NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

247

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Salem Methodist Church
other names/site number Cullasaja Community Club

2. Location

street & number 1201 River Road N/A ☐ not for publication
city or town Franklin ☒ vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Macon code 113 zip code 28734

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kevin Cherry, SHPO — 3/21/2013
Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
☑ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet
☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, explain

for Edson H. Beall — 5·8·13
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)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic and Architectural Resources of Macon County, NC, ca. AD 600-1945

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION : religious facility/church

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Wood
roof Metal
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 who's components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A
(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** moved from its original location.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance
1875

Significant Dates
N/A

Significant Person
(complete if Criterion B is marked)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:
Western Office, Asheville

Salem Methodist Church
Name of Property

Macon County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.74 acres

UTM References
(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	289800	3891780	3			
2				4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hillary Cole
organization _____ date January 2, 2013
street & number 106 Turkey Creek Road telephone 828-450-2149
city or town Leicester state NC Zipcode 28748

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 0r 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Cullasaja Community Club c/o Mrs. Dale Cobb, President
street & number 94 Bryson Knob Road telephone _____
city or town Franklin state NC zip code 28734

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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Salem Methodist Church, built in 1875, is a wood-frame structure with a steeply pitched front-gable roof and prominent central, engaged bell tower standing on a hill overlooking the Cullasaja River. It is located southeast of Franklin in the unincorporated community of Cullasaja in Macon County on 0.74 acres off Highway 64 East/Highlands Road near Old Corundum and Nickajack roads. The church is on the west side of River Road just a few hundred feet west of the Cullasaja River. It is nestled into the side of a knoll overlooking the river and is surrounded by various shrubs and numerous trees including pines, spruces, oaks and maples. It faces east towards the Cullasaja River with access directly off River Road by a short asphalt driveway. A steep set of concrete and stone stairs lead up a hillside from the road to the front of the church. The rear of the church backs up against a steep wooded bank. The church is oriented northeast to southwest but for ease of description the façade will be described as east facing and cardinal directions will be used throughout this nomination. The building is a vernacular example of the Gothic Revival style, the oldest church in the county built in this style. The interior is twenty-eight feet by forty-six feet and is comprised of a sanctuary. Minor alterations include the insertion of two small restrooms and kitchen at the east end near the entrance of the church.

Exterior

The church is a rectangular-shaped, white-washed, wooden structure with a gable-front. The church sits on piers of unmortared stones about two feet above the ground. These stone piers are on each corner and are spaced along the bottom of each side of the structure as needed. A continuous, hewn sill rests on the foundation. There is a freestanding stone marker located near the south corner of the façade with "1875" chiseled into its face. The exterior sheathing is narrow weatherboards on the walls and metal 5-Vcrimp sheathing on the steeply pitched roof. The eaves are supported by exposed curved rafter ends above wide fascia boards. The square two-staged bell tower pierces the front gable and dominates the façade of the church. The first stage had decorative diagonal woodwork and a low-pitched hipped roof. The top stage has a steeply pitched pyramidal metal roof topped with a finial and is open on all four sides to expose the bell. The bell tower was built so that it protrudes slightly from the east facade. This allows for the entrance doors to be recessed about two feet inward. The entrance is centrally located on the façade of the building and features a pair of wood paneled front doors with original metal hardware topped with a two-light transom and wood trim under a pointed architrave. A steep flight of concrete steps lead up to the entrance. The south elevation contains four double-hung four-over-four wood sash windows under two-light pointed transoms with louvered wood shutters on the exterior. The north elevation contains the same windows in the same configuration. The windows are all original wood with wood muntins. The blind west elevation of the church backs up against a wooded slope.

The south side of the church has a wood door near the south-west corner, which was added to the church sometime during the 1990s. A small flat roof porch supported by wood posts shelters this door. This entrance leads to a wooden three foot wide, twelve foot long handicap accessibility ramp.

