

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1333 Carthage Street N/A not for publication

city or town Sanford vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Lee code 105 zip code 27330

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Brown SHPO 12/28/98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

| I hereby certify that the property is: | Signature of the Keeper | Date of Action |
|--|-------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) | _____ | _____ |

Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries
Name of Property

Lee County, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 2 | | buildings |
| 4 | | sites |
| | | structures |
| 6 | 1 | objects |
| 12 | 1 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
"Historic and Architectural Resources of
Lee County, North Carolina, 1740-1942"

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

~~RELIGION/Religious Facility~~
 RELIGION/Church-related residence
 FUNERARY/Cemetery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

~~RELIGION/Religious Facility~~
 RELIGION/Church-related residence
 FUNERARY/Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival
 Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
 walls Weatherboard
 roof Metal
 other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

Funerary Art

Period of Significance

1857-1948

Significant Dates

1879

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Minor, J.J., Architect

Masemore, John B., Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:

Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries

Name of Property

Lee County, North Carolina

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property +/- 12.75 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 663760 3925720
Zone Easting Northing
2 17 664140 3925480

3 17 664150 3925360
Zone Easting Northing
4 17 663780 3925300

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title See Continuation Sheet

organization date

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0015), Washington, DC 20503

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Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries
Lee County, North Carolina

7. DESCRIPTION:

Summary

Buffalo Presbyterian Church stands in a grove of oak and hickory trees in the former Buffalo Community, in what is now Sanford, in Lee County. The church, which faces east, is located on the south side of Carthage Street (SR 1237) across from its junction with Buffalo Church Road (SR 1153). A twenty-five acre cemetery, one of Lee County's largest, extends to the southeast of the church. Adjoining this main cemetery are an earlier church cemetery, an African-American cemetery, and a Matthews Family plot. The property includes a manse across from the church on Carthage Street.

Inventory

1. **CHURCH**
1879; 1957
1 Contributing Building

Buffalo Presbyterian Church is a two-story, gable-fronted, frame Gothic Revival style building with weatherboard siding and a metal-shingled roof. The church measures roughly thirty-seven by seventy-six feet. The facade features lancet-arched double-leaf entries in each of its three bays, with corresponding lancet-arched twelve-over-six windows above. A three-stage projecting entry tower with lancet-arched louvered vents rises through the pedimented front gable to culminate in a flared, pyramidal roof and finial. Corner pilasters and a plain frieze enframe the facade and are repeated in each of the tower's stages. The side elevations (north and south) are five bays deep, with two-story, triple-hung, lancet-arched windows. The window sash each contain six panes of textured glass. A rectangular, one-story chancel projects from the rear (west) elevation. A 1957, two-story, frame office and educational wing is oriented parallel to the sanctuary and connected to its south elevation by a one-story hyphen.

The church is entered through a pair of six-panel doors into a three room vestibule with winder stairs rising to the balcony level. From the vestibule, doors lead into the nave-plan sanctuary. A balcony extends along three sides of the sanctuary and is supported by chamfered posts with molded caps. The underside of the sloping balcony is sheathed with beaded boards. The plastered walls rise to a very shallow barrel-vaulted ceiling from which are suspended early-twentieth-century milk glass lights. Two rows of simple, hand-planed, heart pine pews flank a center aisle. At the west end of the sanctuary is the altar area with a dais backed by a lancet-arched recess. The dais, the balcony railing, and the pulpit are decorated with recessed lancet-arched panels.

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Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries
Lee County, North Carolina

2. **ORIGINAL CHURCH CEMETERY**

1857-1870s

1 Contributing Site

The original church cemetery, now overgrown and largely abandoned, is located directly behind the church, as the land slopes downward towards Persimmon Creek. Several dozen headstones survive, including six within a chain-link enclosure next to the church playground. The oldest headstone in the cemetery marks the grave of Roderick L. Buie (1845-1857).

3. **AFRICAN-AMERICAN CEMETERY**

Mid-nineteenth century-present

1 Contributing Site

To the south of the original cemetery is an African-American cemetery, said to have been a slave burying ground prior to the Civil War, which was purchased by the African-American churches of Sanford in 1900 for use by their members. Though the majority of burials in this section are unmarked, it includes the well-tended plot of William B. Wicker (1896-1974), a notable local African-American educator.

