

NR LISTED 11/12/93

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Old Union School

other name/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: 504 Old Union Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Birdell

vicinity: X

state: AR

county: Randolph

code: AR 121

zip code: 72455

3. Classification

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. Slater  
Signature of certifying official

10-4-93  
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

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**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: EDUCATION

Sub: school

Current : SOCIAL

Sub: meeting hall

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification:

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: Plain Traditional

Materials: foundation stone roof tin  
walls vinyl 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): N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1913

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Campbell, William C.  
Pettyjohn, Frank  
Pettyjohn, Jim

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>670520</u>	<u>4014410</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

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

Beginning at a point on the southern edge of Old Union Road that is approximately 100 feet north of the northwest corner of the school, proceed south along a line formed by, yet four feet away from, the western elevation of the school to the intersection with a line formed by, yet four feet away from, the southern elevation of the building; thence proceed east along this line to the intersection with the line formed by, yet four feet away from, the eastern elevation of the building; thence proceed north to the southern edge of Old Union Road; thence proceed west to the point of beginning.

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

This boundary includes the school building and the associated property to the north of the structure, but excludes the cemetery adjacent to the western, southern, and eastern elevations of the school and the associated outhouse.

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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: 09/29/93

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

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

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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**Summary**

The Old Union School is a rectangular-plan, single-story school building constructed in 1913 in the Plain Traditional style. Supported by a continuous stone foundation, the wood-frame structure is currently sheathed with vinyl siding and covered by a corrugated-tin gable roof. The interior is largely unaltered and features double-beaded board walls and ceilings along with the original blackboard. Located on Old Union Road in the Birdell community, the Old Union School is now used as a community building.

**Elaboration**

The Old Union School is a rectangular-plan, single-story school building constructed in 1913 in the Plain Traditional style. Supported by a continuous stone foundation (the original foundation is said to have been composed of four large rock piers and wooden beams), the wood-frame structure is covered by a corrugated-tin gable roof. A solitary brick chimney punctures the ridge of the roof just aft of center.

A single-leaf, five-panelled wood door is located at the center of the front, or northern elevation and is flanked by two four-over-four double-hung wood-frame windows. The two side elevations are identically fenestrated by three symmetrically placed four-over-four windows. The rear elevation is blank. Five of the windows are protected by original chain-length screens.

Classes ceased to be held in the building after 1941, and the structure deteriorated substantially. In 1991, the building was rehabilitated, and the exterior wood weatherboard was covered with white vinyl siding that duplicates the dimensions of the original and meets the standards outlined by the National Register staff and the State Review Board. From the pre-siding photograph, it appears that only the gable-end frieze-board treatment is missing from the otherwise sympathetic siding application.

The interior is largely original and features double-beaded board siding on the walls and ceiling. A raised stage is located at the southern end of the room with the original chalkboard on the rear wall. In 1991, a new wood floor supplanted the original, which had rotted through in some places. At the same time, a modern central heating and air conditioning unit was installed with the ductwork sensitively placed under the house and exiting through floor vents. The actual unit was positioned unobtrusively behind the building. Also of interest in the single room is the original Dudley box stove, which was refurbished and moved to the northeast corner of the room from its initial central location, and one of the benches made for the building after the school consolidated in 1941.

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Located on Old Union Road in the Birdell community, the Old Union School is abutted on three sides by a cemetery, which is not included in this nomination. There is a historic privy that is associated with the school, but not included within the National Register boundaries due to a portion of the cemetery that separates the two structures. A new white picket fence, purportedly a reproduction of a historic fence on this site, extends east and west from the northern corners of the school, and each terminates at a stone gatepost that enters into the cemetery (because only four feet of this fence on each side of the building is included within the NR boundaries, it is not counted as a noncontributing structure).

The Old Union School is now used as a community building.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1**Summary**

The Old Union School is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best example in the Birdell community of a one-room, wood-frame school building.

