

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Red House Presbyterian Church**

Semora, Caswell County, CS0444, Listed 5/1/2007  
Nomination by James Long  
Photographs by James Long, February 2007



Façade view



Side 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 Red House Presbyterian Church

other names/site number Hugh McAden Gravesite; Red House Church

**2. Location**

street & number 13408 NC Highway 119 North not for publication N/A

city or town Semora vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Caswell code 033 zip code 27343

**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 X statewide \_\_\_ 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): _____	_____	_____
_____		
_____		

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Caswell County, N.C.  
County and State

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>3</u>	<u>2</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  
Funerary grave

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Religion Sub: religious facility  
Funerary cemetery  
Funerary grave  
Domestic secondary structure

**7. Description**

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

Classical Revival

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
roof Terra cotta  
walls Brick  
other Granite  
Wood

**Narrative Description**

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

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Caswell County, N.C.  
County and State

**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.

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1781

1913

**Significant Dates**

1781

1913

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

McAden, Hugh

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Linthicum, Hill Carter, architect

Fields, Henry, builder

**Areas of Significance**

**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

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Caswell County, N.C.  
County and State

Name of repository: North Carolina State Archives, Caswell County Register of Deeds, Red House Presbyterian Church

---

### 10. Geographical Data

---

Acreage of Property 8.5 acres

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

Zone Easting Northing  
1 17 664570 4039370  
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.)

---

### 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title James M. Long, Historic Recognition Committee Chairperson

organization Red House Presbyterian Church date December 28, 2006

street & number 5680 Stephentown Road telephone 336-234-9636

city or town Blanch state NC zip code 27212

---

### 12. 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Trustees of the Red House Presbyterian Church, W. Osmond Smith III, Clerk

street & number 10790 NC Highway 119 North telephone 336-234-7375

city or town Semora state NC zip code 27343

---

**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.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

### 7. Narrative Description

#### Summary

The Red House Presbyterian Church is a one-story with basement Classical Revival brick building located on a 6.5-acre tract of land on the south side of North Carolina Highway 119 approximately one mile southwest of Semora, North Carolina. It is situated on a slight knoll approximately 300 feet across an expansive lawn and is surrounded by a grove of large white oak and hickory trees. It faces northward toward the highway with access by a semi-circular graveled driveway. The building is rectangular in shape, with an engaged front portico. The interior is comprised of a sanctuary and a pulpit apse flanked by two classrooms at the rear of the building. The building is in excellent condition and has had no substantial alteration since its construction in 1913. A 225-year-old cemetery with more than two hundred graves is located immediately to the south (rear) of the building. Grave markers represent the evolving history of grave monuments from field stones of frontier days to large polished headstones of the twentieth century. Early graves are widely scattered throughout the forested graveyard, but later graves are arranged in straight rows in less wooded areas. The cemetery contains the grave of Reverend Hugh McAden, an early missionary from Pennsylvania who founded many Presbyterian churches in North Carolina. Two outbuildings associated with the residential property to the east have been constructed on the acreage historically associated with the church, and they included in the nominated acreage

#### Church Building – contributing building

##### Exterior

The monochromatic red brick and pink mortar gable-front building has an imposing pedimented Doric portico which is reached by a full-width flight of seven granite steps. A red clay-tiled porch floor leads to double door entrances on the left and right, which open directly into the sanctuary. The entries are five feet wide and eight feet tall. The doors are made of hardwood and are clad with zinc on the exterior. Each door contains five horizontal recessed panels. Large stained glass transom windows adorn the entrances and between the entries is one of a total of twelve one-over-one double-hung stained glass windows found in the church. The portico has four rotund, fluted wooden Doric columns sitting on tall brick pedestals. Within the pediment is a semi-circular stained glass fanlight. The pediment features a modillioned cornice and frieze, and this cornice treatment extends around the entire building. The base of the exterior solid brick walls is topped by a stringcourse of granite which serves as the exterior window sills. Five stained-glass windows, separated by broad pilasters are on the side elevations. On the rear a projecting entranceway leads to a partial basement by way of an enclosed stairway. Above the roof of the enclosed basement stair are three small arched stained glass windows. To the right of these small windows is one of the twelve large double-hung stained glass windows resting on the string course of granite. To the left of the enclosed basement stair and the three small windows is a rear exit door from the church interior. Exterior access to this door is by five

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

formed concrete steps. Above the door and stained glass windows is a pedimented gable with modillioned cornice and frieze to match that on the front portico. The roof of the church is covered by red terra cotta tile. There are two corbelled and arch-capped interior chimneys projecting through the roof at the rear corners.

