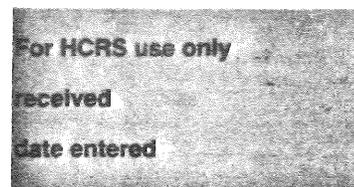


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



**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 First Presbyterian Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 200 West Trade Street _____ not for publication

city, town Charlotte _____ vicinity of congressional district 9th

state North Carolina code 037 county Mecklenburg code 119

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 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name First Presbyterian Church, Mrs. Harvey C. Henderson, Clerk of the Session

street & number 5100 Sharon Road

city, town Charlotte _____ vicinity of state North Carolina 28210

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mecklenburg County Courthouse

street & number 720 East Fourth Street

city, town Charlotte _____ state N. C. 28202

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town _____ state

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		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The First Presbyterian Church, located at 200 W. Trade Street, Charlotte, is an impressive religious complex designed in the Gothic Revival style. Occupying an entire city block in the center of Charlotte, the church with its auxiliary buildings and expansive lawn--all surrounded by an ironwork fence--commands today, as it has since the mid-nineteenth century, a prominent visual as well as spiritual presence in the community.

The present fabric of the First Presbyterian Church complex spans the century from 1857-1961. Throughout the growth of this complex the Gothic Revival style has been retained so, that while some of the structures are obviously of more recent vintage than others, as a whole they form a visually compatible group.

The oldest fabric remaining dates from the second church structure on the site, which was erected in 1857 (Sidney Reading, architect and builder, 1857). The first building, constructed between 1818 and 1823, had been a multi-denominational church although those of Presbyterian persuasion apparently formed the predominant group. In 1841 the property was deeded to the Presbyterians, who had been officially organized in 1821. By the 1850s the congregation had outgrown the first brick church, and in 1857 the second church structure was erected on the site at a cost of about \$13,000. Following its completion, Sidney Reading was praised by a congregational resolution for "the architectural skill and ability exhibited by him in planning, and fidelity in executing the construction of our present church edifice." This Gothic Revival structure was constructed of bricks covered with stucco and painted in imitation of cut stone. Measuring 50x80 feet with balconies along both sides and across the rear, this building boasted a steeple which rose to a height of 187 feet. In 1883-1884 it was necessary to rebuild the spire, and this, along with the 1857 facade, narthex and tower, remain as part of the present church building.

By the early 1890s the congregation had outgrown the 1857 structure and, in addition, the bricks of the side walls were deemed to be structurally unsound. As a result, a major building campaign took place in 1894-1895 (S. Munch, architect, and John Hill, builder) during which the side and rear walls of the church were taken down and a new structure was erected, partially on the foundations of the older building. The work was accomplished under the direction of an English builder, Mr. Hill. To the 1857 facade, narthex and tower and the 1883-1884 spire were added new side walls, extended about 20 feet to include the transept, pulpit area and choir loft. Although the side balconies were not replaced during the 1894-1895 rebuilding, the rear balcony was retained, though the choir moved to the new choir loft behind the pulpit. In addition to the new sanctuary the first Sunday School building with its own smaller tower was added to the east side of the church. This structure contained a large assembly room, classrooms on both stories, a ladies parlor, library and pastor's study. Although in 1952 two rooms in the Sunday School building were combined to form a chapel, both the present church building and this Sunday School building appear largely the same as when built in 1894-1895.

