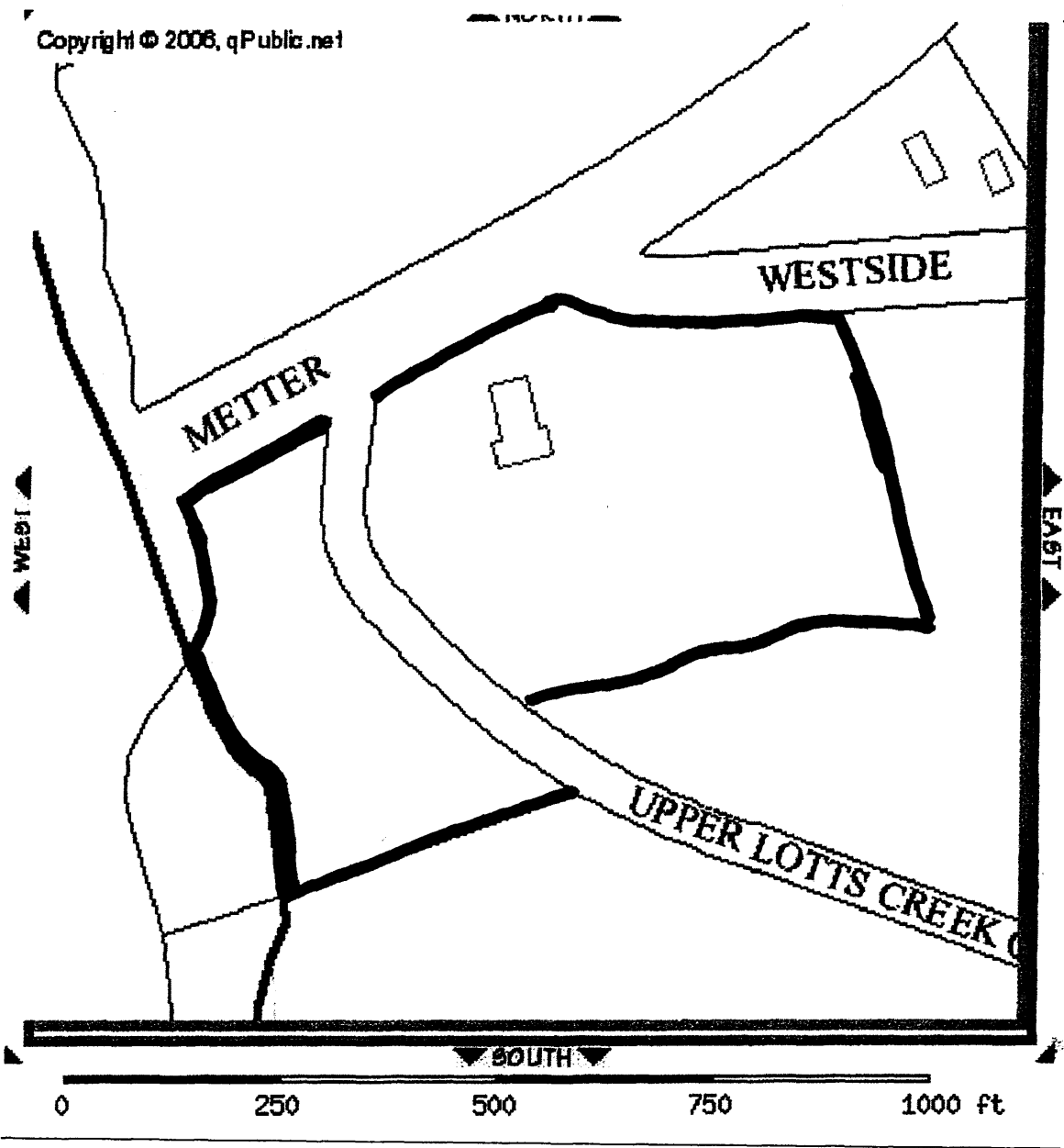
TAX MAP

PROPERTY BOUNDARY: 

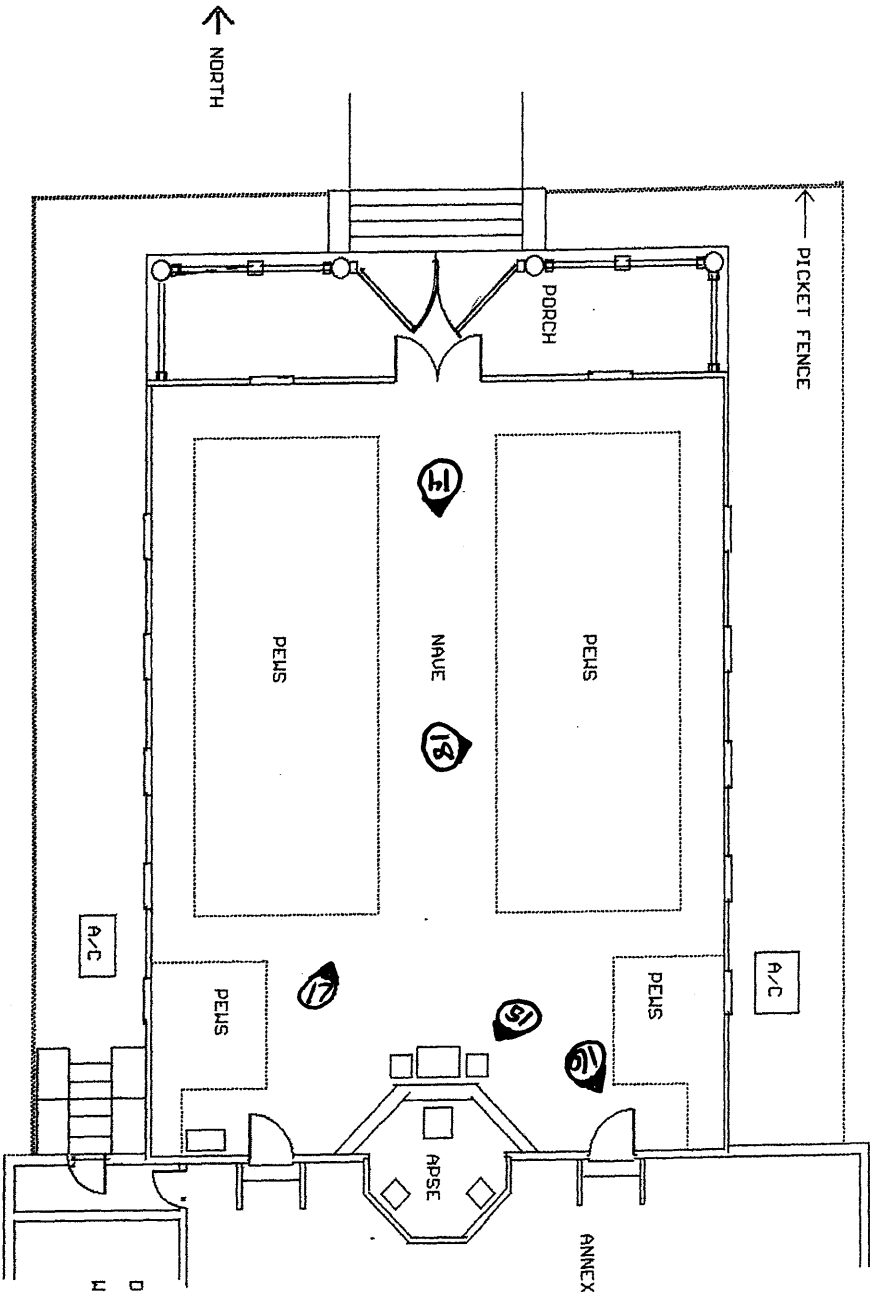
NORTH: 

SCALE: 1":250'

SOURCE: Bulloch County, Georgia, Tax Assessor's Office



UPPER LOTT'S CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH AND CEMETERY
 BULLOCH COUNTY, GEORGIA
 CHURCH FLOOR PLAN
 NORTH: ←
 PHOTOGRAPH DIRECTION:
 SCALE: 1"=7'
 SOURCE: Richard Crotwell

