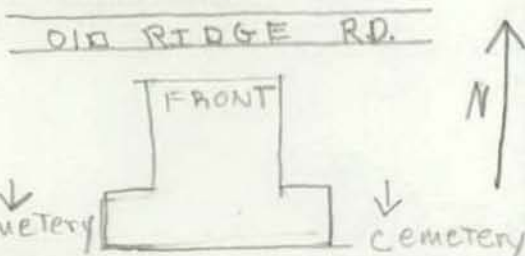


ALABAMA HISTORIC INVENTORY

Alabama Historical Commission
725 Monroe Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

9000e

1. No.	4. Present Name(s) Mt. Hilliard Me. Church	1. No. 2. County Bullock
2. County Bullock	5. Other Name(s)	
3. Location of Negatives		

6. Specific Location Chunnennuggee Ridge Road 15 mi. s.w. of Union Springs	16. Thematic Category Society, Religion	27. No. of Stories 1	2. County Bullock
7. City or Town If Rural, Township & Vicinity Union Springs	17. Date(s) or Period 1856	28. Basement? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8. Site Plan with North Arrow 	18. Style or Design Greek Revival (country)	29. Foundation Material brick piers	
9. Coordinates Lat. _____ Long. _____ U.T.M. Reference Zone _____ Easting _____ Northing _____	19. Architect or Engineer	30. Wall Construction mortise & tenon	
10. Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/>	20. Contractor or Builder	31. Roof Type & Material gable tin	
11. On National Register? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	21. Original Use, if apparent church services	32. No. of Bays Front 2 Side 3	
12. On Ala. Register? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	22. Present Use church services	33. Wall Treatment weatherboard	
13. Part of Estab. Hist. Dist.? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23. Ownership Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/>	34. Plan Shape T-shaped	
14. District Potent'l? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24. Owner's Name & Address, if known Ala. West Florida Me. Conference P.O. Box 700, Andalusia, Al.	35. Changes (Explain in No. 41) Addition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered <input type="checkbox"/> Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	
15. Name of Established District	25. Local Contact Montgomery, Al. 272-9677 Elizabeth G. Black 236 Carol Villa Drive.	36. Condition Interior good Exterior good	
26. Location of Additional Data ARInventory files (survey)		37. Preservation Underway? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		38. Endangered? By What? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		39. Visible from Public Road? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
		40. Acreage, Lot Size ?	

