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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 in "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.

1. Name of Property

historic name Omer Christian Church and Cemetery
other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number Northeast corner of Highway 316 & Highway 324 (Carl/Bethlehem Road)
city, town Winder (X) vicinity of
county Barrow code GA 013
state Georgia code GA zip code 30680

() not for publication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:	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	1	0
sites	1	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	2	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.

Richard C. Coles
Signature of certifying official

1-5-00
Date

W. Ray Luce, 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

Edson H. Beall

2/10/00

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

Ray

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

RELIGION/religious facility
FUNERARY/other: chapel
FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions:

FUNERARY/other: chapel
FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

OTHER: rural vernacular church

Materials:

foundation	concrete
walls	wood
roof	metal
other	n/a

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Omer Christian Church and Cemetery are located in a rural area of Barrow County which is now experiencing development pressures due to the construction of Highway 316 and its proximity to Atlanta.

Constructed in 1883 and moved to this location in 1910, Omer Christian Church is a one-room, front-gabled, wood-framed, building with clapboard siding, a rolled metal roof, and wood, stone, and concrete foundation piers. There are eight 9/6 and one 2/2 double-hung sash windows throughout the building; each window has a three-hinged swing shutter made of 10 to 12 vertical wood planks which completely covers the window. There is a front-gable portico on the front facade and a shed-roof portico on the east facade. The main entryway into the church consists of a pair of six-panel double doors with a single six-panel door on the east side serving as a second entrance.

The interior consists of one room with a slightly raised platform with the hand-hewn pulpit and ceremonial table on the north end. The room is divided by a central aisle which is flanked by hand-hewn pews. The interior walls consist of three-and-a-half inch pine planks painted white, and the floor of four-and-a-half inch unpainted pine planks. The coved ceiling is also of pine planks. The windows and doors have simple wood surrounds. There is a small, covered chimney flue opening that at one time served as a flue for the wood burning stove which is no longer present. The building was wired for electricity during the early 1950s, but was never connected to the main power line.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7--Description

The cemetery includes approximately 280 known grave sites dating from the early 19th century to the present. The graves are laid out in an orderly fashion in rows with some families having their plot designated by a low rectangular-shaped retaining wall made of concrete or stone blocks. The markers are simple standing tablets with inscriptions or stone head and foot markers with no inscription. The cemetery contains no grass and has almost a swept-yard appearance.

On the edge of the cemetery next to the church is a long granite table supported by concrete blocks and used for holding the food for pot-luck dinners. The landscaping throughout the property is minimal and informal with mature oak and cedar trees, a few shrubs, and very little grass. The Omer Church and Cemetery are located in a rural area of Barrow County with surrounding pastures and woods. However, with the construction of Highway 316 which connects Atlanta to Athens, Georgia, just east of the property, the area is changing and population growth and major development is anticipated. (Note that Highway 316, a new road, does not appear on the current USGS topographic map, photorevised in 1985, but it is shown on the current tax map.)

Although there has been no archaeological survey done on the property, the potential for archaeology is high due to the high probability of unmarked or unaccounted for graves.

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

Period of Significance:

c.1820-1950

Significant Dates:

c.1820-first burial
1883-church building constructed at original location
1910-church building moved to current location
1950-end of the historic period

Significant Person(s):

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

n/a

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Omer Christian Church and Cemetery is significant in terms of architecture and landscape architecture as a late 19th century historic intact rural vernacular church building and cemetery with intact historic landscaping, both typically found in rural communities throughout Georgia.

The Omer Christian Church is significant in terms of architecture as an excellent and intact example of a late 19th-century rural church. Although moved in the early part of this century, the church has been essentially unaltered. The overall form, interior space, wood siding, window and door placements, wood ceiling and floors, the hand-hewn pews and absence of ornamentation are all original character-defining features of this important vernacular building type in Georgia and they are unusually intact.

A large number of rural church buildings which survive in Georgia have undergone some alterations. Common alterations include artificial siding, interior paneling, replacement windows and doors, the addition of a fancy portico and/or steeple, and large additions. Because the Omer Christian Church building has escaped all of these frequently seen changes, it has additional significance for its intactness. It is an especially good example of a rural community landmark building.

