

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Registration FormRECEIVED  
MAY 17 1990

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions and 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 Presbyterian Church  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number State Highway 38 ☐ not for publication N/A  
city, town Des Arc ☐ vicinity N/A  
state Arkansas code AR county Prairie code 117 zip code 72040

## 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	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/ANumber 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

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:)

Entered in the  
National Register

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)

OTHER: Vernacular/ Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

☒ See continuation sheet

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1**Summary**

The First Presbyterian Church is a single story, structural brick ecclesiastical building designed in a vernacular interpretation of the Colonial Revival style. It is fenestrated with rectangular openings throughout and is crowned by a central, louvered wood belfry placed toward the front of the building, which itself is dominated by a full-height Classical portico.

**Elaboration**

The First Presbyterian Church is a single story, structural brick ecclesiastical building designed in a vernacular interpretation of the Colonial Revival style. Its 'H'-shaped plan consists of a central recessed porch beneath the gable roof wood portico on its southern elevation, flanked by symmetrical vestibules; a rectangular sanctuary in the middle of the plan; and a rear function room/kitchen/office area which projects beyond the sanctuary walls on both sides. The flat, built-up tar roof is set behind a brick parapet and interrupted only by the louvered wood belfry, which is set upon a square platform and capped with a short, Colonial copper roof. The walls are built from load-bearing brick and the entire structure is supported upon a continuous concrete foundation.

The southern or front facade is divided into three principle bays: the recessed porch with its full-height Classical wood portico and the two projecting vestibule wings to either side. The pedimented wood portico is supported by four symmetrically-placed round wood Doric columns and is ornamented with a dentil course beneath and within the pediment. The center of the wood tympanum features an oculus decorated with four flaring keystones and filled with geometric tracery. The recessed porch beneath is fenestrated with two rectangular stained glass windows to either side of a horizontal rectangular stained glass window, placed slightly higher. The two entrances to the church punctuate the side walls of the recessed porch and are each surmounted by a two-pane transom. The walls of the vestibule are lighted by a central, three-pane fixed wood and stained glass window above a one-over-one wood and stained glass window, all set into a slightly recessed brick panel. The brick parapet above rises above a dentillated wood cornice, both of which run around all four elevations of the building.

The eastern and western elevations are identical. The projecting vestibule bay to the south echoes the longer though slightly lower projecting function room/kitchen/office space bay to the north, with the sanctuary wall between. The vestibule bay is lighted by a central three-pane fixed wood and stained glass window above a one-over-one wood and stained glass window, all set into a slightly recessed brick panel. The northern projecting bay is lighted by three symmetrically-placed one-over-one wood windows and is accessed by a single-leaf door in the southern wall. The sanctuary wall between is lighted by three stained glass windows, each a large, tri-partite windows with a solid transom window above. The northern or rear

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

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elevation is punctuated only by six symmetrically-placed one-over-one wood windows. All of the windows are enlivened by decorative flared lintel stones, painted white; otherwise, there is no other exterior ornament.

The interior features the original woodwork throughout, including the doors, trim, organ case, pulpit, pews and rolling doors at the rear of the sanctuary to separate it from the offices and function rooms at the rear of the church. Also original is the pressed tin ceiling and all the hardware on the rolling doors, both functional and decorative. The function rooms at the rear, though more simply appointed, retain most of their original finishes, including the wainscoted walls, painted white. By far the most glorious features of the interior, however, are the original stained glass windows in the sanctuary. There are nine windows in all: the three smaller windows behind the pulpit and the three large windows in each lateral wall of the sanctuary. As they are placed in the eastern and western walls of the sanctuary, they catch the sunlight during all hours of the day, and lend the interior a dark, rich hue.

The stained glass currently in the vestibule and rear function room windows may have been replaced in the past, as it is rather different in style from that of the sanctuary; however, these rooms were always of a more functional nature, and they could have been outfitted originally with less expensive stained glass. Otherwise, the church is virtually unaltered.



## 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

1912

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Keedy, J.D.

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

Acres of property Less than one

### UTM References

A 1 5 6 3 7 1 2 0 3 8 7 1 3 6 0

Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

☒ See continuation sheet

### Boundary Justification

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

☐ See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date April 4, 1990

street & number 225 East Markham, Suite 300 telephone (501) 371-2763

city or town Little Rock state Arkansas zip code 72201

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 1**Summary**

Criterion C, statewide significance

The First Presbyterian Church, constructed during the period 1912-1922, is noteworthy both for being the best extant example in the city of Des Arc of a Colonial Revival church building and for containing one of the finest original collections of stained glass windows in the state.

