

NR listed 6/5/91

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational 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 Pleasant Hill Methodist Church

other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street &amp; number Corner of Lawson Road and Lake Norrell Road

☐ not for publication N/A

city, town Pleasant Hill

☒ vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Saline

code

AR 125

zip code

72002

## 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.

Signature of certifying official

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

4-29-91

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)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Wood/Weatherboardroof Metal

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1**Summary**

The Pleasant Hill Methodist Church is a single story, wood frame church building constructed in 1894 for the Pleasant Hill community, located in the northern part of Saline County. This simple, gable roof building is of the simplified Greek Revival style that rural congregations had employed since the mid-nineteenth century for their houses of worship. The rectangular overall plan directly reflects the single room within. It is covered with a standing-seam metal roof, sheathed with weatherboarding, and supported by a combination of original stone piers and later concrete block piers.

**Elaboration**

The Pleasant Hill Methodist Church is a single-story, wood frame church building designed in the vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival style that was popular for such rural church buildings throughout Arkansas during the last half of the nineteenth century. Its rectangular plan contains a single room that serves as the sanctuary. Its gable roof is covered with a standing seam metal roof, its walls are sheathed with wood weatherboard, and it is supported upon a series of original stone and later concrete block piers.

The building is accessed via a single, central, double-leaf entry in the southern or front elevation. Though the original panelled doors have been replaced with modern metal panelled doors for security reasons, the original transom and entablature atop the entrance remains, even retaining some of its original, delicate dentil course. Otherwise, this gable end is blank. The gable end opposite, to the north, is lighted by a pair of two-over-two wood sash windows, placed symmetrically to either side of the rostrum within.

The eastern and western elevations are identical, each being relieved only by four symmetrically-placed two-over-two sash windows running the full length of the exterior walls.

Aside from the entrance entablature (mirrored by the even more simple entablatures atop the windows around the building), there are no exterior details of note.

The interior is remarkably intact. The original horizontal flush plank walls are intact throughout, as are the original, hand-finished pews and all the original sash. Of special note is the semi-circular altar rail that separates the rostrum from the remainder of the sanctuary. This rail, through its uneven top bevel and the rough though ultimately successful attempt to fashion rounds at each end, clearly bears the marks of the local craftsman who fashioned it.

The only alterations of note are the replacement of the original wood shingle roof with the metal roof (first done in 1930), the removal of the original central flue that vented the wood

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stove (which was replaced with two butane stoves in the relatively recent past), some carpeting of the celebratory spaces at the northern end of the sanctuary, and the installation of an acoustic tile ceiling within.

The Pleasant Hill Methodist Church is in excellent condition.

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## Summary

## Criterion C, local significance

The Pleasant Hill Methodist Church is eligible under Criterion C with local significance as the best and one of the last surviving examples of this simple, wood frame church type in this rural part of Saline County. Such modest, vernacular renditions of the Greek Revival style had been popular throughout the rural areas of Arkansas since the style became popular in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and examples could still be found throughout these areas up until the mid-twentieth century. Many of these are now gone or severely altered, a situation that only underscores the importance of such extant and relatively intact churches as the Pleasant Hill Methodist Church.

## Elaboration

Pleasant Hill was settled prior to the Civil War along what was known as the Middle Road that ran between Little Rock and Hot Springs. However, it was the quality of the bottomland around the North Fork of the Saline River that first drew settlers here, as it proved to be excellent crop land for the growth of cotton, corn, peanuts and hay. The agricultural focus of the Pleasant Hill community continued after the Civil War, and it remained a relatively dispersed community of farmsteads, most of which were farmed by their owners.

