

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, material and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Webster Methodist Church
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Highway 116 (Main St.) N/A not for publication
city, town Webster N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Jackson code 099 zip code 28788

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Williams S. Fin, Jr.
Signature of certifying official

11/13/89
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Religion: religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Religion: religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Other: Vernacular Gothic Revival

foundation stone
walls weatherboard
roof pressed metal shingles
other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Webster Methodist Church is sited on a slight rise on the west side of Highway 116, which is also the Main Street of the town of Webster. To the south of the church is the "rock school" building, erected in 1936; to the north is a modern ranch style parsonage and a large vacant lot which was once the site of the Mountain View Hotel. The church building faces east, looking over the highway and toward the ravine which runs behind Main Street properties. A wind screen of tall pines separates the church property from the school. A concrete walkway leads from church steps to road and a grassy lawn surrounds the building.

The Webster Methodist Church is a weatherboarded, gable-roofed rectangular building, painted white, with engaged bell tower. The main entrance to the church is in the gable end facing the highway and through the base of the bell tower. The building is four bays long, each bay containing a six over six window with pedimented heading. The cornice is boxed and has returns. Frieze, cornice and cornerboards are plain. The foundation of the building is stone and the roof is of the original tin shingles.

The main architectural interest of the church building is found in the three-bay entrance facade, which is dominated by an engaged bell tower which rises in two stages and culminates in a splayed pyramidal cap which serves as the steeple. Gothic arched vents are centered on all four sides of the tower's second tier, just beneath its cap. A blind fan and a diamond-shaped vent ornament its principal face above the church entrance.

The building's entrance composition is unique in Jackson County. Rectangular six-over-six sash windows with pointed-arched transom flank the base of the bell tower, which has corners faced by Ionic piers with recessed lancet panels. These piers carry a segmental arch and enframe a portico

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hollowed out of the base of the tower. The door into the church, a double-leaf door of six panels, is surmounted by a Gothic transom and is flanked by sidelights with Gothic heads. Fluted Ionic pilasters with spearpoint heads divide the sidelights from the doorway.

On the interior of the church building, a central aisle leads from main entrance to the communion rail, behind which the pastors' chairs are set in an alcove under a low arch. Windows with plain surrounds have the original handblown frosted panes. Pews are high-backed and made of wide pine boards. Walls and ceiling are plaster, painted white. The present flooring was laid in 1945, over the original pine flooring.

The sanctuary was shortened in 1939 when a partition was placed behind the pastors' chairs, allowing space for an additional room in the west end of the building. This church school room is entered from each side of the alcove. With the exception of the interior partition and new oak flooring, the Webster Methodist Church is unchanged since its completion in 1837.

The half-acre lot contains no cemetery. Deceased members of the congregation are buried at the Stillwell Cemetery on Little Savannah Road or at the Webster Cemetery on Buchanan Loop.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1887

Significant Dates

1887

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Webster Methodist Church is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C because it is the oldest and one of the most architecturally significant churches in Jackson County. Built in 1887 for the Webster Methodist congregation, the design of the church is similar to other churches built in the county before the turn of the century, but the wealth of detail, both Gothic and classical, make it outstanding. No changes have been made to the exterior of the church since its construction; on the interior, the sanctuary, which originally occupied the interior as one large room, has been shortened to provide space for a second room on the west end of the original sanctuary.

Architectural context: After the opening of lands to settlers in Western North Carolina, church services were held in local homes and were led by itinerant preachers who rode hundreds of miles each month "on the circuit." Webster was added to the Methodist circuit in 1359 but the local congregation did not have a church building until 1887 when they erected this traditional, yet stylish, church. During that era, many decorated frame houses were being built in Jackson County, and churches of the period were likewise of frame construction. Most were small, rectangular buildings with the entrance in the gable end, and most had a belfry capped by a conical or pyramidal roof.¹ The partial inventory of historic properties in Jackson County (1975) lists/ extant church buildings with belfry: Catherine's Chapel Baptist Church (1906), John's Creek Methodist Church (c. 1899), Olivet Methodist Church (c. 1895), and Webster Baptist Church (1900). The Church of the Good Shepherd (1895) has a free-standing belfry.² Because Jackson County, located in the Appalachian mountains of southwest North

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Carolina, was isolated and sparsely settled at the turn of the century, these buildings are the first generation of church buildings in the county.

The Webster Methodist Church offers the most elaborate decorative trim of the remaining turn-of-the-century church buildings in Jackson County. It contains Gothic detail in windows, vents and transom and basket arch, and a wealth of classical details, including Ionic piers, fluted Ionic pilasters with spearpoint heads, sidelights and portico. The facade, the product of an unknown, talented carpenter-builder, has been called "high-spirited and full of charm,"³ an illustration of an energetic and fast-moving society

Historical Background: When Jackson County was formed in 1851, religious life was dominated by Baptist and Methodist denominations.⁴ Methodist services were held in private homes or in the only church building, Love's Chapel, which was founded in 1840 on the property of John B. Love.⁵ In 1869, Methodists in Webster joined the Baptist and Presbyterian congregations in the construction of a church and school building in Webster, on the site of the present Hedden house on Main Street. Webster Methodists met there on the first and third Sundays of each month, but the approximately 380 members (which include five blacks) anxiously planned for a church building which they could call their own.⁶

On December 11, 1881, William and Mary Bumgarner sold a tract of land in the middle of the town of Webster to the trustees for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the sum of \$50.00, as a "place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and membership."⁷ William Bumgarner (1839-1902) was the son of Charles and Rebecca Odum Bumgarner, who had been founding members of the Love's Chapel Methodist Church.⁸ Trustees of the Webster church were William Enloe, wealthy merchant and father-in-law of attorney Walter E. Moore, George W. Spake, Methodist minister and later postmaster of Webster, L. Coleman Hall, wealthy farmer whose property extended along the west bank of the Tuckaseegee River, Dr. James M. Candler, physician, Thomas M. Frizzell, pharmacist and James W. Terrell.⁹ These were men of education and means, well-equipped to design a building of merit and style, and the last-mentioned, James W. Terrell, provides insight into the interaction of religion and everyday life

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in Webster during this period of construction.

