

16008

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

Historic name: GORMANIA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Other name/site number: Gormanian United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number: Mabis Ave. 1/10 mi. S. of US. Rt.50 not for publication: N/A
city/town: Gormanian vicinity: N/A
state: West Virginia code: WV county: Grant code: 023 zip code: 26720

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally.
(___ See continuation sheet.)

[Signature] 7-21-05
Susan M. Pierce, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date
West Virginia Division of Culture and History

State or Federal agency and bureau Date

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

Signature of Certifying Official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau Date

Gormanian Presbyterian Church
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4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 9-7-05

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): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		TOTAL

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Current Functions

RELIGION/religious facility

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Materials

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals/
Late Gothic Revival

Foundation: Stone
Walls: Weatherboard
Roof: Asphalt
Other: Wood

Narrative Description

(See continuation on sheets.)

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.

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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 a birthplace or grave.

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

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1888,1925

Significant Dates

1888

1925

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

Narrative Statement of Significance

(See continuation sheets.)

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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):

- 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: Sonny O'Haver, historian, personal collection

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 1/4 acre

UTM References

Quad Map Name: Gorman, MD.-W.VA.

17 642610 4350307
Zone Easting Northing

Gormaniana Presbyterian Church
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Verbal Boundary Description
(See continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification
(See continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Sonny O'Haver/ Historian, with assistance from Erin Riebe and Alan Rowe,
Historians, West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office.

Organization: Gormaniana U. M. Church Date: April 16, 2003

Street & Number: 7418 George Washington Highway Telephone: 301-334-4194

City or Town: Oakland State: MD Zip: 21550

Property Owner

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

Name: Gormaniana United Methodist Church Trustees

Street & Number: 7418 George Washington Highway Telephone: 301-334-4194

City or Town: Oakland State: MD Zip: 21550

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Gormanian, West Virginia, located in Grant County, is situated in a narrow valley surrounded by seven hills covered in a verity of trees. Gormanian consists of a modest grouping of mostly wood-frame dwellings. This setting is located about one eighth of a mile from the North Branch of the Potomac River and the Maryland state border. Highway US 50 runs through the center of town, and leads to Gorman, Maryland, Gormanian's sister town.

The Gormanian Presbyterian Church, built in 1888, is a single-story ornate wooden structure with a corner entrance bell tower and tall spire and gable asphalt roof. The architectural style that fits the building best is the Late Gothic Revival. The roof originally had wooden shingles, with scalloped wooden shingles on the roof of the bell tower. Currently, black asphalt shingles cover the main roof and the bell tower roof. The building has white-painted weatherboard siding. The church sits on a cut sandstone foundation on 1/4 acre of land. The structure started out as a rectangular building. In 1925, an addition was constructed on the rear elevation to include three Sunday school rooms, thus introducing an L-shaped plan that it retains today.

The main façade of the church faces west. The bell tower is present on the south-west corner of the building. Wooden steps approach the wood double entry doors, which each display a tall top panel with a shorter bottom panel divided by a smaller panel between. A lancet-transom window above the entry has two curved muntins that create three triangular panes of glass. Continuing up the bell tower, a diamond-shaped window with a large central diamond pane ringed with smaller square panes is visible. Heavy louvers obscure the bell from view. The bell tower is capped with a steep, pyramidal roof with bell-cast eaves and a ball-shaped finial. North of the bell tower is the gable-end of the main sanctuary structure. Centered in this wall space is a large window grouping consisting of two paired lancet windows and a circular bulls eye window.

The north-side elevation presents a wide expanse of clapboard siding, broken evenly into four bays of lancet windows. A broad expanse of the asphalt shingled roof is visible at this elevation. Between the eastern third and fourth bay, a vertical board is present that closes the seam between the 1888 section and the 1925 Sunday school addition. The siding, trim, and lancet window of the 1925 section are identical to the materials of the earlier portion.

The east-facing rear elevation presents a wide expanse of clapboard wall broken into four bays of lancet windows. The central two windows closer together in their spacing—albeit slightly—than the windows that flank them. The roof at this elevation is more complex than elsewhere, with a hip configuration joined to a gable-end configuration on the south end of the elevation. This projection marks the ell formed by the Sunday school addition.