Both the main church and the 1894-1895 Sunday School building are of brick construction covered with stucco to give the impression of stone. The Gothic style is strongly stated in the lancet windows (many of which are filled with stained glass), side and corner buttresses, crenelated parapets, and towers and spires capped by pinnacles decorated with crockets and finials. Adding to the overall quality of design, the steeply pitched roofs feature patterned bands of square and round-cut slate shingles.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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received _____
date entered _____

Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 1

The interior of the sanctuary continues the impressive quality of design demonstrated on the exterior. In fact, its overall appearance is somewhat awesome in both scale and detail. The lower walls of the sanctuary are sheathed in a wainscot of narrow beaded boards with inset reeded panels. Above the wainscot the walls are plastered. Originally the walls were further decorated with a wide frescoed border in a rinceau pattern above the wainscot, painted by L. B. DeQuentine from Florence, Italy. Some years ago, however, this fresco work was painted-over. Perhaps the most impressive feature of the sanctuary is the magnificent ceiling, composed of broad, four-center-arched ribs infilled with panels alternately sheathed with horizontal and diagonal narrow boarding which creates a variety in surface texture. Suspended from the ceiling are three huge combination gas/electric chandeliers which are hung by winches so that they can be lowered for cleaning. These date from the 1894-1895 rebuilding. The sanctuary is arranged with large curved pews which are separated by a center aisle. At the rear of the church is the balcony, and at the front the pulpit and choir loft area is enframed by a pointed arch and surrounded by rich oak paneling accented by layers of blind and openwork pointed arches. The rear balcony repeats this motif in its pointed-arch dado. The memorial stained glass windows in the sanctuary were set in place at various times during the history of the church.

On the right side of the sanctuary, large paneled doors with paneled reveal lead to a foyer which once served as a Sunday School assembly room. This room serves as a link between the sanctuary and the rooms of the Sunday School buildings. To the left of the pulpit area, a pointed-arch, paneled door opens to a small room with beaded board wainscot and angular Victorian stairway which leads to the arched door of the choir loft.

Since the 1894-1895 building phase, the First Presbyterian Church has continued to grow in order to meet the needs of its congregation. During 1916-1917 (C. C. Hook, architect, and Blythe and Isenhour Construction Co.) the Sunday School building was doubled in size by the addition of the Burroughs Building, made possible by the gift of Mr. J. C. Burroughs. Along with numerous Sunday School rooms, this addition contains the Heritage Room, in which are displayed important artifacts from the history of the church. The Burroughs Building continues the use of lancet windows, crenelated parapet and corner buttresses with decorative pinnacles.

In 1952 a large wing was added to the left rear of the church (J. A. Jones Construction Co., builder) to serve as the Fellowship Hall. (At this same time the chapel in the 1894-1895 Sunday School building was created from two classrooms.) The Fellowship Hall features a steep slate roof and windows capped by Tudor arch hood molds, as well as small buttresses between the windows.

In 1960-1961 (Charles W. Connelly, architect, and F. N. Thompson, Inc., builder) the Office-Educational Building was constructed to the left of the sanctuary on the site where the 1876 manse had stood. Connected to the main church only indirectly via a narrow linkage with the Fellowship Hall, this most recent building in the complex maintains the Gothic feeling of the whole through its use of crenelated parapet, corner buttresses and windows like those of the Fellowship Hall with Tudor-arched hood molds.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1857, 1883-1884, 1894-1895, 1916-1917, 1952, 1960-1961. **Builder/Architect** Sidney Reading (1857), S. Munch and John Hill (1894-1895), C. C. Hook (1916-1917)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

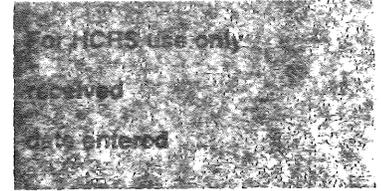
The First Presbyterian Church, set in an ironwork-enclosed tree-shaded park in downtown Charlotte, stands as a monument of Presbyterianism in Charlotte as well as a strong visual reminder of the persistent attraction of the Gothic Revival style for church architecture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This, the second church building erected on the site, was erected in 1857 and embellished and expanded in five succeeding building programs in 1883-1884, 1894-1895 (during which the sanctuary and the central structure arrived at its present appearance), 1916-1917, 1952, and 1960-1961. The stucco-covered brick construction and Gothic Revival arches and other motives are the principal features of the church's fabric. Although it is but the fourth oldest of the Presbyterian congregations established within the present boundaries of Mecklenburg County and thus younger than Providence, Hopewell, and Sugaw Creek churches, it is the oldest of Charlotte's city churches and the mother of a number organized in the city in the past century and a half. The retention of the Gothic Revival style during the expansion of the church plant resulting from an increased membership and program schedule and demographic changes reflects also the inherent conservatism of the congregation. Recognized by the Concord Presbytery in 1821, the congregation was organized out of services conducted in the courthouse in the early years of the nineteenth century. By 1815 the town commissioners set aside a lot to be used for a town church, and less than four years later, construction had begun on a church which was non-denominational until 1835 by which time it came to, and continued to, serve only the Presbyterian congregation until the construction of this church in 1857.

Criteria Assessment:

- A. Although the First Presbyterian Church congregation is but the fourth oldest Presbyterian congregation to be organized in the present confines of Mecklenburg County, it is the oldest of the city churches and the mother church for a number which have been organized later in this community of strong Presbyterian beliefs and Scotch-Irish background.
- B. The church is associated with the lives of the Reverend Robert Hall Morrison, his daughter and granddaughter who were respectively the wife and daughter of General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. The Reverend Morrison was pastor to the congregation from 1827 into 1833. The funeral for Mrs. Julia (Jackson) Christian was conducted from the church with military honors on 30 August 1889. The funeral for Mrs. Mary Anna (Morrison) Jackson, long a member of the church, was conducted, also with military honors, from the church on 26 March 1915.
- C. The First Presbyterian Church, built on this site in 1857 in the Gothic Revival style, continues to serve the congregation as the core of the present church plant. In the succeeding five building programs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through which the church arrived at its present appearance, the architectural form and vocabulary of the original Gothic Revival structure were maintained. This continuation of Gothic Revival forms through successive generations of building exhibits not only the strong importance of that style to ecclesiastical building but also provides the congregation and the city a building of unusually strong architectural richness and visual impact.

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Most of the early settlers of what is now Mecklenburg County were Ulster-Scot Presbyterians who organized and built churches from 1755 to 1770. However, there was no church in Charlotte which was established as the county seat in 1766. There was preaching when a minister was available with services being held in the little courthouse.

In 1815 the town commissioners set aside a plot of land to be used for a town church. It was to be built by the townspeople and used by all denominations. Just when the church was begun is not known, but in 1819 William Davidson sold several lots to the commissioners. The deed stated, "The aforesaid lotts [sic] are granted to the aforesaid Commissioners for the use and benefit of the church now building."¹

As a public undertaking this was a failure and the commissioners had to complete the building by borrowing \$1,500 from the Charlotte branch of the Bank of New Bern. In 1835 the note expired and the remaining balance of \$674 had to be paid. John Irwin, a Presbyterian and commissioner, paid off the debt and in turn was deeded the property in trust for the Presbyterians.² He held the deed until 1841 when he was repaid in part and deeded a clear title to the trustees of the church, ". . . for the members of the Presbyterian Church in the aforesaid Town of Charlotte. . . ."³

The Presbyterians of Charlotte had been officially recognized as a church on September 5, 1821 by the Concord Presbytery in session at Hopewell Church, Mecklenburg County.⁴ No picture of the first building is known to exist, but oral descriptions given in later years by members who remembered it, and articles in newspapers of the period, indicate that it might have been a two story brick building with pews on the ground floor and in the balcony.⁵ It had a steeple in which there was a bell at least by 1826. This bell is a treasured relic and is now housed on a stand in the foyer and is rung on special occasions. It had been removed from the steeple in 1861 and used in various places until it was returned to the church in late 1942.

In 1857 a second building was erected on the site.⁶ The facade, narthex and tower of this building remain as part of the present building with the rebuilt spire of 1883-1884.⁷ A pew used in this building from 1857 to 1894 is now kept in the Heritage Room.