**Elaboration**

The first Old Union School was a hewn-log affair on the same site and, according to some accounts, was constructed prior to the Civil War. This building burned in 1910, and classes were held in the nearby two-room house of Mrs. Mattie Maxwell for three years. In 1913, the current building was erected by William C. Campbell, Jim and Frank Pettyjohn, and others. Although the school was built in area known as the Birdell community, Birdell is actually located about two miles southeast on U.S. Highway 62. The little village (nothing really remains) was named by Joseph Hufstedler for two of his daughters, Birdie and Ella.

Classes through the eighth grade were held in the one-room building until 1941 when the school was consolidated with the Sloan-Hendrix School District in Imboden. The daily routine was probably much the same as other one-room schools in Arkansas. Some accounts were given by former students in two different recent newspaper articles. According to Jennie Sue Holobaugh Crabtree, whose memories of attending the Old Union School date back to 1916, water was carried by the pupils in a drinking bucket from the well in Ed Wallis' yard. Apparently the existing outhouse had not been built "in the early days" of the school, and a cedar break served that purpose. She also remembers that the desks were of the type with the seat in the front and the writing desk at the back for the student behind. After the school consolidated, these desks were removed and benches were made for the building by Monroe Foster, Frank Pettyjohn, Jeff Hufstedler, and Ed Wallis. Mrs. Lucille Hufstedler began her education in the school in 1926 at the age of six. She doesn't recall any desks, but said ". . . we just sat on planks and wrote our lessons on a notebook that we held on our laps." Mrs. Hufstedler also recounts that the school term started on the first Monday of July and lasted until the second week in September when classes were dismissed so the students could pick cotton. School resumed in mid-November and lasted through March, when the children were given a vacation so they could help plant the crops.

Although the building was used primarily as a school building, it was also used for funerals because of the adjacent cemetery and as a temporary church. After 1941, the building was vacant except for Home Demonstration Extension Service meetings, the occasional club meeting, and school reunions. By 1991, despite infrequent maintenance efforts, the school was in poor condition. Intent on preserving the school as a tribute for their parents and ancestors who



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attended the school as well as for future generations, a committee, chaired by Jim Grissom, was formed to raise the necessary funds to rehabilitate the structure. By the fall of 1992 the work was completed, and the Old Union School is now used as a community building.

The Old Union School is representative of the simple, Plain Traditional construction techniques that were long practiced in rural Arkansas. The first white settlers in the Ozark plateau area of Randolph County utilized log construction for their residences and public buildings out of necessity, and the first Old Union School (no one is sure of the origin of the name) was no different in this regard. After it burned, the construction of the new school likewise reflected the common building practice of its time: balloon-frame construction of sawn 2" X 4" lumber sheathed with narrow weatherboard (sawn lumber had been available in the area for at least thirty years). This design was simple, functional, sturdy, and thus long-lived. Although schools of this type were once quite common, the Old Union School is the only extant one-room, wood-frame school building in that area of Randolph County. Its contemporaries, the one-room schools at Hubble Creek, Water Valley, Fairview, and Birdell (colored), have either been destroyed or have deteriorated beyond repair. Therefore, the Old Union School is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance.

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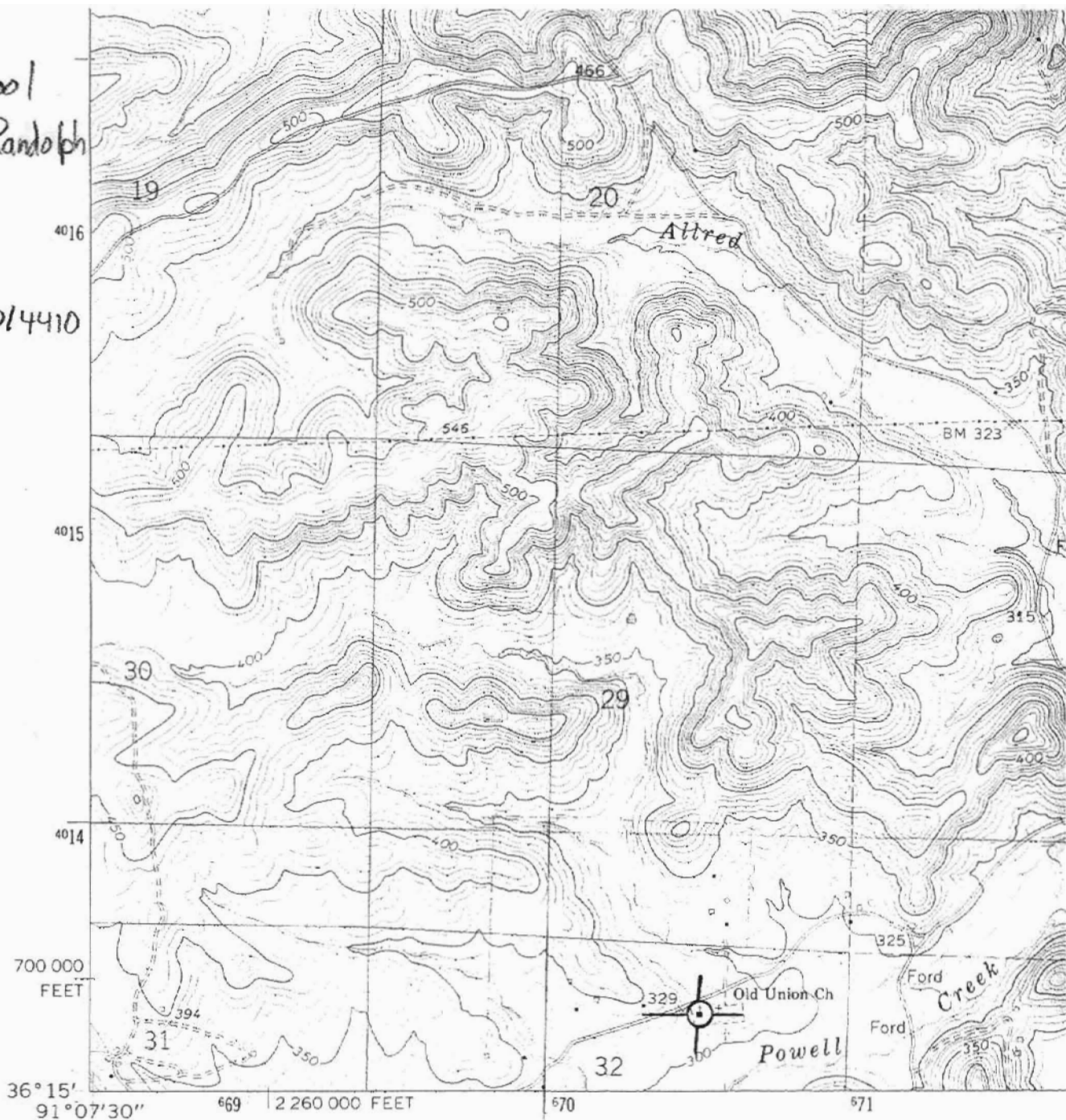
### Bibliography

Information supplied by Jim Grissom, February 1993.

McKamey, Pauline. "Old Union Schoolhouse," *The Ozark Journal* (Imboden). November 1, 1990.

Mitchell, Stan. "School built in 1913 is due to be restored," *Jonesboro Sun*. \_\_\_\_\_, 1992.

Old Union School  
 Birdell vic., Randolph  
 Co., Arkansas  
 ITM:  
 15/670520/4014410



(IMBODEN)  
 7756 II NW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

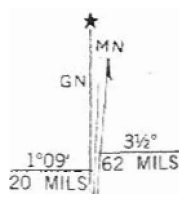
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1965. Field checked 1966

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, north zone  
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Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

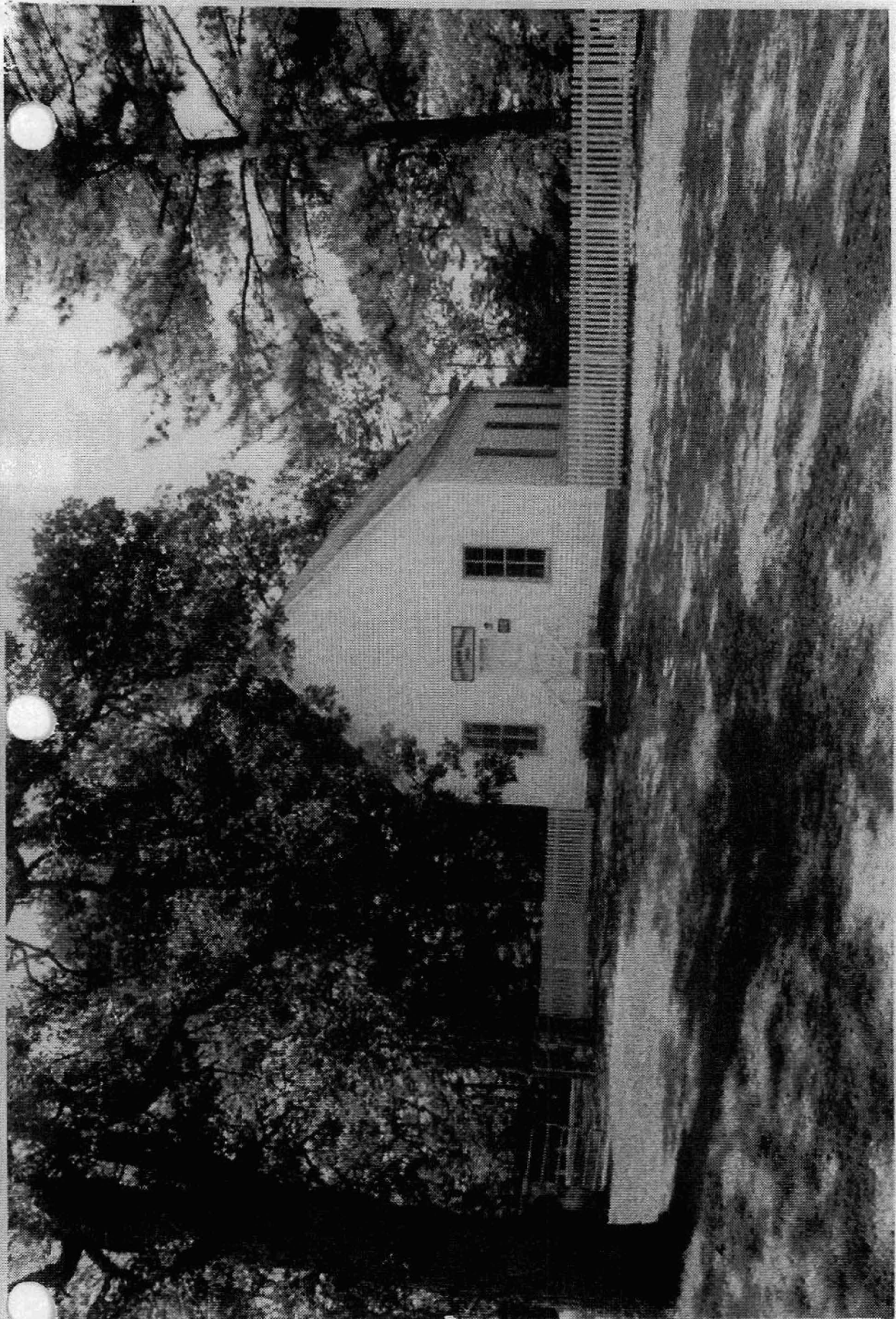
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Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1980. Map edited 1981. This information not field checked



