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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NOV 7 1988

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Orange Springs Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery
other names/site number Orange Springs Community Church and Cemetery /8MR 1505

2. Location

street & number State Road 315 and Church Street
city, town Orange Springs
state Florida code 012 county Marion code 083 zip code 32682

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: State Historic Preservation Officer. Date: 10-28-88.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official. Date.

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
determined eligible for the National Register.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper: Amy Schlager
Date of Action: 12/22/88

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religious Structure/ ChurchFunerary/ Cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religious Structure/ ChurchFunerary/ Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete/ Pierswalls Wood/ Weatherboard

roof Metal/ Galvaized Ironother Wood/ Porch; Wood/ Bell Tower

Describe present and historic physical appearance.Summary Statement

The Orange Springs Methodist Episcopal Church in the unincorporated community of Orange Springs, Florida, is a one-story, rectangular plan, wood frame vernacular structure with a gable roof and a one-story porch on its main (west) facade. The building is sheathed in weatherboard and rests on a low foundation of concrete piers. Other than the porch, its main distinguishing features are a small louvered belfry that sits astride the roof ridge near the front of the church and an exterior wooden stairway on the south elevation that gives access to an upper gallery on the interior of the building. The only significant decorative element found on the exterior is a large wooden cross attached to the center of the main facade immediately above the porch roof. The Orange Springs Cemetery is located about 100 feet south of the church and occupies approximately five acres of land. The plot is distinguished by rather flat terrain on which one finds relatively small gravestones sheltered by large shade trees.

Present Appearance

The building occupies a prominent site on the corner of Church Street and Pearson Street (State Road 315 and County Road 21). The 34 1/2' X 48 1/2' structure rests on a foundation of low concrete piers that are approximately 10 inches in height. The present weatherboard on the exterior is the original cladding and the building appears to be structurally sound. The gable roof is covered with corrugated metal sheeting, and the small belfry at its west end is a square fixture with a pyramidal roof. It is sheathed in flush siding, rather than weatherboard and has louvered vents in the upper half of its four side. No evidence of an original bell has been found. The main entrance on the west end of the church is sheltered by a one-bay, gable roof porch supported by thin wood posts. The steps and deck of the porch are poured concrete and feature a metal railing. The porch is not an original element, but was added at some time in this century. It is uncertain if an earlier porch preceded the one now found on the building.

The church windows are 9/9 light, double hung wood sashes. These are 80 inches in height and have textured glass that is amber in color. There are four bays of these windows on both the north and south elevations of the

 See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

ca. 1852-1865

Significant Dates

ca. 1852

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary Statement of Significance

The Orange Springs Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery are significant under criterion A for their association with the founding and development of the small community of Orange Springs, Florida. The church is the only structure remaining from the period when the town was platted by the founder of the settlement, John W. Pearson, who donated the property on which the church stands and the five acres occupied by the adjacent cemetery. He further provided the materials used in the construction. The wood frame vernacular building was erected ca. 1852 and is the oldest extant church yet documented in Marion County. The building was constructed entirely by local labor using locally milled lumber. The burial ground was laid out while the church was under construction and is, therefore, both historically and visually associated with the church. The cemetery contains the graves of pioneer residents of Orange Springs and a cenotaph dedicated to John Pearson, who is buried in Virginia.

Historical Background

The Orange Springs Methodist Episcopal Church was built only seven years after Florida became a state in 1845. The name of the church is derived from the natural mineral spring that forms the focus of the tiny community of Orange Springs, which is located in the northeast sector of Marion County just south of Orange Creek. The creek forms the boundary between Marion and Putnam counties and empties into Lake Oklawaha, about a mile to the east of town. Orange Springs is mentioned as a settlement as early as the 1820s, when Florida was still a U.S. territory. Fort Russell was built in the vicinity of Orange Springs during the Second Seminole War (1832-1841), and the district was surveyed when the military roads were established.

After the war, the Seminole Indians were removed, and the Armed Occupation Act was passed by the U.S Congress to encourage settlement of the region. The act declared that any man who would agree to settle in the area build a house,

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 6.32 acres

UTM References

A 17 408360 3263840
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

N/A See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Town of Orange Springs, Part of Block 3 and all of Block 4, Section 25, Township 11 South, Range 23 East

N/A See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that part of Block 3 occupied by the church and all of Block 4, which is entirely used as a cemetery and was dedicated for that purpose in 1853 when the town of Orange Springs was platted.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title W. Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date 10-26-88
 street & number 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32301

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Description

building and two bays on the rear (east). There are three entrances to the church: 1) a double leaf wood and glass door on the main (west) facade, 2) a solid wooden door constructed of vertical boarding at the head of the exterior stairway leading to the interior gallery, and 3) a similar solid door at the rear of the building. The weatherboard is painted white. The boards are not always evenly spaced, but average five to six inches in width. The door and window surrounds are simple and display no stylistic detailing.

Like the exterior of the church, the plan of the interior is simple and without any specific stylistic characteristics. The interior consists of one large continuous space, with a low dais at the west end on which stand the altar, organ, lecterns, and other equipment associated with church worship. A wooden communion rail marks the division of the pulpit and the rest of the sanctuary where one finds wooden pews separated by a central aisle. At the rear (west) of the sanctuary is a gallery that extends the width of the building and features a balustrade identical in form to the communion rail. The balustraded gallery is supported, in part, by four slender wood posts that flank the central aisle. The gallery, railings, pews, and coved ceiling are all constructed of varnished pine. The interior walls have been plastered and painted white.

Alterations

The only major alteration made to the exterior of the church was the construction of the porch on main facade during the 1960s. It is unclear if any porch preceded the present one. The wooden stairway leading to the interior gallery was built in 1982 and is a reconstruction of the one which was removed along with the gallery itself about 1910.

The interior of the church was completely renovated in 1982 and a modern heating and cooling system was installed. A dropped ceiling that had been installed during the 1960s was removed and the present coved ceiling of varnished pine constructed. The higher ceiling permitted the rebuilding of the gallery at the rear of the sanctuary. The wall were plastered and painted and painted white and the pews, communion rail, and other church furniture installed.

The Cemetery

The Orange Springs Cemetery is located about 100 feet south of the church and occupies approximately five acres of land. The plot is distinguished by relatively flat terrain on which one finds relatively small gravestones sheltered by large shade trees. The earliest gravestone dates from 1853, but local tradition holds that the site was used as a burial ground during the 1840s, which would indicate that it predates the church and provided the reason for locating the church nearby.

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Description

The Fellowship Hall

Immediately north of the church stands the one-story, concrete block fellowship hall constructed in 1981. This non-contributing structure contains meeting rooms, an office, a kitchen, and restrooms. It also houses a collection of historical artifacts associated with the pioneer era of the community and the church.

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Significance

cultivate the land, and remain on it for five years would receive free title to 160 acres of land. Numerous settlers began to move into that area of Central Florida which now forms Marion and Putnam counties, owing the transportation routes provided by the St. Johns and Oklawaha rivers. The property surrounding the mineral spring was purchased in 1843 by two men: John W. Pearson, a wealthy planter from South Carolina and David Levy, Florida's first U.S. Senator and founder of the Florida Railroad, the state's first trans-peninsular railway.

The mineral-rich spring drew health seekers to the small village which sprang up along the former military road running between Palatka on the St. Johns River and Fort Brooke on Tampa Bay, causing both Pearson and Levy to envision their Orange Springs property as one of the focal points of a potential cross Florida steamboat and railroad line that would link the east and west coasts of Florida. However, nothing ever came of the project and Levy about sold his interest in the tract to Pearson. Levy pursued his political career and in 1860 finally fulfilled his dream of building a cross-Florida railroad. However, the route of the rail line lay many miles north of Orange Springs, running between Fernandina on the Atlantic Ocean and Cedar Key on the Gulf of Mexico.

Until the end of the Civil War Orange Springs remained an important point in the east-west transportation route across Central Florida. A post office was established in 1848, and John Pearson erected a number of buildings in the community, including a hotel, a mercantile store, a lumber mill, a grist mill, and a machine shop. A large cotton gin erected at Orange Springs by two men named John Livingston and Andrew McBride also processed the large amount of cotton grown in the area, owing in part to the ingenuity of a local man named Fane McCarthy, who developed a machine for ginning both long and short staple cotton at the same time. Once the seeds were separated and the fiber baled, the cotton was loaded upon steamboats at the nearby Oklawaha River landing, about a mile east of town, and shipped north. Because travel to Orange Springs was facilitated by river travel, it became one of the first health resorts in Florida, and as early as 1852 was known as a "watering place." Persons wishing to proceed farther west could take the stage line that ran from that point on to Tampa on the Gulf of Mexico.

Tourists visited Orange Springs during the winter season, staying at Pearson's hotel, which could accommodate about sixty guests, or they boarded at private homes in the community. The population of the town was large enough during the winter season to support a private school for young ladies, and the grounds surrounding the mineral spring became the site of numerous functions and entertainments, including church socials, camp meetings, political debates, and concerts. It was at the high point of the town's popularity as a tourist and health resort that the Orange Springs Methodist Episcopal Church was constructed on property donated by John Pearson. His

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Significance

sawmill produced the lumber used to build the church, and he also provided laborers for its construction. The sawmill was located on Orange Creek, immediately north of town. No trace of this facility remains visible today.

The main construction material for the church was yellow pine of the best grade, and the roof was covered with cypress shingles. The latter were also produced by Pearson's mill. The doors and windows were made in Palatka, approximately twenty miles away, and brought by steamboat up the St. Johns and Oklawaha rivers to the landing near Orange Springs. The church symbolized local optimism for the prospects of the town's future growth. The town was platted in 1853, and the plan featured an ambitious grid of eighty city blocks and twenty streets, one of which was expectantly named Railroad Avenue. The location of the church and cemetery are clearly indicated, as are the lots owned by the residents of the town. While the settlement never achieved any appreciable size, it was still an important center of business and communication, owing to the nearby cotton plantations and the river landing on the Oklawaha River. In all, there were about twenty families. A man named Collins owned orange groves east of town, and J.G. Harrison owned the Globe Hotel on the west side of Pearson Street, just north of the church. Andrew McBride, co-owner of the local cotton gin, had a two-story house across the street. Luther Meggs owned a large store and several other buildings. The families of John Livingston, Issac Hall, Dr. A.C. Moody, Charles Rouch, John and George Rast and others also had their residences in Orange Springs. The majority of these men were merchants and planters, although a few were professional men--mainly lawyers, cotton brokers, and land agents--who were also worked as planters and ranchers.

Hope that a railroad might be brought through the area remained strong for a time after the town was platted, as no construction on an alternate route had yet taken place. Moreover, the state would require a vast network of rail lines, and the Palatka, Orange Springs, Tampa route still appeared to many local settlers to be the best one for Central Florida. As the 1850s waned, however, the chances for the construction of a railroad through Orange Springs diminished, particularly as tourists began to discover the more spectacular Silver Springs located near Ocala, only twenty miles to the southwest. Very little of the town plan of Orange Springs remains visible today.

The church is the only building surviving from the antebellum period, and the community consists of only a few houses clustered in the area of Main Street. There is no evidence of a former commercial district or of any of the industrial buildings that once stood in Orange Springs up until the end of the Civil War. Except for Pearson Street (County Road 21), the few surviving streets are unpaved tracts that serve the local residents. The major attraction in the area is the Orange Springs Inn, a small guest hotel which owns the mineral spring and provides facilities for swimming in the spring,

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Significance

camping on the grounds, and canoeing on Orange Creek. The inn was built in 1912 and until 1986 was a private residence.

The Methodist Episcopal congregation did not have a permanent pastor at first but, like many other communities in pioneer Florida, was served by circuit riders that made regular visits to outlying communities to preach, perform marriages, and minister to the wide variety of religious needs of the parish. The Marion circuit was initially quite a large one, encompassing nearly all of the counties bordering on the St. John's River. The Methodist Episcopal Church in Florida had its beginnings in 1845, the same year the territory achieved statehood. The growth in the number of the church's members in the years immediately following the organization of the Florida Conference was extremely slow and for a time, actually decreased from the 6,874 members reported in 1845.

