

Greene Co.
Paragould
Old Bethel Methodist Church
78-14-JOAH-63

NR 4-19-78

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Old Bethel Methodist Church

AND/OR COMMON

Finch Methodist Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Paragould

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

One

STATE

Arkansas

X VICINITY OF

CODE

05

COUNTY

Greene

CODE

055

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__DISTRICT

X PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

__AGRICULTURE

__MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

__PRIVATE

__UNOCCUPIED

__COMMERCIAL

__PARK

__STRUCTURE

__BOTH

__WORK IN PROGRESS

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

X RELIGIOUS

__OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

X YES: RESTRICTED

__GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

__YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Old Bethel Methodist Restoration Foundation; Landis Smith, Trustee

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1

CITY, TOWN

Knobel

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

72435

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Greene County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Courtsquare

CITY, TOWN

Paragould

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

SIGNIFICANCE

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"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Old Bethel Methodist Church and School Building, located at the old Finch Community, typifies the simple, rural vernacular public building that was built before or just after the turn of the century in Arkansas. The history of this building illustrates well the history of the small community of Finch, as well as the history of most small rural communities in Arkansas. It is significant both architecturally and historically as the sole visual reminder of a part of Greene County's history, which is rapidly being forgotten.

The original Bethel Methodist Church was constructed in 1880, a small, one-story, white frame church. In 1900, a storm destroyed this building and in 1901 an almost identical building replaced the original structure. George Russell, a local carpenter, built the building using native materials of cypress and pine. It measures 20 feet by 40 feet and has a high pitched roof covered by tin. Exterior walls are covered with six inch beveled pine siding, while interior walls and ceiling are beaded pine wall board. Adjacent to it is a cemetery that dates to 1886.

Primarily a Methodist Church, Old Bethel also served duty as a school for the Finch Community until 1926. Finch once was a thriving farming community, but soon after the first World War, Finch met the same fate as many other rural Arkansas communities. People left the small communities to settle in nearby towns. A consolidation of the Finch School District #57 into the Walcott School District ended the educational service of Old Bethel. However, it had been an illustrious career, culminating in the production of five doctors and several other locally prominent persons.

Near the same time, the Methodist Church ceased having services in the building also. The building was used irregularly until 1941 when it was permanently vacated.

The years of emptiness and neglect seriously deteriorated Old Bethel. In 1973, the building was in poor condition with missing windows, rotted flooring and part of the west elevation missing.

A concerned group, many of whom had worshipped or attended school in the building or had family in the adjacent cemetery, began restoration of the structure. Today, Old Bethel looks much as it did at its completion in 1901. It is used for church services when the weather is mild, and has become a source of great community pride.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Paragould Daily Press, May, 1974; 6/28/77

"Old Bethel Methodist Church & Country School." Article on file at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 7101050 3987700
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 C

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Donna DuVall, Historian and Frezil Miller, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

DATE

September, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Suite 500, Continental Building, Main at Markham

