PROPOSAL OF
THE 1875 LONG CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STRUCTURE
TO THE GASTON COUNTY HISTORIC PROPERTIES REGISTER
SEPTEMBER, 1985

GASTON COUNTY HISTORIC PROPERTIES COMMISSION

Mrs. Richard Penegar, Chrmn.
Mr. Robert C. Carpenter
Mrs. Fred S. Cloninger
Mrs. William N. Craig
Mrs. Thomas W. Springs
Mrs. William. B. Shannon
Mrs. H.O. Williams
Mr. H.M. Lineberger
Mr. James F. Love, III

CONTENTS

1. Name and location of the property- Long Creek Presbyterian Church, north side of hwy. 1402, west of junction with 1401, Crowders Mtn. Township, Gaston County, N.C.

2. Name and address of current owner of the property- Long Creek Presbyterian Church, Inc. of Kings Mtn. N.C., Presbyterian Church (USA)

3. Representative photographs of the property-

4. Map depicting location of the property-

5. Current deed references of the property-

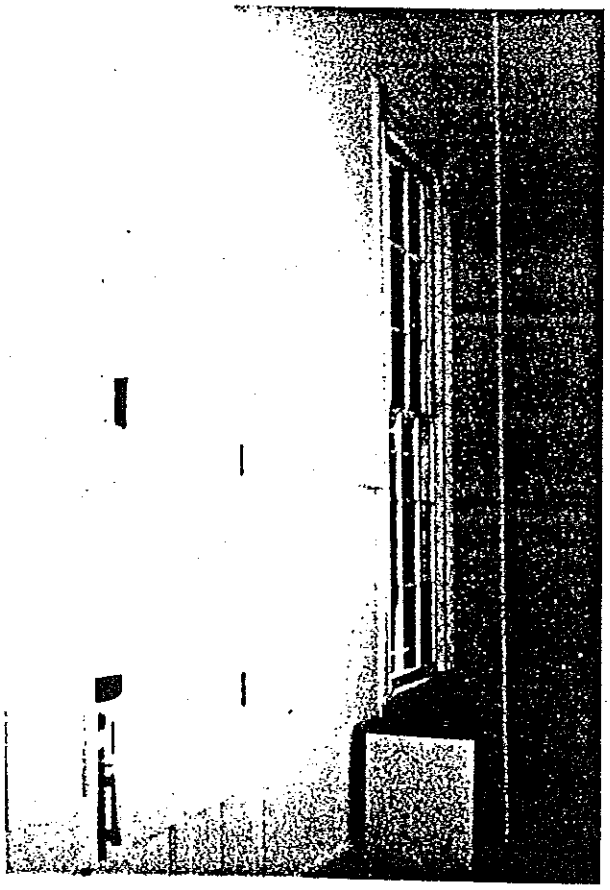
6. Historical sketch of the property- This report contains a brief historical description of the site and structure prepared by a committee from the church and Historic Properties Commission member Robert C. Carpenter.

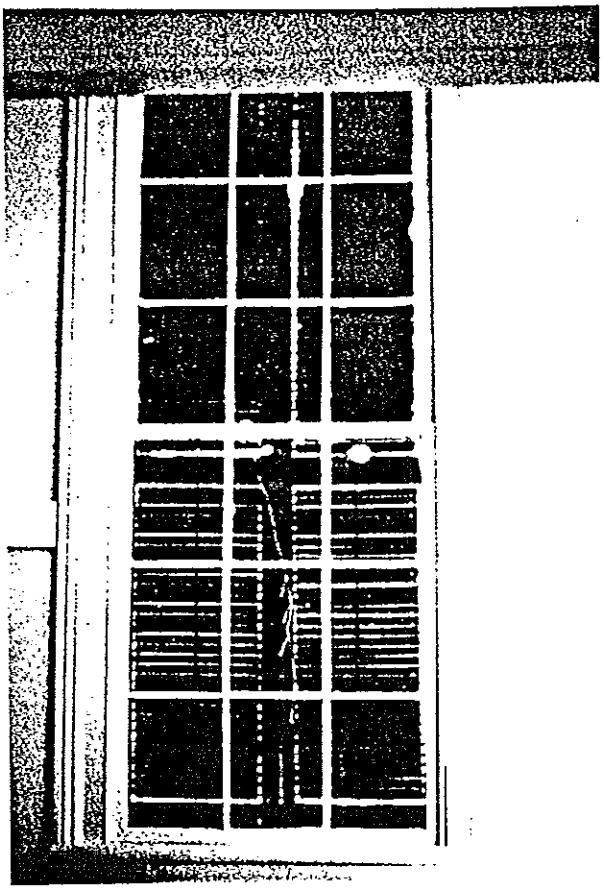
7. Architectural description of the property- This report contains an architectural description prepared by Mr. Alan Waufle, Director of the Gaston County Museum of Art & History.