### Interior

The most prominent interior feature is a set of three dark-stained queen-post roof trusses with ball finials. The ceiling is painted white and has exposed purlins and rafters, which support beaded-board roof sheathing. Interior walls are plastered from ceiling down to the height of the window aprons. Below is a chair rail which defines the top of beaded mahogany wainscoting. All the wooden finishes are stained dark to match the trusses. Four double-hung stained glass windows are evenly spaced on each side wall of the sanctuary. Stained narrow tongue and groove pine flooring slopes theater style down toward the front of the sanctuary to an elevated, center, pulpited apse with a beautifully round arched ceiling and three small round arched stained glass windows behind. Carpeted aisles lead from the entrance doors at an inward angle toward the pulpit with ten curved pews between the aisles and ten curved pews on the outside of each aisle. The apse is recessed between two church school classrooms which have single door entrances from the sanctuary. The classroom to the left contains two stained glass windows of the same size as those in the sanctuary, one in the side wall and the other in the rear wall. The classroom to the right contains one stained glass window in the side wall and an exit door in the rear wall. Two steps and a passage door leading to the right side of the apse are also located in this room. A third classroom and a rest room are located in a partial basement which is accessed by the enclosed exterior stairway. The twelve full sized opalescent stained glass windows located in the sanctuary and classrooms are of a single design. Artwork includes columnettes along the right and left borders of each bottom sash extending to an arch design in the glass at the top of the upper sash. A rectangular panel of dark hues occupies the space between the plinths of the columnettes. An acroterion rises up from the panel. The top sash of each window contains a central crest depicting one of twelve different Christian symbols. The three small stained glass windows in the rear wall of the apse are complimentary in design but contain no crests, and the top arches are of the sash and frame rather than a depiction in the glass of the larger windows. Stained glass transoms over the two front entrances are complimentary in design but contain no crests and no columnettes.

### Alterations To Building

Construction of the present church building was completed in 1913. The only exterior alterations have been the replacement of a damaged terra cotta tile roof on the small rear basement stairwell cover with a standing seam copper roof, and the installation of Classical Revival metal railings on the sides of the portico and on the front and rear steps. There have been no architectural changes to the interior of the building, only the upgrading of lighting fixtures and the replacement of carpet in the

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

aisles of the sanctuary. The church building has excellent historic integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

### Cemetery - - Contributing Site

The cemetery is believed to be the oldest active church cemetery in Caswell County. It is approximately 1.5 acres in size and is located on the south (rear) side of the church building in a grove of red oak, hickory and original growth pine trees. Vehicular access is by a dead end graveled driveway extending along the entire depth of the graveyard on its western edge, and by another graveled driveway which circles the church building to its rear. Pedestrians find easy access from the church yard.

The stones in the cemetery represent all three types of historical grave markers identified by State Archaeologist John Clauser Jr. in his 1994 article, "The Southern Folk Cemetery in Piedmont North Carolina". He labeled the three types as pioneer, transitional and modern phases.

Representing the pioneer phase are twenty four unidentified and undated graves marked only by irregularly shaped upright field stones partially imbedded in the soil and extending approximately one foot above ground. Some are accompanied by smaller foot stones and some are without foot stones. None of the field stone markers contains any inscriptions. Representing the end of the pioneer phase and the beginning of the transitional phase are two notable sandstone markers obviously incised by non-professionals. Although the stones appear to be properly shaped by stonecutters, with smooth surfaces and well defined shapes, the lettering of the inscriptions is irregular in size and some words are misspelled and some are improperly hyphenated. The older of these two described sandstones marks the grave of Leviney Darby (1800-1806) and is shown in Attachment 7A.

The second of these two described sandstones marks the grave of Susan J. Lea (1830-1848) and is shown in Attachment 7B.

Both stones contain what appears to be scratched or chiseled lettering deep enough to have survived the harshness of weather for more than 150 years.

The transitional markers constitute approximately one-fourth the remaining gravestones. They occupy the cemetery space nearest the church building. Thirteen granite obelisks dating from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century adorn the graves of prominent community citizens. An outgrowth of the neoclassical movement, these imposing upright square or tapered shafts, set upon slightly larger bases, represent the most elite type of monument in North Carolina at the time. The tallest obelisk in the cemetery marks the grave of James Monroe Long (1843-1919). It stands seven and one-half feet in height. A companion obelisk of the same, but smaller five and one-half feet design, stands beside it and marks the grave of his wife, Winnie Taylor Long (1868-1940). The simplest obelisk is a four and one-half feet tall monument with a square shaft and pyramidal top



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

marking the grave of Betty Taylor Rainey (1858-1952). Inscribed on the rear of the shaft are the words:

### THE DAY IS DONE

And the night shall  
    be filled with music.  
And the cares that  
    infest the day  
Shall fold their tents  
    like the Arabs,  
And as silently  
    steal away.

