

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Falcon Tabernacle

and/or common

2. Location

street & number E side of West Street, 0.05 mi. N of jct. with Culbreth St. not for publication

city, town Falcon vicinity of

state North Carolina code 37 county Cumberland code 51

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name North Carolina Conference  
Pentecostal Holiness Church

street & number P. O. Box 67

city, town Falcon vicinity of state NC 28342

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Register of Deeds, Cumberland County Courthouse

street & number P.O. Box 2039

city, town Fayetteville state NC 27611

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Cumberland County Historic Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Division of Archives and History Survey and Planning Branch

city, town Raleigh state NC 27611

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>Early 1970's</u>

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Falcon Tabernacle: Architectural Description

Occupying a significant place in the general and architectural history of Cumberland County and reminiscent of Orson Squire Fowler's octagon fad of the mid nineteenth century as advocated in his A Home For All, the Falcon Tabernacle is one of only a very few nineteenth century octagon-form buildings in North Carolina and the only known such example of a church. Built in 1898 to resemble a tent, the meeting place was made available by its builder and local religious leader, Julius A. Culbreth, to Holiness groups during its early years. In 1911, an historic merger of the Pentecostal Holiness and Fire-Baptized Holiness Churches resulted in the birth of the present day Pentecostal Holiness Church, at which time the octagonal church or "tabernacle" became the home of an established congregation. The tent-like building -- a true expression of the vernacular -- symbolizes the spiritual awakening so important to members of the Pentecostal Holiness Church.

The building has undergone several changes throughout its history before coming to rest on its present spacious, grassy site. Built as a simple octagon, the church was expanded by the addition of a small portico c. 1943. In 1952, the Culbreth Memorial Church was constructed and the octagonal tabernacle was enclosed within the new building. "Hatched" in a restoration effort in the early 1970s, the tabernacle was moved to its present site. In 1975, it was rededicated in a special commemorative service.

Unique in shape, this one-story frame church exhibits the influence of the late Victorian period. Resting on brick piers, it features board-and-batten siding and a shake roof. Fenestration includes 6/6 sash in the windows which ring the building, as well as replacement double doors at the front entrance. This entrance is protected by a reconstructed diminutive portico with side balustrades which was originally added c. 1935. Its pedimented gable, which has board-and-batten siding in the tympanum and shake shingles on the roof to complement the main building, is supported by tapered square-in-section posts with brick pedestals. Besides the portico, the only other interruption of the basic octagonal shape occurs at the rear which carries a narrow rectangular apse. The exterior is largely unornamented except at the roofline, where a finishing board caps the board-and-batten wall. Separating it from the boxed cornice beneath the eaves is a molding strip which combines both the cyma recta and cyma reversa. The only other exterior accent is a simple wooden finial rising from the apex of the roof.

Maintaining its original features, the interior of the Falcon Tabernacle is defined as a single, open room with a raised chancel. Evidences of the late nineteenth century machine age are apparent in the even, machine-sewn floorboards, the narrow beaded board wainscot along each wall as well as along the face of the pulpit platform, and drop pendants suspended from the ceiling. Artifacts related to the history of the church are scattered about, including an appropriately-designed pulpit whose multi-sided face resembles that of the church building itself and a simple board table with scarf on the main floor in front of it. Pews which replaced old plank benches during the congregation's history have gracefully curved arms and backs, and are arranged in three sections with aisles in between.

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Falcon Tabernacle

Continuation sheet Architectural Description Item number 7 Page 2

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Most of the interior interest is focused on the ceiling. It is spoked into eight sections by means of molding strips which radiate from a simple center medallion with heavy drop pendant. An octagonal "wheel" created by molding strips rings the medallion, and at the intersection of each main spoke with the "wheel" are smaller drop pendants. Old-fashioned lighting fixtures have been installed in each section.

Located on a choice, undeveloped parcel of general church property just a short distance from its original site, the Falcon Tabernacle stands today as an important, tangible reminder of early area Holiness influence as well as the birthplace of the modern-day Pentecostal Holiness Church.

