NPS Form 10-900 **United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: <u>Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery</u> Other names/site number: Hillsboro Methodist Church Name of related multiple property listing: N/A______

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: Old Highway 35 North City or town: Hillsboro State: Mississippi County: Scott Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \underline{X} nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility 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 _X__ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

_____national _____statewide _____local Applicable National Register Criteria:

__A __B __X_C __D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets	does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery Name of Property Scott Mississippi County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ____ entered in the National Register
- ____ determined eligible for the National Register
- ____ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ____ removed from the National Register
- ____ other (explain:) ______

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.) Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public -	- Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box	.)	
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Building(s)	Х
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Scott Mississippi County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count) Contributing Noncontributing

<u>1</u>		buildings
1		sites
		structures
1		objects
3	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register <u>NA</u>

6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.) RELIGION/religious facility FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.) RELIGION/religious facility <u>FUNERARY/cemetery</u>

Scott Mississippi County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.) LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Craftsman_____

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.) Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery are located in Hillsboro, Mississippi, about eight miles northwest of the City of Forest in Scott County, Mississippi. The church was established circa 1836 and the current wood-frame structure was erected circa 1928 replacing an earlier wood-frame building. The church is situated on a range of hills well above that of the surrounding countryside. The church building is one-story with Craftsman influences. The outside walls are pine boards. The interior walls and ceiling are bead board. A four-room addition was added in the 1930s perpendicular to the sanctuary creating a T-shape floor plan. The cemetery is located to the northwest of the church building.

Narrative Description

Site

The Hillsboro Methodist Church is located on an approximately three-acre site on Hillsboro Road (Old Highway 35 North) in Scott County Mississippi. A graveled drive leads to the church

Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery

Scott Mississippi

Name of Property County and State and extends across the church and cemetery grounds. In the front of the church building is a grove of virgin pine trees (photo 1). An early map indicates there was a dirt road that ran immediately in front of the church and fronted the cemetery property named Church Street. Signs of the old road are still visible today but it has long been abandoned.

Church Building

The current church building was completed circa 1928 after the first building was destroyed. There are no documents that explain how the first building was destroyed. The current church is a one-story wood frame building rectangular in shape, 40 feet wide and 49 feet long with a high-pitched gabled roof (Photo 2). There is a 20 feet long by 8 feet deep front porch with a front gable on the east side facing the highway. The porch is supported by two 9 feet by 14 inch square boxed columns. Eleven concrete steps that are 20 feet wide by 10.6 feet deep with a 12 feet long two-inch galvanized pipe handrail provides access to the porch deck. (Photo 3) The framing of the porch suggests the roof is not original and was a later modification. The porch shelters the main entrance, double-leaf five panel wood doors with a double-pane transom. The church was built with a conventional foundation and is supported by brick piers (Photo 4).

The exterior is sided with original 1x6 pine boards. The sanctuary features fourteen double-hung 6/6 clear-glass windows that are 36 inches wide by 6 feet 6 inches tall – six on each side of the sidewalls and two on the front wall. Some of the windows have the original glass (Photo 5).

The interior has the original 1x4 bead board walls and ceiling and heart-pine flooring. The original wooden pews, varying in length ranging from 11 feet 8 inches long to 9 feet 8 inches long, were built specifically for the building and were positioned to focus one's attention to the altar and speaker platform (Photo 6).

The original 27 feet wide semi-circle wooden chancery rail and a 9-inch wide kneeling rail embrace a two-level raised platform on which the original speaker's stand is located (Photo 7). Fifty-nine 2x2 inch wooden spindles support the chancery rail that is attached to two 34 inches tall banisters (Photo 8). The one-level "choir loft" is 8 feet 10 inches wide by 15 feet 6 inches long and is located to the right of the speaker's platform. It is enclosed with a 4-feet high paneled banister wall (Photo 9). Four sets of "school house" light fixtures suspended on 4 feet chains illuminate the sanctuary (Photo 10).

The floor slopes downward 12 inches from the back of the sanctuary to the front of the sanctuary. The back wall is 14 feet 3 inches from floor to the ceiling and at the front of the sanctuary the wall is 15 feet 3 inches from the floor to the ceiling (Photo 11).

The building does not have central heat and air. The sanctuary is heated by four propane gas space heaters and has an underground propane gas storage tank. When the sanctuary was first built, it was heated with a single potbelly wood burning stove. The brick chimney has been removed, however, the original cast-iron flu is still visible in the sanctuary ceiling (Photo 12). There were no restrooms in the original building.

Scott Mississippi County and State

A four-room 16 feet wide by 52 feet long addition was added in the mid-1930s under a crossgable at the rear. (Photo 13). A 3 feet wide by 7 feet tall door on each side of the addition allows for ingress and egress from the sanctuary. The inside dimension of each room is approximately 11 feet 4 inches long by 12 feet 7 inches wide. The rooms are not air-conditioned and are heated by propane gas space heaters. In the late 1970's, when the membership declined to a point where not all of the space was needed for Bible study, the room on the south side of the building was converted into a unisex restroom. The room on the north side was converted into a kitchen. The wall between the middle two rooms was removed to create one larger room. A three-door movable partition can be closed to separate the two rooms. A door leading from the kitchen into the larger room and a "serving window" were added to the inside wall. A handicap ramp was constructed in the mid-1980s on the north side of the building.

Church Bell

The composition bell was forged by Ven & Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, and is not dated. The base of the bell is 27 inches wide and it is 15 inches tall. It is located approximately 12 feet from the back of the church building. It is mounted on a 10-inch I-beam metal frame that is 13 feet tall and 47 inches wide. It has a mechanical pivot (Photos 20 &21). The bell is believed by some to be the original bell of the first congregation. Others believe the bell was added at a later date. The primary purpose of the bell was a signal that the Bible study hour was over and the morning worship service was beginning. It was also used to celebrate church events, holidays, and as a community alarm for emergencies and natural disasters. One of the oldest members of the church is quoted as having said, "This church building and bell will be here when Christ comes again."

Cemetery

On the north side of the church building is a cemetery that consists of approximately 5 acres (Photo 14). The cemetery may have existed before the first church building was erected. There are many very old markers and tombstones as well as many unknown burial places (Photo14) that are believed by many older people to be the earliest members of the congregation (Photos 15-19). This would include gravesites in 1836 and continuing until this day. Citizens and members of the church donated plots of land and the deeds are on record at the Scott County Courthouse in Forest, Mississippi. Markers vary in shape, size and material – granite, marble and concrete. Earlier graves that had wooden markers no longer exist. There is a gravel road that runs through the cemetery ground from the entrance to the back of the property. Very common with earlier churches in the South, the cemetery was enclosed with an ornate metal fence and a wrought-iron gate. Over time, the fence and gate became victims of damage and neglect and have been removed.

The church and cemetery are maintained by the Hillsboro Methodist Church Cemetery Association. The church building retains a high degree of integrity with only the few alterations noted above. Both the building sand cemetery grounds are in good condition.

In Proverbs 23, verse 10, these words are recorded: "Do not remove an ancient land mark."

Scott Mississippi County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
 - D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery Name of Property Scott Mississippi County and State

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.) <u>ARCHITECTURE</u>

Period of Significance c.1928_____

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Scott Mississippi County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Hillsboro Methodist Episcopal Church, erected circa 1928, is an outstanding local example of vernacular rural church architecture, which over the span of its life has had only minor changes. The church has served as a significant religious, cultural, political and social meeting place for multiple generations. It is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for local significance for Architecture. The Hillsboro Methodist Church Cemetery contains the monuments of six solders that fought in the Civil War.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Present-day Scott County was formed from a portion of the land ceded by the Choctaw in the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830. The Mississippi Legislature created the county on December 23, 1833 and named it in honor of Abram M. Scott, the seventh governor of the state. The nascent town of Berryhill was designated the county seat. However, the town failed to grow and the county seat was moved to Hillsboro in 1836.¹

Hillsboro served as the county seat for the next 30 years. However, when the Vicksburg and Meridian Railway Company completed the tracks through Scott County in 1860, they bypassed Hillsboro. A depot established in Forest contributed to the growth of that community and the citizens voted to move the county seat to Forest in 1866. According to long-held legend, the men of Hillsboro did not accept the change and tore down the first Forest courthouse and carried it back to Hillsboro, brick by brick.² The Legislature finally resolved the dispute in favor of Forest in 1873.³ Hillsboro gradually declined and is now an unincorporated crossroads.

Hillsboro Methodist Church History

The first Methodist congregation in Scott County was formed in 1836 in the home of Jesse McKay, near Hillsboro. An itinerant Methodist preacher named Elijah Steele oversaw the chartering of the congregation, with seven original members. McKay and M. T. Segrist, among those charter members, built a log chapel named Cypress Grove. With the growth of Hillsboro

¹ Source Material for Mississippi History, Scott County. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS. Series 447, Box 10857. General Information subfolder.

² Ibid.

³ Morrow, J. H. The First Methodist Church, Forest Mississippi, 1861-1951: from log cabin to cathedral. (Methodist Men, Forest, MS: 1957). 13.

Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery

Scott Mississippi

Name of Property County and State due to the construction of a courthouse, the congregation moved to Hillsboro and the name was changed to the Hillsboro Methodist Church.⁴

The Hillsboro Methodist Church was well-established by 1848, when the Methodist Conference organized the Hillsboro Charge, recognizing the church as the hub of the Methodist Circuit in Scott County.⁵ A deed dated February 12, 1848, memorializes an 1847 agreement between John M. Chambers and James J. Chambers and their wives granting of a half-acre lot in Hillsboro to representatives Methodist Episcopal Church, South and the trustees Masonic Fraternity and Members of the Scott Lodge, No. 80. The deed stated the purpose of the transfer:

For the use and purpose of building or causing to be built thereon a house the lower story of which is to be occupied by the Methodist Episcopal Church South, in connection with a Female School, or such School as the Trustees or their successors in interest shall see proper to establish, the upper Story to be occupied as a Lodge room for Scott No. 80-of Free and accepted Masons \dots^{6}

The congregation established the cemetery soon after they moved to Hillsboro. Markers with death dates as early as 1836 suggest the cemetery has been used as a burial ground for members and their families during most of the time the church has been in Hillsboro.

A church history compiled by Jean Eady, a long-time member and officer in the Hillsboro Methodist Church Cemetery Association, indicates that for many years a church building was located within the boundary of the cemetery, with a reference to plots where the Stallings and Worrells are now buried. It is not clear whether this was the 1848 church or a later replacement. In November 1927, J. W. and Georgia Sparks and C. P Hatch and Mrs. Sallie Hatch deeded about 1.5 acres to the church, which is the site where the current church building sits.⁷ No church records have been located that establish the reason for the construction of the new church in 1928.

On October 8, 1983, the trustees of the Hillsboro Methodist Church determined it to be in the best interest of the church, its members, and the community to transfer all church property to the Hillsboro Methodist Cemetery Association. The Association was organized in 1978 to accept full responsibility for the perpetual up-keep and maintenance of all church property. With the church property no longer being an active place for worship, the Association allows its members and the public to use the church building and cemetery for weddings, funerals, burials, and other religious activities. Therefore, it is imperative that this beautiful building and cemetery be maintained and preserved for future generations to use, appreciate and love.

In Proverbs 23, verse 10, these words are recorded: "Do not remove an ancient land mark."

⁴ Morrow, p. 11.

⁵ Morrow,

⁶ Scott County Land Records

⁷ Jean Eady. "History of Hillsboro Methodist Church." Historic Preservation Division, Historic Resource files, Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery, 123-FOR-3102.

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Architectural Significance

The Hillsboro Methodist Church is good local example of a rural vernacular church building. According to Richard Cawthon, former MDAH Chief Architectural Historian,

vernacular churches may not fit neatly into the stylistic categories used to assess more architecturally ambitious buildings and may lack their sophistication of design, craftsmanship, materials and finish; but they are important embodiments of Mississippi's architectural heritage. Moreover, they are becoming increasingly rare and endangered. As general class of buildings they are clearly worthy of National Register consideration...⁸

The one-story, rectangular shape gable front church is a common form in rural Mississippi churches dating back to the 1850s. Many of the antebellum examples had two symmetrically placed front entry doors. The form continued to be popular into the early 20th century, as illustrated by the Baptist Church of Christ at Sardis, Winston County, (159-LOU-5025-NR) built in 1917 (NR, 2011). A variant with a single entrance developed as seen at the Georgetown Methodist Church in Copiah County, b. 1934 (029-GEO-0003-NR) (NR, 2016).

The Hillsboro Methodist Church compares well with these listed examples of vernacular churches. It maintains the common rectangular shape and gable front seen in the exemplars. The exterior and, particularly, the interior retain a high degree of integrity exhibiting the work of skilled craftsman. The use of triangular knee brackets in the eaves and boxed columns on the porch suggests a familiarity with the nationally popular Craftsman style, but the building lacks sufficient details to attribute a high-style.

Within the context of Scott County, the Hillsboro church is rare example of a vernacular church with high integrity. Although no comprehensive architectural survey of Scott County has been conducted, a review of surveyed churches in the county includes Methodist churches in Lake, Homewood and Morton. The Lake Methodist Church, b. 1916, (123-LAK-003), a vernacular cruciform building with some Craftsman details is the most similar to the Hillsboro building, although the basic shape of the buildings differ. The church in Homewood, b. 1948, (123-FOR-3202.1) is a Gothic Revival building, while the church in Morton, b. 1958, (123-MOR-0005) is a modernist building. The only other surveyed church in rural or small town Scott County is the First Baptist Church in Morton, b. 1958, (123-MOR-0004), a mid-20th century interpretation of the Colonial Revival style.

