

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Clear Springs Tabernacle

other name/site number: N/A CL 0902

2. Location

street & number: State Route 26 and Bobo Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Okolona

vicinity: X

state: AR county: Clark

code: AR 019

zip code: 71962

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building(s)

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Byrd
Signature of certifying official

1-8-92
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

5. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ 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): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

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6. Function or Use

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Historic: Religion

Sub: Religious Facility

Current : Religion

Sub: Religious Facility

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

N/A

Other Description: Plain Traditional

Materials: foundation Stone/Concrete roof Tin
walls N/A other Wood Posts

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1887

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Miles Kelly

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

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 -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>463830</u>	<u>3768280</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the eastern edge of Bobo Road and a line running east-west approximately 30 feet from the northern elevation of the tabernacle, proceed easterly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with a line running north-south approximately 30 feet from the eastern elevation of the structure; thence proceed southerly along this line to a point formed by the intersection of said line with a line running east-west approximately 30 feet from the southern elevation of the building; thence proceed westerly to a point formed by the intersection of said line and the eastern edge of Bobo Road; thence proceed northerly along the eastern edge of Bobo Road to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all the property historically associated with this resource.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Ken Story, National Register Coordinator

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 01/08/92

Street & Number: 225 E. Markham, Suite 300 Telephone: (501) 324-9346

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Summary

The Clear Springs Tabernacle is a single story, hipped roof religious meeting shelter designed in a simple, functional style best known as Plain Traditional. Its metal roof is supported on all sides by a series of braced, square wood posts that in turn rest upon either flat stones or pyramidal concrete blocks.

Elaboration

The Clear Springs Tabernacle is a single story, hipped roof religious meeting shelter designed in a simple, functional style best known as Plain Traditional. Its metal roof is supported on all sides by a series of braced, square wood posts that in turn rest upon either flat stones or pyramidal concrete blocks. The structure is unenclosed and open.

The northern and southern elevations of this structure are identical, each being ten bays in length and ornamented only with the angle braces that extend from the sides of the wood posts to the wood rafter plate above. Likewise, the western elevation is divided into five bays, though the two bays at either end of the elevation are broader than the narrow central bay, the dimensions of which are roughly those of the average doorway entrance. The eastern elevation, behind which is the low rostrum or speaker's platform, is partially sheathed with horizontal boards to block the morning sun.

The relatively tall hipped roof is itself as high, if not slightly higher, than the supporting beams below, though it extends only slightly beyond the rafter plate. This has resulted in the principal alteration to the structure of the building, the replacement of all the exterior wood posts due to deterioration from exposure to the elements. However, the form of the braced frame construction has been retained. The interior supports -- protected from exposure to the elements -- are original, and retain their mortise and tenon construction.

The Clear Springs Tabernacle has suffered from the same deterioration and vandalism to which many such open and relatively isolated resources are subjected. However, it remains in relatively good condition and continues to be used for religious retreat purposes during the summer.

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Summary

The Clear Springs Tabernacle is locally significant as the best example of this type of simple, open, braced frame structure that was usually constructed to shelter religious "revival" meetings. Though virtually all of the exterior supporting structural members have been replaced due to deterioration, many of the original interior supports survive, and thus reveal the mortise-and-tenon construction that originally prevailed throughout.

Elaboration

Unlike several of its neighboring communities, the small settlement of Clear Springs grew along what is now State Highway 26 well before the arrival of the railroads. The records of the Christian Camp Ground, along with the local oral tradition, indicate that the area adjacent to what would become the site of the Clear Springs Tabernacle supported a Methodist church, a school house and at least one store prior to 1877. The first meeting of this particular Christian denomination (Disciples of Christ) actually occurred as early as 1872, when a Mr. M.E. Kelley preached to a small gathering of people on the site of the later campground. Though such religious meetings continued here for the next fifteen years, at various intervals and under the spiritual direction of two other clergymen, it was not until 1887 that the congregation took clear steps to purchase property and erect their own structure for their meetings.

The first record of this effort survives in the form of the deed for the property on which the tabernacle is sited. This deed indicates that the trustees of this congregation (assembled from among the leading "brethren") purchased forty acres of land from Mr. and Mrs. D.M. Hammonds on October 13, 1886 (specifically, the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 18, Township 8 South, Range 22 West). This document is of especial interest in that not only does it legally authorize the transfer of ownership to the specified forty acres but it also explicitly outlines both the organizational composition of the church and the procedures by which it is to conduct business and make decisions. Among the most noteworthy of these guidelines is the stipulation that any Christian denomination may use the site except the Mormons and any congregation that allows black members; the provision authorizing the geographically-closest Christian church to appoint members to fill vacancies on the seven-member board of trustees when a majority of the remaining members cannot be convened to identify and vote for a replacement themselves; the restriction against the distribution -- by gift or sale -- of intoxicating liquors on the property; and the explicit allowance of the board of trustees to sell the land, or any part thereof, or exchange the land for other property dependent only upon the unanimous consent of the board.