**Elaboration**

The congregation which this building now serves traces its origins to the period between 1842 and 1849, when the first deed to the property was recorded. This deed reveals that the land on which the church is sited was given by George C. Watkins, one of Des Arc's earliest known settlers, to Daniel Lewis Gray, pastor, and Samuel Carr, elder, and to their successors in trust for the Presbyterian Church. The present building is actually the third to serve this congregation, though all were on this same site. A small, wood frame building was the first Presbyterian church; however, the congregation outgrew this by 1883, whereupon a larger, brick structure was erected on the same site and the frame building moved to a corner across the street. This structure burned in a fire twenty-five years later, in 1908, and though most of the furnishings were saved, the building itself was a total loss. The congregation worshiped in the courthouse, the city hall and the old school building until plans were made to erect a new church under the leadership of Rev. E.C. Bingham, who also served as chairman of the building committee. The main auditorium or sanctuary of the church was completed in 1912, at a cost of about \$5,000; the Sunday school rooms (as they were called) to the rear were not completed until several years later, though they had always been part of the original construction plans. The church was formally dedicated on Christmas Eve, 1922.

It is widely believed that the First Presbyterian Church, as it appears today, was the result of the design of a Mr. J.D. Keedy, the contractor who built the church. It is thought that this attribution is quite probable given the rather simple and unornamented handling of the Colonial Revival style. The stained glass windows in the sanctuary were made in Italy, though the specific studio is not known, and were fabricated for installation in this church. All of the windows were donated by members of the congregation, which explains the varying degrees of figural representation: those with more money could afford the more expensive narrative scenes, while those with less money could afford only the more decorative and symbolic windows. Yet the effect on the interior light of the sanctuary is uniform, largely due to the golden hue which is common to all the windows. The figural scenes are remarkable for their Pre-Raphaelite softening of the human form and idealization of facial features to a point where line is minimized, and subtle transitions in color and hue are the primary tools for rendering three-dimensional form. Though the Pre-Raphaelite movement in Europe had largely dissipated by the first decade of the twentieth century, its popularity lingered in the United States, and was reflected in the work of such graphic artists and illustrators as Maxfield Parrish.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

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Obviously, certain Italian stained glass fabricators were still familiar with this style in the first decade of the twentieth century and American patrons were still demanding it. Needless to say, the fact that such artifacts were installed in a church in Des Arc renders this church a virtual reliquary; when considered with the quality of the architectural design throughout, the First Presbyterian Church stands as a structure of obvious architectural significance.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

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**Bibliography**

Davis, Rev. Roy L., *Centennial History of Presbyterianism (U.S.) in Arkansas, 1954.*

Goodspeeds' *History of Eastern Arkansas*, (1890).

Smith, Rita, "Des Arc Churches - Our Heritage", *White River Journal*, November 2, 1978.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of the line formed by the northern edge of Main Street and the line formed by the western edge of 5th Street, proceed northerly along said line to the point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the northern or rear elevation of the church; thence proceed westerly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with a perpendicular line running along the western elevation of the church; thence proceed southerly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with the northern edge of Main Street; thence proceed easterly to the point of beginning, comprising in all less than one acre.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY First Presbyterian Church  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Prairie

DATE RECEIVED: 5/17/90 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/29/90  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/14/90 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/01/90  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 90000897

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6/14/90 DATE

Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

---

CLASSIFICATION

\_\_\_\_count      \_\_\_\_resource type

---

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

---

FUNCTION

\_\_\_\_historic      \_\_\_\_current

---

DESCRIPTION

\_\_\_\_architectural classification  
\_\_\_\_materials  
\_\_\_\_descriptive text

---

SIGNIFICANCE

Period      Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

\_\_\_\_summary paragraph  
\_\_\_\_completeness  
\_\_\_\_clarity  
\_\_\_\_applicable criteria  
\_\_\_\_justification of areas checked  
\_\_\_\_relating significance to the resource  
\_\_\_\_context  
\_\_\_\_relationship of integrity to significance  
\_\_\_\_justification of exception  
\_\_\_\_other

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

\_\_\_\_acreage      \_\_\_\_verbal boundary description  
\_\_\_\_UTMs      \_\_\_\_boundary justification

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

\_\_\_\_sketch maps    \_\_\_\_USGS maps    \_\_\_\_photographs    \_\_\_\_presentation

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OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST

Pratt C





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST

Print C









FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW FROM EAST

Pratt W





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
PORTICO DETAIL

Prunice







FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS

Printed

PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
BELTRY DETAIL





A black and white photograph of a brick building's exterior. The central feature is a rectangular window with a white frame. The window is filled with a dark, patterned glass design. In the center of the window, the words "PRESBYTERIAN" and "CHURCH" are inscribed in a stylized, arched font. The brickwork is made of dark bricks with light-colored mortar. Above the window, there are two decorative elements: a central rectangular panel with a brick pattern and two triangular panels on either side. The overall image has a vintage, slightly grainy quality.

PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
STAINED GLASS WINDOW DETAIL

Proven ©





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW OF SANCTUARY

Pratt Co





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989  
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
VIEW OF SANCTUARY

Pratt C



FATHER



BETHLE



MOTHER



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS

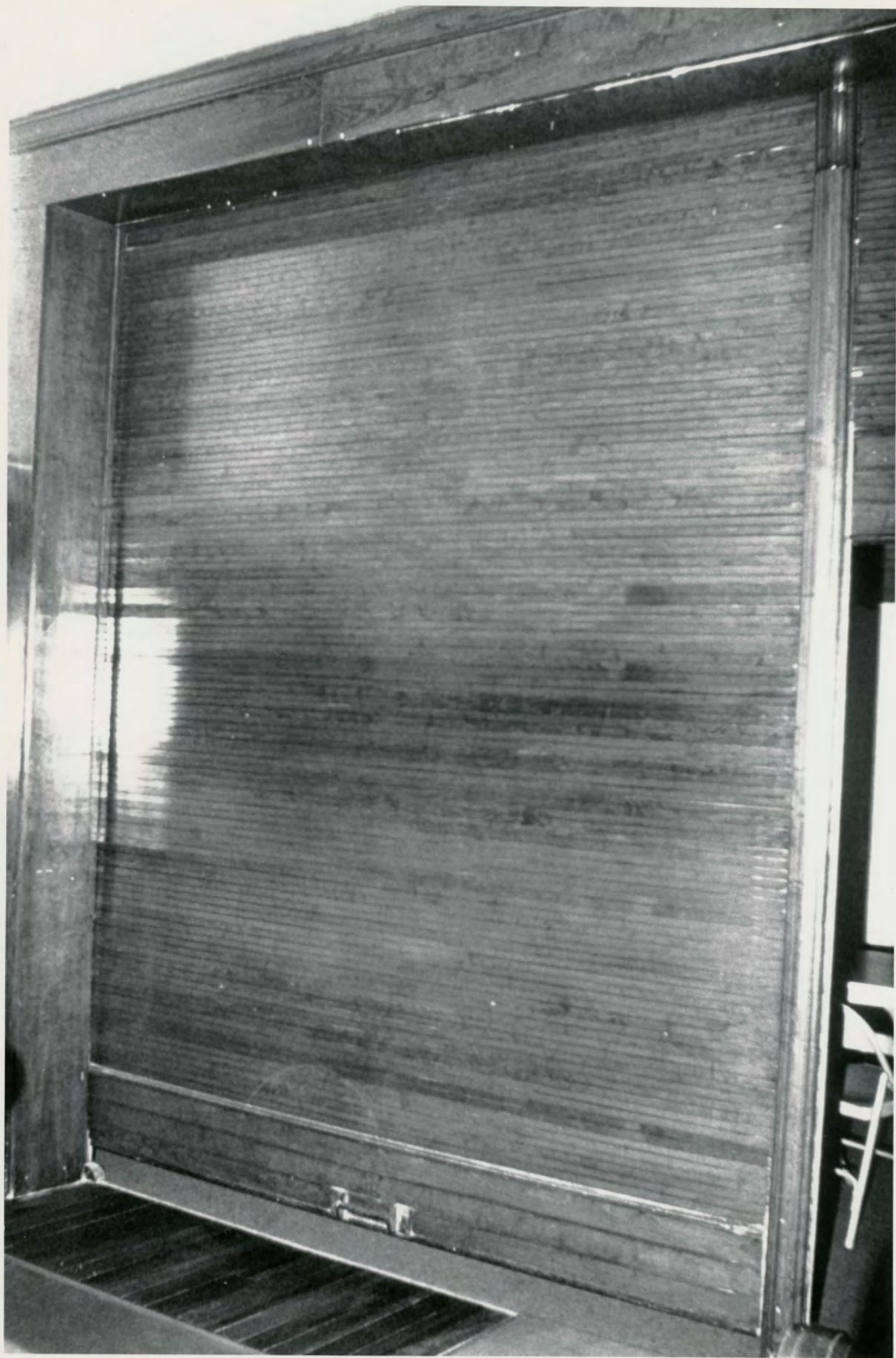
Pratt Co.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP

DETAIL OF STAINED GLASS WINDOW





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS

Primer Co

PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
ROLLING DIVIDER DETAIL





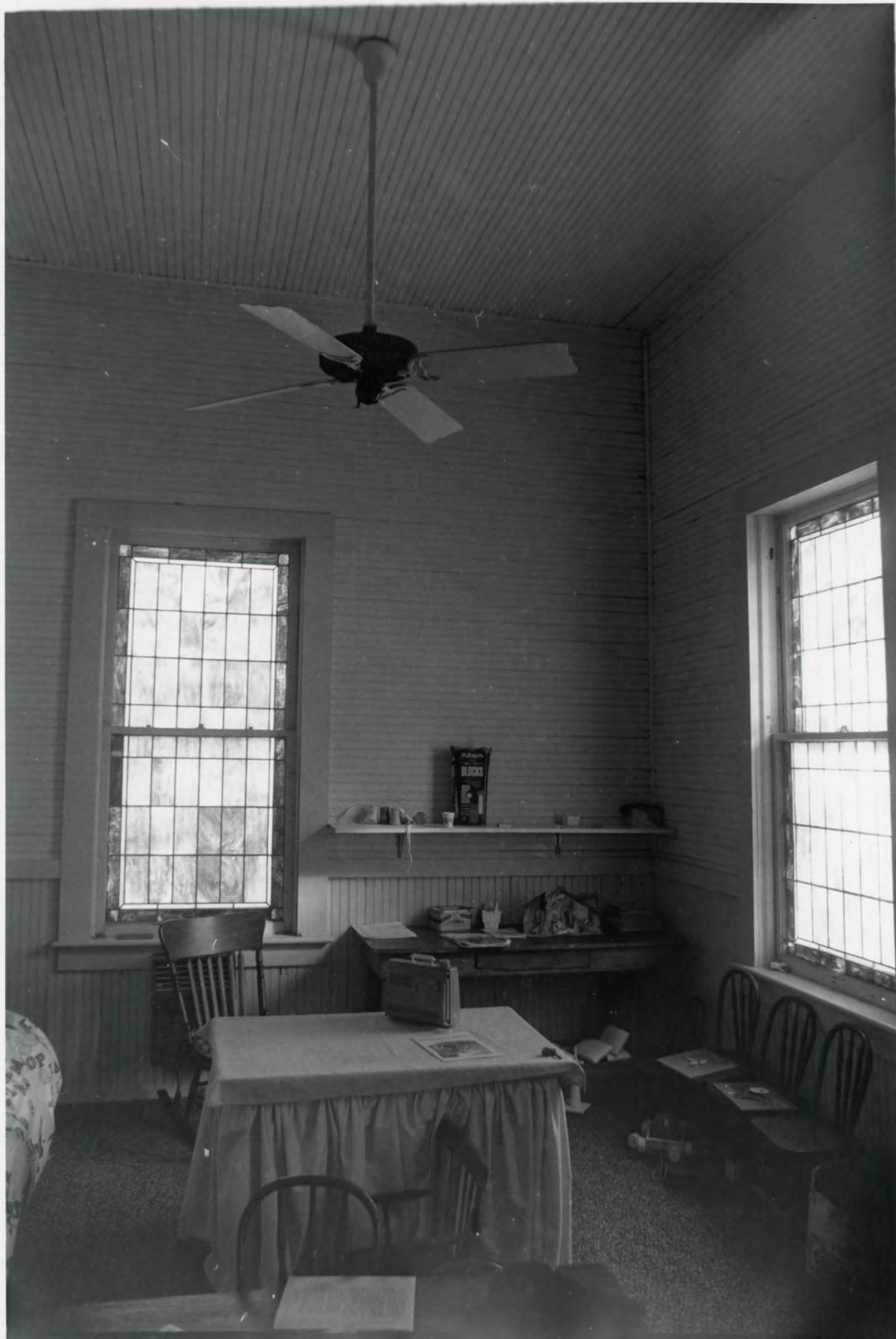


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS

Pratt Co

PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989

NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
DETAIL OF INTERIOR DOORS



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DES ARC, ARKANSAS  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY K. STORY  
OCTOBER, 1989