The circuit riders, however, followed the trails to the new settlements to the south that had been created after the removal of the Indians that had inhabited the area. For six years, the Newnansville (Alachua County) district remained the missionary district for the newly settled areas of South Florida. The Tampa district took over this responsibility, supervising circuits running on the north across the peninsula in Levy, Marion, and Volusia counties, and extending southward to Key West. The number of preachers available to cover so large an area was hardly equal to the task, and traveling their circuits presented these pioneers with a variety of hardships, not the least of which was the failure to regularly receive the small allowance of money appointed for their maintenance. John C. Ley, who was appointed presiding elder of the St. Johns District in 1860, says in his autobiography, Fifty-Two Years in Florida, that the country was but thinly settled; often there were stretches of forty miles between houses. The roads, especially, in the southern part of the district, that had been built by the army during the Indian Wars had been reclaimed by vegetation and often the traveler did not know whether he was on the right road or not.

The records of the church have disappeared, but a few references to its early life can be found in Methodist journals and reports. In 1859, the Reverend D.L. Kennedy was living with his family in Orange Springs, which indicates that there must have been a parsonage of some kind. He organized a Sunday school which had six teachers, thirty-six pupils, and a library.

Orange Springs achieved a certain importance during the Civil War, due in large measure to its rather remote location, which served to protect it from raids by Federal forces. It became a refuge for the citizens of Palatka and families whose homesteads along the St. Johns River were threatened by Federal gunboats. It also became a center for the manufacture, storage, and shipment of material used to support the Confederacy. Florida's railroad system was still in its infancy at the beginning of the Civil War in 1861 and

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Significance

proved of little military or economic value during the conflict. The lack of rapid and reliable overland transport became a major handicap in the supply of salt, timber, and cattle which Florida made to the Confederacy. Confederate sentiment ran high in the area of Orange Springs, as most of the settlers were from Georgia and South Carolina. John Pearson organized the Oklawaha Rangers and his neighbor, J.J. Dickison led the Second Florida Cavalry. Pearson and his associates used his machine shop and a foundry to manufacture muskets, cannons, and munitions used in the defense of the Confederate fortifications surrounding Tampa.

Following the end of the Civil War in 1865, economic conditions in Orange Springs were depressed. The activities that had supported the community during the conflict came to an end, and the refugees returned to their homes. John Pearson had died in 1864 as the result of wounds he had received while fighting in Virginia. His widow was unable to pay the taxes on the Orange Springs property, and it was sold at public auction in 1875. Prosperity never returned to Orange Springs. It became an out of the way place, mentioned only in passing. The Episcopal Bishop John Young visited the town in 1868, but made no mention of the church in the account of his travels. The Reverend J.H. Quimby, pastor of St. Marks Church in Palatka, extended his missionary efforts to Orange Springs in 1866, and the Reverend Phillips of Ocala's Episcopal parish indicated in 1870 that the people of Orange Springs were "without the word of God." A letter in an 1882 Episcopal newspaper describes the Orange Springs church as a run-down and shabby building, one that nevertheless was in use whenever a clergyman passed through. Although it was part of the Methodist circuit, the building was available to all denominations.

By the 1920s, the church was dilapidated and boarded up; however, according to a long-time resident, it was repaired during the mid-1920s and was used at various times by as many as seven different religious groups. It was still part of the Citra Circuit of the Methodist Church in the 1940s, but only two families counted themselves as members, and the building was valued at only \$1,000. There is no indication that the Methodist Conference took much notice of the old building and its scattered congregation.

The Orange Springs church reflected the ups and downs of the small village. It opened and closed through the years, but was never completely abandoned. Since the mid-1970s, it has been an independent church with its own charter. The congregation built a spacious meeting hall next to the church in 1981 and the following year undertook the restoration of the historic church. The Orange Springs Methodist Episcopal Church now stands as a symbol of quiet endurance, one of the few churches built before the Civil War to remain standing in Central Florida.

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Significance

Architecture

Simplicity, even austerity is the keynote of the architecture of the Orange Springs church, a box-like structure with a vestigial bell tower that can only be described as antebellum Methodist. This simplicity reflects not only the primitive frontier where it was erected but also the attitude of Methodism toward houses of worship, preferring utilitarian buildings free from the vanity of excessive adornment. Neatness and plainness of appearance were reflections of a spiritual ideal, although it must be admitted that wealthy congregations found in cities often ignored this precept. In the absence of church records or other documents relating to the building's construction, the name of the man responsible for erecting the church is unknown; but it was probably John McRadie, a local carpenter from Scotland.

Significance

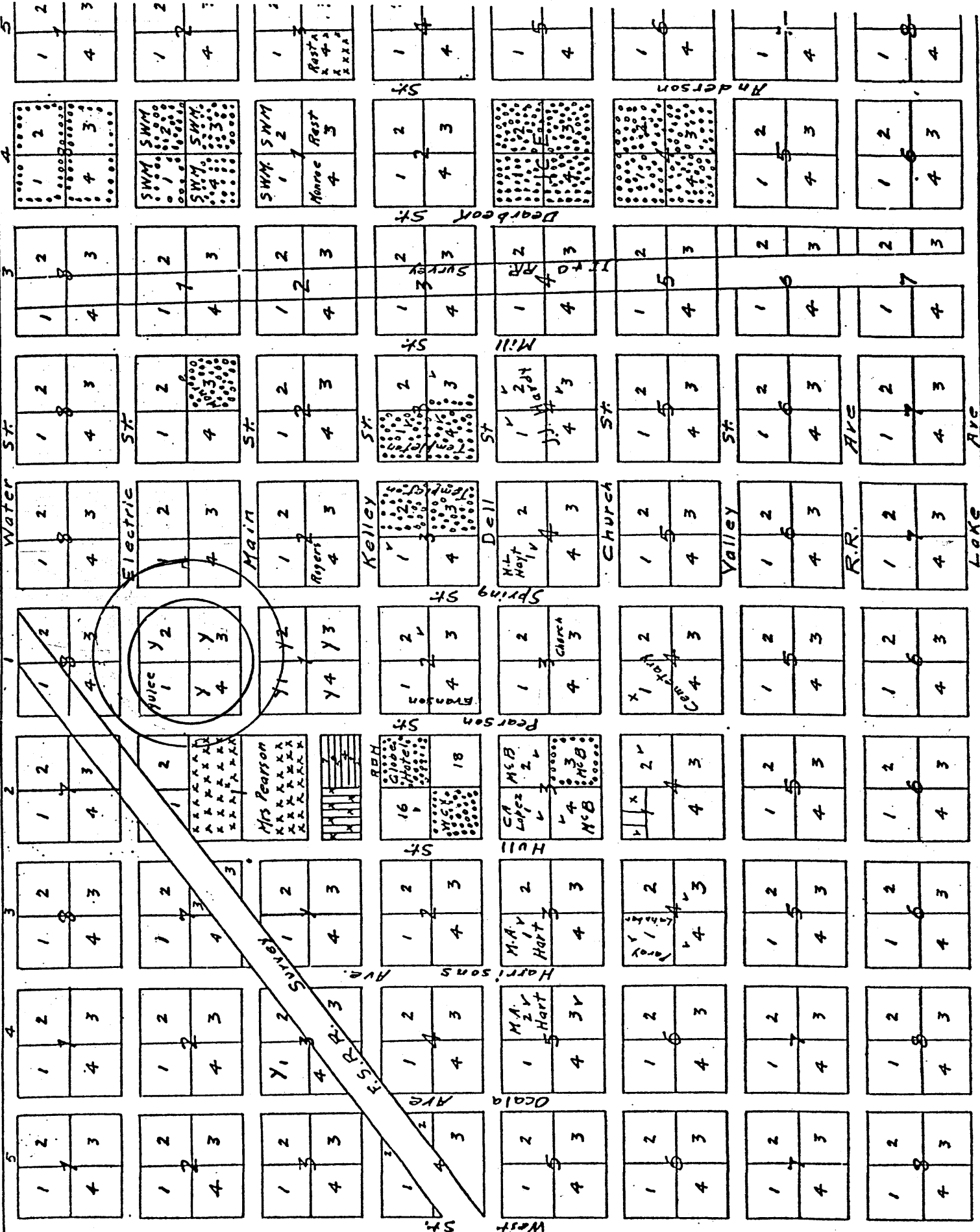
The Orange Springs Methodist Episcopal Church and cemetery are significant for their association with the founding of the community of Orange Springs and with the hopes of its citizens for the development of the settlement into a permanent and thriving town, based on the attraction of the local mineral spring, agriculture, industry, and transportation. The church became the focal point of the religious and social life of the village during the optimistic period of the 1850s. The structure is associated with John W. Pearson, the town's founder and one of its principal promoters. He donated the land on which the church was erected and provided the materials and labor for its construction. The church is also the only building in Orange Springs that dates prior to the Civil War and was either completed or, at least, under construction when the town was platted in 1853. The cemetery dates from the same period as the church and contains the graves of pioneer settlers of Orange Springs. There is also a cenotaph dedicated to John Pearson who was buried in Virginia.

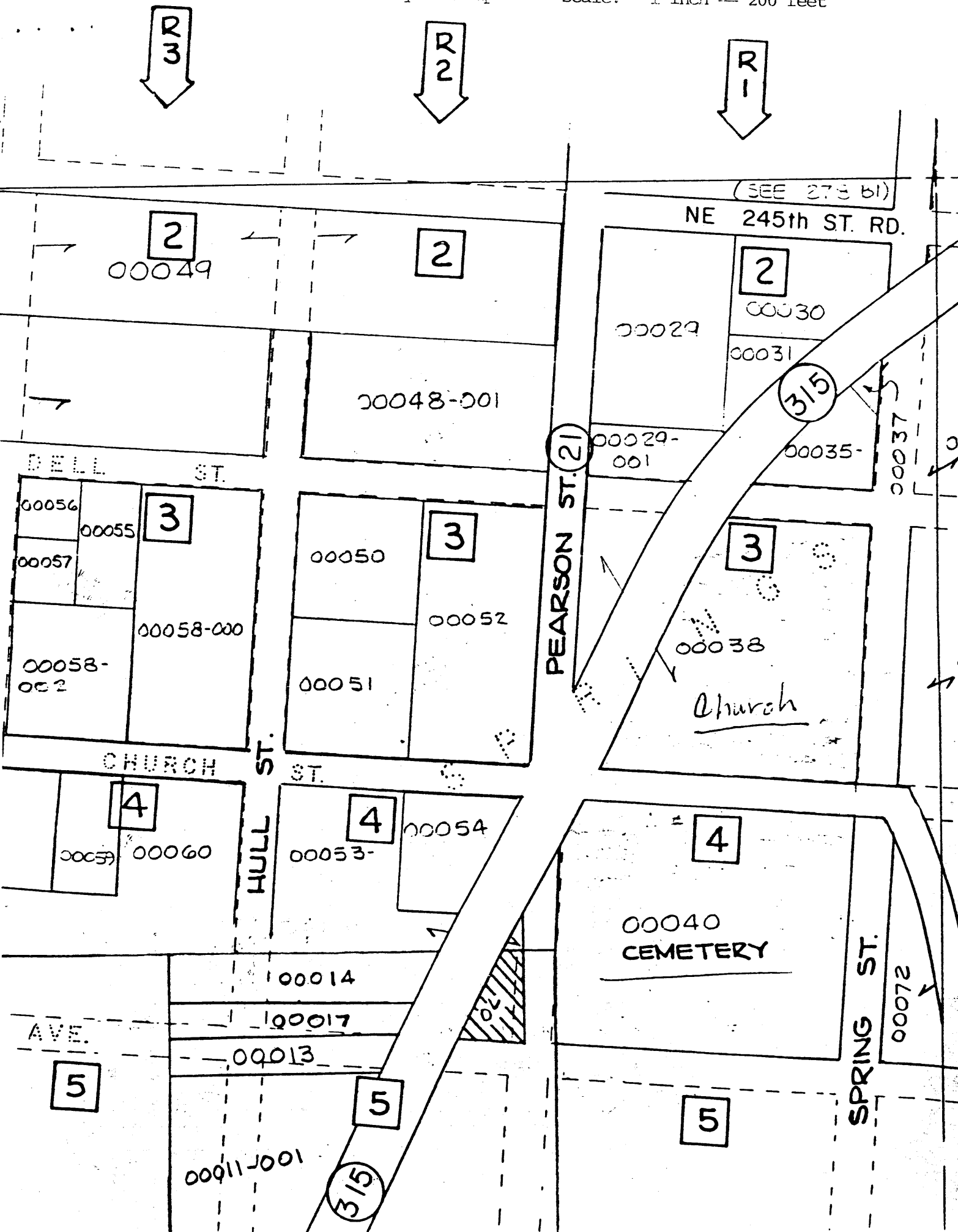
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Continuation SheetSection number 9 Page 1 Bibliography

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Map of Orange Springs

Scale





R3

R2

R1

(SEE 273 b1)

NE 245th ST. RD.