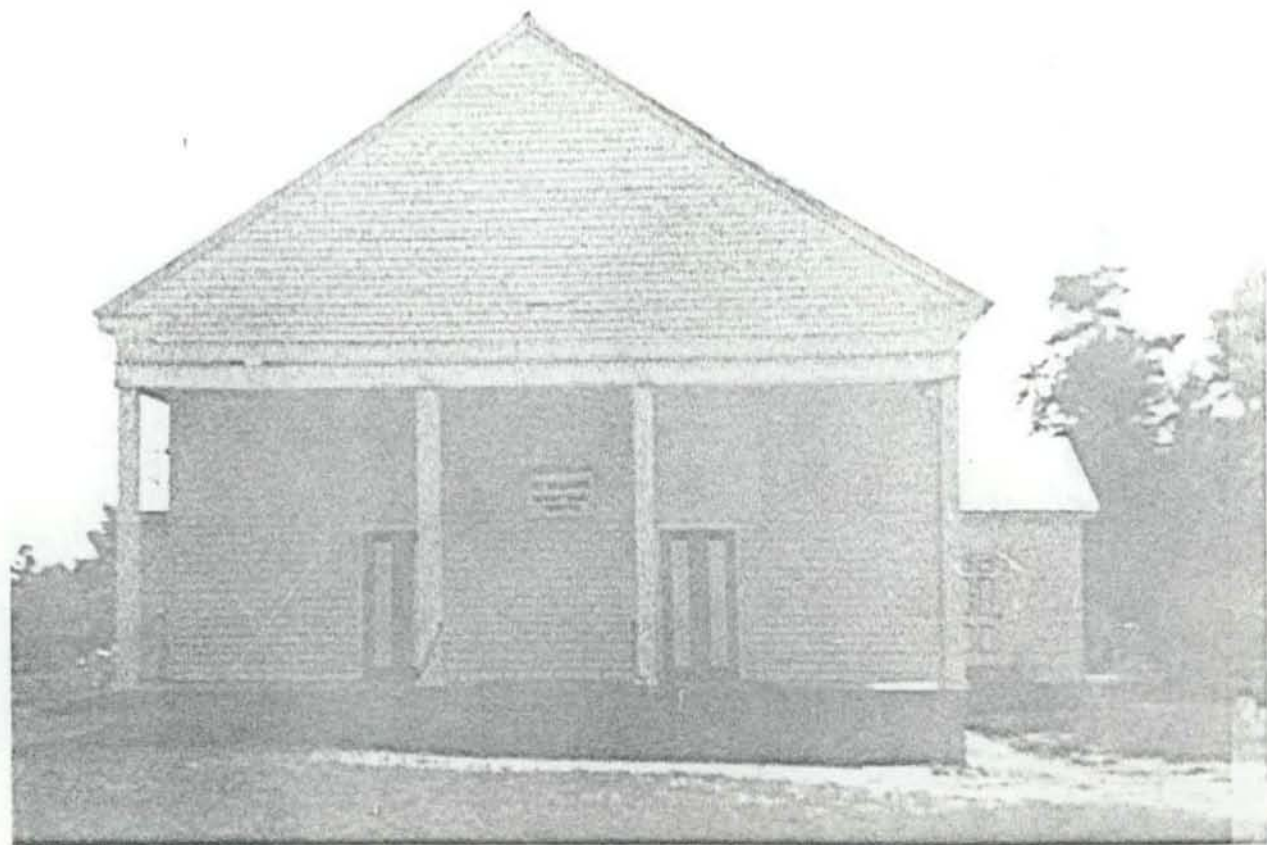
41. Further Description of Important Features The church has a porch across the front with 4 square columns. The facade has two main entries with no windows. At the rear and to either side are two classrooms (1953) forming the T shape. These rooms were made from timber used to build the old Masonic Lodge which was in back of the church. The interior has a central pulpit with 3 rows of pews. There is one chimney on the east side of the church and the six windows are tall and plain rectangular design.	5. Other Name(s) Mt. Hilliard Methodist Church
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42. History and Significance Mt. Hilliard is one of the few rural churches still standing and still active since the 1850's. It marks the spot of the great Revivals of that period. Named for Henry W. Hilliard, who opposed the fiery secessionists during the decades before 1860, it provided the foundation for the founding of Methodist Churches and Colleges in Texas in the 1800's.

43. Description of Environment and Outbuildings In the cemetery are buried veterans of 5 wars from 1812 to WWII.

44. Sources of Information Survey files	45. Prepared By Jill Connell	46. Phone	47. Date 3/3/97
	48. Staff Member	49. Revision Date(s)	

6. Card Typed



Mt. Hilliard Methodist Church

(written by Elizabeth Griswold Black)

Mt. Hilliard Methodist Church is an old church located on Chunnennuggee Ridge in an area where, " in the old days ", four counties came together. After the War Between the States, this region became Bullock County. The Church is beautifully located atop the Ridge and near the highest point in the county. Old-timers called this spot Sacred Ground-- as indeed it is !

Mt. Hilliard Church has been the nucleus of a community and an inspiration to many people for more than a hundred years. It has served continuously as a church since the early 1850's. Here is an example of how the past and the present blend to leave a rich heritage for the future.

Tradition has it that the first religious services were held under the spreading oak trees as the mistress of the Hilliard Plantation instructed the slaves in the Methodist Doctrines of the early 1800's. A bush arbor was built in this area and here developed one of the Camp Meeting Grounds so important to the early religious and cultural life of our people.

Mt. Hilliard Church was organized in 1835, as the plaque over the door testifies, but the first church was a log structure built near the public road. The present building was erected in the early 1850's at about the same time that the Masonic Lodge-School Building was built on the south side of the cemetery. The Masonic Lodge Charter was dated 1854, Pike County, Alabama, which is now Bullock County. The early church records have been destroyed or lost. But the same people whose names appear on the Lodge Charter were some of the early settlers and builders of the present day church. Names appearing on the charter are: J.L.Brown, Gen. McCreless, J.D.Moore, C.D.Shell, Joel Riley. Other family names

connected with Old Mt. Hilliard and often times associated with both Masonic Lodge and Mt. Hilliard Church were Ball; Stron; Hough; Holloway; Brundage; Dismukes; Reynolds; Bickerstaff; Pritchett; Braswell; Faulkner; Harris; Hightower; McCall; Caylor; Sims; Ritch; Sellers; Culver; Griswold; Guthrie; Maxwell; Hooks; Roughton; Baker and others.