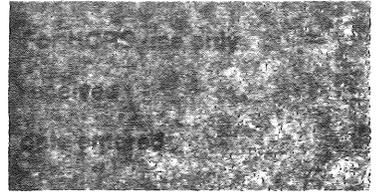
A wing was added to the right of the second building in 1894-1895 for the first Sunday school building.⁸ At that time the sanctuary was rebuilt from the narthex back on the foundation of the previous building with an extension of about twenty feet toward Fifth Street.⁹ The Sunday school building was doubled in size in 1916-1917.¹⁰

The sanctuary remains essentially the same as it was following the rebuilding. It is impressive and contributes to an atmosphere of worship. It is rich in symbolism, especially in the stained glass memorial windows added through the years, four of which are Tiffany windows. New pulpit furniture and communion table were installed in 1976. Those used from 1895 to that date are now in the Heritage Room. The chapel's stained glass windows tell of various phases of the church's work and history. Many memorial gifts have been made to the church throughout its history. Some of these are the Burroughs Building, Fellowship Hall, Orr Memorial Chapel, windows in the sanctuary, the Jones Memorial windows over the front entrances, the pulpit furnishings and communion table, and a substantial anonymous gift for the Office-Educational Building.

The church is the mother church of all the Presbyterian churches in the city. Many prominent families have been members, and through the years the church has been closely associated with the community at large.

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Among the number of interesting events have taken place in the sanctuary or on the spacious grounds from the earliest years was the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the "Mecklenburg Declaration of May 20, 1775." The exercises were held in the sanctuary on May 20, 1825. They were presided over by the Rev. Humphry Hunter, pastor of Steel Creek Presbyterian Church. As a young man he had been present in Charlotte that day in 1775. In attendance were sixty to seventy Revolutionary War veterans.¹¹ The funeral service for Mrs. Julia Jackson Christian, a member of the church, was held in the church with military honors, on August 30, 1889. She was the daughter of General Thomas J. "Stonewall" and Mary Anna Morrison Jackson.¹² On March 26, 1915 the funeral for Mrs. Jackson took place, also with military honors. She was the daughter of the Reverend Robert Hall Morrison, pastor of the church 1827-1833.¹³ For a number of years beginning on May 10, 1873, Memorial Day services were held on the church grounds. A procession then moved to Elmwood Cemetery nearby to decorate the graves of the Confederate Veterans.¹⁴

On April 16, 1919 a homecoming celebration to honor World War I veterans was held in Charlotte. Special guests were the North Carolina officers and men of the 120th Regiment of the 30th Division of the U.S. Army. This was the Regiment that was "first to pierce the Hindenburg Line at Bellicourt, France," on September 29, 1918. Three special trains brought about 2,000 men from Camp Jackson for the day. A number of military and civil officers and other dignitaries as well as a tremendous crowd also came for the celebration. The church yard was the scene of the picnic lunch served to the soldiers. Rain came down in torrents and they had to move inside the buildings. The Charlotte Observer and Charlotte News both carried lengthy articles about action in France and the events of the day's celebration.¹⁵

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States met in the church four times: 1864, 1897, 1920, and 1958.¹⁶ The 1897 meeting was the 250th anniversary of the Westminster Assembly that laid the foundation of the Presbyterian Church. The Reverend Dr. Joseph R. Wilson, father of Woodrow Wilson, was the stated clerk.

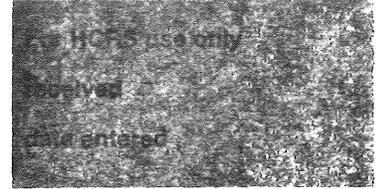
From 1851 to 1874, with only a brief interruption, there were Sunday school classes in the church for blacks. An average of sixty were in attendance in 1859.¹⁷ The church also conducted two mission schools and Sunday schools in the poorer sections of town. The first of these lasted until 1882. Foremost in this endeavor was Mrs. Zebulon B. Vance, who with her husband, the former governor of North Carolina, were members of the church. The second was opened in mid 1890 and discontinued in 1911.¹⁸

Through the years the church has been closely associated with Davidson and Queens colleges, Alexander Children's Center, Barium Springs Home, Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, Presbyterian Hospital and other institutions. A Child Development Center, begun in 1947, is housed in the church building. It was a pioneer in the field and has served as a model for other churches. Office space is also provided for the Community School of the Arts, the Uptown Youth Ministry, and Ex-Convicts Organization (ECO). There is also a walk-in ministry for people in need.

