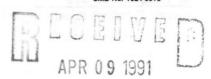
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



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.

(Form 10-300a). Type an entires.			
1. Name of Property	Tool Tool		
historic name First Presbyterian	Church		
other names/site number N/A			
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2. Location		godaneeda Issas	no projekt ene vecesio adoce
street & number 212 College Av	· P-		not for publication N/A
city, town Clarksville			vicinity N/A
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3. Classification			
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	Category of Property		
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4. State/Federal Agency Certific	ation		
Signature of certifying official Arkansas Historic F	Preservation Program		4-3-9/ Date
State or Federal agency and bureau			
In my opinion, the property mee	ets does not meet the Nati	ional Register criteria. See	continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official	al		Date
State or Federal agency and bureau			
5. National Park Service Certific	ation	Entered	in the
I, hereby, certify that this property is:	/.	Total and	1 Register
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Materials (enter categories from instructions)
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roof Asphalt
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Summary

The First Presbyterian Church is a two-story, brick masonry and steel ecclesiastical structure designed in the Classical Revival style. Its plan consists of a central, full-height sanctuary surrounded by two storys of associated offices, activity spaces, recreational rooms and liturgical spaces. Its flat roof and dome are covered with asphalt roll, its parapeted walls are constructed of concrete and red brick, and the entire structure rests upon a continuous brick and concrete foundation.

Elaboration

The First Presbyterian Church is a two-story, brick masonry and steel ecclesiastical structure designed in the Classical Revival style. Its plan consists of a central, full-height sanctuary, rectangular in shape, surrounded by two storys of associated offices, activity spaces, recreational rooms and liturgical spaces. A large brick chimney abuts the eastern wall toward the southern elevation, and another smaller flue projects to the north. The roof is dominated by an octagonal dome that sits upon a tall drum. Each of the eight faces of the drum is lighted with three pair of small one-over-one wood sash windows that allow the light into the stained glass skylight in the ceiling of the sanctuary. The flat roof and dome are covered with asphalt roll, the parapeted walls are constructed of concrete and red brick, and the entire structure rests upon a continuous brick and concrete foundation.

The southern and western elevations - joined as they are by the monumental corner entrance and columned portico - are similar in appearance and composition. The western elevation is divided into three bays, the central of which projects slightly from the wall and is crowned by a pyramidal brick and stone parapet. Four flat concrete pilasters frame the monumental central stained glass window and support the classical entablature above. The cornice of the entablature is bracketed and the frieze is decorated with a concrete signage panel that reads "PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH." The pilasters feature simple rectangular bases and square Doric capitals. The spaces between the pair of pilasters to each side of the central window are lighted with one elaborate, one-over-one, wood sash window on each of the two storys, each being glazed with stained glass. The central, compound monumental window is divided horizontally into two fields. The upper field consists of four stained glass windows, separated by wood mullions, that form an arch. The lower field also features four stained glass windows separated by wood mullions, but these windows are rectangular. The brick arched opening surrounding this window is decorated with concrete springers and a concrete keystone. The bay to the north of the central bay is lighted with a double stained glass window and transom placed directly above the pedimented double-leaf entry below and by a single one-over-one stained glass wood sash window in each of the two storys just to the south. The pedimented entrance also features a concrete entablature supported by two flat Doric pilasters and half-

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

	7		2				
Section number _		Page					

sidelights with a transom, all glazed with stained glass. The bay to the south of the central bay is fenestrated with two symmetrically-placed, one-over-one, stained glass wood sash windows on each story. The raised basement is demarcated by a continuous concrete water table and lighted with six symmetrically-placed windows in the central bay; a separate, more simple basement entrance is placed to the south, adjacent to the brick staircase that leads to the main entrance.

The corner entrance bay is recessed beneath a pedimented, brick and concrete columned portico that is supported by an impressive brick and concrete staircase. The two soaring, round concrete columns are ornamented with molded bases and themselves support a tall, concrete entablature and projecting cornice. The cornice is bracketed in the same style as the entablature on the western elevation and also set above a signage frieze that reads "WELCOME." A double-leaf entry with a transom provides access into the church on the first floor and a pair of one-over-one, stained glass wood sash windows above light the vestibule behind.

The southern elevation is virtually identical to the western elevation, with the only noteworthy exception being the compression of the western bay so as to allow a broader eastern bay to accommodate a rear, single-leaf entrance to the building that features its own shed roof and brick staircase. This bay is lighted by a pair of symmetrically-placed one-over-one wood sash stained glass windows on the second floor and another placed to the east on the first floor.

The eastern bay, designed as it was to face away from the main intersection from which the church was intended to be seen, is far more simple. The southern bay is the only one to contain stained glass windows, and these are of the same one-over-one wood sash type seen before. The central, slightly projecting bay is divided by the brick chimney and accessed via a double fire stair to the south - connecting a single-leaf fire door on each story to the ground. This bay is lighted by an assortment of one-over-one wood sash windows on both storys and of varying sizes. The northern or rear bay is lighted by a row of five symmetrically-placed one-over-one wood sash windows on each floor. Similarly, the northern bay is accessed via a double fire stair to the east and three rows of one-over-one wood sash windows - on the two main storys and the raised basement - all glazed with clear glass.

The significant exterior details include the wealth of geometric but colorful stained glass used on the western and southern elevations, the elaborate Classical entablatures employed to define and focus the compositions of those same elevations, and the dominating corner entrance portico with its massive columns and elaborate brick staircase.

The interior retains much of its original detail, though the vast majority thereof is concentrated within the sanctuary, as one might expect. The sanctuary is oriented to the east and divided into a two aisle plan, with three sections of curved pews radiating back from the dias. The wall behind the dias is oriented around a monumental, slightly recessed, central arched opening

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

7	3	
Section number	Page	

that shelters the organ pipes and is flanked by a pair of tall Doric pilasters. The curved walls that provide the transition from the pilasters to the arch are noteworthy for their curved wood doors that were specifically designed for them. The walls and ceiling throughout the sanctuary are plaster and without much significant ornament. However, literally above all is the octagonal skylight, filled with an abundance of ornamental stained glass that features stylized vegetal references typical of the 1920's. Other characteristics of note within the sanctuary are the rows of simple wood benches in the balcony at the rear. The administrative and vestry rooms that surround the sanctuary are all much more simple and less ornamented, as would be typical of these more functional and less celebratory spaces, though they are nevertheless largely well-maintained and in a good state of preservation. Spaces worthy of note are an original athletic and performance area in the basement and a large kitchen space.

The alterations that have occurred to the First Presbyterian Church have been solely concentrated on the interior. A room to the south of the sanctuary that was built for men's bible study was turned into a chapel area in the 1950's (though with relatively little change to the structure of the building) and some of the offices have had masonite wood paneling added in more recent years. However, the exterior looks just as it did when the building was completed in 1919, including all of its original glazing.

8. Statement of Significance	8	DISISTEM AND DESCRIPTION
Certifying official has considered the significance of this pro	perty in relation to other properties: Statewide locally	
Applicable National Register Criteria A B 30	C □D	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	D DE DF G	
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) Architecture	Period of Significance 1919-1922	Significant Dates N/A
	Cultural Affiliation N/A	
Significant Person N/A	Architect/Builder Clarke, A. O.	noisigamudos zyska kalintarab medimikso
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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

		X See continuation sheet	
Previous documentation on file (N			
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11. Form Prepared By			
name/title Ken Story, Arch			
organization Arkansas Historia	oric Preservation Program	date 3/29/91	
street & number 225 East M	larkham, Suite 300		
clty or townLittle Rock		state Arkansas	zip code 72201

9. Major Bibliographical References

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

8	1	
Section number	Page	

Summary

Criterion C, statewide significance

The First Presbyterian Church, designed by the architect A.O. Clarke from Rogers, Arkansas, stands as the finest example of Classical Revival architecture in Clarksville and in Johnson County. Its octagonal dome, columned corner entrance portico and large, arched stained glass windows distinguish it as an exceptionally erudite and high-style example of this particular style.