Interior

The church interior is very simple in its design; it is a rectangle with twenty-eight-foot by forty-six-foot dimensions, which includes the kitchen and bathrooms. The interior is finished with five-inch-wide wood sheathing, laid horizontally. These boards also form the ceiling, following the underside of the rafters. This ceiling disguises the very sharp pitch of the roof, which allows for a more enclosed feeling in the sanctuary. The floor is also constructed of five-inch-wide boards laid lengthwise from the front to the back of the church. The baseboards are painted five-inch-wide boards on each wall. The window surrounds are painted wood. In the center of the front of the church, there is a very apparent outline indicting a former elevated floor structure where the minister would have stood. The interior church contains the freestanding wood pews and the wooden lectern from the earlier 1854 church building. It also contains an organ that was donated by Jane Bryson in the late 1870s. [1]

The interior contains a few alterations that were completed sometime in the 1950s and include the addition of a kitchen at the southeast corner and the addition of two small restrooms located in the northeast corner. The kitchen space is separated from the church by a pass-through window with a counter that protrudes about one foot. The entrance to the kitchen is a paneled wooden door located to the right of the counter. This kitchen area, which is roughly eight feet by ten feet, has wood paneling throughout and a small storage closet area with a wooden paneled door in the southeast corner. There is a double sink located along the dividing wall between the church entrance and the kitchen. The floor is linoleum laid over the original wood floor. One restroom has wood paneled walls and a linoleum floor. The other has a tile floor and plaster walls. Each restroom is roughly five feet by eight feet and has a toilet and a vanity sink. In 1972, when the Cullasaja Community Association began using the church, wooden paneling was added within the church entryway. The simple modern lighting in the kitchen and the two bathrooms was added around 1972.

Integrity Statement

The setting of the Salem Methodist Church is similar to what it was in the late 1870s when it was built; it is still located within a rural setting, across a narrow two lane road from the Cullasaja River, with no commercial buildings located nearby. The adjacent land is sparsely populated with residential houses and farmland. With only

[1] The Macon County Historic Society, Inc. *The Heritage of Macon County 7/26/1922 to 9/8/1991.* Jessie Sutton, 1992, 93:146.

minor alterations made to the church in the 1950s, and later for its 1970s conversion to a community center, the property retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The structure is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains such as trash pits, wells, privies, and structural remains related to the 1830 and 1857 church buildings may be present and can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure.

Information concerning the locations and structural details of the early church buildings and possible locations of early, unmarked graves is often only evident in the archeological record. Therefore, archeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

Summary

Constructed in 1875, the Salem Methodist Church is the third Methodist church erected on this site since 1830 and the second oldest extant church building in Macon County. It is also the oldest extant example of a Gothic Revival style church in Macon County. Salem Methodist Church meets Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places as an intact local vernacular example of a Gothic Revival-style church from the last quarter of the nineteenth century as seen in the area around Cullasaja and in Macon County. The church also meets Criteria Consideration A as a property historically owned by a religious entity whose primary significance is in the area of architecture.

Context, "The Birth, Division, And Growth of a Mountain County: 1829-1874," pages E24-39, in "Historic and Architectural Resources of Macon County, NC, ca. AD 600-1945" (MPDF) provides the historic context for the growth of Protestant churches in the county and the construction of the Salem Methodist Church. The locally significant Salem Methodist Church falls under Property Type 4, "Institutional Buildings," pages F119-123, which provides the building typology and a short significance statement. Churches in Macon County are significant as reflections of the architectural trends that reached the county and the choices and adaptations that congregations made in terms of architectural design and style. Additional vernacular Gothic Revival architectural context and historical information specific to the church is included herein.

According to the registration requirements on page F123 of the MPDF, to be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for architecture, a church must be at least fifty years old, retain its location, setting, and overall architectural integrity of design and workmanship from the period of significance, and be good a representative example of church architecture as a whole in Macon County. Alterations to the exterior appearance of an individually eligible structure should be minimal and a majority of the original interior finish should be present.[2] Salem Methodist Church is the oldest remaining example of vernacular Gothic Revival church architecture in the county. It has all of its original exterior finishes with only minor alterations and the interior arrangement remains largely intact with it original floors, ceiling, and trim, although with the insertion of two small bathrooms and a kitchen at the rear of the sanctuary.

