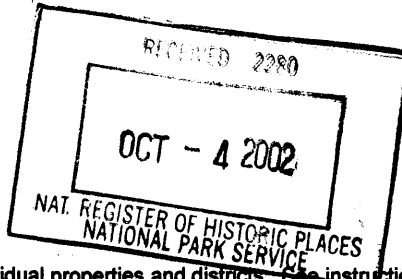


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1341

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Methodist Church

other names/site number First United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number 200 West Main Street

N/A not for publication

city or town McMinnville

N/A vicinity

state Tennessee

code TN

county Warren

code 177

zip code 37110

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Payne
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/2/02
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the 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:)

Colson V. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

11/15/02

First Methodist Church
Name of Property

Warren County, Tennessee
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing		Noncontributing	
1			buildings
			sites
			structures
		1	objects
1		1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

High Victorian Gothic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone
walls BRICK
roof Tin
other GLASS; METAL; WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1886-1940

Significant Dates

1889, 1940

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Bullder

Thompson, Hugh Cathcart.; Gardner, Thomas, and Clark, Thomas; Waller, Louis L.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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

Name of repository:

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

First Methodist Church
Name of Property

Warren County, Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one McMinnville

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>610880</u>	<u>3949137</u>	McMinnville	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing			Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>		4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Holly Barnett
organization Middle Tennessee State University/Center for Historic Preservation date Jan. 30, 2001
street & number Box 80 telephone (615)898-2947
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name First United Methodist Church—Robert Case, Senior Pastor
street & number 200 West Main Street telephone (931)473-4419
city or town McMinnville state TN zip code 37110

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

Architectural Description

The First Methodist Church is located in the City of McMinnville in Warren County, Tennessee. The church is positioned on a corner lot at 200 West Main Street at the edge of the downtown business district. Constructed from 1886-1889, the original part of the First Methodist Church is a High Victorian Gothic style building with two towers, corbelling, pointed arch windows and entryways, and buttresses. The church is one story high over a raised basement with a rusticated limestone foundation. It is important as a local example of the work of architect Hugh Cathcart Thompson who designed the Ryman Auditorium (NHL 6/25/01) in Nashville, Tennessee and the National Register listed Franklin Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Franklin, Tennessee (NR 8/25/84).

The church was built in three sections. The original sanctuary and Sunday School room building was completed in 1889. The first addition was added in 1940, north of the main sanctuary and is named the John L. Willis Memorial Sunday School annex for a prominent church member who left money in his will for the addition. The Gribble Memorial education annex was added to the north side of the church in 1960. Martin Gribble, a McMinnville financier, provided money for the second addition. The original part of the church was built on the top part of a gently sloping hill. The hill causes the additions that were added to the rear of the original church to be less noticeable and enhances the visual integrity of the property. Each addition is compatible with aspects of the architecture of the original sanctuary to help create a unified building.

The original section of the church is a twin-tower design with symmetrical massing. Aside from the decorative masonry work, the brick pattern is common bond with four stretcher rows per header row. A tower is located on each side of the central section that has a steeply pitched gabled roof. The south facade features a central staircase that leads to two entry doors. Although the entry doors have been replaced, both entryways still contain pointed arch stained glass transoms with tracery. Thick decorative woodwork surrounds both doors and separates them from the transoms. A masonry arch is formed around the top of the transom with a limestone keystone. The first floor has three Gothic arch windows within a Gothic brick arch. An unusual pattern of saw tooth bricks laid in rows embellishes the arch. The window openings also have wood tracery. Above the large arch on the first floor is a decorative limestone and masonry band. Above this band are two large vented Gothic arch openings divided by a pilaster and surrounded by a semi-circular brick arch. There is a limestone plaque with "METHODIST CHURCH ERECTED AD 1886" located in the gable apex above the pilaster. The gable features a simple frieze with molded wood trim and modillions in the eave line. Atop the gable peak is a semi-circular masonry form capped with tin belfry and surrounded with molded wood trim. The roof of the church is clad with tin shingles.

Towers are located at the southwest and southeast corners of the church. A pair of wood doors is cut out of the stone foundation on the facade of the both towers. The doors and surrounds have decorative paneling. Narrow buttresses are located on the corners of the towers and divide both towers into three sections. The base of each buttress is a projecting section of the limestone

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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

foundation while the capital for the first section is a piece of curved limestone. The second one is thinner and has a capital of a band of limestone. The final section of the buttress supports decorative roofs of the towers.

The southwest tower contains a large paired Gothic arch stained glass window with wood tracery above the limestone foundation. The two windows are separated by a small slender colonette and form an arch from a small peaked window located in the vacant space between the two arches. Brickwork and a limestone keystone surrounds the arch part of the window. A decorative limestone band is located above the arched windows. Above the band is a stained glass rose window with wood tracery. A roughly shaped arch is created above the rose window with triple-step corbelling. This tower is topped with a low-pitch mansard roof with a steep gable peak clad with tin shingles and capped by a lightening rod. Four crockets are located of each end of the tower roofline. On the west elevation the tower matches the façade except double hung paired windows are cut out of the foundation instead of doors and the paired stained glass Gothic arch widows and rose window are smaller.

