

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR 10-18-06

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 Portland United Methodist Church

other names/site number Site #AS0050

2. Location

street & number 300 North Main Street

not for publication

city or town Portland

vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Ashley

code 003

zip code 71663

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Colleen Matthews
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/6/06
Date

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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Portland United Methodist Church
Name of Property

Ashley County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing Noncontributing

1	buildings
_____	sites
_____	structures
_____	objects
1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

RELIGION/Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY AMERICAN
MOVEMENTS/Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof CERAMIC TILE

other _____

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
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.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1924-1926

Significant Dates

1924-1926

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

John Parks Almand, architect
B. B. Horton, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
Previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository: Portland United Methodist Church

Portland United Methodist Church
Name of Property

Ashley County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description-

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator / Sandra Taylor Smith, Consultant
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date September 6, 2006
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72205

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Portland United Methodist Church, Trustees
street & number P.O. Box 400 telephone (870) 737-2544
city or town Portland state AR zip code 71663

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 listing. 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 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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

Portland United Methodist Church is located on North Main Street, one block north of the town's two-block commercial downtown. The two-story building with full basement, constructed in 1924-1926, rests on a continuous cast-concrete foundation and has red brick walls that are laid in a running bond pattern. The building has a cross-gable roof covered in ceramic tile with a two-story centered front gable bay denoting the main entry. Windows on the building are wood-framed six/six casement with leaded stained glass in the casement windows on the side walls of the sanctuary. Wide overhanging eaves with modillions and triangular knee-braces give the building a Craftsman style influence while a one and one-half story entrance portico is Colonial Revival in style.

ELABORATION

Portland United Methodist Church is located in the small southeastern Arkansas town of Portland, Arkansas. The church is located on North Main Street one block north of the downtown business district of the community. The two-story brick building with full basement was constructed in 1924-1926 and was designed by noted Arkansas architect John Parks Almand.

The T-shaped building rests on a continuous cast-concrete foundation, and features red brick walls laid in a running bond pattern. A band of vertical laid brick wraps the building under first floor windows. Windows are wood-framed six/six casement. Two-story leaded stained glass casement windows are located on the side walls of the sanctuary. A cross-gable roof with shed roof addition on the rear is covered in green ceramic tile.

Distinctive wide overhanging eaves supported by triangular knee braces and featuring modillions, casement windows and ceramic tile roof give the building a Craftsman style character, while the one-and-one-half round-arched entrance is reminiscent of the Colonial Revival style.

East/Front Elevation

The east, or front elevation is denoted by a center, two-story gabled bay. This bay contains a one and one-half story Colonial Revival style entry topped by a round-arched hood supported by large wood brackets resting on slender round columns with square topped capitals. The double-entry doors are fifteen light wood framed doors. Above the doors is a cast concrete panel banded in brick topped by a semicircular window with three leaded glass panes. Narrow wood casement windows with four panes each flank the entrance on this front bay. A small arched vent is located under the cornice on the bay. Concrete-capped brick projections are located on the side walls of the entrance bay on first and second story levels.

Wood-framed six/six casement windows at the basement level are located just above the cast concrete foundation of the building on its front. Three sets of six/six wood-framed casement windows with transoms are found on the main walls of the front elevation. Second story windows are round-arched wood-framed

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casement windows. Cast concrete panels with decorative concrete diamond-shaped brick inserts span the wall space between first and second story windows on the front elevation walls.

South/Side Elevation

The south side of the building features the gable end of the front cross gable. Located on the basement level of this portion of the south side of the building is a set of six/six wood-framed casement windows. The first floor contains one set of six/six casement windows while the second story features a round-arched set of wood-framed casement windows. Similar to first and second story windows on the front of the building, a cast concrete panel spans the wall between these windows. The windows are recessed in a two-story brick-framed arch. The rear (south) wall of the front wing of the building features a pair of six/six casement windows on the second story. An interior brick chimney rises from the west side of the front wing roof.

Located in the juncture of the front wing of the building and the sanctuary is a flat roofed one and one-half story triangular-shaped section, featuring a wood-framed casement window and exterior door at the basement level. The first floor of this section contains two six/six casement windows. A cast concrete band spans the parapet of the flat roof.

Five sets of leaded stained glass windows are located on the sanctuary wall of the south elevation. These two-story windows are topped by round-arched stained glass transoms. Five sets of six/six casement windows are located on the basement level of the sanctuary south exterior wall.

North/Side Elevation

The north side of the building is similar to the south elevation. A brick interior chimney rises from the corner of the two-story gable end on the east portion of this side of the building. A triangular shaped wing with flat roof connects the front cross gable with the rectangular sanctuary section of the building. Unlike the similar triangular shaped connecting wing on the south side of the building, there is no exterior door at basement level on the north side. The two-story rectangular sanctuary north wall features five sets of two-story casement leaded glass windows with stained glass rounded transoms and five sets of casement windows at basement level.

West/Rear Elevation

A one-story shed roof wing is located on the rear elevation of the building. The shed roof of the rear wing is covered in green ceramic tile. The gable end of the sanctuary's roof is veneered with cast concrete and contains a set of two wood-framed vents. At ground, or basement level, the western wall of this wing features two six/six wood-framed casement windows and a wood Craftsman style door with nine glass panes in the upper portion. An identical arrangement of fenestration is located on the first floor of the western wall. Side (north and south) walls of the rear wing contain one six/six casement window at basement and first floor levels.

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Interior

The eastern one-third of the building, located in the front cross gable section, contains the narthex and is flanked by large rooms accessed by double wood doors with glass lights. The second story of this front portion of the building contains a double stairway and landing, flanked by similarly sized rooms as located on the first floor. Balcony seating is accessed through a set of double wood framed doors with glass lights from the second floor narthex. The sanctuary with altar, pulpit, and choir loft at the western end occupies the central rectangular shaped portion of the church. The pews are separated by a center aisle, with aisles located on each of the sanctuary sides. Beaded wood vaulted ceilings and rich wood details of the pews and altar provide Craftsman style character to the sanctuary. The choir loft portion of the sanctuary extends into the shed roof wing on the western elevation of the building. This wing also houses a rear entryway and storage space. The interior basement level of the western wing contains a wood stage at the western end of a large, open room used for meetings and special events.

The Hammond organ was placed in the church in 1937 and reconditioned in 1954. Ceiling light pendants in the first floor narthex and in the sanctuary were installed in 1973.

Site Features

A wide concrete walkway to the front of the church is accessed by a set of four concrete steps from the sidewalk. This walkway was donated by church members and constructed in 1994. On the south side of the building, near the front is a bell hung on triangular brick piers and topped with a wrought iron sign reading "Portland United Methodist Church", erected in 1964 by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Aaron Pugh in memory of their son, Joel W. Pugh, 1873-1944. The plaque on the side of the bell reads "This bell was rung in The First Portland Methodist Church from 1895 to 1924".

Integrity

Portland United Methodist Church retains its original integrity and is largely unaltered. The largest building in Portland's small downtown, it remains a local landmark in this small rural community.

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SUMMARY

Portland United Methodist Church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its Craftsman style design with a prominent one and one-half story Colonial Revival style entrance. The brick building is two-stories with full basement and features broad, overhanging eaves, ceramic tile cross-gable roof and wood-framed casement windows. Designed by one of Arkansas's most well known historic architects, John Parks Almand, the church is the most prominent building in Portland's small downtown. The property is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties**.

ELABORATION

Portland is situated in the Mississippi River Delta lowland of southeast Arkansas, about fifteen miles from the eastern boundary of Ashley County. Ashley County was formed in 1848 from what was originally Arkansas County. Early records indicate the first settlers in the wilderness around Bayou Bartholomew were there c.1815. Portland from its beginning has been driven, influenced, challenged and inspired by the resources associated with Bayou Bartholomew with its thick forests of oak, hickory, cottonwood, elm and cypress along with thick patches of canebrakes and vines.

Bayou Bartholomew, as noted by the French who first explored the area, was originally called the River of Koroa after the Indians who inhabited the region. The name was later changed to Bayou Bartholomew in honor of French hunters, Antoine and Joseph Bartholomew, who settled near present day Pine Bluff on the headwaters of the bayou. Bayou is the French word for slow-moving waters. The green waters of Bartholomew slowly meander from Pine Bluff, through Ashley County, down across the Louisiana border where it empties into the Ouachita River. The booming steamboat trade on the Mississippi River to New Orleans in the mid-nineteenth century eventually spread to the Red River up the Black River to the Ouachita River and cotton, timber rich land around Bayou Bartholomew.

The fertile bottomland and its abundance of giant hardwoods were seen as land of opportunity. Many pioneer families, whose names are still prominent in the region and throughout the state of Arkansas, braved the mosquitoes, wolves, snakes, and bears to settle along the bayou and farm the open fields cleared by the Indian farmers before them. The Fisher family was among the earliest settlers in the area, establishing a home site on the western bank of the bayou c.1833.

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Lumber was milled across the bayou from the Fisher home at the Culpepper Mill at a place the early steamboat captains referred to as the "port." A post office was established at the site in 1857 and the growing community became known as Portland. A town formed along the bayou and moved to the slow simple rhythm of the comings and goings of the steamboats. The boats brought needed supplies, desired luxuries, communication, and a market for the products of the rich land around the bayou. Raw and milled timber, corn, wheat, and cotton were the major exports. By the 1880s Portland could boast of a one-room schoolhouse, a medical practice, three mercantile stores, a gin, a mill, a church and a Masonic Lodge.

There was a schoolhouse located facing the bayou on Alligator Bluff. But there is no record of where the people of Portland met to hold their church services. Beginning as early as 1852, the Methodist Church ministered to Portland as a part of what was known as the Bartholomew Circuit. The first pastor was H.R. Withers. According to local informants, the early church building was next to the cemetery at Alligator Bluff and was shared with the Baptist congregation on alternate Sundays. In 1854 the old circuit was reorganized into the Ouachita Methodist Conference, then changed to the Little Rock Methodist Conference in 1866.

Portland on the bayou became the social and business center for a large township of scattered farmsteads. Portland's early boom was tied to the steamboat trade. But the town could have faded into history with the decline of the steamboats if not for the entrepreneurship of its citizens. Hastening the decline of river trade in the late 1800s was the spread of the railroad system. In 1890 three successful merchants moved from the bayou to the site of the newly laid tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad line less than one mile to the east.

Portland on the bayou became Old Portland and the site beside the tracks became the new Portland. By 1892 there were five general mercantile stores and one drugstore in new buildings lined along Main Street across from the railroad tracks. Trade sales and cotton receipts increased 200 percent over the previous year. Shipments out of Portland in 1892 included 423 railcars of cotton, cottonseed, lumber, shingles, staves, and cattle. Portland was set for another growth boom. On July 20, 1893, an application signed by R.A. Pugh, J.C. Bain, and E. J. Camak was

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submitted for incorporation as a town and granted in October of that year.

To make the new town's transformation complete, it needed a new school and a new church. The Methodist Episcopal Church South was founded in Portland on March 15, 1895. The trustees were E. J. Camak, A. L. Hollaway, and J. O. Bain. That year a one-room building that could seat eighty was constructed on land given by the local Pugh Brothers Company. Reverend McClintock became the first pastor for the church in 1896. This frame building served the Methodist congregation for the next twenty-eight years.

In 1923 the newly appointed Portland United Methodist Church pastor J. R. Dickerson arrived in Portland to find the community's church building in deteriorated condition. The Monday after his third Sunday sermon, Reverend Dickerson and the crew that he had hired without approval from the church, demolished the old church. Dickerson thought in having no building in which to meet, a new church would have to be built. The entire town celebrated the ground breaking for the new building. Jesse D. Dean, a farmer and merchant, donated land and the construction contract was awarded to B. B. Horton of nearby Montrose. As was a practice with other homes and commercial structures in Portland they looked to Little Rock for an architect. Noted architect John Parks Almand of Little Rock was selected to design the new building for Portland United Methodist Church.

John Parks Almand was born in Lithonia, Georgia, in 1885. He graduated from Emory University in 1907 and subsequently worked in an Atlanta architectural firm. Almand decided to study architecture at Columbia University and graduated second in his class. He spent the year following his graduation in Havana, Cuba, in charge of the architectural division of an American company's office. In July 1912 John Parks Almand moved to Little Rock to be a designer for the Charles L. Thompson architectural firm. Charles L. Thompson was the most well-known and prolific architect in Arkansas at the time. Almand remained with the Thompson firm for three years and in early 1915 opened his own architectural firm in Little Rock. Almand designed a number of significant buildings throughout Arkansas. The most well known design by John Parks Almand is Central High School in Little Rock. Built in 1926-7, Central High School (originally called Little Rock High School) was voted shortly after its completion as the most beautiful school building in the country by the American Institute of Architects.

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In 1934 Almand was selected as one of twenty-one architects from throughout the country to become a part of the Supervising Architect's Office of the U.S. Treasury Department, whose charge was to design federal buildings throughout the country. He returned to his private architectural practice in Little Rock in 1937, practicing until 1963 during which time he designed a large number of notable buildings, churches, and residences in Arkansas. Almand was noted for his perfectionism and was well known to require workmen to redo something he thought poorly done. He often personally selected the stones and other building materials to be used in construction of his designs and each of his projects exemplify his attention to detail. John Parks Almand died in 1969 and left a legacy of buildings with special emphasis to detail, proportion, massing and composition. Almand's church designs, in particular are noted for their richness in detail, expressed outside as well as inside.

The congregation met in the Portland schoolhouse while the site for the new church was excavated. The cornerstone was placed and construction begun on the basement of the new church building in 1924. The cornerstone lists members of the building committee:

J. W. Pugh
B.O. Cummings
S.A. Herren
G.A. Lindsey
Dr. H. E. Cockerham
H. H. Naff
Rev. J. A. Parker P.E.
Rev. J. R. Dickerson, Pastor
B.B. Horton, Builder

It took over a year to prepare the site and complete the basement due to a lack of money, but in April 1924 services were moved from the school to the newly finished church basement. The sanctuary and second floor was not finished for another two years with members of the congregation doing much of the physical work of building the church. Rev. Dickerson, dressed in overalls, helped in all areas of the construction. Contractor B. B. Horton helped raise funds. But the church's Women Society, through teas, dinners, plays, and operettas, raised the major part of construction funds. The financial committee was composed of Mr. Joe Pugh, F. W.

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Cockerham, W. W. Rogers, Felix Pugh, Mrs. Rodney, and Mrs. Pearl Newton.

The distinctive colonial style arch on the front of the church was built and donated by Mr. William Neeley. The stained-glass memorial windows were given to the church by its members. The dedications on the windows read as:

1. Dedicated by the Sunday School to Edward J. Camack
2. The Women's Society
3. In memory of Mr. And Mrs. J. L. DeYampert
4. In memory of N. E. Moats and Mrs. N. E. Moats
5. Junior Missionary Society to Mrs. F. M. Sherrer
6. Dedicated to Rev. J. R. Dickerson
7. To Jessie D. Dean and Margaret K. Dean
8. To Martha W. Pugh and Robert A. Pugh
9. In Memory of Augustus H. Wilson

The opening service of the Portland United Methodist Church was held in its new sanctuary in April 1926. The sermon was delivered by Bishop H. A. Boaz and the choir was directed by Mrs. Alexander, with a solo by S. L. Adams. All that remains of the first Portland United Methodist Church building are a few photographs and the bell that rang in the building's belfry every Sunday for twenty-eight years. The 1924 church building does not have a belfry and in 1964 a bell standard was built in front of the church. A wrought iron nameplate was attached with an inscription:

This bell was rung in the First Portland Methodist Church from 1895 to 1924 and was given to the Church by Mr. And Mrs. Robert Aaron Pugh.

The Portland United Methodist Church celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1974 with a dedicated and thriving congregation. The Women's Society continues to raise funds for improvements and maintenance of the church. Descendants of the original founders are still active in the church and continue to contribute to the heritage of the church and community. The

Portland United Methodist Church
Name of Property

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Portland United Methodist Church building remains the most prominent building in the small town.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Portland United Methodist Church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** for its ecclesiastical example of the Craftsman style of architecture. The building's wood-framed casement windows, richly colored stained glass and interior woodwork are characteristics of the style. A distinctive one and one-half story main entrance to the building, constructed by a church member, is characteristic of the Colonial Revival style. The building is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties**.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Almand, A. J. (son of John Parks Almand). Letter to Miss Starr Mitchell of the Quapaw Quarter Association in Little Rock, AR, including a list of completed architectural commissions of John Park Almand. January 11, 1978.

Britton, Nancy. Two Centuries of Methodism in Arkansas 1800-2000. (Little Rock, AR: August House Publishers, Inc., 2000).

DeArmond-Huskey, Rebecca. Beyond Bartholomew: The Portland Area History. (Conway, AR: River Road Press, 1996).

"Methodist Heritage of Portland, Arkansas, 1852-1974" Booklet compiled by the Anniversary Committee of Portland United Methodist Church, 1974.

Pugh, Robert D. Personal Interview by Sandra Taylor Smith, Portland, AR, 24 August 2005.

Pulaski County Historical Review, Volume XXXVII, Number 2, Summer 1989 "Pulaski Profile: John Parks Almand" by Colonel A. J. Almand.

Portland United Methodist Church

Name of Property

Ashley County, Arkansas

County and State

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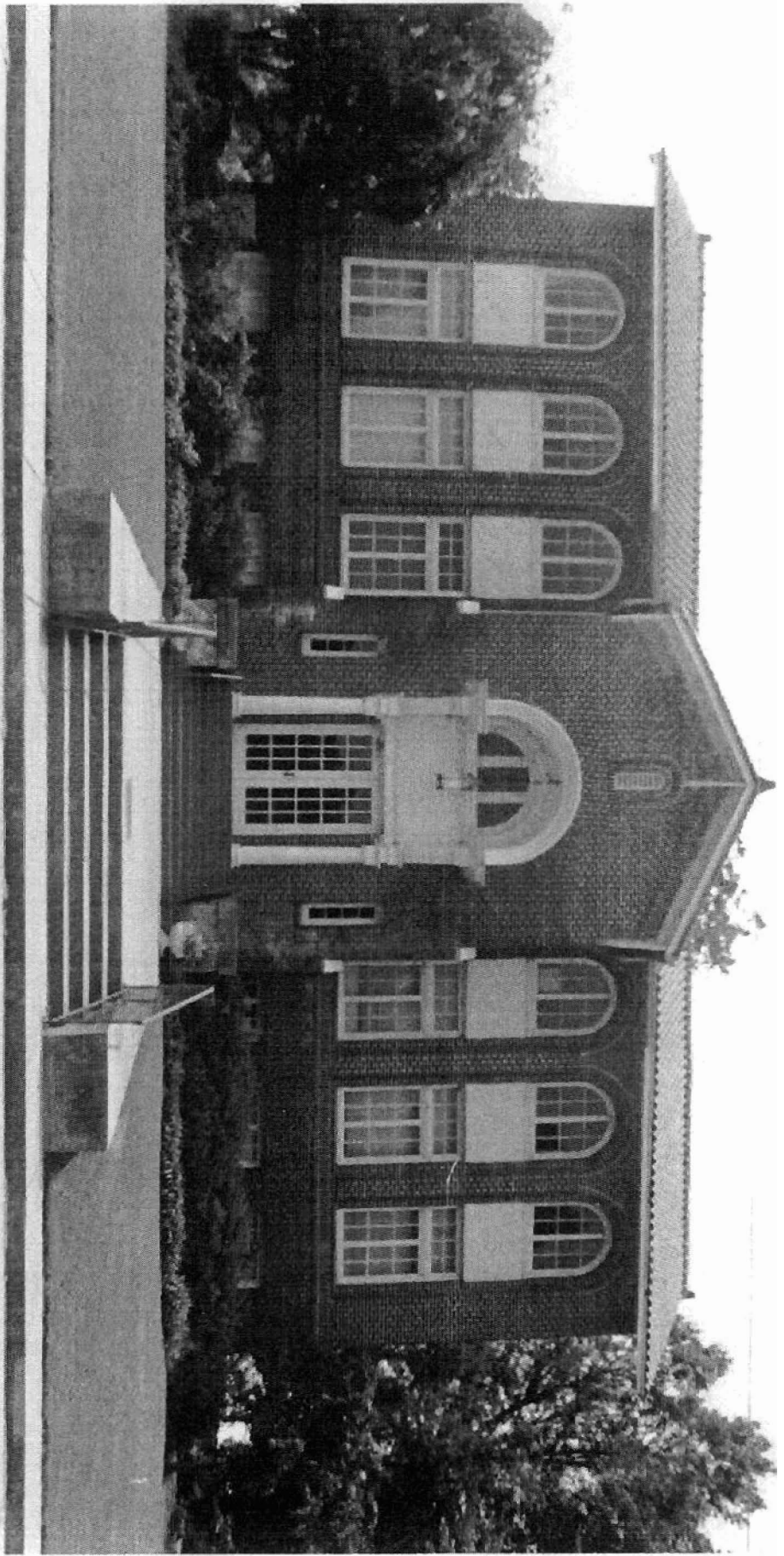
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Part of Lot 1 Block 2, West Daniel's Addition, Town of Portland, Ashley County, Arkansas.

