



Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Historic Preservation Division

PO Box 571 • Jackson, MS 39205-0571 • 601 / 359-6940 • Fax 601 / 359-6955 • mdah.state.ms.us

May 6, 2003

Ms. Carol D. Shull
Keeper of the National Register
of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW, 8th floor
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

The property listed below should be delisted from the National Register of Historic Places, upon the recommendation of the Mississippi Historic Preservation Professional Review Board.

Bethel Presbyterian Church (86003126)
12 miles south of Columbus, off US 45
Columbus vicinity, Lowndes County, MS
Listed on the National Register on December 19, 1986.

This small, wooden, vernacular Greek Revival rural church was destroyed by a tornado on November 10, 2002.

If any additional information is needed, please contact me at the above address or by telephone at (601) 359-6940.

Sincerely,

Kenneth H. P'Pool
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer



Bethel Presbyterian Church, Lowndes County, Mississippi
Photo made by Richard Cawthon, MDAH, on November 13, 2002, following the destruction of the church by a tornado on November 10, 2002.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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 Church

2. Location

street & number twelve miles south of Columbus N/A not for publication

city, town Off U.S. Hwy 45 South X vicinity of Columbus

state Mississippi code 28 county Lowndes code 087

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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A 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 St. Andrews Presbytery, Presbyterian Church USA
c/o Interim Presbyter: Rev. Paul David Snellgrove
street & number P. O. Box 1176

city, town Oxford n/a vicinity of state Mississippi 38658

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Corner of 5th St. and 2nd Ave. North

city, town Columbus state Mississippi 39701

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Mississippi Department of Archives and History

city, town Jackson state Mississippi

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Bethel Presbyterian Church is a small, wood-frame Greek Revival church erected in 1844-45. It is located in a rural area of Lowndes County, Mississippi, some twelve miles south of Columbus and about four miles west of the nearest community, the tiny hamlet of Trinity. It stands on a 3.3 acre tract on the west side of an unsurfaced road now called Gun Club Road.

The church faces eastward at the back of a grassy field surrounded by woods. In the wooded area immediately behind the church is a cemetery, now enclosed by a chain-link fence.

The church is a rectangular building, about thirty-two feet wide by about forty-eight feet deep, with a gabled roof. The front (east) facade is a five-bay composition consisting of a three-bay recessed porch with two Tuscan columns set in antis between the solid-walled end bays, which are articulated at the corners with Tuscan pilasters. The entire composition is surmounted by a pedimented gable carried by a simple Tuscan entablature. (This was a standard facade arrangement for vernacular Greek Revival churches through out the country, but is only seen in one other antebellum church in Mississippi, the old First Baptist Church in Jackson, which is no longer used for religious purposes.) From the porch two doors open into the church directly, and two others open into small chambers on either side which contain stairs to the gallery. The back and side walls of the porch are finished in horizontal flush boards, as is the tympanum of the pediment. The end bay walls are surfaced with clapboard siding, as are the side and rear walls of the building. Each side wall contains four rectangular double-hung windows. The original windows were replaced about 1900 with colored glass windows whose muntins form a pointed arch pattern within the rectangular outline. The original louvered shutters remain.

The rear wall is surfaced with clapboard entirely, including the gable. There are no windows, nor does the entablature continue across the rear.

The building is raised one to two feet off the ground on brick piers.

The interior is a rectangular room with a flat ceiling surfaced with acoustic tile and walls covered with a heavy unadorned paper. Across the east wall is a gallery supported by a single rather crude Tuscan column. There is no access to the gallery from inside the church; the stairs are accessible only from the porch. In the center of the room is a rough square post which was added around 1900 in order to shore up the ceiling. At the west end is a low dais furnished with three chairs and a pulpit, believed to date from the late nineteenth century. In front of the dais is a Communion table

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/
<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 1844-45 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Bethel Presbyterian Church is the finest surviving example of Greek Revival religious architecture in the Black Prairie Region of Mississippi and one of the two finest churches in that style in the northern half of the state.

Of some fifty known antebellum churches still extant in Mississippi, about sixteen can be said to be Greek Revival in design, in varying degrees of sophistication. At least four others display a combination of Greek Revival and Gothic stylistic features, and several churches which are otherwise Federal in character have Greek Revival alterations. Additionally, several of the surviving vernacular churches which otherwise eschew stylistic character show Greek Revival influence in their detailing. Most of these churches, however, are located in the southwestern quarter of the state, in or near Natchez, Port Gibson, and Jackson. In the northern and eastern parts of the state Greek Revival churches are much rarer, the only particularly accomplished example besides Bethel Church being the College Church (1846) at College Hill near Oxford in Lafayette County (placed on the National Register in 1979). Several vernacular antebellum churches with Greek Revival character survive in northern Mississippi as well, mostly in Marshall County. The nearest one to Bethel Church is the Baptist Church at Mashulaville in Noxubee County, an awkward porticoed building erected in 1855, which has had an addition and extensive interior alterations. It is possible that continued survey work will reveal additional examples.

Bethel Church was erected in 1844-45 to house a Presbyterian congregation which had been founded in 1834 by Scots-Irish settlers from Alabama and the Carolinas, who came into the area shortly after it was opened to settlement by the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830. It stands on land donated by the Odeneal family. The church is said to have been built by members of the congregation and neighbors; the designer is unknown.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Julien, Carl and Hollis, Daniel W. Look to the Rock. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1961. Records of the Presbyterian Historical Society (USA), Montreat, N.C., and Philadelphia, PA. This nomination was prepared from a draft submitted by Anna Grace Love, P. O. Box 1604, Columbus, MS 39703.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.3 Acres

Quadrangle name Artesia, Miss.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Parcel 12, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 9, Township 17 North, Range 17 East, Lowndes County, Mississippi. (See enclosed map excerpt.)

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

state	N/A	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard J. Cawthon, Chief Architectural Historian

organization Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

date August 1986

street & number P. O. Box 571

telephone (601) 354-7326

city or town Jackson

state Mississippi 39205

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Kenneth H. P. Pool

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 30, 1986

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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

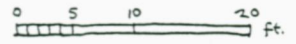
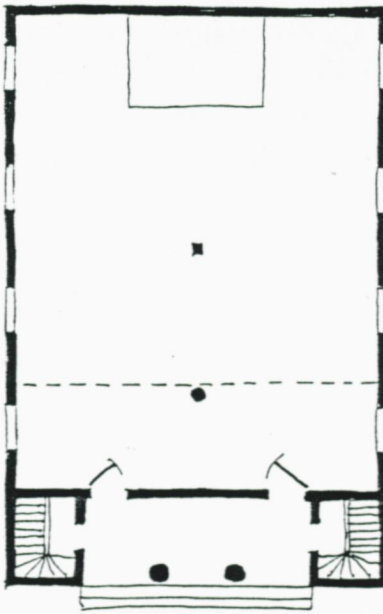
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received
date entered

Continuation sheet Bethel Presbyterian Church, Columbus vic., Lowndes Co., Ms. Item number 7