Historical Context

The unincorporated community of Cullasaja, situated in the township of Ellijay, in Macon County, is located six miles southeast of Franklin, North Carolina, and eighteen miles northwest of Highlands, North Carolina. Macon County was established in 1828, incorporating land from Haywood County.

[2] Martin, Jennifer. "Historic and Architectural Resources of Macon County, NC, ca. AD 600-1945." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1992.

From 1819 on, Cullasaja, and other communities like it in the county, were being settled. Cullasaja lies along the banks of its namesake, the Cullasaja River. The word "Cullasaja" is a Native American term meaning "sweet waters." Several former Cherokee towns were located along the Cullasaja River. The community of Cullasaja was called Sugar Fork until the early 1900s since it was built on the site of a former Cherokee town called Kulsetsiyi (or Sugartown), abbreviated Kulsetsi. "Cullasaja" is a variant spelling of the Cherokee town name "Kulsetsi." The Cullasaja River was a central figure in Cherokee culture and it was one of the reasons that Cullasaja was eventually settled by the whites. Since then it has been used for countless baptisms. [3] Salem Methodist Church was one of the churches that used the river for Saturday revivals and Sunday baptisms.

Methodist and Baptist were the most popular denominations in the county throughout the middle decades of the nineteenth century. In 1867, seven ministers served the thirteen Methodist churches located in the eastern half of Macon County. Eleven Baptist ministers ministered to eight churches in the eastern half of the county. The only Presbyterian churches in the county were located in and around Franklin. The number of both Methodist and Baptist churches increased throughout the period, congregations expanded or groups splintered from more central bodies and new churches were constructed throughout the county. By 1872, at least twenty-eight churches served the county.[4]

One of these churches was Salem Methodist Church located in the Cullasaja community. The Cullasaja community boundary begins five miles southeast of Franklin and extends along the Cullasaja River to Crows Branch, the beginning of the Pine Grove community, a distance of about three miles. The valley in which Cullasaja is located was surveyed and sold by the state in 1820. During the early European settlement years, in the 1840s, the entire Cullasaja town area was owned by Daniel Bryson, a captain in the Revolutionary War; later it was owned by John Angel. Among the earliest settlers of the Cullasaja community were Silas McDowell, Pleasant Watkins, Alexander Standfield, Joseph Bryson, John Ledford, John Jacobs and Alexander Bell. Most of these came from Virginia. The Hollands, Watkins, Bells, Stanfields, Crisps, Angels, McGuires and many more moved into the Cullasaja community during this period and many of these families still call Cullasaja their home.[5] Many public services in the area were established by these families including Salem Methodist Church. Some local businesses established during this time included the Post Office and the General Store. Through the efforts of John Jacobs, the Cullasaja Post Office was established in 1868. He became the first Postmaster, a position he held for thirteen years, resigning in 1881. [6]

The first school in the Cullasaja community was established in the 1860s and was located in a one-room building near Corundum Hill, which was at one time the world's largest corundum mine and is located at the

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[3] The Macon County Historic Society, Inc. *The Heritage of Macon County 7/26/1922 to 9/8/1991.* Jessie Sutton, 1992, 81:140

[4] Branson, Rev. L., *North Carolina Business Directory, 1867- 1868*, p. 68; Rev. L. Branson, *North Carolina Business Directory* (1872), pp. 141-142.

[5] Bryson, Mrs. C. T. (now Mrs. Fred Slagle), Oral History, 1960. Mrs. Vernon Bryson and Mrs. Elma Russell, revised in September 1976. Transcript, Macon County Historical Society, Franklin, North Carolina.

[6] Branson, Rev. L., *North Carolina Business Directory, 1877 and 1878.* Raleigh: L. Branson, 1878, p.182; Ibid, *North Carolina Business Directory, 1884.* Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1884, pp. 428-429; Ibid, *North Carolina Business Directory, 1896.* Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1896, p. 392.

southeast end of the community, about one mile from Salem Methodist Church. Since the operation of the mill interfered with the school, a local resident named Dr. Lucas built another school on top of a hill across the river from the old one. This was a one-room building with a fireplace at one end and served as a "Meeting House," as well as a school. It is unknown what happened to this "Meeting House."

Two prominent members of the local community donated the land for the first Salem Methodist Church: Joseph L. Byers Bryson and Alfred Angel. Joseph L. Byers Bryson was born 1820 and eventually settled near the Cullasaja River after homesteading land nearby for a few years at $0.25 per acre. The Bryson family later purchased land from John Angel and moved near the mouth of Nick-a-Jack Creek, located just north of Salem Methodist Church. [7]

Salem Methodist Church is the second oldest church building in Macon County and has continuously occupied its church grounds longer than any other church in the county. The first Salem Methodist Church building was constructed circa 1830. Some families of the Cullasaja community erected a one-room, log church on the site of the current cemetery, which is located southwest of the church on a separate property.[8] Describing that first church, some individuals suggested that it was little more than a timber lean-to.[9] No one is certain of the fate of the first primitive Salem Methodist Church in Cullasaja community. In August of 1857, in order to fulfill the need for another Salem Methodist Church building, residents Joseph Bryson and Alfred Angel presented land to trustees "P. H. P Watkins, Silas McDowell, W. I. G. Stanfield, J. K. Gray, and H. Carpenter and their successors in office forever in trust that they shall erect and build or cause to be erected and built a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South ascending to the Rules and Discipline which from time to time may be agreed upon, and adopted by the ministers and ministers of said Church at their general conferences and further trust and confidence that they shall at all times here after permit such ministers and ministers belonging to the said church and shall from time to time be already authorized by the General conferences of the ministers and ministers of the said authorized Episcopal church south or by the annual general conferences authorized by the general conference to preach on Episcopal God's Holy word therein....."[10] The church that was built on that plot of land in 1857, which is located just south of the current cemetery property, burned down sometime before 1875. It is unknown if this 1857 church had a burial ground, but it has not been documented to date. In 1875, Wayne Jacob's mother gave the land for a cemetery where the burned church formerly stood. Salem Methodist Church was rebuilt in 1875 at the current location northeast of the current cemetery on additional land donated by Jane Beal Bryson, who was Joseph Bryson's mother. [11]

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[7] Bryson, Mrs. C. T. (now Mrs. Fred Slagle), oral History 1960. Mrs. Vernon Bryson and Mrs. Elma Russell, revised in September 1976. Transcript, Macon County Historical Society, Franklin, North Carolina.
[8] Calhoun, Ceighton Lee, Jr., *Old Southern Apples*. McDonald and Woodward, 1996.
[9] Calhoun, Ceighton Lee, Jr., *Old Southern Apples*. McDonald and Woodward, 1996.
[10] Macon County Register of Deeds. Alfred B. Angel and Joseph B. Bryson to P. H. P Watkins, Silas McDowell, W. I. G. Stanfield, J. K. Gray, and H. Carpenter, August 14, 1857. Book CRP S-33 pp. 1226-1228.
[11] The Macon County Historic Society, Inc. *The Heritage of Macon County 7/26/1922 to 9/8/1991*. Jessie Sutton,1992, 93:146.

After the third Salem Methodist Church was built, in 1875, a minister by the name of Hull and his wife, who were missionaries, held a service in the church every Sunday at 2 PM. After Hull died, his wife continued to lead the services until her death, which occurred shortly after her husband's. After the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Hull, a traveling minister, known as Mr. Greene held services. [12] There were other traveling ministers after that at Salem Methodist Church. All ministers spoke to a congregation of, at most, about fifty to seventy parishioners, the most that could be seated comfortably in the small space.[13]

The records of Salem Methodist Church have been lost, creating some question as to why exactly the congregation declined from a healthy number for a rural setting to a number that lead to the loss of even the assignment of a traveling minister to the church by 1961.[14] According to local residents and former congregation members, the congregation aged, moved away, or began attending other local churches. There was an effort for two years after this initial closure to report membership, as some church members continued to convene at the church for Sunday worship with lay ministers.[15] The existing conference records show that in 1928 the church had 45 members in its congregation. In 1930, the member count dropped to 40 and in 1931 the church had only 25 members. One of the many reason for the church membership decline was that in 1926 the Cullasaja Assembly of God formed a church less than one mile from the Salem Methodist Church, which attracted several members of Salem Methodist Church to their congregation. It is unclear what happened to that 1926 Cullasaja Assembly of God church building, but the church was rebuilt three miles further south in 1982. In 1959, the Salem Methodist Church property and membership has been assigned by the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church to the Franklin Methodist Church in Franklin.[16] From 1950 through 1970 there continued to be a gradual decline in membership until in 1962, there were only nine members and six of them were attending the Franklin Methodist Church, leaving only three full time members. [17] In 1963, The Reverend Mark Rose Junior held discussions with the Franklin Methodist Church regarding his leading worship for the

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[12] Bryson, Mrs. C. T. (now Mrs. Fred Slagle), Oral History, 1960. Mrs. Vernon Bryson and Mrs. Elma Russell, revised in September 1976. Transcript, Macon County Historical Society, Franklin, North Carolina.

[13] Journal of Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1952, Lake Junaleska, North Carolina, Tables, Waynesville District, Charles D. White, ed.

[14] Journal of Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1961, Lake Junaleska, North Carolina, Tables, Waynesville District, Charles D. White, ed.

[15] Journal of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1965, Lake Junaleska, North Carolina, Tables, Waynesville District, Charles D White, ed.

[16] Journal of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1959, Lake Junaleska, North Carolina, Tables, Waynesville District, Charles D. White, ed.

[17] Stoudemire, Danita. Features Editor. "Old Salem Church Still Used by the Cullasaja Community." *The Franklin Press* (Franklin, North Carolina), August 15, 2003.

Salem Methodist Church. However, that idea was rejected by those at the Franklin Methodist Church, thus effectively ending all preaching ministry at the Salem Methodist Church. [18] In 1972 the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church officially declared the Salem United Methodist Church, as it was then known, discontinued. [19] In 1975, the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church declared Salem United Methodist Church closed after an unsuccessful search for a church caretaker. [20] Starting in 1976, the Cullasaja Community Club leased the property from the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, and then on June 4, 2010, the property was deeded to the Cullasaja Community Club.[21] The first Cullasaja Community Organization was begun in 1952, but while the present Highway 64 East was being built the organization did not meet. In 1975, residents felt the need to reorganize and started up the Cullasaja Community Club that began meeting in Salem United Methodist Church in 1976.[22] Today, there are plans to renovate the building and use it as a meeting place for community groups.

There are only two churches currently active in the Cullasaja community. The Sugarfork Baptist Church is located two-and-a-half miles northeast of Salem Methodist Church. It was organized in 1836 and the current church structure was built sometime in the 1890s.[23] The other active church is the Cullasaja Assembly of God Church, which is located about three miles south of Salem Methodist Church. It was organized in 1926 and its current church structure was built in 1982.[24] The Salem Methodist church was built in 1875 and was one of the more active churches in the area for many years. However, it ceased to function as a church in the mid-1960s and the building was left unused until 1976 when the Cullasaja Community Club began using it.[25]

Architectural Context

In communities across the country, including those in North Carolina, during the early to mid-1800s, groups and individuals who had strong ties to national ideological or business networks were the principal patrons of the picturesque style of architecture, of which Gothic Revival was the foremost style beginning in the 1840s.

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[18] Journal of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1965, Lake Junaleska, North Carolina, Tables, Waynesville District, Charles D. White, ed.
[19] Spaine, Nancy. Letter to Frances Johnson from Nancy Spaine, Assistant Archivist for the Commission on Archives and History and Conference Historical Society Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. July 13, 2010
[20] Western North Carolina Conference MAE-17 page 153 June 7, 1975.
[21] The Board of Trustees, Western North Carolina Conference, United Methodist Church, Inc. to Cullasaja Community Club. Macon County Register of Deeds Book CRP S-33 pp. 1226-1228.
[22] *Franklin Press* (Franklin, North Carolina) "Cullasaja Remodels Old Salem Methodist Church," 4-22-82.
[23] http://www.higdonfamily.org/photos/places/sugarfork.html. The Higden Family Association, Inc. website. Accessed August 29, 2012.
[24] http://www.cullasajaag.org/?TargetPage=3C2643F9-1E10-449E-89E2-E2C504F5BF7C Cullasaja Assembly of God website. Accessed August 29, 2012.
[25] The Macon County Historic Society, Inc. *The Heritage of Macon County 7/26/1922 to 9/8/1991.* Jessie Sutton, 1992, 93:140-150.