Since May, 1961, the Sunday morning service has been televised by WSOC-TV. In 1974 color cameras were installed. The viewing audience is estimated to be in the thousands. Letters are received from a wide geographical area expressing appreciation and requesting copies of the sermons.

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From this church members still continue to go out as ministers and laypeople to bear witness to the Christian faith. The church, building on the past, continues to look to the future for ever widening fields of service.

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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National Park Service

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received
date entered

Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8

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FOOTNOTES

- ¹Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3, p. 99, 1819.
- ²Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3, p. 100, 1835.
- ³Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3, p. 101, 1841.
- ⁴Madeline Orr, "Collection Historical Materials," First Presbyterian Church File. Microfilm copy in Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- ⁵First Presbyterian Church File.
- ⁶First Presbyterian Church File.
- ⁷First Presbyterian Church File.
- ⁸First Presbyterian Church File.
- ⁹First Presbyterian Church File.
- ¹⁰First Presbyterian Church File.
- ¹¹Catawba Journal (Charlotte), May 31, 1825. First Presbyterian Church File. Microfilm copy in Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- ¹²Charlotte Chronicle, August 31, 1889. First Presbyterian Church File. Microfilm copy in Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- ¹³Charlotte Observer, April 26, 1915. First Presbyterian Church File. Microfilm copy in Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- ¹⁴Mrs. J. A. Fore, First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1832-1932, p. 12. First Presbyterian Church File.
- ¹⁵Charlotte Observer, April 16, 1919, April 17, 1919. Charlotte News, April 16, 1919. Microfilm copy in Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- ¹⁶First Presbyterian Church File.
- ¹⁷First Presbyterian Church File.
- ¹⁸First Presbyterian Church File.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Orr, Madeline. "Collection of Historical Materials." First Presbyterian Church File. Microfilm copy in Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina
See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.2 acres

Quadrangle name Charlotte East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	7
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See enclosed Mecklenburg County Tax Line Map, Book 78, Page 01 (copy)

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state		code	county		code

11. Form Prepared By

Architectural description by Laura A.W. Phillips (consultant), Historical Research by Miss name/title Elizabeth Williams (Church Historian) Statement of significance and criteria assessment by Davyd Foard Hood
organization Division of Archives and History date December 22, 1981

street & number 109 East Jones Street telephone (919) 733-6545

city or town Raleigh state N. C. 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *William P. Rice, Jr.*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date August 30, 1982

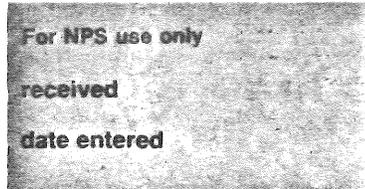
For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
date

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 1

Fore, Mrs. A. J. Scrap Books. First Presbyterian Church File.

James, John. "A Brief Historical Sketch of Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte and the First Presbyterian Church Property." First Presbyterian Church File.

Mecklenburg County Records, Mecklenburg County Office Building, Register of Deeds Office, 720 East Fourth Stree, Charlotte, North Carolina.

