

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Centenary Methodist Church**

Rowland vicinity, Robeson County, RB0530, Listed 4/10/2007

Nomination by Beth Keane

Photographs by Beth Keane, September 2005



Front and side view



Side and rear view

**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 any 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 Centenary Methodist Church

other names/site number Centenary Memorial United Methodist Church

**2. Location**

street & number 2585 NC Hwy 130 East [North side NC Hwy 130 E. at intersection  
with SR 2462 (Butler Road)] not for publication N/A

city or town Rowland vicinity X

state North Carolina code NC county Robeson code 155 zip code 28383

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. (      See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or 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 commenting or other official      Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

     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):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Centenary Methodist Church  
Name of Property

Robeson County, NC  
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	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility  
FUNERARY cemetery

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility  
FUNERARY cemetery  
DOMESTIC outhouse

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)  
Classical Revival

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation brick  
roof asphalt  
walls weatherboard  
other \_\_\_\_\_

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

Centenary Methodist Church  
Name of Property

Robeson County, NC  
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**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.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a 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)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1885-1903  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1885  
1903  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Centenary Methodist Church  
Name of Property

Robeson County, NC  
County and State

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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 1.8 acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing  
1 17 660530 3817960  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

Zone Easting Northing  
3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ 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.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Beth Keane

organization Retrospective date November, 2006

street & number 6073 Gold Creek Estates Drive telephone 828-328-8147

city or town Hickory state NC zip code 28601

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### 12. Additional Documentation

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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)

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### Property Owner

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

name Centenary Memorial Association, Trustees; C/O John C. Edens, Trustee

street & number 12200 Idlewood Drive telephone 910-276-5172

city or town Laurinburg state NC zip code 28352-2314

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**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 the 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 Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Centenary Methodist Church  
Robeson County, NC**

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The 1885-1903 Centenary Methodist Church (currently known as Centenary Memorial United Methodist Church) is located in the southern section of Robeson County in an area known as Cotton Valley, approximately four miles southeast of Rowland. The church sits facing southwest on an approximate two-acre lot at the northwest corner of the intersection of NC 130 East and SR 2462 (Butler Road.) A cemetery, partially surrounded by a wrought iron fence, is located northwest of the church close to NC 130. An early twentieth-century frame school house, known as Centenary School, once stood east of the church building. The school closed in 1942 and was dismantled in the late 1950s. A rural landscape surrounds the simple frame church, with agricultural fields fanning out to the south and east and woods located north and west of the building. For ease of description of the building orientation, the southwest direction will be designated as south, the southeast will be designated as east, the northeast will be designated as north, and the northwest will be designated as the west.

According to John Edens, a life-time member of the church and a descendent of one of the original members, Centenary Methodist Church was constructed by church members from timber harvested from a nearby stand of virgin long leaf pine. The church, as originally built, was a modest gable-front frame building with weatherboard siding and a small, front stoop. The church rested on brick piers which have since been infilled with a continuous brick foundation. Its original length, approximately forty-five feet, was roughly equal to the height of its front gable, making for a very stout and stable structure. The church had two entrance doors and four six-over-six sash windows on each side elevation.

In 1903 Centenary Methodist Church was enlarged with the addition of a vestibule and two flanking Sunday school rooms, increasing the length of the building by approximately eleven feet. A steeple was also added to the roof of the church at this time. The rectangular steeple features a four-sided, pointed roof with a flared base and a pointed-arch vent on the south, east and west elevations. In addition, the church was updated with Classical Revival-style details with the addition of overhanging eaves, a cornice with returns, and corner pilasters.

The one-bay façade features central double-leaf, four-panel doors surmounted by a four-light transom. A pointed-arch vent is centered over the entrance. A central brick stoop with flanking brick walls was added in 1957. A gable-front portico with cornice returns, supported by two slender wood columns, rests on the stoop and was added to the church in 1982. A wrought iron railing flanks each side of the steps leading to the front entrance. The steeple was covered with aluminum siding in 1982 and a new roof composed of asphalt shingles was added to the church in 2004.

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The east and west elevations of the church each include five evenly spaced six-over-six double-hung sash windows. The windows are flanked by green wooden shutters and many of the original float glass panes remain in place. A small hipped-roof chancel with angled sides is attached to the north elevation. Two six-over-six sash windows located on the north elevation of the church flank the chancel. Two additional six-over-six sash windows are positioned on the east and west elevations of the chancel.