It was this first Board of Trustees -- W.I. Meeks, James Hardin, A.J. Osburn, R.H. Wilder, S.T. Kirkham, George Bruce and W.R. Cargile -- that met over the winter to decide upon the size and design of the tabernacle and to appoint a building committee. That committee later reported that the proposed design would cost five-hundred dollars to construct. Another committee was then appointed to raise the required funds and to distribute the specifications for the construction for the purpose of obtaining bids. The contract for the building was let on June 4, 1887, and Miles Kelly, a well-known local carpenter, was selected to do the work.

Though Kelly was in charge of supervising the overall construction, several members of the church donated time in helping with the work. Furthermore, W.I. Meeks, one of the trustees, donated the services of his sawmill to cut the lumber for the building. The construction was substantially complete by the following August as the church

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records reveal that the first meeting after the construction began took place on August 13, 1887 and that all was in readiness.

Campers would often drive cows with them to provide fresh milk during their stay; they also brought live chickens, along with cured hams, canned vegetables and other foods that would keep for the duration of the meeting. Pine knots were originally placed around the campground for light in the evenings, though these were later replaced with gas lanterns.

Though the tabernacle itself is the only historic structure remaining on the original forty-acre parcel that retains its historic integrity, there were originally many surrounding "camp houses" on the property that were constructed by individual members for the comfort and convenience of themselves and their families while attending the ten-day meetings. However, many members chose to camp in canvas tents that they brought with them. Also of note are the total of eight springs that continue to flow adjacent to the tabernacle and which provided the bathing and drinking water for the members during the meetings. At least a few of these springs were even tiled during the construction of the tabernacle. However, due to the fact that the surviving camp houses have all been extensively altered and the springs are overgrown and therefore difficult to locate precisely, they are not included in the nomination.

The Clear Springs Tabernacle remains the best example of this simple, vernacular building type in this vicinity, and one of the few examples of this building type to survive in the state.

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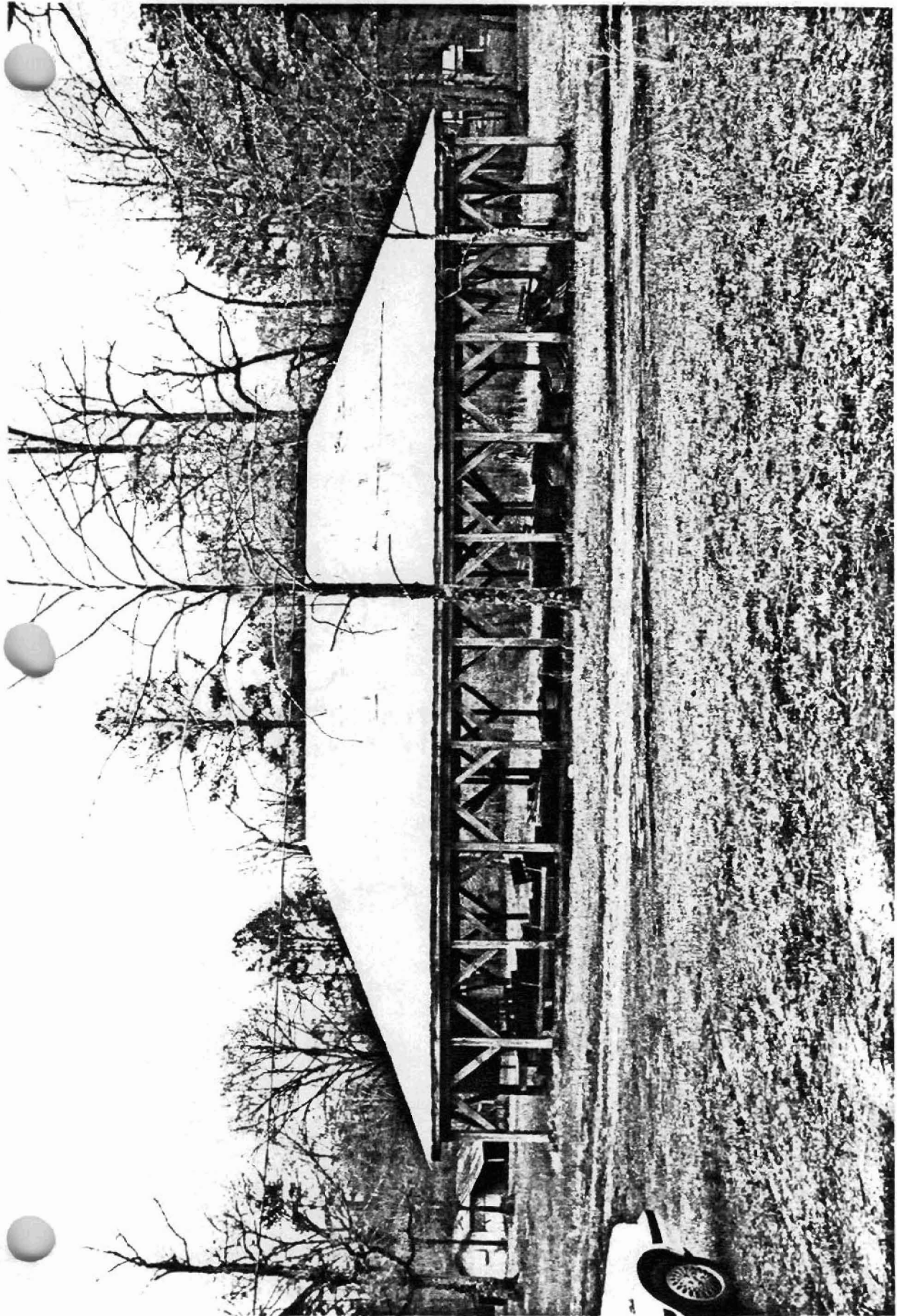
Bibliography

