CITY, TOWN

PH0506893

DATA SHEET

STATE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 1 4 1977

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	_INDUSTRIAL	_TRANSPORTATION	
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OWNER OF PROPERTY				
OWNER OF TROILETT				
NAME				
Old Bethel Methodist Restorati	on Foundation; Landi	s Smith, Trustee		
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Route 1		STATE		
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CONDITION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Bethel Methodist Church is a Southern rural church similar in design and construction to many country churches which once dotted the southern landscape. With the advent of centralization, many of the structures have been left abandoned to decay. Bethel Methodist has been not only physically maintained, but is today still functioning as a religious institution. It is, therefore, a prime example of a past genre of Southern building.

The 1901 structure is a 20' x 40' rectangle with 6" pine siding. The entrance is marked only by a set of double doors. Sides are divided into four bays. The sanctuary end is marked by three irregular spaced openings. The roof is a tin gable. On the interior the ceiling and wall surfaces are finished in beaded pine siding. The ceiling is cove-like in configuration. Carpets cover pine plank flooring. Furnishings are simple with a storey and Clark reed organ and wooden pews.

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PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	X RELIGION
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1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
1800-1899	COMMERCE	_EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	_TRANSPORTATION
<u>X</u> 1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Old Bethel Methodist Church and School Building, located at the old Finch Community, typifies the simple, rural vernacular public building that was built before or just after the turn of the century in Arkansas. The history of this building illustrates well the history of the small community of Finch, as well as the history of most small rural communities in Arkansas. It is significant both architecturally and historically as the sole visual reminder of a part of Greene County's history, which is rapidly being forgotten.

The original Bethel Methodist Church was constructed in 1880, a small, one-story, white frame church. In 1900, a storm destroyed this building and in 1901 an almost identical building replaced the original structure. George Russell, a local carpenter, built the building using native materials of cypress and pine. It measures 20 feet by 40 feet and has a high pitched roof covered by tin. Exterior walls are covered with six inch beveled pine siding, while interior walls and ceiling are beaded pine wall board. Adjacent to it is a cemetery that dates to 1886.

Primarily a Methodist Church, Old Bethel also served duty as a school for the Finch Community until 1926. Finch once was a thriving farming community, but soon after the first World War, Finch met the same fate as many other rural Arkansas communities. People left the small communities to settle in nearby towns. A consolidation of the Finch School District #57 into the Walcott School District ended the educational service of Old Bethel. However, it had been an illustrious career, culminating in the production of five doctors and several other locally prominent persons.

Near the same time, the Methodist Church ceased having services in the building also. The building was used irregularly until 1941 when it was permanently vacated.

The years of emptiness and neglect seriously deteriorated Old Bethel. In 1973, the building was in poor condition with missing windows, rotted flooring and part of the west elevation missing.

A concerned group, many of whom had worshipped or attended school in the building or had family in the adjacent cemetery, began restoration of the structure. Today, Old Bethel looks much as it did at its completion in 1901. It is used for church services when the weather is mild, and has become a source of great community pride.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Paragould Daily Press, May, 1974; 6/28/77

"Old Bethel Methodist Church & Country School." Article on file at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

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Form No. 10-300a (Hev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED

NOV 1 4 1977

DATE ENTERED

APR 1 9 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE 1

Old Bethel Methodist Church is one of the few historic buildings which has survived in Greene County. As such, it is significant as a link with the rural heritage of Greene County which contributed heavily to Greene County's history. Architecturally, it is an excellent example of a simple, frame one-room church and school building of vernacular styling. Historically, Old Bethel illustrates the story of the decline of rural Arkansas farming communities just after the turn of the century. Located in a beautiful, natural setting of two acres with old pine trees framing it, Old Bethel Church and cemetery present a serene and graceful appearance to the world.

Property Old Bethel Methodist Church	GREENE CO.
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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service WASO No. 7



Form No. 10-301a (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 1 4 1977

DATE ENTERED

APR 1 9 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS

TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Bethel Methodist Church & School

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

X VICINITY OF

COUNTY Greene STATE

Arkansas

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

Finch

PHOTO CREDIT BO

Bob Dunn

DATE OF PHOTO 1977

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

1

View of north elevation

INT: 2983-75

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Form No. 10-301a (Rev. 10-74)

> UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY RECEIVED DV 1 4 1977 DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