The Pleasant Hill Methodist Church was constructed in 1894 on land that had served this particular congregation since 1880. The Pleasant Hill Methodist Episcopal Church South was organized in that year, with this particular church being on the Oak Hill circuit. This congregation's first church building was a log structure of unrecorded plan and type; like so many such early buildings, it served the community as both church and school in the early days of the settlement. Apparently that structure stood on private land owned by neighbors, as it was not until 1893 that J.M. and Sarah T. Vaughn sold this land to the Methodist Episcopal Church South for the sum of \$45.00. One of the terms of that sale was that the original school house must be moved off the land, presumably so that a new church building could be constructed, the execution of which may have also been part of the understanding behind the sale of the property. A codicil to the deed stating that the old school house had indeed been moved satisfactorily was executed on February 26, 1894. The trustees were W.M. Mitchell, L.G. Grimmer and J.T. Grimmer.

The current church building was built by Walter Overhault with the assistance of many of the men of the Pleasant Hill community. Little information on Overhault has survived, except that he was obviously a competent carpenter as well as the postmaster at nearby Tatumville. It is noteworthy that, according to the oral tradition, he was assisted by neighbors of various religious affiliations, a fact that is easily understood when one considers that churches of any denomination were not plentiful in such rural areas. While denominational distinctions were

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strictly drawn in theory, their observance was less vigilant and subject to compromise due to the limitations imposed by rural living.

Nearby native materials were used throughout, such as creek stones for the original foundation piers and yellow pine for the framing and sheathing of the structure itself. Walnut was selected for the altar or communion rail, supported by pine balusters.

As was common for such rural churches, the Pleasant Hill Methodist Church, then as now, served more than the community's spiritual needs. Located as it was at the intersection of two principal local roads, it provided a natural gathering place for local meetings and community events. Noteworthy among them is the reunions that have taken place here over the years. In fact, to this day the former residents of the Pleasant Hill community and their descendants return here to this church on the third Sunday in July every year to attend services and hold a day-long reunion, complete with home cooking and reminiscence.

The Pleasant Hill Methodist Church retains all the principal features that typify rural, vernacular Greek Revival churches of the last half of the nineteenth century. Its simplified entrance entablature and window crowns, interior horizontal plank walls and tall, gable roof are all signature features of this architectural type. However, in addition, this church features such distinctive features as the hand-made pews and communion rail within. For all these reasons, the Pleasant Hill Methodist Church is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C with local significance.

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**Bibliography**

Dunnahoo, Pat, "90-Year-Old Church to Hold Annual Homecoming," *Arkansas Gazette*, July 19, 1970, p. 5E.

"Pleasant Hill Reaches Century," *The Benton Courier*, Tuesday Evening, July 22, 1980, p. 5.

*Warranty Deed*, Saline County, Arkansas, Book "O", p. 506.

**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  
1894

Significant Dates  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Overhault, Walter

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 15 535215 3839250  
Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Beginning at the point formed by the intersection of the northern edge of Lake Norrell Road with a perpendicular line running along the western elevation of the church, 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 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 southerly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the northern edge of ☐ See continuation sheet Lake Norrell Road; thence proceed westerly 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 4/8/91

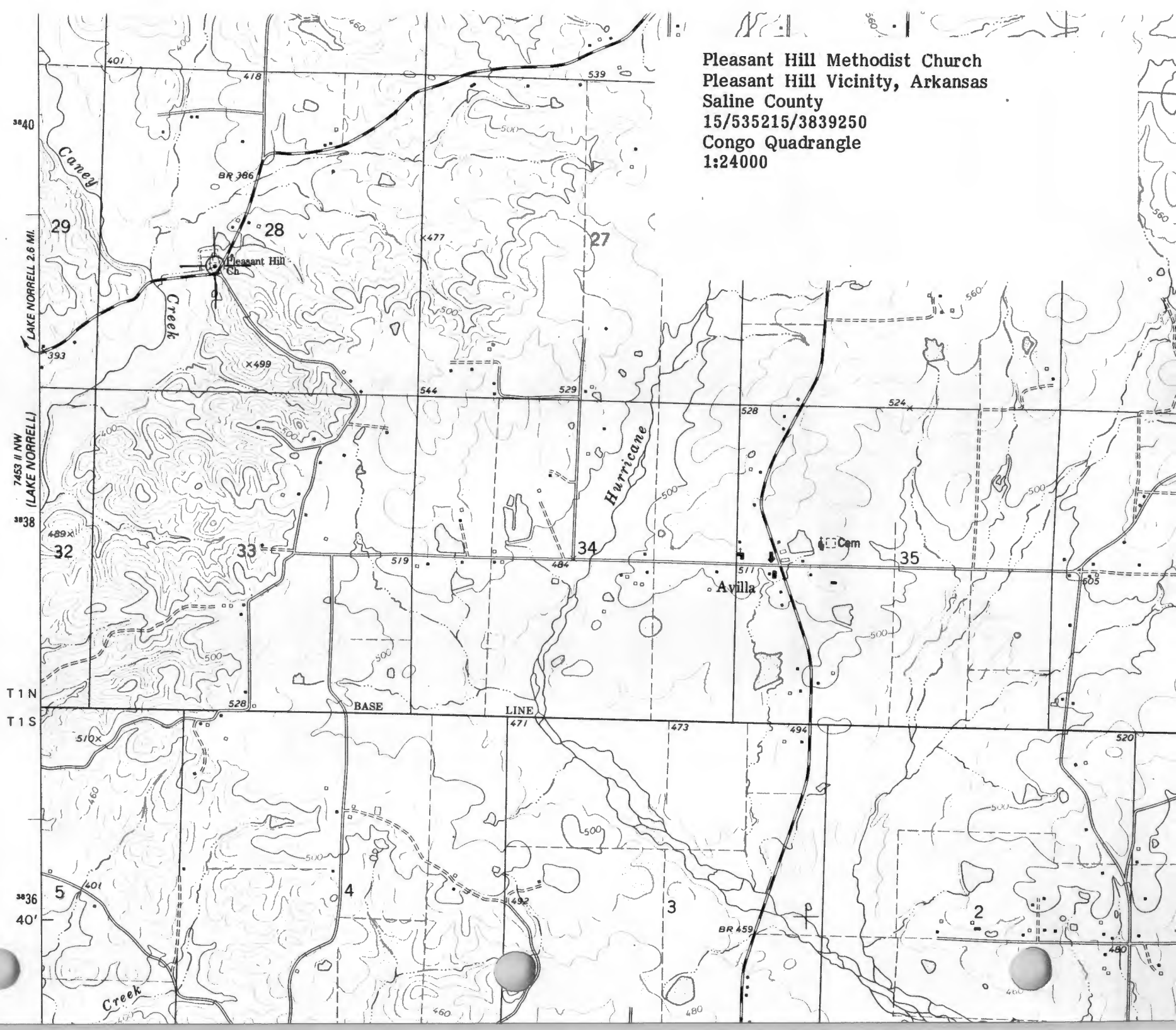
street & number 225 East Markham, Suite 300

telephone (501) 324-9346

city or town Little Rock

state Arkansas zip code 72201

Pleasant Hill Methodist Church  
Pleasant Hill Vicinity, Arkansas  
Saline County  
15/535215/3839250  
Congo Quadrangle  
1:24000





PLEASANT HILL METHODIST CHURCH  
PLEASANT HILL, ALABAMA  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY T. ZOLLNER  
JANUARY, 1991  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ANPP  
VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST



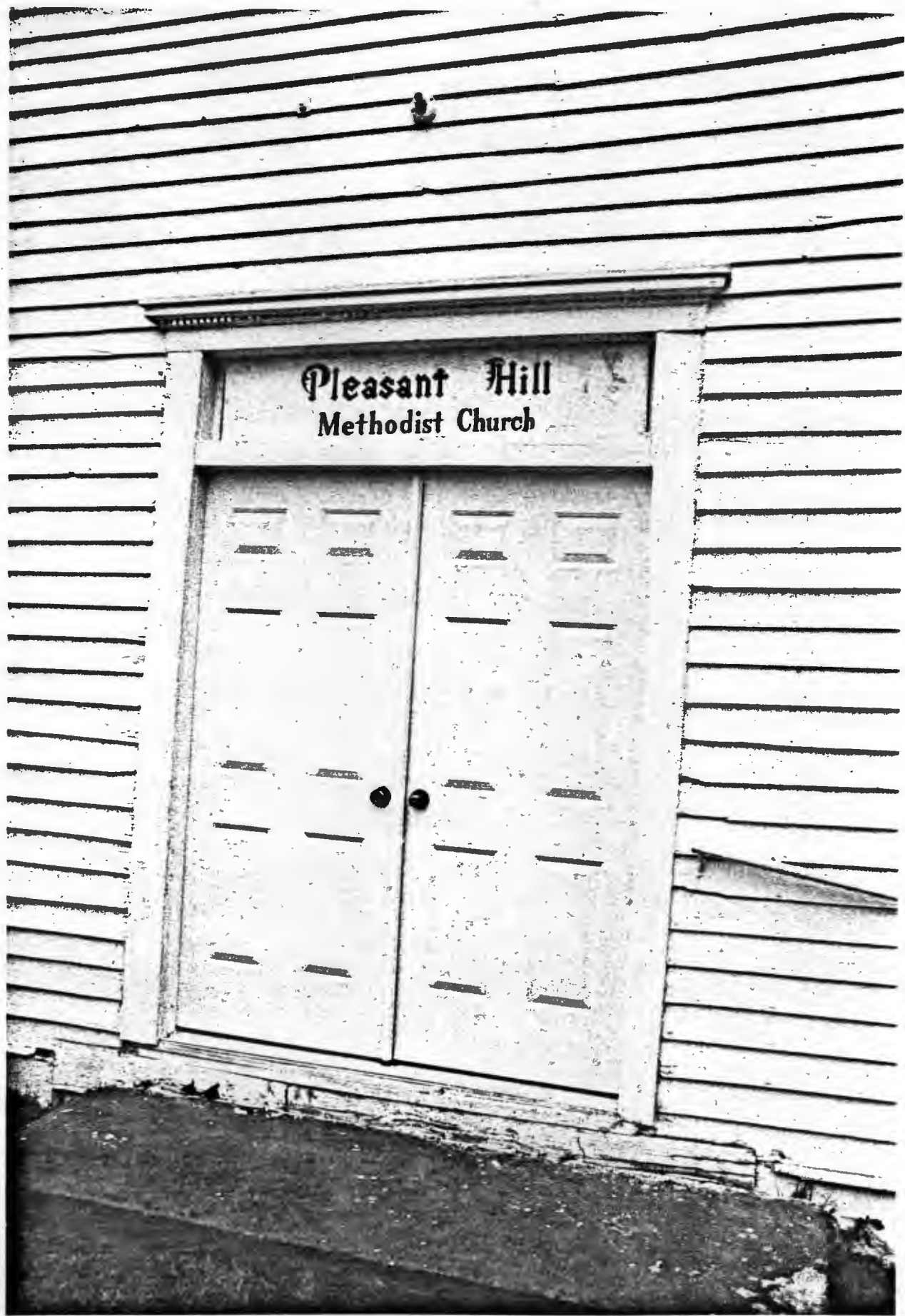


PLEASANT HILL METHODIST CHURCH  
PLEASANT HILL, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER  
JANUARY, 1991  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT APP  
VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST



PLEASANT HILL METHODIST CHURCH  
PLEASANT HILL, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY D. DOLLNER  
JANUARY, 1991  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ARPP  
VIEW FROM NORTHWEST

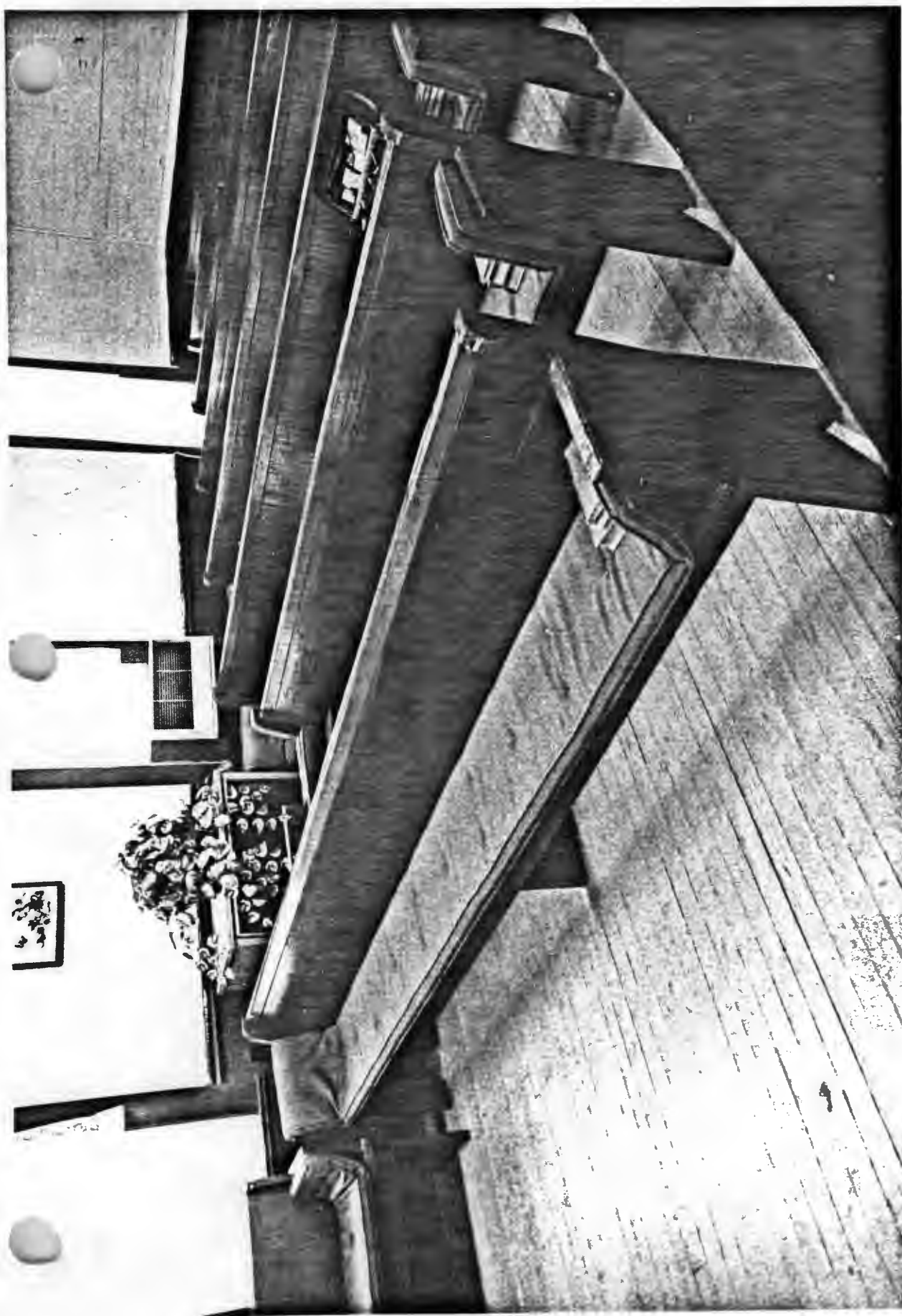




PRESENT THE METHODIST CHURCH  
TO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS  
RECORDED BY J. J. JOHNSON  
JANUARY, 1891  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT ARPP  
FRONT DOOR DETAIL



JEFFERSON HILL METHODIST CHURCH  
JEFFERSON HILL, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER  
JANUARY, 1991  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW OF INTERIOR



PLEASANT HILL METHODIST CHURCH  
PLEASANT HILL, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER  
JANUARY, 1991  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT APP  
P&A DETAIL





PLEASANT HILL METHODIST CHURCH  
PLEASANT HILL, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER  
JANUARY, 1991  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT APP  
VIEW OF INTERIOR