

*Replacement
of
02-77*

FEB 15 2002

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 Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and Cemetery
other names/site number Whitesville United Methodist Church and Cemetery

2. Location

street & number 4731 Pine Lake Road
city, town Whitesville (unincorporated) () vicinity of
county Harris **code** GA 145
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 31833

(N/A) not for publication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	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 Luce
Signature of certifying official

2-11-02
Date

for W. Ray Luce, Division Director and 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

Patricia Andrews 2/22/2002

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

RELIGION/religious facility
FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions:

RELIGION/religious facility
FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne (details)

Materials:

foundation	stone piers
walls	wood frame
roof	asphalt shingles
other	n/a

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and its adjoining cemetery, are two of the most important remaining historic elements in the formerly incorporated town of Whitesville. The church and cemetery are located on the north side of Pine Lake Road in an area that remains rural. Within the former circular town limits are several other churches, some with cemeteries, a non-historic school, the vestiges of a commercial area, and scattered residences. To the east, and just outside the former circular limits, is Interstate 185 with a Whitesville exit. The interstate essentially parallels GA 219, the main north-south road through Whitesville.

The Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is a wood-frame church built in 1854. (Photo 2) Later c. 1900 changes that reflect the Queen Anne style include decorative shingles and lancet vents, and a bell tower. (Photo 8) The church has a three-bay, front façade with two steeples on slightly projecting bays, the east higher than the west and including the bell, flanking a central door. The steeple roofs flare at the bases. (Photo 6) Also added c.1900 is a simple cornice board entablature reflecting the Neoclassical style runs around the façade, unifying the entire building. (Photo 8) There are double-hung sash windows that are rectangular and 4 over 4. (Photo 4) The exterior of the church is painted white, both the clapboards and the shingles. The rear siding is vinyl, the original material having been removed in 1994 to eliminate bee infestation. (Photo 5) The front-gabled roof is asphalt shingle. The foundation is fieldstone piers, in-filled with concrete block when the area beneath the church was dug out in 1937 to create the fellowship area. (Photo 4) There is a cemetery immediately to the west of the church.

The church is entered by modern steps through double doors into a central narthex/vestibule which is flanked by two small rooms. One of these rooms is used for crowd overflow on Sundays, the other for storage and access to the bell. A double central door leads from the narthex to the sanctuary. The central aisle runs between seven rows of pews and terminates at a chancel rail and pulpit (added in the 1940s); and a choir loft (added in the 1950s) on the north end (rear) of the church. Stairs to the west of the pulpit area lead to the fellowship area which was added underneath the sanctuary in 1937. (Photo 5)

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Section 7--Description

The church was built with braced-frame construction utilizing mortise-and-tenon joints in large hand-hewn pine beams. The interior has painted board walls. The floors are finished heart pine. The coved ceiling angles upward to 28 feet from the top of the windows in two stages. Three metal tie bars added in the 1940s span the church from east to west and hold the church building together. The pews are painted, hand-hewn pine. (Photos 10, 11, and 12.)

The interior is simple and with little ornamentation. There is molding below the window sills and baseboard running along the east, north and west walls. Original central-pivot windows had colored glass panes pre-1947. The colored panes surrounding the stained glass window behind the pulpit are reportedly fragments of these panes.

The lighting was originally provided by oil lamps, affixed to walls between the windows on brackets. These were removed when electricity was installed in 1936-1937 and reflected by four light fixtures that hang down from the ceiling. Heat was originally provided by wood-burning heaters on both sides of the altar, with chimneys extending through the roof. The location is still visible on the floor and in the ceiling. Central heating was added in 1947. Plumbing was installed in the basement when the fellowship area was added in 1937.

The church sits on a small rise with a stone terrace wall with steps leading to the road. (Photo 8) There are currently no outbuildings. An original outhouse/privy which was present on the northeastern part of the original property behind the church was removed when plumbing was installed.

Adjacent to the church, on the west side, and running along the north side of Pine Lake Road, is the historic cemetery, which predates the church building. The cemetery has numerous family burial plots defined by retaining walls and copings as well as one ornamental iron fence, and many undefined plots. (Photo 16) Some older graves are unmarked or marked with stacked piles of brick and stone, most of these being on the western portion of the cemetery. (Photo 18, 19, and 20) Some of the stone or brick graves have a marble marker on top or adjacent. At least one has the date 1854 as a burial date. One lot, closer to the church, has metal, pre-fabricated or mail-order markers that are dated 1885, 1886, 1891 and 1908, all in the same family and all of the same design. (Photo 15) There is informal landscaping with native trees and shrubs.

The church has in recent years acquired property on the south side of Pine Lake Road for the c. 1954 parsonage and new cemetery area, along with a wooded area. This land is not being nominated due to its not being historically associated with the church.

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
ART
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance:

1854-1951

Significant Dates:

1854, 1900

Significant Person(s):

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

unknown

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is the most important historic community landmark building in the historic and formerly much larger community of Whitesville. The church and its adjacent cemetery represent the founding, growth, and decline of the rural community.

The Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church, South is significant in architecture as a good example of a country church, c. 1854, that was "modernized" c. 1900 with the addition of a bell tower, Queen Anne-style decorative shingles, and Neoclassical Revival details, transforming it into a much more sophisticated church building from the earlier simple structure. The church retains much of its original materials, workmanship, and details, and the original pews and bell. The main body of the church, with its simple front-gable form, large open interior, and heavy timber structure, reflects the architectural traditions of vernacular country churches in Georgia throughout the 19th century, and this part of the church dates from the founding years of the Whitesville community. The paired asymmetrical towers, lancet detailing, and fishscale shingles added to the earlier building c. 1900 reflect picturesque Victorian-era architectural traditions and represent the heyday of the community. The basement fellowship hall and the electrification of the building, both dating from 1937, represent the important role played by the church even as the community around it declined.

The cemetery is significant in art because it contains several types of burial markings including the earliest stacked rock graves, some bricked, house-like grave markers, and the one lot where four graves are marked with metal, mail-ordered grave markers. There are obelisk-type markers, a variety of carved upright slab-type markers, stone curbing around several plots, and one example of an ornamental metal fence around a large burial plot. This cemetery, picturesquely located adjacent to the historic church, has a rather informal arrangement of family plots, but does have a large variety of different types of markers mentioned above. These types of markers are typical of the mid-19th to mid-20th century types of markers found in rural Georgia cemeteries, but this small cemetery certainly has a good assortment covering this time frame.

The church and cemetery are significant in community planning and development because in the small town of Whitesville the Methodist church first incorporated in 1837, the same year the town was incorporated, was representative of one of the two major religious denominations (the other being Baptists) in antebellum Georgia, and along with the adjacent cemetery played an important role in the community, and are now two of only a handful of identifiable landmarks for this once-thriving community. The Methodist church and cemetery were two of the necessary "elements" for a small Georgia town in its formative years, and these elements survive today as a reflection of the town's existence and former prosperity reflected in the enhancements to the church c. 1900, just before the town began to decline, after having been bypassed by the railroad. The Whitesville Methodist Church has been a focal point in its community for 150 years. Before the Civil War, afternoon services for the African-American slaves were offered by the church. During the Civil War, the ladies of the church were part of the Whitesville Soldiers Aid Society. After the war, the Freedmen sought permission to use the building for their services. Trustees of the church along with Trustees of Hopewell Methodist Church and Midway Baptist Church repaired and held responsibility for Sunnyside School as a community club building, located nearby. The church's continuing active role into the mid-20th century is represented by the construction of a new fellowship hall under the church as well as electrifying the building, all in the late 1930s, showing that the church expected to remain a viable institution even though the town around it was declining.

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National Register Criteria

The Whitesville Methodist Church meets National Register Criterion A because it has been an important focal point for a small rural, crossroads community representing one of the two predominant white religious institutions found throughout Georgia. It has thus been one of the two "rocks" or religious strongholds that has seen the community through over 150 years of existence and still remains as one of the few visible remnants of a once bustling town.

The church meets National Register Criterion C because it is an intact and good example of a small rural church that has retained its form and massing, original floors, doors, pews, as well as its c. 1900 changes to give it elements of the Queen Anne and Neoclassical Revival styles, popular at that time.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The nomination meets Criteria Consideration A because it is a religious property deriving its significance from its architecture as well as its importance in community planning and development as a major surviving element of a small, crossroads community.

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance runs from the building of this church building (1854) until the close of the historic era (1951) because the church has remained active and continuously in use as a Methodist church during the entire period and remains in use today.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

There are two contributing resources, one building (the church) and one structure (the cemetery).

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was completed in 1854 in the then-bustling community of Whitesville. The town was founded after 1827 when the area opened for white settlement, and prospered as a main stop on the stagecoach route which ran from Columbus to Rome. The town had a 32-room hotel, wagon and buggy factories, general store, tanneries, harness and tailor shops, doctors and dentists, saloons, and male and female academies. The church reflects the size of the town at its peak rather than its current aspect as a rural crossroads community.

The Methodist church grew from meetings and visits of circuit-riding preachers beginning in about 1828 at the home of Reuben R. Mobley north of Whitesville. The First Methodist Church was founded in the early 1830s, and by 1837 the decision was made to erect a church building for the growing congregation. The location belonged to a trustee of the church and was across the road from the male academy. This first church building

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

was used until 1854 when the current building was completed. The original church building was removed from the site prior to 1900.

The church records state:

"In the year of A.D. 1853 we, the members of Whitesville M. E. Church, under the supervision of Rev. J. P. Duncan, P.E., becoming awakened to our duty to our God, ourselves and our cause, resolved within ourselves, petitioned our brethren and friends to assist us, and by great exertion and perseverance erected the Chapel now know as the Whitesville M. E. Church for God and his worship alone. The house was begun in the fall and finished October 1854 the society then being in the charge of Rev. Thomas M Withbey. The church, now completed, was dedicated in October A.D., 1854 by Bro. The Rev. Lovic Pierce."

The Whitesville Methodist Church has been actively in use as a Methodist church since its dedication. It has been renovated and altered on at least three occasions. The first, and most dramatic, remodeling was begun in 1900 under the supervision of E.M. Phillips, a member of the Building Committee. It is at this time that the east steeple was raised, the two entrances under the steeples were removed in favor of a central doorway, and the decorative shingles were applied. Although the town of Whitesville had begun its decline by 1900, as the construction of the railroad through Hamilton drew away both business and population, the congregation of this church was still large and flourishing; the renovation was probably intended to make the church the most prominent and up-to-date building in the community.

The renovations in 1937 and 1947 were modernizations of the building as well as accommodation to changing church functions. In 1937, electricity came to Whitesville and the church was wired for electric lights. The basement was dug out and finished as a fellowship area the following year. In 1947, central heating was installed and the windows were replaced. The addition of the choir loft in the early 1950s was the last major alteration of the building.

Today, most of the historic buildings which made up the prosperous town of Whitesville are gone. The incorporation charter for the town, originally dating from 1837, was revoked by the State of Georgia in 1995; the government had long been inactive. Whitesville has joined the Department of Community Affairs "Historic Township" program with the intention of retaining an identity as an historic place in Harris County. The most important and historic building remaining is the Whitesville Methodist Church, standing on what was known as the Whitesville-West Point Road.

The Whitesville Methodist Church has been a focal point in its community for 150 years. Before the Civil War, afternoon services for the "colored" were offered by the church. During the Civil War, the ladies of the church were part of the Whitesville Soldiers Aid Society. After the war, the Freedmen sought permission to use the building for their services. Trustees of the church along with Trustees of nearby Hopewell Methodist Church and Midway Baptist Church repaired and held responsibility for Sunnyside School as a community club building.

In more recent times, the church has seen several important ministers serve here. It was the early church of Rev. William Jackson Callahan, an 1891 Emory University graduate who was a missionary in Japan. The church was also the place when Rev. Charles L. Allen preached his first sermon in 1932 on "The Prodigal Son." Rev. Allen went on to become the pastor of Grace Methodist Church in Atlanta and a well-known author (The

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Touch of The Master's Hand , God's Psychiatry, When The Heart Is Hungry and others). He later moved to Houston, Texas.

The church has had slight name changes like all Methodist churches. In the 1930s, with the reunion of the northern and southern branches of the faith, it became known simply as the Whitesville Methodist Church. A further union in 1968 brought about the current name, the Whitesville United Methodist Church.

The church remains a small, but active, congregation. The cemetery is maintained by the church while most new burials take place across the highway in the newer, and not nominated, addition. Marked graves in the cemetery indicate burials from the 1840s to the present.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Straub, Linda. "Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church, " draft Historic Property Information Form, 1997, on file at the Historic Preservation Division, DNR, Atlanta, Georgia.

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):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 683940 Northing 3632820

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is marked on the enclosed tax map as the northern portion of the land owned by the church, on the north side of the Pine Lake Road. It is the northern half of parcel 28 on Harris County, Georgia, Tax Map no. 24-A

Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel includes the historic church and the historic cemetery, both on the north side of the road (but not the modern cemetery on the south side), and some wooded area behind the church and the cemetery. This is the historic land owned by the church and which remains associated with the church.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 156 Trinity Ave. SW, Suite 101
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** October 15, 2001

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title Linda J. Straub
organization Harris County Trust for Historic Preservation
street and number P.O. Box 16
city or town Hamilton **state** GA **zip code** 31811
telephone 706-663-2815

(X) **consultant**
() **regional development center preservation planner**
(X) **other:** Member, Board of Directors of Harris County Trust

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

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Photographs

Name of Property: Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery
City or Vicinity: Whitesville (unincorporated)
County: Harris
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: August, 1999

Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 20: Front facade and cemetery as seen from across the road; photographer facing northeast.
- 2 of 20: Front facade with cemetery to the left (west); photographer facing northwest.
- 3 of 20: East facade; photographer facing northwest.
- 4 of 20: Detail of east facade; photographer facing northwest.
- 5 of 20: Rear (north) facade with fellowship hall exterior entrance; photographer facing west.
- 6 of 20: West facade near cemetery; photographer facing southeast.
- 7 of 20: Front facade; photographer facing northeast.
- 8 of 20: Closer view of front facade, entrance doorway and stone retaining wall; photographer facing northeast.
- 9 of 20: Detail of front facade, entry steps and door; photographer facing northeast.
- 10 of 20: Interior from just inside front entrance to sanctuary; photographer facing northeast.
- 11 of 20: Interior of sanctuary from east side; photographer facing northwest.
- 12 of 20: Interior, closer look at pulpit area; photographer facing northwest.
- 13 of 20: Interior, view from pulpit looking toward entrance; photographer facing southwest.
- 14 of 20: Cemetery, from near the church; photographer facing northwest.
- 15 of 20: Cemetery, just west of the previous photographer showing the metal, pre-fab tombstones; photographer facing southwest.
- 16 of 20: Cemetery, rear edge near trees, north side; photographer facing west.

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Photographs

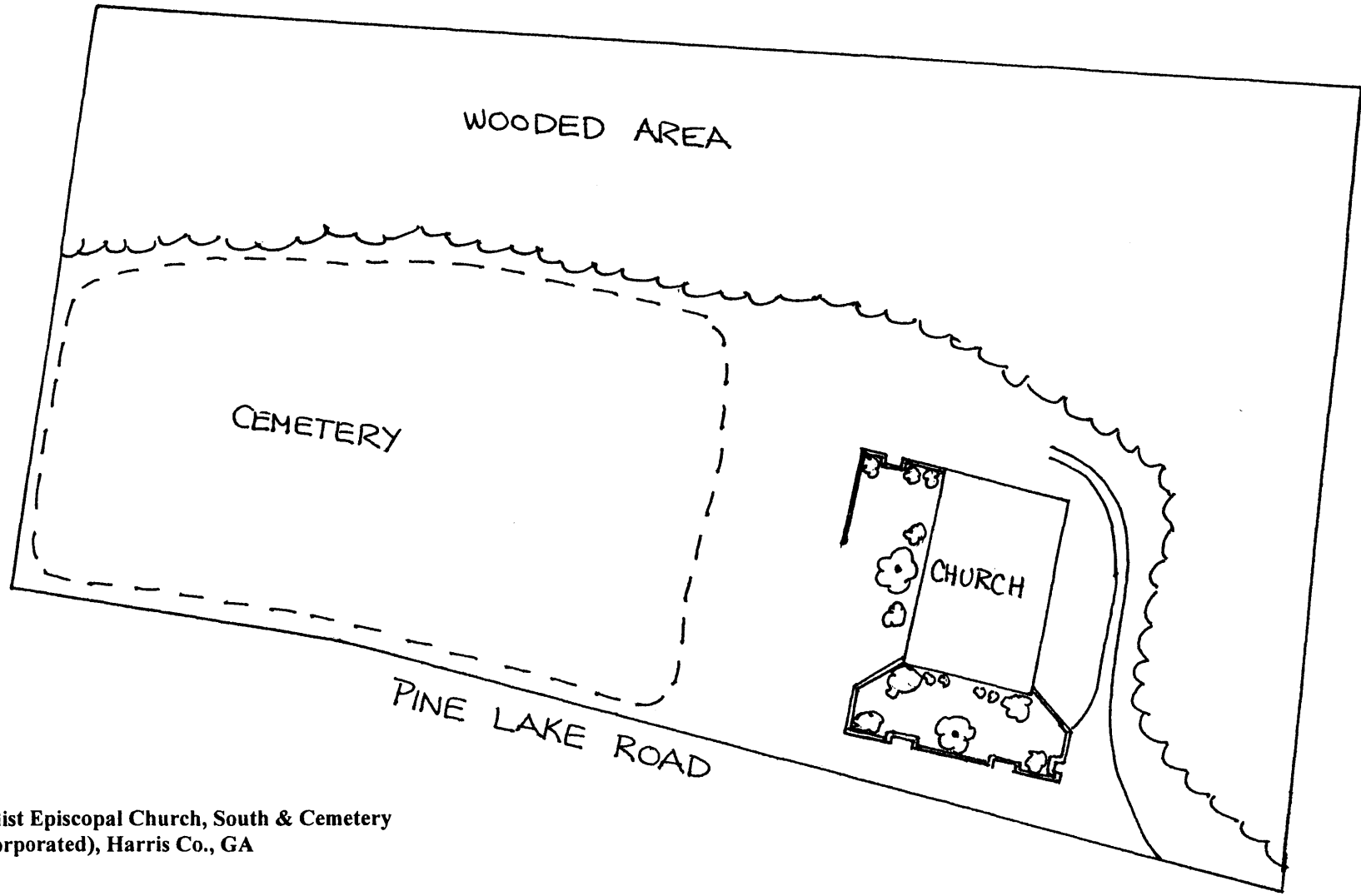
17 of 20: Cemetery, another view of the same lot; photographer facing northwest.

18 of 20: Cemetery, stacked brick grave markers; photographer facing northwest.

19 of 20: Cemetery, stacked stone graves with marble marker, near western edge of cemetery looking back toward the church; photographer facing east.

20 of 20: Cemetery, early stacked stone graves in far northwest edge of cemetery; photographer facing northwest.

WHITESVILLE METHODIST CHURCH



Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church, South & Cemetery
Whitesville (Unincorporated), Harris Co., GA

Sketch Map

Not to Scale

North ↑

Drawn by Linda Straub, 1997

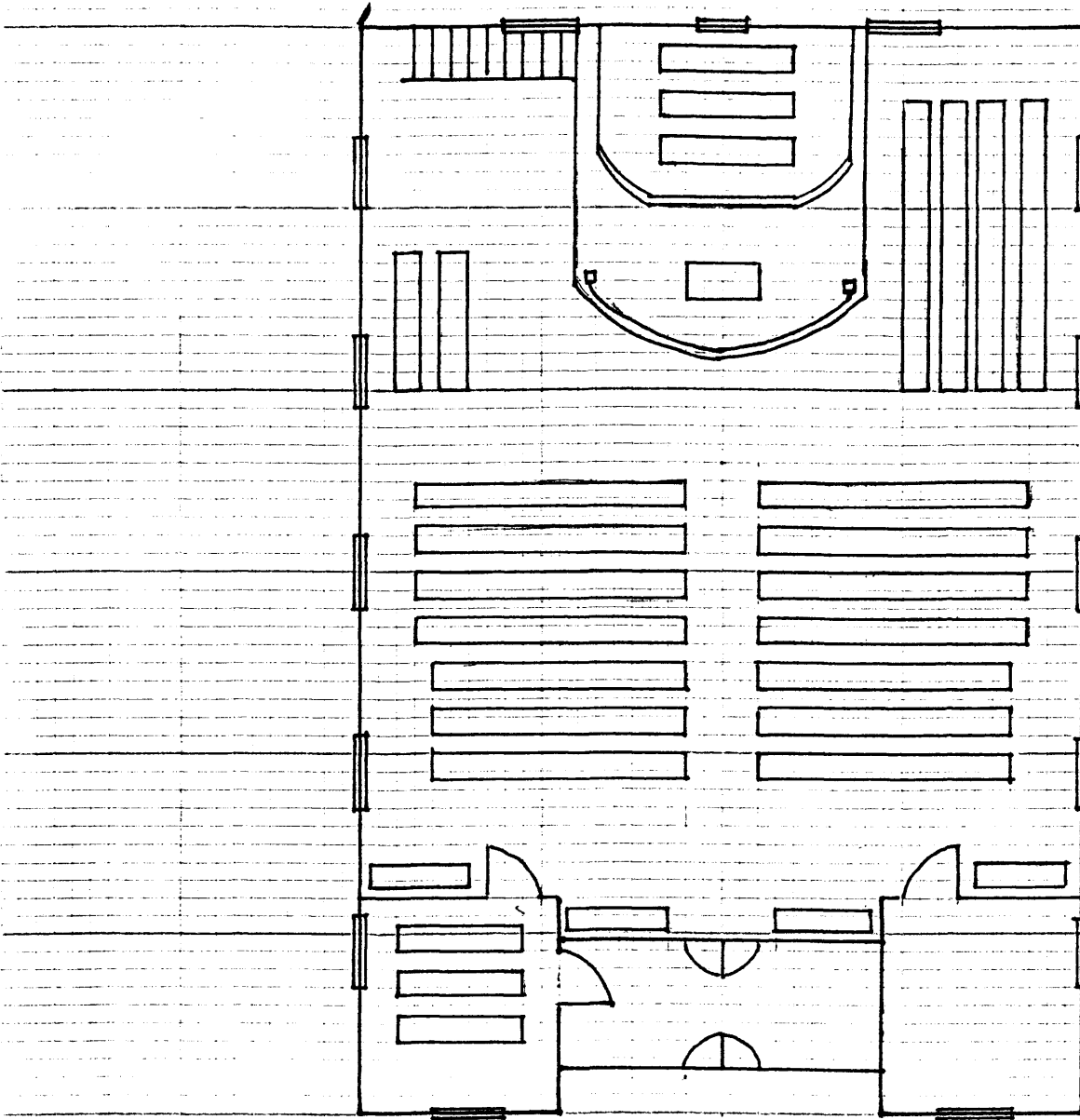
The church and cemetery are marked directly on the map

Prepared by Linda Straub

Scale 1" = 50'



