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ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE

MAR 6 2001

Nomination Form

Ala. Historical Commission

1. Name HATCHETT CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH + BROWNVILLE CEMETERY
historic
and/or common

2. Location 4 MI. NORTH OF GOODWATER ON CLAY CO. HIGHWAY 7 (SECTION 8, TWP 22, R 6E)
street & number
city, town ---vicinity of
state county zip

3. Classification

Table with 5 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Accessible, Present Use. Includes checkboxes for building(s), structure, site, object, public/private/both, occupied/unoccupied/work in progress, yes/no, and various present uses like agriculture, commercial, educational, etc.

4. Owner of Property

name GOODWATER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Phone number 256-839-5892
street & number P.O. BOX 72
city, town GOODWATER, AL 35072 ---vicinity of zip

BROWNVILLE CEMETERY CO - WM. FULTON, PRES. - 5 LAKESHORE DR, BIRMINGHAM 35209
205-942-5136

5. Floor plan & site plan. Use space below to sketch floor plan and site plan or attach additional sheet.

SEE ATTACHED SHEETS.

**6. Description** (See attached instructions for specific guidelines.)

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.**

SEE ATTACHED

**7. Significance** (See attached instructions for specific guidelines.)

| Period                                    | Areas of Significance-Check and justify below   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric      | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic    | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture            | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce               | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)     |

**Specific dates** **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph).**

SEE ATTACHED

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**8. Major Bibliographical References**

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SEE ATTACHED SHEET

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**9. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of nominated property 16.4 ACRES  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose map showing location of property. (city or county map, state highway department map, or USGS map)  
ATTACHED

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**10. Form Prepared By**

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name/title JANET FAZEKAS  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 2-2001  
street & number 7624 DESOTO CAVERNS PKWY telephone 256-362-2850  
city or town ALPINE, state AL zip 35014

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**11. Please submit color slides of the property with this form.**

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Color slides are essential to the review process.

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**12. Please return ALABAMA REGISTER form and documentation to:**

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Alabama Register Coordinator  
Alabama Historical Commission  
468 South Perry Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900

## HATCHETT CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND BROWNVILLE CEMETERY

Clay County Highway 7, 4 miles north of Goodwater  
Goodwater vic., Clay County

AR01.05

|   |                               |                          |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Owner (church and cemetery owned separately): | Contact:                      |                          |
| Presbytery of Sheppards & Lapsley             | Brownville Cemetery Co.       | Janet Fazekas            |
| PCUSA   | c/o William Fulton, President | 7624 DeSoto Caverns Pkwy |
| 3603 Lorna Ridge Drive                        | 5 Lakeshore Drive             | Alpine, AL 35014         |
| Birmingham, AL 35216                          | Birmingham, AL 35209          | 256-361-2850             |
|   | 205-942-5136                  | jnfuzzy@mindspring.com   |

Church maintained by:  
Goodwater Presbyterian Church  
P.O. Box 72  
Goodwater, AL 35072  
256-839-6433

Located in southwestern Clay County in what was once the community of Brownville, the Hatchett Creek Presbyterian Church and Brownville Cemetery comprise a 16-acre complex containing a cemetery dating to 1838, a c.1902 gable-front church building, a wood frame arbor possibly dating to the mid-nineteenth century, and a fellowship hall added in 1982. It faces west on Clay County Road 7, approximately 4 miles north of Goodwater. The congregation was one of the earliest Presbyterian groups to organize in the area, with local tradition dating its organization to 1832. Settlement along the Socopatoy Road, now known as Clay County Road 7, brought in an increasing membership, and meetings were first held in a log building approximately two miles southwest of the present site.

As membership increased, the church moved to its present location and constructed a frame building. An arbor was maintained on the property for camp meetings, with estimates of attendance being as high as 5000, though no records remain. The meetings were popular until around the turn of the century, when discipline problems led to their cessation. When the current building was erected, the earlier structure was moved to another location in the community for use as a school, but this structure no longer remains. Also popular during the early period was the Sabbath, or Sunday, School, with as many as 59 children enrolled in 1959.

The church remained a cohesive institution in the community until its dissolution in 2000 because of a dwindling congregation. Ownership of the building was continued by the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley of Central Alabama, with maintenance of the building transferred to the nearby Goodwater Presbyterian Church. Hatchett Creek Church continues to serve descendants of the congregation, however, connecting them with their past through reunions and homecoming events. The earliest settlers in the area, as well as prominent ministers and significant Alabamians, such as the Carmichael family and Blanche Evans Dean were members of Hatchett Creek (see nomination form).