## 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 1898 Builder/Architect Julius A. Culbreth

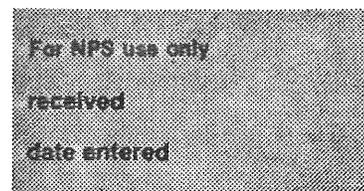
### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Meriting state significance for being a rare example of the octagonal form in North Carolina and the birthplace of the Pentecostal Holiness Church during the consolidation in January 1911 of the Fire Baptized Holiness Association and the Holiness Church, the Falcon Tabernacle was originally constructed in 1898 by Julius A. Culbreth to serve the religious and educational purposes of the small rural community of Falcon. A native of nearby Sampson County who moved to Falcon in the mid 1890s, Culbreth had been so spiritually moved in 1896 by his experiences at local tent revivals that he decided to build for the community this small one-room board-and-batten tabernacle. The Little Tabernacle derives its form directly from the local popularity of tent revivals and typifies a totally vernacular expression of form and function. Serving in various capacities until 1952, the Tabernacle was then incorporated into a new and larger brick church to serve as its apse. The restoration of the tabernacle occurred in the mid 1970s when it was relocated virtually intact a short distance from its original site.

### Criteria assessment:

- A. Associated with the formation of the Pentecostal Holiness Church in 1911 as a result of the consolidation of the Fire Baptized Holiness Association and the Holiness Church.
- B. Associated with Julius A. Culbreth, an important local figure who not only built the Tabernacle but also started in Falcon the Holiness School in 1902 and the Falcon Children's Home, an orphanage, in 1909.
- C. Illustrates a rare example in North Carolina of the octagon form; this simple one-room board-and-batten structure embodies a vernacular interpretation of form and function stemming from locally popular tent revivals.

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The Falcon Tabernacle is located in the rural community of Falcon, in the north-eastern part of Cumberland County. The eight sided building, known locally as the little Tabernacle, was constructed in 1898 by local religious and community leader Julius A. Culbreth. It has served a number of religious and educational purposes for Falcon.

Julius A. Culbreth (1871-1950) was a native of Sampson County but moved to Falcon in the middle 1890s. He was related to a number of locally prominent Methodist ministers. In 1896 he attended a tent revival in Dunn conducted by the Reverend Ambrose Crumpler.<sup>1</sup> Culbreth was deeply moved by the experience and decided to build a religious structure:

I built the Little Tabernacle in octagon shape, to be as much like a tent as I could make it, because our spiritual awakenings and overflowing blessing had come to us through Tent Meetings. The little building was erected in 1898 as a place to have community prayer meetings, absolutely independent of ecclesiastical, sectarian, or denominational narrowness.<sup>2</sup>

The building served as a nondenominational center for community prayer meetings and as a location for traveling ministers to preach to the community for the first decade of its existence. In 1900 the first Falcon Camp Meeting was held under the auspices of Culbreth. The annual event has become one of the largest such gatherings in the south and has made Falcon famous. Culbreth started the Holiness School in Falcon in 1902 and an orphanage, the Falcon Children's Home, in 1909. The Little Tabernacle was used as an organizational headquarters for all of these endeavors, for at least a short period.<sup>3</sup> All three endeavors are still active.

By about 1907 the Little Tabernacle was being used extensively for meetings by two Holiness denominations, the Fire Baptized Holiness Association and the Holiness Church. Both of these denominations were founded in the 1890s and by 1909 "there was a strong feeling among members of both . . . that these two groups should unite. Both were preaching the same biblical truths."<sup>4</sup> Delegates from both denominations met during January of 1911 and on the 31st of that month formally consolidated as the Pentecostal Holiness Church.<sup>5</sup>

The Tabernacle housed the Falcon congregation of the Pentecostal Holiness Church until about 1914 when the Falcon Camp Meeting auditorium was built. Church services were moved to the auditorium while the Little Tabernacle was divided by a partition and used for school classrooms. The first, second, and third grades of the Holiness School met on one side of the partition, while grades four through six met in the other side. A separate building housed the higher grades. The high school burned in 1926 and was replaced by a larger building which could accommodate both the elementary and high school. From 1926 until the early 1930s the tabernacle was used for storage.<sup>6</sup>