TELEPHONE

501-371-2763

CITY OR TOWN

Little Rock

STATE

Arkansas 72201

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Anne Battle

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

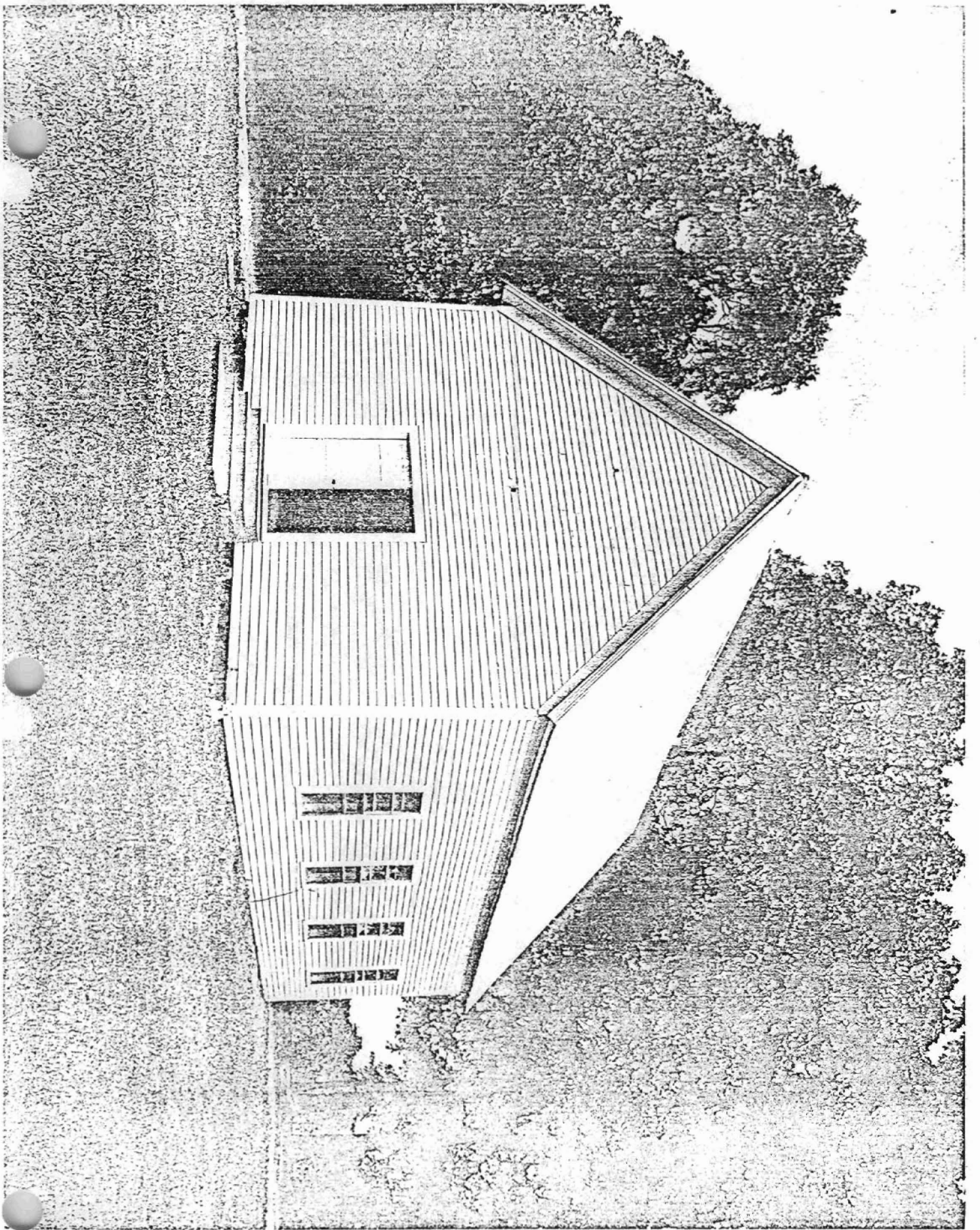
DATE

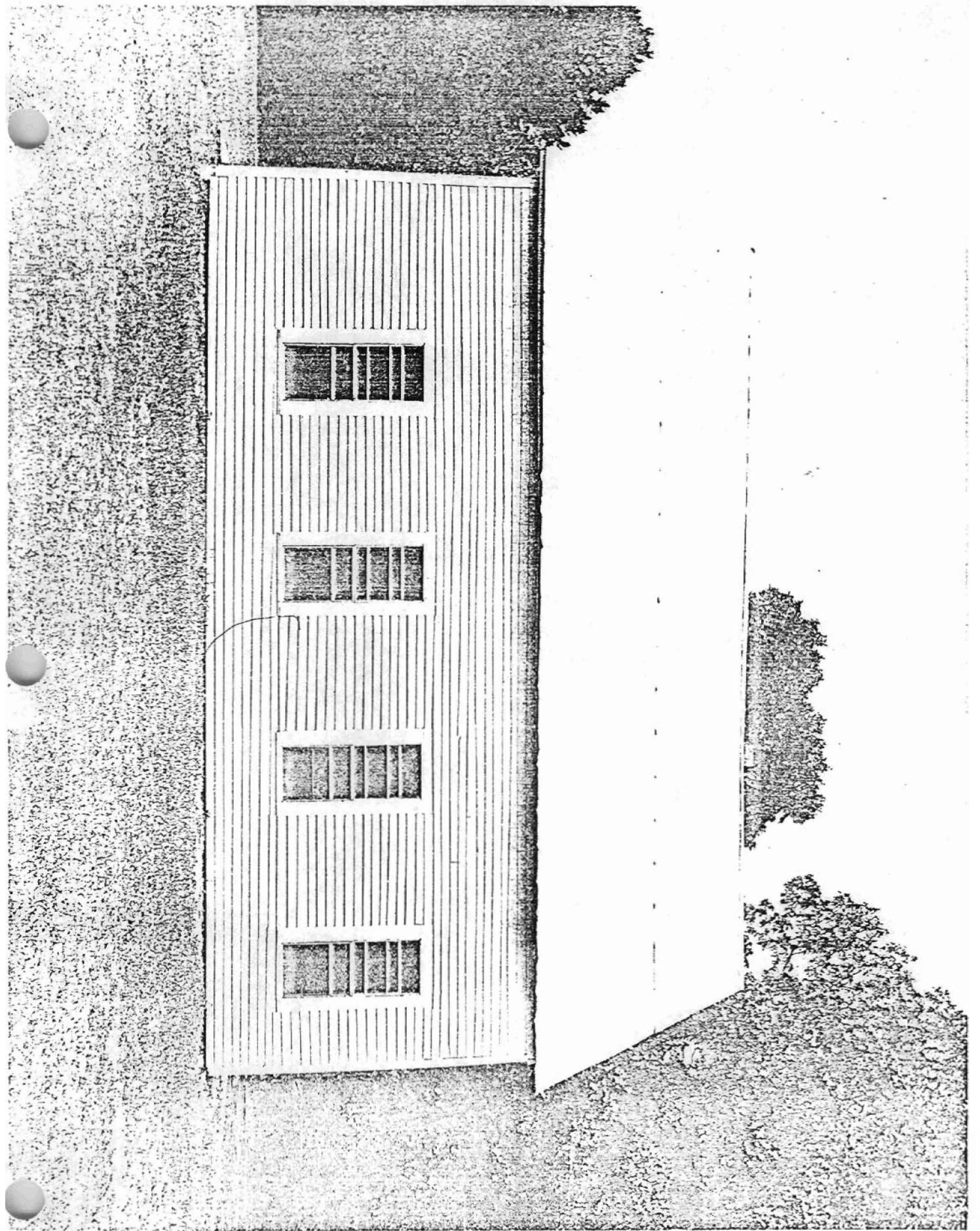
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

POST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Bethel Methodist Church & School

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Finch

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Greene

STATE

Arkansas

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Bob Dunn

DATE OF PHOTO 1977

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

View of north elevation

1



THIS MAP COMPILED WITH NATIONAL MAP ACQUISITION STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER 25, COLORADO OR WASHINGTON 25, D. C.,
 ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS,
 AND MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION, VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST