

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South

other name/site number Houston United Methodist Church

=====

2. Location

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street & number: South of State Route 60

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Houston

vicinity: N/A

state: AR

county: Perry

code: AR 105

zip code: 72070

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</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. Sater  
Signature of certifying official

4-7-94  
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

=====  
**6. Function or Use**  
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Historic: Religion

Sub: Religious Facility

Current : Religion

Sub: Religious Facility

=====

**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification:

Other: Plain Traditional  
Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: see above

Materials: foundation Brick; Concrete roof Asphalt  
walls Weatherboard other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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: 1912

Significant Dates: 1912

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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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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>528060</u>	<u>3876400</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point created by the intersection of the southern curbline of State Route 60 and a line formed by, yet fifteen feet from, the northwestern elevation of the church, proceed southwesterly along said line to its intersection with a line formed by, yet fifteen feet from, the rear or southwestern elevation; thence proceed southeasterly along said line to its intersection with a line formed by, yet fifteen feet from, the southeastern elevation of the church; thence proceed northeasterly along said line to its intersection with the southern curbline of State Route 60; thence proceed northwesterly along the curbline to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 03/23/94

Street & Number: 323 Center, 1600 Tower Bldg. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

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

Constructed in 1912, the Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South is a single-story frame building of rectangular plan. The structure features a bell tower on the front elevation and exhibits restrained Colonial Revival influence that is seen largely in the arched windows decorated by a false keystone and in the boxed cornice returns. The interior has been altered somewhat, but essentially retains its appearance. There are no associated outbuildings. Located south of State Highway 60 in Houston, the church, though not in use, is in excellent condition.

### Elaboration

Constructed in 1912, the Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South is a single-story frame building of rectangular plan. Originally resting upon brick piers, the structure is now supported by a continuous brick and concrete block foundation. The frame walls are clad with white-painted, simple-drop novelty siding and support a composition-shingled gable roof that is pierced by a central interior brick chimney (no longer functional).

The front, or northeastern, elevation features a bell tower that projects from the center of the gable end. The tower is larger at its base, where double-leaf doors of recent vintage permit entry into the vestibule. At the attic level, the tower recedes, by way of a hipped roof adorned with a frieze and architrave, into smaller section that extends beyond the gable peak and is crowned by a composition-shingled pyramid roof. This roof contains the same frieze/architrave treatment found underneath the other eave overhangs. All four elevations of the tower are punctuated by wood rectangular louvers. The only alteration to the front elevation is a modern gable-roof porch that projects over the entry and is supported by wrought-iron posts on a raised concrete deck. Two two-over-two double hung windows with an arched upper sash and decorative keystone flank the tower assembly.

Five symmetrical windows of the type found on the front elevation fenestrate the identical side elevations. The rear elevation contains a single-leaf door to the west and a shortened two-over-two window to the east that was originally the same size as the other windows.

The interior has been somewhat altered since construction. Sheetrock has replaced the original wall material, and a modern wood-panelled wainscoting has been added. Other changes include the enclosure of the area to either side of the pulpit to create two rooms and the addition of an acoustical-tile ceiling.

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There are no associated outbuildings, although a concrete restroom facility for the adjacent city park is located directly behind the church. Located south of State Highway 60 in Houston, the Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South - now known as the Houston United Methodist Church - is no longer in active use but remains in excellent condition.

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**Summary**

The Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South in Perry County is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best example of a Colonial Revival-style church in Houston.

**Elaboration**

Although the area surrounding the present town of Houston was settled before the Civil War, sufficient population to warrant a post office was not attained until 1878. The name "Jamesville" was first selected, however, due to another post office by that name in Arkansas, the name "Houston" was substituted instead. According to oral tradition, the name is in honor of Sam Houston, who is said to have stayed in the area during his travels. Interestingly, Goodspeed calls the town "Huston" and, in a different section, mentions a John L. Huston, who operated the first ferry across the nearby Fourche LaFave River in 1847.

The community around Houston never really prospered and disappeared into memory as "Old Houston" in 1900 with the completion of the Choctaw, Oklahoma, and Gulf Railroad two miles to the south. The new town became a center for shipping logs, crossties, cattle, and cotton produced in the surrounding area. The town grew quickly, as most railroad towns did, and contained the usual assortment of businesses including a bank, several general stores, a couple of saloons, hotel, blacksmith shop, sawmill, and a cotton gin. Additionally, the town could offer to its populace the *Houston Weekly* newspaper, a brick kiln, and a grist mill. The town was incorporated in 1908.