The first story of the southeast tower contains two paired Gothic arch windows like those on the southwest tower. Above these windows is a pair of double hung windows with Gothic arch vented openings over the windows. A masonry lintel and brick arches keystones surrounds each vented opening. Above the windows are a series of four arches accented with corbelling. Corbelling also accentuates the final point of the buttress below the tower roof. The southeast tower is topped with an octagonal roof clad with tin shingles. The peak is topped with a finial and weathervane. Four of the eight sides of the conical roof have gable dormers with single pane windows. On the east elevation the tower matches the facade except double hung paired windows are cut out of the foundation instead of doors. This tower contains the belfry.

The west elevation of the original church is composed of five bays including the tower. The four remaining bays are symmetrical and contain eight window openings. Shallow three brick wide pilasters divide the four bays. Four paired double hung windows divided by a colonette are cut out of the foundation. The basement windows are capped with a single band of limestone that matches the rest of the foundation. Four triple hung sash stained glass paired Gothic arch windows are located above the basement windows. The widows are separated by a small slender column and form an arch from a small peaked window located in the vacant space between the two arches. Brick trim and masonry lintels surround the windows. Two bands of three step corbelling are located above the windows. The east elevation (aside from the tower) is similar to the west elevation.

The John L. Willis Memorial Sunday School building was added directly to the north elevation of the original church building in 1940. Although the High Gothic Revival had fallen out of favor by 1940, Nashville architects Thomas Gardner and Tom Clark, utilized softer elements of the Gothic Revival style to design the Willis building so it would not differ substantially from the original

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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

church. The Willis building was designed to be viewed and entered primarily through the east elevation. A two-story covered walkway or cloister leads to a two-story gable front projection that connects the original church and the addition, while leaving part of the original church untouched by the addition. The cloister is composed of one arch that projects past the original church and four bays of arches facing the south elevation that are divided by tapering buttresses on the first floor. The arches on the second floor are Gothic with keystones. A decorative cast iron railing extends between the arches on the second floor. The cloister surrounds a small courtyard and leads to the chapel (on the second floor) and Sunday School room (on the first floor) located in the projecting section of the addition. The second floor of the covered walkway must be entered from the interior of the Willis addition. The addition contains an irregular floor plan of Sunday School rooms and a small chapel.

The main entryway to the 1960 Gribble Memorial Annex is located on the east elevation. It is obvious that the architects studied the original section of the church because several of the original architectural elements are referred to in the south elevation of the Gribble annex. A series of two arches, like the Willis walkway, visibly connects the first and second addition. The main section of the Gribble annex, like the original section of the church, is divided into three sections. Concrete steps lead to a recessed entryway. The entry and three Gothic arch stained glass windows are divided by a rectangular piece of limestone with the words "Gribble Memorial" carved in it. A limestone arch surrounds the entire entry and windows. Although the Gribble Memorial has a clipped gable roof, the roofline of the central section is composed of steeply pitched masonry that recalls the steeply pitched gable roof of the original church. The slightly pitched roof does not distract the eye from the elaborate tin roof of the original building and matches (though on a smaller scale) the roof of the first addition. Two thin decorative buttresses flank the entryway, matching those on the first level of the original church's towers. Unlike the original building, the two segments that border the central segment are symmetrical, each composed of two six over six double hung windows with limestone sills divided by a section of five horizontal rows of stretchers. The upper windows have small arches above them to make the otherwise normal windows appear to be Gothic arches.

The north elevation is composed of the rear of the Gribble Memorial education annex. This elevation contains numerous one over one and multi-light windows. A gable roof canopy with brick posts was attached to the building circa 1980 for the church bus.

The west elevation side of the additions is much plainer and the designers did not try as hard to integrate elements from the original church into this side of the church. Perhaps it is because the east side was meant to be the primary entry, it could be seen from downtown, and is located on busy Chancery Street (now Highway 55). The Gribble section of the east elevation is composed of five bays. The central bay is composed of double doors and a large eight over eight double hung windows with a concrete sill and masonry lintel. Two symmetrical bays of two six over six double hung windows with a concrete sill and masonry lintel flank each side of the central bay.

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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

The west elevation of the Willis addition is three stories. The windows of the addition are all double hung six over six with masonry lintels and concrete sills. The addition extends past the original church approximately six feet. This section of the addition contains two windows on the second and third floors. The Willis addition has a central section that projects slightly beyond the rest of the addition. The central section contains two single entry doors on the first level, a bank of three windows on the second level, and two windows on the third. Symmetrical bays flank the central section with a single window on the second and third floors.

The most recent alteration to the church occurred in 1987 and 1988 when the congregation replaced an aluminum canopy for a slightly larger canopy at the west entrance, converted space from the Gribble addition to create a new foyer, offices, an elevator, and kitchen. The portico does obscure the view of the original section of the church and does not obscure anything architecturally significant about either addition.

Interior

The interior of the original church contains many features that reflect the High Victorian Gothic style. It retains a large degree of integrity and is characterized by features such as detailed grained pew ends, a richly turned altar rail, and light provided by the multiple paired pastel stained glass Gothic arch windows and the coffered ceiling.