⁸ Cawthon, Richard. National Register eligibility criteria for Churches in Mississippi

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Cain, J. B., Methodist History in County Related, The News Register.

- Morrow, J. H, *The First Methodist Church, Forest, Mississippi, 1861-1951: from log cabin to cathedral.* Forest, MS: Methodist Men, 1957.
- Source Material for Mississippi History, Scott County. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS. Series 447, Box 10857.

Contributors

- Eady, Jean, Program material presented to the Hillsboro Methodist Cemetery Association October 13, 2002, on file with current church members.
- Greener, Valda Eure (1922-2015), Personal handwritten notes on file with current church member. Former church member, charter member and long-time secretary/treasurer Hillsboro Methodist Church Cemetery Association.
- J. B. Cain Archives of Mississippi Methodism, Millsaps College, Wilson Library, Jackson, Mississippi.
- Sparks, Thomas W. (1934-), Personal interviews. Former church member, charter member and past president Hillsboro Methodist Cemetery Association.
- Webb, Robinson S. "Bob" (1956-), Personal interviews. President, Hillsboro Methodist Church Cemetery Association.
- Webb, Sammye Jean (1925-), Personal interviews. Former church member, charter member and past president, Hillsboro Methodist Church Cemetery Association.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- _____ 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 # _____
- _____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- _____ State Historic Preservation Office
- ____ Other State agency
- _____ Federal agency
- ____ Local government
- _____ University
- ____ Other
 - Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 123-FOR-3102

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 9 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: (enter coordinates to 6 decimal places) 1. Latitude: 32.454444	– Longitude: -89.512778
2. Latitude:	Longitude:
3. Latitude:	Longitude:
4. Latitude:	Longitude:

See Continuation Sheet

Or UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):



or

NAD 1983

1. Zone:

Easting:

Easting:

Northing:

Northing:

2. Zone:

Scott Mississippi County and State United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

Hillsboro Methodist Church	and Cemetery		Scott Mississippi
Name of Property			County and State
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:	
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:	

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Commence at the Southwest corner of the NE ¼ of NW ¼, Section 18, T7N, R&E, thence run North, 322.08 feet to fence corner; thence run South 88 degrees 53 minutes East 1788.13 feet along fence; thence run South 103.62 feet; then run East 330.00 feet for the point of beginning; thence run East 77.30 feet to the West side of a gravel driveway also known as Church Street; thence run South 03 degrees 28 minutes West 98.82 feet along said street; thence run North 87 degrees 10 minutes West 71.41 feet; then run North 95.10 feet to the point of beginning, said tract containing 1.64 acre and located in the NW ¼ of NE ¼, Section 18, Township 7 North, Range 8 East, Scott County, Mississippi.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the church building and cemetery historically associated with the Hillsboro Methodist Church.

11. Form Prepared By

Additional Documentation

Scott Mississippi County and State

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery

City or Vicinity: Hillsboro

County: Scott

State: Mississippi

Photographer: Robin Autry

Date Photographed: August 27, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 21. Grove of virgin pine trees in front of church. Camera facing west.
- 2 of 21 Exterior elevation. Camera facing southwest.
- 3 of 21 Front porch and entrance steps. Camera facing west.
- 4 of 21 Conventional foundation and brick piers. Camera facing southwest.
- 5 of 21 Clear glass windows. Camera facing northeast.
- 6 of 21 Arrangement of pews. Camera facing west.
- 7 of 21 Chancel rail, kneeling rail and support spindles. Camera facing west.
- 8 of 21 Original speakers stand. Camera facing west.

Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery

Name of Property

- 9 of 21 "Choir loft". Camera facing north.
- 10 of 21 "School house" light fixtures. Camera facing east.
- 11 of 21 Slanting floor and back wall. Camera facing east.
- 12 of 21 Potbelly stove flu. Camera facing up.
- 13 of 21 Four-room addition. Camera facing north.
- 14 of 21 Cemetery marker. Camera facing west.
- 15 of 21 Example of older grave markers. Camera facing west.
- 16 of 21 Example of older grave markers. Camera facing west.
- 17 of 21 Example of older grave markers. Camera facing west.
- 18 of 21 Example of older grave markers. Camera facing west.
- 19 of 21 Unknown burial places. Camera facing northwest.
- 20 of 21 Church bell showing elevation. Camera facing east.
- 21 of 21 Church bell showing placement at rear of building. Camera facing northeast.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Scott Mississippi County and State United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery Name of Property Scott County, Mississippi County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number <u>10</u> Page <u>1</u>





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Site Plan Hillsboro Methodist Church and Cemetery Scott County, Mississippi	











