2

2

2

00049

00030

00029

00031

00048-001

315

00029-001

00035-

00037

BELL ST.

00056

00055

3

00057

00058-000

00050

3

00052

00058-002

00051

00038

3

Church

CHURCH ST.

HULL ST.

ST.

4

00059

00060

4

00053-

00054

4

00040

CEMETERY

AVE.

5

00014

00017

00013

5

00011-001

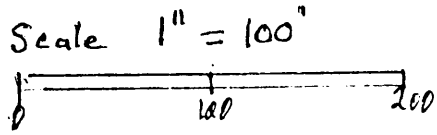
315

5

SPRING ST.

00072

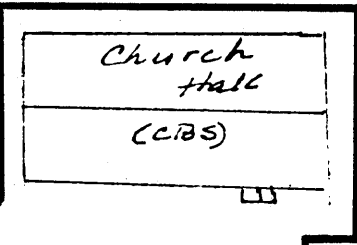
Site Plan: Orange Springs Church & Cemetery



Numbers correspond to photographs

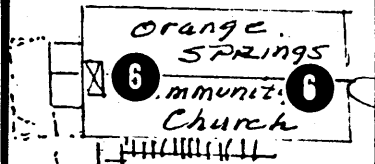
State Road 315

2



Church Hall
(CIBS)

[buildings not to scale]



