

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUL 28 1980
DATE ENTERED DEC 10 1980

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Bethel Presbyterian Church

AND/OR COMMON
Bethel Presbyterian Church

2 LOCATION

approximately four miles east of Clover on

STREET & NUMBER
S.C. Highway 557

CITY, TOWN
Clover

STATE
South Carolina

CODE
045

COUNTY
York

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fifth

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Bethel Presbyterian Church

STREET & NUMBER
S.C. Highway 557

CITY, TOWN
Clover

STATE
South Carolina 29710

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
York County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
Congress Street

CITY, TOWN
York

STATE
South Carolina 29745

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE
1980 (update)

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN
Columbia

STATE
South Carolina 29211

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located approximately four miles east of Clover on Highway 557 in York County, South Carolina, Bethel Presbyterian Church was constructed in the spring and summer of 1873. Stylistically a vernacular interpretation of a colonial meeting house, the church is set on the second level of a hill near a spring. It is the fourth house of worship to occupy this site which was selected as central to the twenty-mile square area that the original church served.

The building was described in a newspaper article of 25 September 1873 as it originally looked.

The house is set at right angles to the aged structure just vacated, is sixty-two feet long and forty feet wide, and can comfortably seat, in the lower pews and in the three galleries, seven hundred persons. The pulpit, which is in the southern extremity of the building, is neatly and judiciously constructed. The gallery immediately fronting the pulpit, is for the colored people....

Exterior: The two-story rectangular frame building is sheathed with weatherboard siding. The roof, covered with composition shingles, features a boxed cornice with return which extends around all sides.

The facade (north elevation) has a central entrance with double-leaf six-paneled doors and a rectangular transom. The 6-over-6, double-hung sash windows are in two bays with a central window over the doorway. Exterior shutters cover all windows. The four-pillared portico is a 1940's addition, at which time the church was underpinned with brick.

The east elevation has ten windows arranged in five bays. The west elevation has an identical configuration. All windows have original shutters and hardware. The south or rear elevation has a one-story session room and recess which was added in 1885. It has been faced with vinyl siding. Attached to this and at right angles to it is a modern addition containing a ladies parlor and restrooms, ca. 1950.

The church is supported by hand-hewn floor joists set on lime-mortared granite rock pillars. The medium pitched gabled roof is supported by a king post truss, the central post, upper and horizontal chords being hand-hewn. The diagonal struts bear saw marks. An iron strap connects the king post to the horizontal chord. The rafters are composed of two overlapping elements held together by wooden pegs. The original roof sheathing, which remains intact under the shingle roof is inscribed " _____ Adams - May (or June) 1873."

Interior: The interior has a meeting house floor plan with a vestibule. Galleries on the east and west sides are supported by slender columns. The original pews are now in these galleries. The north gallery, built for the black membership, has been enclosed with folding screens to form Sunday school rooms. Remodeling done in 1943 and 1944 included putting celotex with paneling overhead to give the effect of beams, adding three foot wainscoting around the walls and installing a new hardwood floor. The pulpit was extended and a choir loft built.

continued

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1873

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bethel Presbyterian Church, located four miles east of Clover on Highway 557 in York County, South Carolina, was built in the spring and summer of 1873. The church, a local interpretation of a colonial meeting house, is set on the second level of a hill near a spring. It is the fourth house of worship to occupy this site and is architecturally significant as an example of a style and construction methods of a much earlier period. Also significant is its scope for its building date (1873). Bethel represents an architectural achievement during a time of political and social upheaval and economic adversity. Bethel is historically significant as a "mother church" to two other Presbyterian churches formed in the area. Bethel may also be credited with the early establishment of a systematic means of recording and therefore preserving congregational history.

Architecture: Bethel Presbyterian Church, a vernacular meeting house building, was built in 1873. It is typical of the upcountry Presbyterian Church built in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. (Bethesda Presbyterian Church of nearby McConnells is architecturally very similar with a construction date of 1820). The heavy post and beam, hand-hewn, wooden pegged construction is unusual for so late in the century, especially when lighter, more rapidly assembled methods were in common use in other parts of the country. The king post truss used in Bethel's roof structure is an ancient design found in some of America's earliest churches.

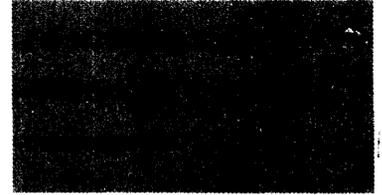
Significant, too, is the scope of the building for its construction date (1873). It is large, spacious, with interior details and seating for over 700 people. South Carolina in 1873 was still suffering the effects of a devastating war and reconstruction policies. Money was scarce; churches often paid their ministers in goods. Bethel's congregation constructed a commodious house of worship under severely reduced circumstances, doing so without incurring debt.

History: Bethel's early congregational history is long and distinguished, stretching back to its organization in 1764 by the ubiquitous Reverend William Richardson. He founded or helped to found at least four Presbyterian churches in the upcountry of South Carolina. Still drawing its membership from descendents of its largely Scotch-Irish founders, Bethel is the third oldest congregation within its Presbytery, which encompasses the counties of Fairfield, Lancaster, York and Chester.

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Surroundings: Bethel Presbyterian Church is located in a rural setting faced and flanked by undeveloped land. The congregation's property consists of twenty-one acres of land. Structures on the west side of the site are a tennis court and a modern one-story, white frame educational building with front portico. It is architecturally compatible with the church building. A large well-tended cemetery covers three acres of a ridge on the property's east side. Enclosed by a stone wall, it contained some three to four thousand graves in 1887, the earliest marker being dated 1774. Many Revolutionary soldiers of the Battle of Kings Mountain are buried here.

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Congregational history associated with the present structure (built 1873) includes two churches organized out of Bethel Church. They are Clover Church, organized 1881, and Bowling Green Church, organized 1895.

Bethel may be credited with an early awareness of her historical significance and the value of recording it. In 1879, then pastor Samuel Watson wrote a brief congregational history of the church. His successor Reverend Robert Webb expanded on Watson's sketch and produced a detailed history which was published by the church's Ladies Aid Society in 1887. It was reprinted in 1938 and revised to that date. Each pastor from the time of Reverend Watson has prepared an account of the major events during his service to Bethel before leaving for other pastorates. These sketches are entered in the church's session records. Current history is recorded as it happens by the women of the church who annually compile a text with photographs.

Bethel's three-acre cemetery contains many old markers; the earliest is dated 1774. Many soldiers of the Battle of Kings Mountain are buried here, among them Col. William Hill, the founder of Hills Iron Works and the author of an 1815 narrative manuscript which remains major source material in any study of that conflict.

Bethel is currently meticulously maintained. Except for the addition of a portico in the 1940's and session rooms, ladies parlor and bathrooms to the back, no major alterations of the church's exterior which might compromise its integrity have been made. At least twice this church has escaped brick veneering: once in 1939 when a recommendation by the church's building committee was rejected, and more recently when it was proposed as a solution to frequent and costly repainting. The traditionalist congregation refused to make the change.

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Books and Booklets

Condit, Carl W. American Building. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 43, plate 3.

Fletcher, Banister. A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method. 17th ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967, pp. 262, 264.

Howe, George. History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina. 2 Vols. Columbia, S.C.: Duffie and Chapman, 1870, 1: 290, 298, 338, 341-342, 424.

Jones, F. D. and Mills, W. H., eds. History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina Since 1850. Columbia, S.C.: Synod of South Carolina, 1926, pp. 515, 523.

Julien, Carl and Hollis, Daniel W. Look to the Rock. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961, pp. 12, 13.

Malone, Dumas, ed. Dictionary of American Biography. 20 Vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932, 9: 48-49.

Webb, Robert A. History of the Presbyterian Church of Bethel. Gastonia, N.C.: issued by the Ladies Aid Society, pp. 16, 17, 30.

Unpublished Sources

Columbia, S.C. University of South Carolina. South Caroliniana Library. Historical and Genealogical Material (York County, S.C.), ca. 1950. Virginia Jackson, "A Short History of Bethel Presbyterian Church," 1949, p. 7.

Columbia, S.C. University of South Carolina. South Caroliniana Library. Minutes of the Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church, York County, S.C., Vols. 4 and 5.

Newspapers

"Church Dedication," Yorkville (S.C.) Enquirer, 25 September 1873.

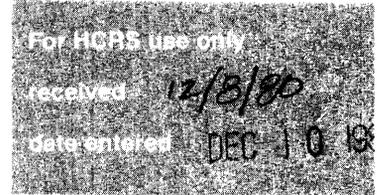
Interviews

Kendrick, Robert A., Jr. Bethel Presbyterian Church, York County, S.C. Interview, 4 April 1980.

West, Rev. Vernon. Bethel Presbyterian Church, York County, S.C. Interview, 4 April 1980.

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The boundary of Bethel Presbyterian Church nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying York County Tax Map Number 465, which is drawn at a scale of 330 feet to the inch. The nominated property includes the church and cemetery while excluding the nonhistoric tennis court and educational building.

The acreage of the nominated property is approximately seven acres.