

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only
received OCT 24 1984
date entered

1. Name

historic Pisgah United Methodist Church and Cemetery

and/or common name

2. Location

street & number Pisgah Road N/A not for publication

city, town Pisgah vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Tennessee code 047 county Giles code 055

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"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Bishop Edward L. Tullis

street & number Scarritt College

city, town Nashville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37203

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Giles County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Pulaski state Tennessee 38478

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Giles County Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978-79 federal state county local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37203

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located on Pisgah Hill in eastern Giles County, Tennessee, the Pisgah United Methodist Church is a frame chapel constructed in a vernacular adaptation of the Greek Revival style. Built in 1867, the church was constructed on the site of an important Methodist campground which was established in 1813. A large cemetery containing approximately 500 graves which date from 1820 to the present is located behind the church.

The church is a one-story, gable roofed, rectangular, frame structure with a pedimented north (front) facade. It rests on a full limestone cellar. Decoration is classical in influence; the front pediment is supported by corner pilasters and a central pilaster, windows and doors are topped with molded cornices and dentil moldings.

The front of the church faces generally north towards the Pisgah Ridge Road. Two double-leaf doors in paneled entries are centered below the pedimented roof. Above the doors are stained-glass transoms in a lunette-shaped pattern giving the impression of rounded-arch entries. The pediment features a dentilled raking cornice and a plain shiplapped tympanum.

The east and west fronts are both four bays deep, divided by 6/6 double-hung sash windows with stained-glass transoms in the same rounded-arch design. The windows are topped with heavy molded wooden cornices. On the east end, steps lead from the outside - down to the cellar below. The rear of the building is plain.

The interior retains its original wooden pews and pulpit furniture, but has been altered by the removal of the raised choir behind the altar and by the addition of the stained-glass windows in the original openings some years ago. In the 1950s the crawl space beneath the church was enlarged into a full basement, but the historic structure was scarcely affected.

Behind the church is the church graveyard containing about five hundred graves, some dating back to the early 1820s.

A small stone springhouse is located about ninety yards down the hill below the church.

The setting of the church is spectacular. The building is located atop a high hill overlooking the Indian Creek valley. The lot is shaded by mature trees, with maples, cottonwoods, and magnolias predominating.

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 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 1867-69 **Builder/Architect** James M. Edwards and William C. Hollis

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Pisgah United Methodist Church, high atop Pisgah Ridge in eastern Giles County, Tennessee is being nominated under National Register criterion C for its significance in architecture to Giles County. The property served as a Methodist Campground, an outdoor area used for worship and church meetings as early as 1813. The frame chapel, constructed in 1867, sits on a high ridge overlooking the valley. The small structure is one of the best examples of Greek Revival chapel architecture in Giles County. The weatherboarded frame structure has a pedimented front, pilasters, dentilled entablature and cornice characteristic of the Greek Revival style, though constructed some years after the style had begun to wane in the area. Also on the property is the large cemetery containing approximately 500 graves.

The first settlers in the Pisgah area arrived in 1805. Among the members of the McDonald family who began farming in this area was the Reverend Alexander McDonald who held church services in his home for two or three years. In 1813 a campground was established at the foot of Pisgah Hill, attracting many early preachers and families from the surrounding countryside. About 1824, Reverend McDonald established the campground on his property atop Pisgah Hill and gave the summit its name. The hill was covered with forests which provided shade for worshippers and their animals, and plenty of firewood for cooking purposes. In 1838, he deeded ten acres of the site to church trustees for a permanent church campground. A large brush arbor was made under which the meetings were held. Permanent camps were built of rough logs covered with white oakboards and arranged in a hollow square fronting the arbor, which was located some distance north of the present church. A frame church, which doubled as a school, was erected about 1846. The last camp meeting was held in 1860. When Federal troops came through, they put the camp to the torch. The cabins were never rebuilt.

The present frame church was constructed in 1867-68 by James M. Edwards and William C. Hollis, from a plan prepared by Professor S.A.R. Swann, a member of the congregation. The church trustees provided exact specifications for the work, which began on November 5, 1867. On June 25, 1858, \$1,256 was paid to Edwards and Hollis for the framing. William R. Smith and Felix T. Abernathy floored the church in the latter part of 1868 for \$158. H. E. Finn plastered the interior in the spring of 1869 and was paid at fifty cents per square yard. Construction funds were raised by subscription. The first sermon was preached one Thursday in September 1869, by the Reverend Thomas F. Brown. The church was dedicated the following Sunday by Bishop Robert Paine, a convert of an early camp meeting on the site.

The small frame structure is a survival of the Greek Revival style, featuring a pedimented front supported by paneled corner and center pilasters, molded door and window cornices, and a full entablature with a dentil course frieze. The quality of the carpentry is very fine.

A small stone springhouse is located some distance below the church at the head of a steep ravine. From its construction, it appears to date from the late-nineteenth century.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 6.57 acres

Quadrangle name Tarpley, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	5	0	8	0	2	0	3	8	9	2	7	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Quin, Historic Preservation Planner

organization South Central Tennessee Development District date August 16, 1984

street & number P. O. Box 1346 telephone 615/381-2040

city or town Columbia state Tennessee 38401

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Byrum

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 10/15/84

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Herbert L. Byrum Entered in the National Register date 11/23/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Pisgah United Methodist

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Behind the church is a large cemetery which is the principal burying ground for the community. Many monuments have weathered badly but burials are believed to date from the 1820s.

