

# INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Iredell County

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR \_\_\_\_\_ THEMATIC NOMINATION

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Bethany Presbyterian Church and Cemetery/Ebenezer Academy

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER NW side U.S. 21, on either side of its jct. with  
SR 1921

\_\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF Statesville 9th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

037

Iredell

097

## 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"/> 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<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

Bethany Presbyterian Church

STREET & NUMBER

Rt. 4, Box 387-A

CITY, TOWN

Statesville

\_\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina 28677

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Laura A. W. Phillips (Winston-Salem)

ORGANIZATION

Consultant for Survey & Planning

DATE

February 4, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

Archives and History

TELEPHONE

(919) 733-6545

CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The present Bethany Church building was erected in 1855 and stands about 100 yards from where the original building had been erected in 1777. The 3 X 5 bay, one-story frame church has a low gable roof with gable end facade and boxed molded eaves with wide eave returns. The front facade has two double-leaf doors with fieldstone steps. The foundation of the church is also of fieldstone. At the rear of the church is a small, rectangular apse. The building exhibits perhaps the simplest form of Greek Revival church design and is very similar to Snow Creek Methodist Church (before alterations) and numerous other churches built in the Piedmont region during the mid to late 19th century. In the late 1950s the stained glass windows were installed in the sanctuary and in 1970 the interior was remodelled. A breezeway connects the rear of the church with a one-story brick education building which was constructed ca. 1965.

To the north and east of the church is a large cemetery surrounded by a flat-topped fieldstone wall of similar construction to the Snow Creek Burying Ground wall. The two wrought-iron gates are also similar in design to those at Snow Creek. The front gate has vertical pickets which become taller toward the center and which have fleur-de-lis finials. The left wall beside the front gate contains the carved inscription, "July 1825 WN." The side gate is of similar, but much more simple design, and is in a sense more delicate than the front gate. The cemetery contains numerous pre-Civil War stones, many of prominent church and community leaders, and dates from at least 1785.

Ebenezer Academy is located on the opposite side of SR 1921 from Bethany Church on land owned by the church. Built in 1823, the school is a one-story, 3 X 2-bay structure measuring approximately 20' X 30'. It is constructed of hand hewn, half-dovetail logs and is set on short fieldstone foundation piers. The 9/6 sash windows have single-leaf batten shutters with iron strap hinges. The gable roof is covered with wooden shingles and the two exterior end chimneys are replacements. In earlier years at least one long side of the structure was covered with weatherboards. The interior has one room with two large fireplaces with simple molded surrounds. The walls and ceilings are covered with flush sheathing. Mottos and the alphabet are written on the walls in chalk and are adorned with various designs, apparently dating from the 1880s, though they have been renewed since then. The building has been heavily restored through work done in 1913, 1945, and 1968 so that at this point it is somewhat difficult to determine the extent of the original fabric which remains. Nevertheless the building is well-maintained and still provides the image of an early 19th century Iredell school.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

\_\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL

\_\_\_\_\_ STATE

  X  

\_\_\_\_\_ LOCAL

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 checked="" 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 1823;1855

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ebenezer Academy, chartered in 1822 and in operation as an academy until 1856 and then as a subscription school until 1903, is perhaps the most significant of the pre-Civil War schools in Iredell County. Certainly it was in operation far longer than the rest. Its close relationship with Bethany Presbyterian Church, by whom it is still owned, is not surprising in light of the strong personal interest in education held by Princeton-trained James Hall, first pastor of Bethany from 1788-1816. Hall had in earlier years established both Clio's Nursery and the Academy of Sciences, and his bent toward educational training was continued by his nephews who founded Ebenezer Academy on the grounds of Bethany Church. The Halls and other prominent Iredell Citizens are buried in Bethany Church Cemetery, which dates from at least 1785 and is distinguished by a dry-laid stone wall and decorative iron gates similar to those at Snow Cree Burying Ground. After Ebenezer Academy closed its doors in 1903, Hall descendents worked to preserve it for the future. Preservation efforts in 1913, 1945, and 1968 proved successful and represent an early example of historic preservation in Iredell County.

## CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. Ebenezer Academy and Bethany Presbyterian Church have made a significant contribution to educational and religious development in Iredell County. Bethany Church is one of the oldest congregations in the county, having been created in 1775 by the division of Fourth Creek Church into three congregations, and acted as a focal point not only in the religious, but also in the social and educational life of the area it served. The relationship between the church and education was probably stronger at Bethany than anywhere else in Iredell, largely due to the first pastor, James Hall. This commitment was passed down to Hall's nephews and other members of the congregation and led to the establishment in 1822 of Ebenezer Academy, perhaps the most successful of the pre-Civil War academies in Iredell County.
- B. Bethany Presbyterian Church and Ebenezer Academy are associated with a prominent family of Iredell educators, the Halls. James Hall, a graduate of Princeton (then called Nassau Hall) and first pastor of Bethany Church from 1788-1816, established two important Iredell schools in the 18th century - first Clio's Nursery near Snow Creek and, after it closed, the Academy of Sciences next to his home near Bethany. His nephews, also university trained, along with other members of Bethany congregation, established Ebenezer Academy in 1822. Robert Sloan Hall and Alexander Hall served as Ebenezer's first and second teachers, respectively. Hugh Roddy Hall was probably the best known of Ebenezer's teachers, serving nearly a quarter of a

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Iredell County

Bethany Presbyterian Church and Cemetery/Ebenezer Academy

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Criteria Assessment (Cont'd)

century from 1832 to 1856. These men provided educational training for many prominent 19th century citizens, not only from Iredell County but from other counties and states as well.

- C. Bethany Cemetery is representative of a group of Iredell cemeteries dating from the late 18th century, which feature dry-laid stone walls and decorative iron gates. The skills of at least one local artisan are exhibited in the two gates at Bethany, one having pickets with fleur-de-lis finials and the other having a simpler but more delicate design. These gates relate in design to those found at Snow Creek Burying Ground.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE Page 3

Historical Background (Cont'd)

schools--Clio's Nursery and the Academy of Sciences--was continued by his descendents in the establishment of Ebenezer Academy on the grounds of Bethany Church. Robert Sloan Hall began teaching in the session house at Bethany in 1821. The following year Ebenezer Academy was chartered by the state with all eleven trustees being associated with Bethany Church.

Ebenezer Academy was constructed in 1823. On December 9, 1823, William A. Bell of the Western Carolinian (Salisbury) reported:

This institution was incorporated during the session of the General Assembly in 1822. It is now open to all who wish either to pursue a course of liberal education or study English Grammar and Geography. All branches of education required for admission into college will be taught. We are happy in stating to the public that a new and commodious Academy will be completed in a few days. This academy is in a rural situation, six miles from Statesville, so that students will be measurably free from temptations to vice. It is convenient to church, where there is preaching statedly.<sup>10</sup>

Robert Sloan Hall was followed by his nephew, Alexander Hall, who served as principal of the school until 1825. After Alexander Hall joined the western migration, the school was turned back to Robert Sloan Hall for a few years. The best known teacher at Ebenezer was Hugh Roddy Hall, who came in 1832 and continued until 1856, giving Ebenezer a longer history than any of Iredell's earlier academies. Students came not only from the surrounding area, but from other states as well. Many Ebenezer students went on to become doctors, ministers, lawyers, teachers and congressmen.<sup>11</sup>

From 1856-1903 Ebenezer was used as a public subscription school.<sup>12</sup> Two prominent teachers during the 1880s were John Paris and Laura Lazenby. Paris was responsible<sup>13</sup> for the colored chalk mottoes and designs written in beautiful script on the walls. Laura Lazenby later operated the first kindergarten in Statesville and lived on Bell Street in the Academy Hill area.<sup>14</sup>

By 1900, a new public school had been built across the road and Ebenezer ceased to function soon thereafter.<sup>15</sup> The last teacher was Mary Lizzie Hall, a granddaughter of Hugh Hall. Ten years later she and her father, Dr. E. A. Hall, took over the school, preserving it for the future.<sup>16</sup> In 1945 and again in 1968 the building was "restored." Although the present building contains much replacement fabric, these efforts at preservation from 1913 to the present are significant in themselves, pointing out the strong sentiments attached to Ebenezer by Hall descendents, the Bethany congregation and the community. Ebenezer Academy is still owned by Bethany Church and is now used as the chapter house of the Fourth Creek Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.<sup>18</sup>