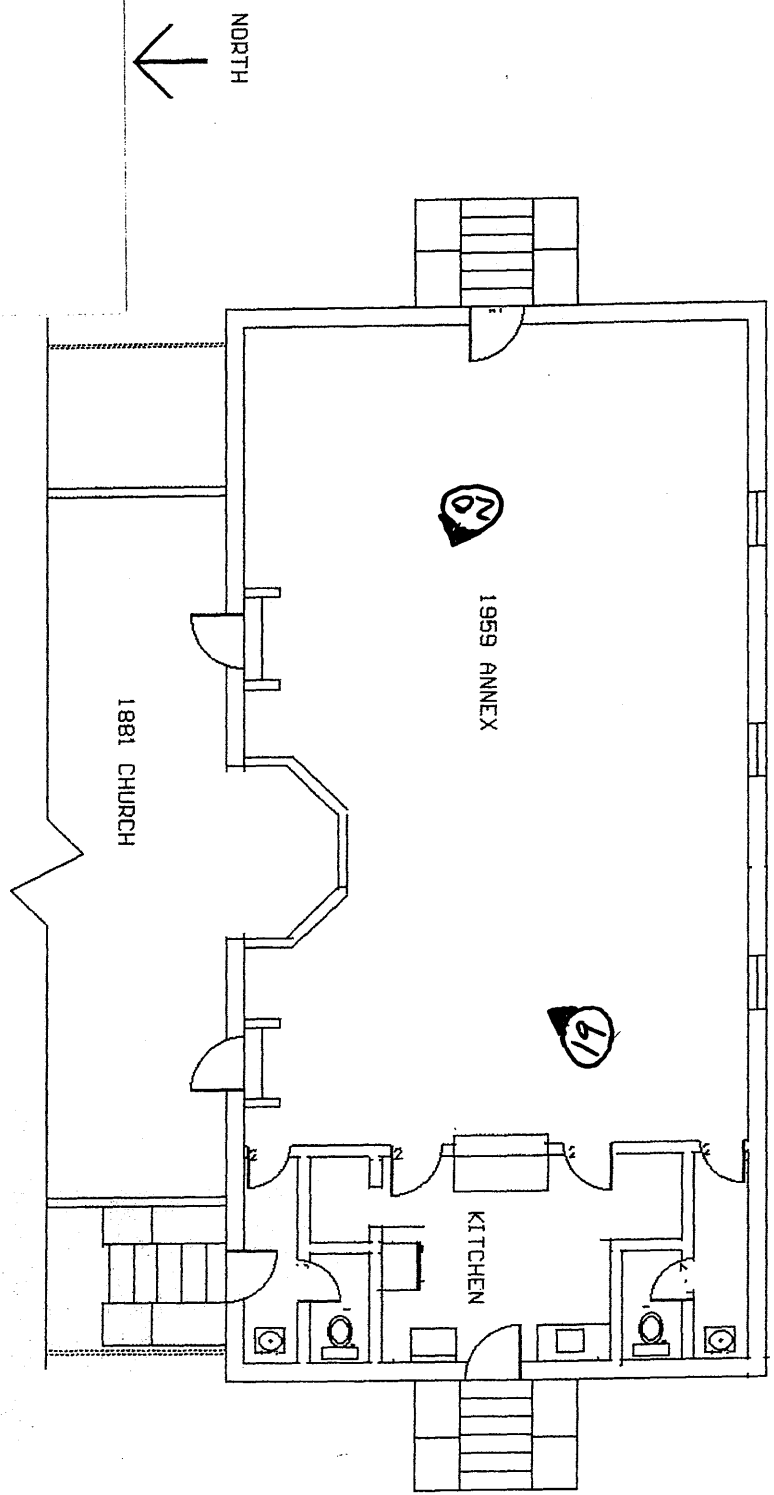


DRAWN BY:
 W. RICHARD CROTWELL

FLOOR PLAN - UPPER LOTS CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH
 METTER - PORTAL ROAD, BULLOCH COUNTY, GA.

Pen And Ink Drawings By
 W. Richard Crotwell, Architect
 Metter, GA 30439
 2007

UPPER LOTT'S CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH AND CEMETERY
BULLOCH COUNTY, GEORGIA
ANNEX BUILDING FLOOR PLAN
NORTH: ↓
PHOTOGRAPH DIRECTION:
SCALE: 1"=7'
SOURCE: Richard Crotwell



ANNEX FLOOR PLAN - UPPER LOTT'S CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH
METTER - PORTAL ROAD, BULLOCH COUNTY, GA.

UPPER LOTT'S CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH AND CEMETERY
BULLOCH COUNTY, GEORGIA

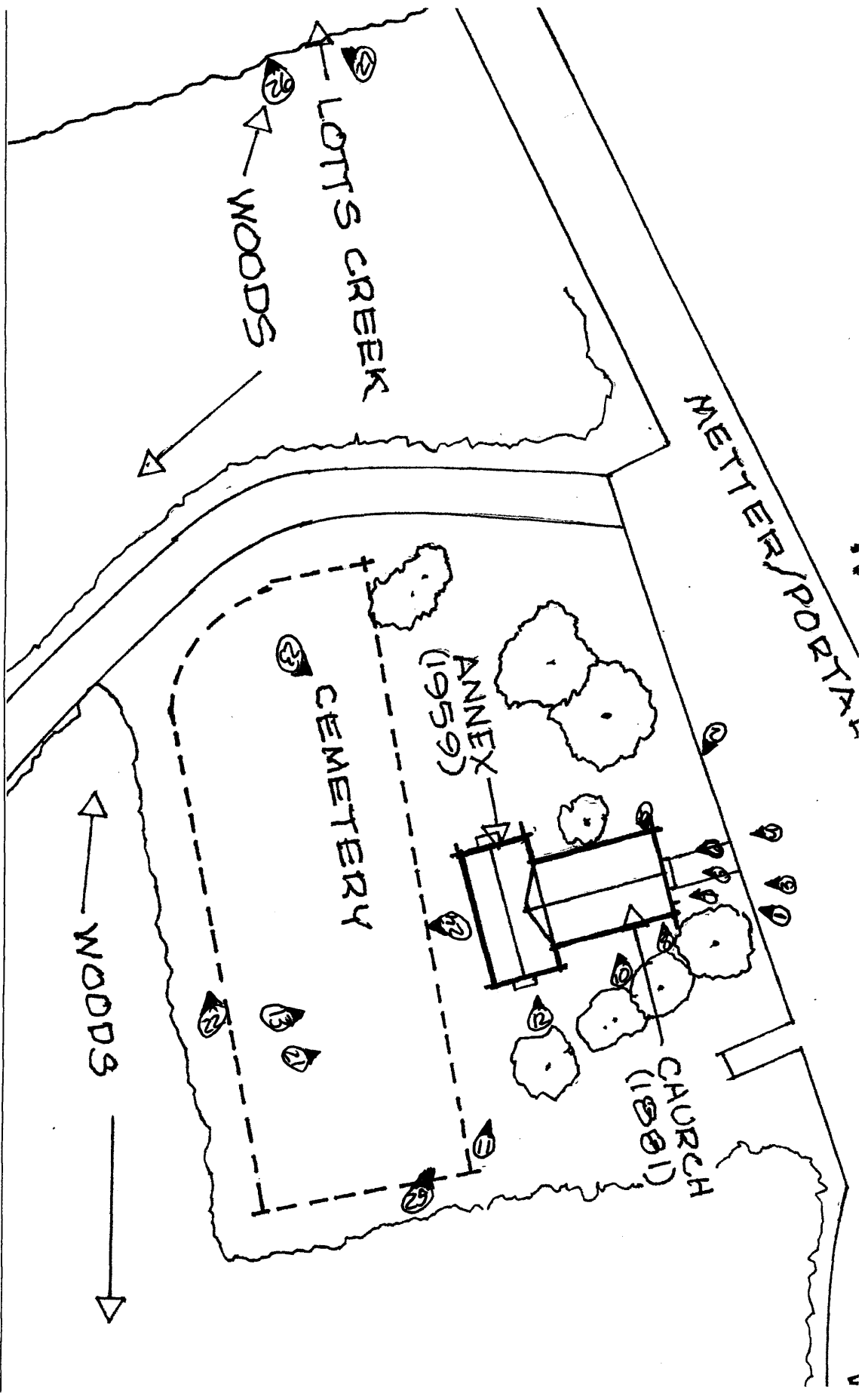
SITE MAP

NORTH: ↑

PHOTOGRAPH DIRECTION: ↻

SCALE: Not Drawn to Scale

SOURCE: Richard Crotwell



UPPER LOTT'S CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH AND CEMETERY
BULLOCH COUNTY, GEORGIA
ATTACHMENT ONE: Absolom Parrish



ABSLOM PARRISH (Ab)

UPPER LOTT'S CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH AND CEMETERY
BULLOCH COUNTY, GEORGIA
ATTACHMENT TWO: Historic Photograph of Church, c. 1939



**UPPER LOTT'S CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH AND CEMETERY
BULLOCH COUNTY, GEORGIA**

ATTACHMENT THREE: Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church, Brook County,
Georgia, Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, 2004.