In the early 1930s the building was renovated. Under the leadership of the Reverend Major D. Sellars the partition was removed and the altar was rebuilt. In 1943 Ralph R. Johnson became pastor and the building was modernized, with a new furnace, venetian blinds, and a new porch. During this period the building was used for a variety of church functions, including Sunday school. A new church building was constructed in 1952, the Culbreth Memorial Church. The Little Tabernacle was enclosed within and continued to be used for Sunday school and as an educational facility.<sup>7</sup>

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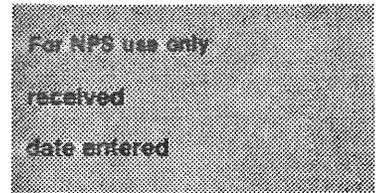
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In the early 1970s members of the Culbreth Memorial Church and the Falcon community became interested in preserving the Little Tabernacle. Under the direction of the Reverend James D. Leggett, who is still minister of the congregation, the building was removed from the larger structure and moved to a two acre lot a short distance away. The building and the lot are both owned by the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. The structure is currently used for meetings but plans call for its eventual use as a repository of church archives.<sup>8</sup>

The Little Tabernacle in spite of its modest size, has played an important role in the religious life of the state and also in the community of Falcon. The Pentecostal Holiness Church was founded in the small building at a time when numerous other Pentecostal denominations were founded. Yet while many of these have withered and died the Pentecostal Holiness Church has grown so that it now encompasses almost 400 congregations in North Carolina, with a cumulative membership of approximately 100,000 in this state. Its worldwide membership is about 600,000.<sup>9</sup> In Falcon the building has served as the spiritual and civic center of the community for eighty years.

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NOTES

<sup>1</sup>V. Mayo Bundy (ed.), A History of Falcon, North Carolina (Charlotte: Herb Eaton, Inc., 1980), 20-22, hereinafter cited as Bundy, A History of Falcon.

<sup>2</sup>Bundy, A History of Falcon, 61.

<sup>3</sup>Bundy, A History of Falcon, 61-63; Evangel, Volume 29, Number 10, October, 1974, hereinafter cited as Evangel.

<sup>4</sup>Evangel.

<sup>5</sup>Evangel; Bundy, History of Falcon, 65-67; Elmer T. Clark, The Small Sects in America (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), 107-108.

<sup>6</sup>Bundy, History of Falcon, 68-70; Fayetteville Observer, September 14, 1976.

<sup>7</sup>Bundy, History of Falcon, 68-70; Fayetteville Observer, September 14, 1976; Telephone interview with the Reverend James D. Leggett, August 20, 1982, notes in file, hereinafter cited as Leggett interview.

<sup>8</sup>Leggett interview; Evangel; Bundy, History of Falcon, 71-74.

<sup>9</sup>Leggett interview.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 2 acres

Quadrangle name Wade

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	7	7	1	4	1	5	0	3	8	9	6	8	6	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

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D 

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E 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Part of Subdivision 1845, Map 163-4, Black River Township (part of the Falcon Children's Home property, P. O. Box 37, Falcon, North Carolina, 23842) as outlined in red on map.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

Architectural Description: Linda Jasperse, Principal Investigator  
name/title Historical Background: Jim Sumner, Research Branch

organization Division of Archives and History date November 19, 1982

street & number 109 E. Jones St. telephone 1-919-733-6545

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. Pin, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date June 2, 1983