This transitional section of gravestones is laid out in five straight rows, containing a number of thin tablet headstones and footstones in addition to obelisks. One such marker is that of Annie Willie Rainey (1878-1896) which is a thin headstone of baroque styling containing a tympanum with a carved dove bearing a flower in its beak. An inscription at the bottom of the tablet reads "Our dove has flown." Another nearby baroque style tablet headstone marks the grave of J. P. Leonard Rainey (1886-1895). It is capped by a stone bouquet of flowers with a resting lamb carved on the base under an inscription which reads, "He shall gather the lambs with his arm." One three inch thick granite headstone, measuring twenty four inches wide and five feet high and inserted in the ground without a base, marks the grave of Nancy S. Richmond (1808-1856). A child's grave (John H. Whittaker 1914-1921) is marked by a stone topped by a three dimensional carved lamb and underscored by the words, "Safe in the arms of Jesus."

The modern section of the cemetery is dominated by a white coursed rubble quartz mausoleum constructed in 1938 for the later entombment of George R. Rogers (1868-1952), and wife Della Harris Rogers (1881-1942). It is nine feet wide and ten and one-half feet long and nine feet tall with a segmental roof. On the rear wall of the mausoleum is a cut stone plaque with the words, "DESIGNED AND BUILT BY G. D. BROOKS, SEMORA, NC." The mausoleum is located inside a reserved family plot measuring twenty four feet wide and forty four feet long bordered by a low white coursed rubble quartz wall. Other members of the Rogers family are buried within the walled plot behind the mausoleum.

George D. Brooks, who built the Rogers mausoleum, was a local undertaker. He constructed a smaller segmental arched mausoleum for himself and his wife near the rear of the cemetery. Built of the same type of white coursed rubble quartz, the Brooks mausoleum measures nine feet wide and four and one half feet high and nine feet long. It contains the bodies of George D. Brooks (1887-1964) and Mollie B. Brooks (1884-1978). An inscription on his inserted stone reads, "He has done

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

what he could” and on her inserted stone, “Blessed are the pure in heart.”

The modern section of the cemetery is less crowded than the transitional section and contains many available gravesites. Most burial sites in this section are marked by head and foot stones of commercial stonecutter quality. Most are rectangular in shape or have a segmented arched top. A notable exception is the family headstone of William Osmond Smith (1875-1937) and two footstones of similar design marking Mr. Smith’s grave and that of his wife Josephine Rainey Smith (1883-1963). The Smith headstone, erected shortly after Mr. Smith’s death, is six feet tall and ten inches thick and sits on a four feet wide base. It contains a cross thirty inches tall cut into the face of the top half of the stone and the family name SMITH cut into the lower half. Mr. And Mrs. Smith’s upright foot stones have the same cross design as the headstone. Her inscription reads, “Her children rise up and call her blessed” and his inscription reads, “His presence lent a radiance so sublime, no sense of death can dim or time.”

The largest headstone in the modern section is that of the Pointer family which measures ten feet wide, forty inches high and eighteen inches thick and marks the recent graves of Jack Lee Pointer (1925-1995) and his wife, Mary Frances Pointer (1922-1992).

The oldest known grave is that of the Reverend Hugh McAden, the first minister of the church who died on January 20, 1781 and, according to recorded history, “was buried in the church yard.”<sup>1</sup> The “church yard” was a historical description of burial grounds located adjacent to church buildings of that time.<sup>2</sup>

### Hugh McAden Grave – contributing site

Located at the northeast corner of the cemetery, approximately one hundred feet from the church building is the burial place and granite monument honoring the memory of Hugh McAden, the first resident minister of Red House Church. The monument is thirty six inches wide, forty eight inches high and twelve inches thick and rests on a fourteen inch high base which measures forty four inches wide and twenty inches thick. Inscribed on the monument are the following words:

REV. HUGH McADEN  
PIONEER MISSIONARY TO NORTH CAROLINA  
IN 1755 AND THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

---

<sup>1</sup> Powell, William S., When The Past Refused To Die, A History of Caswell County 1777-1977; Moore Publishing Co., Durham, NC; 1977

<sup>2</sup> Little, M. Ruth, Sticks And Stones: Three Centuries of North Carolina Grave Markers; The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London; 1998

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

MISSIONARY TO SETTLE IN THE STATE, PASTOR  
IN DUPLIN COUNTY 1757 – 1768. PASTOR OF  
RED HOUSE AND OTHER CHURCHES FROM  
1768 TO THE DATE OF HIS DEATH, JAN 20, 1781  
*“The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance”*

The monument does not reveal the date of its unveiling, but a published record of the occasion<sup>3</sup> reveals that date to be August 3, 1913.

A nearby North Carolina highway historical marker located at the intersection of NC Highway 119 and NC Highway 57 tells the location of Red House Church and Hugh McAden’s grave as follows:

RED HOUSE CHURCH

PRESBYTERIAN, FOUNDED ABOUT MIDDLE  
OF 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, HUGH McADEN, ITS  
NOTED PASTOR WAS BURIED IN THE  
CHURCH YARD, 1781.  
ONE MILE S.

Garage – Non-contributing building

Gable-front, one-bay, frame building with vertical board siding and shed roofed, shed on side. ca. 1940

Shed – Non-contributing building

Shed-roof, two-bay frame building with vertical board siding, ca. 1940

---

<sup>3</sup> Claytor, N. R., “The Unveiling of a Monument to the Memory of Hugh McAden”; a privately published pamphlet; Milton, NC; 1918

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Summary

Red House Presbyterian Church is the second oldest church in Caswell County and has continuously occupied its church grounds and cemetery longer than any other church in the county. Its 250 year old congregation dates back to 1755, the very beginning of organized Presbyterian religion in North Carolina with direct ties to the Reverend Hugh McAden who was the first Presbyterian missionary to permanently settle in the state and serve as a resident minister. McAden is of outstanding importance as he was instrumental in establishing a large number of Presbyterian churches across North Carolina from Mecklenburg County in the west to Wilmington in the east during the mid 1750's. The Hico church, the original name of the Red House Presbyterian Church congregation, was one of the first churches founded by him, and he served as its first resident minister from 1768 until 1781. Hugh McAden's grave, located in the 225-year-old church cemetery and marked by a large monument, meets Criterion B and Criterion Consideration C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his productive life.

The present church building, erected in 1913 is the fourth such structure erected on the site since 1756. Architecturally, it is an excellent example of the Classical Revival style in rural Caswell County and its design by architect H. C. Linthicum is highly sophisticated and sets it apart from other churches in the county of the same time period. The church building is of local architectural distinction and meets Criterion C and Criterion Consideration A for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

#### Historical Context

##### Hugh McAden and the Establishment of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina

Great numbers of Scotch-Irish Presbyterian immigrants sailed to America between 1720 and 1750 because of religious and economic discrimination in Ireland. They were required to pay tithes to the Church of England which they did not attend and were largely excluded from the purchase of land controlled by wealthy landlords. The promise of religious freedom and cheap land in America was irresistible. A popular destination was Pennsylvania. By 1750, one fourth of the population of that state was Scotch-Irish. Benjamin Franklin estimated the number to be 350,000. The great influx of immigrants led to tensions with the established residents. As a result, the Lord Proprietors of Pennsylvania ordered that no more land be sold to the Scotch-Irish immigrants in York and Lancaster counties. New immigrant families began to look elsewhere for settlement opportunities. A southern migration to the frontier lands of Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia was the choice of many. So great was the number of families following the Indian trading paths south through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, it became known as the Great Wagon Road. The families entering North Carolina did so in the northwest Piedmont region, north of present day Winston-Salem. Most continued

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

southwest into the Yadkin and Catawba valleys, but a few families turned eastward after rumors of smallpox to the southwest raised fears.

By 1740 several families of Scotch-Irish immigrants had reached the northeastern Piedmont area of North Carolina and settled on the Hico, Haw and Eno rivers in what is now Caswell, Orange and Alamance counties.<sup>1</sup> By the mid 1750's, small Presbyterian fellowships had been established in communities where small churches were soon to be built at Hico (now Red House), Upper Hico (now Grier's), Eno and Fields of Haw (now Hawfields).

Most Scotch-Irish immigrants preferred the Presbyterian religion over other denominations and Presbyterianism became the religion of choice for many frontier families. The demand for resident Presbyterian ministers to serve churches in rapidly growing Scotch-Irish communities on the western frontiers of Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia, exceeded the supply available from the sponsoring synods of Philadelphia and New York. To temporarily meet this demand, the Synod of Philadelphia and the Synod of New York directed each of their ministers to take time off from their regular assigned pastorates each year to become supply (visiting) preachers to churches without resident ministers in the South. Many supply ministers visited and preached at churches on the Hico, Eno and Haw rivers over a twelve year period from 1756 to 1768. The churches they served are associated with the earliest efforts to organize the Presbyterian religion in the Piedmont region of North Carolina.

### Reverend Hugh McAden

Reverend Hugh McAden (sometimes spelled McCadden) was born in Pennsylvania of Scotch-Irish parentage and was educated at Nassau Hall, now Princeton University. He was licensed to preach by New Castle Presbytery of his home state in the spring of 1754. Rather than assigning him to a local pastorate, the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia sent him as the first Presbyterian missionary to the South for the purpose of visiting North Carolina congregations (Presbyterian or otherwise) which existed without pastors. He traveled by horseback for two months through territories endangered by battles of the French and Indian wars, often pondering whether he should continue on or turn back. A July 1755 entry in his journal states: "I resolved to prosecute my journey, come what will, with some degree of dependence on the Lord for his divine protection and support that I might be enabled to glorify him in all things, whether in life or in death...". Finally, on August 1, 1755, he crossed the Virginia line into North Carolina several miles north of the present location of Red House Church. On August 3, 1755, he preached his first sermon in North Carolina to a fellowship group at the home of Solomon Debow. This was a short distance from where a number of those in attendance would build the Hico (later named Red House) Church the following year (1756).

After preaching his first sermon in the Hico community, Mr. McAden continued his missionary

---

<sup>1</sup> Turner, Herbert Snipes, Church in the Old Fields: Hawfields Presbyterian Church and Community in North Carolina; The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1962

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

journey by traveling to the Eno community of Orange County, and then to the Hawfields community of Alamance County. Having preached at Eno and Hawfields, he traveled across Orange County into Granville County on the Tar River, thence to Grassy Creek and Fishing Creek before returning to the settlements of Eno and Hawfields. He then rode on to the Buffalo settlement in Guilford County, and thence through areas of present day Davidson, Rowan and Cabarrus counties into Mecklenburg County, preaching at every opportunity along the way. From Mecklenburg County, he traveled into the lands of the Catwba Indians in South Carolina before returning to Mecklenburg County and proceeding east to Scotch settlements on the Cape Fear River. After spending some time in the Cumberland County area, he then traveled down the Cape Fear to Wilmington and thence up through Pender County to Duplin County where he preached to well-organized churches known as the "Welsh Tract" and "Goshen Grove". Leaders of these two church congregations pleaded with him to remain with them; they jointly made out a call (formal request) for him to become their pastor. He did not accept the call at that time, but traveled back across eastern North Carolina to Granville County and the Red House community where he preached a final sermon on May 2, 1756. His missionary journey through North Carolina had begun and ended with sermons preached in the Red House community. Accompanied by Solomon Debow to the Dan River, Mr. McAden departed from the state on May 6, 1756 and began a northward journey back home to Pennsylvania. His missionary journey to North Carolina had lasted exactly nine months. During that time, he had preached almost daily to different groups of people in different places.

The accomplishments of Hugh McAden are best summarized by the noted historian R. D. W. Conner, Secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission, who wrote in the History of North Carolina, Vol. 1, The Colonial and Revolutionary Periods<sup>2</sup> the following description:

In 1755 came Hugh McAden, a truly great missionary, who did more, perhaps, than any other person to establish Presbyterianism on a firm foundation in North Carolina. Traversing almost the entire length and breadth of the province from the Catawba on the west to the Neuse and the Pamlico on the east, from the Roanoke on the north to the Cape Fear on the south, he visited places on the extreme frontier where not only 'never any of our missionaries have been', but where the voice of a Christian minister had never before been heard, and preached in private houses, in courthouses, in churches and chapels, under the trees of the forests, wherever, indeed, he could gather two or three together. Scotch, Germans, and English, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Quakers and Churchmen, and 'irregular' people who knew 'but little about the principles of any religion', all flocked eagerly to hear him. He began his great missionary tour in North Carolina on August 3, 1755 and brought it to a close on May 6, 1756, and all along his route left Presbyterian communities firmly established.

---

<sup>2</sup> Conner, R. D. W., The History of North Carolina, Vol.1, the Colonial and Revolutionary Periods 1584-1783; The Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago and New York, 1919

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

One of the many churches he is credited with founding is Red House Church.

Upon his return to Pennsylvania Mr. McAden was ordained by New Castle Presbytery in 1757 and thereafter accepted the call of the Duplin County churches in North Carolina which had earlier expressed their desire for his services. He reported to that post in the year 1757 and thus became the first pioneer missionary of the Presbyterian Church who became a resident pastor and permanently settled in the State of North Carolina.

He remained with the Duplin County churches for ten years until he concluded the climate of that area was detrimental to his health. This caused him to move back to the Red House community of present day Caswell County where he had begun and ended his 1755-1756 North Carolina missionary journey. At a meeting of the Hanover Presbytery at Buffalo Church in Guilford County on March 2, 1768, he accepted the call of what was then known as Hyco (previously spelled Hico and also referred to as Middle Hico, followed by Red House in 1806), Dan River and Country Line churches. Thus, he became the first resident minister of Red House Church.

Until 1770 Presbyterian churches in North Carolina were governed by the Hanover Presbytery covering the state of Virginia and an area of indefinite extension to the south. There was no separate authority for the North Carolina region. By actions of the Synod of Philadelphia and the Synod of New York, the Orange Presbytery was authorized in 1770. An organizational meeting of the new Presbytery was held on September 5, 1770. Reverend Hugh McAden was one of the organizers and preached the opening sermon at the organizational meeting at Hawfields Church. The territory of the new Orange Presbytery was south of Virginia to an indefinite length westward and an indefinite distance to the south.<sup>3</sup>

It is a well-known fact that during the American Revolution, General Cornwallis and the British army "ever showed a dislike to Presbyterian ministers, as the immediate cause of much of the stubborn resistance which met them at every step in Carolina."<sup>4</sup> In his "History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America", author E. H. Gillett states, "In initiating the Revolution and in sustaining the patriotic resistance of their countrymen to a legal tyranny, the ministers of the Presbyterian Church bore a conspicuous, and ever foremost, part."<sup>5</sup> British soldiers studiously destroyed all that they could not carry away, and the Presbyterian clergy were generally the special objects of vengeance."<sup>6</sup> To North Carolinians, the Revolutionary activities of Henry Pattillo, David Caldwell, James Hall and

---

<sup>3</sup> Stone, Robert Hamlin, A History of Orange Presbytery 1770-1970; Heritage Printers, Inc., Charlotte, 1970

<sup>4</sup> Foote, Reverend William Henry, Sketches of North Carolina, Third Edition; Harold J. Dudley, Synod of North Carolina, Presbyterian Church in the United States, Raleigh, 1965

<sup>5</sup> Gillett, E. H., D. D., History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America Volume 1; Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, Philadelphia, 1864

<sup>6</sup> Breed, Reverend W. P., D. D., Presbyterians and the Revolution; Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, Philadelphia, 1876

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

Hugh McAden were well known.<sup>7</sup> It is unknown whether Cornwallis had any reliable information as to McAden's personal opinions considering the British invasion; he certainly would have known that McAden and fellow Presbyterian ministers, James Creswell, Henry Pattillo, and David Caldwell were community leaders in the region which produced the Regulator rebellion in the Orange County area in the late 1760's. In 1768, these four ministers had addressed a letter to Colonial Governor Tryon concerning this rebellion.<sup>8</sup> Whatever his knowledge of McAden's opinions relative to the American insurrection, General Cornwallis and his troops, retreating through Caswell County en route to Hillsborough, after failing the catch General Nathaniel Greene in the their famous "race to the Dan River", did not neglect an opportunity to pay McAden "a visit" in February, 1781. Arriving at Hico Church, Cornwallis encamped a contingent of his forces on the church grounds and learned of McAden's death a short time earlier. His troops opened McAden's grave in the church yard "and are credited with the destruction of his journals, books and other records and with extensive damage to the church and [McAden's] family property."<sup>9</sup>

The grave of Hugh McAden remained unmarked for 132 years until 1913. On September 28, 1911, Dr. D. I. Craig, stated clerk and chairman of the Historical Committee of the Orange Presbytery, informed the delegates of the Presbytery that "No stone of any kind marks the spot where this man, the first settled minister in North Carolina is buried." The Presbytery promptly took steps to "erect a suitable monument over the grave of Mr. McAden."<sup>10</sup> Such a monument was unveiled on August 3, 1913, and in a memorial sermon delivered on that day Dr. Craig stated, with regard to the British soldiers, "tradition says his new made grave was profanely opened and his body taken up and mutilated! It is said that in re-filling the grave, the work was not more than half done, hence the explanation of the sink in the ground which has so conspicuously marked his resting place for so many years."<sup>11</sup>

### Architectural Context

The first Hico church building was constructed in 1756. No first hand description of that original building has survived, but according to the scholarly writings of Herbert Snipes Turner, D. D., most of the early church buildings in Scotch-Irish communities of the mid-eighteenth century were built of logs with the pulpit located at the side of the room underneath a "sounding board" which extended out from the wall.<sup>12</sup> The first Hico church building served the congregation until 1806 when a second building

---

<sup>7</sup> Baldwin, Alice M., Sowers of Sedition: the Political Theories of Some of the New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina; *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., Vol. 5, No. 1 (Jan., 1948) pp 52-76

<sup>8</sup> Turner, op cit,

<sup>9</sup> Powell, William S., When the Past Refused To Die, A History of Caswell County, North Carolina 1777-1977; Moore Publishing Company, Durham, North Carolina, 1977

<sup>10</sup> Stone, op cit,

<sup>11</sup> Claytor, N. R., The Unveiling of a Monument to the Memory of the Rev. Hugh McAden;

<sup>12</sup> Turner, op cit,



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

was constructed beside the first. The name of the church was changed to Red House at that time. The name came from a noted inn nearby which was a popular stage coach stopping place between Hillsborough and points north in Virginia and elsewhere. The inn was painted red, and the entire area was referred to by locals and travelers as Red House. The second church building was consumed by fire shortly after it was completed and a third building was erected in 1809. This third building was remembered as a "quaint wooden structure" with the pulpit located between two exterior entrance doors by which the congregation entered the sanctuary.<sup>13</sup> If not by design, this arrangement discouraged church members from arriving late for preaching services. Seats to one side were reserved for black slaves who attended with their masters. The pews were made by Thomas Day, a noted free black cabinetmaker in nearby Milton. They were given to nearby Gilead Church when the fourth church building was constructed in 1913.

By 1913, the congregation of Red House Church decided to replace the 1809 building. During that year, a committee of the church was appointed to raise funds for the new endeavor. Through its diligent efforts, \$7,000 was raised and ambitious construction plans were made. For design of the new building, the committee was authorized by the congregation to engage the services of Hill Carter Linthicum (1860 -1919), a well known architect of Durham, North Carolina. Linthicum was educated at Danville Military Academy and studied architecture in Baltimore, Maryland. He worked in his father's contracting business from 1878 until 1891 when he opened an independent architectural practice in Winston-Salem, North Carolina where he enjoyed much success in the early 1890's. He obtained a number of design contracts in the Durham area at the turn of the century and opened an office there. His commissions include the 1892 Edgar Vaughn residence in Winston-Salem, the 1904 Jesse Harper Erwin, Sr., residence in Durham, the 1906 Confederate Memorial Auditorium in Hertford, North Carolina, and the 1935-1937 National Guard Armory (later Cape Fear Museum) in Wilmington, North Carolina. A devoted advocate of legislation requiring the licensing of architects in the state, Linthicum played a vital role in the founding of the North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects and became the first president of that organization.

Linthicum's design for the 1913 Red House Presbyterian Church was very different from the traditional wooden framed country churches of that period. He created plans for a Roman temple to be constructed of brick in the Classical Revival style.

The construction contract for the new building was granted to Henry Fields, a master builder from nearby Roxboro. Church records state friends and members of the church contributed materials and labor to aid the effort. In their exuberance over progress being made, members of the congregation upgraded plans and raised an additional \$1,000 to cover the costs of a complete set of stained glass windows and curved birch wood pews. The pulpit from the 1809 church was moved into the new building and has continued to be used until the present. Also, after completion of the 1913 Red House Church building, the old 1809 building was pulled by a team of horses across rolling logs to the farm

---

<sup>13</sup> Powell, op cit,

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

of James Allen in Semora, one mile northeast from its original location. It was used as a storage facility for tobacco and hay crops until it burned in the 1990's.

Befitting the name "Red House", the architect specified the addition of red coloring in the mortar which masons used to create a monochromatic red brick exterior. A very prominent Doric portico, supported by four fluted wooden columns resting on granite capped square brick pedestals creates the impression of a much larger scaled building. Ruth Little-Stokes in An Inventory of Historic Architecture Caswell County North Carolina states, "...its dignified design gives the small structure a monumentality out of proportion to its diminutive size." Extensive use of granite, stained glass and mahogany wood set it apart from all other rural churches in the county. Its design style was rarely used except in larger urban buildings.

Features not observed anywhere else in present day Caswell County include a string course of granite surrounding the building at the level of all window sills, an inserted fanlight stained glass window in the pedimented gable façade, and a terra cotta tile roof. In addition, exterior pilastered wall treatments and exposed ornamented interior trusses are features that are rarely found in any public buildings in the county.

There are four examples of Classical Revival architecture expressed in its national form in early twentieth century churches still standing in Caswell County. Red House Presbyterian Church with its distinctive Roman Doric temple design, and the 1919 Bethel Methodist Church, derived directly from the Greek Revival style, are the most high-style examples. The Bethel Methodist Church, located in the Pelham community, was constructed in 1919 and has four full length massive Doric fluted columns which support a heavy frieze of triglyphs and metopes and a pediment. It projects a sense of overpowering massiveness, whereas the Red House Presbyterian Church has four smaller fluted Doric columns set upon three feet high brick pedestals, all supporting a pediment with a modillion cornice.

