

NR listed 5/13/91

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name First Baptist Church

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number Northeast Corner of Pine and Carruth Streets

not for publication N/A

city, town Marvell

vicinity N/A

state Arkansas

code

AR

county Phillips

code

AR

zip code 72366

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

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

#### Category of Property

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

#### Number of Resources within Property

##### Contributing

1

##### Noncontributing

           buildings

           sites

           structures

           objects

1

0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously

listed in the National Register N/A

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A Buford  
Signature of certifying official

4-3-91  
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

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 the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Church

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Church

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Collegiate Gothic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Windows: Stained Glass

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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### Summary

The First Baptist Church is a single story, brick masonry church building designed in a simplified, vernacular interpretation of the Collegiate Gothic style. Its flat roof is set behind the brick parapet walls and is covered with asphalt roll. The walls and continuous foundation are brick. Pointed arch openings provide both access and light to the structure.

### Elaboration

The First Baptist Church is a single story, brick masonry church building designed in a simplified, vernacular interpretation of the Collegiate Gothic style. It features a relatively regular plan, with the sanctuary and vestibule occupying the full width of the building at its southern end and two stories of ancillary rooms wrapped around the northern end of the sanctuary. Its flat roof is set behind the brick parapet walls and is covered with asphalt roll. The walls and continuous foundation are brick, and there is a basement beneath the sanctuary that was designed to accommodate the Sunday School.

The southern or main elevation is divided into three principal bays. The square, crenelated tower to the west is taller than the similar tower to the east, and both are smaller than the broad central bay that is lighted by the large, pointed arch Gothic window. The western tower is lighted by a single, narrow pointed arch window in the second story (lighting a rear balcony stairwell) and accessed via the large Gothic entrance below with its blind concrete transom. A concrete stairwell with brick stoops provides connects the entrance with the sidewalk. The eastern tower also contains a stairwell and is thus lighted with a single central Gothic window. The broad central bay features a pyramidal parapet above the monumental wood Gothic window. The window itself is glazed with stained glass set into wood tracery.

The eastern elevation is composed of the single southern tower bay, the four bays of the sanctuary wall and the two bays of the rear ancillary rooms. The tower and sanctuary bays are each filled with a single Gothic window -- also glazed with stained glass -- while the two ancillary room bays are lighted with eight-over-eight wood sash windows on both the main floor and the basement. The western elevation is similar in that it is also fenestrated with a smaller Gothic window in the southern bay and four larger Gothic windows in the sanctuary wall. The wall of the rear ancillary rooms is punctuated only by a single-leaf wood door that is accessed by a concrete stairway.

The northern elevation is lighted by five eight-over-eight wood sash windows to the east -- two on the upper story and three on the lower story -- and by a single Gothic window in the upper section of the building to the west (another pointed arch opening next to it has since been filled with brick). A single-leaf entry accesses this elevation and is placed near the

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Continuation Sheet**

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western end of the elevation, at ground level. Two metal flues vent the interior on this elevation.

The interior of the First Baptist Church has been altered somewhat. However, these alterations are largely limited to the ancillary rooms to the rear of the church, and alterations consist primarily of wood paneling placed over the original plaster. The sanctuary of the church is virtually unaltered, with the only changes being the covering of the original balcony front to create Sunday School rooms and the installation of an acoustic tile ceiling. The wood pews remain arranged in their original semi-circular plan, and the recessed choir is set behind a large, arched opening that provides the visual transition from the sanctuary to the choir itself. The original plaster walls and stained glass windows remain also.

As noted above, the principal alterations to the building are for the most part confined to the interior of the ancillary rooms at the back of the church. The only alterations of note are the removal of the original wood doors in the front entrance and their replacement with aluminum thermal doors.

The First Baptist Church is surrounded by an asphalt parking lot; there are no associated outbuildings, nor is there any record of there ever having been any.

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### Summary

Criterion C, local significance

The First Baptist Church survives as the best example in Marvell of a building designed in the Collegiate Gothic style. In spite of its restrained use of the idiom, such typical features as the pointed arch openings throughout and the heavy, stylized wood tracery in the stained glass windows clearly reflect the strong influence of the architectural style that was eminently popular for Christian religious structures (and such other building types as schools and institutional structures) during the early twentieth century.

### Elaboration

Marvell (Phillips County) existed as a small community prior to 1872, when it became a stop along the Arkansas Central Railroad (later the Arkansas Midland Railway) between Helena and Clarendon. Thereafter the town experienced its greatest period of growth, and by 1889 boasted of five general stores, four groceries, a furniture store, two blacksmith shops, and three churches. Located in the heart of the Mississippi delta, the chief export from Marvell was cotton for most of the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The Baptist church in Marvell was founded in 1877 with a total of nine charter members; the congregation became affiliated with the American Baptist Association of Churches by 1879. Their first church building -- the actual date and physical description of which has not survived -- was destroyed by high winds some time before 1880. The congregation then met in a Union Church (serving several denominations) until 1902, when they built a simple wood frame building with a corner belfry. The church decided to expand in 1925, largely due to their growth and increased activity as a congregation. It was at this time that the lots of the present church were deeded to the church by one Brother Bean. Even as of 1925, these lots were on the northern edge of the settled area of town and within an area that was relatively sparsely populated.

The name of the architect of the present building has not survived, but the contractor was a Mr. Stratton. The sanctuary was designed to seat 500 people, with room in the basement meeting room for another 250. The building continues to serve the Baptist congregation to this day.

The First Baptist Church survives as virtually the only historic church structure in Marvell that exhibits any influence of the Collegiate Gothic style. However, its vernacular rendering thereof, with its focused and economical emphasis on such identifying features as Gothic windows and crenelation at the expense of virtually all other detail, elevates it to a status unparalleled in Phillips County.

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### Bibliography

"A History of the First Baptist Church of Marvell," *First Baptist Church Centennial Program*, 1977 (unpaginated).

Goodspeed's *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Eastern Arkansas*, (1889), p. 748.

Hull, Clifton E., *Shortline Railroads of Arkansas*, (Norman, Oklahoma; 1969), p. 337.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1925

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown/Stratton, Mr.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one

UTM References

A 

1	5
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6	9	1	5	5	0
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3	8	2	5	7	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Beginning at the point formed by the intersection of the eastern edge of Pine Street with the northern edge of Carruth Street, proceed easterly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the eastern elevation of the church; thence proceed northerly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the northern elevation of the church; thence proceed westerly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the eastern edge of Pine Street; thence proceed southerly  See continuation sheet along said line to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