Dating to around 1902, the church is a one story, wood frame, gable front building. Its original weatherboard siding was covered with vinyl in the 1980s. The original tin covering of the steep-pitched front-gabled roof was replaced with a new standing seam tin roof of like color in 2000. Entrance is on the north side of the facade and features four six-foot wide concrete steps leading to an original wood door with six raised panels. An aluminum awning shelters the entry and a

wrought iron ornaments the steps. A secondary entry at the rear features the same six-panel door, with concrete steps, an aluminum shed awning, and a wheelchair ramp dating from 1999. Original windows are 1/1 double hung wood sashes, paired on the front facade, symmetrically arranged in rows of five on each side, and two separated windows at the rear.

Interior features include original vertical wainscot and chair rail, horizontal beadboard upper walls, beadboard ceiling, and tongue and groove flooring that has been covered with carpet. Drop globe lights probably date to 1970, ceiling fans to the 1980s, and central heat and air to the 1980s.

The arbor, a rustic timber construction, is located just a few feet to the rear of the church building and is believed by local historians to date to the mid-19th century when camp meetings were popular. Repairs have been in keeping with the original construction, with the use of large wood pegs to join the rafters.

A few feet on the south side of the church is a 1982 Fellowship Hall containing a large fellowship area, two Sunday School rooms, a nursery, and rest rooms.

Surrounding the church on the north and east is a cemetery containing approximately 625 graves. Formerly a part of the church property, it was sold to the Brownville Cemetery Co. in 1929. Early graves are concentrated in the westernmost section fronting on Clay County Road 7, with newer graves to the rear. The earliest grave dates to 1838, traditionally known as the burial of a ministerial student from Tennessee who was attending a camp meeting with relatives from Hackneyville. An inventory of graves yields the following statistics: prior to 1865--26 (5%); 1866-1900--86 (17%); 1901-1930--163 (31%); 1931-1960--93 (18%); 1961-present--150 (29%). Roughly, this indicates that 70% of the graves date to the historic period. Early settlers buried here include John B. Brown, charter member of Hatchett Creek Presbyterian Church (1861); his wife Susan Alford Brown (1846); Malcolm Patterson, who received an 1835 land patent (1839); Theodore Levie, also received land patent in 1835 (1854); Thomas Graham (1845); Daniel Morrison (1880). Other early markers are detailed in a 4/15/00 e-mail correspondence. Markers include a variety of styles and materials, with the early markers being primarily rustic. An unusual rectangular stone box-type marker is the grave of Elvira Germany, age 5, date unknown. Notable persons interred include Patrick Carmichael, Omer Carmichael, and Blanche Evans Dean (see nomination form). Burial continues to the present.

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Hatchett Creek Presbyterian Church and Brownville Cemetery are eligible for listing on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage under Criteria A and C in the areas of religion, settlement, funerary art, and architecture. The complex contains one of the earliest buildings associated with the development of the area and a cemetery dating to the settlement period. In addition, a rustic timber arbor possibly dates to the mid-19th century and reflects the popularity of camp meetings during the mid- and late-nineteenth century. The church depicts a good example of a turn-of-the-century gabled-front religious building, maintaining a high degree of historic fabric. Its rural setting remains intact to a remarkable extent. The church has been significant in the spread of the Presbyterian denomination to rural Alabama and its congregation has been a cohesive institution in the community for approximately 170 years. Though membership has dwindled and maintenance of the property has been transferred to the Goodwater Presbyterian Church, former members and descendants of the congregation continue to utilize the building for homecoming and reunion services.



**TALLADEGA  
NATIONAL  
FOREST**

**TALLADEGA  
NATIONAL  
FOREST  
Hollins Wildlife  
Management  
Area**

**Bill Nichols Scenic Hwy.**

TALLADEGA COUNTY

COOSA COUNTY

COOSA COUNTY

FREEMAN BASE LINE

TO COOPERVILLE

898'

N ↑

NEW

CEMETERY

781'

OLD  
CEMETERY



DRIVEWAY

780'

CLAY CO.  
SEC 8, TWP 22S, R. 6E

893'

CLAY CO. RD 7 TO GOODWATER →

HATCHETT CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CH  
AND  
BROWNVILLE CEMETERY, CLAY CO, AL



52' 3"

53' 2"

ARBOR

- 34' 4" -

- 24' 11" -

HANDICAP RAMP

PULPIT AREA

KITCHEN

FELLOWSHIP HALL

CHURCH

- 52' 6" -

- 52' 4" -

MEN'S R.R.

LADIES R.R.