Entry to the church is through a door on each tower. The windows and doors of the tower foyers are surrounded with decorative wood trim. Narrow, paneled double swinging doors lead from the tower foyers to the sanctuary. Molded wood trim and shaped lintels surround the doors of the sanctuary.

The sanctuary is composed in the center-aisle format with three sets of fourteen original pews that surround the altar. According to Jan Jennings and Herbert Gottfried, the pew ends have historically "set the tone for interior design" and "the height of the end and its profile were the essentials."¹ The pews ends have detailed graining in arched and semi-circular forms and the cross of St. Andrew carved into uppermost section. Wainscoting that is three feet nine inches tall was added most likely between 1930 and 1940 and surrounds the sanctuary.

The altar rail is composed of heavy turned balusters and two elaborate newel posts detailed with chamfered edges and rosettes. The chancel is open aside from two ornately carved pulpits. Behind the altar is located space for the choir, in movie-theatre type folding seats. A short wood railing carved with a trefoil arch design surrounds the space for the choir. The large pipe organ, placed in the church in 1913, was paid for in part by a gift from the Carnegie Corporation, and is

¹Jan Jennings and Herbert Gottfried, *American Vernacular Interior Architecture, 1870-1940*. (Ames: Iowa State University, 1993), 395.

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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

located on the rear wall of the sanctuary. The organ is the largest in Warren County, has thirty-seven ranks of pipes, two keyboards, and forty-six stops. The organ is partially hidden behind a wood screen decorated with trefoils, quatrefoils and paneling.

Cove molding surrounds the flat ceiling of the sanctuary. Acoustic tiles, possibly added during the Willis addition, circa 1940, cover the ceiling. A series of finials connected by bands of decorative wood trim imitates traditional coffering on the ceiling. Historic direct lighting hung from a link chain that is covered with a decorative canopy provides illumination.

The John L. Willis Memorial Sunday School building contains an irregular floor plan of Sunday School rooms that retain many of the same design elements as when they were built. The interior doors of the Willis addition all contain large single panes of figured glass in the Florentine pattern in the upper half of the door. Figured glass is made by putting soft glass under rollers to create glass with a pattern cut into its surface.² The glass was popular in the 1930s and 1940s and the patterns in the glass allow light to enter a room while maintaining privacy. The Sunday School rooms and small department classrooms of the Willis Memorial building are lit with one-light Art Deco styled lanterns.

A door with eight panels and a diamond shaped window on each side of the chancel leads from the sanctuary into the Willis addition. Directly to the east of the southeast sanctuary exit, a door leads to the second floor of the cloister, which leads to a door entering the rear of the chapel. To the west of the southeast sanctuary exit is a hallway that leads to a staircase, which in turn, leads to a classroom, the choir room, and hallway to the chapel. From the southwest sanctuary exit, on the immediate west is an elevator. The elevator was added in a 1988 renovation and took the space of a small classroom. Sometime between the construction of the Willis and Gribble additions, circa 1950s, Nashville architect Louis Waller was contracted to design plans that would remodel the church. The sanctuary was not altered but a nursery (located just outside the southwest exit from the sanctuary) with built-in cribs and soundproof walls replaced the choir room. After the Gribble Annex provided nursery space, the nursery was converted into a classroom. During the Waller renovation, the choir room was moved to an adult classroom directly across from the new nursery where it is still located today. The wall between two small classrooms was removed to provide closet space and bookshelves. Around the nursery/classroom is located an open space that is divided by a counter. Attendance records are recorded and kept in this area. Next to this space a single door leads to a corridor to the Gribble annex. Beside this door, a smaller one leads to a stairwell that leads up to the second level or back down to the ground level.

The ground floor of the Willis addition contains a foyer (converted from a ladies lounge in the 1988 renovation), administrative offices, a furnace room, restrooms, and pastor's office, which are

²Jan Jennings and Herbert Gottfried, *American Vernacular Interior Architecture, 1870-1940*. (Ames: Iowa State University, 1993), 28.

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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

located in the projecting gable front section under the chapel. A hallway and a series of steps leads down to the original basement section of the church which now houses a kitchen and large meeting space known as the fellowship hall.

The Willis Memorial Chapel is small and simple in design. The floor is carpeted and the pews are made of unadorned oak. The six windows are twelve over twelve double hung with a slightly pointed, shallow arch. The chancel is only slightly raised and the alter is recessed under a wide arch. The altar rails and alter are oak carved with arch designs. The ceiling shows the clipped gable roof through a half-timbered design. On either side of the chapel, two one light lanterns are hung from a linked chain.

The upper floor of the Willis addition is composed of a series of Sunday School department rooms. The rooms provide a large open space with smaller classrooms that open into the large room.

The Gribble annex is made up of a series of large classrooms that can be broken into smaller rooms with sliding partitions. The second addition has oak flooring, lightly stained wood doors, and is lit with florescent lighting.

The church takes up most of the small lot. There are a few foundation plantings around the church. Both the south façade and east elevation are close to the road. The rest of the lot is taken up with parking area. A small modern noncontributing sign is located on the property.