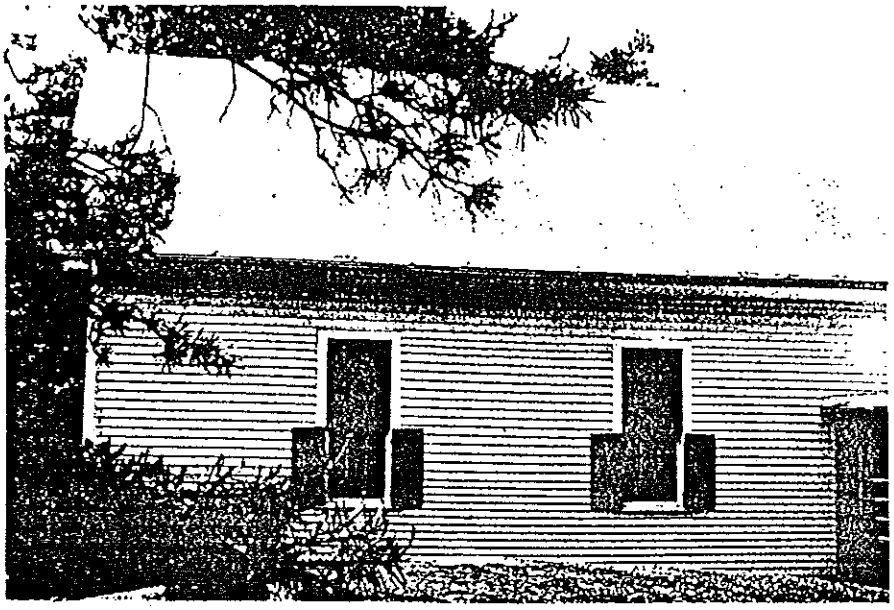
8. Documentation of Why and in what ways the property is of historical significance to the county. Because this church was one of the first organized churches in the county and its present 1876 Greek Revival structure has been cared for and used throughout its existance, the Historic Properties Commission members feel that this structure is important to the history of Gaston County and proposes it for designation as an historic site.

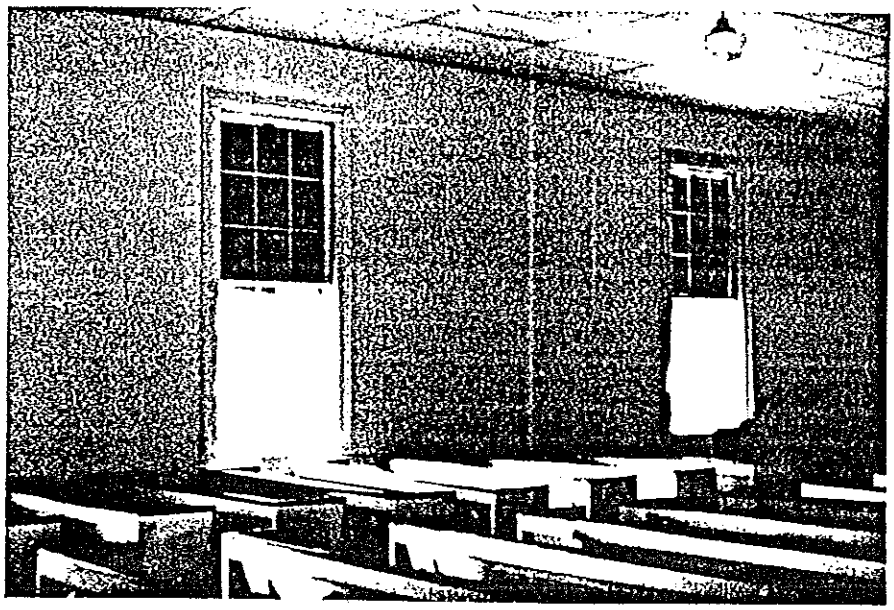
9. Reaction of the N.C. Department of Archives and History-

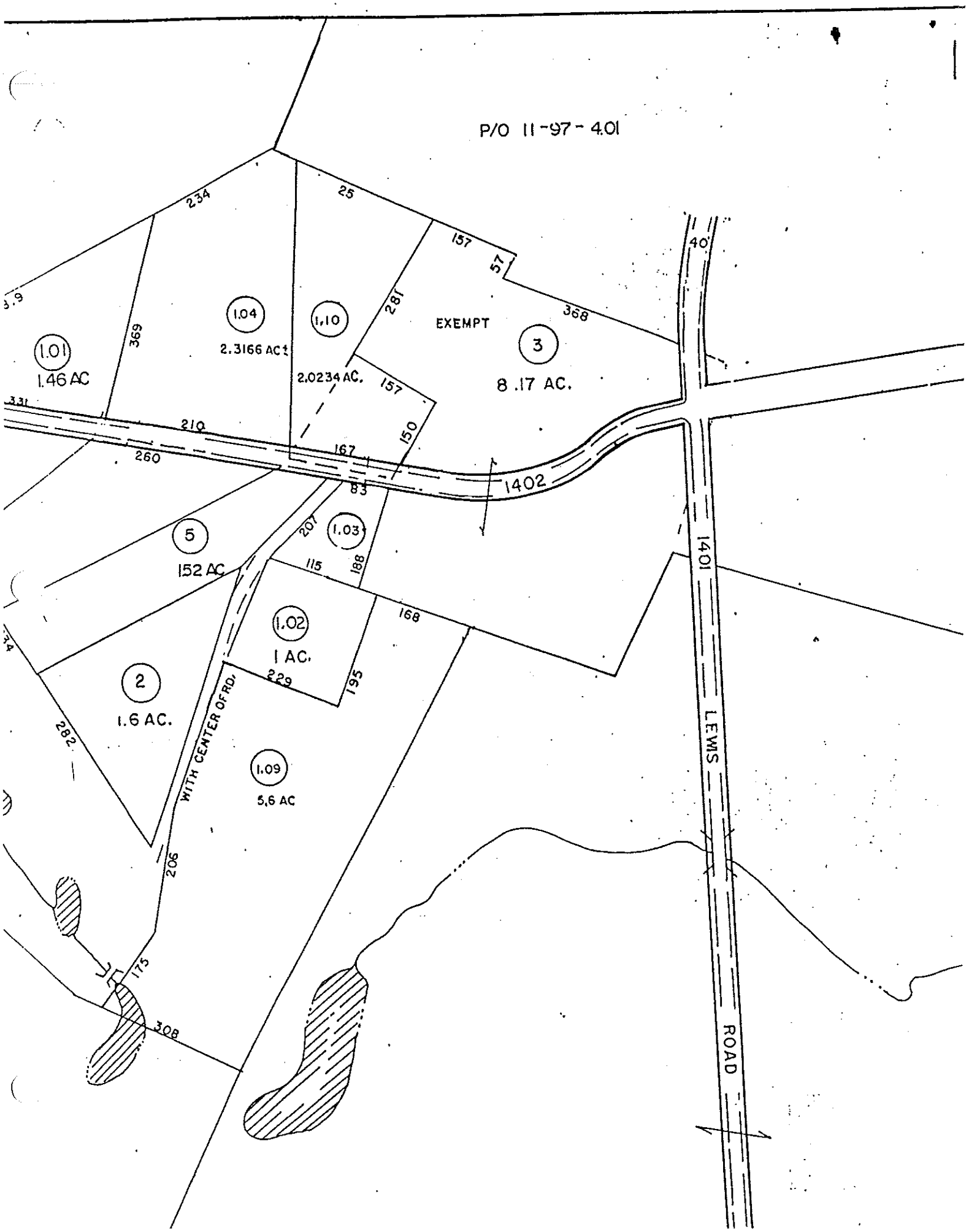
10. Ordinance designating structure as historic property and public hearing notices, correspondence with owners.







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DEED REFERENCE OF
LONG CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1. Land belonged to Benjamin Ormand where first log structure was located (near the present structure) near a spring.

2. March 6, 1838, Benjamin Ormand and Henry Fulenwider sold to Drury Arrowood, James Oates, Isaac White as trustees of Long Creek Presbyterian Church and their successors 5 3/4 acres for five shillings. Lincoln Deed Book 37, p. 340.

3. April 9, 1877, Robert D. & Sarah M. Ormand sold to T.M.A. Oates, R.A. White, & H.B. Huffstetler as trustees of Long Creek Presbyterian Church for five ($5.) dollars one acre and two poles "adjoining the church and grave yard lands". Gaston Deed Book 8, p. 286 & 287.

4. Dec. 17, 1906, R?D. Ormand, B.M. & Anne Ormand, sold to R.A. White, T.M.A. Oates, & H.L. Ramseur as trustees of Long Creek Presbyterian church for six ($6.) dollars, 18 1/2 square rods at the "southeast corner of the church property". Gaston Deed Book 65, p. 316.

5. Feb. 23, 1966, Sarah Ormand Hoover & E.C. Hoover, Robert D. Ormand, Jr. & Mary Frances W. Ormand, Luciele Ormand McAuley &J.F. McAuley, and Dorus William Ormand & Faye B. Ormand sold to Harley Wayne Whitesides, Robert Lee Robinson, Sr., & Walter Hood Bridges as trustees of Long Creek Presbyterian Church, one acre for ten ($10.) dollars. Gaston Deed Book 904, p. 507.

6. Oct. 24, 1968, Sarah Ormand Hoover & husband E.C. Hoover, Robert D. Ormand, Jr. & wife Mary Frances W. Ormand, Luceile Ormand McAuley & husband J.F. McAuley, and Dorus William Ormand & wife Faye B. Ormand sold to Harley Whitesides, Robert Robinson, & Hood Bridges trustees of Long Creek Presbyterian Church for one ($1.) dollar a parcel adjoining church lands. Gaston Deed Bk. 994, p. 362.

7. Nov. 13, 1968, Dorus William Ormand & wife Faye B. Ormand sold to Harley Whitesides, Robert Robinson, and Hood Bridges trustees of Long Creek Presbyterian Church for one ($1.) dollar a triangular piece of land adjoining church property. Gaston Deed Bk. 994, p. 361.

8. Nov. 27, 1984, from trustees of Long Creek Presbyterian church Robert L. Robinson, Sr., Harley Whitesides and Hood Bridges to Long Creek Presbyterian Church, Inc. of Kings Mountain N.C. Presbyterian Church (USA), a non-profit organization, two parcels of land containing 7.758 acres and 2.0234 acres. Gaston Deed Bk. 1500, p. 593 & 594.

LONG CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
HISTORICAL SKETCH

As early as the 1740's settlers began to move into the area west of the Catawba River. These earliest settlers were mostly German and Scotch-Irish. The Scotch-Irish brought with them to America their Presbyterian beliefs. Their desire for a place of worship was an important part of their life.

Among the predominate German settlement which was located in northern present day Gaston County was located a Scotch-Irish settlement which included western Gaston and eastern Cleveland Counties. During this period the area was known as Tryon County and then in 1779 as Lincoln County. By 1780 this group of settlers had organized a church. They called it Long Creek Presbyterian after the source of a creek which flowed eastward from the ridge upon which the new church sat. While no documentation exists to pinpoint 1780, the oldest grave in the extensive cemetery was for Joseph Blackwood, died October 22, 1780. Family tradition indicates that Blackwood was wounded on October 7 in the Battle of Kings Mountain. He died a few days later of his wounds and was buried near the new church. He may be the same "Mr. Blackwood" who according to tradition allowed his home to be used for services prior to the organization of Long Creek Presbyterian. The first structure was made of logs and was located below the present structure near a spring. The following are the only known charter members: William Oates and family, James White and family, and Benjamin Ormand and family. They and their descendants helped shape the history of Long Creek Presbyterian from its beginning in 1780 until the present day.(1)

Apparently Long Creek was organized by the Orange Presbytery of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. In 1789 the General Assembly minutes for the Orange Presbytery listed Long Creek as vacant, having no minister.(2) Ministers were scarce and most small churches in western North Carolina had to rely on ministers who served many churches while doing much travelling. In 1793 Long Creek introduced "Dr. Watts Hymns" for their worship instead of singing psalms exclusively for worship. This introduction caused a "rupture" in the church which eventually caused "seceders" to leave the church to start Pisgah A. R. P. Church in 1796.(3) The Great Awakening also caused some discord at Long Creek. Beginning about 1800 revivals created great emotional outbursts. "Shakers" caused some irregularities, such as baptizing without the proper authority, in some congregations. In 1802 Long Creek and Knob Creek in northern Cleveland County were both censured for these activities. On November 28, 1804, the Concord Presbytery, to which Long Creek now belonged, appointed a committee to investigate the practices at Long Creek. Some two dozen persons from both Long Creek and Knobb Creek were suspended from communion. The reports of 1805 indicated that unacceptable practices continued to occur. However, by 1807 all but one person had been restored to communion after disavowing their past practices. During this entire period Long Creek only had supply ministers.(4)

On September 3, 1816, Long Creek, Olney, and New Hope called Licentiate Henry M. Kerr to be their pastor. He accepted and served until 1819. The next few years saw Long Creek again being served by supply ministers.(5) In 1826 Long Creek was shown as having 30 communicants and with 2 infant baptisms. From 1836-1840 Rev. Albertus L. Watts served as pastor at Emmanuel (known as Lincolnton later) and supplied at Long Creek.(6) On March 6, 1838, the first deed for Long Creek Church was transacted. Benjamin Ormand and Henry Fulenwider sold to Drury Arrowood, James Oates, and Isaac White, "as trustees of Long creek Church and their Successors" 5 and 3/4 acres for the sum of 5 shillings. The deed included the church and cemetery. There is no known reason why the congregation which had been in existence for 58 years had never had legal ownership of the land upon which the church and cemetery was located. One reason may be that Benjamin Ormand, a staunch member of the congregation, owned the property. The congregation perceived no reason to have legal ownership. Since Ormand was getting older, the reason for a deed may have become more evident.

About this same time the need for a new house of worship became an issue. About 1845 a frame structure was constructed about 200 yards below where the present church stands. The building had two doors and a gallery, where Negro members of the church which were mostly slaves gathered.(7) In 1847 Lincolnton and Long Creek together listed 81 communicants and 7 infant baptisms. In 1851 Rev. Robert Newton Davis was called as "Stated Supply" which he served until 1871. He lived in Lincolnton and usually had services at Long Creek every two weeks. In 1860 Long Creek issued the call for 1/2 the ministerial services to Rev. Davis and offered $300. He accepted and was installed.(8) Rev. Davis had a profound affect on the church life at Long Creek. During his pastorate Sunday School was started. In 1869 Long Creek listed 105 members in the Mecklenburg Presbytery.(9)

In 1873 Rev. J. J. Kennedy became the supply pastor of Long Creek.(10) He served as pastor at New Hope and later at Olney. He drove his horse and buggy from Gastonia to preach at Long Creek. His inspiration and the significant growth in membership created the need for a new church. In 1875 plans were made to build a new structure. Harleigh B. Huffstetler, a deacon, was treasurer of the building fund which raised $1500 through subscription. Crow and Beam were to furnish the lumber, and Albert Torrence and Lee Ramseur were the carpenters. They made the doors, window frames, pews and Bible stand. J. L. Phifer and his father painted the church. After a few months the church was finished and paid for. It was to be dedicated during the summer of 1876. The congregation with many guest ministers and other guests came to the dedication. Rev. J. T. Plunkett of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church in Mecklenburg County preached the dedicatory sermon. His message came from Haggai 2:9 which said that "this latter house shall be greater than the former".(11) This church is currently (1985) being used for worship. The congregation has kept the structure in very good condition.

The Long Creek Church was constructed from heart pine. The

exterior was covered with six inch weatherboarding. The building is 40 feet by 70 feet. Wooden shingles originally covered the roof. The interior walls were of plaster, and the floors of heart pine. The pews were hand made and square nails were used throughout. Heat was by wood-burning box heaters. It was a most excellent structure. The architecture was still simple with clear glass windows in keeping with their Calvinistic heritage. But the congregation was very proud of their new sanctuary. They knew it would serve them well.(12)

On September 30, 1877, Rev. J. J. Kennedy organized the Ladies Missionary Society at Long Creek. The Missionary Society has played a prominent part in the development of Long Creek congregation.(13) In 1887 the elders were William Arrowood, T. M. A. Oates, H. L. Ramsour, and R. A. White. The deacons were W. V. Ramseur and D. M. Arrowood.(14) In 1889 Rev. E. A. Sample became pastor of Long Creek in a multi-parish with Kings Mountain, Shiloh, and Hephzibah.(15) From this period to the present day Long Creek called a pastor and only used supply ministers while searching for a pastor. During this period services were held at night. Kerosene lamps were hung from the ceiling to furnish light. Long Creek had furnished three Presbyterian ministers before 1900: Rev. William Butler Arrowood, Rev. Robert Silvanus Arrowood, and Rev. M. Chalmers Arrowood. In 1897 the Long Creek Sunday School Library was in use. In 1899 some members were dismissed from Long Creek to allow for the creation of a Presbyterian Church in Bessemer City. In 1901 additional members were dismissed to neighboring congregations. In 1904 the church reported 65 members.(16)

From 1910-1912 Rev. S. S. Oliver served as pastor at Long Creek, Kings Mountain, and Bessemer City. He requested that the pulpit be remodeled. In 1911 the remodeling took place, and the church bought three new pulpit chairs.(17) From 1907-1923 a school was located directly behind the church on the property of R. D. Ormand. Gaston County operated the school for grades 1-7.(18) In 1919 Kings Mountain called its own minister. Long Creek and Bessemer City remained together until 1982 when Long Creek went self-supporting. In 1919 a frame manse in Bessemer City was used to house the pastor. In 1930 the need for a better manse brought a new brick structure at 307 W. Washington Ave. in Bessemer City. In 1936 93 members were on roll, of which 18 were on the inactive list. In August 1935 Long Creek gathered to celebrate the departure of Miss Amy Robinson to serve as a missionary in Japan. During the 1930's the kerosene lamps were replaced with gasoline lantern-type lights which also hung from the ceiling. They furnished light until 1939 when electricity came to the area. In January 1942 work began on the Sunday School rooms. A 20 feet by 40 feet addition was constructed at the back of the church building. The men of the church did the carpentry work with lumber cut off the church property. Each room had a wood-burning heater. Despite the problems of the Great Depression and the World Wars, Long Creek had grown in membership and in its programs. Modern times would certainly bring more progress.(19)

In January 1951 the old wood-burning box heaters were replaced

with an oil furnace for the church and Sunday School rooms. The same year the membership was listed at 84. In 1952 the old pews were refinished. On September 14, 1952, the 75th Anniversary of the women's organization was celebrated at homecoming.(20) On October 16, 1955, the church celebrated its 175th year of organization. Rev. F. C. Debele Jr. preached the sermon, and the Rev. Ben F. Ormand talked on the history of Long Creek Church. In 1958 the new fellowship hall was completed at a cost of $13,497, which included a 40 feet by 40 feet fellowship area and a kitchen. In 1962 the construction loans were repaid. On October 20, 1959, the Kings Mountain Presbytery met at Long Creek Church. Sample Hager constructed wooden benches and tables for the lunch, and the ladies prepared a turkey dinner. At the same time a Boy Scout troop was organized at Long Creek. In 1965 a fibreglass panel suspended ceiling was installed in the church below the original ceiling. In 1966 the four children of Mr. R. D. (Bert) Ormand donated one acre of land. which had formerly been the old school property,to Long Creek Church. At this time Long Creek showed 122 members. In 1968 the church building was refurbished. In 1974 the church purchased an electric organ. The following year the manse was air conditioned. In 1977 a new and larger fellowship building was constructed under the supervision of Mr. Joe Whitehurst. The cost of $43,932 was free of debt at the time it was completed. The following year the old fellowship hall was converted into five Sunday School rooms.(21)

On November 30, 1980, Long Creek Presbyterian Church celebrated its 200th Anniversary with a grand Bicentennial celebration. The Bicentennial Committee organized the homecoming with special historical sketches during the afternoon. At this time the Gaston County Historical Society, which had been invited, attended the celebration. Long Creek Presbyterian Church History and Cemetery Index 1780-1980 was compiled and sold to interested persons.

The Long Creek Church entered another period of growth and development in 1982. On April 4, 1982, the congregation voted to become a single church field. For the first time in 200 years the church would enjoy a single, "full-time" pastor. The congregation approved plans for a $90,000 manse on September 5, 1982. This house was to be built on land joining the church and was completed debt free in February 1983.

Charles W. Davenport was called to be the pastor of the church on December 12, 1982. He and his family moved into the newly constructed manse on February 1, 1983. In recent years Long Creek Church has ministered to the community in important ways. A church van was purchased in August 1984, and has been used weekly to aid the Gaston County Office on Aging. A mother's morning out program is held in the summer for school age children. In 1985, the church sponsored a summer intern program through Columbia Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. This program enabled Se Young Roh, a Korean-American student, to serve the congregation as a summer assistant pastor.

The Long Creek Church is 200 years old, but still growing in mission!

LONG CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FOOTNOTES

(1) Miss Estell Arrowood, "A History of Long Creek Church", 1936. (Written for the Women of the Church and located in the Church Historical Room.)

(2) Minutes of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. 1789-1860.

(3) Dr. E. E. Boyce, History of Pisgah A. R. P. Church, 1943.

(4) Neill R. McGeachy, Confronted by Challenge: A History of Concord Presbytery 1795-1973 (Published by the Presbytery of Concord, 1985), p. 31.

(5) Minutes of Concord Presbytery, 1816-1819 (Housed at the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian Church U. S. A., Montreat, N. C.)

(6) Minutes of Bethel Presbytery 1836-1840, (Historical Foundation, Montreat, N. C.)

(7) Miss Estell Arrowood, "A History of Long Creek Church"

(8) Minutes of Concord Presbytery 1847, 1851, 1860 (Historical Foundation, Montreat, N. C.)

(9) Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery 1869 (Historical Foundation, Montreat, N. C.)

(10) Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery 1869, ibid.

(11) Miss Estell Arrowood, "A History of Long Creek Church"

(12) Mrs. Lida Whitehurst, "Long Creek Presbyterian Church 1780-1980", 1980, (History published for church Bicentennial in 1980)

(13) Miss Estell Arrowood, "A History of Long Creek Church"

(14) Sessional Records of Long Creek Presbyterian Church, 1887 (Housed at the Historical Foundation of Presbyterian Church U. S. A., Montreat, N. C.)

(15) Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery, ibid.

(16) Sessional Records of Long Creek Presbyterian Church 1899, 1904, ibid.

(17) Sessional Records of Long Creek Presbyterian Church 1911, ibid.

(18) Robert Cope and Wade Wellman, The County of Gaston, Gaston County Historical Society, 1961.

(19) Sessional Records of Long Creek Presbyterian Church (Historical Foundation, Montreat, N. C.)

(20) Miss Estell Arrowood, "A History of the Long Creek Women of the Church" (Written on the occasion of the 175 anniversary of the W. O. C. in 1955 and housed in the Church Historical Room.)

(21) Sessional Records of Long Creek Presbyterian Church, (Historical Foundation, Montreat, N. C.)

Long Creek Presbyterian Church

One of the oldest surviving churches in Gaston County, Long Creek Presbyterian Church was built in 1876, almost a century after the congregation was formed. The church is located near the western edge of the county, at the intersection of state roads 1401 and 1402. The building is impressively sited on a rise near Long Creek and overlooks the church cemetery which is located across state road 1402.

This Greek Revival church is a single story, frame building which rests on granite piers and has been underpinned with masonry block. The design of Long Creek Church is both delicate and plain with minor details and trim being the significant features. The gable-fronted church is accented with cornice returns and corner posts which resemble pilasters.

The facade of the church contains three bays. The central, double doorway is flanked by sash windows containing nine-over-nine lights. Windows throughout the 1876 portion of this building are the same design with simple moulded surrounds and covered with exterior shutters. The doorway also has moulded but simple surrounds. Some alteration has ocurred in the transom over the doors which are replacement, six panel.

Entering through the main doorway, one comes into a narrow narthex lighted by the two windows from the front facade. There is little in the way of architectural detailing. A hat and coat rail is found on all walls. The beaded baseboard is approximately 12 inches high. Window surrounds

are moulded as are the architraves for the main door and the four paneled doors which lead to the sanctuary.

The sanctuary is designed with two side aisles rather than one center aisle. The three sections of pews are original to the building as are the wide plank floorboards made of quarter sawn pine. The same lack of detail seen on the exterior and in the narthex is continued in the sanctuary. Windows have deep sills but simply moulded surrounds. The baseboards are wide but simply beaded as those in the narthex. The pews are distinctive in their severity. The ceilings both in the narthex and the sanctuary have been replaced with acoustical tiles laid in metal grids. Light fixtures date from the 1930's and replace the original oil lamp fixtures, one of which is kept in the church historical room.

The chancel end of the church is undistinguished from the rest of the sanctuary. Choir pews have been elevated on a movable platform. The lectern-style pulpit and chairs for ministers rest on a center platform. The table-style altar rests on the main floor.

Two doors of five panel design flank the pulpit platform and lead to ante chambers found in an addition made to the back of the church. This addition was made of brick in 1942 and is two stories, a basement and first floor. Even with a sloping lot, the first floor is one step higher than the sanctuary. On this floor of the addition are two rooms and a set of stair leading to the one room basement. Two doors in the basement lead to the side and back yards. The first floor rooms originally served as ante rooms and

minister's offices.

A replacement door located in the northeast corner of the sanctuary leads to an ell-like addition made in 1958. This addition is composed of brick with jalousie windows, and a flat metal roof. The addition contains several classrooms, restrooms, and a small chapel. A covered driveway attaches the 1958 addition to the fellowship hall which was built in 1977. This structure also contains the present minister's offices. Architecture for this building is very simple. The building is made of brick with narrow, long windows which only open at the bottom. One other recent structure on the church grounds is a small, storage building made of brick. This building like the original 1876 church is covered in composition shingle roofing tiles.

The church cemetery which is located across the road from the main church property is enclosed by a field rock wall accented by decorative wrought iron gates. The cemetery continues to be used today and is in good repair with tombstones dating back to the late eighteenth century.

Alan D. Waufle

June 24, 1985