The south-side elevation reveals the bell tower at its west end. The bell tower from this perspective displays a 1/1 double-hung sash window at the first story level, with a diamond pane

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window above, which repeats the design of the main façade. Three bays of lancet windows mark the original, 1888 section of the building, with the ell of the 1925 addition marking the east end of the elevation. The west side of the ell is accessed from grade by a non-original, wood handicap ramp. The door leading into the ell is a wood, five horizontal panel design, with a lancet transom. The transom is divided into three triangular panes by two curving muntins. The south side of the ell contains one lancet window.

The interior consists of plaster walls, tongue-and-groove flooring, and a painted arched ceiling in the sanctuary. The pulpit is on a platform about one and a half to two feet tall, covered with red carpeting. As you enter the sanctuary through two tall swinging doors, there is a large stained glass window in an arch shape with a round glass panel above it in the left wall which is the west facade, or main elevation; and smaller stained glass windows, in a half rectangular shape tapering to an arch at the top, in the north and south side walls.

The entrance to the vestibule has two side-by-side doors, each door exhibiting diagonal beaded panels. The vestibule interior walls were done in wainscoting. There are two diamond-shaped stained glass windows just below the bell, but they are not visible from the inside.

The back part of the church, added in 1925, is a simple structure divided into three parts by way of two sets of fan-folding doors. The original flooring is unknown, but now is covered by linoleum. This was done sometime in the 1970s or 1980s as well as the addition of a counter top and sink, and restroom

In 1994 or 1995 the outside front steps were built up with lumber over the existing steps which were made out of concrete. Also, a handicap access ramp was added at the back entrance on the south side of the building. A new heating system was added to the sanctuary in the same time period. Some glass panes were replaced in some of the windows which were broken from vandalism. The repairs and additions were unobtrusive to the church and did not result in irreversible changes to the original structure.

The building itself is in fair condition due to good stewardship, and the long the period of not being used prior to its purchase by the United Methodist Church. Some evidence of weathering and vandalism have appeared recently.

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The Presbyterian Church may be one of the oldest buildings in Gormanian, West Virginia, located in north-western Grant County. At the present, the building is 115 years old and the last church remaining in the community. The church is eligible under Criterion C for Architecture, with a period of significance of 1888 and 1925, the latter date marking the addition of an architecturally compatible Sunday school wing. The church meets Criteria Consideration A for a property owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. As an architectural specimen, the church is locally distinguished as a good representative of the Late Gothic Revival style, while maintaining a high level of physical integrity, inside and out.

The town in which this church is situated has a rich history of its own. Gormanian is situated on the right bank of the Potomac River where the Northwestern Turnpike, now US Route 50, crosses the river, which marks the West Virginia-Maryland boundary. The original name of this community was North Branch. In c. 1840, around the time the turnpike went through, Jacob Schaeffer bought the land from John G. Brant for one hundred and fifty dollars. Mr. Schaeffer was the first to settle here in this quiet little town, and its name was changed to Schaeffersville. Mr. Schaeffer was the first postmaster and started the first tannery in 1853 to 1858. Around 1889, J. G. Hoffman & Sons Co., of Wheeling, West Virginia, started the state's largest tannery in Gormanian. The tannery was known chiefly for the tanning of harness and shoe sole leather, with the leather raw materials being sourced from the Chicago, Illinois packing companies. The tannery continued in operation until about 1925. Located near the church, the tannery workers no doubt supplied many congregants to the Presbyterian Church through the years.

Gormanian is also known historically as a tourist spot. In the years following the Civil War, a man named William Deakins operated a resort (known as the "Pendleton House") just over the Maryland border for travelers and anglers visiting from the East. Tourists, such as the likes of journalist Rebecca Harding Davis, wrote of visiting the area and remarked on the still visible ramparts of old Fort Pendleton, a Union-constructed Civil War earthen fort located on a promontory above town. The resort burned down in 1888. Even with the loss of the resort, the tannery business, the railroad, and local forest industries supported the town well into the early 20th century.

Around 1881 the town's name again changed--this time to "Elkins" in honor of West Virginia Senator Stephen B. Elkins. In the late 1880s or early 1890s the name changed again for the last time to Gormanian. Possibly, this was due to the rise of another town named Elkins, one that became the county seat of neighboring Randolph County in 1900. The neighboring town just across the river on the Maryland side was named Gorman, in honor of a Maryland Senator, Arthur Pue Gorman. Both towns were named for the Senator but it is uncertain as to which was named first.