NAME

HISTORIC

Bethel Methodist Church & School

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Finch

X_VICINITY OF

COUNTY Greene

STATE Arkansas

PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Bob Dunn

DATE OF PHOTO 1977

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

IDENTIFICATION

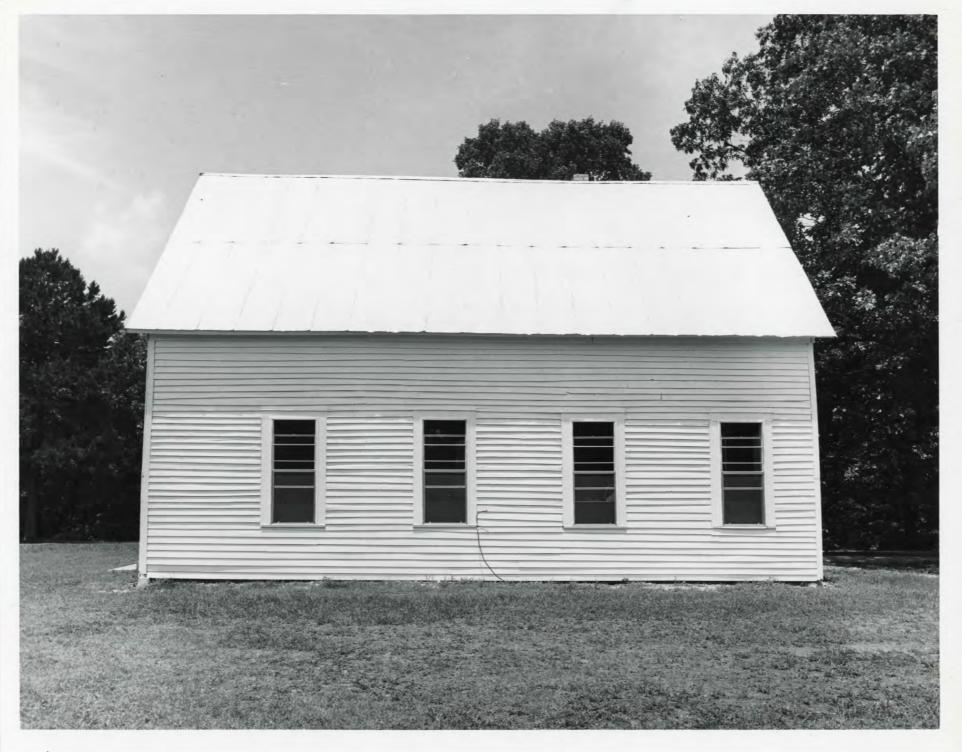
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

View of north and west elevation

INT: 2983-75

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Form No. 10-301a (Rev. 10-74)

> UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 1 4 1977

DATE ENTERED

APR 1 9 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

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Bethel Methodist Church & School

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Finch

X VICINITY OF

COUNTY Greene STATE

Arkansas

PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Bob Dunn

1977 DATE OF PHOTO

NEGATIVE FILED AT Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

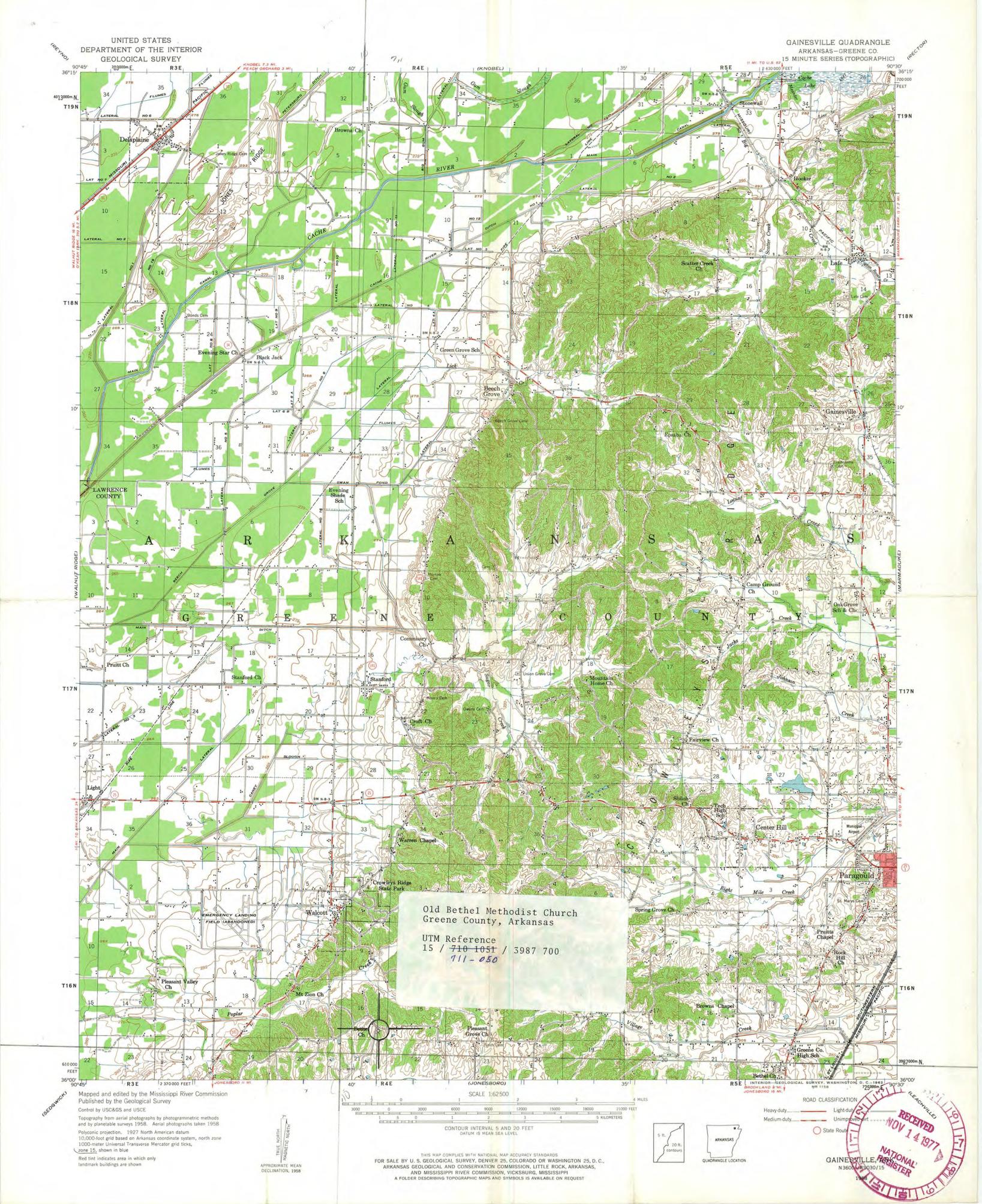
PHOTO NO.