6

6

6

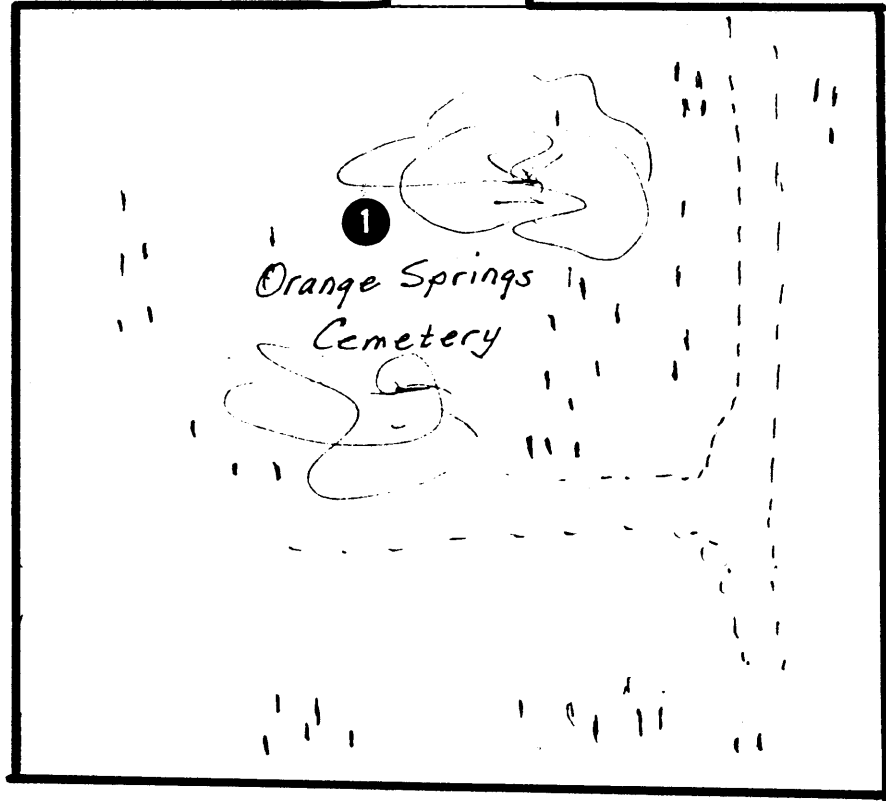
Orange Springs
Community Church

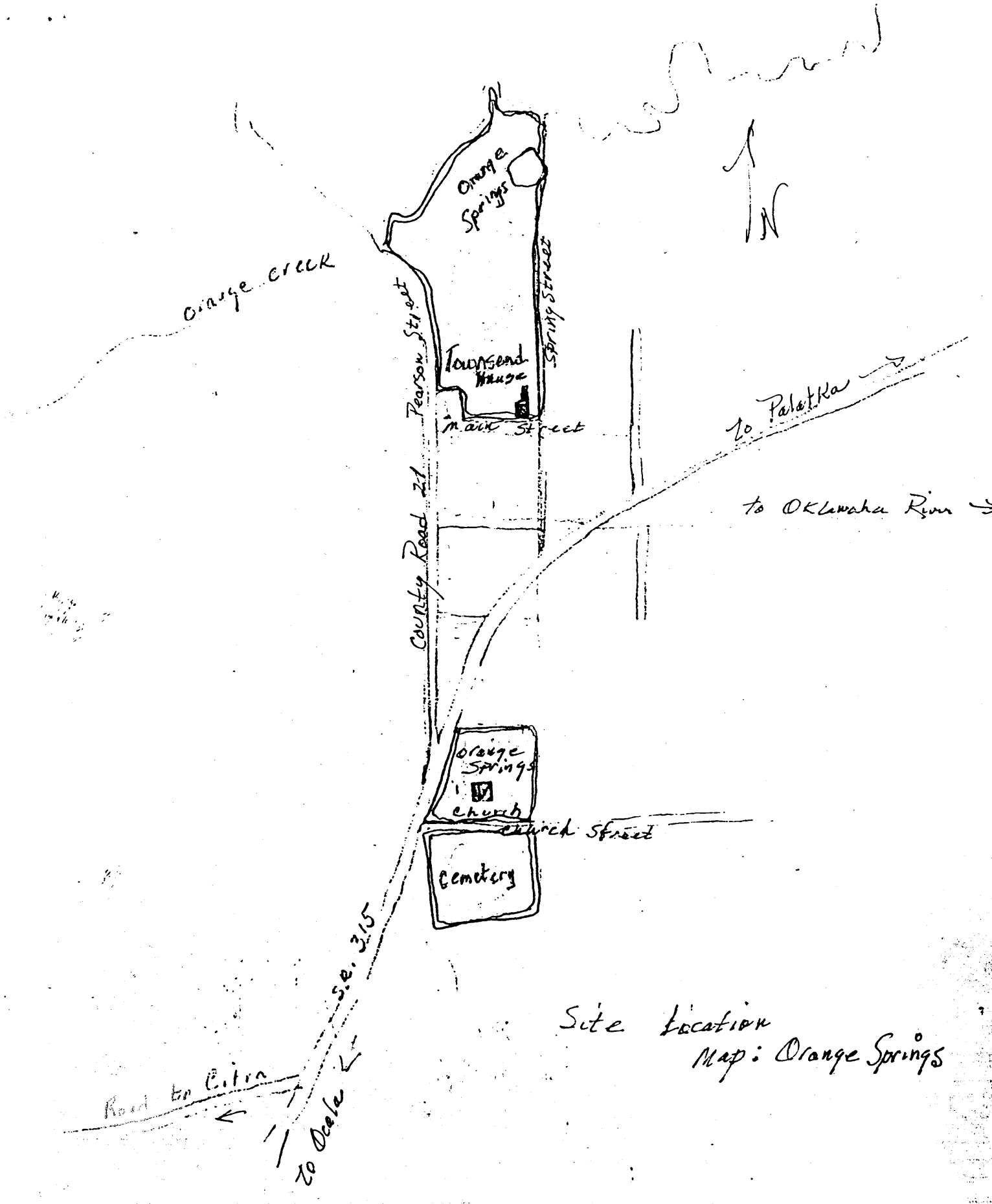
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Church Street

1

Orange Springs
Cemetery





Site location
Map: Orange Springs

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88002805 Date Listed: 12/22/88
Orange Springs Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery Marion FL
Property Name County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Signature of the Keeper

12/22/88

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Criteria considerations A and D for this religious property, which also contains a cemetery, should be checked as part of this record.

Discussed and concurred in by Florida SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)