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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

Statement of Significance

The First Methodist Church in McMinnville (pop. 12,060, in 1996), Warren County, Tennessee is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its significance as an intact local example of High Victorian Gothic architecture. The original building has a variety of decorative masonry work, paired stained glass Gothic arch windows, brick and stone buttresses, and two asymmetrically decorated towers. The interior of the building also maintains its integrity with pastel stained glass windows, original pews with carved pew ends, hardwood floors, a large pipe organ, and intricately carved chancel. The architecture of the church also exhibits the evolution of the church according to religious architectural planning. The 1940 addition to the church is compatible with the original Gothic Revival elements, although less detailed.

Warren County was established in 1807 by an act of the Tennessee General Assembly. Land used to form Warren County was taken from neighboring White County. Warren County was named for the American patriot, General Joseph Warren. McMinnville, the county seat, was named for Joseph McMinn, a Pennsylvania Quaker who settled in Tennessee. He was speaker of the Tennessee Senate when McMinnville was founded and later became governor of Tennessee. Warren County's territory was decreased when Franklin, Grundy, Coffee, Cannon, DeKalb, and Van Buren counties were formed during the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Although the first Methodist churches were established in Warren County around 1810, McMinnville did not have a church building of any denomination before 1837. Church meetings were held in the courthouse and schools. While it is not known exactly when the Methodist church in McMinnville was established, some type of organized Methodist group did exist before 1836 because the Second Quarterly Conference met in McMinnville that year. The church was part of a circuit that included Sparta, Manchester, and other nearby communities. Services were held in the courthouse or local schools until the church built its first building in 1852. Membership reached 83 (thirty-four whites and forty-nine slaves) by 1847 and members began building a wood frame structure on the site where Magness Memorial Library (NR 11/4/3) is now located. This site is across the street from the present church location. Construction was never completed and a committee was formed to sell the unfinished building and begin taking subscriptions for a brick building.³ A brick church was finished on the Magness Library site in 1852.

During the decades preceding the Civil War, the issue of slavery caused tensions between the northern and southern Methodist Episcopal Church members. At the General Conference of 1844 the Methodist Episcopal Church split into Northern and Southern Conferences. The southern conference was known as the Methodist Episcopal Church South until 1939, when both conferences rejoined with the Methodist Protestant Church. The Church was then known simply

³"Methodists Erect First Church Building in 1852," Southern Standard Commemorative Edition, March 25, 1990.

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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

as the Methodist Church. United was added to the title when the Evangelical United Brethren joined the conference in 1969. Therefore the Methodist church in McMinnville has been known as Methodist Episcopal Church, South of (or at) McMinnville, First Methodist Church, and the First United Methodist Church.

Between construction of the first church in 1852 and the completion of the current sanctuary in 1889, the McMinnville church membership continued to grow and the congregation hosted the Tennessee Annual Conference in 1858 (the congregation hosted it again in 1900 and 1908).

Church members purchased a lot on the corner of Main and Chancery Street in 1886. Hugh Cathcart Thompson was chosen as architect and construction began slowly, stretching until 1889 due to financial difficulties of the congregation. The cornerstone was laid on August 25, 1886 with a grand ceremony that included the entire McMinnville community.⁴ The structure originally contained the sanctuary and basement Sunday School room and was built for about \$18,000. In 1887, the church on the Magness Library site was sold to Clay Faulkner, a member of the church trustees and local industrialist, for about \$900.00 and the promise that he would provide assistance with building the new church building.

At the same time the First Methodist Church was being planned and built, new industrial developments were occurring in Warren County. For example, the Great Falls Cotton Mill (NR 8/26/82) was built by the Great Falls Manufacturing Company that was chartered in by Asa Faulkner, Jesse and H. L. Walling, and Clay Faulkner, all prominent Warren County citizens. The company was chartered to "manufacture, spin, weave, bleach, dye, print, finish and sell all goods of every kind made of wool and cotton."⁵ The company erected a three-story brick mill. Brick for the building was burned on a hill a short distance from the mill and Methodist Church trustee and Building Committee member, Clay Faulkner had his workers burn enough bricks for the new church building. The mill began operation in 1892 and was the only textile mill in Warren County before 1930. Flowing water of the Caney Fork River was channeled to provide power to the mill. A flood in 1902 destroyed the wheelhouse that powered the mill and it never reopened.⁶ The site is located in northern Warren County and is today a part of Rock Island State Park.

In a nomination for the First Presbyterian Church in McMinnville located across the street, Leslie Draper states that the design for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South

⁴Lila Rose Denton and Alene Boyd, eds, *History of First United Methodist Church*, (McMinnville: Womack Printing Co, 1984), 20.

⁵ Arthur Weir Couch, "The Caney Fork of the Cumberland," in *Great Falls Cotton Mills*, September 1999, <<http://www.tngenweb.org/warren/gfmill.htm>> (5 November 2001).

⁶ Eugene Wiseman, "The Warren County Story," in *Great Falls Cotton Mills*, September 1999, <<http://www.tngenweb.org/warren/gfmill.htm>> (5 November 2001).

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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

(First Methodist Church) was modeled on its Presbyterian neighbor.⁷ The First Presbyterian Church is a vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Revival style. Architect Thompson did use some primary Gothic elements, such as arched windows and a steeply pitched roof and towers, and most likely made his design coordinate with the existing Presbyterian Church. The Methodist church is a late example of the High Victorian Gothic, which was refined and simplified in the Thompson's design for the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville as the dramatic style began to lose its popularity.

Gothic Revival architecture was popular in America from 1835-1860. The High Victorian Gothic style made use of polychromatic exteriors and sturdier exterior ornamentation than the Gothic Revival styles, and was popular in America from 1860-1890. Horizontal bands of limestone, the use of different styles of windows on each floor, and a colorful roof, were also typical of the High Victorian Gothic style, and many of these characteristics can be seen in the McMinnville First Methodist Church.

Architect Hugh Cathcart Thompson was born in Monroe County in 1829 and moved to Davidson County in 1849. After the Civil War, Thompson was a carpenter and construction contractor before setting up an architectural office in 1875. Some of Thompson's notable buildings include the Allen Block and Baxter Court in Nashville (demolished), the Edgefield Cumberland Presbyterian Church (demolished), the McKendree Methodist Church (extant partially under later additions), and the Franklin Cumberland Presbyterian Church (extant). Thompson is most well known for his Gothic interpretation of the Union Gospel Tabernacle (Ryman Auditorium) in downtown Nashville.

Although not formally educated, Thompson was involved in the architectural profession. He was a member of the Western Association of Architects, a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, and served as vice-president of the Nashville Chapter in 1891. Thompson worked in different partnerships with R.P. McGinnis, Julian Zwicker, and George Nevins until 1897 when he worked independently until his death in 1911.

Thompson's interpretations of different forms of the Gothic style exhibit the popularity of the style and his versatility as an architect. The Franklin Cumberland Presbyterian Church, completed in 1877, is a small Gothic church with arched windows and entryways, buttresses, and a heavy tower. About ten years later Thompson designed an elaborate example of the High Victorian Gothic style for the McMinnville Methodists, a larger congregation who were willing to wait several years for the money necessary to build a fashionable church that would, according to Pastor A.T. Crawford, look "to higher and nobler Christian activity."⁸ The Union Gospel Tabernacle designed only a few years

⁷ Leslie Draper, National Register of Historic Places Nomination--First Presbyterian Church, listed Sept 13 1995.

⁸Lila Rose Denton and Alene Boyd, eds, *History of First United Methodist Church*, (McMinnville: Womack Printing Co. 1984), 19.

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after the McMinnville church reflects a softer, less ornate version of the Gothic style that could be built quickly for the evangelists who took public subscriptions to pay for it to be built.

Thompson's design of the McMinnville church is important to the architectural significance of it, but the two additions exhibit through architecture how the church evolved and how religious education has changed since the late nineteenth century. The Sunday School Movement began during the 18th and early 19th century in England and the United States. Many congregations began Sunday Schools to teach poor children and often provided the only formal education available. Methodists led the movement but other Protestant denominations soon took part. By the mid-19th century public education was established enough for Sunday Schools to primarily provide religious instruction. By the time the McMinnville church had built its current building, according to Christopher Stephen Jenks, Sunday School was "promoted as the backbone of the nation's moral character, and its proliferation was encouraged for all children."⁹ Early Sunday Schools taught both adults and children the same lesson in the same large room. Christian educators soon decided that children should receive religious education in different grades like public schools. The Universal Lesson System was developed and all students received the same lesson each week only on a level that was appropriate to their particular age. The system also involved memorization and recitation of prayers and bible verses. The Akron Plan of a large central area surrounded by smaller individual classrooms was developed in response to the new Sunday School techniques.¹⁰ Instead of following the Akron Plan, the congregation in McMinnville added on to the church. The Willis and Gribble additions reflect this next movement in religious education, the Sunday School department. Students were placed in a department with other children or adults of similar age. Lessons were tailored for each department and students would meet in assembly and then be split into smaller groups for further lessons. W.A. Harrell, author of *Planning Better Church Buildings*, stated that "department rooms should open into classrooms in order to facilitate the quick and easy passage of pupils back and forth."¹¹ The Willis and Gribble additions made ample space for Sunday School departments that opened into smaller classrooms.

⁹Brother Christopher Stephen Jenks, BSG, "The Akron Plan Sunday School," *Common Bond* 11 (December 1995): 2.

¹⁰Ibid, 3.

¹¹W.A. Harrell, *Planning Better Church Buildings*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1948), 50.

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The renovations and additions to the church show the importance of religious education to the mission of the First Methodist Church and the evolution of the Sunday School movement. As the church grew, the sanctuary remained unchanged but new and improved spaces for the religious education of infants, children, and adults were gradually added. The 1940 addition also reflects twentieth century design principals with its much simpler Gothic Revival details.

Aside from Sunday School, the First Methodist Church has also taken part in the community by sponsoring numerous boy and Girl Scout troops since the 1940s. The church has also allowed local civic organizations to use the church facilities such as, the Garden Club and Retired Teachers Association. The First Methodist Church is one of only two churches in McMinnville that dates from the 19th century. The church is seen prominently from downtown McMinnville and represents the only example of High Victorian Gothic architecture in McMinnville. The church is also an important small-town example of work of Nashville architect Hugh Cathcart Thompson.

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First Methodist Church
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Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The boundary for the First Methodist Church in McMinnville, Warren County, Tennessee is city lot 4, Tax Map # 68E, group K, parcel 4.00. The nominated boundaries include the land containing the building that is historically associated with the First Methodist Church.

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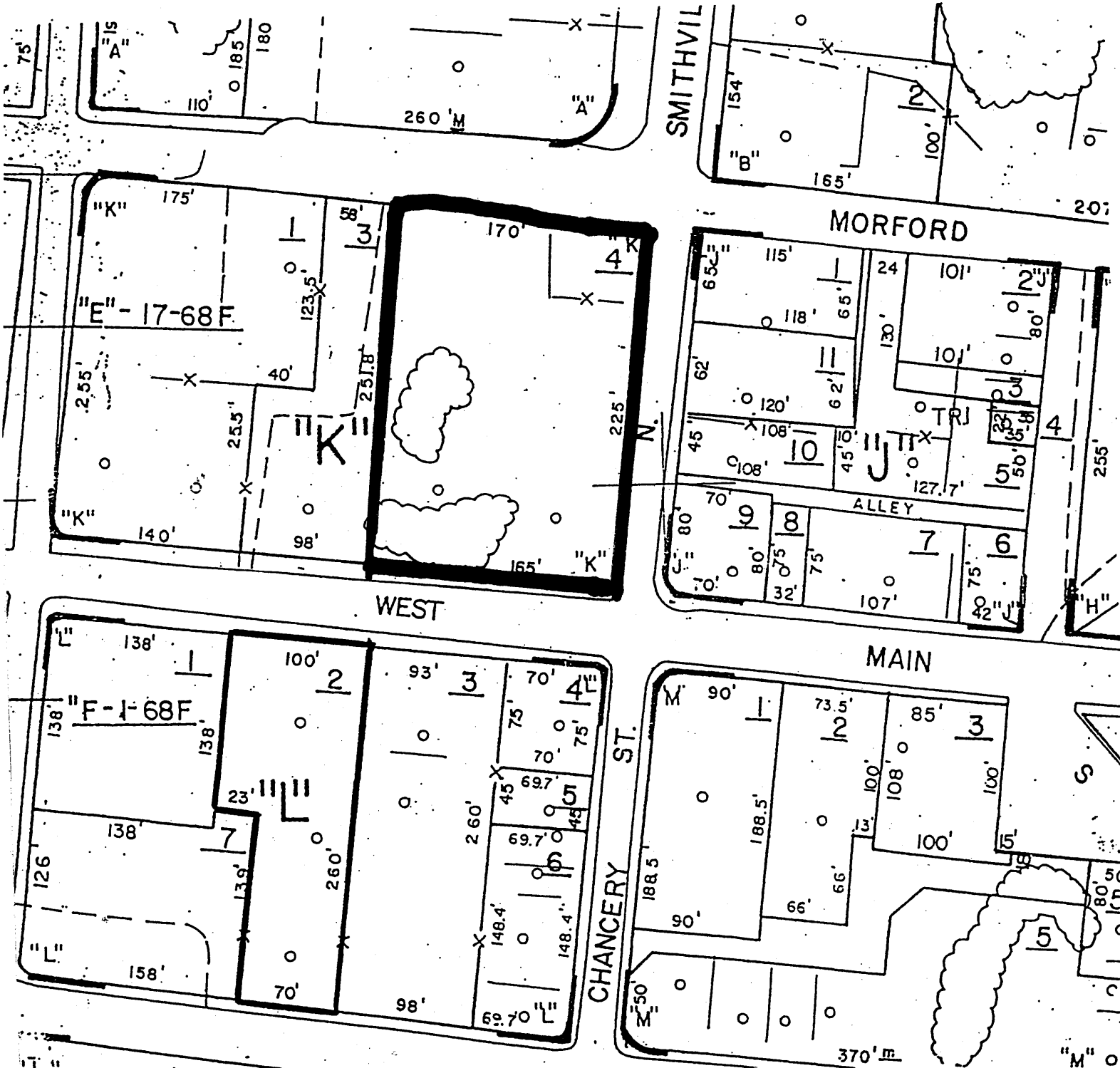
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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

Tax Map

Scale 1" = 100'



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First Methodist Church
Warren County, Tennessee

First Methodist Church
McMinnville, Warren County, Tennessee
Photos by: Carroll Van West
 MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
Date: November 2001
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
 2941 Lebanon Road
 Nashville, TN 37243

