

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

OCT 26 1992

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Williford Methodist Church

other name/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: NW of int. of Ferguson & Hail Sts.

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Williford

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Sharp

code: AR 135

zip code: 72482

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

       buildings

       sites

       structures

1

       objects

0 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. Byrd  
Signature of certifying official

10-21-92  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

~~Entered in the~~  
National Register

Arlene Byrd 11/27/92

for  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
of Action

=====

#### 6. Function or Use

=====

Historic: Religion

Sub: Religious Facility

Current : Religion

Sub: Religious Facility

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## 7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification:

Late Gothic Revival

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: Plain Traditional

Materials: foundation Stone roof Asphalt  
walls Weatherboard other N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

=====

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A

Areas of Significance: Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1910

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Beavers, Richard

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  
X See continuation sheet.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

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**Summary**

The Williford Methodist Church is a single-story, wood-frame religious structure constructed c. 1910 in a vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Revival style of architecture. A continuous fieldstone foundation supports the weatherboard-clad walls, which are covered by a composition-shingled gable roof. The rectangular-plan church is adorned with Gothic windows and features a small, pyramid-roof belfry. The church is in good condition, and the only principal alteration, the concealment of a large Gothic window by the front porch, is currently being rectified. The Williford Methodist Church is located in the small town of Williford in Sharp County and is situated on the outskirts of town at the northwest corner of Ferguson and Hail Streets.

**Elaboration**

Constructed c. 1910, the Williford Methodist Church is a single-story, wood-frame religious facility of a rectangular plan. A continuous fieldstone foundation supports the weatherboard-clad walls, which are covered by a gable roof sheathed with composition shingles. The roofline is punctuated by a pyramid roof-covered square belfry that is fenestrated by four louvered vents. This Plain Traditional building form is ornamented with double-hung, three-over-one Gothic windows of the familiar "lancet" configuration. Four windows adorn each side elevation, one on the rear elevation, and two on the front, or northeastern, elevation. All are symmetrically arranged.

The front elevation is entered through a raised double-leaf entry which is accessed by a stone stoop. A nonhistoric gable-roof porch has been erected over the entry and has unfortunately obscured a large, stationary lancet window over the doorway. The trustees of the Williford Cemetery Association plan to remove the porch and restore the Gothic window, which can still be viewed from the interior.

With the exception of the aforementioned window placement, the side and rear elevations are not otherwise adorned.

The interior appears largely as it did in 1910. It contains the original pews and features a raised pulpit defined by a simple stick balustrade. A raised choir is located behind the pulpit and is flanked by two enclosed classrooms. The principal alteration to the interior has been the covering of the original walls with sheetrock. The overall effect, however, is harmonious with the historic fabric of the interior. At some point in the modern period, the original beaded-board ceiling was also sheathed with acoustical tiles. Fortunately, they are now in the process of being removed.

The Williford Methodist Church is located in the small town of Williford in Sharp County and is situated on the outskirts of town at the northwest corner of Ferguson and Hail Streets. There are no historic outbuildings associated with the church.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

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**Summary**

The Williford Methodist Church, constructed in 1910, is an excellent example of a vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Revival style. By grafting Gothic windows and a belfry onto an otherwise Plain Traditional building form, the local craftsman of Williford produced a dignified church building that reflects a distinct architectural style. Because of this, and the fact that it is remarkably original, the Williford Methodist Church is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best example in Williford of a Gothic Revival-inspired religious facility.

**Elaboration**

According to local tradition, the area around present day Williford was first settled in 1841 by Jeremiah Baird, who homesteaded in the Spring River valley across the river from the future townsite. Shortly thereafter, the Ferguson, Crawford, and Williford families settled in the valley, which furnished fertile soil for growing subsistence and cash crops. Although the population in the area grew steadily, a town was not established until the arrival of the Kansas City, Fort Scott, & Memphis Railroad in 1883. The land belonging to William Ambrose Williford became the site of the new town, which took his name.

The new town became the center of transportation for the shipment of crossties, cedar posts, fruit, and cotton. According to *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeastern Arkansas*, in 1890 Williford could boast of three general stores, a saloon, cotton-gin, blacksmith shop, railroad section house, a one-room, log school house, which was also used for religious purposes, and two stone quarries. Later in the same year, a new two-story frame school was constructed to supplant the earlier log structure. Religious services of the different denominations present in Williford continued, however, to be held in the log building for another 20 years until the Williford Methodist Church was erected in 1910. The church was constructed by volunteer labor under the guidance of Richard "Dick" Beavers, a master carpenter who built several houses in town.

By 1912, the Church of Christ congregation had built the second church in Williford (which, though extant, has suffered many additions and alterations), the population numbered 728, and the merchants were thriving. Two years later Williford was officially incorporated. The growth of the town was unfortunately curtailed in 1915, however, by a devastating flood that destroyed the bridge across Spring River and caused great damage to store buildings and residences. Despite this reversal, Williford recovered and ultimately experienced the zenith of its prosperity in the mid-1920's, when the town reached a population of 850. Again, a disaster befell the town. In the spring of 1929, fire destroyed seven business establishments. Williford did not rebound this time, and the ensuing Depression dealt yet another blow to the town. The quarry ceased operation due to lack of demand for cut stone, and the bank, like many others across the state, closed.

After World War II, Williford steadily declined in population. Easy accessibility to larger neighboring towns was made possible for the remaining citizens through the common availability of the automobile and improved roads. Demand for local goods dwindled, and the remainder of Williford's once thriving business district soon ceased to exist.

The declining population likewise affected the Williford Methodist Church. By the 1960's, the congregation was no longer large enough to support a minister, and the building ceased to be used for services. The building

**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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continued to be used as a chapel for funerals, and in view of this, the North Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church deeded the church to the Williford Cemetery Association in 1979. The cemetery association plans to restore the church (remove front porch, remove acoustical ceiling tiles, repair windows, etc.) and utilize the building as a meeting hall for community functions in addition to its continued use as a funeral chapel.

Although it is based on a Plain Traditional building form, the Williford Methodist Church is an excellent example of a vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Revival style. By utilizing Gothic windows and a belfry, the local craftsmen in Williford created a dignified church building of a recognizable architectural style that is not commonly found in small, rural communities. Because of this, and the fact that both the exterior and interior are remarkably original, the Williford Methodist Church is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best example in Williford of a Gothic Revival-inspired religious facility.

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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

=====

Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing      Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>647390</u>	<u>4013030</u>	B	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
C	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	D	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

     See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description:      See continuation sheet.

Beginning at the northwest corner of Ferguson and Hail Sts., proceed 210 ft. northwest in a line that is parallel to the front, or northeastern, elevation of the church. Then proceed 105 ft. southwest in a line that is parallel to the northwestern elevation of the church. Then proceed 210 ft. southeast in a line that is parallel to the rear, or southwestern, elevation of the church. Then proceed 105 ft. northeast in a line that is parallel to the southeastern elevation of the building to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:      See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes the historic church building and the surrounding associated property but excludes the adjacent cemetery.

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**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**

Garner, Glenna. "Yesterday's Williford." *The Sharp County Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1, April, 1988.

Information supplied by Mayor Wilma Hill, March 1992.



11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 10/19/92

Street & Number: 323 Center, 1600 Tower Bldg. Telephone: (501) 324-9346

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Williford Methodist Church  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Sharp

DATE RECEIVED: 10/26/92 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/10/92  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/26/92 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/10/92  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 92001629

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 11/27/92 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

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CLASSIFICATION

\_\_\_count      \_\_\_resource type

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STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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FUNCTION

\_\_\_historic      \_\_\_current

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DESCRIPTION

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

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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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_





Williford Methodist Church

Sharp Co., Arkansas

Photographed by Patrick Zollner

March 1992

Negative on file at AHPP

View from the east



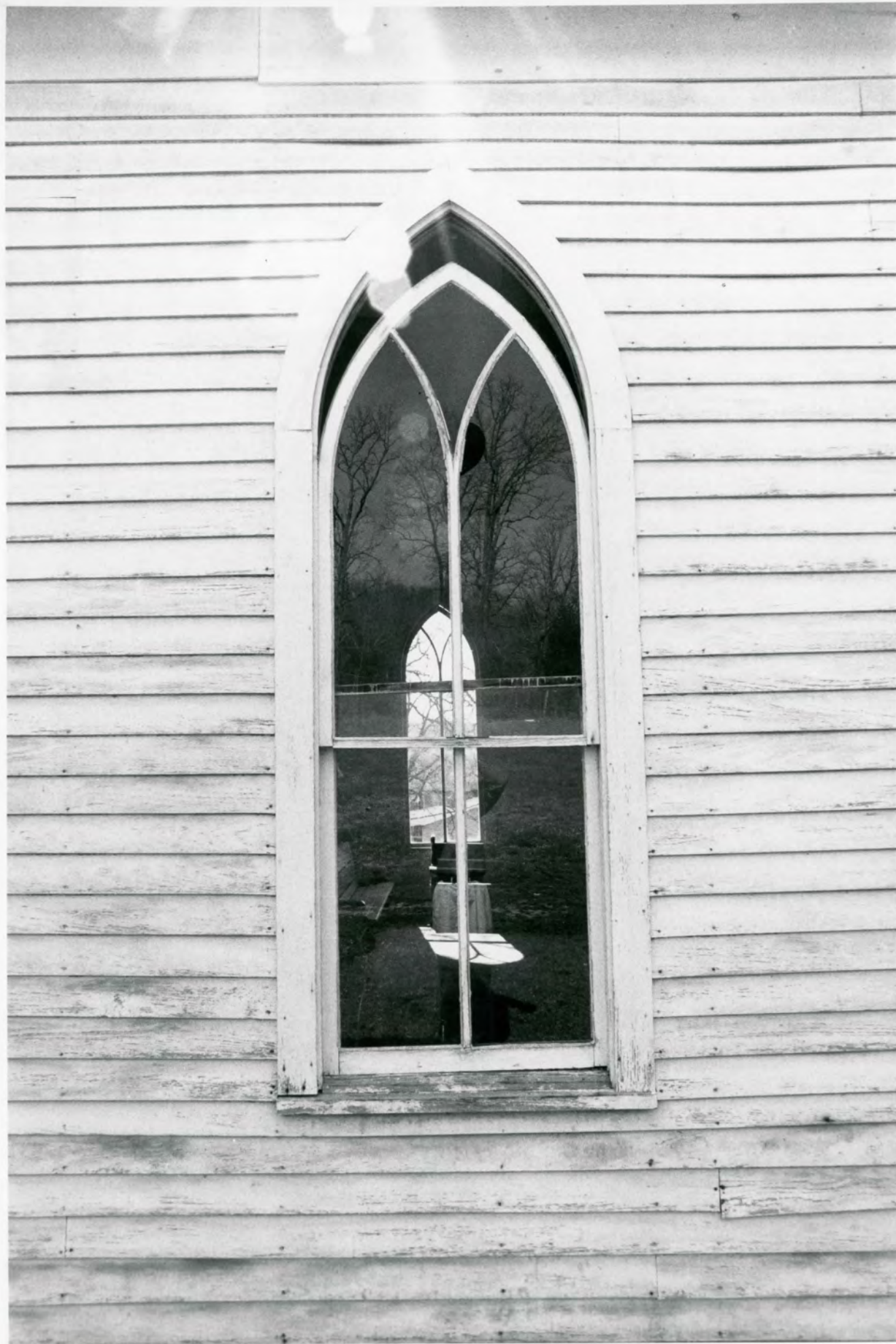
Williford Methodist Church  
Sharp Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
March 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from the west







Williford Methodist Church  
Sharp Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
March 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from the northeast



