

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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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 Mizpah Methodist Church  
other names/site number Mizpah United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number Intersection of U.S. Hwy. 301 and S-5-31 not for publication       
city or town Olar vicinity X  
state South Carolina code SC county Bamberg code 009 zip code 29843

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.)

Mary W. Edmonds 11/9/2000  
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.  
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:  
 entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall 12/13/00  
     See continuation sheet. Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
     other (explain):

Mizpah Methodist Church  
Name of Property

Bamberg County, South Carolina  
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	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  
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Religion

Subcategory: Religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Religion

Subcategory: Religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival  
Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
walls Wood/Weatherboard  
roof Asphalt  
other

Narrative Description

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

Mizpah Methodist Church  
Name of Property

Bamberg County, South Carolina  
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.
[X] 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.)

- [X] 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

1856

Significant Dates

1856

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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:

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other
Name of repository:
S.C. Dept. of Archives & History

Mizpah Methodist Church  
Name of Property

Bamberg County, South Carolina  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of Property 7.3 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1 <u>17 483305 3664303</u>	3 <u>17 483080 3664237</u>
2 <u>17 483169 3664393</u>	4 <u>17 483154 3664138</u>
<u>See continuation sheet.</u>	

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 Andrew W. Chandler, Architectural Historian, w/assistance from Betty Jane Miller, Barnwell, S.C.  
organization SHPO, S.C. Department of Archives & History date 3 June 2000  
street & number 8301 Parklane Road telephone (803) 896-6179  
city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29223

**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 Mizpah United Methodist Church  
street & number U.S. Hwy. 301 and S-5-31 telephone (803) 368-5433  
city or town Olar state SC zip code 29843

**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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Mizpah Methodist Church  
Name of Property  
Bamberg County, South Carolina  
County and State

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Mizpah Methodist Church, located near the town of Olar in southwest Bamberg County on a seven-and-three-tenths-acre wooded parcel to the immediate northeast of the intersection of U.S. Highway 301 and State Secondary Road S-5-31 [Old Barnwell-Walterboro Road], is the only extant building from the antebellum village of Buford's Bridge on the Great Salkehatchie River.<sup>1</sup> Constructed in 1856 approximately two miles west of the former 1832 structure, it is a three-bay wide by five-bay long temple-form frame building featuring an engaged tetrastyle portico and a steeply-pitched pedimented roof. Immediately surrounding the church is a historic cemetery enclosed within an iron fence. The church property is accessed from US Highway 301 and State Road S-5-31 by a dirt driveway which defines the nominated acreage on the northeast and southeast.

Built upon a brick pier foundation, the church follows the traditional rectangular, meeting house form, while exhibiting architectural embellishments which distinguish it from the simplicity of many vernacular examples still extant throughout much of rural South Carolina. The braced-frame construction features morticed, tenoned and pegged joinery throughout the building which is sheathed in weatherboard. Termite infestation required that portions of some of the hand-hewn timbers of the building's understructure, wall studs and roof rafters be replaced with similar, if not identical hand-crafted materials in recent restoration efforts. The roof structure extends on the church's southeast elevation (façade) to form a full-width portico measuring approximately eight feet in depth. Consisting of a wood deck with four solid fluted wood columns featuring slightly larger fluted bases and capitals supporting a steeply-pitched pediment, the portico's ceiling and tympanum contain flushboard sheathing. Within the portico are two evenly-spaced, double-leaf entrances containing single-paneled doors, surrounds, plinth and corner blocks, and Gothic arched transoms with traceried windows. The portico's pediment contains an oversized Gothic arched louvered vent, while the side and rear elevations feature nine-over-nine light, double-hung sash windows with transoms identical to those over the main entrances and louvered wood shutters. At the center of the rear (northwest) elevation, between two windows, is a double-leaf entrance with single-paneled doors, a Gothic arched traceried transom, and a modern but well-designed and executed Gothic arched bracketed frame and asphalt shingle-roofed hood. A brick flue, located on the interior of the building between the first and second windows along the southeast elevation and likely added in the early twentieth century to accommodate a freestanding wood-burning heater, was removed from the building in the recent restoration.

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<sup>1</sup> Buford's Bridge on the Great Salkehatchie River was named for Major William Buford and is referred to as such as least as early as 1792 when he, Richard Creech, James Smart, John Chisholm, and Elias Robert were appointed commissioners by the South Carolina General Assembly to open, lay out, and maintain a road "from Buford's Bridge, on Saltcatcher river, to Smart's Meeting House, on Coosawhatchie; and from these to the Two Sister's ferry, on Savannah River," as well as "from Smart's Meeting House aforesaid, to the Court House of Beaufort District," quoted in David J. McCord, Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX (Columbia, S.C.: A.S. Johnston, 1841), p. 353. The town of Buford's Bridge, although inhabited and functioning in the early nineteenth century, was not incorporated until 1859; see Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. XII, 1850-1861 (Columbia, S.C., 1861), pp. 794-97.

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

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

Section number   7   Page   6  

Mizpah Methodist Church  
Name of Property  
Bamberg County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

The entire interior space of the building contains the church's sanctuary and is sealed with twelve-inch wide, hand-planed flushboard planking. A limited amount of the interior sheathing had to be replaced also because of termite infestation; however, hand-planed replacement sheathing has been installed where necessary. Simple coved moulding finishes the interior's sheathing at corners and ceiling. Along the center of the interior are three evenly-spaced, elongated and fluted columnal supports, each with a simple square moulded capital. Between the main entrances at the southeast end of the sanctuary is a three-tiered or stepped pulpit with simple appointments. Although this and other interior furnishings were removed from the building to accommodate the current restoration, plans are to restore the pulpit, altar, altar rail, and wood pews to the building. The original wood plank flooring was removed but will be restored as an interior finish over a new diagonally-laid subfloor.

The historic cemetery surrounding the church contains the gravestones and iron Maltese cross markers for a number of Confederate veterans, as well as those for many of the church's families, most notably those of the Brabhams, Kearses, Kirklands, McMillans and Moyes, who have held joint family reunions at Mizpah Church since 1922. Some of the stones, in fact, are signed by their cutters. While the church and iron-fenced graveyard occupy much of a three-acre clearing, an additional four and three-tenths acre wooded parcel, conveyed to Mizpah Church in 1940 by W.C. Kirkland, surrounds the original lot on three sides. This acreage is included because it is said to contain additional graves of former members of Mizpah Church as well as possible archaeological remains of buildings and structures once standing in the antebellum village of Buford's Bridge. It has been owned by Mizpah Church for the past sixty years but likely has associations with the church into the nineteenth century.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Mizpah Methodist Church  
Name of Property  
Bamberg County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

Mizpah Methodist Church, constructed in 1856 in the village of Buford's Bridge near the crossing on the Great Salkehatchie River bearing the same name, is the only extant building from that old Barnwell District town which flourished in the nineteenth century but had all but disappeared by the early twentieth century. It is significant architecturally as an extraordinary surviving example of the vernacular meeting house form, typical of many rural South Carolina churches but with the added sophistication of both Greek Revival and Gothic Revival elements. Mizpah Church is also significant as a tangible reminder of one of Bamberg County's earliest and continuously functioning Methodist congregations.

Additional Information

The organizational date for Mizpah Methodist Church is generally accepted as 1832; however, some sources indicate that there was a Methodist congregation in the Buford's Bridge area by 1819.<sup>2</sup> The Rev. M.M. Brabham states in his 1923 *A Family Sketch, and Else or Buford's Bridge and Its People* that the Methodists of the area worshipped in an old log meeting house on his great grandfather Joseph Brabham, Sr.'s property before 1819 when they and the Baptists began holding services on alternate Sundays in a school house on Reuben Kirkland, Sr.'s property. He further reveals that in 1826 the two denominations built on or near the site of the Kirkland school house a joint or union house of worship that came to be called Philadelphia Meeting House. When by 1832 doctrinal differences and prejudices became so intense between the two denominations, the Methodists withdrew from and built a separate church on land donated by Robert C. Kirkland, a Baptist, and called it Mizpah. The Philadelphia Meeting House was thereafter known as Philadelphia Baptist Church.<sup>3</sup> Mizpah Methodist Church became a part of the Walterboro circuit in 1834.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1850s not only had Mizpah Church grown considerably but the town of Buford's Bridge had become a commercial center in that part of the county and a more attractive location for a new church. As early as 1853 the town boasted three successful merchants with general stores, two taverns, a tailor shop, a shoe or cobbler's shop, a boarding house and a Masonic lodge.<sup>5</sup> In 1856 Mizpah's congregation decided to relocate approximately two miles to the west in the town of Buford's Bridge, where they erected the current house of worship. It would, however, be the only church ever built in the town.<sup>6</sup> Only two years later the Bamberg Circuit was carved out of the old Walterboro Circuit, with Mizpah, Andrew Chapel, Zion and Bamberg churches placed on this new

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<sup>2</sup> Albert Deems Betts, History of South Carolina Methodism (Columbia, S.C.: The Advocate Press, 1952), pp. 204-06; A.M. Chreitzberg, Early Methodism in the Carolinas (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1897), p. 254; M.M. Brabham, A Family Sketch, and Else or Buford's Bridge and Its People (Columbia, S.C.: The State Company, 1923), p. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Brabham, pp. 68-71.

<sup>4</sup> Chreitzberg, p. 254.

<sup>5</sup> Brabham, pp. 83-86.

<sup>6</sup> Chreitzberg, p. 86.

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

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

Section number 8 Page 8

Mizpah Methodist Church

Name of Property

Bamberg County, South Carolina

County and State

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charge.<sup>7</sup> The incorporation of Buford's Bridge's as a town in 1859 further testifies to its growth and prosperity in the late antebellum period.<sup>8</sup>

In February 1865, in the final weeks of the Civil War in South Carolina, the Buford's Bridge community became the scene of a brief but locally significant military activity between Federal troops on their way to Columbia from Savannah, Georgia, and Confederate troops defending the line of the Charleston and Savannah Railroad. Confederates constructed defenses at three points along the Great Salkehatchie River -- namely Broxton's, Rivers and Buford's Bridges, each approximately six miles apart -- but the only action of any note to take place in the area occurred on February 2-3, 1865 at Rivers Bridge when a small Confederate force was outflanked and forced to withdraw by a much larger Federal force. Federal troops burned or looted several residences, farms, and institutions in the vicinity of the Salkehatchie River -- such as the Salkehatchie Baptist Church, located on the south bank of the river, which they dismantled for timbers and lumber to rebuild the bridges crossing the swamp. According to local tradition, Mizpah Methodist Church was the only residence or institution in the Buford's Bridge community that was not burned or otherwise destroyed by Federal troops during their stay. Philadelphia Baptist Church and Philadelphia Academy, for example, were both burned and had to be rebuilt after the war.

Though the town of Buford's Bridge dwindled in the postbellum years, Mizpah Church continued to be active but on a smaller scale. After the death in 1895 of James M. Brabham, a long-time member, the church was sustained by the yearly income from a 440-acre plantation which he bequeathed to the church's trustees. Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, Mizpah became part of the Olar charge, which also included Old Salem (1803), Bethel at Olar (1905) and Kears (1895).

Of particular note in the early twentieth century annals of Mizpah Church was the commencement in 1921 of joint reunions of the five principal families of Mizpah. Held at Mizpah Church annually (except during World War II), the Brabham, Kears, Kirkland, McMillan and Moye Family Reunions have served also to sustain the church through the years.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73; Betts, p. 499.

<sup>8</sup> *Statutes At Large*, Vol. XII, 1850-1861, pp. 795-96.



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

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

Section number   8   Page   9  

Mizpah Methodist Church  
Name of Property  
Bamberg County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

Architectural Significance

Mizpah Methodist Church's primary significance lies in its architectural merit as an exceptional example of the meeting house form with Greek Revival and Gothic Revival detailing. The centerpiece of the building's temple-form plan is, of course, the fully-engaged tetrastyle portico with its four solid wood fluted columns featuring fluted bases and capitals. In 1856 the Greek Revival was at its height as a building style; however, the Gothic Revival had only come into popular usage around 1845 following the construction from 1839-1846 of Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church in New York City. It took longer for new styles to reach other areas of the country; however, Edward Brickell White introduced it into South Carolina church architecture as early as 1845 with his Huguenot Church of Charleston. It was used more in the larger towns and cities of inland South Carolina during the antebellum period, but occasionally found its way into rural areas. For instance, E.B. White's Trinity Episcopal Church in Columbia (1846), and First Presbyterian Church of Columbia (1853), as well as the Church of the Holy Cross at Stateburg (1850), certainly evidence the use of the Gothic Revival style elsewhere in South Carolina, but fall short in providing any clues as to the inspiration for Mizpah Church or others like it. Far more likely is the probability that an itinerant builder, accustomed to building in the meeting house vernacular form, as well as the Greek Revival, simply began to incorporate elements of the Gothic Revival into the buildings he had been and was already constructing. One local example that may have provided some idea to the builder is the Old Presbyterian Church in Barnwell, built about 1848 in the Greek Revival style with a fully-engaged portico but incorporating Gothic Revival details, namely pointed arched window heads. Yet another nearby example of the use of the Gothic Revival in relatively rural church architecture is in the Church of the Holy Apostles, which was being built in Barnwell about the same time as Mizpah; however, it was the work of the Charleston architectural firm of Barbot and Seyle, employing a carpenter Gothic vocabulary more in keeping with that popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing and Alexander J. Davis.

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

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

Section number   9   Page   10  

Mizpah Methodist Church  
Name of Property  
Bamberg County, South Carolina  
County and State

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REFERENCES

- Betts, Albert Deems. History of South Carolina Methodism. Columbia, S.C.: The Advocate Press, 1952.
- Brabham, M.M. A Family Sketch, and Else or Buford's Bridge and Its People. Columbia, S.C.: The State Company, 1923.
- Chreitzberg, A.M. Early Methodism in the Carolinas. Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1897.
- McCord, David J. Statutes At Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX. Columbia, S.C.: A.S. Johnston, 1841.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Statutes At Large of South Carolina, Vol. XII, 1850-1861. Columbia, S.C., 1861.
- Power, J. Tracy, and Daniel J. Bell. Rivers Bridge State Park Visitor's Guide. Columbia, S.C.: Division of State Parks, South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, 1992.

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

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

Section number   10   Page   11  

Mizpah Methodist Church  
Name of Property  
Bamberg County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the black line marked "Mizpah Methodist Church" on the accompanying plat of Mizpah Methodist Church, dated 13 July 1940 and drawn at a scale of 1" = 2 chains.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property is restricted to the historic sanctuary and church cemetery.

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

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

Section number PHOTOGRAPHS Page 12

Mizpah Methodist Church

Name of Property

Bamberg County, South Carolina

County and State

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The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Mizpah Methodist Church  
Location of Property: Olar vicinity, Bamberg County, South Carolina  
Name of Photographers: William H. Craven, Jr., and Andrew W. Chandler  
Dates of Photographs: February 2000 and 28 June 2000  
Location of Original Negatives: S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.

1. Facade and southern elevation
2. Facade (west elevation)
3. Facade, left (north) oblique view
4. Southern and rear elevation
5. Northern elevation
6. Rear (east) elevation
7. Rear elevation entrance hood detail
8. Front door surround detail
9. Interior (looking west)
10. Interior, fluted column detail and capital
11. Interior, view toward facade entrances
12. Interior, heart pine doors
13. Interior pine paneling with replacement boards
14. Segment of wall studs and joinery left open for viewing