Houston could also boast daily passenger train stops, a feature unusual for a town its size, in addition to the regular freight schedule. Margaret Long, who donated the land for the townsite, received credit for obtaining this service by stipulating the daily stops in her contract with the railroad. A fine of \$25 was imposed on the railroad, payable to the Houston Public Schools, for each day the passenger train failed to stop. Passenger train services following these conditions were continued for thirty-five years until the town was made a flagstop.

Margaret Long was also responsible for donating the land for the first Methodist Church in the Houston area. In 1893, approximately seven years before the arrival of the railroad, Long donated one-and-a-half acres for the construction of the Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The name of the church was changed to the Houston Methodist Episcopal Church,



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South in 1902 to reflect the presence of the new railroad town that now encompassed the building. By 1912, the congregation had outgrown the existing facility, and the current structure was erected on the same site. In 1968, the name was changed to the Houston United Methodist Church when the Evangelical United Brethren Church joined with the Methodist Episcopal Church. The building is no longer used for church services, except for the occasional funeral, as only two members of the congregation remain. Nevertheless, the building is well maintained and has been little altered since its construction.

The Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South is an excellent example of the single-room, wood-frame, gable-roof church form used throughout rural Arkansas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although these buildings are basically Plain Traditional in style, local congregations sometimes applied various architectural style elements - most commonly Gothic Revival windows - to the basic form. This church, however, exhibits the less frequently employed Colonial Revival-style influences that consist of a dignified frieze and cornice treatment and unusual arched windows with purely decorative keystones. As it is the best example of this type of church form and style in Houston and the surrounding area, the Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