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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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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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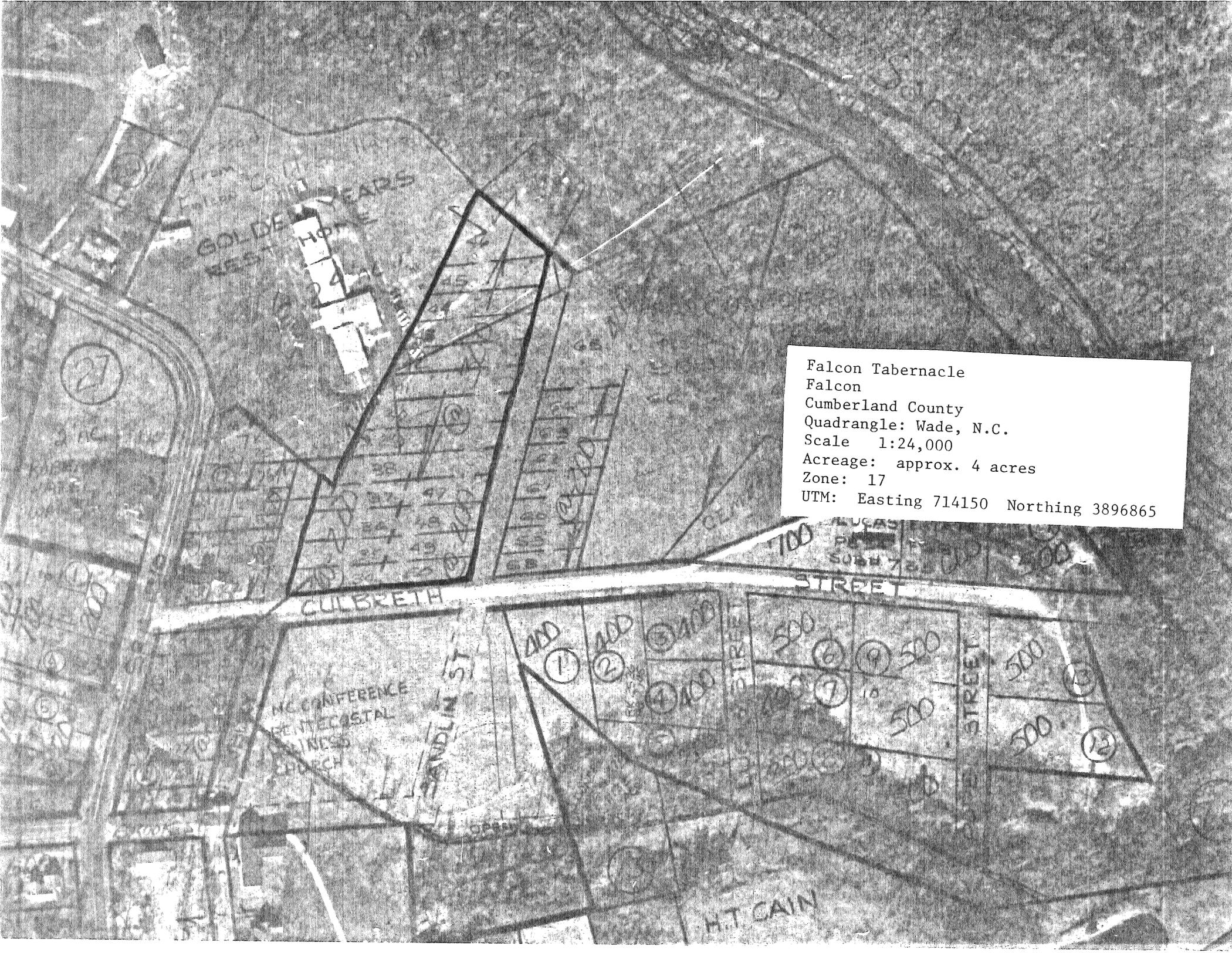
Bundy, Mayo, ed. A History of Falcon, North Carolina. Charlotte: Herb Eaton, Inc., 1980.

Clark, Elmer T. The Small Sects in America. New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948.

Evangel. Volume 29, Number 10, October, 1974.

Fayetteville Observer. September 14, 1976.

Leggett, Reverend James D. Telephone interview with. August 20, 1982. Notes in file.