Old Mt. Hilliard Church was great in influence, and it sent forth devout pilgrims to places far and near. One of those was Dr. J. T. Griswold who carried Methodism to the Texas Panhandle in 1891. He described his experiences in his book From Dugout to Steeple. I quote from his book to give information about old Mt. Hilliard Church. He mentions a great early "master of the pulpit", W. S. Wade, who was pastor of Mt. Hilliard Church in the early 1870's, and who was six feet tall and angular, but by the time he had finished preaching "every thing there was aglow". Preacher Wade had tremendous influence! So did a beloved early local preacher, Rev. Jimmie Hightower, whose descendents are still a part of Mt. Hilliard Church.

Dr. Griswold, uncle of the writer, also recounts in his book, the story of a "powerful revival which swept the entire community" in 1880. He was "baptised along with many others at God's holy altar". Other old residents, one being Mrs. Mollie Hightower Ritch, daughter of the Rev. Jimmie Hightower, have referred to this great revival.

"Immediately after this gracious revival", Dr. J. Thomas Griswold records, "We organized a young men's prayer group to meet each Saturday night ...It was referred to as that wonderful young men's prayer meeting at Mt. Hilliard... That organization lived seven years, and from its membership came six Methodist preachers and one Baptist preacher." Dr. J. T. Griswold and Dr. Frank P. Culver were members of that group. They established many Methodist churches in Texas and were on the Conference Committee which established Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Both taught school on the opposite

side of the cemetery and preached early sermons in Mt. Hilliard Church. Their descendents and relatives still cherish Mt. Hilliard Church and often return to the source of their religious heritage.

The John McCreless family is another family with roots in Mt. Hilliard who moved to Texas and who have been instrumental in founding Methodist Churches and Colleges or Schools in Texas and in other parts of the world. Many families and individuals have similar stories to tell. Mt. Hilliard Church has been a source of strength and inspiration for those substantial citizens who still live in the immediate vicinity and whose concern and devotion are recognized by the well-kept appearance of the old church with its original pews and furnishings.

The name Mt. Hilliard is of historical significance as well as religious importance. The village, the old Post Office, and the Church were named for Henry Washington Hilliard, prominent in Alabama politics, and indeed in the nation, for two decades before the War Between the States. In 1845, Hilliard became the first Whig to represent the Montgomery district in Congress and the only successful Whig in the State of Alabama, according to Party Politics in Alabama, by Leroy Dorman. He defended the South but he opposed secession as a means of solving the problems of that period of history. In 1851, he prevented a divided Alabama from falling into the hands of the secessionists who would have seceded the state at that time. Hilliard set up a series of appointments through out the old Second Congressional District in order to explain his views to the people. Radical Editors called for William Lowndes Yancey to meet Henry W. Hilliard at his appointments. "Still declining joint discussions", according to Dorman and taken from Hilliard's Politics and Pen Pictures, "Hilliard reached his first appointment at Union Springs on July 3, 1851 to find Yancey already on the ground with his friends, and a great crowd assembled to hear the expected 'battle of the giants.'" Finally, on the platform, Yancey extended his hand and began the attack. This was the first of the famous debates between fiery Yancey and

cool and calculating. Hilliard!

Old residents of the village of Mt. Hilliard, one of them being Mrs. Harriet Griswold Moore, who loved Mt. Hilliard and lived for nearly one-hundred years, told members of her family that Yancey, himself, for a brief time stayed in the little village. But the Church was named for Hilliard, who was a lay preacher in the Methodist Church, and who is believed to have spoken in Mt. Hilliard Church, or at this site, during those two decades before the War Between the States when feeling ran high and when he canvassed the district and the state in order to express his political and religious ideas.