The Omer Christian Church Cemetery is significant in terms of landscape architecture as an excellent and intact example of a rural cemetery. While most city or intown cemeteries are laid out with formal plans by a trained planner or designer, rural cemeteries are less formal and have a tendency to be more spread out. This is the case with the Omer Cemetery. However, it is somewhat unusual because the majority of the graves are laid out in rows in an orderly fashion. Character defining features of this rural cemetery include marked and unmarked graves, simple standing stone tablets or head and foot markers with no inscriptions, cedar trees, no formal landscaping and a swept-yard appearance. The cemetery also has a relatively high degree of integrity with an absence of larger modern intrusive monuments and overwhelming nonhistoric landscaping.

The church was constructed in 1883 about one-half mile from its current location. The church was named for the Reverend R.V. Omer (1853-1916), who was the district evangelist for Northeast Georgia and the pastor for the Omer Christian Church for its first two-and-a-half years, preaching there once a month. His successor was the Reverend S.S. Landrum, who baptized 125 people in the summer of 1885. In 1909, the church was dissolved and many of the members joined the newly founded Carter Hill Christian Church. The Omer Christian Church building was then moved in 1910 to be on the same parcel of land as the cemetery.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

The cemetery was started in the early 1800s on what was then the Georgia frontier. Some of the earliest settlers in the area are buried in this cemetery and account for its oldest burials. Many of the original members of the Omer Christian Church and their descendants also are buried in the cemetery. Since its move, the Omer Christian Church has been inactive and the building has served as a funeral chapel for the Omer Cemetery. On the last Sunday of every August, the descendants of the five original families gather at the church for a reunion service and dinner on the grounds. At this time the cemetery is cleaned and money is raised for the maintenance of the building and grounds.

National Register Criteria

The Omer Christian Church is significant under Criterion C as a good and intact example of a rural vernacular church building constructed in Georgia in the late 19th century. The cemetery is also significant under Criterion C for its intact rural cemetery landscape.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The Omer Christian Church and Cemetery meet Criteria Consideration A as it is a religious property deriving its primary significance for its architectural and landscape significance as an intact example of rural vernacular design.

Period of significance (justification)

The first burial was in c.1820 and 1950 represents the end of the historic period. Because burials in the cemetery continue through history to the present, 1950, the fifty-year cut-off date, was chosen as all the markers within the cemetery placed during the historic period contribute to the significance of the property making up a rural cemetery landscape. The burials continued in the traditional manner and pattern after the church building was relocated to the site through the historic period and continuing although in reduced numbers to the present.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The contributing building is the church and the contributing site is the cemetery.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

NOTE: The following historical narrative was taken from the Omer Christian Church Historic Property Information Form, Winter 1996, on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Omer Christian Church was built by settlers in the area from trees that were felled in a storm in September 1882. The builders named their church after the Reverend R.V. Omer, who was a district evangelist in the Northeast Georgia Circuit. He organized the church on September 9, 1883 at the Old School House which stood in front of what is now the Carter Hill Christian Church on Georgia Highway #82, southwest of Winder, Georgia. Reverend R.V. Omer served this church once a month for two or more years. We know the church building was in use by 1885 because 125 people were baptized there that year. The congregation of the church was dissolved in 1909. In 1910 many of the members moved to the newly organized Carter Hill Christian Church.

The Omer Church building was originally erected about one-half mile away at the corner of Georgia Highway 234 and Tucker Road. It was moved to its current location in 1910 for use in funerals, as a gathering place, and to be near the cemetery in order to keep it maintained. Because many of the original members of the Omer Christian Church had been buried in this cemetery, it was a logical place to move the building. Since that time the church and cemetery have been referred to as the Omer Christian Church and Cemetery.

The cemetery began in the early 1820s. As the story goes, a family in a covered wagon was traveling west, following what had been an Indian trail that passed through the area. They stopped at the home of Thomas Dillard during bad weather, and their child became ill and died. Since the family had traveled too far to return home, Thomas Dillard gave them a plot of land on which to bury the child. Thus began the cemetery which would eventually hold the remains of Thomas Dillard, his father, William Dillard, who was the second person to be buried there, many of the Dillard descendants, and other settlers in the area.