The Gormanian Presbyterian Church was founded in the nineteenth century by Mr. M. W. Woodworth. Woodworth earlier had organized the nearby Winston Church, which was dissolved following the close of the Civil War. Under Woodworth's leadership and direction

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money was raised and a church built in Gormanian in 1888. How the money was raised is uncertain. The deed to the property, dated December 22, 1882 runs from Isabella Cooper to D.C. Tabb, F. W. T. Pitman, and Archibald Chisholm, Trustees, with on consideration of the sum of one dollar, and conveys a quarter acre of ground near North Branch Bridge in Grant County, [West Virginia] to erect a house of worship for the use of the members of the Presbyterian Church of Alleghany.¹ Efforts to formally incorporate the new Presbyterian church did not take place until 1895, according to church records. On May 14, 1895, the Gormanian Presbyterian Church was organized by George W. White, M. W. Woodworth and H.C.V. Campbell. It is unknown why a span of seven years passed from the construction of the church building to the recorded date of incorporation.

Architecturally speaking, the new church was a modest expression of the Late Gothic Revival, a movement suited to the needs of young or small mountain communities. Most of the local buildings were simple, wood-frame vernacular creations, with several of the houses bearing traces of the Queen Anne style, as evidenced from historic photographs. Comparatively, all three churches in Gormanian followed a similar theme, one found in coal and logging towns up and down the crest of the Allegheny Mountains. The general theme followed was wood frame, white painted clapboard siding, a generally rectangular floor-plan, and a square bell tower located centrally on the main façade, or to one side of the main façade. Architectural detailing in religious buildings of this type tends to be sparse, with a leaning toward the aforementioned Late Gothic Revival.

The original Methodist Church and the nearby Catholic Church building looked strikingly similar in style and structure to the Presbyterian Church. The Methodist Church was destroyed by a tornado in March, 1927, and it was rebuilt the same year, but with a stucco exterior finish in place of the usual clapboards. The Catholic Church was built around 1894 by the J. G. Hoffman & Sons Company for their employees. The building was moved to Bayard, West Virginia sometime in the 1940s. Although all three churches looked similar, and it is postulated that the same builder erected them all, no proof has been found to corroborate this claim.

The Gormanian Presbyterian Church served the community until the mid-1980s when it closed its doors. The United Methodist Church purchased the building in October of 1994, for five thousand dollars, and on October 16, 1994, the congregation had its first service in the new location. Gormanian today is a quiet village of wood frame houses and a small cluster of historic commercial buildings. The site is ringed by tree covered mountains, threaded by the North Branch of the Potomac River, and still traversed by US 50, historically the old Northwestern Turnpike. As the last remaining house of worship from Gormanian's historic period, the Gormanian Presbyterian Church remains a well-preserved reminder of the area's late-19th century and early 20th century architectural development.

¹ Summary of Grant County Deed Book 7, page 76.

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Bibliography

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Cranmer, Gibson Lamb. History of Wheeling City and Ohio County, West Virginia, and Representative Citizens. Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1902.

Idleman, D.W. A History Of Mt. Storm Community In Grant And Mineral Counties, West Virginia. Morgantown, W.Va.: Agricultural Extension Division, 1927.

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Woodworth, Robert Bell. A History Of The Presbytery Of Winchester (Synod Of Virginia); Its Rise And Growth, Ecclesiastical Relations, Institutions And Agencies, Churches And Ministers, 1719-1945. Based On Official Documents. Staunton, Va., McClure Printing Co., 1947.

(NPS Form 10-900)

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Gormanian Presbyterian Church is shown as parcel number 50, marked as "Gormanian United Methodist Church" on the attached tax parcel sketch map.

Boundary Justification

The selected boundary is drawn to include all property historically associated with the Gormanian Presbyterian Church as outlined in Grant County Deed Book 7, page 76, December 1882.