UTM GRID AND 1981 MAGNETIC DECLINATION AT CENTER OF





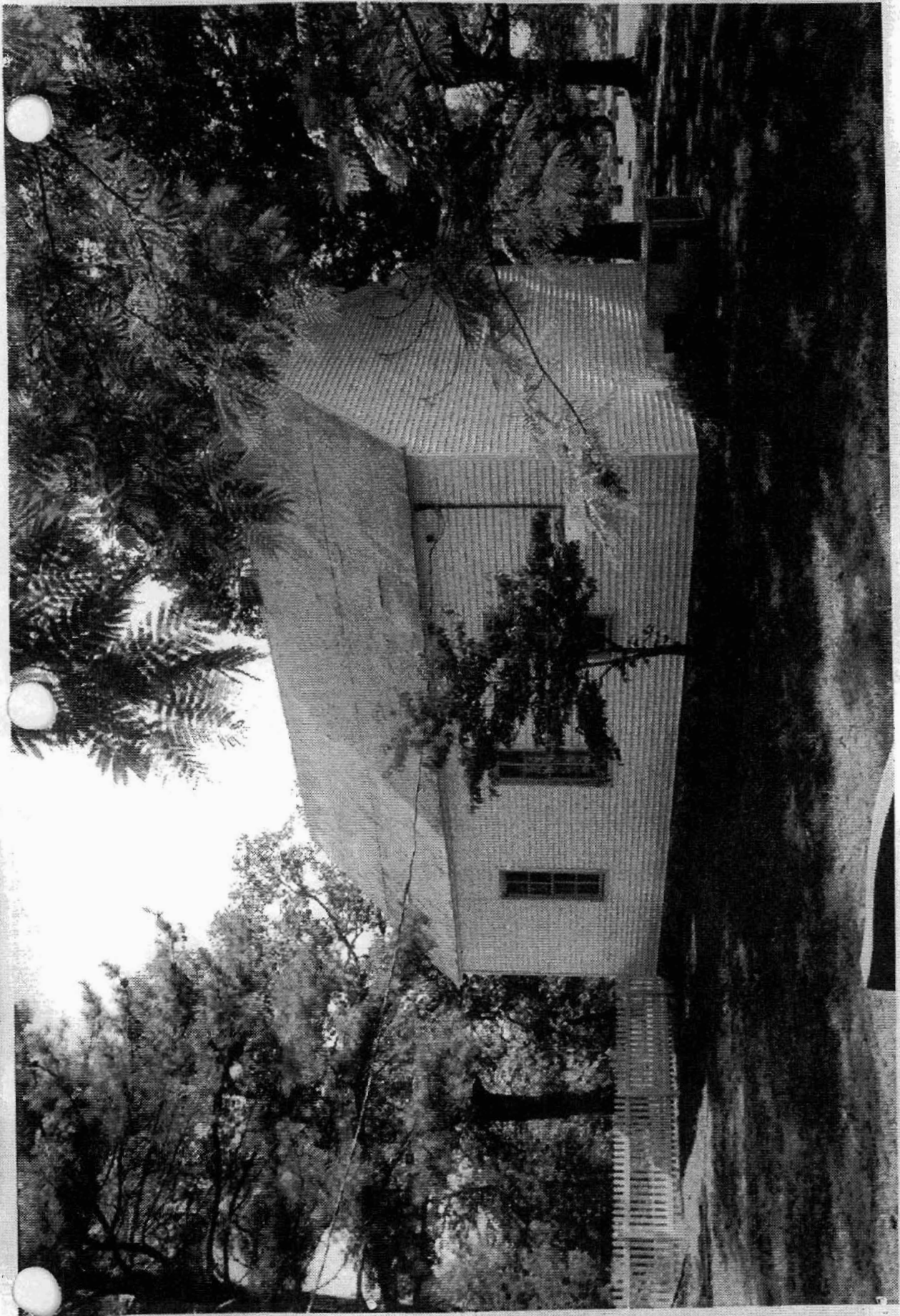
Old Union School 1

Randolph Co., Arkansas

Photograph by Patrick Zolner  
July 1993

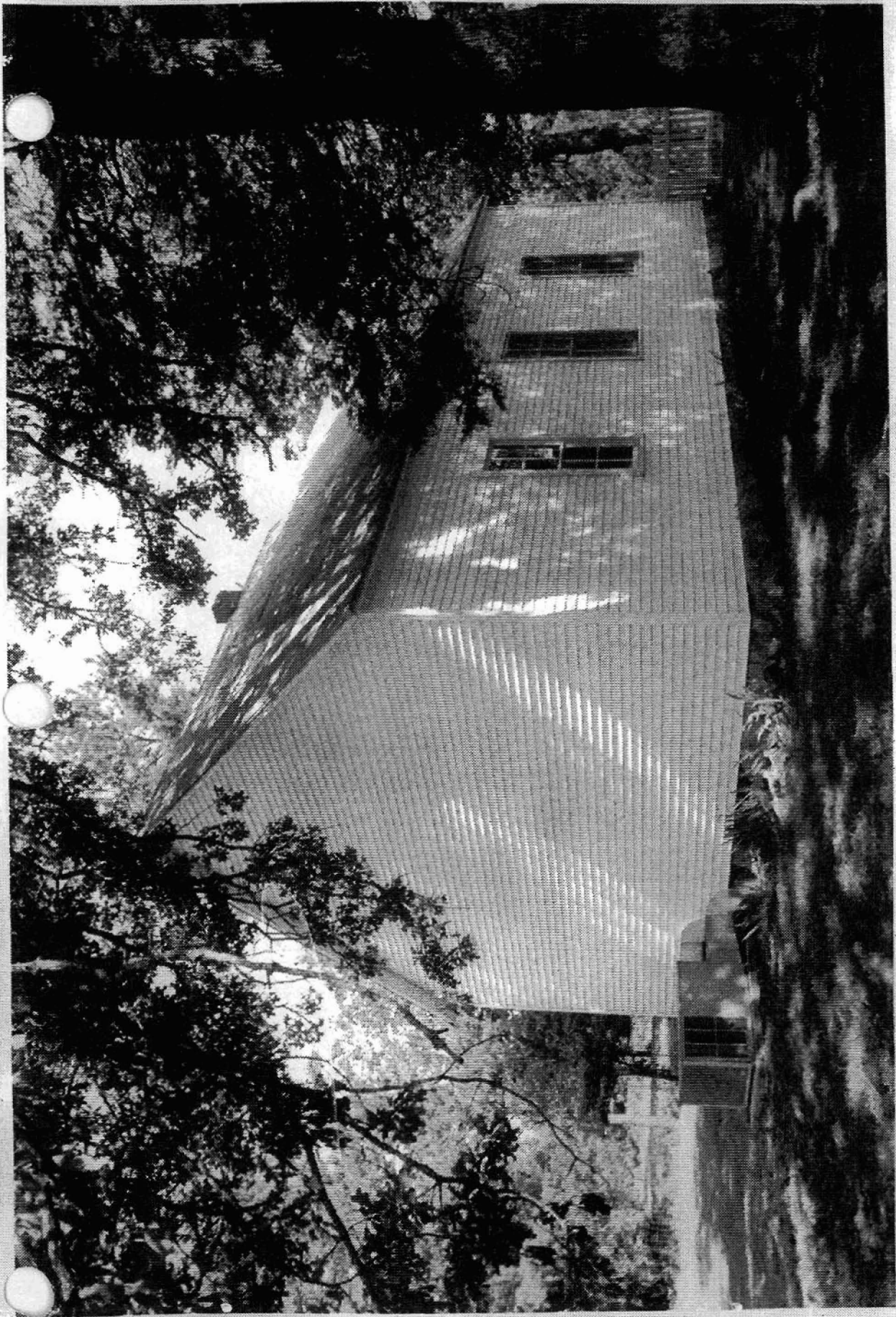
Negative on file at AHPP

Views from the north



Old Union School  
Randolph Co, Arkansas  
Photograph by Patrick Zolner  
July 1993  
Negative on fire at AHDP  
View from the southwest





Old Union Co. 1001

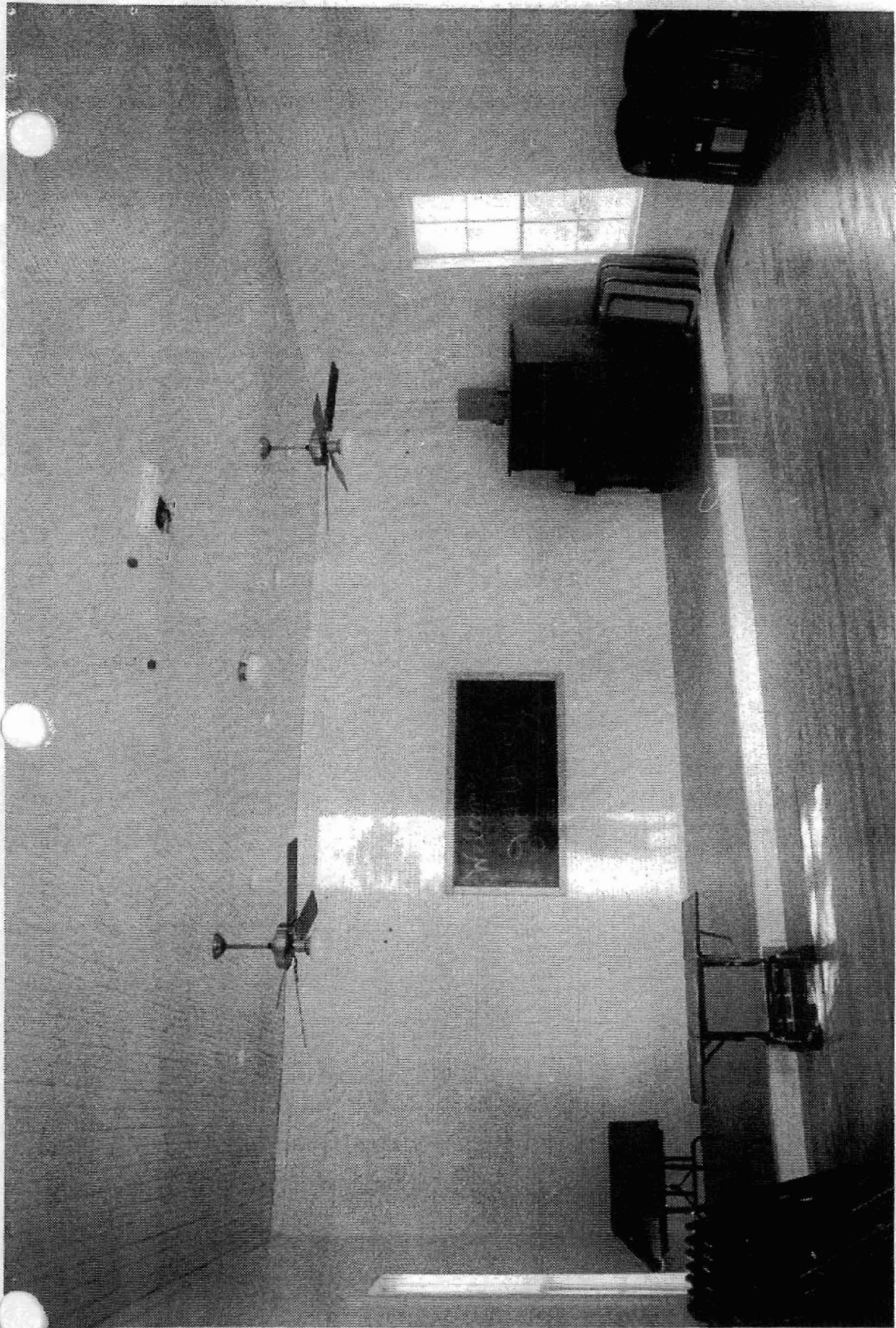
Randolph Co. Arkansas

Photograph by Patrick Zolner

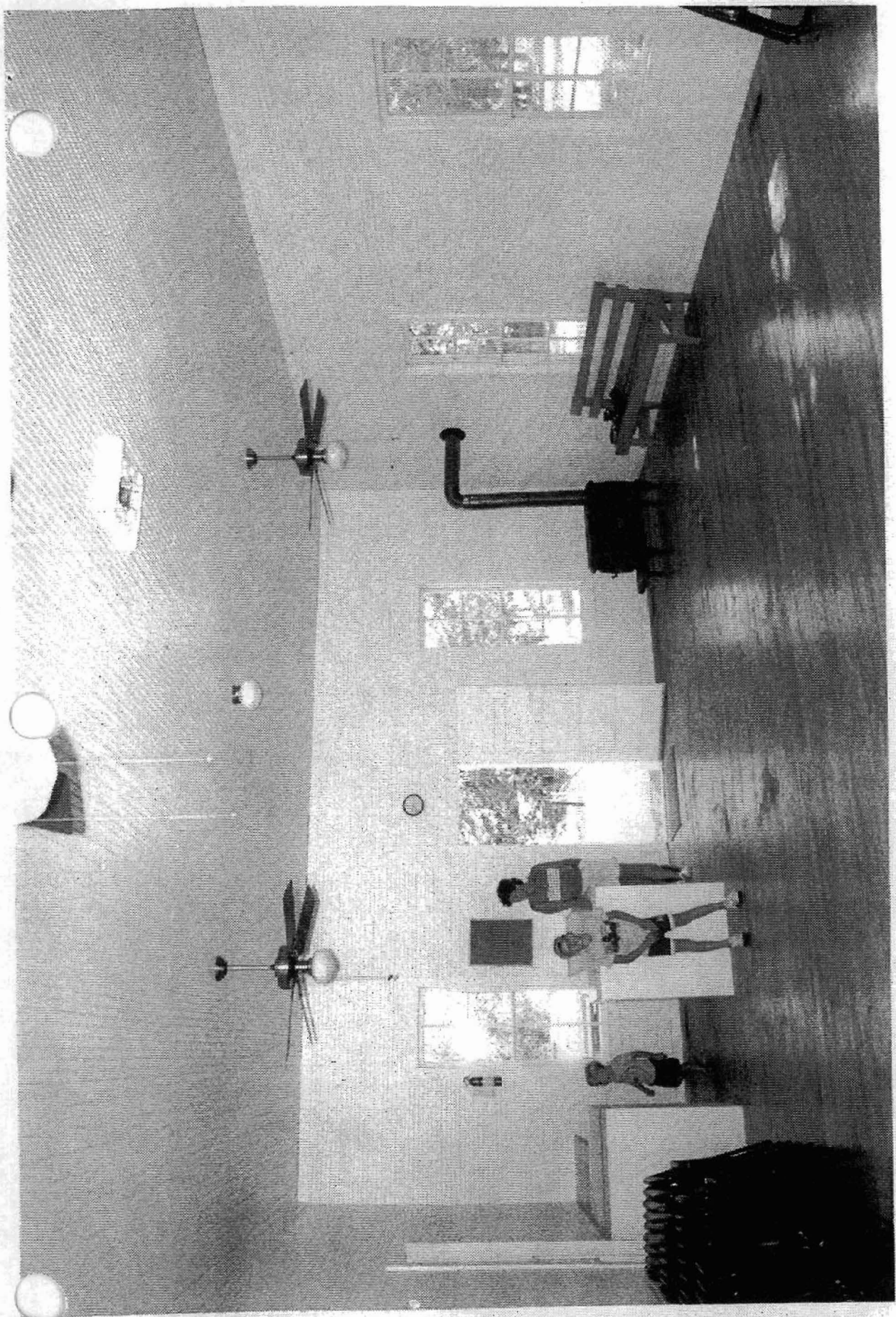
July 1943

Negative on file at AHPP

View from the southeast



Old Union School  
Randolph Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Patrick Zollner  
July 1993  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of the rear of interior  
room



Old Union School  
Randolph Co., Arkansas  
Photograph by Patrick Zollner  
July 1913  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of the front (or northward)  
of the interior.