Bethany Presbyterian Church was created in 1775 through the division of Fourth Creek Congregation into Fourth Creek, Concord, and Bethany churches. However, it was 1777 before the first frame church structure was built. About four acres of land was deeded to the congregation by Hugh M. Hall and his brother, W. Davidson Hall. On April 8, 1778, Rev. James Hall was ordained as pastor of Fourth Creek, Bethany and Concord churches. Hall was a 1774 graduate of Nassau Hall (later Princeton University), served as a chaplain during the Revolution and played a major role in the education of the area by founding two prominent 18th century schools in Iredell--first Clio's Nursery of Arts and Sciences near Snow Creek and then the Academy of Sciences in a building next to his home near Bethany. Hall served all three churches until 1790, when he resigned from his work at Fourth Creek and Concord in order to be able to devote full time to Bethany Church and to missionary work. His missionary work led him as far west as Natchez on the Mississippi River. Hall was a great supporter of the Revival movement which was so controversial in the Piedmont region during the early 19th century, and his church supported him in this enthusiasm. In 1816 poor health forced Hall to resign his position at Bethany, and he died in 1826. Hall was buried in Bethany Cemetery, as were other members of his extended family, many of whom were prominent in local religious and educational affairs.

Other pastors made significant contributions to Bethany Church and to the growth of Presbyterianism in the area. Because the earliest written records of Bethany had apparently been lost, Rev. Stephen Frontis, who served as pastor from 1828 to 1836, compiled the early history of the church and recorded it in the front section of the Session Book. Frontis also began a Temperance Society and a Sunday School. In 1855 under the pastorate of Rev. B. S. Krider, the present church building was constructed. Although there have been some alterations, the present building looks not too dissimilar from when it was built.

The black congregation of Bethany Church was the first in Iredell and one of the first in this area of the state to withdraw from the white congregation and form a church of its own. The blacks were led by Rev. Sidney S. Murkland, white pastor of Bethany Church during the Civil War years. Murkland removed the bar in the church that divided the blacks from the whites, and later made an address before the North Carolina Synod in which he advocated the abolition of slavery. He finally resigned under much pressure and in 1865 organized the black members of Bethany into Freedom Presbyterian Church. The following year, this church along with another in Mecklenburg County were organized into a Catawba Presbytery.

Bethany Presbyterian Church still has an active congregation. The strong concern for education held by Bethany Church's first pastor, Rev. James Hall, as evidenced in his 18th century

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Mildred J. Miller, "Historical Sketch of Bethany Presbyterian Church," (1979) an unpublished typescript report prepared for the Iredell County Historic Properties Commission. Hereinafter referred to as Miller, "Bethany Presbyterian Church."

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6 1/4

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 7	5, 14, 10, 13, 10	3, 9, 6, 8, 4, 6, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Tract 49, Block A, Map 10G, Bethany Township, Iredell County, North Carolina, as outlined in red on map.

This property includes the church, the cemetery and the academy with their immediate surroundings.

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Bethany Presbyterian Church and Cemetery/Ebenezer Academy

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Footnotes (Cont'd)

<sup>2</sup>Homer M. Kever, Iredell Piedmont County (Iredell County Bicentennial Commission, 1976), pp. 73, 80, 209. Hereinafter referred to as Kever.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>6</sup>Eva B. Watts and Mary P. Adams, "A Brief Historical Sketch of Bethany Presbyterian Church, Statesville, North Carolina, 1775-1975," p. 1, an unpublished typescript filed with Homer Kever's files in the Iredell County Public Library.

<sup>7</sup>Miller, "Bethany Presbyterian Church."

<sup>8</sup>Kever, pp. 327-328.

<sup>9</sup>Mildred J. Miller, "Historical Sketch of Ebenezer Academy," (1979), an unpublished typescript report prepared for the Iredell County Historic Properties Commission. Hereinafter referred to as Miller, "Ebenezer Academy."

<sup>10</sup>Rachel Morrison, "Ebenezer Academy Restored," Statesville Record and Landmark, October 18, 1969, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup>Miller, "Ebenezer Academy."

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>"Turner Recalls Academy Days," Statesville Record and Landmark, September 12, 1967.

<sup>14</sup>Data sheets for Academy Hill Historic District, Iredell County Historic Inventory.

<sup>15</sup>Kever, p. 211.

<sup>16</sup>Howard Covington, "History Falling into Poison Ivy Patch," The Charlotte Observer, September 12, 1967, p. 4A.

<sup>17</sup>Miller, "Ebenezer Academy."