4. **MATTHEWS FAMILY PLOT**

1865-present

1 Contributing Site

A Matthews family plot is located in front of the church in a grove of trees encircled by a driveway. The quarter-acre plot is defined by stone curbing and contains thirty markers, including that of Daniel Matthews (1796-1865), whose family sold a five-acre parcel surrounding the plot to the church in 1890 (Moore County Deed Book 20, p. 141). Still in use today, the plot includes markers dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present.

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5. **MAIN CEMETERY**
1870-present
1 Contributing Site
6 Contributing Objects
1 Non-contributing Object

The main cemetery was established in 1870 as the original cemetery approached capacity. It now covers twenty-five acres extending southeast from the church, but only the approximately 3.5-acre oldest section of the cemetery is included in the nominated parcel. This section, closest to the church, is situated on a slight rise that features mature magnolia and cedar trees, and is encircled by a paved drive. Laid out to accommodate up to 2,640 graves, this section contains roughly half that number (Ellis interview). The majority of the burials date to the period of significance, but newer gravestones are interspersed amongst the older ones. In addition to notable granite and marble headstones in a variety of popular late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century styles, the cemetery contains several of locally quarried brownstone. Five of the brownstone markers represent the work of highly skilled French stonecutters brought to Sanford in the 1890s to work at commercial quarries (Pezzoni, p. 54-58). Four of these, two Gonella markers and two Bellet markers, stand in a cluster in the southwest corner of the nominated section; the marker for Cornelious B. Hicks (1884-1891) is located near the southern edge of the nominated section. The most striking is the grave marker of John and Minnie Gonella, erected in 1906. John "Frenchy" Gonella worked at one of the local quarries, and his marker is an outstanding piece of Eastlake-style brownstone craftsmanship, with a rusticated base, a molded cornice, and an arched top with incised filigree.

6. **MANSE**
1926
1 Contributing Building

A manse was constructed in 1926 for the pastor who served Buffalo, White Hill, Euphronia and Pocket Presbyterian Churches. The two-story, hip-roofed frame dwelling exhibits restrained Colonial Revival detailing. The three-bay facade features a formal entrance with fanlight and sidelights, and a hipped-roof porch with square posts. Artificial siding was applied to the building in recent years. The manse faces south on a tree-shaded lot across from the church on Carthage Street.

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Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries
Lee County, North Carolina

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Summary

Buffalo Presbyterian Church was organized in 1797 by Highland Scot settlers to Moore County (now Lee County). It is the oldest Presbyterian congregation in Lee County, and the northernmost of the Presbyterian congregations established by the Cape Fear Highland Scots in the eighteenth century. The church and cemeteries possess important associations with this settlement group; and have functioned as a social and religious center of community life for over two hundred years. The 1879 Gothic Revival style sanctuary is a well-preserved example of Lee County's nineteenth century rural Presbyterian churches. The adjacent cemetery contains several outstanding markers of locally quarried brownstone. Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in the areas of social history, architecture, and funerary art as defined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Historic and Architectural Resources of Lee County, North Carolina, 1740-1942." While this document does not specifically identify social history as an area of significance under which churches and cemeteries can be considered eligible, its ample background information about Lee County's settlement and ethnicity provides the social history context. The period of significance for the locally significant property begins with 1857, the date of the first interment in the original cemetery. Because the church's membership reflected its associations with the region's Scottish settlers well into the twentieth century, the period of significance is extended until 1948, the last year in which the property meets the fifty-year criterion for listing in the National Register.

Historical Background

Buffalo Presbyterian Church was the first formally established church in what is now Lee County (then Moore). It was the northernmost of the Presbyterian congregations established by the Highland Scots, the principal settlement group in the Upper Cape Fear Valley during the eighteenth century. The concentration of Highland Scots had a profound effect on the culture of the Lee County area, as has been outlined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form.

Buffalo Presbyterian Church was organized in 1797, when the Reverend William D. Paisley began preaching every third Sunday in a log building located near the site of the present church. On March 8, 1798, he was called to the pastorate of Buffalo and nearby Union Church, and was ordained at Buffalo on May 10, 1798 (Lacy, pp. 6-7). Later pastors of Buffalo likewise served more than one Presbyterian congregation in the region.