Interview with Ms. Evelyn R. Weber, December 10, 1990.

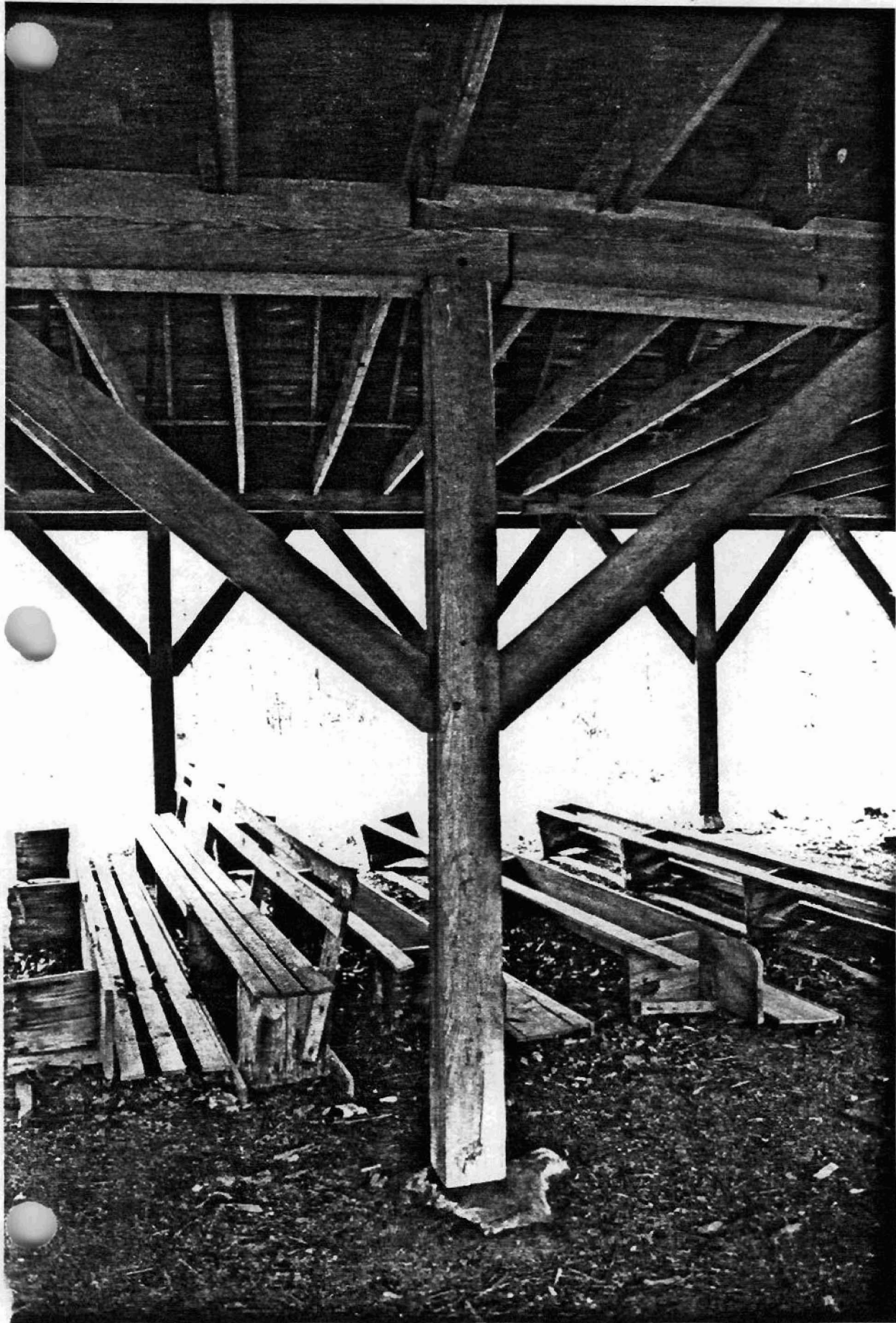
Riley, Lilla, History of Christian Camp-Ground Meetings (Disciples of Christ), undated.













Okolona vic., Arkansas
Clark County
15/463830/3768280
Antoine Quadrangle
1:24000



(OKOLONA NORTH)
7352 III SE

13 MI. TO ARK 51
ARKADELPHIA 20 MI.