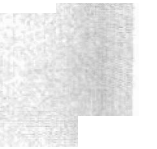
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains all of the land historically associated with Portland United Methodist Church.





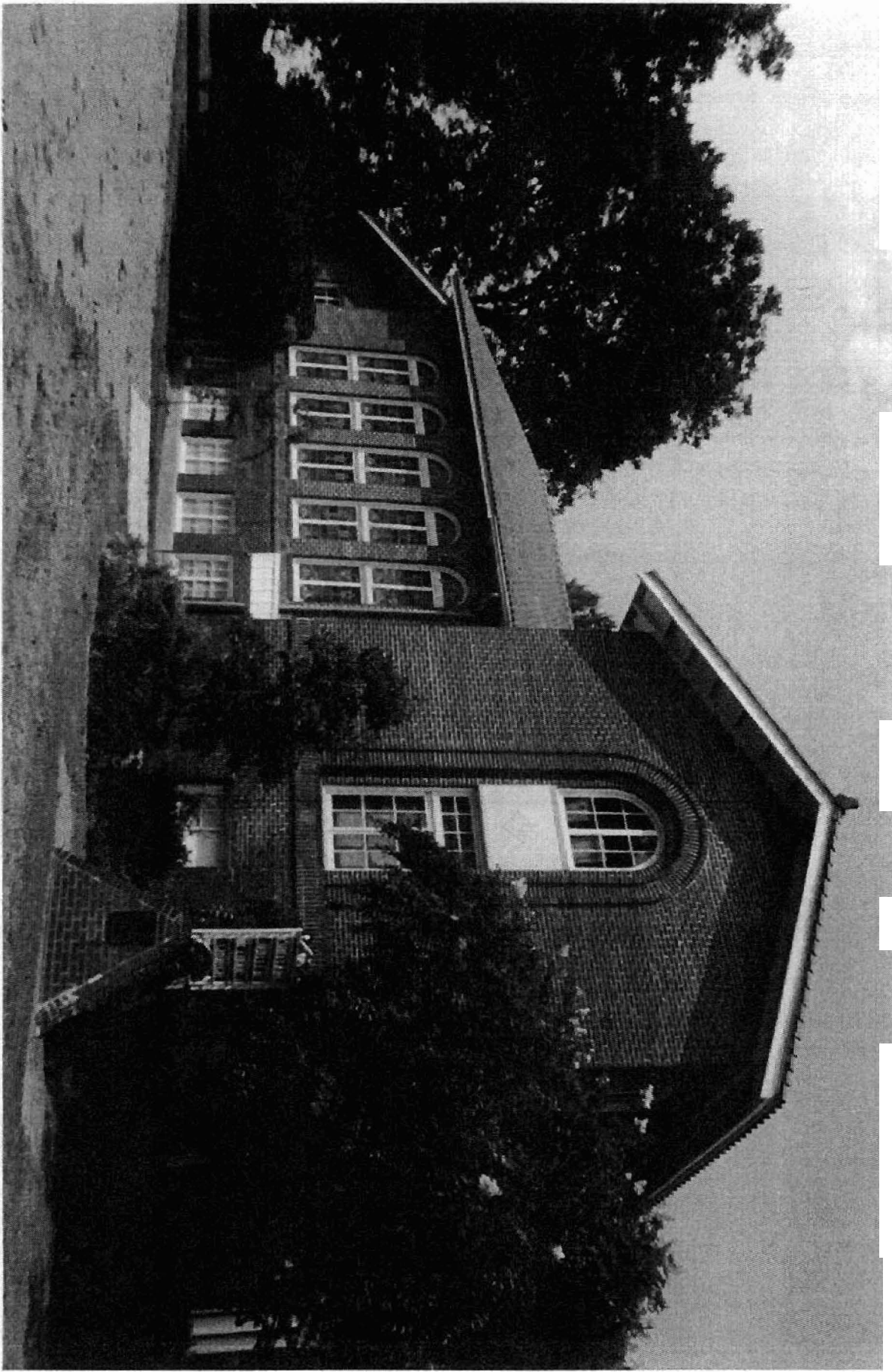


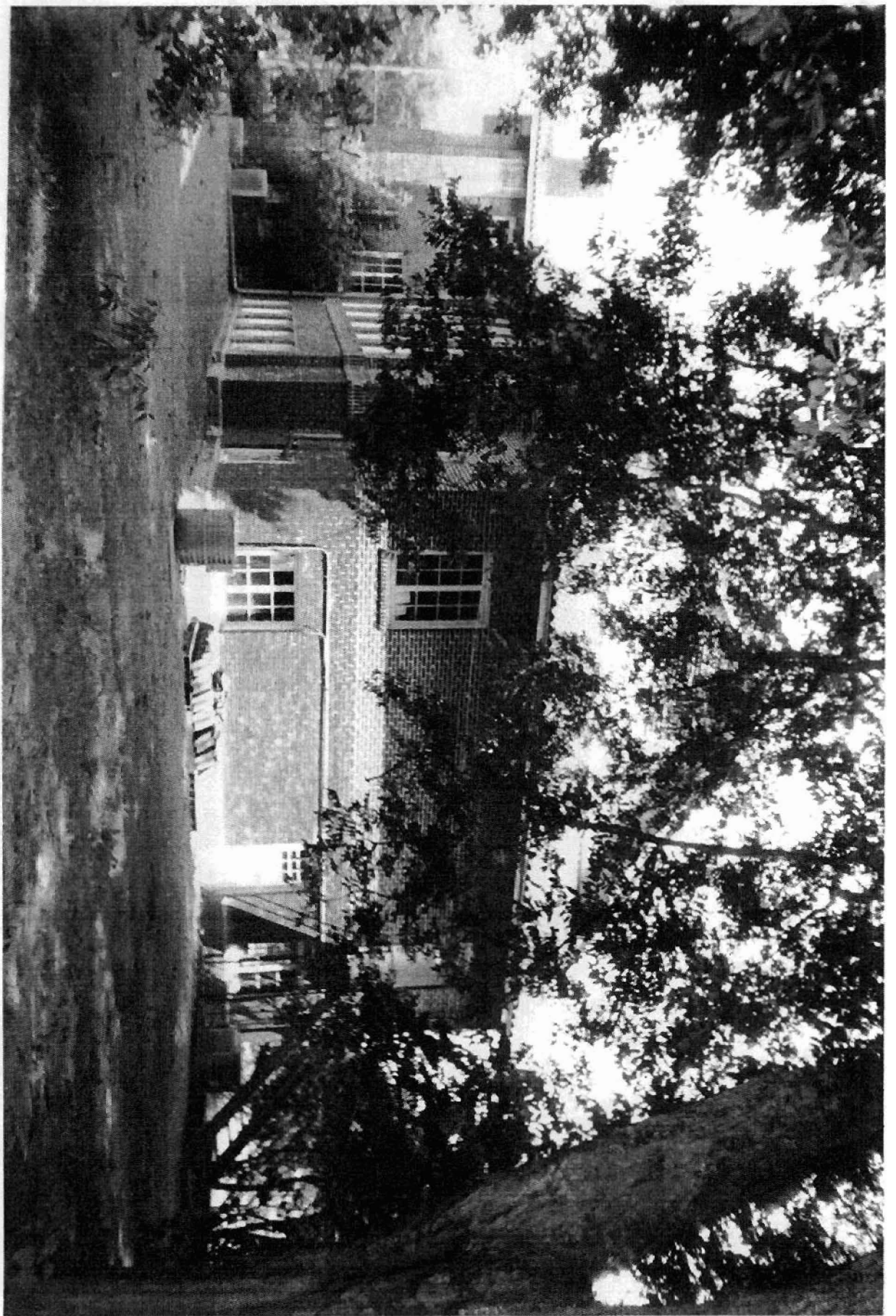


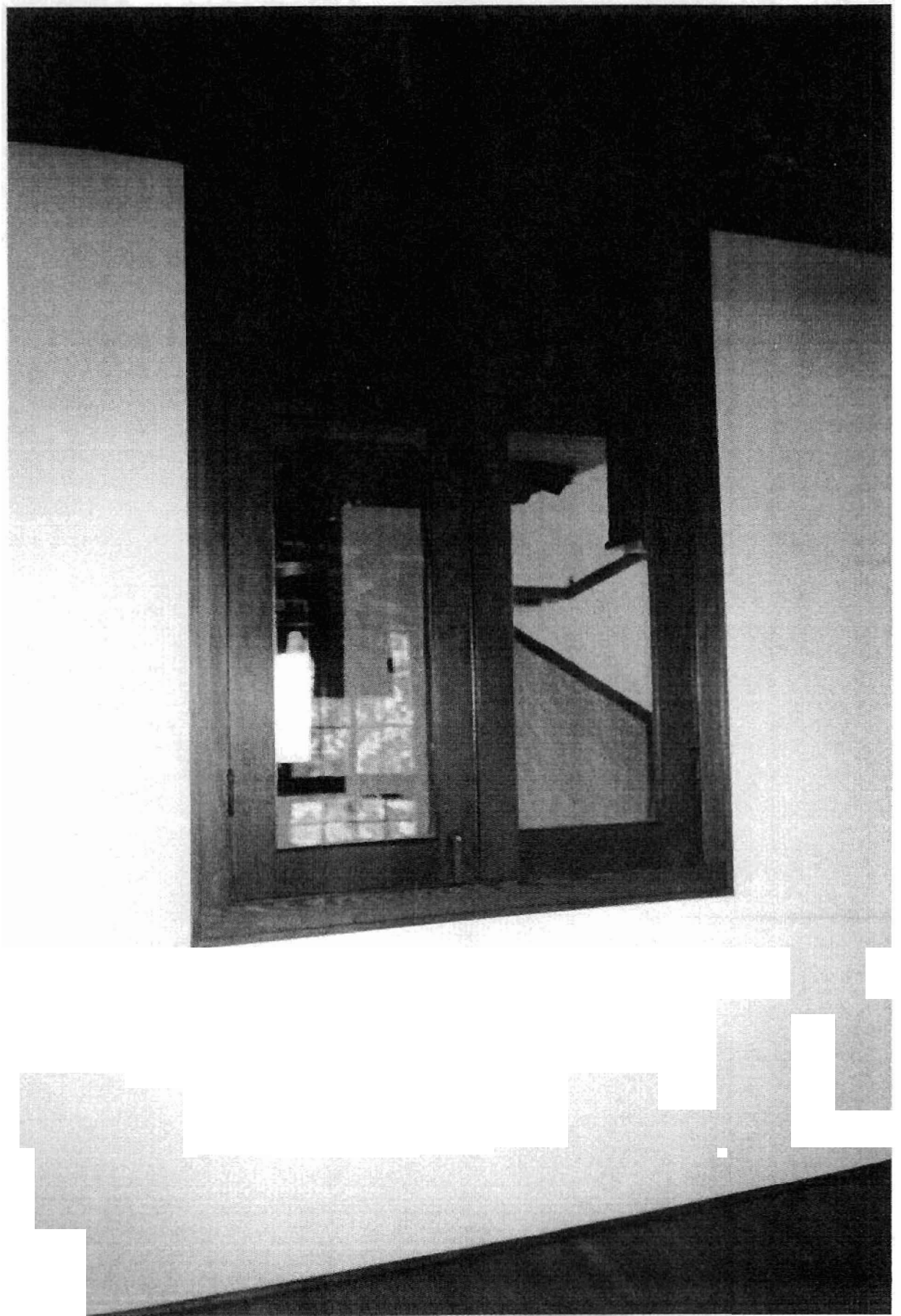


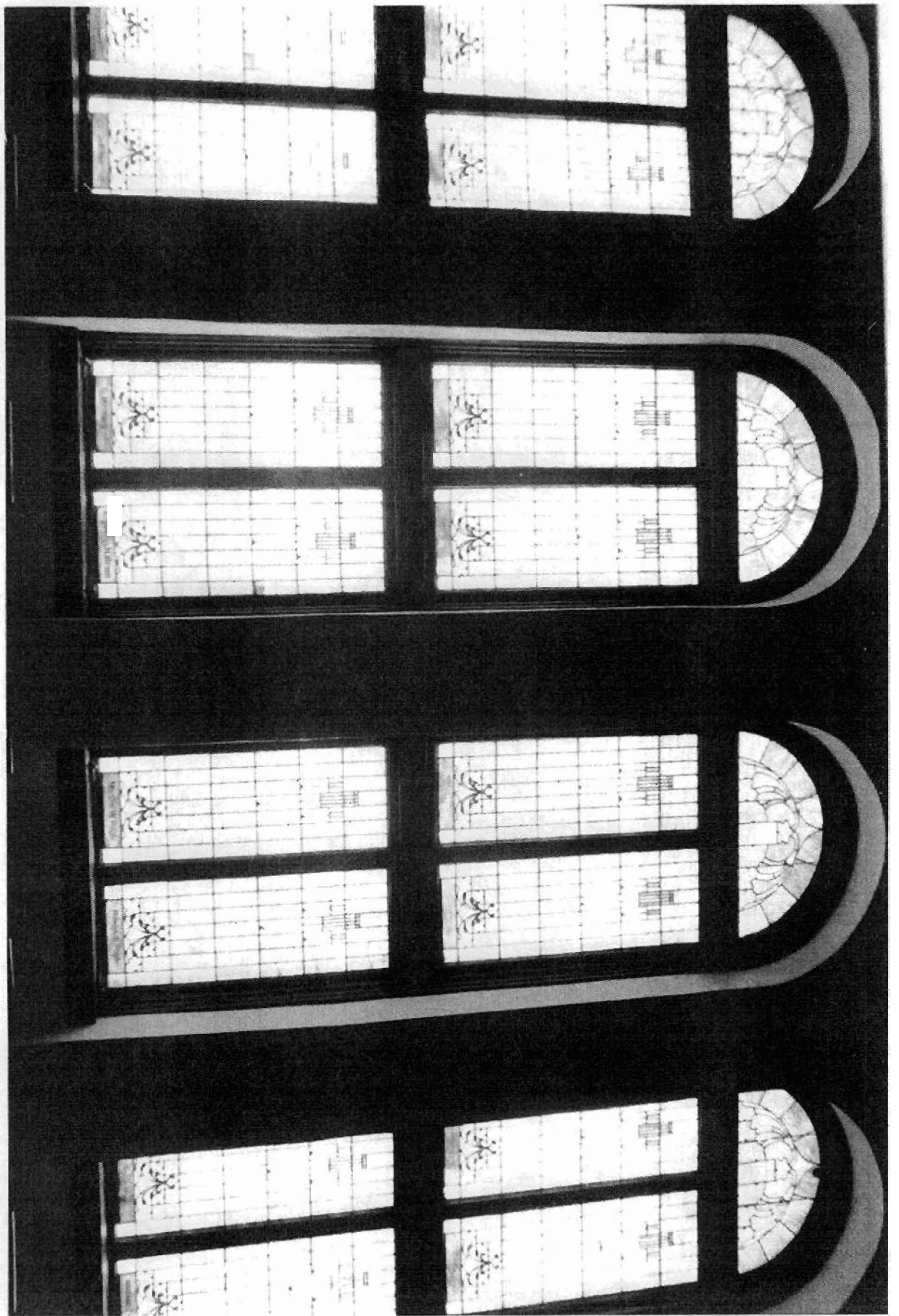


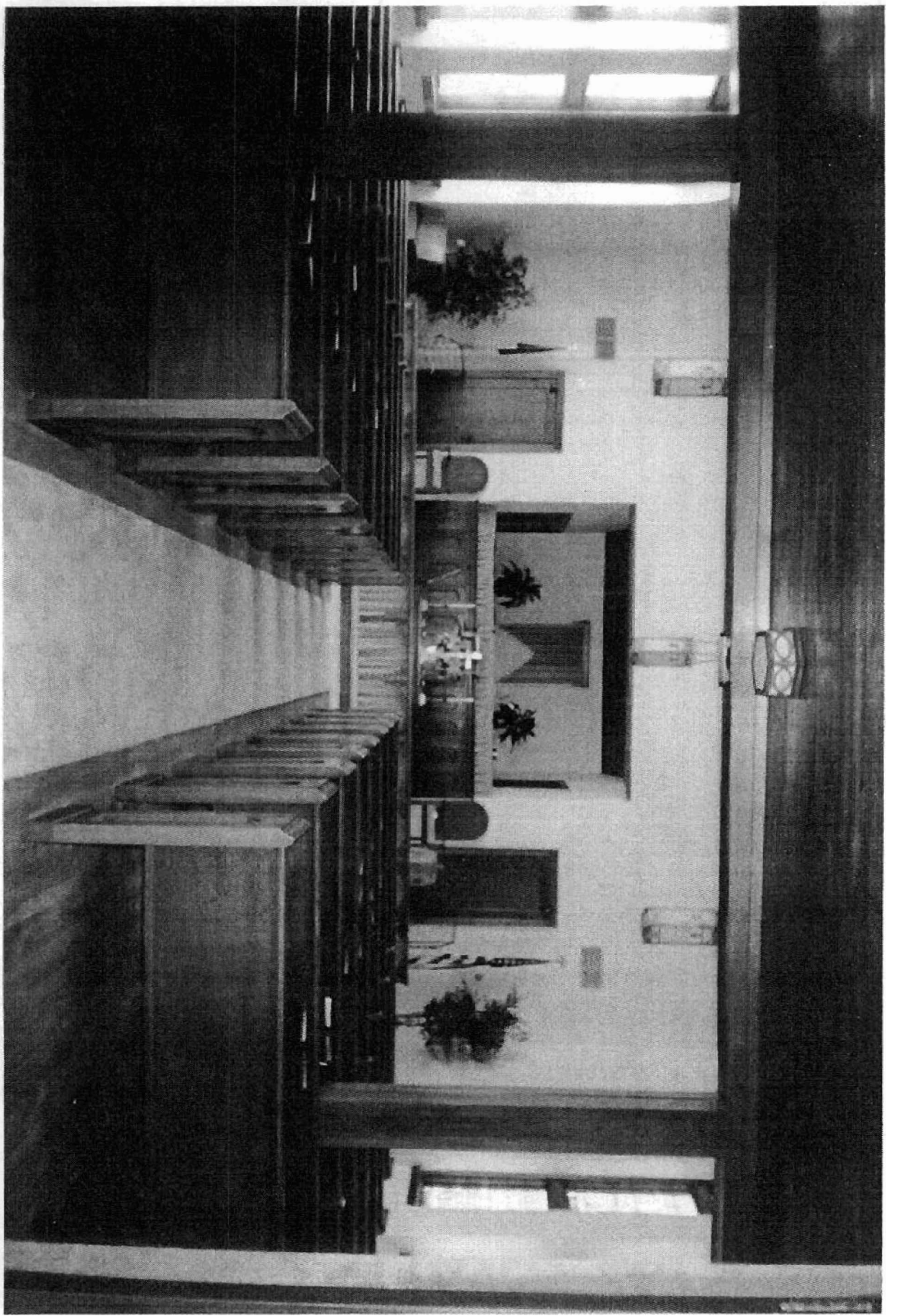


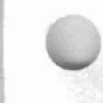
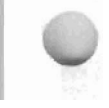
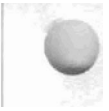
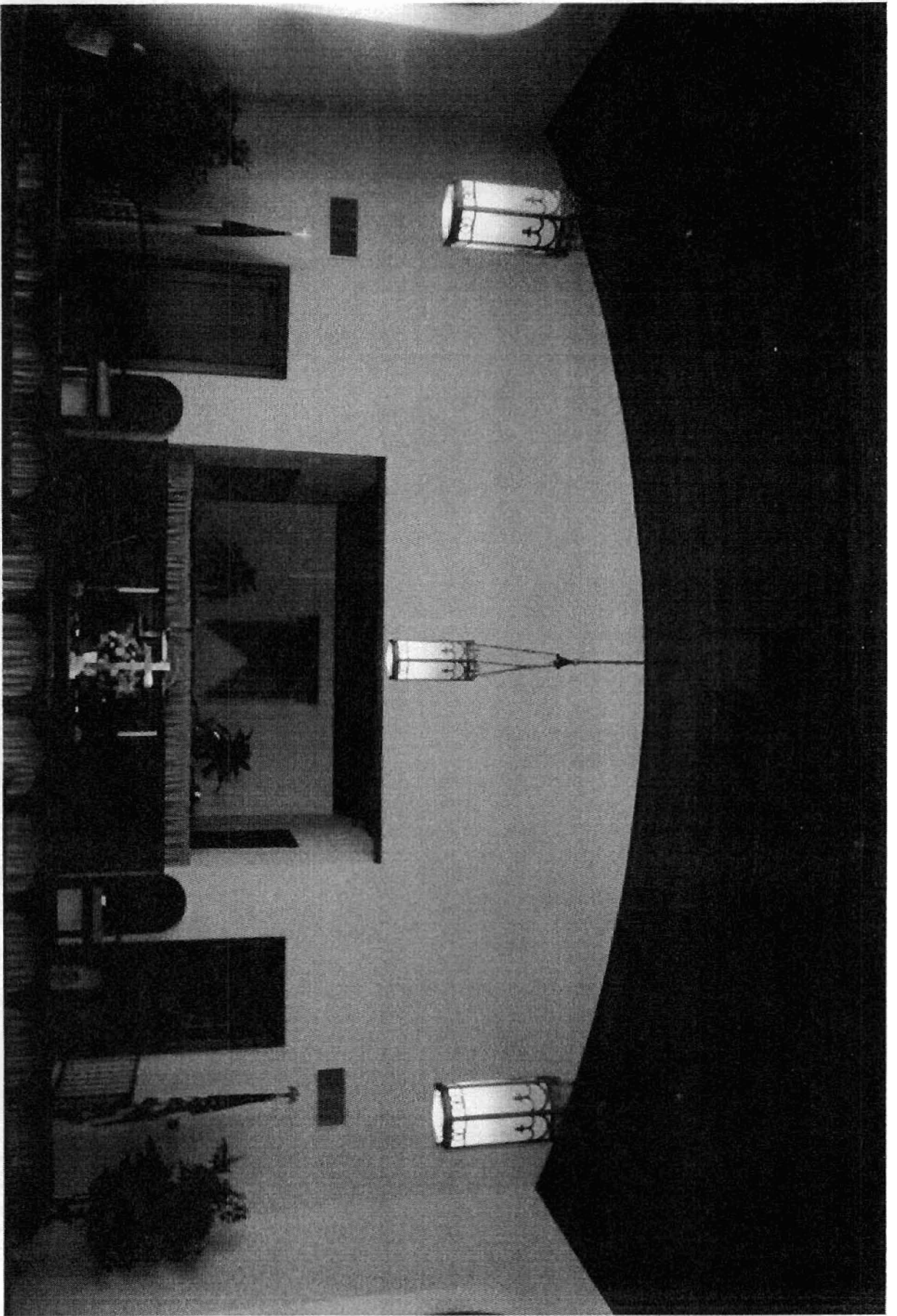