Elaboration

Clarksville's beginnings as a community were humble enough, occupying as it did a relatively unfavored location relative to its thriving neighbors on the Arkansas River: Pittsburg, Spadra and Morrison's Bluff. These communities prospered through the period of early statehood, and especially during the 1850's, when commercial trade up and down the Arkansas increased dramatically. However, all of these communities suffered during the Civil War - as did so many communities throughout the state - and several of these river towns disappeared altogether after 1873, when Clarksville's location above the river's north bank made it the preferred location for the Little Rock-Fort Smith Railroad. The absorption of this relatively small-time venture into Jay Gould's national railroad system soon thereafter only insured that the shift in activity and growth away from the river would continue, and that Clarksville would enjoy more than just a brief moment in the sun.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church had been established in Johnson County as early as 1840 under the leadership of Rev. Anderson Cox. However, they worshipped for a full eighteen years without a building to call their own, and they had to borrow the county courthouse. Their first structure was constructed of brick and erected in 1858.

The fortunes of Clarksville's Presbyterians - and their relative stature among the city's religious groups - only increased with the establishment of Arkansas Cumberland College at the northern edge of the city (now the College of the Ozarks). The siting of the state college of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Clarksville has been seen by virtually all local historians of Johnson County as one of the single greatest boons to the city's well-being and vitality. Naturally, the local Presbyterians began to feel a special responsibility to provide proper and suitable quarters in which to accommodate the students; and since their financial situation as a congregation improved dramatically during the first two decades of the college's operation, it was only a matter of time before the congregation would decide that it had outgrown its old, smaller building and owed it to all of its faithful to provide a more modern facility.

The decision to construct a new church for Clarksville's Presbyterian congregation provided

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

8	2	
Section number	Page	

a fortuitous opportunity for a cooperative venture between two unique individuals: the Rev. Elbert Hefner, the clergyman in charge at the church, and the architect Albert Oscar Clarke from Rogers, Arkansas, Rev. Hefner embraced an extremely progressive view of the church's role in the community and felt strongly that the church had an obligation and a responsibility to serve. Thus the construction of a brand new church building presented him with a golden opportunity to obtain a facility that would contain all the features he considered necessary to better carry out those responsibilities, and he made certain that he had an architect who was both sympathetic and capable. A.O. Clarke came to Rogers, Arkansas from St. Louis, Missouri in 1904 to supervise the construction of his design of Applegate's Drug Store on First Street. Once in Rogers, however, Clarke's architectural practice in Rogers and the surrounding area expanded rapidly, and he soon had more work just in northwest Arkansas than he could handle. Such commissions as his designs for the American National Bank in Rogers and the Bentonville Bank Building in Bentonville spread his renown as one of the better and preferred architects. It should also be noted that his design of 1915 for the Presbyterian Church in Rogers must have earned him special recognition among Presbyterians; the similarities between the designs of this building and that for the First Presbyterian Church in Clarksville of four vears later are unmistakable.

Yet the surviving correspondence between Clarke and Rev. Elbert Hefner does not reveal specifically how Clarke came to receive the commission, nor does it reveal the architect that the church had worked with previously before deciding to work with Clarke instead. However, Clarke himself makes a rather cryptic comment about "...the matter with the other architect..." being settled and how happy he was that he could now feel confident in proceeding with a full set of plans and specifications. In any case, though most of what survives in these files are Clarke's responses to Hefner's letters - and few of Hefner's letters remain - it is clear that Clarke has been asked to include a whole host of anterooms, social and kitchen spaces, recreational areas, etc. in addition to a sanctuary and liturgical rooms. And though Clarke clearly had the model already in mind from the Rogers church design, he had to magnify all the proportions to accommodate both the larger lot and the greater space requirements of this congregation. The result, completed in 1922, was a church building that cost over \$100,000, contained a seating capacity for 1,200 people, and became not only the best and most grand example of the Classical Revival style of building in Johnson County, but also ranks as one of the finest and most impressive commissions of Clarke's career.

A.O. Clarke certainly became a master of the Classical Revival during his illustrious design career in Arkansas, and the state is fortunate in having a relatively high number of his executed buildings survive today. Yet not one of his bank or institutional designs manifests his talent at handling classically-inspired forms and materials in a scale and sheer drama that compares with his design for the First Presbyterian Church in Clarksville. As such it is being nominated under Criterion C with statewide significance as the extraordinary work of a master.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

9	1	
Section number	Page	

Bibliography

Langford, Ella Molloy, *History of Johnson County, Arkansas*, (Clarksville, 1921), pp. 78-80, 91-96.

Murphy, Lucille, A Brief History of the First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Arkansas, (1986), pp. 1-11.

"One Man Designed City's Most Notable Buildings," *Northwest Arkansas Morning News*, 5/25/1986, pp. 6-7C.

"Presbyterian Church Dedication, Sunday, May 28th, 1922," *The Herald-Democrat*, 5/25/1922, p. 1.

"Presbyterians Here 125 Years," The Johnson County Graphic, 10/14/1965, p. 1.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION	
PROPERTY First Presbyterian Church	01100014
MULTIPLE NAME:	
STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Johnson	
DATE RECEIVED: 4/09/91 DATE OF PENDING LIST: DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/10/91 DATE OF 45TH DAY: DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:	4/24/91
REFERENCE NUMBER: 391000588 Date worldsomeoffing a to the	
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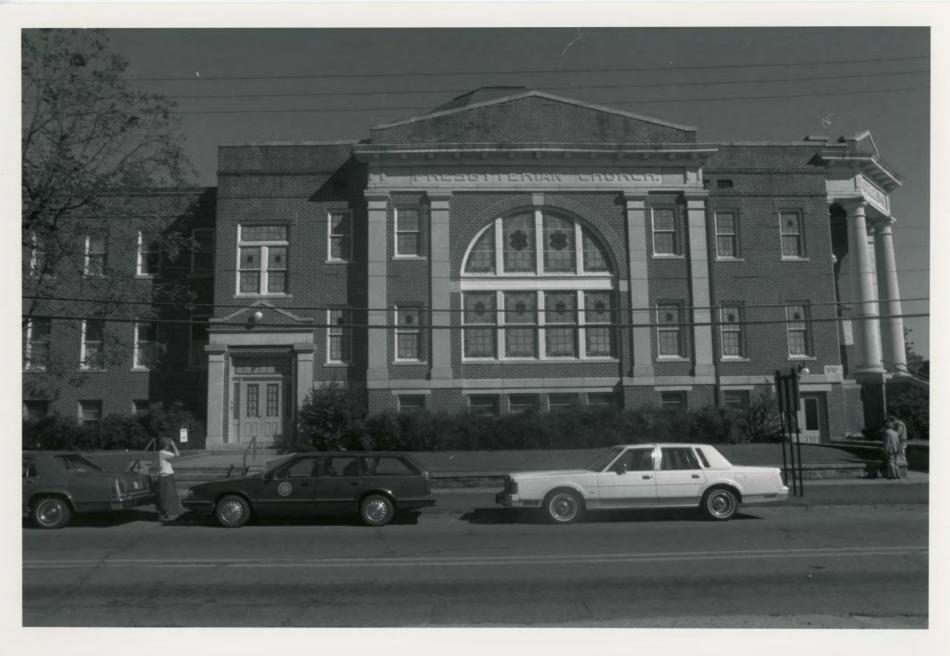
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

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OTHER COMMENT	S	
Questions con	cerning this nomination may be direct	ed to
	Phone	
Signed	Date	
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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CLARKSVILLE, ARKANSAS

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CLARKSVILLE, ARKANSAS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER

OCTOBER, 1980

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CLARKSVILLE, ARKHINSAS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER

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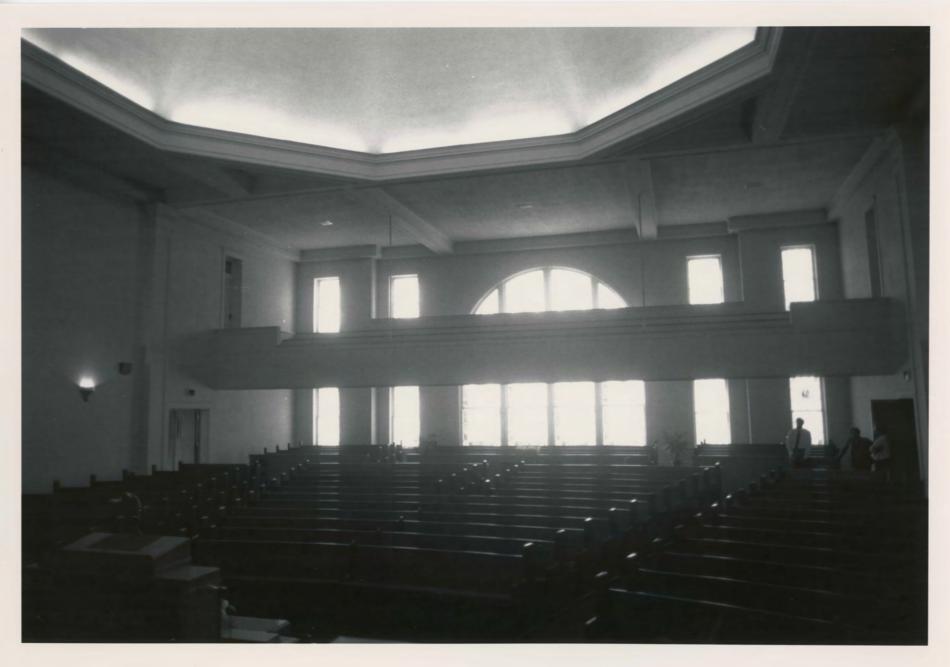


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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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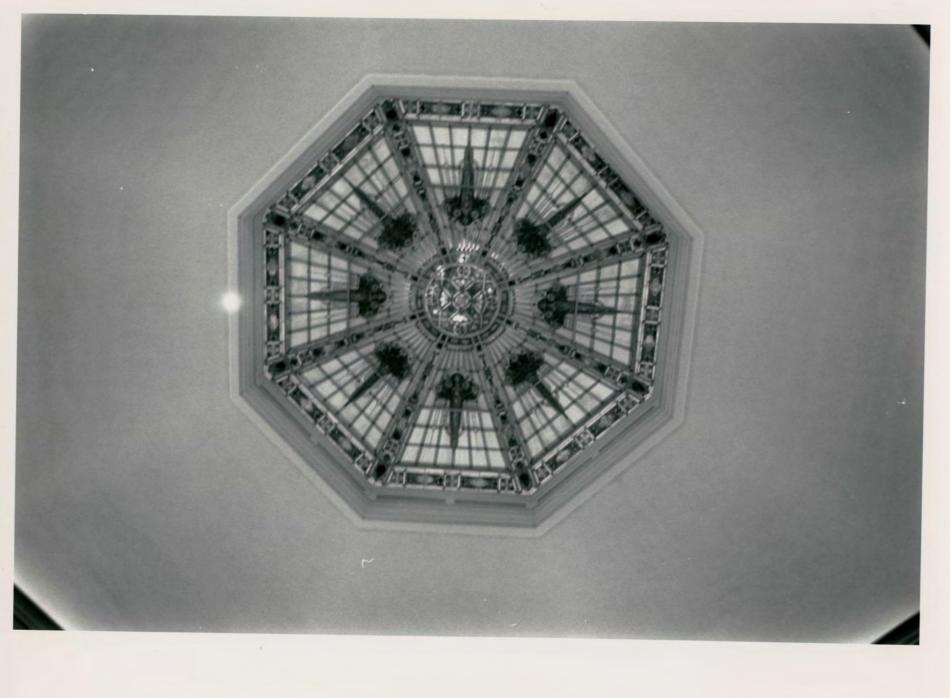
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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CLARKSVILLE, ARKANSAS PHOTOGRAPHED BY P. ZOLLNER OCTOBER, 1980 NEGATIVE ON FILE AT AHPP SOCIACH DETAIL