Pratt ©

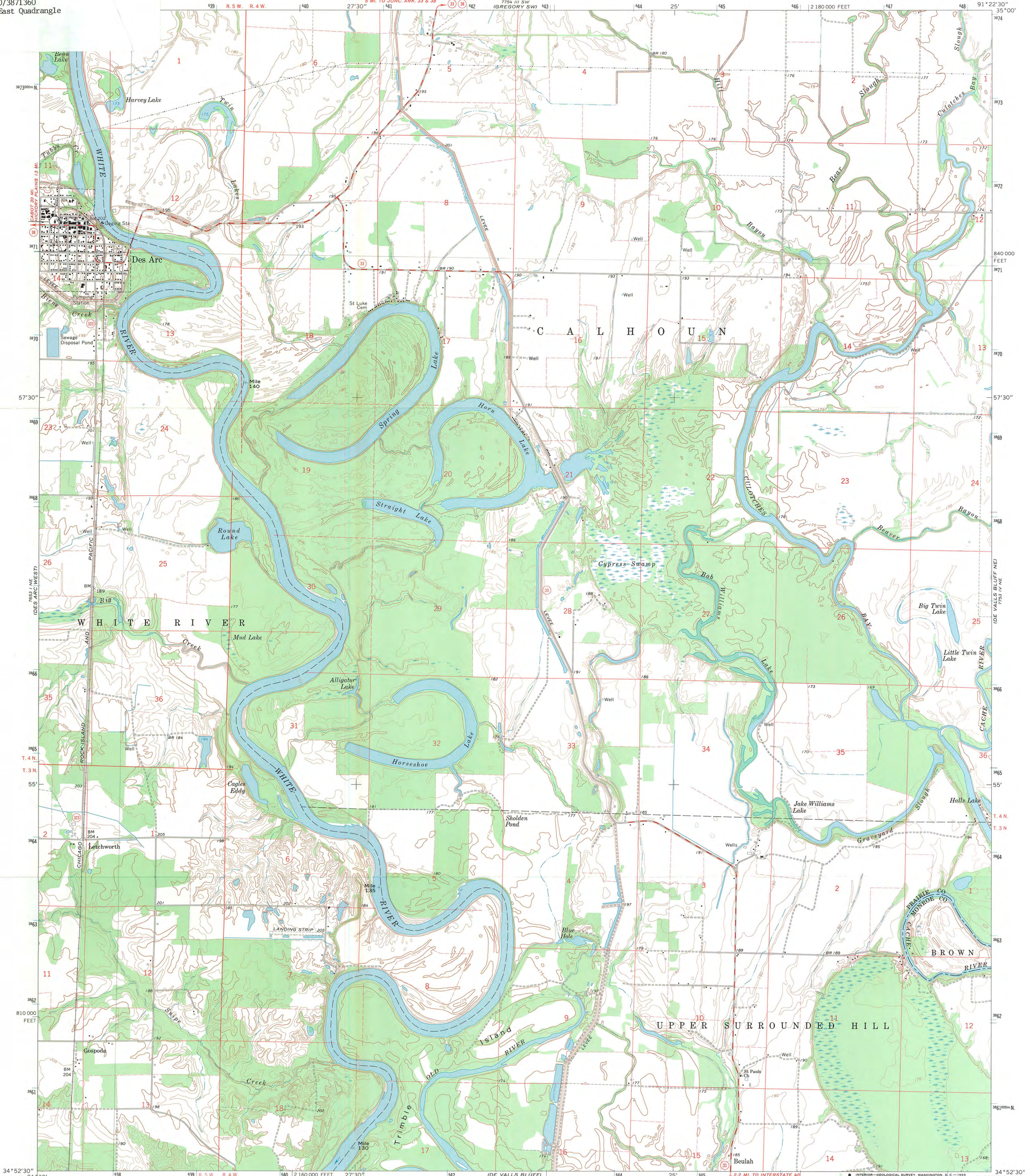
NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP  
KITCHEN INTERIOR



First Presbyterian Church  
Des Arc, Arkansas  
Prairie County  
15/637120/3871360  
Des Arc East Quadrangle  
1:24000

DES ARC EAST QUADRANGLE  
ARKANSAS  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
NW/4 DE VALLS BLUFF 15' QUADRANGLE

7754 IV SE  
(COTTON PLANT)



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1968  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 15, shown in blue  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

UTM GRID AND 1968 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000  
CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242  
AND BY THE ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Medium-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
Unimproved dirt ———  
State Route ———

DES ARC EAST, ARK.  
NW/4 DE VALLS BLUFF 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3452.5—W9122.5/7.5  
1968  
AMS 7753 IV NW—SERIES V884





ARKANSAS  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION  
PROGRAM

6-00000000  
MAY 17 1990

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

May 4, 1990

Carol D. Shull  
Chief of Registration  
United States Department of the Interior  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1100 "L" Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

RE: First Presbyterian Church - Des Arc, Arkansas

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the nomination of the above referenced property. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathy Buford  
State Historic Preservation Officer

CB:dg

Enclosures