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

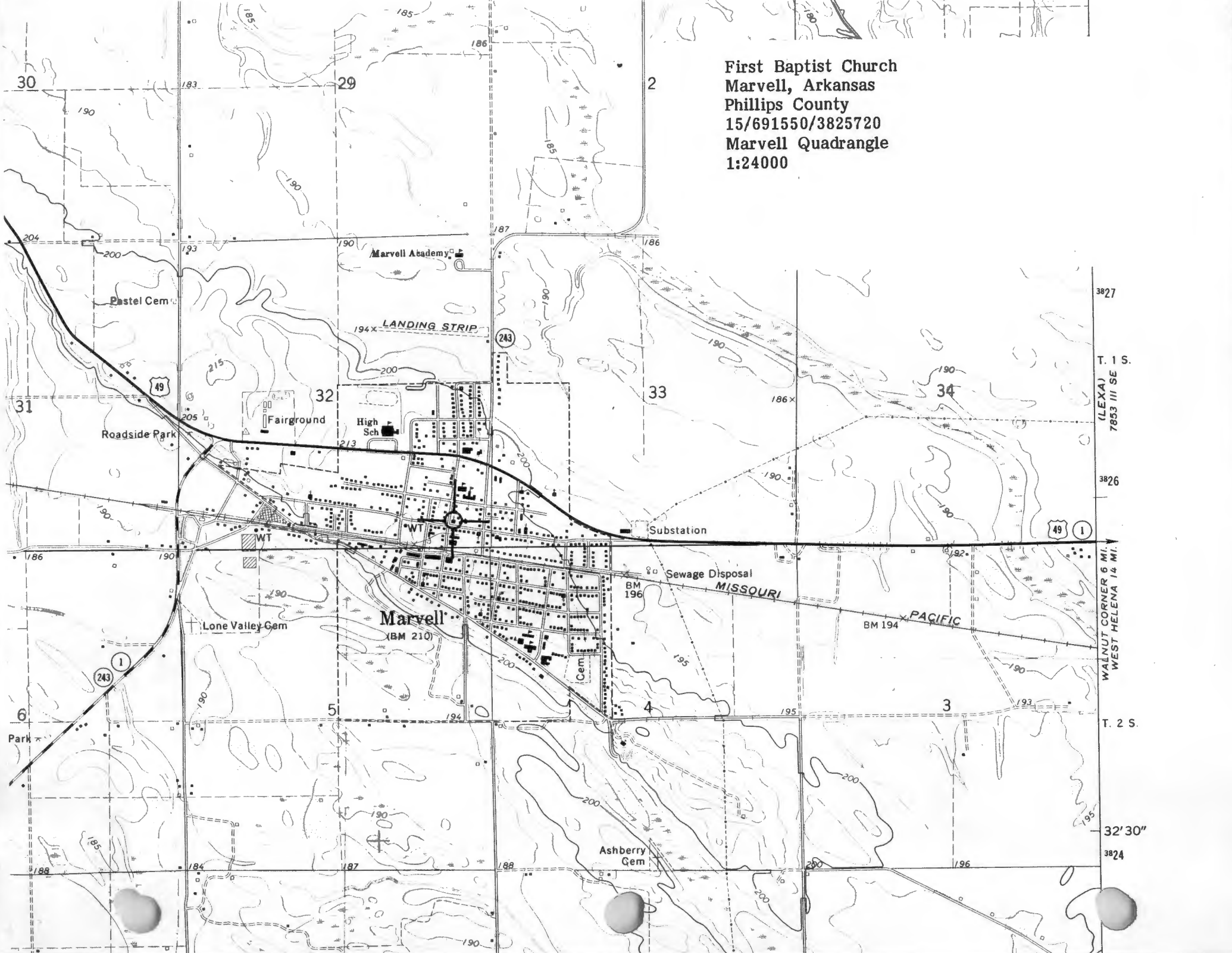
See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