In 1858, Milly Anne Dillard, daughter of Thomas Dillard, married Richard Sharpton and they became owners of this land. There is a record of Richard Sharpton selling a right of way to the cemetery on December 16, 1899. On January 2, 1911, the Sharpton children sold the two-acre tract of land known as the Old Omer Church Lot to the former members of the Omer church.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

There are 280 known graves in the cemetery including some which are unmarked, and the cemetery is still in use. The church building is used once a year. On the last Sunday of August, the descendants of the five original families gather at the church for a reunion service and dinner on the grounds.

The Disciples of Christ is an organized religion that began in the late 1700s and held its first State Convention in Georgia in 1849. In 1954 there were 156 churches in Georgia which were considered Disciples of Christ and locally known as Christian Churches or Churches of Christ. Between 1849 and 1954 there were at least 170 congregations which had failed like the Omer Christian Church congregation. This faith continues to have its stronghold in the South with its largest membership probably being in Tennessee. The Disciples of Christ Historical Society is located in Nashville, Tennessee.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bennett, Glenn et al. "Omer Christian Church and Cemetery," Historic Property Information Form, Winter 1996. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, with supplemental information.

Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee. Various files consulted.

Ingram, Fred, ed. and compiled by the Barrow County Historical Society. Beadland to Barrow: A History of Barrow County, Georgia From the Earliest Times to the Present. Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1978.

Interview with H.A. Morris on January 16, 1996 at Omer Christian Church by Glenn Bennett et al.

Interview with Fred Ingram on January 22, 1996 at Omer Christian Church by Amanda Wilbur.

Moseley, J. Edward. Disciples of Christ in Georgia. St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1954.

The Winder News, multiple issues.

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

Acreeage of Property Approximately 2 acres.

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 244670 Northing 3760150

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated on the attached tax map with a heavy black line, drawn to scale. The boundary encompasses lot 22-21C/100 as identified on the Barrow County tax map. This map is the only map available showing the location of the property associated with the historic church and cemetery.

Boundary Justification

The boundary represents the remaining intact historic property associated with the Omer Christian Church and Cemetery.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Gretchen B. Kinnard, National Register Coordinator
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth Street
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** January 5, 2000

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) not applicable

name/title University of Georgia graduate students
organization University of Georgia Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
street and number School of Environmental Design
city or town Athens **state** Georgia **zip code** 30602
telephone 706-542-4720

consultant
 regional development center preservation planner
 other: students

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Name of Property: Omer Christian Church and Cemetery
City or Vicinity: Winder Vicinity
County: Barrow
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: December 1998

Description of Photograph(s):