This writer's Grandfather, John Jephtha Griswold, bought land at Mt. Hilliard "less Church, Graveyard, Masonic Lodge Lots, and Methodist Parsonage" according to an old handwritten deed dated 1880. The land was bought from W. V. Thompson and it was ^{considered to be} the original Hilliard plantation from which the church lots were carved. This land was inherited by the writer's father, Benjamin B. Griswold, and it remained in the Griswold Family for nearly one-hundred years. My father operated the plantation and the old store and at one time operated a cotton gin so important to small villages in those early days. My mother, Mrs. Lula Pritchett Griswold, taught school in the old school house and in neighboring communities for more than forty years and did much to preserve information and human interest stories so valuable to us now. They were an important part of the history of Mt. Hilliard Church.

Henry W. Hilliard, for whom the church was named, came to Alabama in 1831 as the first professor of English Literature at the University of Alabama. He was born in North Carolina. He was educated in South Carolina and he had practiced law in Athens, Georgia before coming to Alabama.

In 1834, he moved to Montgomery and formed a political-legal partnership which was to launch his long public career. He was a man of reason, so he advocated cautious cooperation of the Southern States; he was a man of tolerance and held a broad outlook; he believed in discussion in time of crisis;

and so he called for a convention of the leading statesmen of the country to solve the difficult problems of that day; he opposed secession because he believed the rights of the southern states could and should be protected under the Constitution. Hope of maintaining the Union and at the same time the honor of the South was Hilliard's main point of emphasis. But he was loyal, and when Alabama seceded from the Union and joined the Confederate States of America, he organized Hilliard's Legion and became an officer in the Confederate Army.

Henry W. Hilliard was a teacher, lawyer, congressman, orator, United States Minister to Belgium, Regent of the Smithsonian Institute, Minister to Brazil after the War Between the States where he helped forward the emancipation of slavery. He was also a Diplomat for the Confederate States of America, an officer in the Confederate Army, a writer, and a lay-minister of the Methodist Church.

It is fitting that Mt. Hilliard Church be named for such a man, for it is a quiet and re-assuring spot in a turbulent world, and it has been a small but stalwart church of great influence. In the old families, names of the great evangelists have been perpetuated and handed down to future generations. Many outstanding Methodist Ministers of a more recent period of history preached early sermons in Mt. Hilliard Church. Some of these names include Bickerstaff, Spencer; Pickard; T.S. Harris; Gerald King; Charles Liddell; Jack Holland and John Vickers to name a very small number. At this time (1976) there are three young ministers of Methodist and Baptist Churches in the area whose families are some of the old and devoted members of Mt. Hilliard Church. Indeed, the speaker at the 1976 Homecoming, a professor at Emory University, is of a family whose roots are tied to Mt. Hilliard Church. Other families have produced teachers, ministers, doctors, lawyers, farmers, and businessmen who have made an important contribution to society and who are still interested in Mt. Hilliard Church. This is an attempt to have Mt. Hilliard recognized for its enduring contribution to the culture of the people of Bullock County, the State of Alabama, and indeed, the South.

Other churches in this area of Bullock County that have not been dealt with sufficiently, are the old and influential churches of the Black people. Before the War Between the States, the black people attended churches of the white people and their names were on the church rolls. I have given proof of this by including the Church Records such as that of Old Union. Special pews at Mt. Hilliard were reserved for black members.

After the War Between the States, the black people desired to have their own churches and ministers. The white citizens helped the black people build their churches. One such church which still stands and holds regular services is at Pleasant Grove a few miles south of High Ridge. My Grandfather, Phillip Pritchett, and Uncle Burl Braswell helped the people build this church and encouraged them in the Methodist doctrines.

Another Church important to black people of the area is at Mt. Carmel located on the road "under the bluff", Highway 82. This church was encouraged by people of the Simsville area. I remember that as a child, my mother, Mrs. Lula Pritchett Griswold, would take me with her to check on the burial places of members of our family, and we always visited the grave of beloved Aunt Patsy who was so important in my Mother's happy childhood. Aunt Patsy is buried in the McCarmel Cemetery.

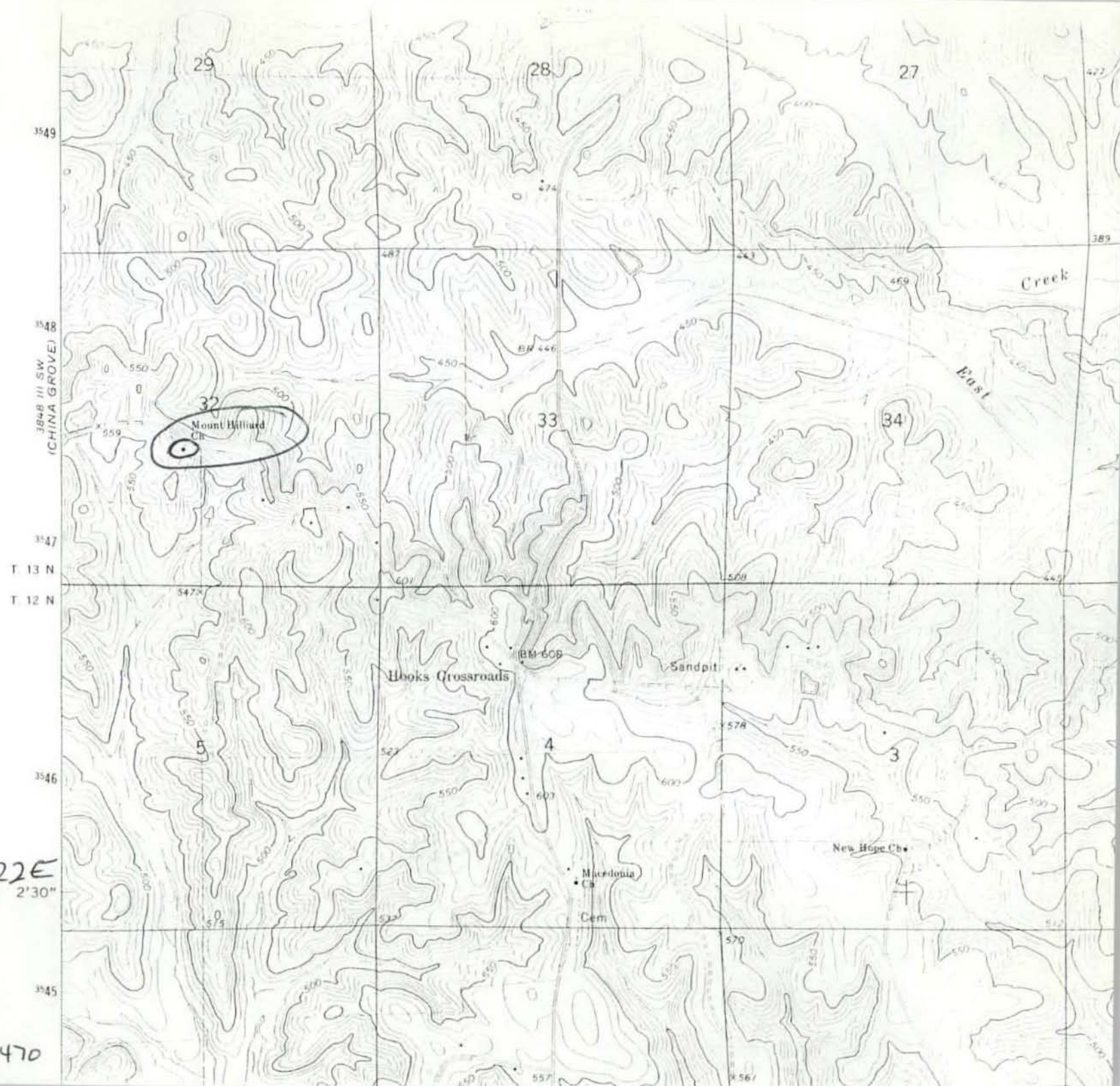
A beloved and respected black woman of the present time and who died last year, 1975, was Aunt Zeneah Strom and she is buried at Mt. Carmel. She was devoutly religious and reared a large family of 15 children who are very substantial black citizens.

Another stalworth black woman who reared a fine family was Aunt Mollie Baldwin. Her oldest son, Sherman, saved my life one time when my horse ran away. Aunt Mollie is buried at Pleasant Grove. Other important black families include the Harris families, the Jim Pritchett family, Mc Claney, and family of Emanuel Stucky.

One day in the 195's a wagon stopped in front of our house at Mt. Hilliard

and one of the good black christians of the community came to the front door with two large plates piled high with the most delicious country fried chicken and marvelous cake of all kinds. She presented this to my mother with these words, "Miss Lula, you and Mr. Ben have been good to us and you have brought us food from your church dinners, so we want you to have these two plates from our church's Quarterly Meeting!"