View of west elevation

3

INT: 2983-75

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER





ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM



Suite 500, Continental Building, Main and Markham Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 Telephone: (501) 371-2763

August 5, 1977

Mr. Landis Smith, Trustee Old Bethel Methodist Church Route 1

Knobel, AR 72435

RECEIVED

NOV 1 4 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER RE

AUG 16 1977

old Bethel Methodist Church Near Finch, Greene County

Dear Mr. Smith:

Sincerely,

The staff of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program is preparing a National Register nomination for the Old Bethel Methodist Church which will be presented to the Arkansas State Review Committee at their September meeting. If approved, the nomination will be submitted to the National Register office in Washington for final consideration.

The National Register of Historic Places is a listing of historic sites, buildings, objects and districts from all across the country that are worthy of preservation.

Entry in the National Register is an honor which places no obligation on a private owner. It does, however, provide protection through comment by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation from federally financed, assisted or licensed projects that might affect a National Register property.

On October 4, 1976, the President signed a Tax Reform Act of which Section 2124 refers to tax incentives for historic properties. Enclosed you will find an information sheet on that tax act.

If you have any questions concerning the program or this property's nomination, please contact Donna DuVall of our staff.

Enclosed are two copies of this letter. Please complete the form below, sign and return the original to our office. The copy is for your files. We would appreciate receiving any comments you might have concerning the nomination of this property. If we do not hear from you within 30 days, your approval will be assumed.

Barbara Woodard, Deputy Director
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

I approve of the nomination of the above property
to the National Register of Historic Places

Comments: One of last remaining restored Country School - Church building remaining in Greene County and Arkansas. This type building was common in latter century of 1800's and early century of 1900's.

August 14, 1977

Date

Signature

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE

ARKANSAS

Date Entered

APR 1 9 1978

Name

Location

Ward, Zeb, Building

Little Nock Pulaski County

Old Bethel Methodist Church

Paragould vicinity Greene County

Also Notified

Hon. Kaneaster Hodges, Jr.
Hon. Dale Bumpers
Hon. James G. Tucker, Jr.
Hon. Bill Alexander
NR Mott 4/24/78

State Historic Preservation Officer
Ms. Anne Bartley
Acting Director, Arkansas Historic
Preservation Program
Suite 500, Continental Building
Markham and Main Streets
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Harton /18

The Reverend Richer W. Stenowe

Cicle

Yes Joseph Williams

14-25 A Control Preservation 436 Building Was also Streets

MAR 2 3 1981

The Reverend Robert H. Peacock First Assembly of God 20th and Lyon Streets P.O. Box 2758 Batesville, Arkensas 72501 ional Office

188 Ansas 72201

Dear Mr. Peacock:

Thank you for your letter of January 27, 1981, expressing your thoughts on the inclusion of religious properties in the National Register of Historic Places. We apologize for not responding sooner.

The criteria for evaluating potential entries for the National Register state that ordinarily properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes are not considered elibible for the National Register. However, a religious property which derives primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance does qualify for listing in the National Register. The impact on society of religion and religious institutions is recognized by the National Register criteria and provides a basis for the listing of many religious properties. There are a number of religious institutions in Arkansas which are listed in the National Register, including

> Trinity Lutheran Church, Conway County. Mount Olive United Methodist Church, Crawford County. Selma Methodist Church, Drew County. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Franklin County. Old Bethel Methodist Church, Green County.

Enclosed are copies of the "Federal Register", which list all properties entered in the National Register prior to December 1980 and information on the National Register program.

Once again we appreciate your taking the time to share your thoughts with us. If we can be of further assistance to you, please let us know.

Sincerely.

Carol D. Shull (Sgd.)

Carol D. Shull Chief of Registration which are the set the sent are telephone by a first on se

NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

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MATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP					