

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 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. 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 Worth's Chapel

other names/site number Creston United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number 175 Three Top Road not for publication N/A

city or town Creston vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Ashe code 009 zip code 28615

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey A. Crowe SHPO 8/15/05
Signature of certifying official 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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u> </u> entered in the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined eligible for the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

Worth's Chapel
Name of Property

Ashe County, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

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.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Religion Sub: religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Religion Sub: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic

Romanesque

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

roof asphalt

walls wood/shingle

vinyl

other metal

Narrative Description

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

Worth's Chapel
Name of Property

Ashe County, North Carolina
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

(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 a grave.

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

1902

Significant Dates

1902

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

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: _____

Worth's Chapel
Name of Property

Ashe County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 1.5 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
1 17 444340 403550
2 _____

Zone Easting Northing
3 _____
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 Rose Ellen Farrington/Chairman, Board of Trustees; Ann V. Swallow, National Register Coord., NCHPO

organization Creston United Methodist Church date April 28, 2005

street & number 976 Three Top Road telephone 336-385-4475

city or town Creston state NC zip code 28615

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Creston United Methodist Church Trustees

street & number 976 Three Top Road telephone 336-385-4475

city or town Creston state NC zip code 28615

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Worth's Chapel
Ashe County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 1

Description

Exterior

Worth's Chapel (now Creston United Methodist Church) is located at the intersection of Highway 88 and Three Top Road about three-fourth miles from the Creston Post Office, thirteen miles from the town of West Jefferson and twenty-seven miles from the town of Boone. The building is a square, frame building covered in vinyl siding on the lower walls, approximately forty feet by forty feet set on a stacked unfilled foundation of gray field stones. Set into the top course of this foundation near the front entrance is a cornerstone, engraved with the words "**WORTHS CHAPEL ESTABLISHED 1852.**" This cornerstone was brought from the original chapel across the road to the present church. A small lean-to furnace room is built onto the eastern end of the church.

There is a large paved parking lot between the church and the Creston fire department building located to the south. The church sits on a lawn that also serves as a parking lot. Behind the church is a newly-built fellowship hall building. The hall is located outside the boundaries of the nominated property. The only other house in close proximity to the church sits on a hill above it to the north. This house is barely visible through the trees. The church is relatively isolated from the rest of the community. The church faces south toward a gravel road that runs between the church and the fire department building. With the exception of a small area of flowers planted around the church sign, there are no cultivated plants on the church property. A church sign listing the name of the church, establishment date, and time of service is mounted in a rock base just off the southwest corner.

The building is a simple square shape with the entrance façade facing north. The west wall and the north wall are almost identical; each has a large pointed arch window flanked by stained-glass, one-over-one sash windows. The large arched façade window still has the original stained glass. The west wall arched window has clear glass. The north side of the building has a wall with two small memorial stained-glass windows set far apart. The east side has a projecting chancel bay with two stained-glass memorial windows in it. There is another stained glass memorial window to the side of the chancel. As these memorial windows were added the stained glass from them was used to replace glass that had been lost from the sash windows. The roof is hip shaped and steep, with lower cross gables above the large pointed arch windows.

The building has the distinctive characteristics of the Gothic Revival style from the Victorian era. Some Romanesque Revival features are also incorporated into the structure. On the northwest corner, the Romanesque Revival style influence is seen in a tall corner tower. In the top part of this tower is an enclosed belfry. The belfry is buttressed on all four corners with round pinnacles reminiscent of Romanesque design. The four turrets and the belfry have polygonal shaped metal roofs and decorative finials. The tower contains the main entryway

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Worth's Chapel
Ashe County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 2

into the church. Two large, five-panel, double doors are centered in the north wall of the tower. A gabled hood above the doors provides a cover for the upper landing of the five concrete steps that lead into the church. This hood is supported on each side by wooden two-by-four knee braces. There are metal pipe railings on both sides of the steps.

On the eastern end of the façade, a small entrance porch with a gabled roof provides another entrance into the church. It is decorated with spindles at the eaves. The porch has four-by-four wood posts that support the roof, and three concrete steps lead to the ground.

The Gothic Revival style is seen in the two large pointed arch windows in the middle of the façade and the west wall of the building. It is repeated in two smaller arched windows in the base of the tower and eight pointed windows with slatted openings in the belfry. These slatted windows are placed two on each of the walls of the belfry. The mid-section of the tower has clear one-over-one sash windows on each side.

The steep, hipped, pyramidal roof is covered with gray asphalt shingles. A large finial rises from the peaked center. Cross gables are above the two high arched windows and an additional gable provides space for a projecting chancel on the east side of the structure.

Vinyl siding covers the clapboards around the lower part of the building, but none of the original clapboards were removed. The top section of the tower, the belfry and the turrets are covered with painted, diamond-shaped shingles. A wall band from the top of the rectangular windows to the peak of the arched windows is also covered with diamond-shaped shingles. Dramatic diagonally-placed boards emphasize the pointed shape of the gables above the arched windows and the chancel.

Interior

The interior of the tower contains a small vestibule. This room is entered by a set of large double doors painted white. Entrance into the sanctuary is by another set of similar double doors in medium oak finish. A rope hangs down into the vestibule for ringing the bell in the belfry.

The sanctuary fills the entire main structure. The floor of the sanctuary is medium oak finish wide boards. The floor has never been refinished and the stain is the original one. Some narrow strips of carpet have been added across the back of the sanctuary behind the pews and down the middle aisle to the altar. A recessed chancel is at the front of the room and a small choir area is on a dias to the right. Both the chancel and the choir area are enclosed by a spindled railing.

Chestnut wainscoting covers the walls three feet up from the floor. This same chestnut is used to cap the upper walls of the sanctuary that rise to an open, two-story-high, chestnut paneled ceiling. The windows and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Worth's Chapel
Ashe County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 3

doors are all framed with the clear finished chestnut. None of the woodwork has been altered since 1902. The walls are covered with a white painted fiberboard that replaced a similar covering in the 1950s. Three simple white light fixtures hang from long chains from the ceiling and one fixture is above the pulpit on the wall. This is the only lighting inside the church and the fixtures are the original ones installed when the building was wired for electricity in the 1940s. The building has recently been rewired for safety, but all fixtures were kept and put back in place just as they were.

Massive dark oak curved wooden pews draw the eye toward the front of the church and the altar. The pews are the type used in theater churches in the late nineteenth century. They were purchased from two different churches to replace folding wooden movable chairs in the late 1940s. One of the original sets of three folding chairs was kept and remains in the choir area. There are also two antique dining room Queen Anne chairs in the pulpit area.

One inside light and two outside lights were added to comply with the safety code when the building was rewired in 2002. In the 1950s, the coal stove was removed from the middle aisle and a small one-story, lean-to, cinderblock furnace room was built on the back of the structure. In the early 1950s, the interior lower fiberboard covering of the walls was covered with a similar, thicker fiberboard.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Worth's Chapel
Ashe County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 1

Statement of Significance

Worth's Chapel meets Criterion C and Criterion Consideration A for listing in the National Register of historic Places due to its distinctive, eclectic Gothic Revival style. The 1902 frame corner-towered, church building was constructed using monies willed to the church by the town's wealthiest citizen, David Worth. It is locally significant, and compares favorably to the county's other church buildings from the same time period in terms of its stylistic treatment. Although the lower portion of the exterior walls have been covered with synthetic siding, the building's noteworthy architectural design and exterior and interior detailing has very good integrity.

Historical Background

"Known as North Fork until 1882 for its site along that branch of the New River, Creston was a center of rural enterprise through the nineteenth century that included a major regional store, grist- and sawmills, a tannery, a wool carding operation, and a furniture and wagon factory. All were ventures of David Worth, a Quaker from Guilford County who came to Ashe County as a young man about 1830. He formed a partnership with storekeeper Stephen Thomas, in time marrying Thomas's daughter and raising a big family." (Bishir, p. 206) A small dam located on Three Top Creek above the village supplied water power for running these businesses. Worth and T. J. Lillard operated the carriage factory in a large frame building. Farming was Alexander McEwan and Zachariah Baker were prosperous farmers and livestock owners with large land holdings. Other small farms were scattered among the adjoining hillsides.

In 1852, David Worth, Alexander McEwan, a Presbyterian; Zachariah Baker and Stephen Thomas both Methodists, decided their thriving community needed a church. They worked together to establish and build Worth's Chapel located at the end of the village near the river. The church was not associated with the religion of any of the four men and all villagers worshipped there together. According to a local history of the church, Worth's wife and daughters liked to walk to church, and the road between Worth's house and the church was muddy. Worth had a board walkway constructed to the church, thereby providing a sidewalk for part of the village.

David Worth died in 1888 and in his will he left land on which to build a new church. Bank stock was left also, and the income from it was to be used to pay a minister. The will specified the land and the bank stock be left to the Holston South Methodist Conference. With the land at their disposal, assurance of money to pay a pastor, and plenty of donated materials, the villagers spared no effort in erecting a new church. In 1902 the present church was completed. A photograph taken the day of the church dedication depicts a very large congregation gathered in front of the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Worth's Chapel
Ashe County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 2

In the early 1900s, commerce became more prevalent in other areas of the county, and the village began to lose its prominence. Businesses closed or moved elsewhere, and many of the villagers moved away. The old church was used for a school for awhile and then torn down. What buildings were not torn down were washed away by the 1940 flood. A house being carried downstream by the current became stuck at the bridge above the church. This directed the flow of water away from the 1902 church and it survived the flood. Worth's substantial residence, one of the largest antebellum houses in northwestern North Carolina, still stands in Creston. The building that housed the store is close to Worth's house. The church, Worth's house and store building, and one other house were all that remained in the center of the village after the flood. The church, now known as the Creston United Methodist Church, still serves the community and descendants of David Worth still attend the church.

Architectural Context

In the Guide to Historic Architecture in Western North Carolina Worth's Chapel is described as "one of the most ambitious rural Gothic Revival churches in the region, a vigorous composition with the upper sections of its massive pinnacled three-stage corner tower enlivened with diamond-patterned shingles." (Bishir, page 206) The Gothic Revival had been a popular architectural style for church buildings since the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the century, with improved sources for pre-cut, mass-produced building materials, Gothic Revival-style churches often were larger in scale and more elaborately decorated, especially those within urban area. Elements from a variety of medieval-inspired styles also may have been incorporated into the church design, and Worth's Chapel exemplifies this eclectic trend in religious building design.

Although no record of an architect being employed to design the church has been found, at the time of its construction, "the Methodists' Board of Church Extension was one of several sources for designs for efficient, attractive, and practical church buildings suited to the worship and ideals of the denomination. These ranged from elaborate towered and domed monuments of brick or stone for prosperous urban congregations to the simple gable-end form for country and village churches." (Bishir, page 206) Further research into the Extension's building designs may reveal whether Worth's Chapel was designed using one of these plans.

Creston's Methodist church stands out in Ashe County as one of the county's most stylistically fashionable rural and village churches. It is distinctive for its eclectic use of both Gothic Revival and Romanesque Revival elements. Nearly square in massing, the building's interior differs from the county's other rectangular-massed churches with its separate foyer in the tower and the broad sanctuary space. The rows of pews are slightly curved, emphasizing the building's square plan.

Gothic style church design among these rural churches is characterized by pointed arch windows, sometimes with tracery sash. In some cases the pointed arch may be as simple as a triangular head over doors and windows. Both of these features are strong elements in the Creston church. The three-tiered corner tower,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Worth's Chapel
Ashe County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 3

however, is the dominant design feature of the lower, hip-roofed church building. The tower's top stage exhibits Romanesque characteristics in its rounded corner pinnacles surrounding the distinctive steep, pyramidal roof. The tower is partially wrapped in sharply-pointed shingles, and this wall treatment continues on the upper section of the exterior walls and on a rear and side roof gable. Originally the lower walls were clapboarded, and the wood siding has been covered with beveled vinyl siding. Nevertheless, the various treatments of the exterior walls – sharp, needle-like shingles, diagonal flush boards in the front gables, and the horizontal siding on the lower walls are indicative of the picturesque esthetic of this time period.

The craftsmanship of the church is displayed in the arched, tracery windows, the high, chestnut tongue and groove wooden beamed ceiling, and the two sets of huge, handmade double doors leading into the church and sanctuary. Wooden wainscoting, the turned balustrade separating the dias from the seating area, and the opalescent stained-glass windows further distinguish the interior.

Ashe County has many rural churches dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, however, most are simple, gable-front churches with few, if any, decorative details. Only a handful of them are similar to Worth's Chapel in terms of their floor plan or the exterior massing and finishes. Grassy Creek Methodist Church of 1904 (Grassy Creek Historic District, NR, 1976) is comparable to the Creston church, with its pyramidal-roofed corner tower, partially shingled exterior walls, and nearly square interior space. Turn-of-the-century churches in Warrentonville and Fleetwood also have touches of the Gothic Revival style, but are much less elaborate than the Creston church. The Warrentonville Methodist church has also been wrapped in synthetic siding, obscuring any decorative work. Worth's Chapel is one of Ashe County's most important Gothic Revival churches – certainly the most ornate of the rural structures.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Worth's Chapel
Ashe County, North Carolina

Section number 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Worth's Chapel
Ashe County, North Carolina

Section number 10 Page 1

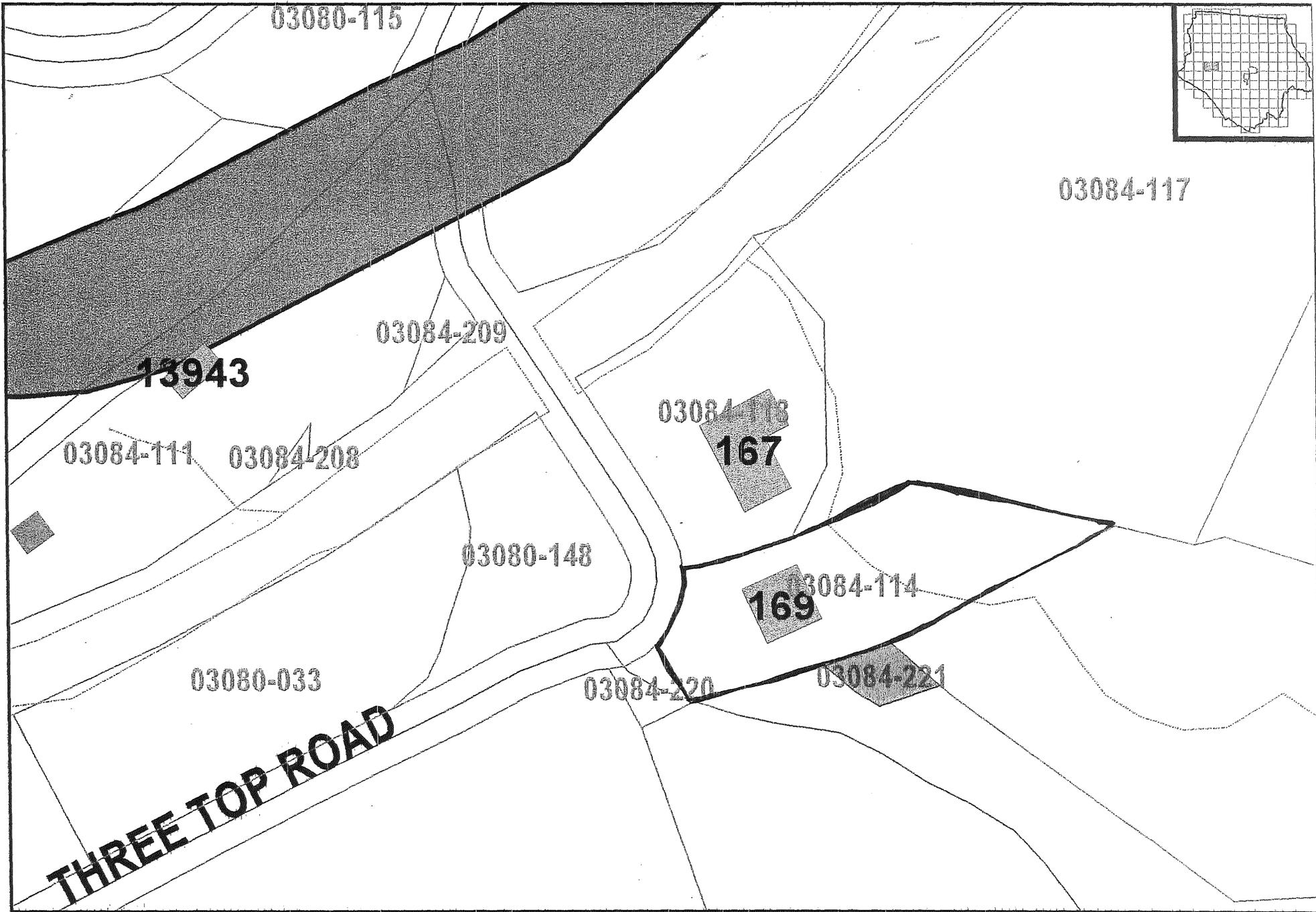
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area, approximately one and one half acres, is Parcel # 03084-114 on Map 2928 Block 95, Lot 1366 on the Ashe County NC Tax Parcel Data Map. The deed is found in Deed Book, A-4 Page 206 at the Office of the Register of Deeds in the Ashe County Courthouse.

Boundary Justification.

This property is the land historically associated with Worth's Chapel which has retained its historic integrity. The nominated property excludes .75 of an acre originally part of the church property. This land (Parcel #03084-118, lot 1504) was deeded to the Creston Volunteer Fire Dept in 1975 and recorded in Deed Book T-5, Page 0068. A firehouse has been constructed on the property.



03080-115

03084-117

03084-209

13943

03084-113

167

03084-111

03084-208

03080-148

169

03084-114

03080-033

03084-220

03084-221

THREE TOP ROAD

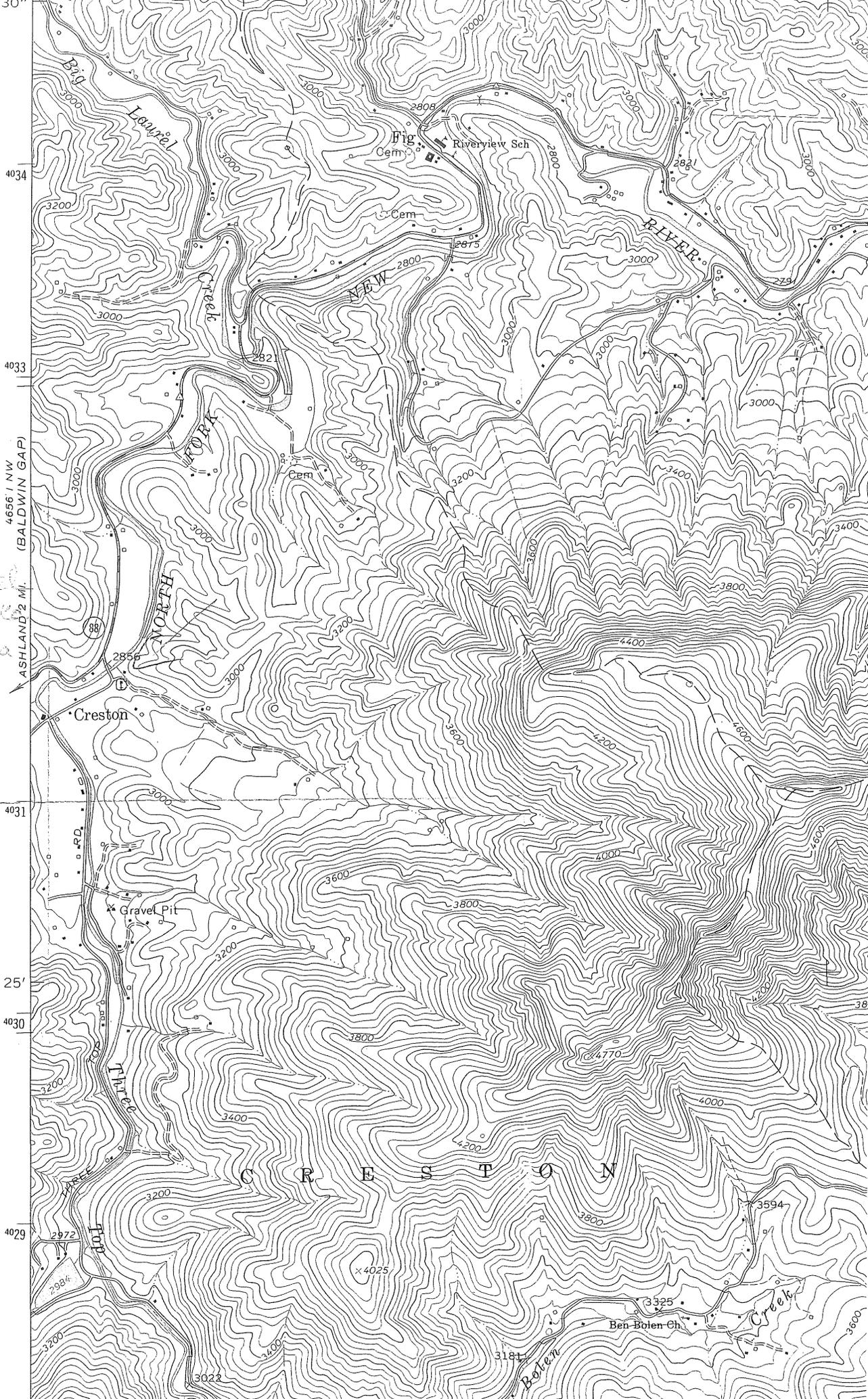


**WORTH'S CHAPEL
CRESTON, ASHE COUNTY, NC
NR BOUNDARY**

1 in. = 100.0 feet



27'30"



4656 / NW (BALDWIN GAP)

ASHLAND 2 MI.

North's Chapel
Creston, Ash Co
North Carolina
zone 17

E: 444340

N 4031550

Warrensville
quad

4034

4033

4031

25'

4030

4029

CRESTON

x4025

3594

3325

3181

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2972

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2808

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