The Gothic Revival style was introduced in Episcopal church architecture in the 1830s and 1840s and spread quickly to other denominations.[26]

In 1848 the growth of the church in Western North Carolina prompted the construction of one of the first Gothic Revival-style churches in the area, located in Wilkesboro. St. Paul's Episcopal Church was a small brick building that epitomized ecclesiological tenets in its steep roof topped with crosses and its deep, well-defined chancel. Designed by its minister, a student at a nearby Valle Crucis seminary established by Bishop Levi Silliman Ives, St Paul's gained praise in 1851 for its "very satisfactory liturgical arrangement" from the *New York Ecclesiologist*. Many called it the "extreme of the Gothic style." [27]

By the mid-1850s the special associations of the Gothic Revival style with the Episcopal church had begun to dissipate. As early as 1846, the central-tower, decorated Gothic church type had been adopted by other church architects throughout North Carolina. Urban and rural churches of every denomination built brick, frame, and stone churches in the Gothic style.[28] In the late 1850s, Baptists and Presbyterians in Wilmington, Raleigh, and Rowan County, among others, were building Gothic Revival Churches. By 1860, the Gothic style had become the stylistic choice within the religious, as well as the architectural mainstream. [29]

The vernacular form of this style became the most commonly seen in church architecture, especially among rural communities. The vernacular style provided a cost savings in regards to the materials and craftsmanship required to achieve the Gothic Revival style of architecture. This was because the vernacular Gothic Revival style had only a few Gothic details, usually pointed arch windows and a front facing gable with wooden trim, adapting specific Gothic elements to light-frame construction. Other typical elements of this style included the use of Gothic-arch windows, often in stained glass, steeply pitched roofs, and exterior walls built of brick, stucco, stone, or board and batten.[30] The invention of the scroll saw and mass-produced wood moldings allowed a few of these structures to mimic the florid fenestration of the High Gothic. However, in most cases these vernacular Gothic buildings were relatively unadorned.

Even though many churches in the early years of the twentieth century were built in the more popular classical revival styles, the Gothic Revival "...never lost its hold on church architecture...."[31] This was a style that served the basic needs of many congregations. This style was so universal that "...the most stylized renditions of its elements, a pointed arch, a pointed headed door or window, a tower, became standard indictors of a church...."[32] The Methodist church in the mid- to late nineteenth century was no exception to this stylistic

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[26] Stanton, Phoebe B., *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture: An Episode in Taste 1840 to 1856*. The John Hopkins Press 1968. p. 332.
[27] Bishir, Catherine W., *North Carolina Architecture*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990, p. 287.
[28] Bishir, Catherine W. *North Carolina Architecture*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990, p. 390.
[29] Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990, p. 287.
[30] Stanton, Phoebe B., *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture: An Episode in Taste 1840 to 1856*, The John Hopkins Press 1968, 332.
[31] Bishir, Catherine W. *North Carolina Architecture*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990, p. 390.
[32] Argintar, Sybil. "Thomas Chapel AME Zion Church". National Register Nomination, 2008.

trend. Rural community churches such as Salem Methodist Church were most often simple wood-frame structures with minimal embellishment that reflected the modest resources of the community. Salem Methodist Church clearly exemplifies this trend, displaying allusions to the Gothic Revival through the use of basic forms and certain motifs. For example, in the four windows of the side walls, the use of two-light pointed transoms with louvered wood shutters on the exterior was a less expensive alternative to the more high-style Gothic arch window. The basic form of the church, with a small entry vestibule and bell tower, was also typical of the style. The interior of the church is an open sanctuary with an angled wooden ceiling, dark stained pointed window surrounds, dark stained wooden flooring and plain white walls. The tower is open on all four sides to expose the bell just below the pyramidal roof cap, emphasizing the verticality of the tower.

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GEOGRAPHIC DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the accompanying Macon County tax map and corresponds to Parcel 0301992 (Cullasaja Community Center).