WHITESVILLE METHODIST CHURCH



Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church, South & Cemetery

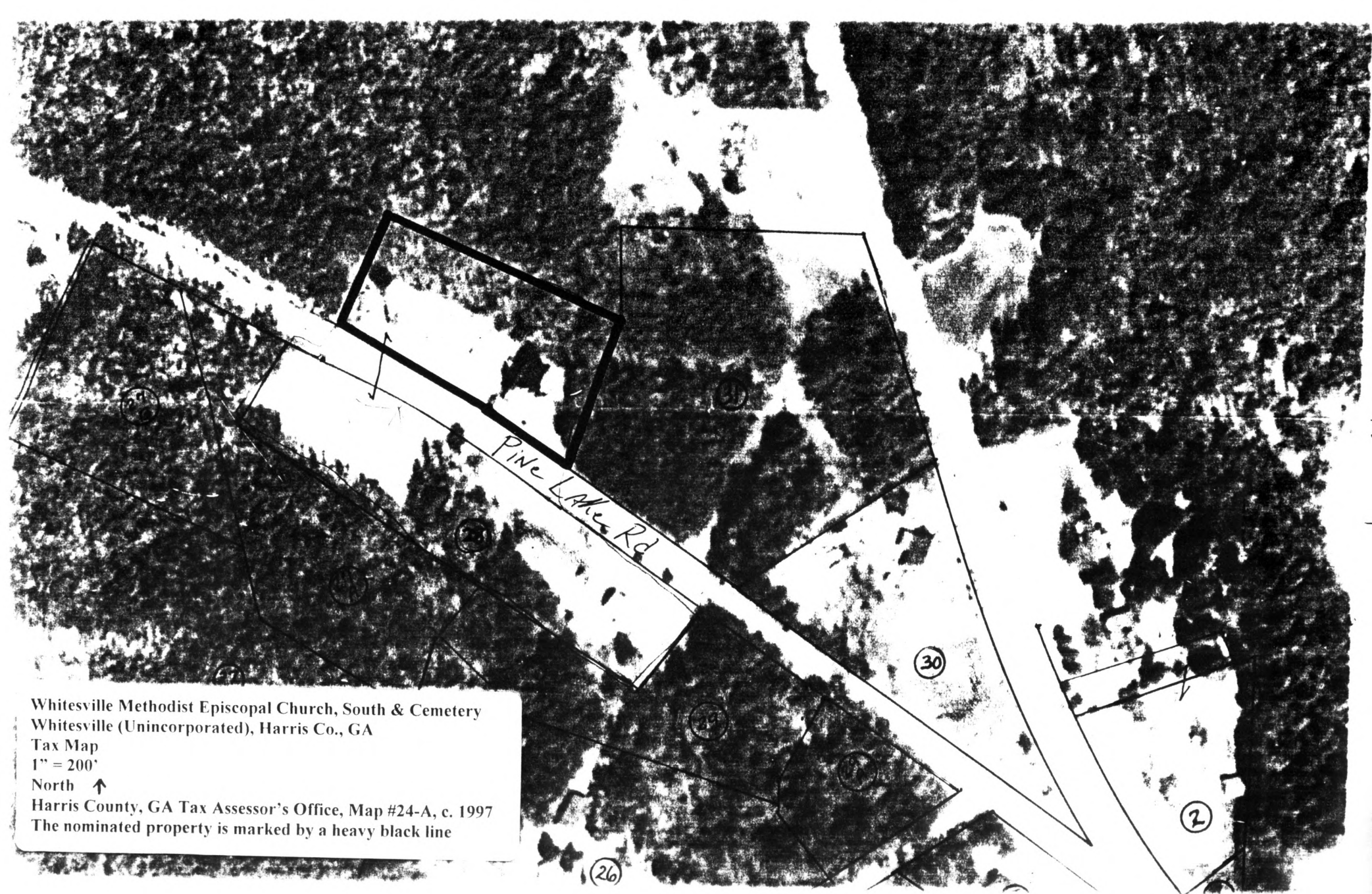
Whitesville (Unincorporated), Harris Co., GA

Floor Plan
Not to Scale

North ↑
Drawn by Linda Straub, 1997
Furnishings are shown on the plan

Scale: 1 □ = 1'





Whitesville Methodist Episcopal Church, South & Cemetery
Whitesville (Unincorporated), Harris Co., GA
Tax Map
1" = 200'
North ↑
Harris County, GA Tax Assessor's Office, Map #24-A, c. 1997
The nominated property is marked by a heavy black line