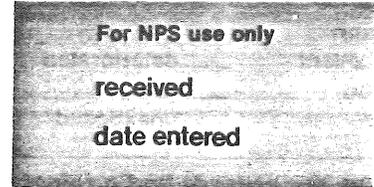


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Harshaw Chapel and Cemetery

and/or common

2. Location

street & number SW corner of Church Street and Central Street N/A not for publication

city, town Murphy N/A vicinity of congressional district

state North Carolina code 37 county Cherokee code 039

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied (occasional)	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input 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

Church: Archibald D. Murphey Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution
name c/o Louise Bayless, Campbell Street, Murphy, N. C. 28906

Cemetery: United Methodist Church, Valley River Avenue, Murphy, N. C. 28906
street & number Reverend Joseph Lasley

city, town Murphy N/A vicinity of state North Carolina

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cherokee County Courthouse

street & number Peachtree Street

city, town Murphy state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Comprehensive sites survey of Cherokee
title County, conducted by Michael Ann Williams has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1981-1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records N. C. Division of Archives and History, Western Office

city, town Asheville state North Carolina

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Harshaw Chapel is a circa 1869, vernacular Greek Revival brick church, located 0.2 mile south of the center square of Murphy, North Carolina. It is situated on Church Street, one block west and parallel to Peachtree Street, a major artery into town. Despite its close proximity to the center of town, the church's location on a small knoll, amidst a shady cemetery, gives it a peaceful, remote atmosphere.

The church is constructed of handmade brick and takes the traditional, minimal temple form--simple rectangular plan, three bays wide and four bays deep, with gable roof. A plain boxed cornice with frieze board circumscribes the structure creating fully pedimented gables. The gable ends, or tympana, are finished in flush sheathing. An octagonal belfry with a conical cap, altered during a 1960s rehabilitation project, rises above the entrance on the north gable end.

The bricks are laid in American bond, with a random pattern of four to ten stretcher courses to each header course. The brick construction is in itself noteworthy, as the church was built in an area and time period of predominantly frame construction. Although there are records of brick construction as early as 1840 (the first census after the opening of the county to white settlement), Harshaw Chapel is the sole surviving mid-nineteenth century brick structure in the county. (The only other surviving brick structure dating from before the turn of the century is the circa 1880 farmhouse built by Abram McDowell Harshaw, nephew of Joshua Harshaw who donated the church.)

The entrance to the church, located on the north gable end, is simple, consisting now of early twentieth century double doors, with six panels each. Above the doors is a six light transom. Surmounting the entrance is a marble plaque with a dedication inscribed in it: "HARSHAW CHAPEL. /I JOSHUA HARSHAW/ DO MAKE A FREE WILL GIFT OF THIS HOUSE/TO THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH SOUTH/AT MURPHY N.C./THIS MAY 1, 1869." Two windows flank the entrance.

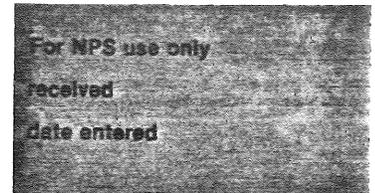
All twelve windows of the church are double hung sash windows of nine-over-nine panes. The sides of the church have four windows each, the south gable end has two windows. Besides the entrance and windows, the exterior walls are otherwise unadorned. All the windows are now kept tightly shuttered.

The interior of the chapel is quite plain. The floors, original except for the pulpit platform, are of pine, random width boards. The plaster walls are undecorated. Most of the original furnishings were removed after the completion of the new Methodist church, built during the 1920s on Valley River Avenue. Six of the original handmade pews have been returned to the church, as well as four other pews of a later date.

The Harshaw Chapel had an active life of approximately sixty years. Several changes were made during the early twentieth century, including the replacement of the front doors and the installation of electric lights. Except for a brief period of use during the 1940s, the church largely fell into disuse after the mid 1920s. In 1965, in a much deteriorated condition, the building was deeded to the Archibald D. Murphey Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on the express condition that they restore and maintain the structure. With aid from a Richardson Foundation challenge grant the church underwent a basic rehabilitation.

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Continuation sheet

DESCRIPTION

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The rehabilitation included a new roof of cedar shakes and the addition of new board and batten shutters to prevent further vandalism. The greatest exterior change was the alteration of the belfry. The former belfry featured a louvered, octagonal lantern on a square base, with a domical roof. During the rehabilitation, the base, originally weatherboarded, was shingled with cedar shakes; the belfry was completely enclosed by vertically applied boards; and a conical roof replaced the domical cap. Alteration of the interior was limited to sanding the floors and the building of a new dais and rail.

Harshaw Chapel is surrounded by the Murphy Methodist Cemetery. While there are graves on all sides of the church, the majority of the cemetery extends north and west of the structure. As the oldest non-family cemetery in Murphy, use of the cemetery pre-dates the construction of the chapel by several decades. The earliest grave is said to be that of Nancy Hayes who died about 1840.

Marked gravestones dated prior to the Civil War are relatively rare in Cherokee County. Although many of the early stones in Harshaw Cemetery are unmarked or deteriorated beyond legibility, the cemetery has the most extensive collection of early marked stones in the county. Early stones include: Felix Axley (1802-1858), Wm. T. Brittain (1838-1850), Betsey Davidson (1787-1861), Roszel O. Davidson (1851-1851), Joseph E. Enloe (1840-1860), Leonides A. Enloe (1831-1852), Turner A. Enloe (1842-1860), Wm. M. Enloe (1838-1850), Abraham T. Harshaw (1849-1866), Elizabeth A. Harshaw (1828-1863), Theodore M. Howell (d. 1852), McCombs infant (d. 1851), Elizabeth S. Meroney (1804-1859), Jane H. Meroney (1840-1859), Noah Rector (1811-1860). The cemetery also has a significant collection of Victorian grave markers. It is still owned and maintained by the Murphy Methodist 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 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 Ca. 1869 **Builder/Architect** James Warner Cooper (contractor)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

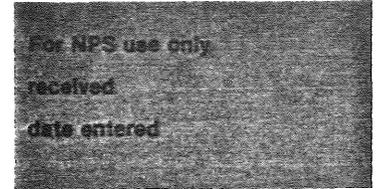
Harshaw Chapel is a small vernacular Greek Revival brick church built during the 1860s for the first Methodist congregation in Murphy, North Carolina. The church building was donated by Joshua Harshaw, a prominent early settler in the county. The site of the church and surrounding cemetery had been donated by Harshaw in 1844, land he had purchased six years previously in the Indian land sales. The small church was replaced by the congregation in the 1920s, and its subsequent survival is remarkable in that it has received little use since. It is the oldest church building in Cherokee County, and is the oldest structure surviving relatively intact in Murphy. Harshaw Chapel is also the sole surviving example of mid-nineteenth century brick architecture in the county. The church is surrounded by a cemetery, containing the graves of many locally prominent citizens and a collection of notable Victorian grave markers. Among the graves is that of Abram Enloe, subject of a North Carolina folk tradition concerning the parentage of Abraham Lincoln.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. Association with the first Methodist congregation in Murphy, and with the early development of the town, the county seat of North Carolina's far western county. The chapel is the oldest intact architectural landmark in Murphy.
- B. Association with prominent early citizens of Murphy, who are buried in the church cemetery.
- C. Sole surviving mid-nineteenth century church structure in Cherokee County, as well as the only extant brick structure in the county from the same period.
- D. The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological 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 archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological 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.

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Continuation sheet

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Item number

8

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Cherokee County, the far western county in North Carolina, was one of the last areas in the state to receive white settlement. Although some settlers did trickle in earlier, the area was not "legally" opened to white settlement until after the Cherokee Removal in the spring of 1838. The following fall the land was put up for public sale in Franklin, county seat of Macon, and in 1839 Cherokee became a county.

The Baptists were the earliest to establish Christianity in the area that would become Cherokee County. As early as 1820 a Baptist mission center existed in the area, and in 1838 a small assembly of Cherokee and white members created the Valley River Baptist Church. In 1837 a Baptist church was also established in Peachtree. There were no known Methodist congregations in this area prior to the Removal.

Among the purchasers in the Franklin land sale which followed the Removal were several members of the Harshaw family of Burke County, North Carolina. Two members in particular prospered in the newly formed county. Abram Harshaw established a farm on the Hiwassee River, four miles east of Murphy (this property remained in the Harshaw family until recent years). Abram's brother, Joshua, owned a farm farther down the river near present day Brasstown. By 1850 these two brothers were among the most prosperous men in the county and were the two largest slave holders.¹

During the land sale Joshua Harshaw also bought land at the site of the newly created county seat, Murphy. In 1844 Harshaw deeded "six acres and a pole" of his town land to trustees Morris K. Taylor, Sutton Talley and John R. Black, for the purpose, "that they shall erect and build or cause to be erected and built therein a house as place of worship, for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."² This is the earliest known written record of Methodism in Murphy.³

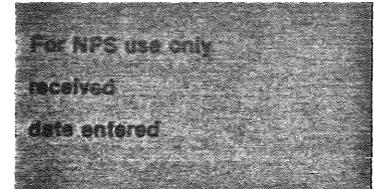
It is possible that Harshaw had already given permission for this land to be used as a cemetery before this legal transaction took place. The oldest grave in Harshaw Cemetery is said to be that of Nancy Hayes, the first wife of Captain George Hayes. Captain Hayes is known to have remarried in 1842.⁴ The other early grave is that of Abram Enloe who died in 1840. This grave is the center of considerable local folk tradition, discussed below.

There is little record of the early Methodist congregation in Murphy. Murphy appears for the first time as an appointment in the Holston Annual Conference in 1858, as part of the newly created Franklin District. Records from the Holston Conference show that during this year the Murphy Circuit consisted of 432 white members, 43 white probationary members, 15 colored members, and 4 local preachers.⁵

While it is obvious that Methodist worship was being held in Murphy prior to the 1858 appointment, nothing is known of a church structure or structures that preceded the brick chapel. It is probable that the plans for construction, or the actual construction of the new chapel, began at about the same time as the assignment of the first pastor by the Holston Conference. Although the new brick church was not dedicated until 1869, local tradition holds that the building was in use several years prior to this date. At least one source gives the construction date as 1860.⁶ It is quite possible that construction of the structure had begun on the eve of the Civil War, and was slowed down or halted with the disruptions of the war and the immediate post-war period.

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National Park Service

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Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page two

The Harshaw Chapel was dedicated on May 1, 1869. A marble plaque above the door reads, "Harshaw Chapel. I Joshua Harshaw do make a free will Gift of this house to the Methodist Episcopal Church at Murphy, N.C. This May 1st - 1869." This structure would serve the first Methodist congregation in Murphy for over half a century.

In the years preceding the dedication, Harshaw himself suffered several misfortunes. As one of the largest slave holders in the county, he must have suffered financially from the war, but his greatest losses were personal. In 1863 his wife died at the age of thirty-five. Three years later his only child, Abram Taylor, died as well. These tragedies seemed only to increase Joshua Harshaw's beneficence. He gave farming land for support of the church, as well as town property to be used for educational purposes. In 1876 Harshaw donated an additional half acre in Murphy to the Methodist Church on which a parsonage was to be built.⁷ The same year Joshua Harshaw died and was buried close to the church on the land he had donated.

The small brick church on the hill must have been a central landmark in Murphy during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In 1926 Stanley Olmsted published the novel, At Top of Tobin. Tobin is a fictionalized, somewhat satiric, rendering of the Murphy of Olmsted's childhood. Many of the early scenes of the book take place at the town's Methodist church, and the novel opens with its description:

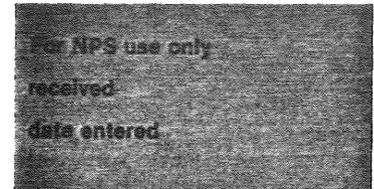
"From the perch of its steeple, pricking the grove and graveyard at the summit of the hill, the bell tolled very mournfully. The church was of rusty uneven brick, but the steeple was of wood, white painted like the plinth of the wooden gable whereby it was supported."⁸

The Murphy Methodist Cemetery, surrounding the chapel also played an important role in the life of the citizens of Murphy. As the town's earliest non-family cemetery, it served as the burying ground for members of many of Murphy's prominent early families. Along with Joshua Harshaw, other prominent early citizens buried in the cemetery are: Felix Axley (1802-1858), who entered the county in 1836, before the Cherokee Removal, and became Murphy's first lawyer; prominent merchant and businessman, Mercer Fain, who having entered Murphy in 1839, established the Fain Bloomery Forge and was later president of the Georgia and North Carolina Railroad; Samuel Henry (1819-1899), who in the 1840s established Murphy's first hotel; and B. B. Meroney (1830-1893), who in 1839 came to Murphy as a member of the first family to settle permanently in the newly created county seat, and who later became one of the county's largest landowners.

One grave also ties Murphy to a wide-spread North Carolina folk tradition. According to this tradition (which probably had its origins in the "era of personal politics" when fallacious stories were used to discredit the political opposition), a man named Abraham (or Abram) Enloe, who lived in Rutherford County and later moved to Ocanolufly, had living with him and his family, Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. Nancy Hanks became pregnant by Enloe and was eventually sent away where she later married Thomas Lincoln.⁹

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Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page three

While many know that the "real father of Abraham Lincoln" is buried in Murphy, there seems to be no living tradition as to how he ended up being buried there. However, there is a clearly marked stone with "Abram Enloe/Born 1779/Died 1840" inscribed on it in the cemetery. The best connection there seems to be is with the Davidson family of Cherokee County. Celia Davidson married Alfred Enloe of Haywood County in 1834. After his death in 1842, she married Henry Moss of Cherokee County. Celia Davidson Enloe Moss, and several of her children by Alfred Enloe, are buried in the Harshaw cemetery. It is also know that her brother, Colonel A. T. Davidson, a resident of Murphy before he became an Asheville lawyer, settled Abram Enloe's estate.¹⁰

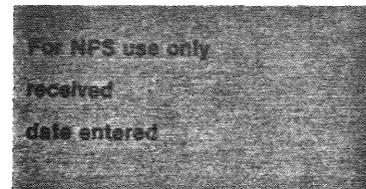
Inevitably, Murphy's Methodist congregation outgrew Harshaw Chapel. In 1922 construction of a large two-story Neo-Classical church on Valley River Avenue began. As was probably the case with Harshaw Chapel, the current Methodist Church was in use for several years prior to the formal dedication in 1929.¹¹

The old chapel largely passed into disuse. During the 1940s the structure was leased to the Free Methodist congregation until their own structure was completed.¹² Finally, in 1965, out of growing concern that the deteriorating building would become a hazard and have to be destroyed, the trustees of the First Methodist Church deeded the building to the Archibald D. Murphey Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on the express condition that they "preserve, restore, and maintain" the structure.¹³

Rehabilitated, the chapel is now occasionally used for special services by the Methodist congregation and the community. It stands as Murphy's oldest surviving structure which is basically intact, and it is the oldest church building in Cherokee County.

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Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page four

FOOTNOTES

¹Census information in: N. C. Browder, The Cherokee Indians and Those Who Came After (Hayesville, 1973).

²Deed Book 2, pp. 336-339, Cherokee County Courthouse, Murphy, North Carolina.

³Margaret Walker Freel, Our Heritage. The People of Cherokee County, N. C. 1540-1955 (Asheville: The Miller Printing Company, 1956; reprinted by the Andrews Journal, 1973), 159.

⁴Freel, op. cit., 167, 292.

⁵Information provided by the Holston Conference Archives, Kelly Library, Emory and Henry College, Emory, Virginia, and the General Commission on Archives and History, United Methodist Church, Madison, New Jersey.

⁶Information provided by the Archibald D. Murphey Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

⁷Abram Edgar Harshaw, "Joshua Harshaw," unpublished speech delivered by Mrs. Edgar Harshaw, at the First Methodist Church of Murphy, N. C., February 5, 1964; Deed Book 15, p. 528, Cherokee County Courthouse, Murphy, N. C.

⁸Stanley Olmsted, At Top of Tobin (New York: The Dial Press, 1926), 3.

⁹One of the most thorough accounts of this tradition is in: John Preston Arthur, Western North Carolina. A History 1730-1913 (Spartenburg: The Reprint Company, 1974; reprinted from Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Co. 1914), 308-326.

¹⁰Arthur, op. cit., 307-309; Freel, op. cit., 269.

¹¹"Condensed Church History," unpublished manuscript, United Methodist Church, Murphy, N.C., 1966; and information provided by the Rev. Joseph W. Lasley.

¹²Information provided by the Rev. Joseph W. Lasley, Murphy, N. C.

¹³Deed Book 248, pp. 260-261, Cherokee County Courthouse, Murphy, N. C.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property \pm .5 acre

Quadrangle name Murphy, North Carolina

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	6	7	7	0	4	6	0	3	8	8	6	3	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See map of property. Boundary of nominated property outlined in red.

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

name/title Ms. Michael Ann Williams, Consultant to the Division of Archives and History

organization N. C. Division of Archives and History date July 14, 1983

street & number 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date February 2, 1984

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

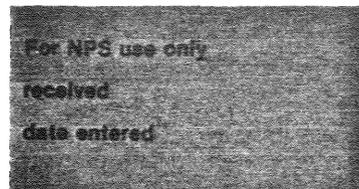
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Item number 9

Page one

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Olmsted, Stanley. At Top of Tobin. New York: The Dial Press, 1926.

HARSHAW CHAPEL
MURPHY, N.C.
NOMINATED PROPERTY
OUTLINED IN RED
SCALE: 1" = 50'