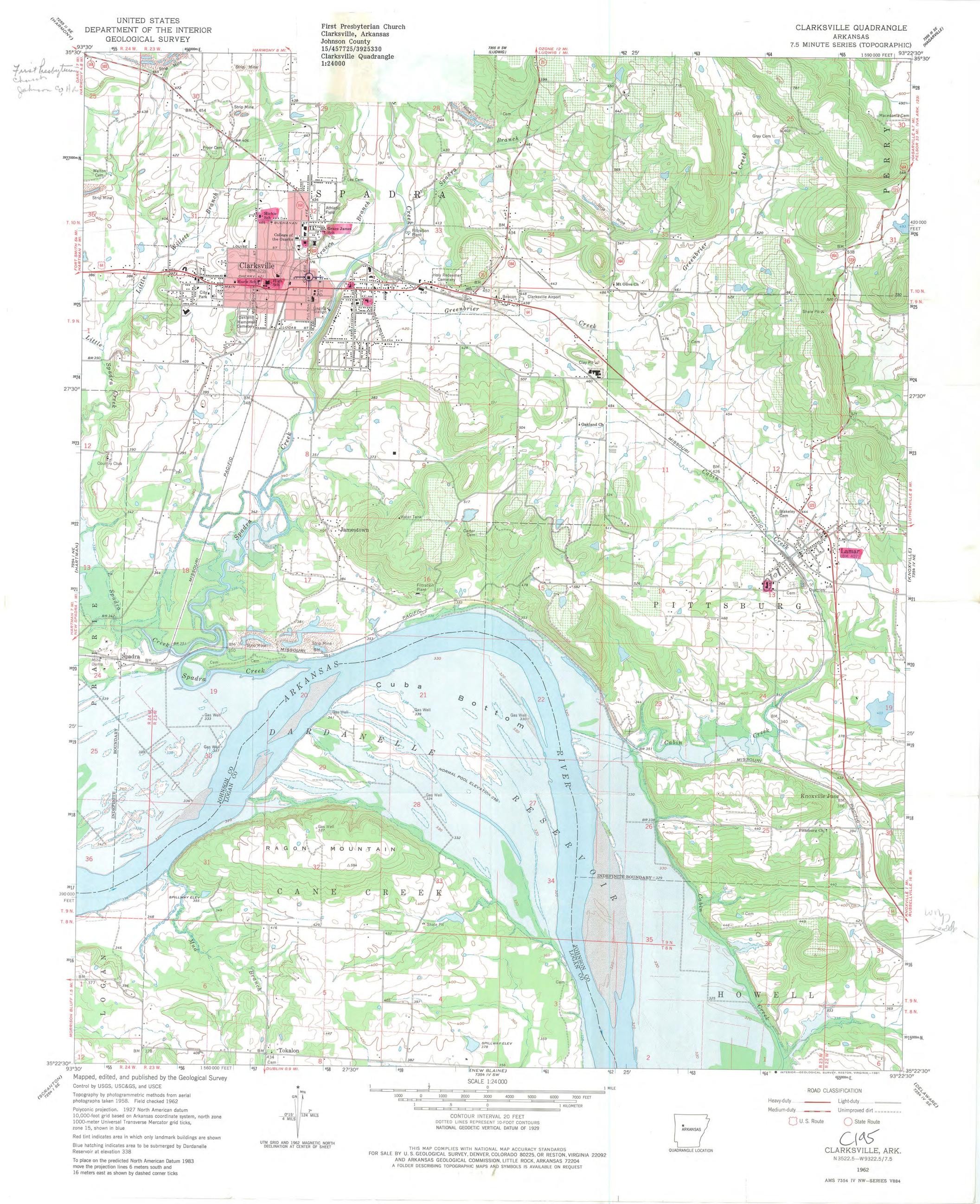
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NATIONAL REGISTER

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

April 2, 1991

Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1100 "L" Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

RE: First Presbyterian Church

Clarksville - Johnson County, Arkansas

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the nomination of the above referenced property. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathy Buford

State Historic Preservation Officer

CB:kg

Enclosures