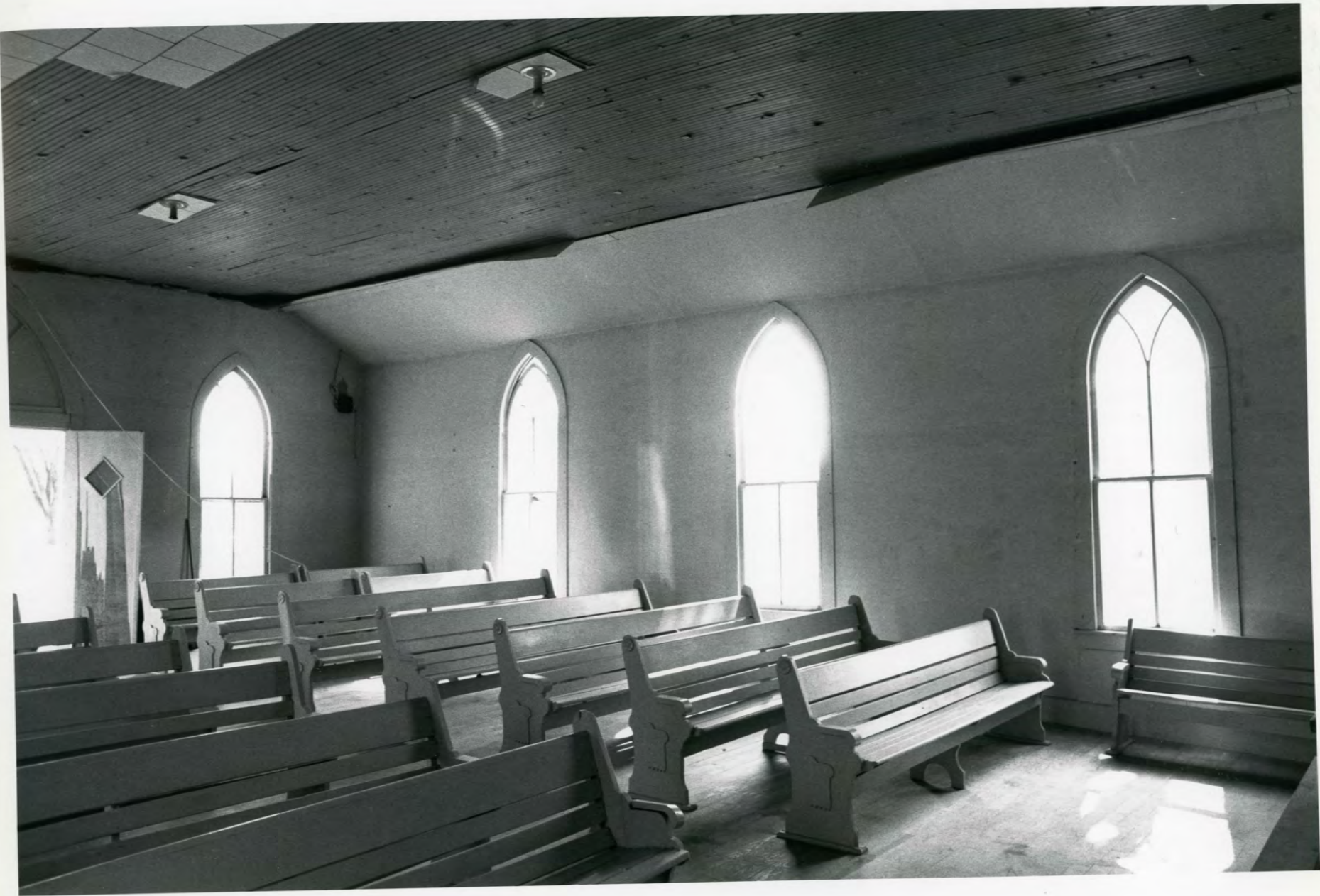
Williford Methodist Church  
Sharp Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
March 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of window





Williford Methodist Church  
Sharp Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
March 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of interior





Williford Methodist Church  
Sharp Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
March 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of interior







Williford Methodist Church  
Sharp Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
March 1992  
Negative on file at AHP  
View of pulpit and choir



Williford Methodist Church  
Sharp Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
March 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of interior, front entry





Williford Methodist Church  
Sharp Co., Arkansas  
Photographed by Patrick Zollner  
March 1992  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of pew detail





Williford Methodist Church

Sharp Co., Arkansas

Photographed by Patrick Zolner

March 1992

Negative on file at AHPP

View of anteroom door





Williford Methodist Church  
Williford, Sharp Co.  
Arkansas  
UTM:  
15/647390/  
4013030

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

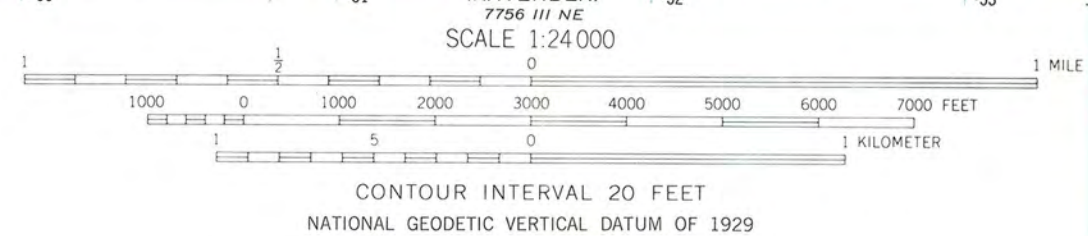
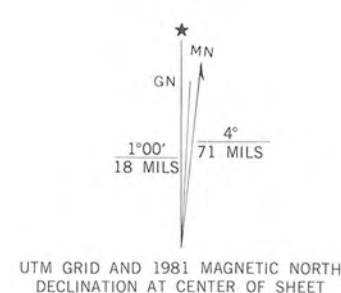
10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, north zone

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 uncheck

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 4 meters south and 12 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

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



ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route	State Route

WILLIFORD, ARK.  
N3615-W9115/7.5

1968  
PHOTOREVISED 1981  
DMA 7756 IV SE-SERIES W884





ARKANSAS  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION  
PROGRAM

RECEIVED  
OCT 26 1992  
NATIONAL  
REGISTER

October 21, 1992

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: Williford Methodist Church  
Williford, Sharp County

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:kg

Enclosures