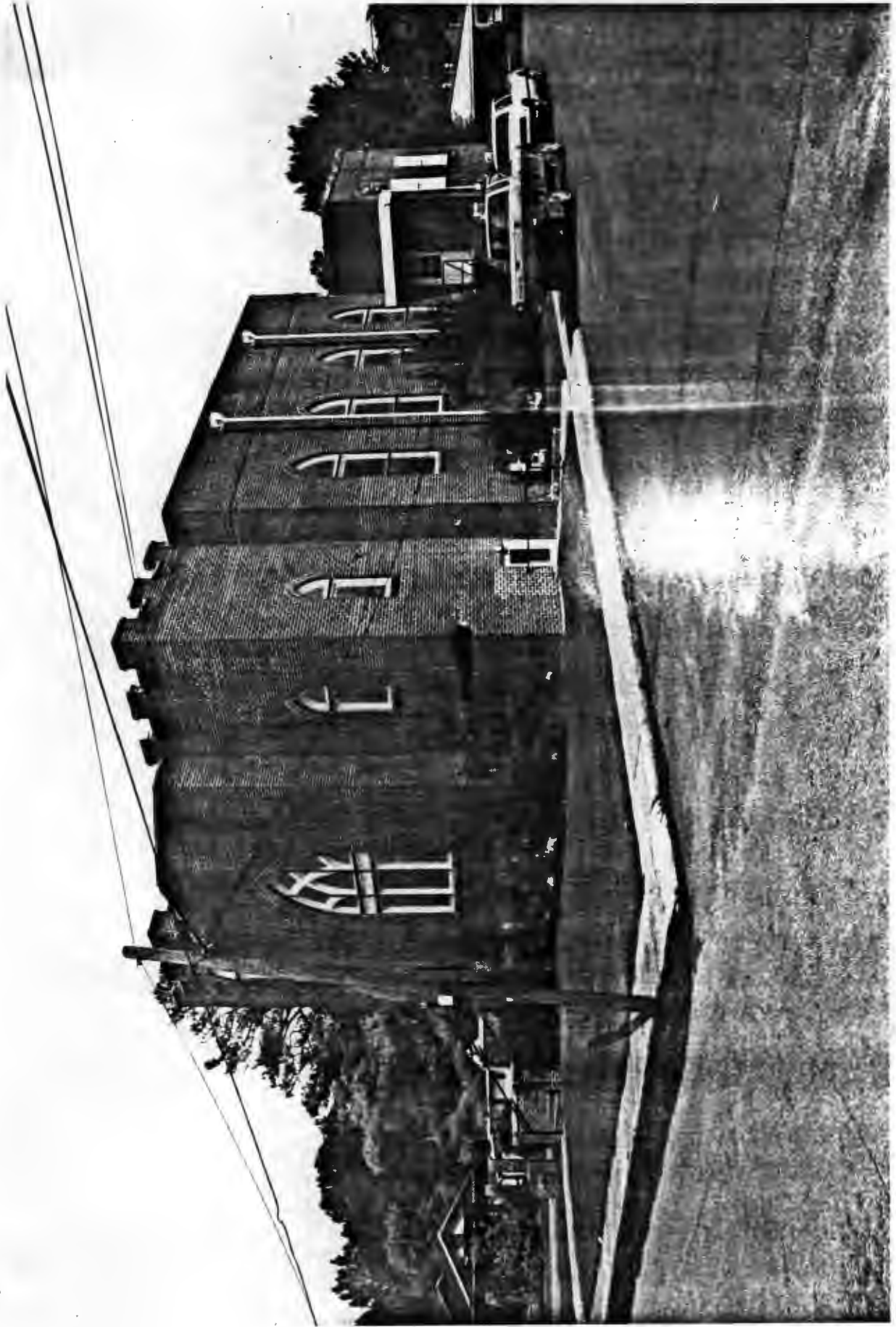
name/title Ken Story, Architectural Historian  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 3/29/91  
street & number 225 East Markham, Suite 300 telephone (501) 324-9346  
city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201



First Baptist Church  
Marvell, Arkansas  
Phillips County  
15/691550/3825720  
Marvell Quadrangle  
1:24000



3827  
T. 1 S.  
(LEXA) 7853 III SE  
3826  
WALNUT CORNER 6 MI.  
WEST HELENA 14 MI.  
T. 2 S.



714 BAPTIST CHURCH  
MINNIE, ILLINOIS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY P. DOLLNER  
OCTOBER, 1990

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ARPP  
VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST





FILM SUPPLIED (HURON  
WHEEL, AFRICANUS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY D. DOCKMAN  
OCTOBER, 1990  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ANPP  
VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST



FIR BAPTIST CHURCH  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA  
PHOTOGRAPHS 59 IN 2010  
OCTOBER, 1990  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW FROM EAST

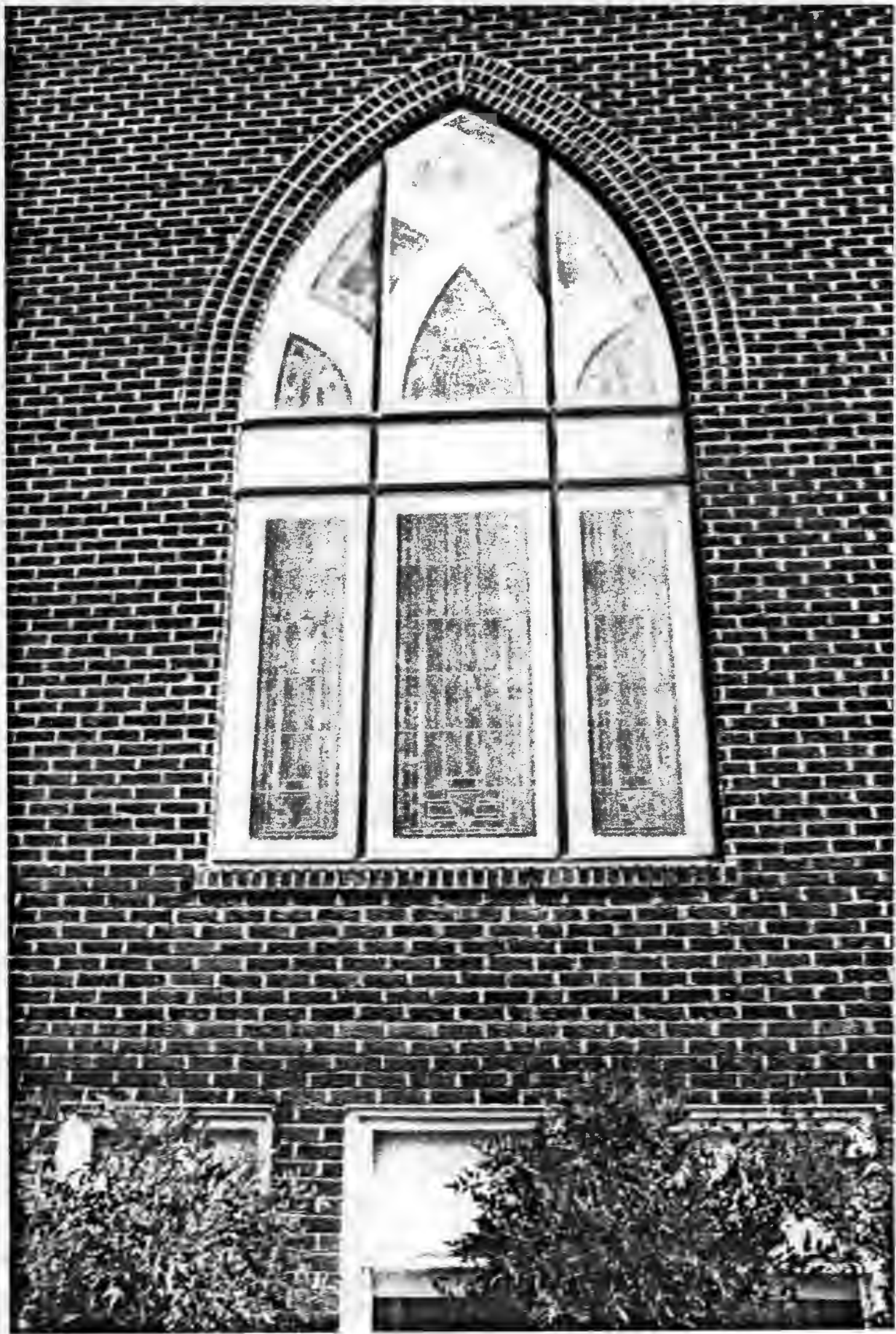




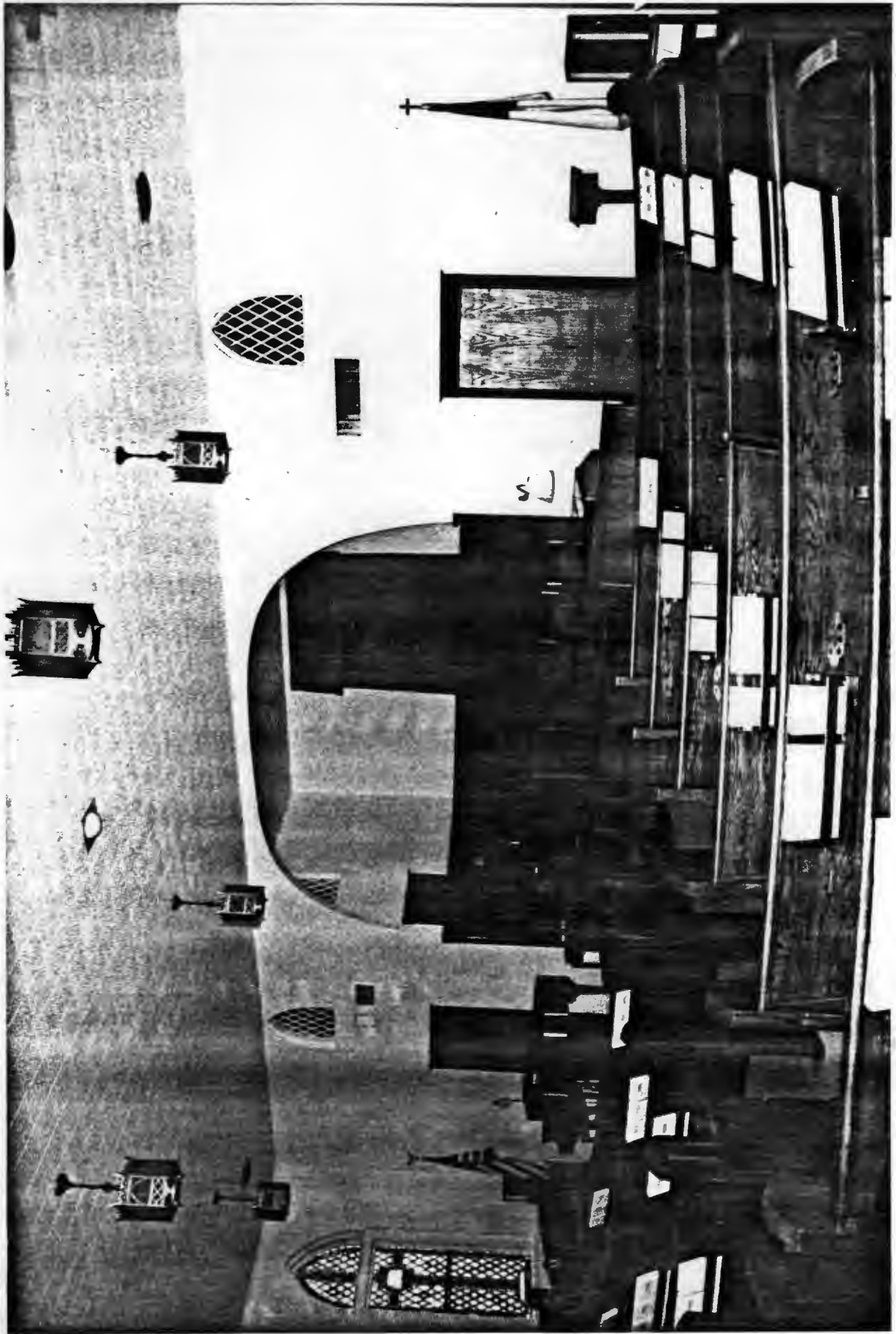
TIA BAPTIST PULPIT  
MEMBER, ARKANSAS

PROVIDENCED 33 22 OLIVER  
OCTOBER, 1990

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ANPP  
ENTRANCE DETAIL



F BAPTIST CHURCH  
MARVELL, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY P. COLLIER  
OCTOBER, 1990  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ARPP  
WINDOW DETAIL



FIRST BAPTIST (MURKIN)  
REVEL, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY D. J. JENNINGS  
OR UBER, 1910  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AMHP  
VIEW OF SANCTUARY