

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic St. Frances Methodist Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number N. Side NC 308 .2 mi. W of jct. w/SR 1145 not for publication

city, town Lewiston vicinity of congressional district 1

state North Carolina code 37 county Bertie code 015

3. Classification

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Elizabeth City District, N.C. Methodist Conference

street & number Post Office Box 1662

city, town Elizabeth City vicinity of state North Carolina 27907

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bertie County Courthouse

street & number King Street

city, town Windsor state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

| | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> original site | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved | date 1896, approx. one mile; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | | 1966, approx. twenty feet. |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Frances Methodist Church faces the east side of NC Highway 308 in the village of Lewiston, and is situated approximately sixty feet from the road on a half-acre lot. Two large trees frame the entrance to the church while several other large trees are randomly placed about the yard. The churchyard is adjoined on the north and east by private residences, and on the south by a vacant lot.

The rectangular sanctuary, three bays deep and two wide, is covered by a pedimented gable roof. Entrance to the church is through a three-bay projecting narthex at the west end of the sanctuary. The narthex is surmounted by a two-story tower topped by an octagonal steeple covered with patterned wooden shingles. The first stage of the tower contains one window of nine-over-nine sash; the second stage has a louvred opening with a pediment on all four sides. The large windows of the sanctuary are of six-over-six sash with lites of frosted glass. The exterior fenestration is trimmed with simple symmetrical molding with slightly pointed lintels.

The corners of the buildings are emphasized by paneled pilasters, with molded bases and caps, which support a wide three-part architrave around the building. Large scrollwork brackets appear in the architrave only on the facade of the church and on the tower.

The interior of the church retains its original Greek Revival woodwork. Two doorways lead from the narthex into the sanctuary; typical Greek Revival doors of two vertical molded panels have surrounds of symmetrical trim with large paneled centerblocks. Above each doorway is a window, with eight-over-eight sash and original glass, which opens from the slave gallery overlooking the sanctuary.

A high molded baseboard encircles the sanctuary. The windows and doors are trimmed with symmetrical fluted molding with plain bases and cornerblocks; molded panels appear beneath the windows. Three fluted Doric columns support the slave gallery with a paneled parapet railing. A doorway on the north side of the exterior leads to the enclosed stairway of the slave gallery.

The twenty-one pews, with square paneled ends, are divided into three ranges by the two aisles leading from the doorways. The raised pulpit is delineated by a semi-circular altar rail with turned balusters terminating at each end with a heavy turned newel.

The only apparent changes to the church date from 1966 when the building was moved back from the street. At that time the church received a concrete block foundation, and the ceiling was lowered approximately two feet; acoustical tiles replaced a ceiling of narrow beaded sheathing. The frosted glass of the windows was installed at some undetermined time.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900– | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates 1845 **Builder/Architect** Thomas Bragg

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Frances Methodist Church was organized and built in 1845. Originally located in Woodville on land donated by Humphrey H. Hardy, the church was moved a short distance to Lewiston in 1896. The church was named in honor of Mrs. Frances S. Pugh of Woodville, who willed \$1,000 for the construction of the church. According to one local source, the contractor for the building was Thomas Bragg, a well-known antebellum builder from Warrenton, North Carolina. The exterior of the church features a projecting narthex with a two-stage tower and octagonal steeple, and is trimmed with scrollwork brackets. Handsomely detailed Greek Revival woodwork distinguishes the interior, with fluted Doric columns supporting a slave gallery. The original pews, pulpit furniture, and organ are still in place.

Criteria:

- A. Associated with the protestant religious life and customs of a small antebellum plantation community of eastern North Carolina.
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a church structure built to accomodate the needs of the protestant Methodist denomination which flourished in eastern North Carolina. The church is also a handsome and well-detailed example of Greek Revival architecture as built by Warren County builder Thomas Bragg.
- D. Is likely to yield information important in local religious history.

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St. Frances Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1845 with forty-six members, many coming from the membership of the Robbins Chapel Methodist Church.¹ Robbins Chapel was located about four miles from the villages of Hotel and Turner's Crossroads, now known as Woodville and Lewiston, respectively. The residents of those villages desired a more conveniently located church, so the congregation sold the Robbins Chapel structure to a black congregation and organized a new church.² In September, 1845, Humphrey H. Hardy of Woodville, being "desirous of promoting the cause of Religion among the Citizens of the County . . . and in particular among those residing near him," deeded to the church trustees three acres of land on the road between Woodville and Lewiston.³ Hardy's deed stipulated that the trustees "shall erect and build -- or cause to be erected and built -- thereon a house or place of Worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."⁴ The new church building was made possible when Mrs. Frances S. Pugh of Woodville willed \$1,000 to Humphrey H. Hardy and Thomas J. P. Smallwood, trustees, for the erection of "a church of worship of almighty God according to the form of the Methodist Episcopal Church."⁵ Mrs. Pugh also left \$500 for a parsonage for the circuit minister, but this was located in Hertford County.⁶ The newly organized church was named St. Frances in honor of Mrs. Pugh.

According to the memoirs written in 1894 by Dr. Charles Smallwood, a charter member of the church, St. Frances was built by Thomas Bragg.⁷ Bragg was a successful and well-known Warren County builder during the antebellum period.⁸ Bragg's building activities were evidently far-reaching; in addition to his Bertie County work, it is known that he was involved in the construction of the North Carolina Capital in Raleigh in the 1830s.

The congregation of St. Frances and its handsome church building survived the Civil War and Reconstruction period and prospered. In 1896, after much debate among the members, the church was moved three-quarters of a mile from its Woodville site to Lewiston.⁹ The Lewiston members, who outnumbered the Woodville members, felt the church would be a more effective organization if located in their community. The half-acre lot in Lewiston was purchased from Mr. A. T. Eason.¹⁰ The church cemetery was maintained at the original church site in Woodville.¹¹

In 1966 the church was moved back from the street on its lot about twenty feet. Funds from the Duke Foundation were used to put the church into thorough repair. With an active membership of only nine, services are held in the church once a month. The original Gothic Revival pulpit furniture and altar rail, the pump organ purchased in 1866, and the original pews, are still in use.

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St. Frances survives today as the finest and best preserved church building in Bertie County. Although the exterior exhibits traces of the Italianate style, the interior is perhaps the most sophisticated example of Greek Revival architecture in the county. This quality of work may be explained by the attribution of Thomas Bragg as the builder; as a skillful and well-known regional builder, Bragg could provide a design of greater stylistic sophistication than could the local Bertie County building community.

The structure is, of course, closely related to the surrounding environment. Archeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are 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 probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

Footnotes

¹Diane Hoggard, "St. Frances Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery," 1976, p. 1, unpublished manuscript in the possession of Mrs. Ray Widmer, Lewiston, hereinafter cited as Hoggard, "St. Frances." Mrs. Widmer, the guardian angel of St. Frances, has collected much material on the church which she has shared with the author. Mrs. Widmer received much of her information from Miss Mary Grant Spivey who held possession of the original church records. At Miss Spivey's death, the records were destroyed. Xerox copies of Mrs. Widmer's material can be found in the file on St. Frances, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

²Hoggard, "St. Frances," p. 1; Robbins Chapel is now Mt. Olive Baptist Church.

³Humphrey H. Hardy to Charles W. Jacocks, et al, 23 Sept. 1845, Bertie County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Bertie County Courthouse, Windsor, Book GG, 301, hereinafter cited as Bertie County Deeds.

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⁴ Humphrey H. Hardy to Charles W. Jacocks, et al, 23 Sept. 1845, Bertie County Deeds, Book GG, 301.

⁵ Will of Mrs. Frances S. Pugh, 28 Dec. 1843, probated Feb. 1845, Bertie County Wills, Office of the Clerk of Court, Bertie County Courthouse, Windsor, Book G, 376, hereinafter cited as Bertie County Wills.

⁶ Will of Mrs. Frances S. Pugh, Bertie County Wills, Book G, 376; the trustees named in Mrs. Pugh's will purchased a house for a parsonage in 1848 in Harrellsville, Hertford County, which still stands. See Humphrey H. Hardy and Thomas J. P. Smallwood to William D. Pruden, et al, 24 July 1850, Bertie County Deeds, Book 86, 501.

⁷ "Woodville: Some Early Recollections," (Windsor) Bertie Ledger-Advance, 28 September 1972.

⁸ Bragg was also the father of Gen. Braxton Bragg, C. S. A., John Bragg, U. S. congressman from Alabama, and Thomas Bragg, governor of North Carolina, U. S. senator from North Carolina, and Attorney General of the Confederacy. See William S. Powell, ed., The Dictionary of North Carolina Biography (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979).

⁹ Hoggard, "St. Frances," p. 3.

¹⁰ A. T. Eason to J. M. Ballance, et al, 10 Feb. 1896, Bertie County Deeds, Book 87, 185.

¹¹ The oldest tombstone now remaining dates from 1852; for a compilation of the cemetery records, see Hoggard, "St. Frances," pp. 6-10.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bertie County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Bertie County Courthouse, Windsor.
 Bertie County Wills, Office of the Clerk of Court, Bertie County Courthouse, Windsor.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Woodville

Quadrangle scale: 1: 24000

UMT References

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is a rectangular one-half acre lot bounded on the south by NC 308, an exact description of said lot being found in Bertie County Deed Book 87, 185, and includes the entire property connected with the structure.

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

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marshall Bullock, consultant to the Mid-East Commission

organization Survey & Planning Branch
Archeology & Historic Preservation date August 1980

street & number N.C. Division of Archives & History
109 E. Jones Street telephone 919-733-6545

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 16 October 1980

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Hoggard, Diane. "St. Frances Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery."
Unpublished manuscript, 1976, in the possession of Mrs. Ray Widmer,
Hoggard St., Lewiston, North Carolina.

Powell, William S., ed. The Dictionary of North Carolina Biography.
Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

"Woodville: Some Early Recollections." Bertie Ledger-Advance (Windsor),
28 September 1972.

300

301 12'30"

11 MI TO U.S. 258
KELFORD - MI

5556 II NW
(KELFORD)

304

2405 E 15 W
E 1/4 TO N 1/4 325

10'

306

St. Frances Methodist Church
Lewiston Bertie County

Woodville, NC Quad
Scale: 1:24000
Zone: 18

18 304000/3099640