Facade, facing northeast
1 of 41

East tower, facade, facing northeast
2 of 41

Center detail, facade, facing north
3 of 41

Dedication stone, facade, facing north
4 of 41

Central window, facade, facing north
5 of 41

Facade, facing north
6 of 41

East tower basement door, facade, facing northwest
7 of 41

Facade and east elevation, facing northwest
8 of 41

East elevation, facing west
9 of 41

North elevation of Willis arcade, east elevation, facing southwest
10 of 41

Willis arcade east elevation, facing southwest
11 of 41

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Willis arcade, Willis addition, Gribble Memorial Addition, east elevation, facing northwest
12 of 41

Gribble Memorial Addition, east elevation, facing west
13 of 41

Sunday School rooms addition, north elevation, facing southwest
14 of 41

Sunday School rooms addition, west elevation, facing southeast
15 of 41

Sunday School rooms addition and Gribble Memorial Addition, west elevation, facing east
16 of 41

Gribble Memorial Addition, west elevation, facing northeast
17 of 41

West elevation, facing southeast
18 of 41

Sanctuary, facing north
19 of 41

Sanctuary, facing northwest
20 of 41

Pulpit, facing northwest
21 of 41

Choir, facing northeast
22 of 41

Choir seating, facing east
23 of 41

Pew detail, facing east
24 of 41

West wall window, sanctuary, facing west
25 of 41

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First Methodist Church
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Original wood door to west entry, facing south
26 of 41

Detail, light globe, west entry
27 of 41

Sanctuary, facing south
28 of 41

Sanctuary and west wall, facing south
29 of 41

Basement, facing east
30 of 41

Reception area, church offices, facing east
31 of 41

Sunday School rooms, Gribble Memorial Addition, facing west
32 of 41

Sunday School rooms, Gribble Memorial Addition, facing north
33 of 41

Art deco light globe, Sunday School rooms, Gribble Memorial Addition
34 of 41

Sunday School rooms, Gribble Memorial Addition, facing east
35 of 41

Sunday School room, Gribble Memorial Addition, facing northwest
36 of 41

Classroom, Sunday School addition, facing northwest
37 of 41

Hall to Sunday School addition from the Gribble Addition, facing north
38 of 41

Hall, Sunday School addition, facing east
39 of 41

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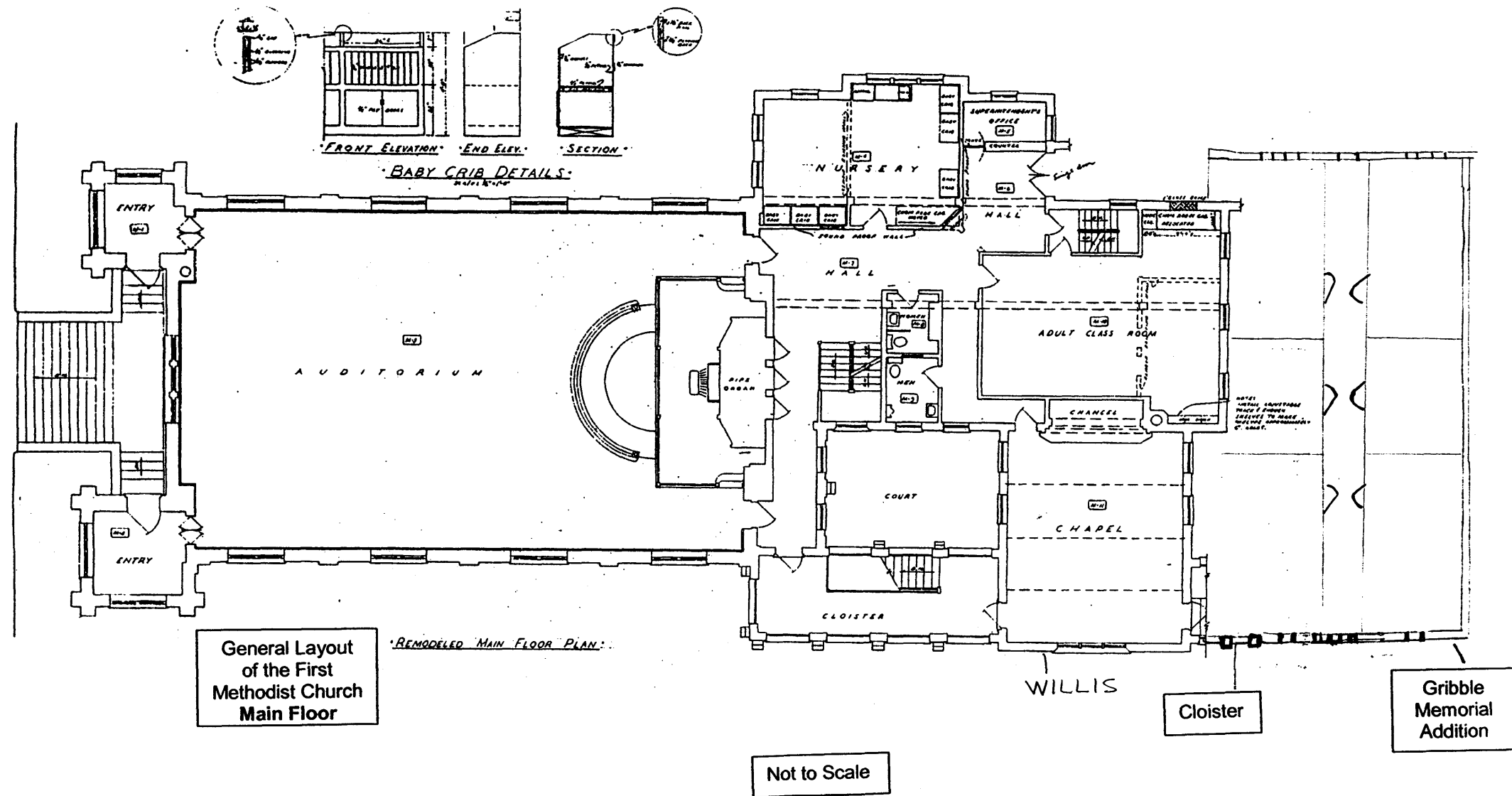
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First Methodist Church
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Hall, Sunday School addition, facing west
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Hall, Sunday School addition, second floor, facing north
41 of 41