NURSERY

6x6  
6x6  
6x10

S.S. ROOM

SS ROOM

9' x 9'

HATCHETT CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
AND ARBOR  
CLAY CO, AL

Stairways – no interior stairways

Wall and ceiling finish – on the lower walls are four-foot high vertical wainscoting extending up to a 3-inch chair rail. The upper walls are covered with horizontal beadboard to the ceiling. The ceiling is painted white beadboard with the strips running from front to back of the auditorium.

Flooring – entire auditorium floor is the old tongue and groove wood covered with red carpeting.

Notable hardware or mechanical systems – old-fashioned dropdown globe lights some of which could be original to 1902. *installed c1970*

Additions – in 1982 a Fellowship Hall was added to the main building. It consisted of two Sunday School rooms, a nursery, men and women's restrooms, kitchen area and a large open meeting area.

Ceiling fans were installed in the auditorium in the 1980's. Central heating and air conditioning were installed in the 1980's.

General setting – the church is located in a rural area of southern Clay County that was known as Brownville; however, there is no longer a community here. It faces east on Clay County Road 7 and is bordered on two sides by the Brownville Cemetery with dense timber on the remaining side.

Outbuildings – an historic arbor is located a few feet behind the church building. The exact date that it was built is unknown, but thought to have been in the mid-1800's when camp meetings there were popular. The repairs over the years have been in keeping with the original construction, even to the large wooden pegs used to join the rafters.

Surrounding the church on the north and east sides is the Brownville Cemetery. The cemetery consists of approximately 625 graves. In 1929 the church and the cemetery divided into separate entities and the cemetery has been maintained by a private foundation administered by the Brownville Cemetery Co. The lower half of the cemetery or "old cemetery" consists of the oldest graves with the first grave being noted as 1838, that of a ministerial student from Tennessee who was attending the camp meetings with relatives from Pinckneyville. The upper half or "new cemetery" is on the hill behind the church and consists of more recent graves.

Back entrance – one solid wood door with the same raised panel design as the front doors.

Windows – are original with much original glass in some. There are five tall windows on each sidewall of the auditorium, two tall side-by-side windows in the front and one tall window on each side of the pulpit in the back. The windows are 31" x 8' tall, double hung with one large pane of glass in the top section and one in the bottom section. There is no exterior trim around the windows.

#### Interior Features

Mantels – no mantels

Interior door and window trim – there is white painted decorative molding around all the doors and windows. It consists of a four inch wide board with a one inch cove in the middle with a ¾ inch bead on each side of that with a one inch lap board on the outer edges. At the top are corner blocks featuring a rosette in the middle of each block with a crown on top.

White painted shutters have been installed in the top section of each window along the side walls with full shutter coverage on the front and back windows.



Pews – according to local history, forty pews were all made from one enormous pine tree, which had stood for many years on the property line between the Swindall and McPhail properties. Neither family felt it was the owner of the tree, so they resolved the matter by donating the tree for the church's use. The pews were designed and the decorative portions were cut by Edgar Watts. The Watts brothers operated a sawmill and small furniture manufacturing business nearby. The young men of the church assembled them on the church grounds.

## THE WRITTEN DESCRIPTION:

Number of stories – one story

### Foundation

Height above ground – 2-1/2 ft. at front. Ground level at back.

Type of material – brick piers later underpinned with concrete blocks in the 1980's.

Interior framing – wood frame

Exterior wall material – in late 1980's aluminum siding was applied over the original wood siding. The replacement siding was kept as close to the original as possible. See old picture enclosed.

Exterior wall treatment – No fancy wall treatment

Porch – at the main entrance are four 6 ft. wide concrete steps leading to the front door. An aluminum awning covers the top step with a wrought iron railing down each side of steps. Covered with green indoor/outdoor carpeting.

Porch – at the back entrance three concrete steps lead up to a small porch about 5 x 7 ft which extends around the side of the building as a wheelchair ramp with wrought iron railing along the outside. (Installed in 1999) A small flat aluminum roof extends from the back door area and connects to the arbor.

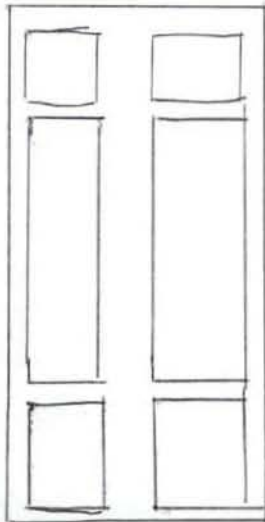
Roof type and covering – steeply pitched gable-front. The original roofing was tin, which was replaced with a new tin roof of the original color in 2000.

Roof trim – No fancy roof trim.

Chimneys – No chimney. Originally there was one chimney in the middle of the room for a potbelly stove, which was removed years ago.

### Doors –

Main entrance – solid wood double doors with 6 raised panels in each door – 2 small panels at the top with 2 long panels in the middle with two shorter panels at the bottom. These could be the original doors from 1902.



### Statement of Significance

The Hatchett Creek Presbyterian Church and Brownville Cemetery are eligible for listing on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage under Criteria A and C, in the area of settlement and religion. The church remains as one of the earliest buildings associated with the development of the area during the 1800's. Grave markers dating from as early as 1838 bear testimony of the many years of service the church and cemetery have had in the life of the community. Associated with the spread of Presbyterianism to rural Alabama, the church congregation served as a significant local institution from its inception in the early 1830's to its dissolution in 2000.

The church is notable for the extraordinary number of leaders it has sent beyond its own provincial bounds. Rhodes scholars, university presidents, judges, legislators, environmentalists, medical doctors and a host of ministers have all emerged from the congregation to take their place in the larger national and international scene.<sup>1</sup> (Eight native sons were sent out from the church congregation as ministers: John Doddridge McPhail, Joseph Fulton Joedy Ford, Robert Carmichael, Patrick Henry Carmichael, John Morton Partridge, Claud Partridge and Charles Dowell Patterson and Thomas Gordon Watts. Noted educators and doctors were born in the community and attended the church. Among them: Patrick H. Carmichael, who earned a Ph.D. degree from Princeton University and became Dean of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education at Richmond, VA. He is buried in Brownville Cemetery. Others are Fitzhugh L. Carmichael who earned a Ph. D. degree from the University of Denver and was an expert on taxes and zoning and became a consultant to the city of Denver and the State of Colorado; Oliver C. Carmichael was a Rhodes Scholar, earned a Ph. D. degree and at various times became President of Alabama College at Montevallo, Chancellor of Vanderbilt University at Nashville and President of the University of Alabama; Omer Carmichael was superintendent of schools at various times in Talladega, Selma, Tampa, FL, Lynchburg, VA and Louisville, KY. He is buried in the Brownville Cemetery. Dr. John Carmichael and his sons, Dr. Don, Dr. Erskine, and Dr. Glen were and are still prominent in the medical community in Birmingham. Blanche Evans Dean, a noted environmentalist, authority on birds, wild flowers, ferns and trees was born in the community. She is buried in Brownville Cemetery.)

The most important ministry the church performs today, however, has to do with remembering its past. Serving as a magnet to draw Hatchett Creek sons and daughters back periodically to reunions and homecoming events, it gives people the opportunity to rediscover their religious and familial roots.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Communique New Times, July-Aug, 1980, Davis Perkins

<sup>2</sup> Communique New Times, July-Aug, 1980, Davis Perkins

## Historical Summary

Located on sixteen acres in southern Clay County, the Hatchett Creek Presbyterian Church and Brownville Cemetery date from the early 1830's. It is known that white settlers were in the area that was the Brownville community in the year 1832 along the Socopatoy Indian Trail which runs through the community and became known as the Socopatoy Road which is now County Road 7 in that area. Some of the earliest settlers were the Brown family for whom the community is named. Family records state that Duncan Brown was one of the first two ruling Elders in the church. Tradition is that the church was founded in 1832, and meetings at first were held under a brush arbor, then in members' homes until a log church was built about two miles southwest of the present site. As the settlement of homes continued, the church moved to its present location and a frame structure was built. Camp meetings were a highlight in the area from the 1830's when they were first held at the present church and cemetery grounds. Attendance has been estimated as high as 5,000, but no written record of that estimate has been found. The prominence of the site as a Camp meeting ground probably led to location of the church there. A wood frame arbor was built behind the old church at the present site and was used for camp meetings until the meetings were halted around the turn of the century because of discipline problems among the crowds. During the mid-1880's, Hatchett Creek was the only Scotch Presbyterian Church of record between Talladega and Wetumpka and the membership was drawn from a wide area. About 1901-02, the present building was erected on the site of the old building with the first service probably held in June of 1902. The old building was given to the community and moved a short distance away and used for a school. The arbor was retained in its original location a few yards behind the new building. An integral part of worship services at Hatchett Creek Church for many years has been the Sunday School or Sabbath School as it was called in the early years. In 1859 in a statistical report from the church to the Presbytery, it was stated that 30 children were enrolled in Sabbath School. The church continued for decades with varying membership until its dissolution in 2000 because of its dwindling congregation.