Another church building of more modest classical design is the nearby wood framed Semora Baptist Church (1907) which featured a tall, pedimented portico. The rectilinear qualities of the classical portico contrasts with the round arch windows and decorative bargeboards on the main body of the church. Finally, the frame 1924 Semora Methodist Church most closely resembled the Red House church, and it featured an unadorned front pediment with broken returns, supported by Doric columns on brick piers before it was altered ca. 1970. It should be noted that this one-story, temple front church form appeared in the county as early as ca. 1892 on the Gilead Presbyterian Church, Estelle vicinity. Today, only the brick bases of the church's portico remain standing.

Other early twentieth churches in the county are either vernacular gable-front designs, some with decorative sawnwork details, or Gothic-inspired towered churches. The 1906 New Hope United Methodist Church in the Hamer community features a gabled front with sawnwork bargeboards in the gables.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 14

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Baldwin, Alice M., "Sowers of Sedition: The Political Theories of Some of the New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina"; William and Mary Quarterly, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., Vol. 5, No. 1 (Jan., 1948)
- Breed, Reverend W. P., D. D. Presbyterians and the Revolution; Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work; Philadelphia; 1876
- Buchanan, John, The Road to Guilford Courthouse: the American Revolution in the Carolinas, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., NY, 1997
- Clauser, John W., "The Southern Folk Cemetery in Piedmont North Carolina" North Carolina Historic Preservation Office Newsletter (Fall 1994) State Historic Preservation Office: Raleigh, NC
- Claytor, N. R., The Unveiling of a Monument to the Memory of Hugh McAden; a private publication of Red House Presbyterian Church; Milton, NC; 1918
- Conner, R. D. W., The History of North Carolina, Vol.1, The Colonial and Revolutionary Periods 1584-1783; The Lewis Publishing Co.; Chicago and New York; 1919
- Foote, William Henry, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her Early Settlers, Robert Carter, NY, 1846, Third Edition, Owen G. Dunn Co., New Bern, NC, 1966.
- Gillett, E. H., D. D., History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Vol. 1; Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work; Philadelphia; 1864
- Little, M. Ruth., Sticks & Stones: Three Centuries of North Carolina Grave Markers, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London, 1998.
- Little-Stokes, Ruth., An Inventory of Historic Architecture Caswell County, North Carolina, Fisher Harrison Corporation, Seeman Printing Division, Durham, NC, 1979.
- Powell, William S., When The Past Refused To Die, A History of Caswell County, North Carolina, 1777-1977, Moore Publishing Company, Durham, NC, 1977.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9,10 Page 15

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

Rose, Ben Lacy and Preston Satterfield III, Chapel on South Hyco, The Story of Lea's Chapel United Methodist Church, Person County, North Carolina 1750-2000 A. D., Robert Schreiber Printing, Richmond, VA, 2000.

Scrapbook of Red House Presbyterian Church in possession of Elder Eunice Lea Thompson, Long's Mill Road, Blanch, NC

Session Minutes of Red House Presbyterian Church, 1917-1963 located in North Carolina Archives Building, Raleigh, NC

Sessions Minutes and Records of Red House Presbyterian Church, 1820-1917 located at The Presbyterian Church Historical Society, Presbyterian Church USA, Office of the General Assembly, Montreat, NC.

Stone, Robert Hamlin, A History of Orange Presbytery 1770-1970; Heritage Printers, Inc.; Charlotte; 1970

Turner, Herbert Snipes., Church in the Old Fields: Hawfields Presbyterian Church and Community in North Carolina, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1962.

### Section 10 Geographical Data

#### Boundary Description

The boundaries are indicated on the accompanying Caswell County Tax Map 138, parcel 36.

#### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the church, churchyard, cemetery, previous church building sites and mature forest, all of which have been part of the church property for at least 175 years. Two small outbuildings associated with the residence to the east were constructed on the historic church property around 1940. Although they are an encroachment on the edge of the church property, they have little to no impact on the historic integrity of the property. The tax parcel east boundary is the most appropriate boundary for National Register-listed acreage. The north boundary is North Carolina Highway 119.

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

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photos Page 16

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Caswell County, North Carolina

---

### List of Photographs

Red House Presbyterian Church  
Semora, Caswell County, North Carolina  
James Long, photographer  
March 15, 2006

Negative: NCSHPO, Raleigh

1. Façade, looking south
2. Side elevation, looking west
3. Rear and side elevations, looking northeast
4. Rev. Hugh McAden Grave
5. Interior: looking north
6. Interior: looking south