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Name of Property: Gormanian Presbyterian Church /
 Gormanian United Methodist Church
Address: Mabis Avenue, 1/10 mi. S. of US 50
Town: Gormanian, West Virginia.
County: Grant

Photographer: Sonny O'Haver

Date: March 24, 2003

Negatives: West Virginia SHPO, Charleston, West Virginia

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Photo 1 of 6 | Front or West Facade
Camera Facing East |
| Photo 2 of 6 | West and South Facade
Camera Facing East-Northeast |
| Photo 3 of 6 | North and East Facade
Camera facing South West |
| Photo 4 of 6 | South Facade
Camera Facing North East |
| Photo 5 of 6 | West Interior Back Wall showing the Pulpit
Camera Facing East |
| Photo 6 of 6 | West Interior Front Facade Wall Showing
Large Stained Glass Windows
Camera Facing West |

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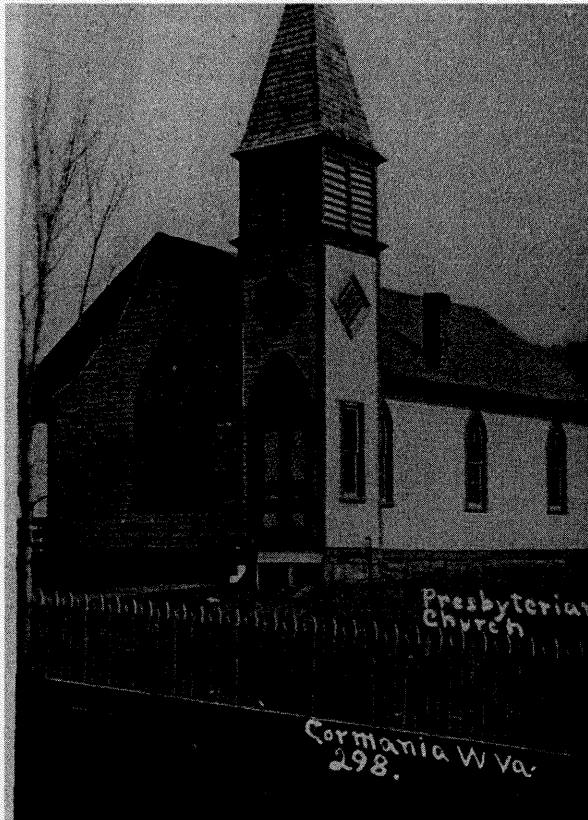
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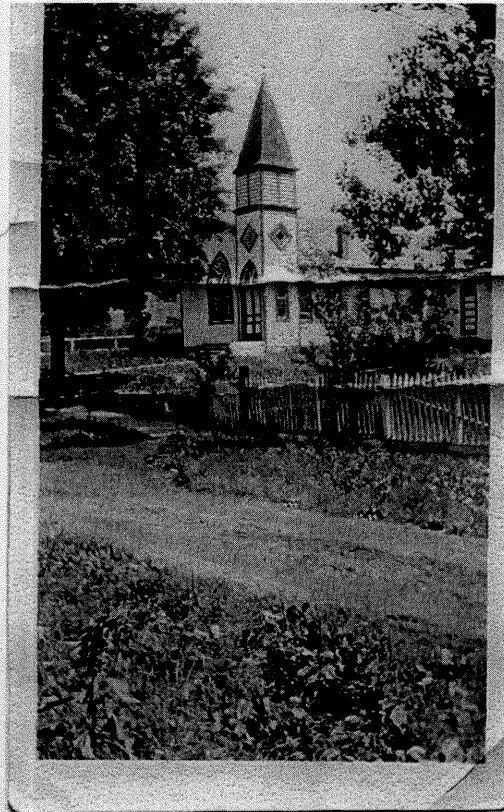
Grant County, West Virginia
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Historic Images

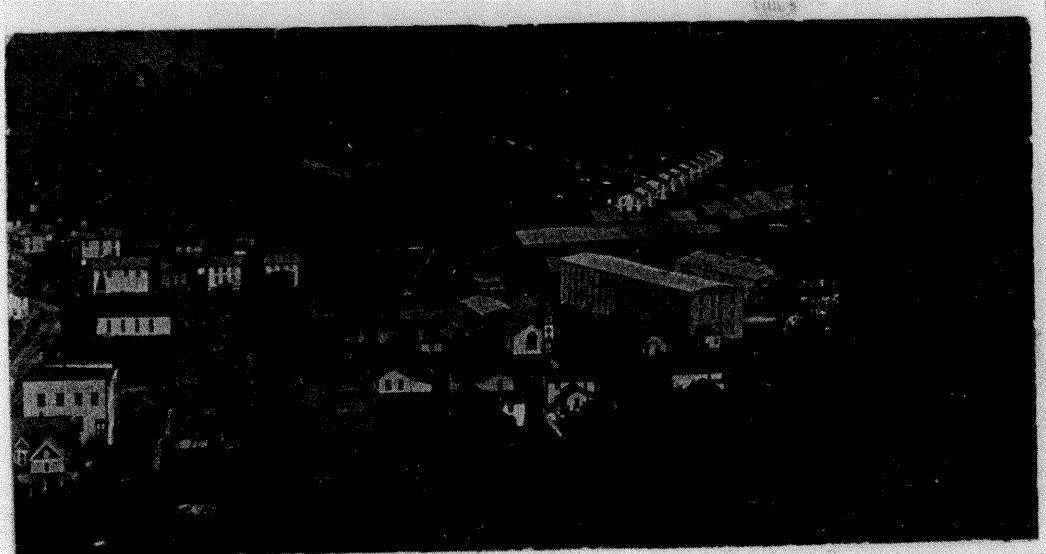
Page 8



Church Before 1920s.



Church After 1925 Addition

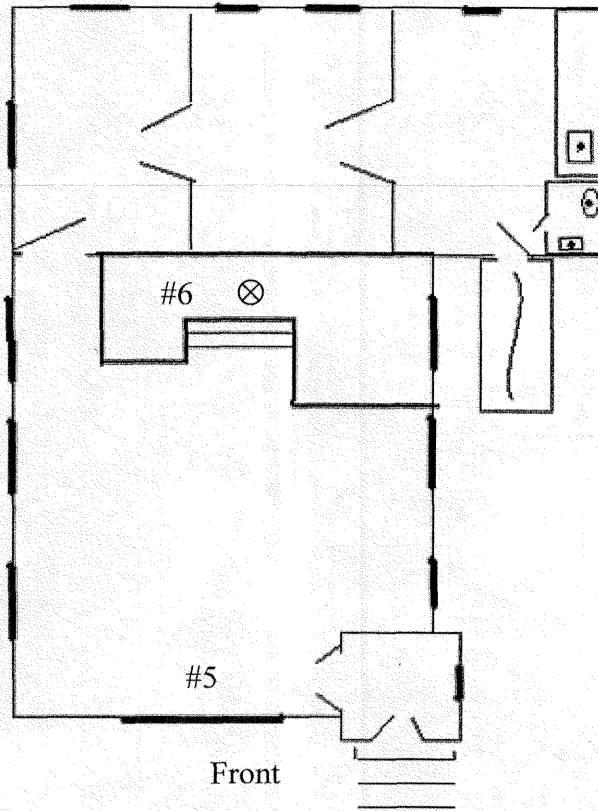


View of Town Showing Church and Adjacent Tannery Building.

#3

FLOOR PLAN

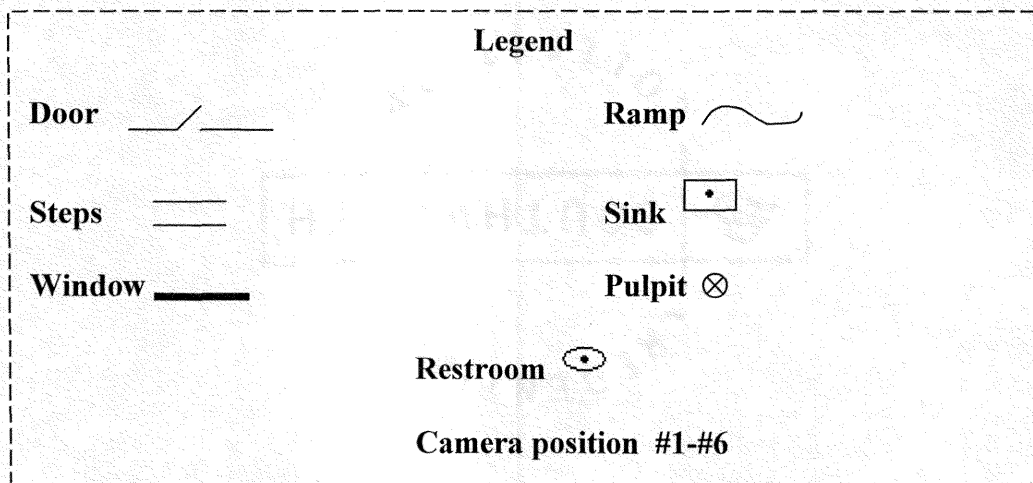
← N
"Not to Scale"



#4

#2

#1



GORMANIA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GORMANIA, GRANT COUNTY,
WEST VIRGINIA

Sketch Map