I say these are God's principles at work, and this is an example of the influences of the small but great country churches in this small part of our big and beautiful world!

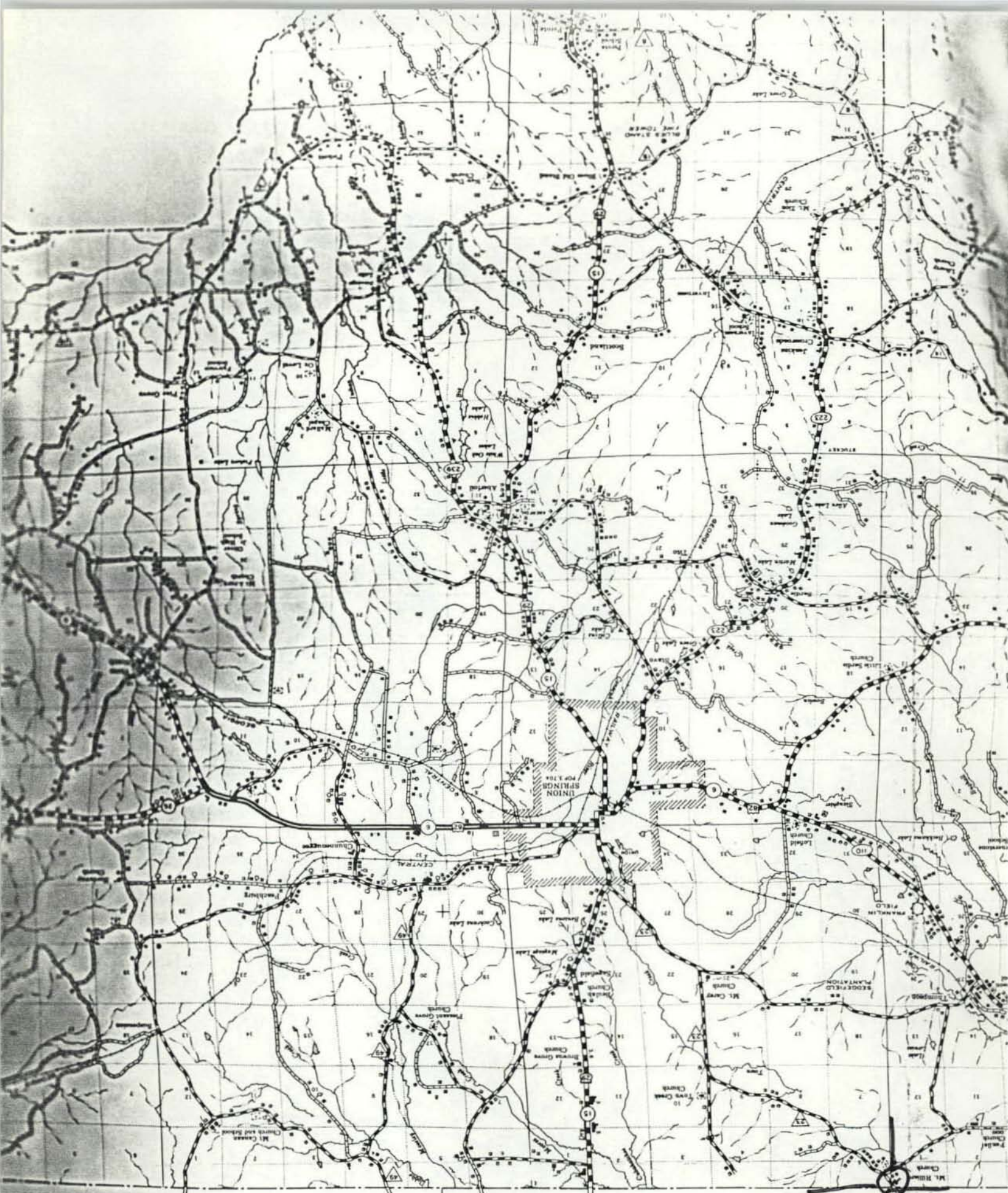


Mount
Hilliard
Church

Almeria 7.5
1971.

S32 T13N R22E
2'30"

UTM-
16/606580/3547470



MACON COUNTY

TO TUSKALOOGA

TO TUSKALOOGA