**Interior: 1903 Vestibule**

The vestibule has a trapezoid shape with the shorter side on the south end. Two small classrooms are positioned on either side of the vestibule. A chair rail divides the dado from the upper wall. The four walls of the vestibule are sheathed with tongue-and-groove beaded boards laid diagonally with the wainscot boards laid in the opposite direction from the boards on the upper wall creating a lozenge pattern.

The interior vestibule doors and floor replaced the original features in the 1950s. The four six-panel doors each measure three feet, five-inches wide. The side doors provide access to the flanking classrooms, while the doors on the north wall open into the side aisles of the sanctuary. The diminutive classrooms are also sheathed with beaded boards. A bench attached to the side wall in each classroom provided seating for the children during their Sunday school lessons. The ceiling of the vestibule and classrooms are also sheathed with tongue-and-groove beaded boards laid diagonally. An attic can be reached through a square opening in the vestibule ceiling; however, the attic was not accessible for inspection. A small display cabinet in the vestibule holds the original wooden communion set and small glass communion cups used by the congregation.

**Interior: 1885 Sanctuary**

The wainscoting in the sanctuary consists of three wide flush boards, laid horizontally. The upper walls and ceiling are sheathed with tongue-and-groove beaded boards running at a forty-five degree angle, making perfect ninety-degree angles where the sections join. The unusual geometric pattern of the sheathing coupled with the concave upper sidewall construction meeting the ceiling is an unusual design and reveals the skills of the local craftsmen.

The chancel features a concave ceiling and is set off by flanking pilasters. A communion rail marks the raised platform of the altar and curves to the right enclosing the individual chairs used by the choir. An upright piano sits in the corner behind the chairs. The interior woodwork is finished with a rich glossy dark pine stain that glows in the natural light provided by the large windows.

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The church retains the original window frames surmounted by decorative triangular pediments, as well as many of the original glass float panes. The pews are arranged in three rows with two aisles. Three additional pews, perpendicular to the others, are situated in the front, left of the chancel. Most of the pews are original to the church and can be identified by the rosettes applied to their end panels. The regular, rippled waves of a hand-planed surface are evident on the seats and backs of the benches.

Carbide lamps replaced the original kerosene lanterns in the early 1930s. In 1937 the carbide lamps were replaced with electric lights and the ceiling fans were added in 1986. A wire chase, housing the electrical wires for the ceiling fans and lights, spans the length of the meeting hall ceiling. A gas heating system replaced the old pot-bellied stove in 1950.

**Cemetery:**

A cemetery, located approximately one hundred feet west of the church, contains approximately 160 marked graves. The south-facing stones are arranged in eight rows with approximately twenty graves in each row. A number of different marker styles are represented in the cemetery including one brick box tomb. The earlier markers tend to be upright slabs with segmental arches. Several of the stones marking the graves of children are topped by lambs or doves. There are also a number of obelisks and pedestal tombstones. Many of the newer markers consist of substantial marble stones.

A number of the original parishioners are buried in the cemetery with numerous members of the McCormic, McCormick, McArthur, Crawford, Edens, Falk, Gaddy, Hammond, McGirt, McLellan, Miller, and Phillips families among the interred. The oldest grave dates to 1883 and belongs to Margaret McCormick (b. March 3, 1843, d. September 13, 1883). The cemetery continues to be used by former church members with the most recent burial occurring in 2001. A handsome wrought iron fence partially encloses the cemetery.

**Outbuildings:**

Two outhouses, rebuilt in 1966, are associated with the church, although only one is located on the church property and included with the nomination as a noncontributing building. The simple frame buildings have board-and-batten siding and a shed roof. The included outhouse is located north of the cemetery on a narrow strip of land that runs between the wrought iron fence and the edge of the woods.



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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Centenary Methodist Church is a fine example of a late-nineteenth-century rural church enlarged and updated in the early twentieth century with classically-derived stylistic details. The original 1885 gable-front frame church featured two entrance doors opening into a two-aisle sanctuary with the altar and pulpit located at the opposite gable end. Built by church members from timber harvested from a nearby stand of virgin long leaf pine, the church is a testament to the highly skilled craftsmanship of its builders. The interior, almost entirely clad with tongue-and-groove boards laid diagonally and making perfect ninety degree angles where the sections join, coupled with the concave upper sidewall construction, makes for a distinctive and beautiful design. The window frames, surmounted by framed pediments, retain many of the original float glass panes. Also contributing to the architectural integrity of the church is the retention of the original hand-planed pews.