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

1855 IV NW  
(CENTRAL)

35° 52' 30"

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

51,200m E

913

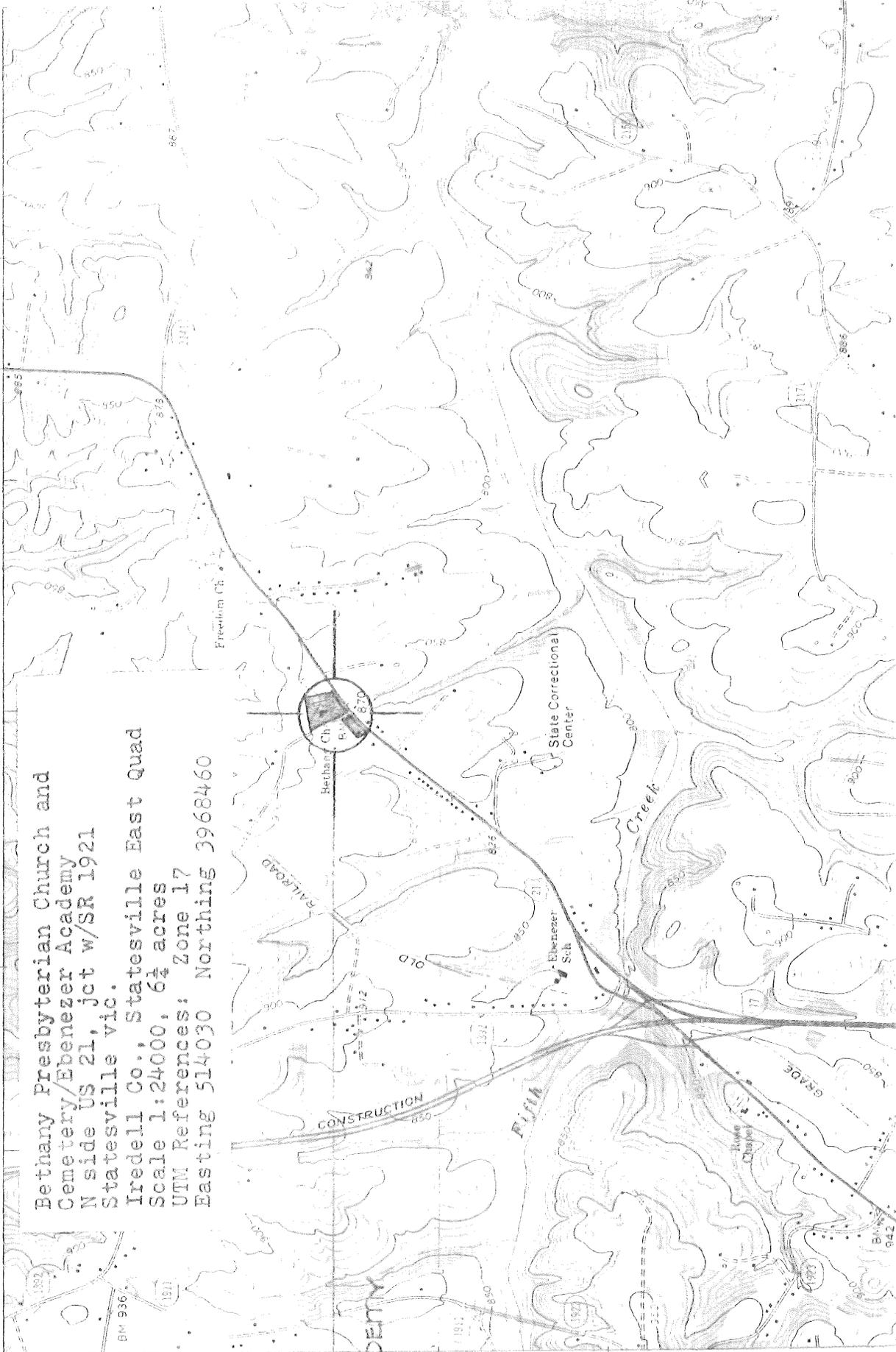
514

50'

STATE OF NORTH  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
RALEIGH, NORTH  
1855 IV NE  
(HARMONY)

ID 8  
ID 9

Bethany Presbyterian Church and  
Cemetery/Ebenezer Academy  
N side US 21, jct w/SR 1921  
Statesville vic.  
Iredell Co., Statesville East Quad  
Scale 1:24000, 6 1/4 acres  
UTM References: Zone 17  
Easting 514030 Northing 3968460



396900m N

#11

BETHANY CHURCH  
EBENEZER ACADEMY

3968

3967