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the acreage historically associated with Salem Methodist Church.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Salem Methodist Church

Franklin vicinity, Macon County, North Carolina

Hillary Cole, photographer

July 14, 2012

1. Façade, looking northeast

2. Side elevation, looking northwest

3. Side elevation, looking southeast

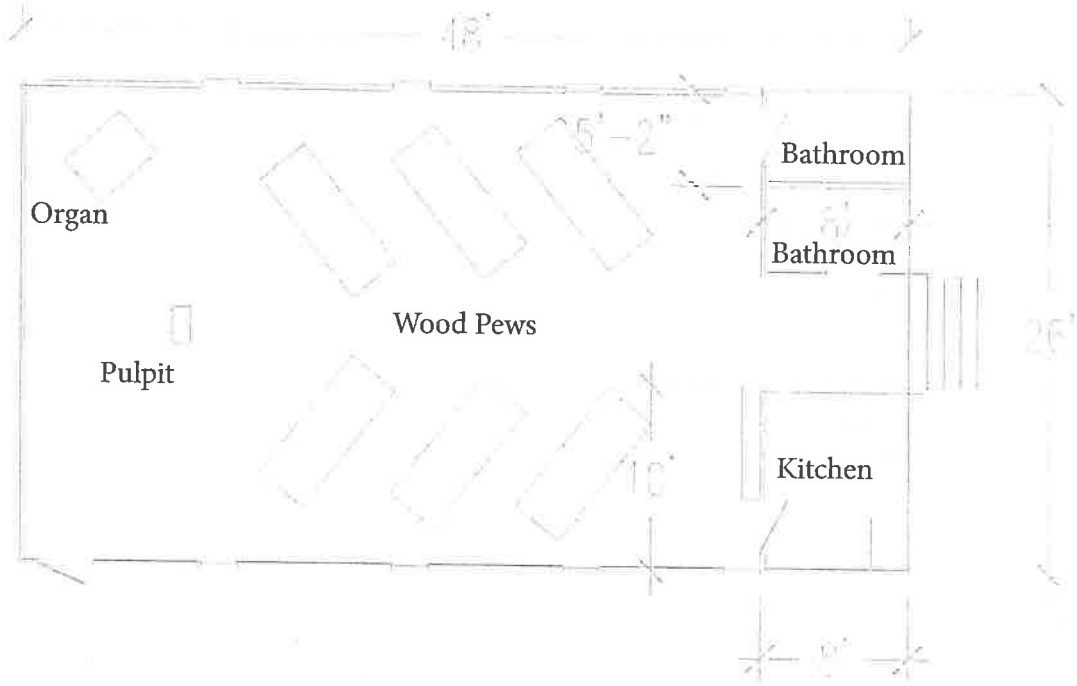
4. Rear elevation, looking north

5. Interior, looking southwest

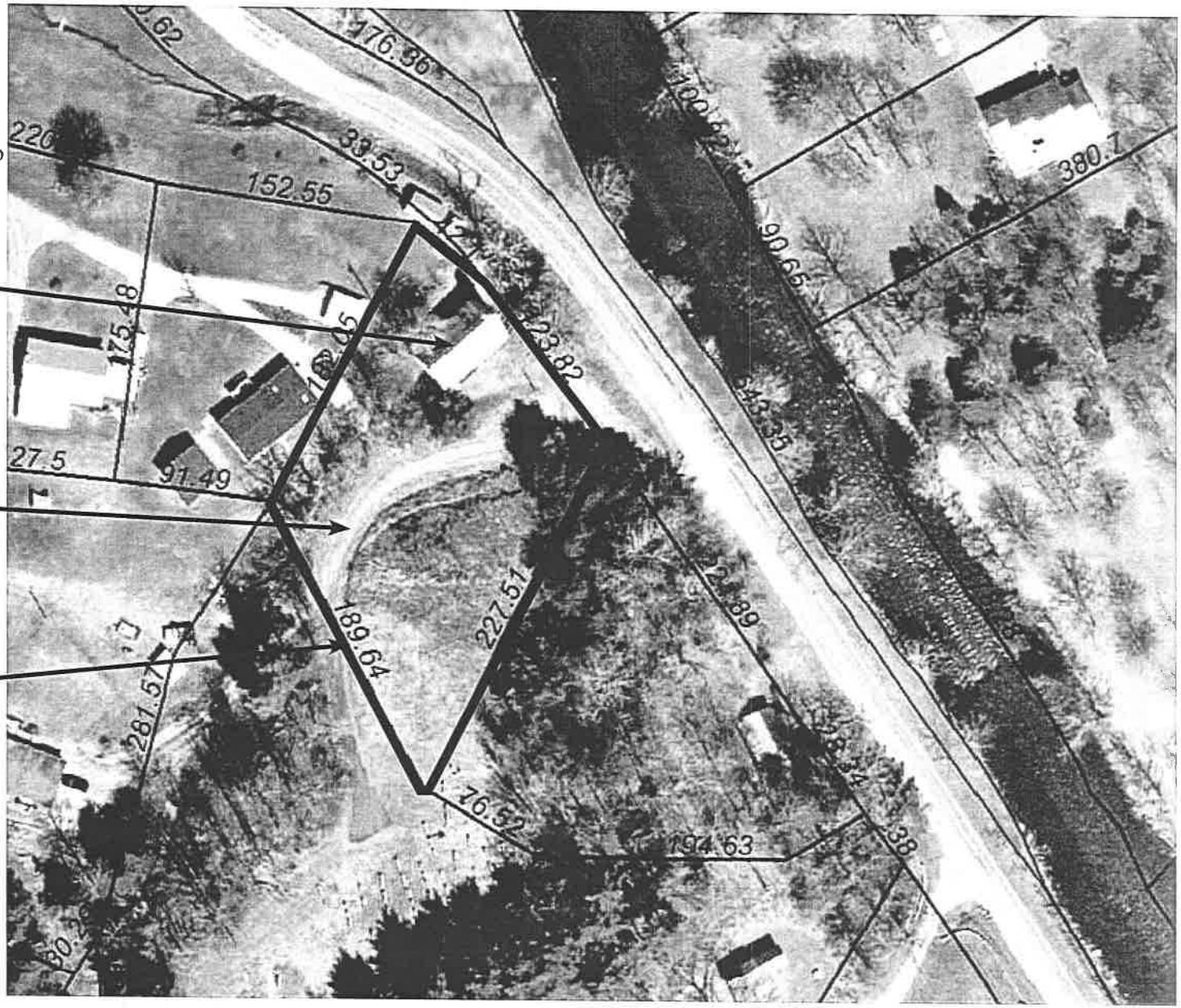
6. Interior, looking northeast

7. Interior, looking east

Salem Methodist Church
1201 River Road, Cullasaja, Macon County, North Carolina (Franklin vicinity)
Floor Plan



Salem Methodist Church
1201 River Road, Cullasaja, Macon County, North Carolina
Tax Map and Site Plan (Franklin vicinity)



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RIVER — CULLASAJA — Porter — Dowdle Knob — ANGEL CEM — Mashburn Branch Sch — Bryson Knob — Salem Ch — Salem Sch — BM A 55 2107 — Jacobs Knob — Corundum Hill — SUGAR FORK — Guy Knob — Clark Chapel Sch — Clark Chapel — Mill Creek — Howes — Fulcher Br — Ammons Knob — DDS 19 3546 — Buzzard Knob — Dills Knob — Pine Grove Ch — Pine Grove Sch — Gneiss — Mile 10 — Buck Cr — BM LHT 1668 2115 — ELLIJAY — Stonefield Br — Nicholson — Arnold — Scott — Mashburn — Cove — Bryson — Zachariah — Corundum Hill Br — Walnut — Moses — Fredonia Camp — Higdon — Ellijay — Arnold — Scott — Nicholson — Stonefield Br — Zachariah — Bryson — Mashburn — Cove — Corundum Hill Br — Walnut — Moses — Fredonia Camp — Higdon — Ellijay — Arnold — Scott — Nicholson — Stonefield Br — Zachariah — Bryson — Mashburn — Cove — Corundum Hill Br — Walnut — Moses — Fredonia Camp — Higdon — Ellijay

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