James W. Terrell was born in Rutherford County in 1829. Little is known of his early life. In 1852 he became an Indian agent with his long-time friend William Holland Thomas, trader, state senator, land owner, and "great benefactor of the Cherokees."¹⁰ Terrell managed Thomas's store in Quallatown in Jackson County, the business center of the Cherokee Indian reservation. In the Civil War, he was a captain in the 69th North Carolina Regiment, called the Thomas Legion in honor of its commander, William Holland Thomas. After the war, Terrell was active in Indian affairs and studied and wrote about Cherokee customs and mythology.¹¹ In 1858 Terrell married Leila, daughter of Ulrich Keener, (1801-1856), a Methodist minister from East Tennessee who in 1850 became the first minister to the Echota Indian Mission in Quallatown. Keener was also the first Methodist itinerant preacher in Jackson County, where he began his circuit preaching in 1847.¹²

Terrell was Jackson County's first county surveyor and one of the first superintendents of schools. He was a county commissioner from 1879 to 1884, and a member of the North Carolina House of Representatives for the term beginning in 1881.¹³ His life was rich with service for the Methodist Church. He was a trustee of the local church and later chairman of the Board of Deacons for the Webster Circuit, which served seven area Methodist churches.¹⁴

Construction of the new church building was completed in 1887. Local lumber provided the weatherboarding, pegged pews and flooring. Paint was shipped from Knoxville. Handblown frosted panes formed windows and gas lights hung from the side walls. Paint and gas lights have been replaced, but pews, windows and weatherboarding remain to this day. A parsonage just to the north of the church was completed in 1887 also; this dwelling was replaced several times between 1887 and 1956, when the present brick ranch house was built.¹⁵ In 1939 a partition was erected behind the pulpit in the sanctuary, shortening the sanctuary area and providing space for a Sunday School room. In 1945 new oak flooring covered the deteriorating pine flooring.¹⁶

Although the Webster Methodist Church has never had a large congregation,

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early membership roles read "like a who's who in North Carolina: Madison, McKee, Terrell, Alley, Enloe, Allison, Moore, Fisher, Eroyles, Bryson, leader of both church and state."¹⁷. The congregation has been active since 1887, and the church is still the central church of the Webster Methodist Circuit.

FOOTNOTES

1. Historic Properties Survey for Jackson County, unpublished. (Asheville: Western Office of Archives and History, 1979).
2. Ibid.
3. Webster Historical Society, Historic Webster, Vol. IX, no. 2, Summer 1983.
4. Williams, Max R., ed., The History of Jackson County, p. 255.
5. Webster Historical Society, Historic Webster, Vol. X, no. 2, Summer 1984.
6. Webster Historical Society, Historic Webster, Vol. IX, no. 2, Summer 1983.
7. Jackson County Register of Deeds, Book 15, page 29.
8. Webster Historical Society, Historic Webster, Vol. X, no. 2, Summer 1984.
9. Webster Historical Society, Historic Webster, Vol. I, no. 5, Fall 1974.
10. Van Noppen, Ima W. and John J., Western North Carolina Since the Civil War, p. 89.
11. Terrell, J.W., Collection, Western Carolina University Library Special Collections, Cullowhee.
12. Deems, Rev. Charles F., D.D., Annals of Southern Methodism for 1856, page .
13. Williams, Max, ed., op. cit., pp. 562, 566, 570.
14. Clyde, C.H. The Webster Circuit, p. 22.
15. Webster Historical Society, Historic Webster, Vol. IX, no. 2, Summer 1983.
16. Webster Historical Society, Historic Webster, Vol. I, no. 5, Fall 1974.
17. Webster Historical Society, Historic Webster, Vol. IX, no. 2, Summer 1983.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Clyde, C. H., The Webster Circuit, Journal Publishing Co., Sylva, 1907.
- Deems, Rev. Charles F., D.D., Annals of Southern Methodism for 1856, Nashville, 1857.
- Historic Properties Survey for Jackson County, unpublished. (Asheville: Western Office of Archives and History, 1979).
- Jackson County Register of Deeds, Jackson County Courthouse, Sylva.
- Terrell, J. W., Collection, Western Carolina University Library, Special Collections, Cullowhee.
- Van Noppen, Ina W. and John J., Western North Carolina Since the Civil War, Appalachian Consortium Press, Boone, 1975.
- Webster Historical Society, Historic Webster, Vol. I, no. 5; Vol. X, no. 2; Vol. IX, no 2, Sylva.
- Williams, Max R., ed., The History of Jackson County, Jackson County Historical Association, The Delmar Company, 1987.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .5 acre

UTM References

A

1	7	2	9	8	0	0	0	3	9	1	3	2	4	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The southern one-half of parcel 1898 as shown on the orthophoto map of Jackson County, North Carolina, inventory of real property, 1980, as distributed by the Jackson County, NC, Department of Planning. Outlined in red on accompanying copy of orthophoto map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The Webster Methodist Church occupies the original lot deeded to the church in December, 1881, and described as a one-half acre lot in Jackson County Register of Deeds, Book 15, page 29.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn A. Humphries (for the Webster Historical Society)
organization _____ date December 1, 1988
street & number Route 2, Box 175 telephone 704/526-9462
city or town Highlands state NC zip code 28741