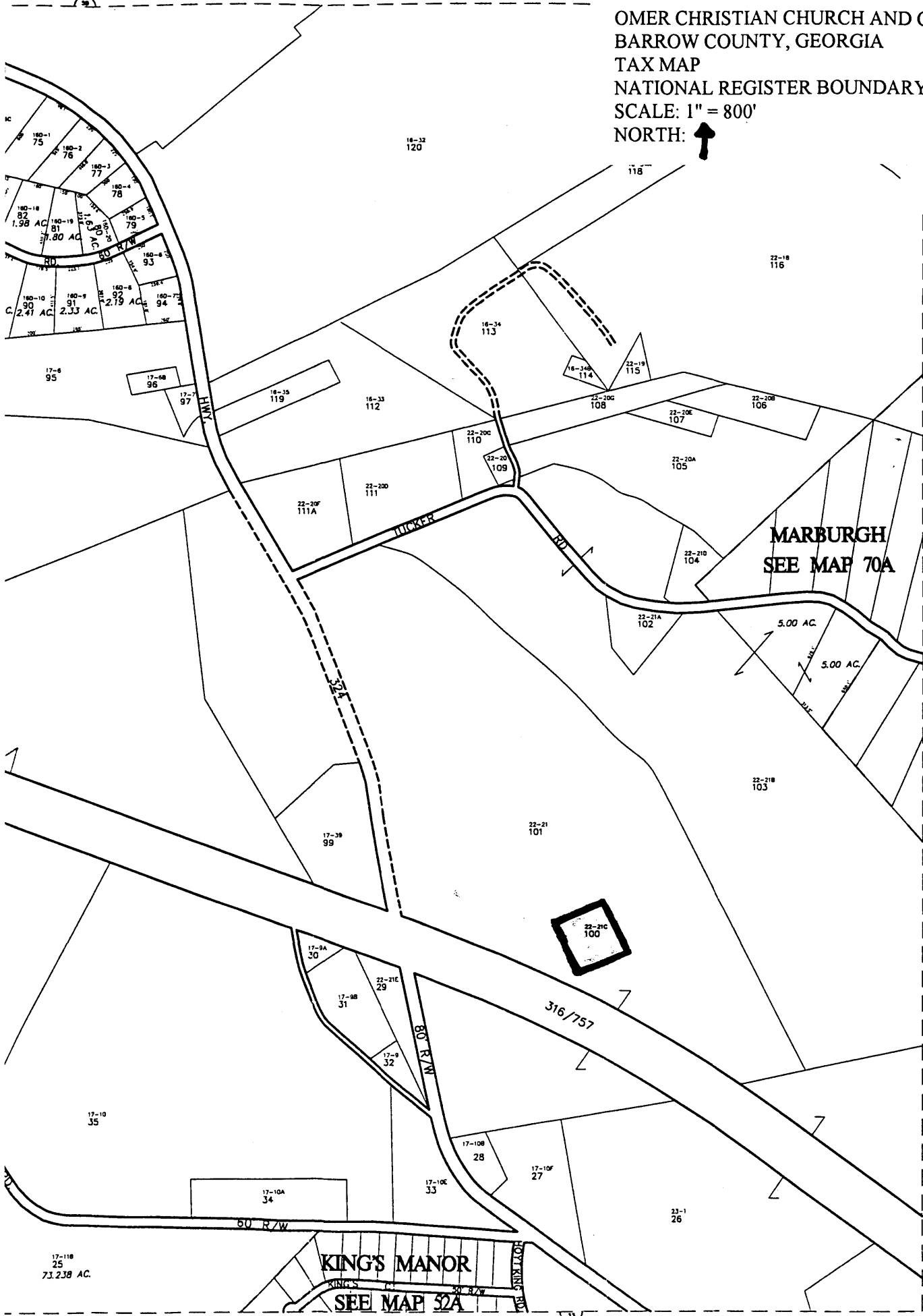
- 1 of 15 Front and side facades of church; photographer facing north.
- 2 of 15 Side facade; photographer facing northwest.
- 3 of 15 Side and rear facade; photographer facing west.
- 4 of 15 Rear and side facade; photographer facing south.
- 5 of 15 Interior of church; photographer facing northeast.
- 6 of 15 Interior of church; photographer facing southwest.
- 7 of 15 View of church from the cemetery; photographer facing northeast.
- 8 of 15 View of cemetery; photographer facing southwest.
- 9 of 15 View of cemetery; photographer facing southwest.
- 10 of 15 View of cemetery; photographer facing south.
- 11 of 15 View of cemetery; photographer facing southwest.
- 12 of 15 View of cemetery; photographer facing south.
- 13 of 15 View of cemetery; photographer facing north.
- 14 of 15 View of cemetery; photographer facing southwest.
- 15 of 15 View of cemetery; photographer facing west.

OMER CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND CEMETERY
 BARROW COUNTY, GEORGIA
 TAX MAP
 NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY: 
 SCALE: 1" = 800'
 NORTH: 

JANUARY 1, 1997

MAP 70

BARROW COUNTY GEORGIA



MARBURGH
 SEE MAP 70A

KING'S MANOR
 SEE MAP 52A

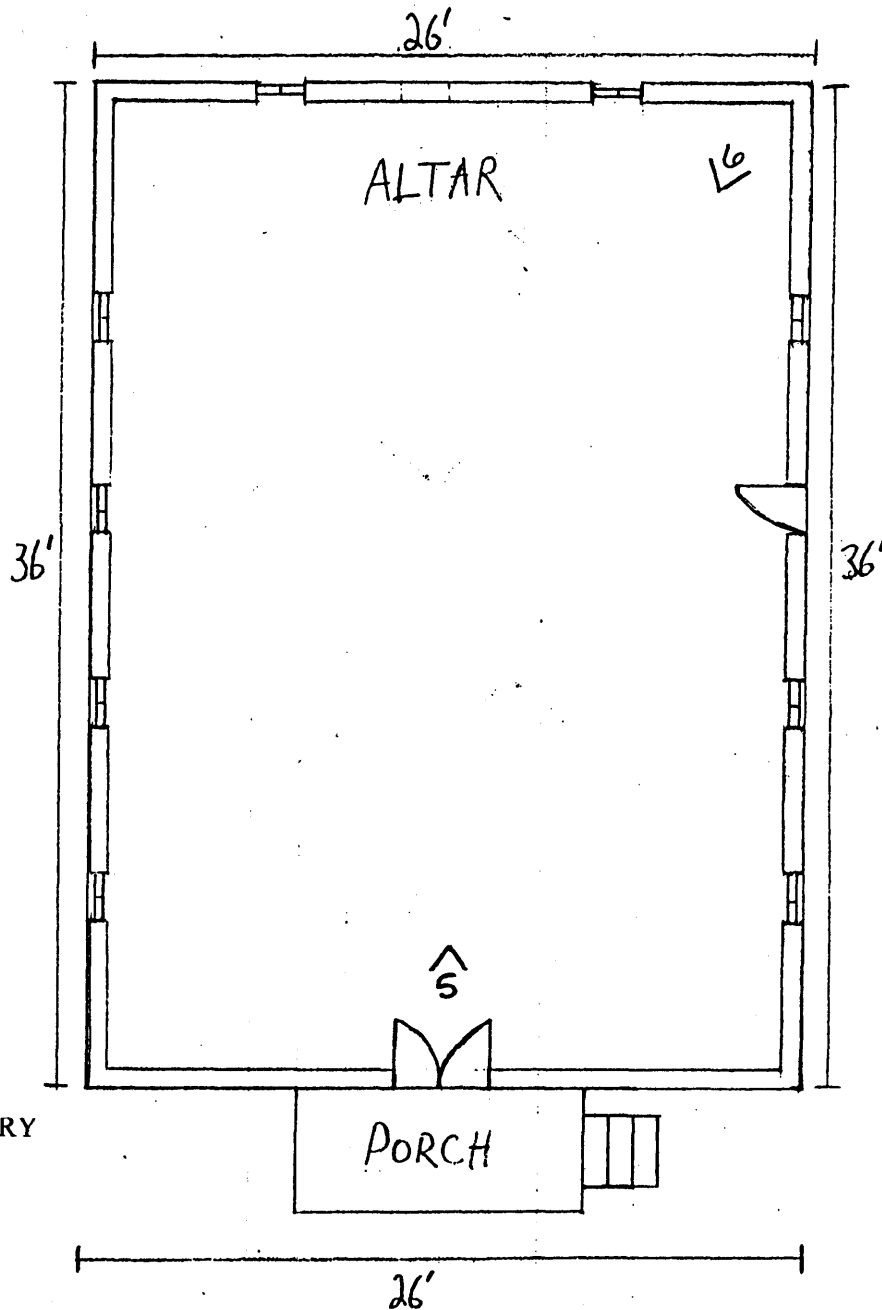
1" = 800'
 MAP 72



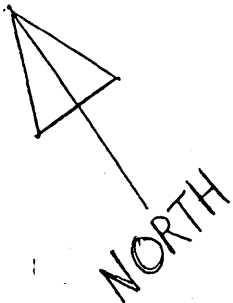
Keck & Wood, Inc.
 (770)-939-1334

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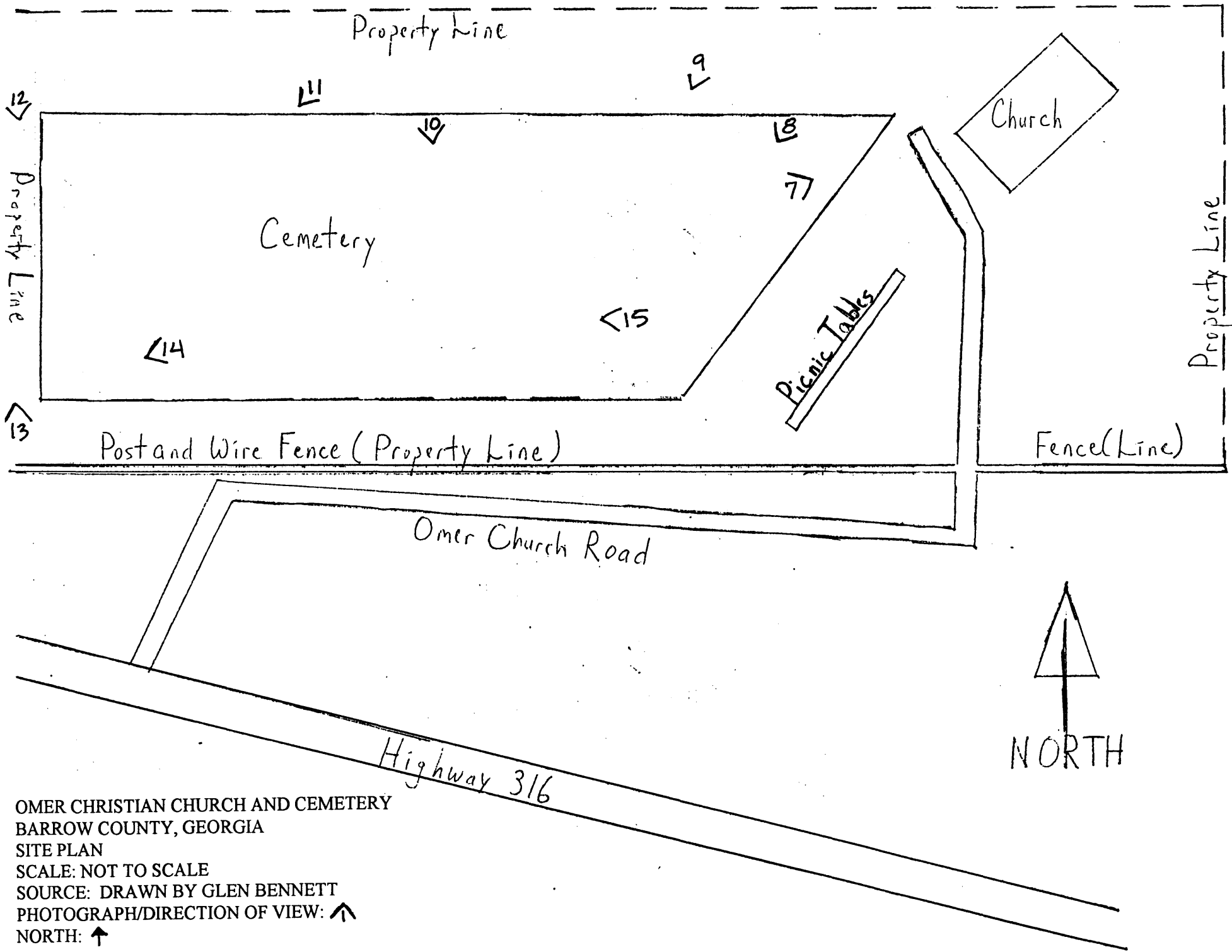


2



OMER CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND CEMETERY
 BARROW COUNTY, GEORGIA
 FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: NOT TO SCALE
 SOURCE: DRAWN BY GLEN BENNETT
 PHOTOGRAPH/DIRECTION OF VIEW: ↑
 NORTH: ↗

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OMER CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND CEMETERY
 BARROW COUNTY, GEORGIA
 SITE PLAN
 SCALE: NOT TO SCALE
 SOURCE: DRAWN BY GLEN BENNETT
 PHOTOGRAPH/DIRECTION OF VIEW: ↗
 NORTH: ↑