The church was enlarged in 1903 with the addition of a vestibule with flanking classrooms. At the same time, the church was updated with classically-derived stylistic details including corner pilasters, overhanging eaves, a wide cornice, and cornice returns. In addition, a new steeple gave the church an added presence and identification.

Located in southern Robeson County, the Centenary Methodist Church is situated in a pastoral setting surrounded by agricultural fields and woods. Although no longer in active use, the church is maintained by an active and devoted memorial association and continues to host annual homecomings in addition to the occasional wedding or funeral. The church meets Criteria Consideration A as it meets National Register Criterion C for architecture as an intact example of a late-nineteenth-century rural protestant church updated in the Classical Revival style in 1903. The cemetery is a contributing site due to its association with the church. The period of significance begins in 1885, the year the church was constructed, and ends in 1903, the year the church was enlarged and stylistically updated with classically-derived elements.

**Historic Background**

Centenary Methodist Church, located in the southern section of Robeson County in an area historically known as Cotton Valley, was organized in 1882 by Reverend Washington S. Chaffin, a Methodist circuit rider. In January, 1882, Rev. Chaffin visited Cotton Valley and observed that the area had no Methodist church. His diary entry noted that "he would try to establish a Church and work for God and His Church." On August 11, 1882, Duncan A. and Mary McCormick deeded one acre of land to a group of seven trustees for the purpose of building a church (Deed Book 3B, page 70). Two years later, A. R. Raven, the Secretary of the Board of Missions of the North Carolina Conference, noted in the December 10, 1884 issue of the *Raleigh Christian Advocate*: "there are twenty-four pastoral charges in the bounds of the

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North Carolina Conference known as missions, that is, societies and communities which are not able, unaided, to provide themselves with the Gospel.” The area known as Cotton Valley was part of the Ashpole Mission (Edens, p. 1).

The erection of a church building began in 1884 and was completed in 1885. According to John Edens, a descendent of one of the original families in the congregation, the building, all wood, was constructed by church members from timber harvested from a nearby stand of virgin long leaf pine. While the church was being constructed, services were held in an unfinished building owned by Alex McCormic. At the annual session of the North Carolina Conference in 1885, Centenary Methodist Church was transferred from the Ashpole Mission to the Robeson Circuit and in 1886 Jonathan Sanford was appointed pastor of the new church. The church held a well-attended dedication ceremony on May 9, 1886, presided over by Dr. Sanford. Jonathan Sanford continued as pastor to Centenary Methodist Church through 1887 and 1888. Church membership continued to increase, with a report in September 1888 that 150 members had been added in the past three years (Edens, p. 3).

In 1889 S. V. Hoyle replaced Jonathan Sanford as pastor and the following year, Hoyle was replaced by N. M. Journey who served the church from 1891-92. In 1893, Jonathan Sanford served the Robeson Circuit and Centenary Methodist Church for an additional two years. The minister continued to change every three to four years through the end of the nineteenth century with Erskine Pope serving from 1895 through 1898 and Z. T. Harrison from 1899 to 1900 (Edens, pp. 5-6).

Rowland Circuit was formed at the annual session of the North Carolina Conference in 1902 and Centenary Methodist Church was placed on it, with J. W. Bradley the assigned pastor to the church. The new circuit was part of the Rockingham District that was described by Pastor Bradley in a letter dated March 11, 1903, as “having four appointments including three houses of worship, all badly in need of repair or paint.” During that same year, Rev. Bradley oversaw the addition to Centenary Church of a vestibule flanked by two small classrooms and a new steeple (Edens, p. 8).

Centenary Methodist Church officially acquired the adjacent cemetery lot west of the church on October 8, 1904, when Daniel, Flora Ella, Ellen, and Belva McCormick sold the property containing 8/10 of an acre to the trustees of Centenary Cemetery. The deed specified that the lot shall “remain the property of the said trustees and their successors in office so long as the same shall be used as a cemetery for a place of burial or the last resting place of bodies buried therein” (Deed Book 4-W, p. 83).

Early in the first decade of the twentieth century a school building was erected on the parcel east of the church. Centenary School as it was called, along with the church, served the

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surrounding farming community for many decades. The school was composed of four classrooms with movable walls and dividers that could be opened up for assembly or chapel which was held each morning. There was a stall behind the school where the mules and ponies used by students for transportation stayed during school hours. The school generally employed three teachers per session teaching combined grades, with an average enrollment of approximately 100 students. The teachers boarded in the homes of local families. Heat for the building came from a pot belly stove in each room and water came from a pump outside the schoolhouse. The students attended week-day services, including funerals, at the adjacent church (Edens, pp. 85-86).

In May of 1905, Pastor Bradley wrote in an article for the *Raleigh Christian Advocate* the following:

Old Centenary church has put on a new dress. People are watching her and she is marching valiantly in the front ranks of the circuit with the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and Sunday School and all church work fraught with spiritual interest. Before our third Quarterly Meeting, which is to be held there, it is our aim to do still more work on the interior of the church – repairing and painting” (Edens, p. 9).

It was common practice to hold week-long revival meetings at the four churches belonging to the Rowland Circuit during the second decade of the twentieth century. The same minister served the four churches - the Rowland Church, Purvis Church, Asbury Church, and Centenary Church – taking turns at each house of worship. Rev. J. A. Lee, minister of the Rowland circuit from 1912 through 1915, reported in the August 15, 1912 edition of the *Raleigh Christian Advocate* that the meeting at Centenary Church was held the third Sunday in July with Rev. S. T. Moyle of Fairmont preaching. He described it as a “genuine revival, the brethren say the best in many years. There were many professions and reclamations and the Pastor received eight members at the close of the meeting.” The revivals generally attracted large crowds with much socializing among the attendees including picnic dinners on the church grounds (Edens, pp. 10-11).

A. J. Groves served the Rowland Circuit as pastor from 1916-1919, continuing the custom of holding week-long revival meetings at the various churches. In August of 1916 Centenary Methodist Church hosted a revival starting the fourth Sunday in the month and closing the following Saturday. It was described as a “gracious revival with five additions on profession of faith” (Edens, p. 11).

During the following decades, various ministers were assigned to the Rowland Circuit and Centenary Methodist Church, generally serving from one to four years at a time. The

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parsonage for the minister serving the four churches was located in the town of Rowland. In 1931, the Rockingham District was discontinued and the Rowland Circuit was placed in the Fayetteville District. In 1935, Centenary Methodist Church had a membership of approximately 150 congregants. Electricity was added to the church and school by the Rural Electrification Authority in 1937. Annual homecoming services scheduled for the fourth Sunday in August were instigated in 1949 (Edens, p. 12).

Centenary Methodist Church and Centenary School were the cultural and educational center for the Cotton Valley community of Robeson County for many years. The teachers at Centenary School generally served as Sunday school teachers at the church. Due to a low enrollment, the Centenary School closed its doors in 1942, merging into the Rowland schools. Centenary Methodist Church purchased the one-acre school property in 1958 from the Board of Education of Robeson County, giving the church a total land area of approximately 2.8 acres (Deed Book 12-W, page 51). The school was dismantled soon after the church acquired the property (Edens interview with Beth Keane).

In 1971, Centenary Methodist Church ceased to be an active church due to a diminished membership. At the annual meeting of the North Carolina Conference for the United Methodist Church in 1971, the church merged with the Rowland United Methodist Church. At that time, the North Carolina Methodist Conference deeded the property to the trustees of the Centenary Memorial Association (Deed Book 18-A, p. 232). As a memorial church, it is currently used for annual homecomings and special events such as weddings and funerals. A plaque was added to the front of the church in 1997 that reads: "Centenary Memorial United Methodist Church, established 1882, erected 1885." The church is in excellent condition and remains a treasured community landmark.

**CONTEXT – ARCHITECTURE, Criterion C**

Centenary Methodist Church, when built, was typical of many rural churches built in North Carolina both before and after the Civil War and is exemplary of the plain beauty of the country church. The rural nineteenth-century church in North Carolina provided a sturdy and spacious hall for preaching while also serving double duty as the principal location for socializing for the rural farm families. Often the churches were built by members of the congregation from trees harvested from the land the churches were built on. As congregations grew and prospered, many rural churches expanded their meeting halls by adding a vestibule and/or classroom space. Embellishments in the form of a steeple, cornice returns, and classical porticos updated the look of the church while adding a sense of stability and moral authority.

By the last two decades of the nineteenth century, church architecture was greatly influenced by a proliferation of official denominational publications on church architecture. In

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particular, The Methodists' Board of Church Extension published articles for "efficient, attractive, and practical church buildings" suitable for the worship and ideals of the denomination. Although they recommended sophisticated and elaborate edifices for more urban and wealthy congregations, plans for simple gable-front frame structures for rural, less affluent communities were also included. In addition, many congregations took advantage of the availability of mass-produced building materials making possible the erection of frame or masonry churches with stylistic ornamentation for the first time (Bishir, p. 311).

The builders of Centenary Methodist Church were probably influenced by the advice and official publications of their leaders when they designed and constructed the 1885 church. Centenary Methodist Church originally measured approximately thirty feet by forty-five feet and featured two front doors opening into corresponding aisles. The altar, resting on a raised platform, is located at the opposite gable end, with the pulpit located in a central alcove behind the altar. The large spacious six-over-six sash windows are spaced evenly apart on the side elevations, flooding the interior with natural light. The interior of the church, sheathed with diagonally-laid, tongue-and-groove beaded boards, features triangular pediments over the windows and concave upper sidewall construction and an arched pulpit.

A growing congregation resulted in the expansion of the church in the early twentieth century. In 1903, Centenary Methodist Church followed the typical pattern of many rural churches by adding a vestibule with flanking Sunday school rooms and adorning the building with a steeple, a primary identifying component of a church. In addition, classically-derived stylistic details, including a wide cornice with cornice returns and corner pilasters added touches of embellishment to the simple country church.

Centenary Methodist Church, as originally built in 1885, had a strong resemblance to the 1879 Gilboa Methodist Church in Burke County. The preacher of the Gilboa church cited it as "a splendid building which will compare favorably with many village churches." Similar to Centenary, the simple frame gable-front church clad with weatherboards features two front entrances surmounted by simple transoms and a row of double-hung sash windows on the side elevations. The interior walls and ceiling are covered with planed boards and handmade pews face the raised pulpit (Bishir, pp. 311-313).

Closer to home, two comparable late-nineteenth-century Protestant churches remain standing in rural Robeson County. Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, built during the 1880s, as a simple gable-front, one-story frame church was enlarged in 1913 with three classrooms added behind the pulpit and again in the 1950s when a vestibule and flanking classrooms were added. At approximately the same time a steeple and small portico were added, giving it a similar appearance to Centenary Methodist Church (West, p. 66).

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Orrum Baptist Church, constructed in the 1890s, also began as a simple, gable-front, weatherboarded building with large double-hung sash windows. The church was enlarged in the 1920s with a vestibule with two flanking classrooms and adorned with a new steeple (West, p. 70).

No longer extant, the Midway Presbyterian Church, so named because it was located halfway between the Smyrna and Ashpole churches, was constructed in ca. 1889 as a plain, gable-front, weatherboarded building with large double-hung sash windows. Similar to Centenary Methodist Church, the Presbyterian church added a vestibule and two flanking Sunday school rooms between 1927 and 1937 and a steeple in 1952. The church was lost to a fire on November 29, 2002 (West, pp. 63-64).

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**Bibliography**

Bishir, Catherine W. *North Carolina Architecture*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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**Centenary Methodist Church  
Robeson County, NC**

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated parcel consists of 1.8 acres situated on the northwest corner of North Carolina Highway 130 and Secondary Road No. 2462 (Butler Road). The boundary is delineated on the attached survey map for Centenary Methodist Church dated June 16, 2004. It does not include the one-acre school tract or the .61 acre highway right-of-way.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the one-acre parcel historically associated with Centenary Methodist Church. In addition it includes the adjacent eight-tenths-of-an-acre cemetery parcel, located northwest of the church and acquired by the church in 1904. It excludes the one-acre school tract acquired by the church in 1958 as it is not historically associated with the church. The 2004 surveyed boundary accurately depicts the church property, unlike the Robeson County tax office which shows an incorrect tax parcel.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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**Centenary Methodist Church  
Robeson County, NC**

**Section Photos**

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The following information applies to all photographs:

Name of Property: Centenary Methodist Church

County and State where property is located: Robeson County, North Carolina

Address: 2585 North Carolina Highway 130E, Rowland, NC 28383

Name of Photographer: Beth Keane

Date of Photographs: April, 2006

Location of Original Negatives: North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh

Photographs:

Photograph 1: South and east elevations; camera looking northwest

Photograph 2: North and west elevations; camera looking southeast

Photograph 3: Interior of sanctuary looking at the alter

Photograph 4: Interior of sanctuary looking at the entrance doors

Photograph 5: Interior of vestibule

Photograph 6: Cemetery; camera looking southwest

Photograph 7: Outhouse; camera looking northwest