Page 1

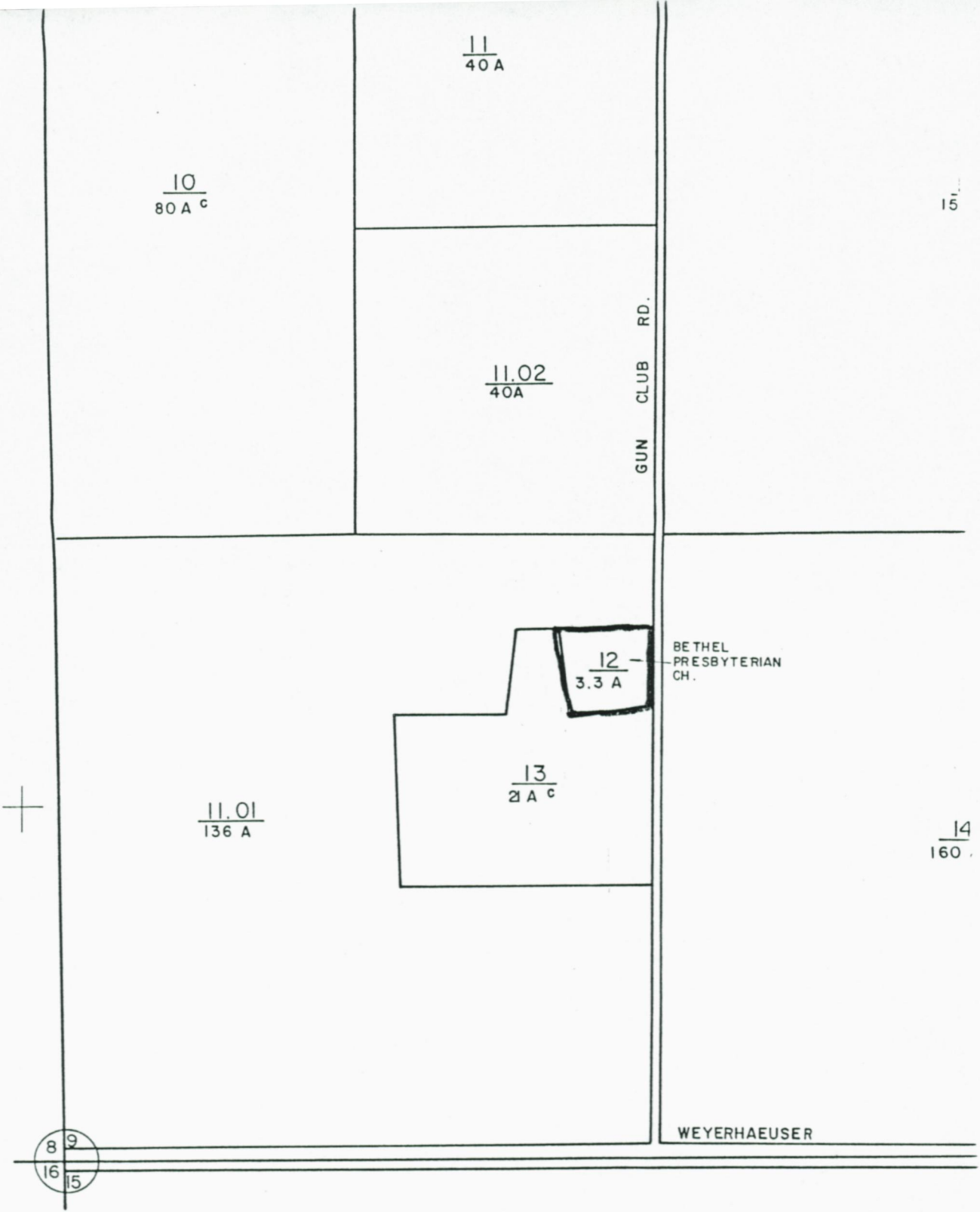
which appears to be mid-nineteenth century. The pews are original to the building, although the doors which once enclosed the ends have been removed.

The architectural integrity of the exterior is very high, the window sashes the only noticeable alteration. The interior, although not as pristine as the exterior, is still essentially unchanged.



Approximate Plan
BETHEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
LOWNDES COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Richard [Signature]
1986



594,000

COORDINATE SYSTEM SHOWN

ONLY
 ALTERATION IN WHOLE OR IN PART
 PERMISSION OF LOWNDES COUNTY
 IS PROHIBITED

S COUNTY
MISSISSIPPI
PLANNING AND APPRAISAL
 JULY 193
 MEMPHIS, TN.



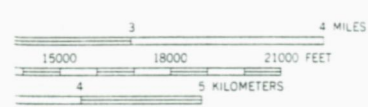
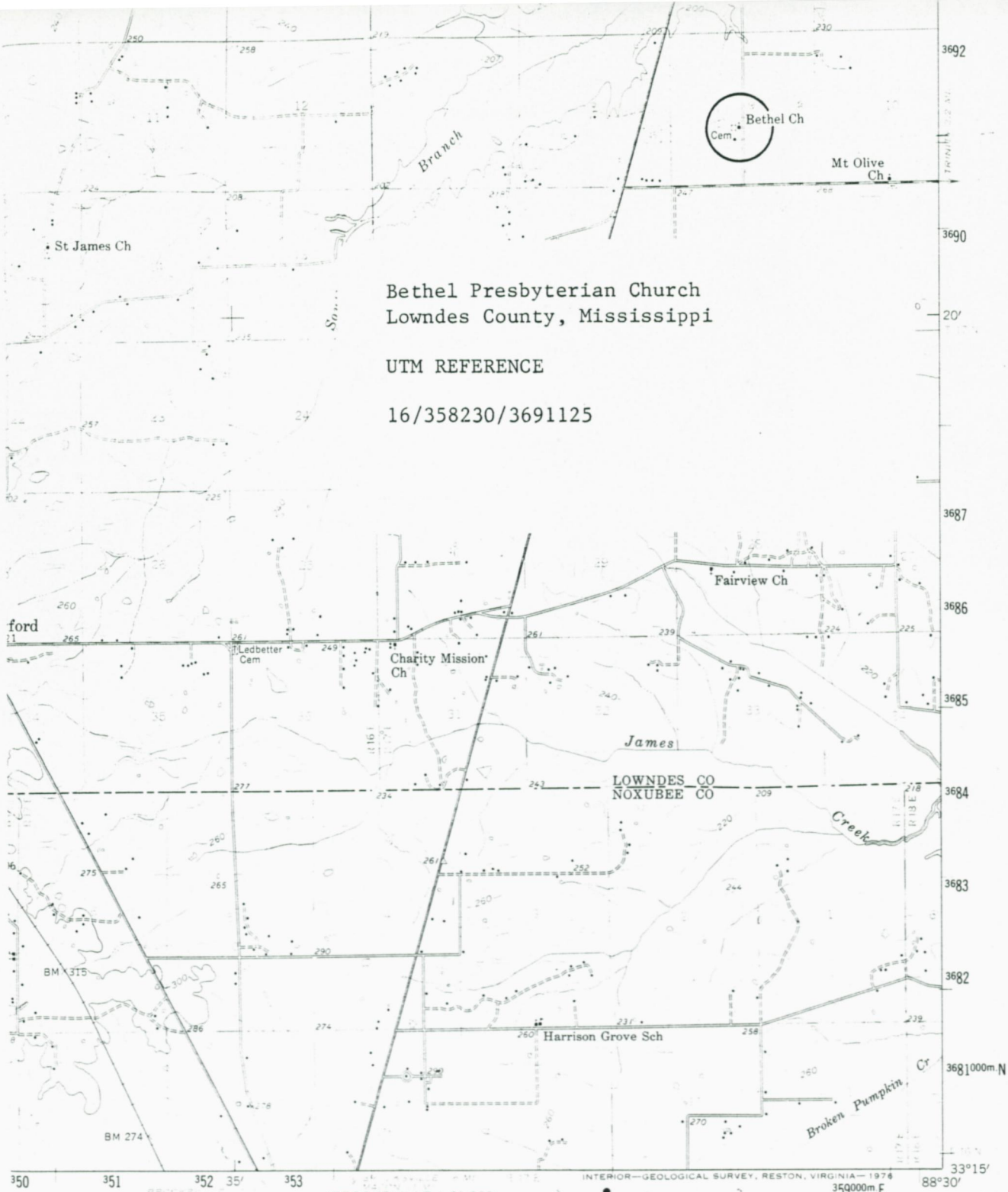
02	01
03	04

08	07
09	10
16	15
17	14

Bethel Presbyterian Church
Lowndes County, Mississippi

UTM REFERENCE

16/358230/3691125



(BROOKVILLE 1:24 000)
3250 II NE

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1974
3590000 E

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	—————	Light-duty	—————
Medium-duty	—————	Unimproved dirt
U. S. Route	—————	State Route	—————

3250 III NW
(CLIFTONVILLE)
1:24 000

JRS
929



STANDARDS
GINIA 22092
AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ARTESIA, MISS.
N 3315—W 8830/15

1959

AMS 3250 I—SERIES V743



Bethel Presbyterian Church

Lowndes County, Mississippi

Frontal oblique view from east-northeast

Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History

Jim Bennight Studios, Columbus, MS

June 1986

Photo 1 of 3



Bethel Presbyterian Church
Lowndes County, Mississippi
Oblique view from southeast
Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History
Jim Bennight Studios, Columbus, MS
June 1986
Photo 2 of 3