

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 China Grove Methodist Church

and/or common same as above

**2. Location**

street & number Eastern side of State Highway 585 about five miles north  
of its intersection with U.S. Highway 98 NA not for publication

city, town Tylertown vic.  vicinity of ~~Walthall County Courthouse~~

state Mississippi code 28 county Walthall code 147

**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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church

street & number P. O. Box 931

city, town Jackson NA vicinity of state Mississippi 39205

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Chancery Clerk  
Walthall County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Tylertown state Mississippi 39667

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Statewide Survey of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1974  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Mississippi Department of Archives and History

city, town Jackson state Mississippi

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>NA</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located on the eastern side of State Highway 585 about five miles north of its intersection with U.S. Highway 98, China Grove Methodist Church is a simple frame Greek Revival church that rests upon brick foundation piers. All elevations of the church are sheathed in wooden lap siding with an unmolded base. The westerly gable-end facade and the easterly rear elevation feature a molded raking board and are further enlivened by the returns of the molded cornices of the side elevations. Although the southerly side elevation is a four-bay composition of windows, the northerly elevation differs in having an additional bay occupied by a single-leaf, molded, four-panel door set beneath a tall transom. This doorway, located in the westernmost bay, opens directly into a stairway providing access to the slave gallery. The rear, or easterly, elevation is divided into two bays consisting of a window and a doorway matching the doorway of the northerly side elevation. All window and doorway openings have unmolded surrounds with the suggestion of a drip cap, and all window openings are filled with unusually narrow, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung sash and are closed by original shutter blinds. The entrance doorway is located in the center-bay of the three-bay facade and is filled with double-leaf, molded, four-panel doors set beneath a transom.

The interior space of the church is undivided with a slave gallery at the western end and a raised chancel area with pulpit at the eastern end. The interior walls and ceiling are finished in horizontal matched boards with a wide, unmolded baseboard, and all interior door and window facings are unmolded. An unusual, apparently original, panel of horizontal matched boards stands behind the center back pew to screen the entrance area from the seating area. The sides and backs of the pews, which are original, are constructed of vertical matched boards, and the pews have shallow seating. The slave gallery, which is supported by molded box columns, is accessed by an open, single-flight stairway that runs in a southerly direction and is entered from an exterior doorway on the northern side elevation. The circular handrail of the stairway, which features rectangular-sectioned balusters, is mortised into the door surround rather than a newel to provide a sense of separation from the seated congregation. The box columns supporting the slave gallery are echoed on the gallery level by additional box columns which extend to the ceiling, and the slave gallery is railed like the stairway. The raised chancel differs from the gallery and stairway by having a turned baluster railing. The well detailed, molded pulpit, which is wide and low, is adorned with pilasters and three rectangular panels of horizontal matched boards.

Adjacent to the church building, on its southern side, is the church cemetery.

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

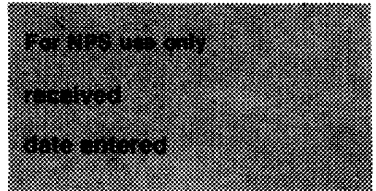
**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

China Grove Methodist Church

Continuation sheet Walthall Co., Miss.

Item number 10

Page 1



east 3 and 61/100 chains, thence south 10 chains to the point of beginning, containing 6.15 acres, being partly in Section 23 and partly in Section 24, Township 3 North, Range 11 East and recorded in Deed Book 3, p. 590, Walthall County, Mississippi.

## 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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** Completed 1861 **Builder/Architect** unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Completed in 1861, just before the onset of the Civil War, China Grove Methodist Church is one of Mississippi's unique expressions of rural, vernacular, ecclesiastical architecture. The church is simply constructed but rendered architecturally significant by the rarity of pre-Civil War rural churches in the state, but its unusual architectural features, and by its outstanding architectural integrity. Replacement by more modern structures and dwindling congregations resulting from the automobile age and migration to the city have been instrumental in the loss of many such church buildings throughout Mississippi. Many of those that survive have been extensively renovated or, like China Grove, are endangered by not having active congregations. China Grove is used today for irregular church services, "homecoming" events, weddings, and funerals. The construction of the slave gallery at China Grove may be unique among pre-Civil War Mississippi churches, because the gallery is constructed like a double-tiered porch with gallery-level columns extending to the ceiling and with an exterior doorway opening into the gallery stairway and the stairway railing extending beyond the bottom step and being mortised into the doorway surround. The creation of a vestibule effect by the erection of a horizontal matched-board panel, or screen, is another unusual feature of the church. The rhythm created by the use of matched boards for walls, ceilings, church pews, and the decorative panels in the pulpit adds architectural interest to the interior. Although China Grove is one of the two earliest settlements in Walthall County, only the church survives as a reminder of the community, settled ca. 1815, that once boasted a post office, school, and numerous houses. China Grove Methodist Church is the second church to be constructed on its site. It replaced a log Baptist Church that was constructed in the early nineteenth century and was acquired in 1836 by the Methodist Church who later built the present building.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Tylertown, Mississippi. China Grove Methodist Church papers.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 6.15

Quadrangle name Kokomo, Mississippi

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

**UMT References**

A 

1	5	7	8	03	4	0	3	4	56	3	3	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** Beginning at a point which is 50/100 chains east of the southwest corner of the northwest 1/4 of Section 24, Township 3 North, Range 11 East, and running thence west 8 and 50/100 chains to a red oak, thence north 5 chains; thence north 62 1/2 degrees east 6 and 27/100 chains to a black gum, thence north 52 1/2 degrees

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries** (see continuation sheet)

state	NA	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

state		code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Warren Miller/preservation consultant

organization Historic Natchez Foundation

date March 16, 1984

street & number P. O. Box 1761

telephone (601) 442-2500

city or town Natchez

state Mississippi 39120

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Kenneth H. P. Pool*

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 25, 1984

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<i>for Allores Byers</i>	entered in the National Register
Keeper of the National Register	date <u>7/5/84</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	