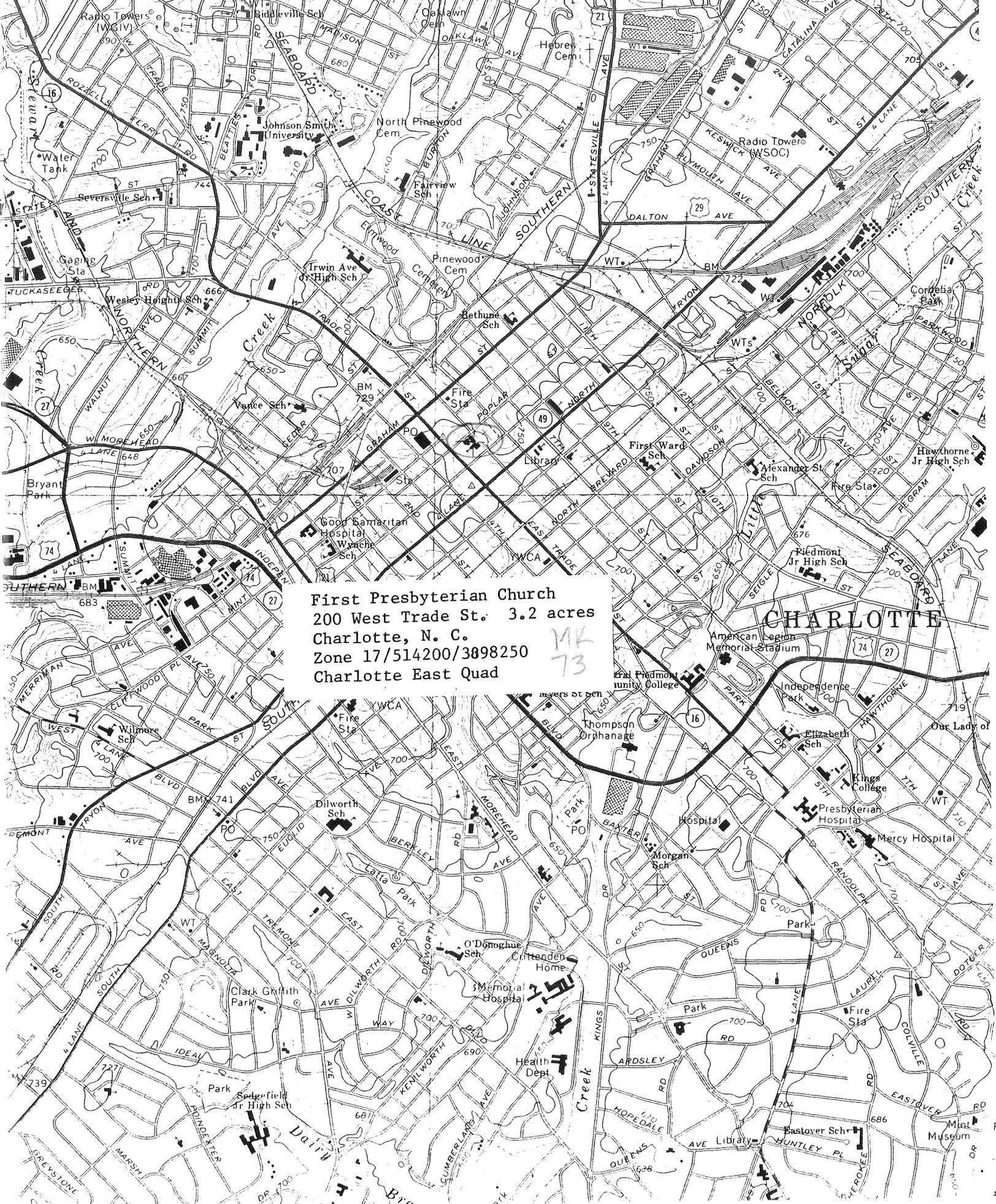
Minute Books of the Session and Diaconate, First Presbyterian Church File.

Newspapers, various microfilm copies in Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Orr, Madeline. "Collection of Historical Materials." First Presbyterian Church File. Microfilm copy in Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Williams, Elizabeth. Scrap Books. First Presbyterian Church File.

Mockleburgs East



First Presbyterian Church
200 West Trade St. 3.2 acres
Charlotte, N. C.
Zone 17/514200/3898250
Charlotte East Quad

MK
73

CHARLOTTE