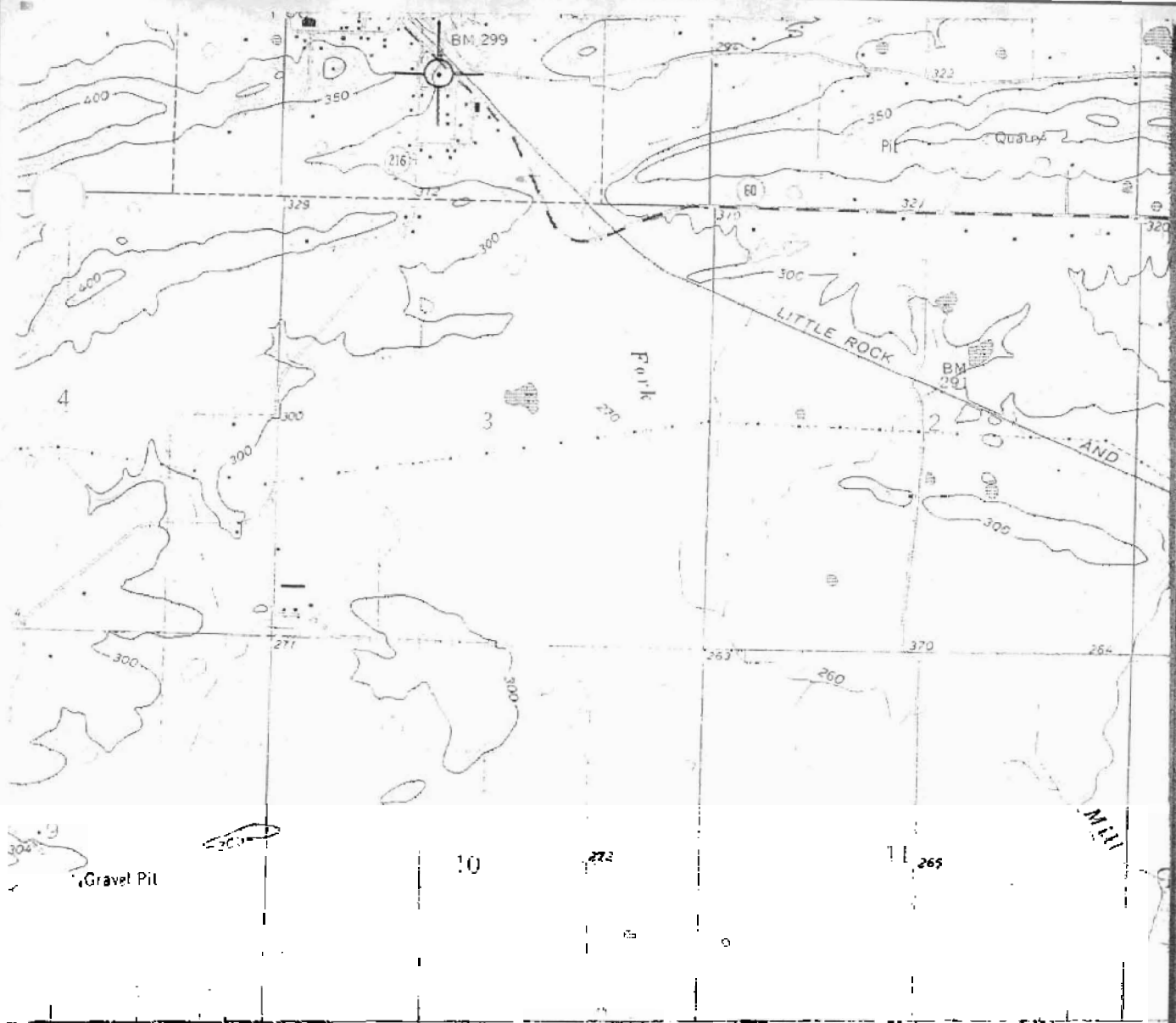
Section number 9 Page 1

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### Bibliography

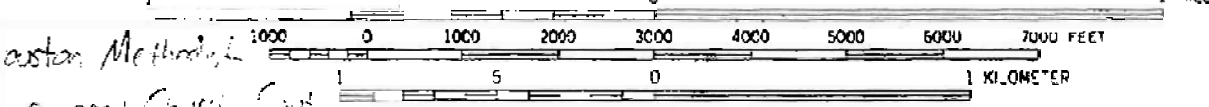
Kemper, George. *You Can Go Home Again: A History of Houston, Arkansas*. 1982 (bound and on file at the Arkansas History Commission).

*The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Central Arkansas*. Chicago, Nashville, and St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889.



42°30"    27    28    (MARTINDALE)    29    30    40'

74531 MW  
SCALE 1:24 000



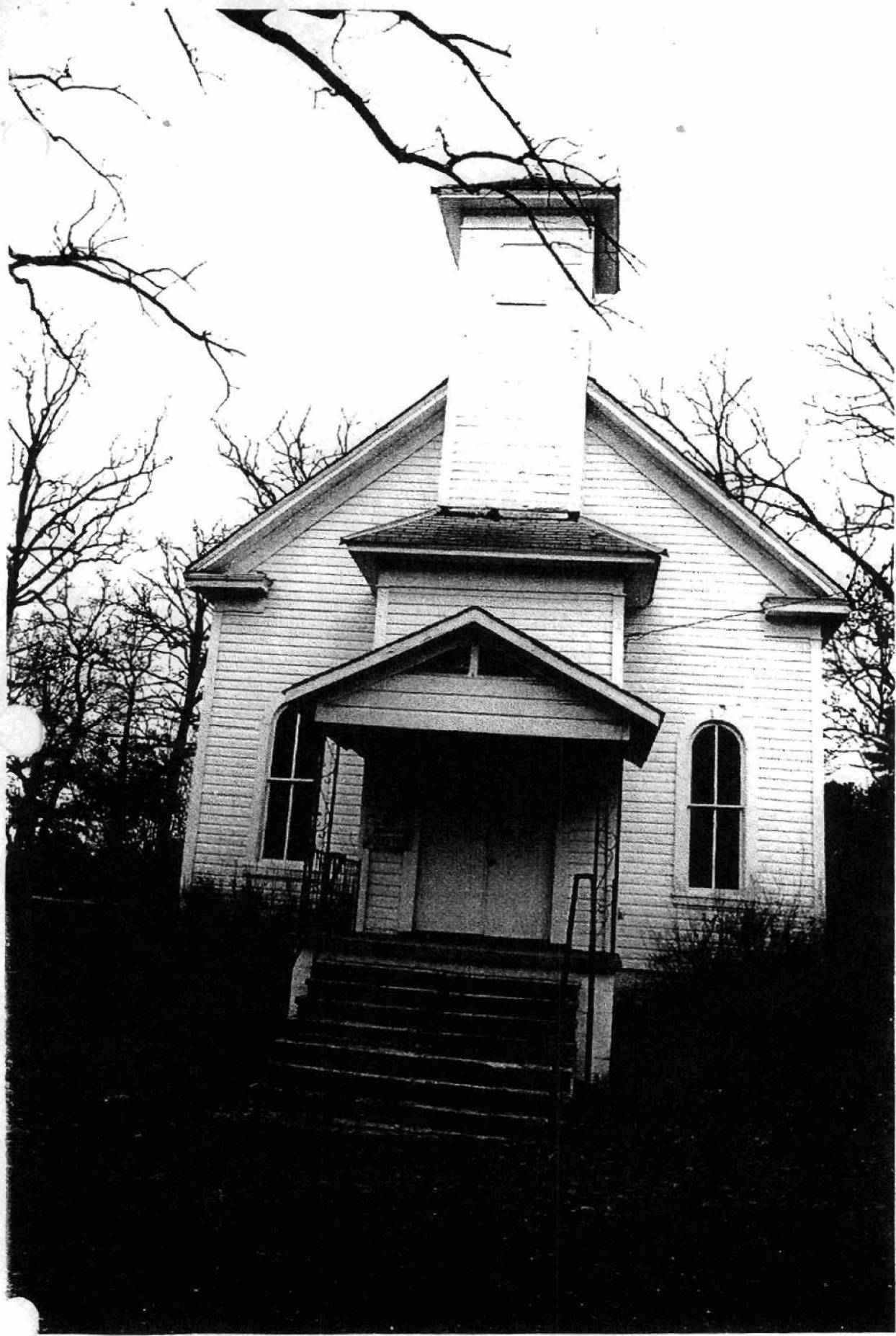
*Austin Methodist  
- Proprietor Church  
Co.,  
Arkansas*

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

*UTM: 15/528060/3876400*

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST





Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South  
Derry Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Patrick Zoller  
February 1994  
Negative on file at AHPP  
New from the northeast

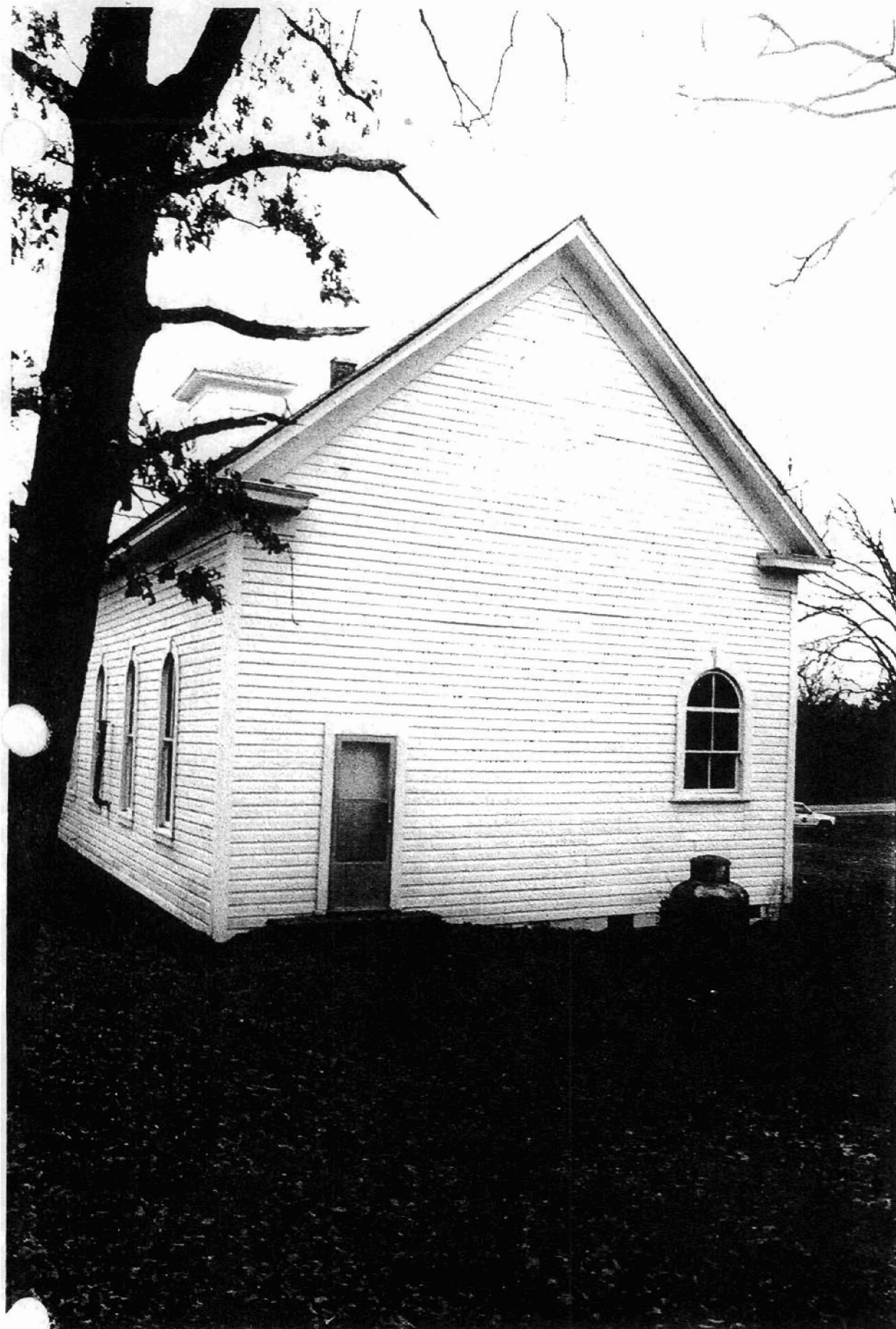


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Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South,  
Berry Co., Arkansas  
Photography by Patrick Zolner  
February 1994  
Negative on file at AHP  
View from the south

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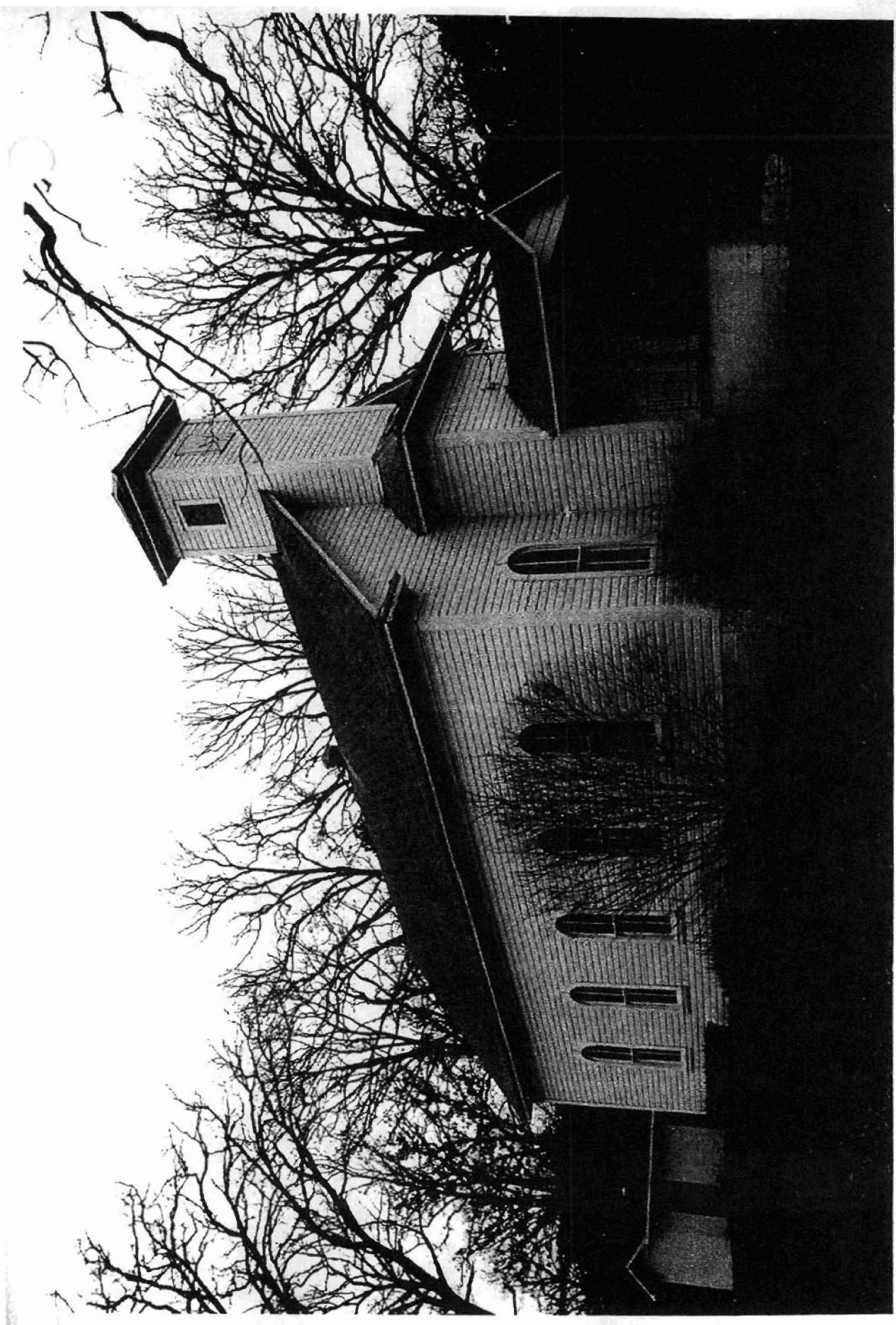