Falcon Tabernacle  
Falcon  
Cumberland County  
Quadrangle: Wade, N.C.  
Scale 1:24,000  
Acreage: approx. 4 acres  
Zone: 17  
UTM: Easting 714150 Northing 3896865

GOLDEN BEARS HOME

CULBRETH STREET

PENTECOSTAL BUSINESS CHURCH

HANDLIN ST

H.T. CAIN

1 ADD

2 ADD

3 ADD

4 ADD

6

9

7

500

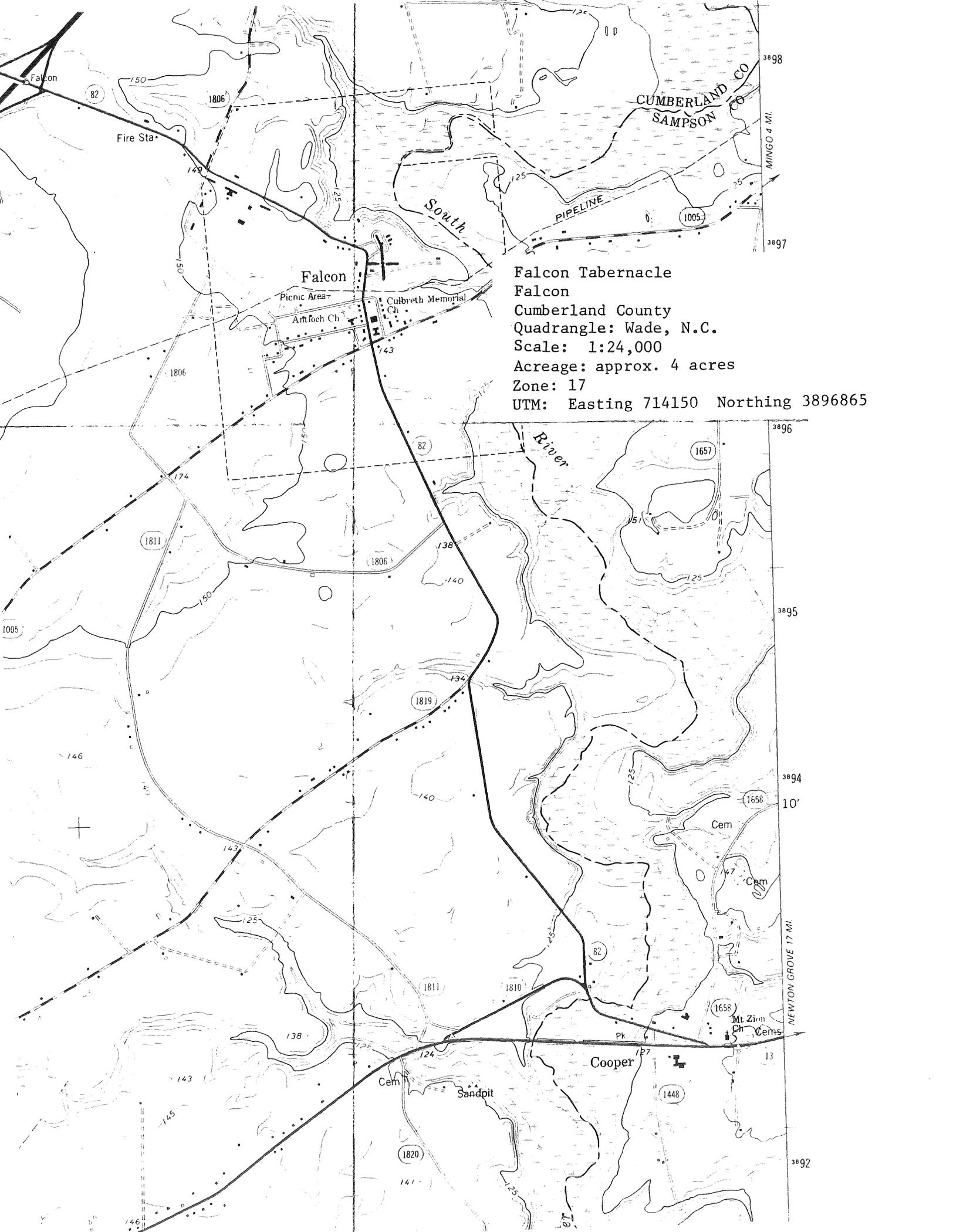
500

10

12

STREET

27



Falcon Tabernacle  
Falcon  
Cumberland County  
Quadrangle: Wade, N.C.  
Scale: 1:24,000  
Acreage: approx. 4 acres  
Zone: 17  
UTM: Easting 714150 Northing 389685