Pisgah is the second oldest congregation in Giles County, the first being another Methodist chapel at or near Rehobeth. Few churches enjoy such a dramatic setting. The church, graveyard, and old campground overlook the Indian Creek valley and its rich fields of corn and soybeans. Pisgah Church is a delightful survivor of earlier classical style in a sylvan setting on the eastern edge of rural Giles County.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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Pisgah United Methodist

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Harwell, J. R. "Pisgah". The Pulaski Citizen. 1 April 1920.

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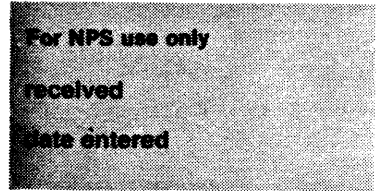
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Stevenson, John H. "Some Historical Facts Gathered About Mt. Pisgah Church."
Typed MSS. 26 February 1923.

Williams, Joe Max. Personal Interview. July 1984.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

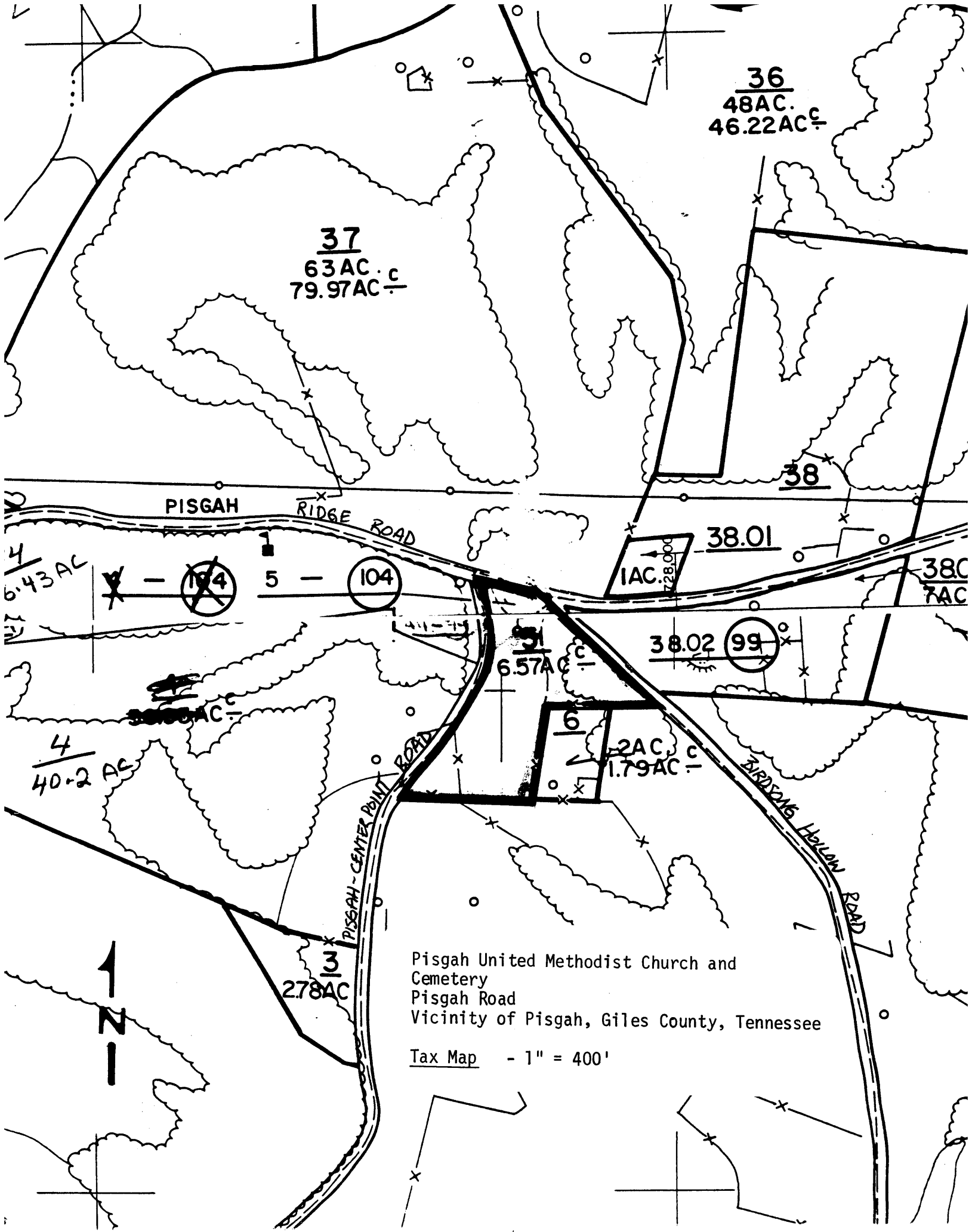
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Verbal Boundary:

The nominated acreage is an irregularly shaped piece of property bounded on the north by Pisgah Ridge Road, on the east by Birdsong Hollow Road, on the west by Pisgah-Centerpoint Road and on the south by adjoining property lines. The boundary includes all the property historically associated with the Pisgah United Methodist Church and Cemetery.



36
48AC.
46.22AC_c

37
63AC._c
79.97AC_c

38

PISGAH

RIDGE ROAD

38.01

1AC
728.00C

38C
7AC

4
6.43AC

~~194~~

5

104

38.02

99

5
6.57AC_c

~~3000AC_c~~

4
40.2 AC

6
2AC._c
1.79AC_c

PISGAH - CENTER POINT ROAD

BIRDSONG HOLLOW ROAD

3
278AC

Pisgah United Methodist Church and Cemetery
Pisgah Road
Vicinity of Pisgah, Giles County, Tennessee

Tax Map - 1" = 400'

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