General Layout of the First Methodist Church Main Floor

REMODELED MAIN FLOOR PLAN

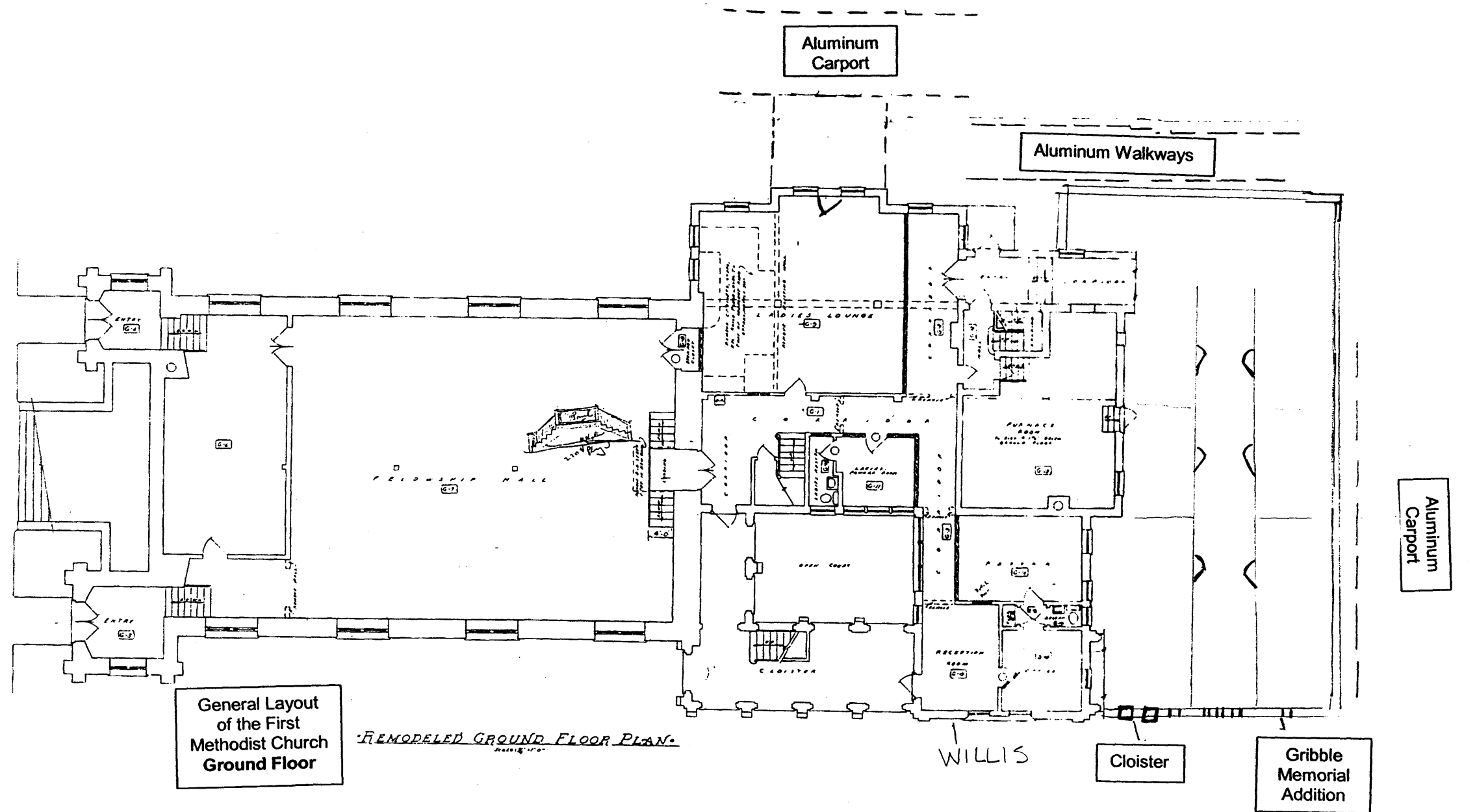
Not to Scale

WILLIS

Cloister

Gribble Memorial Addition

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
WARREN CO. TN
FLOOR PLAN 2/2



Not to Scale

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
 WARREN CO. TN
 FLOOR PLAN 1/2