The log church building was replaced in 1817 by a frame church built by contractor John Voncanon, which in turn was replaced by a second frame building in the 1840s. The present building,

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Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries
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the fourth to serve the church on this site, was erected in 1879 by contractor John B. Masemore of Cameron, according to plans prepared by architect J.J. Minor of Fayetteville (Lacy, pp. 6, 9, 11-12, 15). The total cost of approximately \$2,500 was raised by Buffalo members (*North Carolina Presbyterian*, June 2, 1880). This church building was dedicated on May 15, 1880.

Buffalo Church served as the social and religious center of community life for the Scottish families that settled the area. Regular church services, semi-annual communion services, and camp meetings held under an open-air "stand" provided welcome opportunities for the dispersed families of the region to gather. The congregation was largely, if not wholly, Scotch, as was reported by a visitor in 1875--"All Scotland seemed to be there; and as the McIvers, and McIntoshes, and McKays, and Campbells, and Camerons, Stewarts, Blues, Blacks and hosts of others assembled..." (*North Carolina Presbyterian*, October 1, 1875). At least one early pastor conducted services in both English and Gaelic (Lacy, p. 8).

Presbyterians placed great significance on formal education, and often established academies in conjunction with churches. In the 1850s a Masonic lodge and academy were established at Buffalo Church, sharing a building across the road from the church, near where the manse now stands (Comer, p. 1). The Buffalo Male and Female Academy, also known as the Lodge School, opened in 1857 and provided students with a formal education in English, Latin, Greek and higher mathematics, with additional courses for girls in French and German languages, piano and vocal music, painting, drawing and needlework (*Fayetteville Observer*, January 5, 1857 and December 14, 1857). Both institutions had left the Buffalo community by the close of the nineteenth century.

From its establishment in the 1790s until the first decades of the nineteenth century, Buffalo Church was the only Presbyterian congregation within a broad area, "embracing in its wide scope of territory, from the waters of the Deep river [sic] and beyond on the North and West, to the waters of Lower Little river [sic] and Barbecue and Cape Fear on the east and south--an ample and lordly domain--whence people came not two or four or even six miles to church, but ten, fifteen and twenty" (Lacy, p. 17). Beginning in the second decade of the nineteenth century with the organization of Euphronia Presbyterian Church, additional Presbyterian congregations were established in the region, drawing members from Buffalo Church. Buffalo Church is considered the "mother church" for eight white Presbyterian congregations: Euphronia (1810s), St. Andrews (1864), Salem (1868), White Hill (1881), Gulf (1882), Jonesboro (1885), Pocket (1890) and First Sanford (1894). Several of these newer congregations maintained a close relationship with Buffalo Church, sharing ministers who "held preaching" at different churches in the area each week of the month, and holding shares in Buffalo's cemetery and manse.

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Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries
Lee County, North Carolina

African-American slaves worshipped at Buffalo Church during the antebellum period, but segregated congregations became the norm shortly after the Civil War. Buffalo Church contributed members to the African-American Presbyterian churches that were subsequently formed in the area. Former African-American members of Buffalo Church formed St. John Presbyterian Church in 1868 and Blandonia Presbyterian Church in 1876, which later merged into First United Presbyterian Church (Comer, p. 194). These new congregations, together with the African-American Baptist, Congregational, and A.M.E. Zion churches of Sanford, purchased a lot adjacent to the old Buffalo cemetery in 1900, said to have been a slave burying ground prior to the Civil War, to provide a cemetery for their members (Moore County Deed Book 23, pp. 123-125). (According to Lee County tax maps, Buffalo Church now owns this parcel, though its transfer from the African-American churches has not been documented.)

Since most burials took place in dispersed family plots, there was no cemetery associated with Buffalo Church until 1857, when Roderick Lea Buie was buried in low ground to the west of the present church. A second cemetery was established on higher ground to the southeast of the church with the donation of a tract of ninety square feet by James Huckabee Wicker around 1870 (*Sanford Express*, January 12, 1917). The cemetery grew with subsequent additions of land to reach its present size of twenty-five acres. Although closely associated with Buffalo Church, and maintained for several decades by the church, it has been overseen by an independent Buffalo Cemetery Commission since 1897. Representatives on the first cemetery commission were to be drawn from Buffalo, Pocket, Jonesboro and Sanford Presbyterian churches (General Assembly Session Records, March 9, 1897).

The main cemetery is distinguished by the presence of brownstone gravemarkers carved by highly skilled French stonecutters brought to Sanford in the 1890s to work at commercial quarries. Brownstone underlies much of northern Lee County, and was a common building material, primarily for chimneys and foundations, since the earliest settlement period. The hand-carved brownstone gravemarker of Roderick McIver (1727-1810), moved to Buffalo in 1989, and the brownstone block bases on many of the cemetery's granite and marble markers illustrate its traditional use for marking graves. As interest in architectural brownstone rose nationally during the late nineteenth century, its abundance in Lee County was exploited by several commercial quarries. The burgeoning brownstone industry attracted the French stonecutters who were responsible for Sanford's finest brownstone carving, including five markers at Buffalo (Pezzoni, p. 54-58).

In one of the church's many land transactions, the elders acquired a 5.25 acre parcel in front of the church from the Matthews family in 1890. Because the parcel included the grave of Daniel Matthews, the deed stipulated that one-quarter acre surrounding his grave be reserved for a Matthews family cemetery (Moore County Deed Book 20, p. 141). This plot remains in use by Matthews family descendants today.

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Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries
Lee County, North Carolina

A manse was constructed in 1926 for the pastor who served Buffalo and three other Presbyterian congregations in the area--White Hill, Euphronia and Pocket (*Sanford Express*, March 13, 1925). By 1949, these churches were no longer associated, and Buffalo purchased the other churches' interest in the manse (Lee County Deed Book 50, p. 181). It continues to serve as the residence of Buffalo's pastor today.

Buffalo Presbyterian Church remains a vibrant congregation of 150 members, some of them descendants of the church's founders. The church has exhibited good stewardship of its historic property throughout the years. In 1957, an office and educational wing was added to the south side of the church. While it provides much-needed space for the activities of the congregation, its scale, positioning, and materials detract as little as possible from the original building. Only minimal alterations have been made to the church building itself. The church celebrated its bicentennial in 1997, which generated on-going interest in the history and significance of the congregation and its buildings and cemeteries.

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Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries
Lee County, North Carolina

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Comer, James Vann. *The Bountiful Legacy of A Mother: Buffalo Presbyterian Church, 1997-1997*. Sanford, N.C.: the author, 1997.

Ellis, Clawson, interview with author. Sanford, N.C., March 11, 1998.

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General Assembly Session Records, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Lacy, Rev. William S. "Historical Address Delivered on the Occasion of the Centennial of Buffalo Church, August 12, 1897." Original at Buffalo Presbyterian Church, Sanford, N.C.

Lee County Deed Records, Register of Deeds Office, Lee County Courthouse, Sanford, N.C.

Moore County Deed Records, Register of Deeds Office, Moore County Courthouse, Carthage, N.C.

North Carolina Presbyterian (Fayetteville and Wilmington, N.C.). Microfilm, Suzanne Reeves Library, Sanford, N.C.

Pezzoni, J. Daniel, *The History and Architecture of Lee County, North Carolina*. Sanford, N.C.: Railroad House Historical Association, Inc., 1995.

Presbyterian Standard (Charlotte, N.C.). Originals, Union Theological Seminary Library, Richmond, VA.

Sanford Express. Microfilm, Suzanne Reeves Library, Sanford, N.C.

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Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries
Lee County, North Carolina

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated parcel is shown by the heavy black line on the accompanying portion of Lee County Property Map 9642-03, drawn to a scale of 1 inch = 200 feet.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes a tract of approximately 12.75 acres that forms the historic and current setting of the Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries. The entire church property on the south side of Carthage Street, which contains the church, the original church cemetery, African-American cemetery and Matthews family plot, is included, as is that portion across Carthage Street that includes the manse. The oldest section of the main cemetery, which contains the majority of the burials within the property's period of significance, is included as well. Excluded from the boundary are the wooded lot on the northwest corner of Carthage Street and Buffalo Church Road, and newer portions of the main cemetery.

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Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries
Lee County, North Carolina

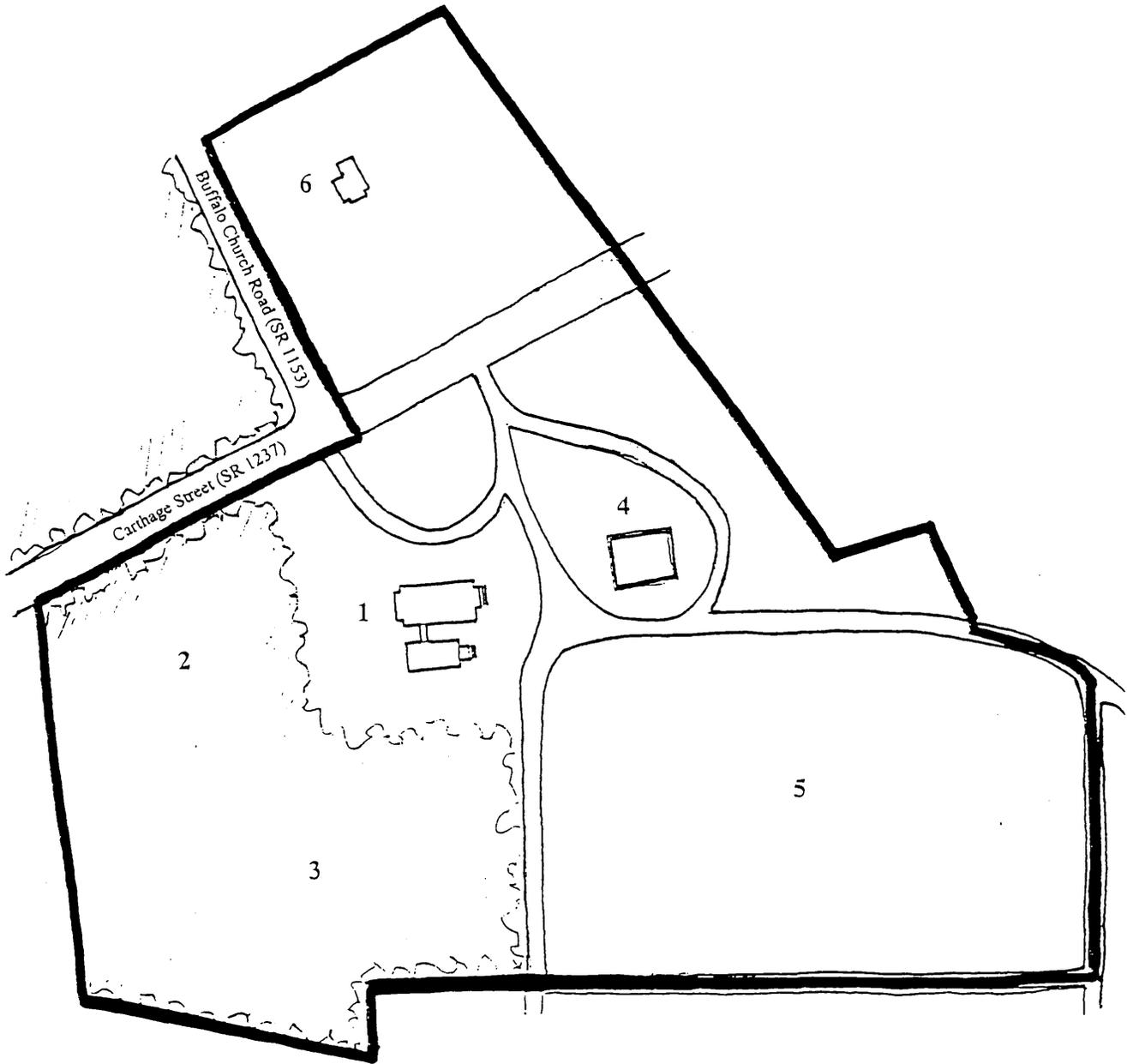
11. FORM PREPARED BY: Debra Kraybill Bevin
Division of Archives and History
109 E. Jones Street
Raleigh, N.C. 27601
919-733-6545

Research By: James Vann Comer
Professional Genealogist
P.O. Box 2681
Sanford, N.C. 27331-2681
919-775-5763

PROPERTY OWNERS:

Buffalo Presbyterian Church
1333 Carthage Street
Sanford, N.C. 27330
919-776-7313

Buffalo-Jonesboro Cemetery, Inc.
P.O. Box 1207
Sanford, N.C. 27331-1207
919-776-5623

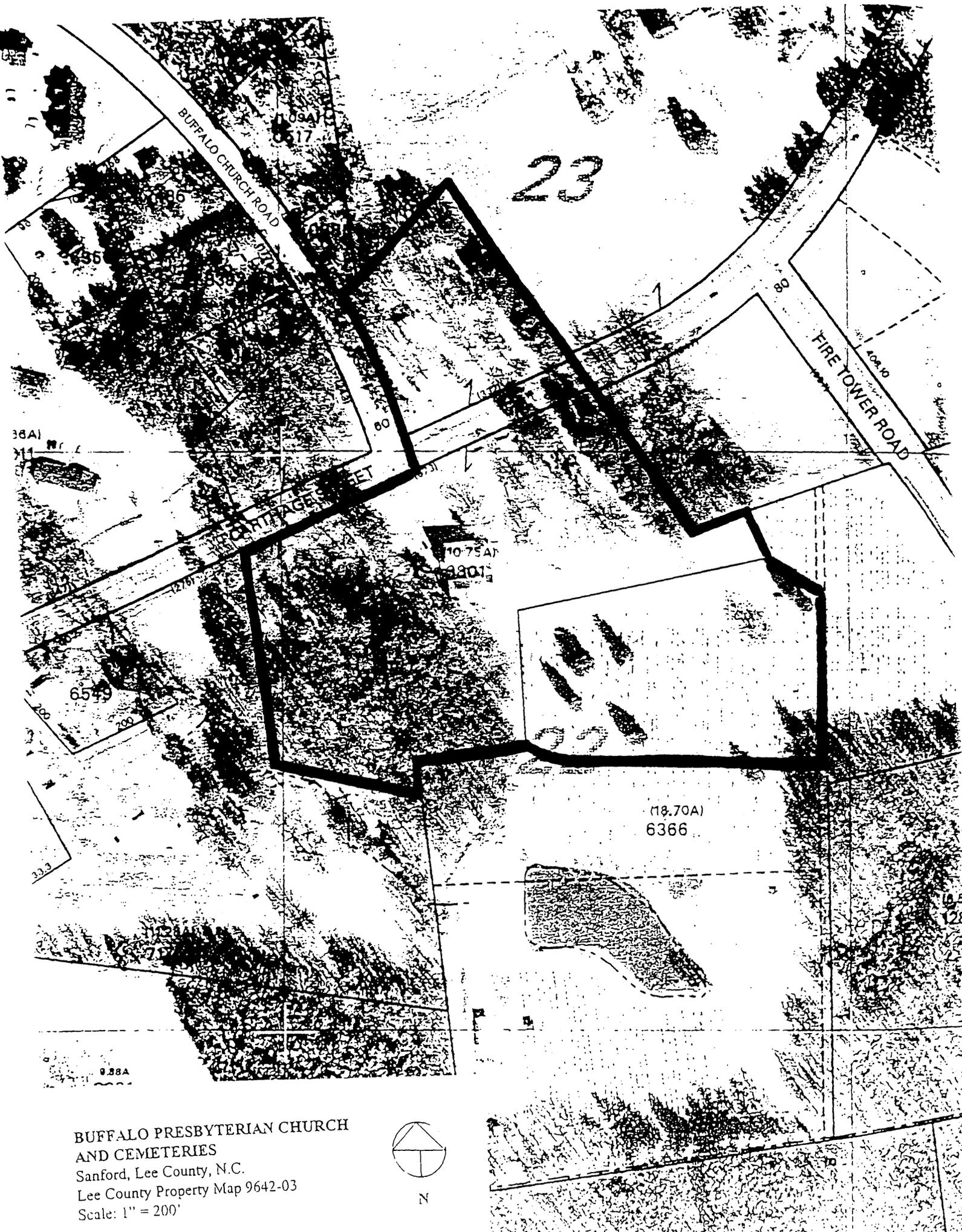


**BUFFALO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
AND CEMETERIES**
Sanford, Lee County, N.C.
Not to scale

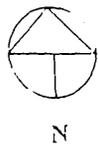


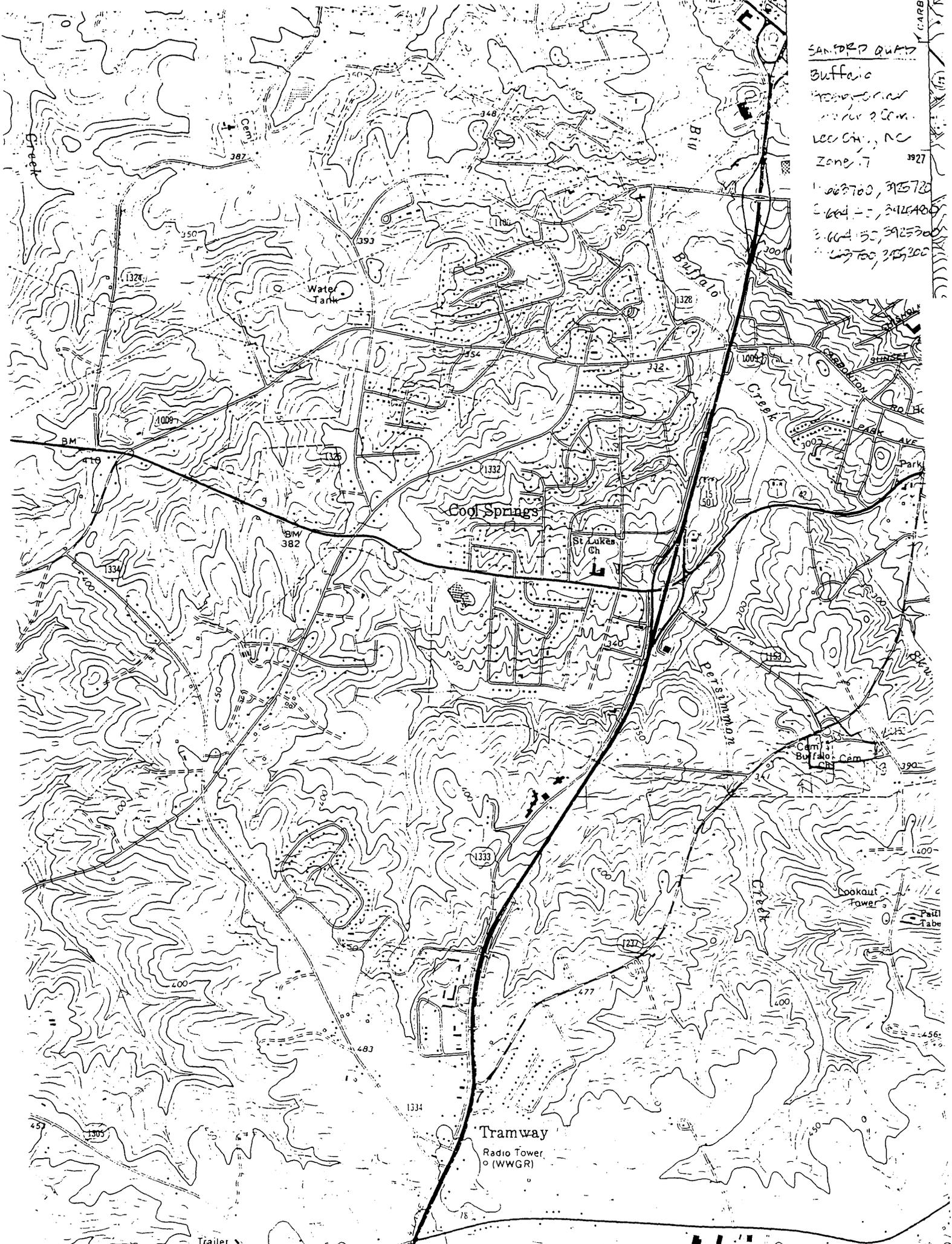
KEY (numbers correspond to inventory in nomination):

1. Buffalo Presbyterian Church
2. Original Church Cemetery
3. African-American Cemetery
4. Matthews Family Plot
5. Main Cemetery
6. Manse



BUFFALO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
AND CEMETERIES
Sanford, Lee County, N.C.
Lee County Property Map 9642-03
Scale: 1" = 200'





SANFORD QUARTER
 Buffalo
 1:25,000
 1927
 1000
 1000
 1000
 1000

CARB

Trail Table

456