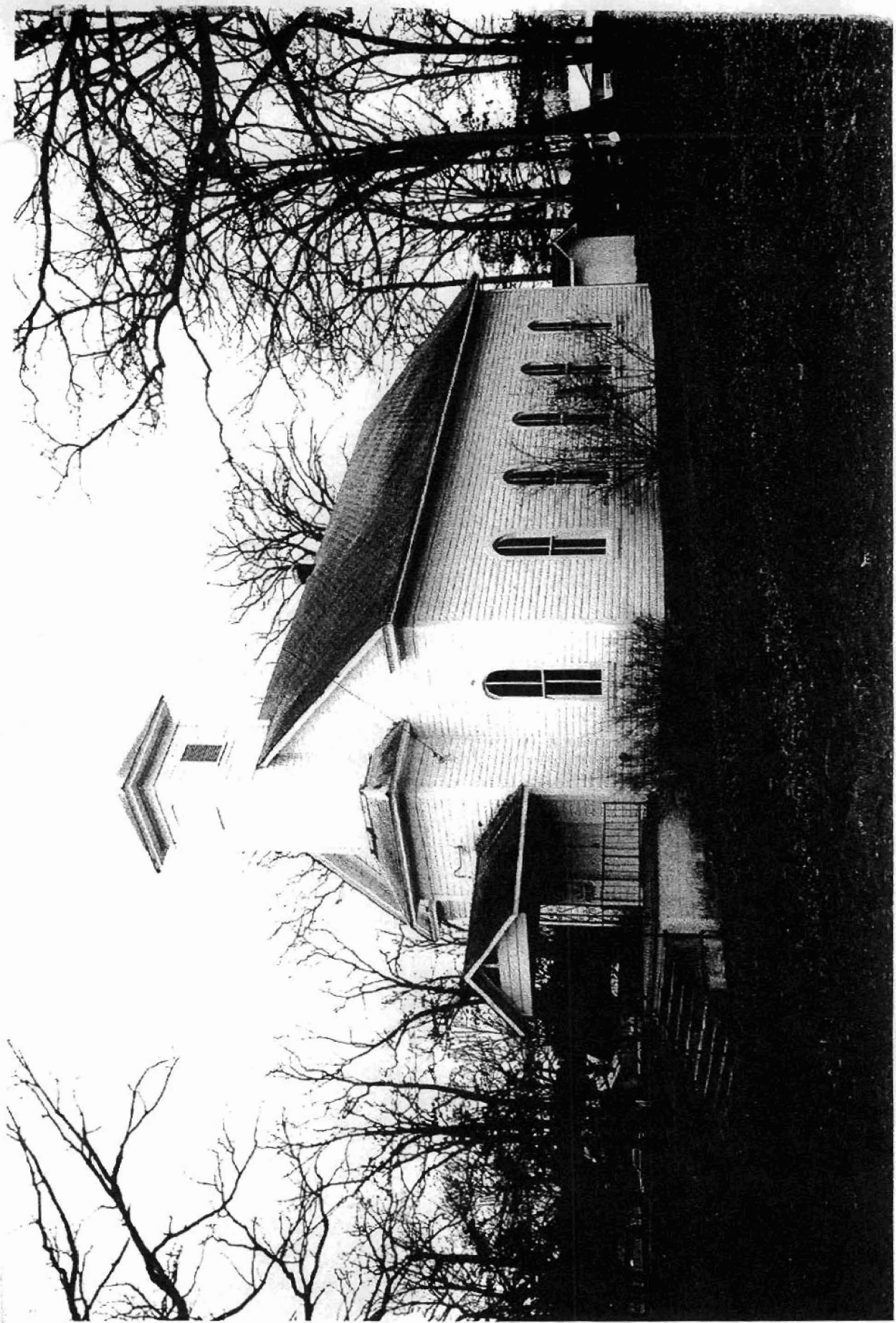
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Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, South  
Perry Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Patrick Zoller  
February 1994  
Negative on file at AHP  
View from the southwest

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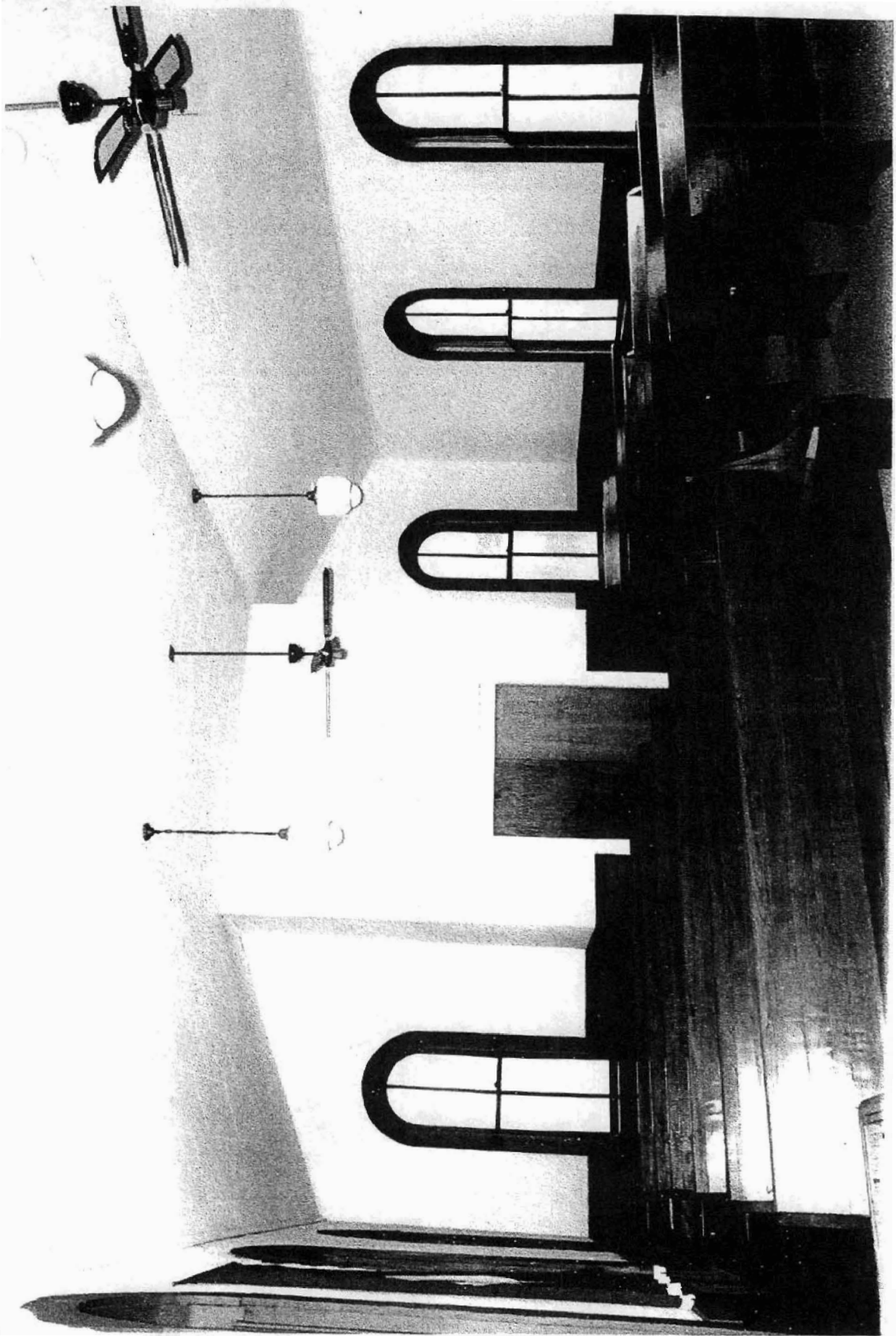
Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South  
Perry Co., Arkansas  
Anatograph by Patrick Zoller  
February 1994  
Negative on file at AHPP  
New from the east



Houston Methodist Episcopal Church  
Perry Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Patrick Zoller  
February 1994  
Negative on file at AMHP  
View from the north

South





Heustein Methodist Episcopal Church, South

Perry Co., Arkansas

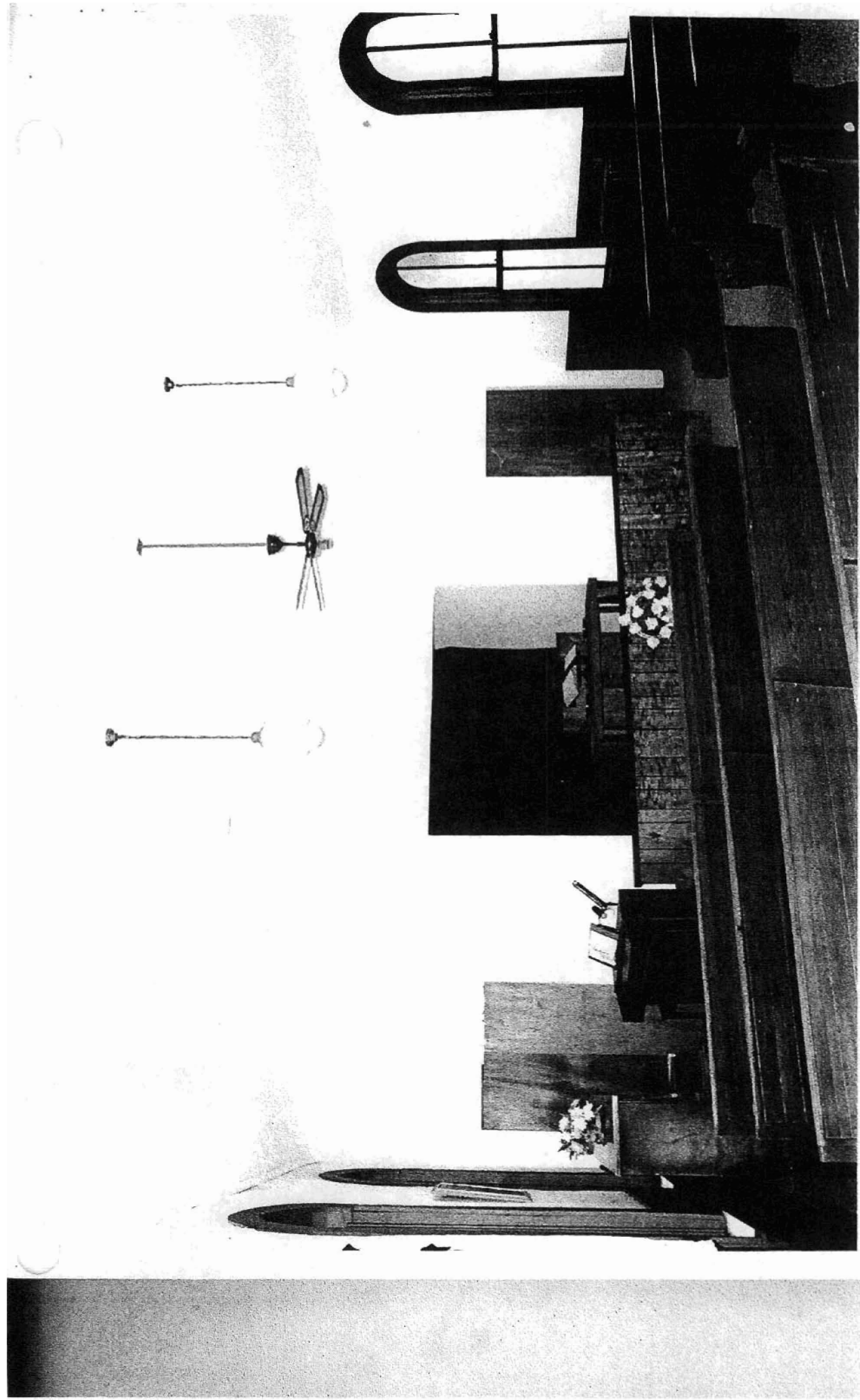
Photograph by Patrick Zollner

February 1994

Negative in file at AHPP

View of the interior from  
the southwest





Houston Methodist Episcopal Church, South  
Perry Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Patrick Zolner  
February 1994  
Negative on file at AHP  
View of the interior from  
the northeast