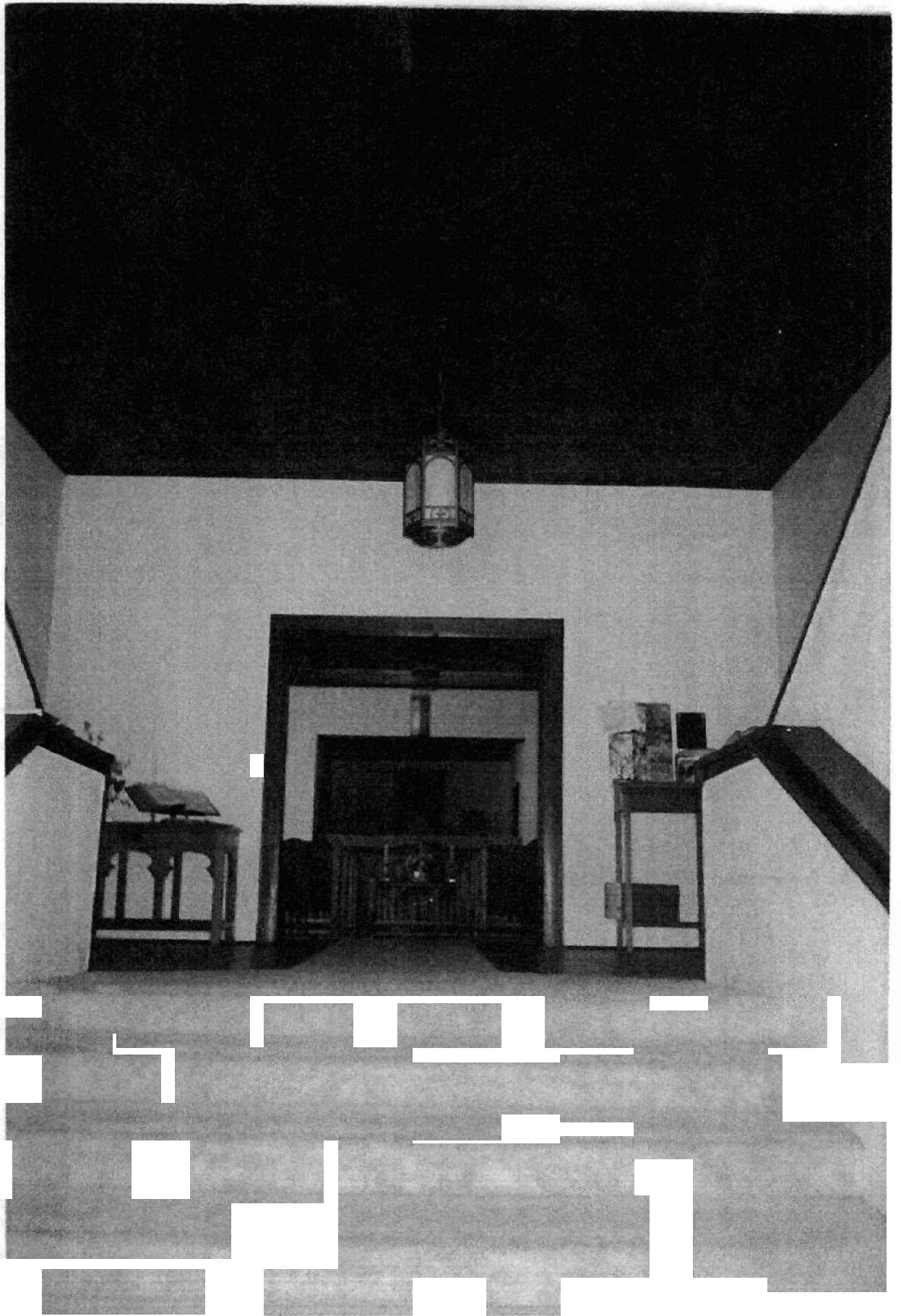


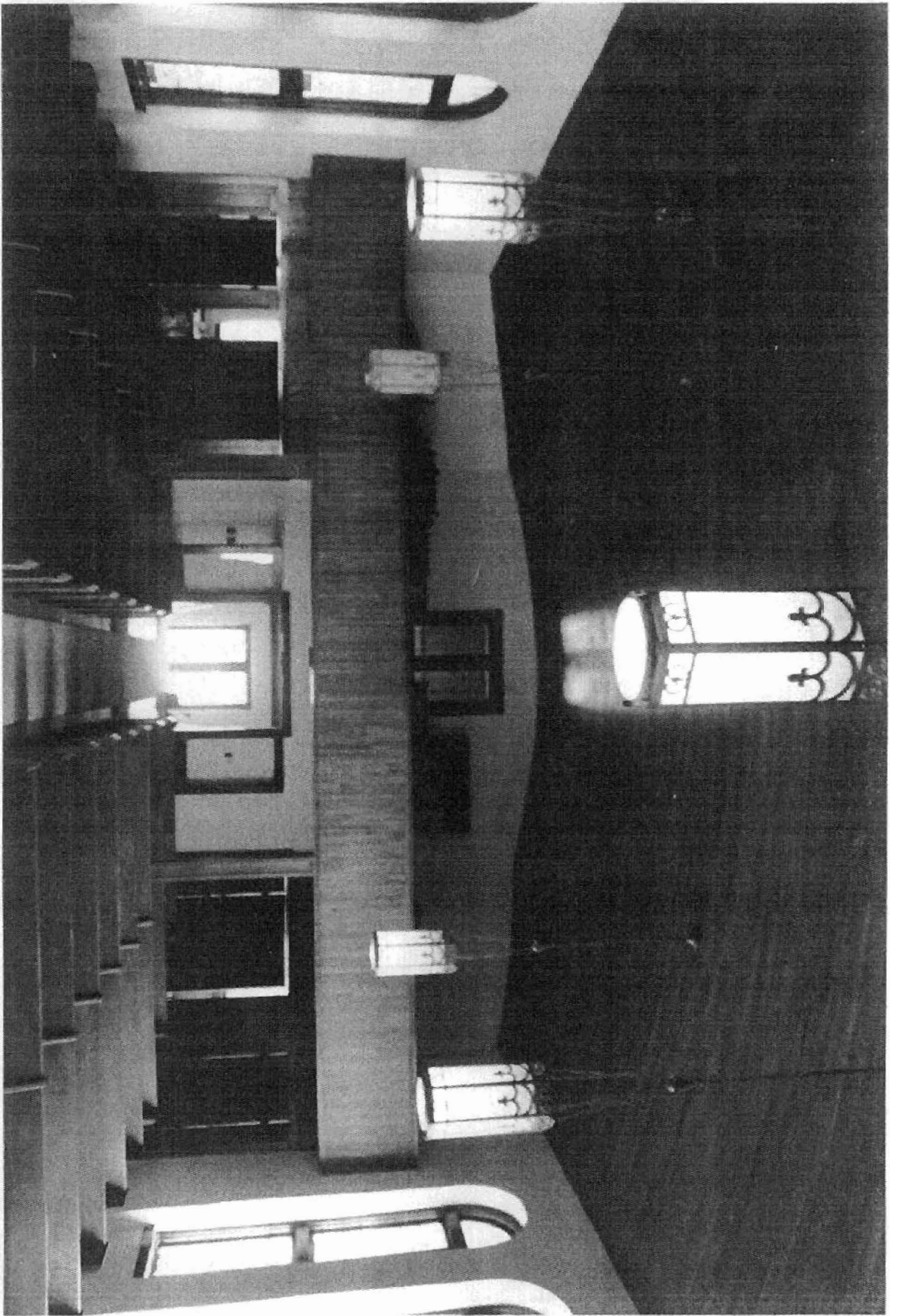




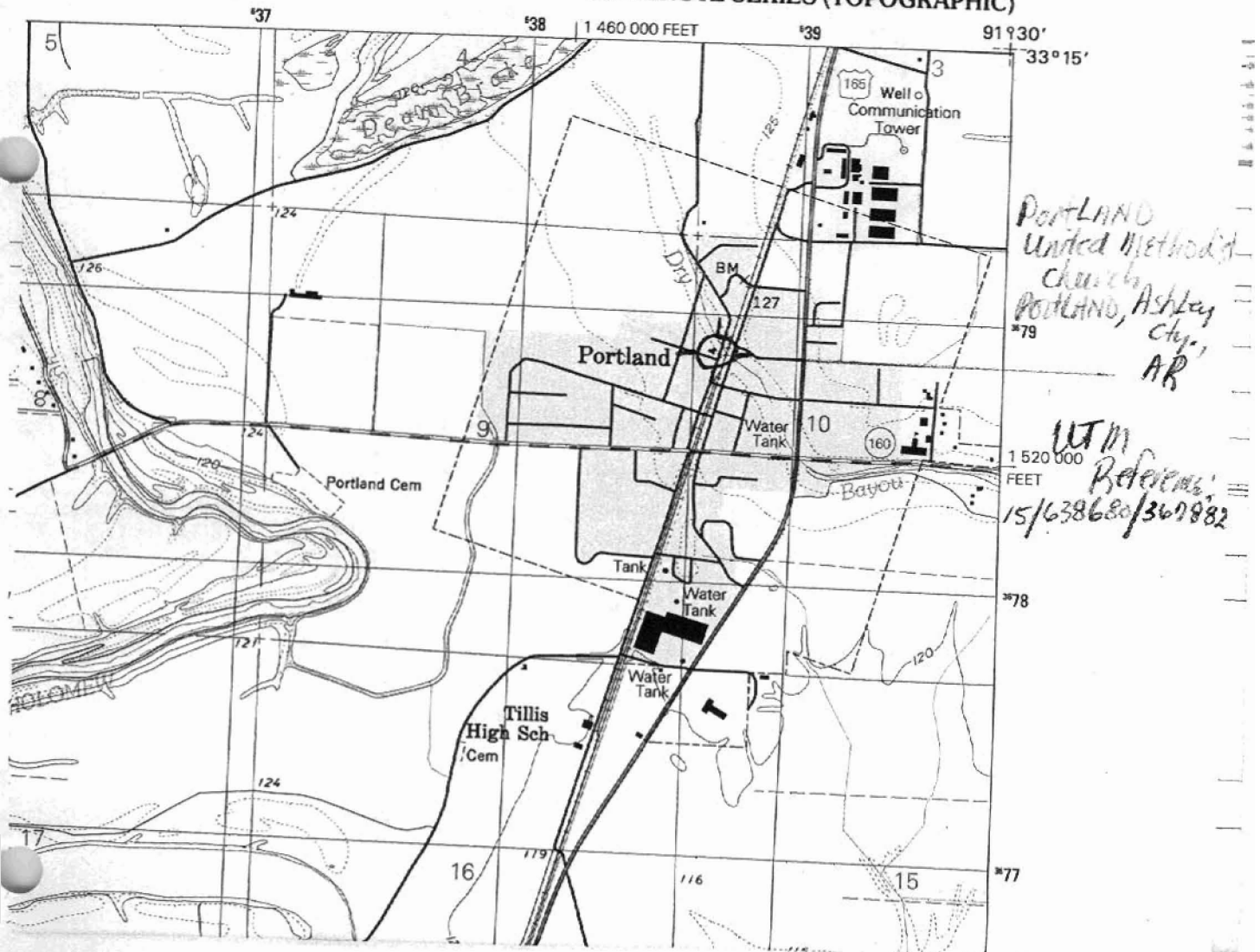








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