

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

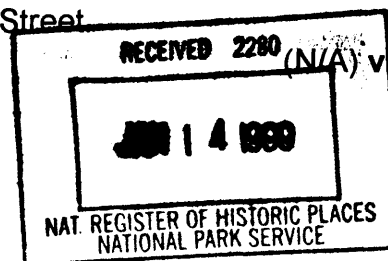
This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested 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 First Methodist Episcopal Church 160
other names/site number Stillmore United Methodist Church; Stillmore Methodist Episcopal Church South

2. Location

street & number Northwest corner of Third Avenue and Third Street
city, town Stillmore
county Emanuel **code** 107
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30464



(N/A) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

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

Number of Resources within Property:	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	1	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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 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 the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Richard Cox
Signature of certifying official

1-4-99
Date

W. Ray Luce
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Edson A. Beall 2.12.99

() determined eligible for the National Register _____

() determined not eligible for the National Register _____

() removed from the National Register _____

() other, explain: _____

() see continuation sheet

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Religion/religious facility

Current Functions:

Religion/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Romanesque Revival

Materials:

foundation	Brick
walls	Brick
roof	Metal: tin
other	Concrete

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The First Methodist Episcopal Church in Stillmore, Georgia, is a large, Romanesque Revival-style brick church with a three-story corner tower and a tall gable front. Designed by Charles Edward Choate and built between 1907 and 1908, the Stillmore church features two similar arched entrances at each end of the main (south) facade. The southeast entrance is located at the base of the tower. The tower features narrower, round-arched windows at the second level and an enclosed belfry surmounted by a double-pitched pyramidal roof. The tower roof, like that of the auditorium, is covered with pressed-metal shingles. The south, east, and west facades each feature a large, round-arched window composed of five vertical and three circular stained-glass lights. Windows throughout the church feature round-arched brick hoods. Painted brick water tables and string courses ornament the front and sides of the building.

The interior of the church features an open plan with three rows of wood pews facing the dais. The auditorium includes a tongue-and-groove wood floor, plaster walls, and a pressed-metal ceiling. The northeast corner of the auditorium was enclosed as the minister's study. In 1915, a fire destroyed much of the interior. Flecks of stained glass from the windows that melted from the fire can still be seen on the front steps. The next year the church was rebuilt within its existing walls according to the original design. In 1976, the openings in the bell tower have been filled with concrete block to stabilize deteriorated brickwork in the tower. A one-story social hall was added to the rear of the church during the middle 1990s.

The church is located on a large lot near the center of the small town of Stillmore. The lot, which is mostly open, features a grass lawn and a small number of deciduous and evergreen trees.

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Section 7--Description

Camellias and other shrubs have been planted near the foundation. The rear lot on which the parsonage was located remains unpaved and is used by church members for parking.

In 1994, the trustees of the church sold the parsonage. It had not been used and had been allowed to deteriorate. The parsonage was purchased and relocated to another site in Stillmore before the new property owner determined that the building could not be rehabilitated. The building was then dismantled and its materials were incorporated into a new house.

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): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture

Period of Significance:

1907-1916

Significant Dates:

1907-1908 - date of construction.

1915 - fire destroyed much of church interior.

1916 - church rebuilt according to original designs.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Choate, Charles Edward

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The First Methodist Episcopal Church, Stillmore, Georgia, is significant in architecture as an excellent example of the early work of Charles Edward Choate, one of Georgia's most prolific architects. Choate practiced from the early 1890s until his death in 1929. Choate designed residential, commercial, and ecclesiastical buildings throughout Georgia in the styles popular at the turn of the century. The First Methodist Episcopal Church is an excellent example of the use of the Romanesque Revival style in Georgia.

The Romanesque Revival began in the mid-1840s in Europe and reached the height of its popularity in the United States in the 1850s and 1860s with mostly churches and public buildings. Also called the *Rundbogenstil*, this round-arched style competed with the Gothic Revival as another historical picturesque style. The Romanesque Revival style is characterized by round-arched openings for doors and windows and sometimes blind arcades. Masonry walls are typically broad and smooth and divided by beltcourses and stringcourses. In South Georgia, where natural stone is rare, masonry buildings are usually constructed of brick. The massing may be symmetrical or asymmetrical but in churches with two towers one is usually taller than the other.

In Georgia, the Romanesque Revival style was among the less popular historical styles. The Georgia Historic Resources Survey, which includes field data on 43,800 buildings, identifies only 81 buildings as Romanesque Revival and only 40 of these are churches. The survey, by way of contrast, includes 213 churches among 382 Gothic Revival-style buildings.

Charles Edward Choate, the architect of Stillmore First Methodist Episcopal Church, was born August 31, 1865 in Houston County, Georgia. His grandfather, Jacob Thompson Choate, was an architect who designed the old Capitol in Milledgeville and the Wesleyan Female School in Macon. Charles is listed in 1889 as a matriculating student at the University of Georgia. The following year he began his study of architecture with a series of architectural internships over a ten-year period. He worked in the offices of Peter Dennis in Macon, George Thompson in Dublin, and Joseph Turner in Augusta. Between 1897 and 1898, Choate studied at Vanderbilt University.

In 1891, while training to be an architect, Choate began a career as a Methodist minister. He served individual churches and small churches linked into "charges" across middle Georgia. The Sandersville, Georgia newspaper in early 1899 announced Choate's intent to establish a partnership in architectural design with the Reverend George C. Thompson who was also a minister-architect and builder of churches. Thompson had designed the Dublin Methodist Church in Dublin, Georgia and the Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in Atlanta.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

From 1891 until 1903, Choate worked intensively in Sandersville and Tennille, Georgia, where he had a profound impact on the appearance of these towns. He designed residential, commercial, industrial, and religious buildings. Choate's Sandersville houses are excellent examples of Victorian, Neoclassical, and Victorian Eclectic architecture. It is unusual for small towns such as Sandersville and Tennille to have so many architect-designed buildings. Because Choate began his practice during the period of greatest prosperity in Washington County, Choate's faithful clients multiplied their commissions and recalled him to do later work. This increased the volume and variety of Choate's work in these towns.

Charles Edward Choate's earliest building in Sandersville and Tennille was built in 1896, while the latest work dates from 1919. At least 14 of his buildings were built between 1896 and 1903. Some of them include high-style Victorian-era residences such as the Paris-Veal House, ornate commercial buildings such as the Holt Brothers Banking Building and the Wrightsville and Tennille Railroad Building, and Gothic Revival-style churches such as the Tennille Baptist Church.

Charles Edward Choate married Agnes Smoot Dodson on July 5, 1900, in Maysville, Kentucky, during the height of his practice in Washington County. Choate and Dodson had been engaged for five years during which time Choate served as a Methodist minister in Wrightsville. Dodson had arrived from Kentucky to teach private music lessons. According to family letters, Dodson wished that Charles not preach and Charles respected her wishes by establishing a career in architecture. Methodist records indicate that in 1899 Choate was not associated with a specific church and that he was "located," meaning that he ceased to travel.

In 1900, the Choates moved to Augusta, Georgia, where he worked for Joseph C. Turner and Company. Turner died in about 1903, and Choate took over his business, completing his unfinished commissions. Work completed by Choate includes St. John's Methodist Church, parsonage, and education building in North Augusta, South Carolina. He also designed the Young Men's Christian Association Building and designed half a dozen residences, particularly along Green Street where he lived and in the Augusta suburb of Summerville.

His work after 1900 was not limited to Augusta and its environs and marks Charles Edward Choate's emergence as a regional designer. He returned to Tennille to design several houses, the Tennille Baptist Church, and Washington and Tennille Railroad Building. His Winnie Davis Memorial Hall, an austere Neoclassical dormitory at the old "normal" school in Athens, is integral to the Oglethorpe Avenue National Register Historic District. Also from this era was Choate's 1902 Muscogee Elementary Training, an eight-grade laboratory school (demolished) where teachers practiced teaching techniques. In 1903, Choate published a brochure of his "recent designs," including the High-Victorian Gothic Isaac Hardeman House in Macon, Georgia, Neoclassical residences for S. And M. G. Michael in Athens, Georgia, and Neoclassical houses for W. E. Jones and W. A. Wilkins in Waynesboro, Georgia. In addition, Choate returned to Wrightsville to design a Methodist church.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

In 1907, he designed the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Stillmore and, the following year, the Second Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina.

By 1909, Choate had left Augusta, and he and Cyril B. Smith opened an office in the Candler Building in Atlanta, Georgia. For a time both the Augusta and Atlanta offices were open, supporting Choate's far-flung design contracts. By 1914, Deford Smith was in practice with them in Atlanta and Choate was elected to the Georgia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

During this period, Choate continued to design buildings and structures around the state of Georgia. His designs reveal his careful attention to detail, balance, and articulation, but also show adaptation to popular styles. With a broader base, his architectural activities radiated throughout the region, and most cities of importance contained at least one of his buildings. In West Point, Georgia, he designed the Neoclassical "White Columns" and Will Lanier-Jones residences. He designed the Craftsman-style Spence-Perry residence in 1916-1917 in Macon, Georgia, incorporating stones gathered by Mr. Perry for the buttresses and foundation. Its swimming pool, Macon's first residential swimming pool, has a distinctive pergola combining stones, wood lattice, and marble floor. In 1919, Choate designed the Kelly-Mertz House in Tennille, Georgia, in an unusual Mediterranean-Craftsman style. He also designed a country club in Albany, Georgia during this period.

In 1925, financial difficulties forced Choate to close his Atlanta office. He moved to Florida and was dropped from the Georgia Institute of Architects for nonpayment of dues, only to be reinstated the next year. He worked for Frances Kennard and Sons in Tampa, Florida and held the title, Supervising Architect, Central District, Florida State Hotel Commission. He soon opened a firm, Choate and Field, in Orlando. In the last two years of his life he practiced in Alabama in partnership with a young architect. He then practiced alone in Montgomery. Choate died November 16, 1929, in Maysville, Kentucky.

On July 28, 1994, the multiple property nomination, "Buildings Designed by Charles Edward Choate, Constructed in Washington County, Georgia, between 1896 and 1919," was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Charles E. Choate Thematic Nomination consists of 12 properties which are tied together because of their attribution to the early 20th-century Georgia-born architect Charles Edward Choate (1865-1929). Washington County contains the largest known concentration of Choate's work. Three of the 12 properties had been previously listed in the National Register.

National Register Criteria

C.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

The First Methodist Episcopal Church is a religious property that meets National Register Criteria Consideration A because it draws its primary significance from its architectural design by Charles Edward Choate.

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1907, the year the church was constructed, and ends in 1916, when the church was rebuilt after a fire that had occurred the previous year.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The church is the only building on the nominated property and it is a contributing building.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The Methodists of Stillmore organized a congregation in 1892, soon after the town was founded. Reverend Charles Edward Choate was appointed as the first pastor in December of that year. On September 23, 1892, George M. Brinson, the founder of Stillmore, conveyed a 110-by-140-foot lot at the northeast corner of Third Avenue and Third Street to the Trustees of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Stillmore. In 1895, George M. Brinson donated building materials and a small frame Methodist church was constructed. In 1905 or 1906, lightning struck the steeple and the church was destroyed by fire.

In 1907, the second church building was constructed under the ministry of Reverend R. S. Stewart. Charles Edward Choate, who had since left the ministry to practice architecture, was selected to design the second church building. The new church cost \$7,500. In 1914, George M. Brinson conveyed to the church an additional rear lot measuring 110-by-120 feet. A Craftsman-style parsonage was built on this lot.

On December 15, 1915, the church and parsonage were destroyed by fire. The exterior walls of the church survived but the fire only left only the chimneys of the frame parsonage. The church was rebuilt according to the original Choate design with only minor changes, such as the raised ceiling in the chancel which was lower in the 1907 church building. Construction of the new church and parsonage was completed in 1916 at a cost of \$10,000.

Following the completion of the new church building, the congregation continued to grow. By 1922, membership reached 180 and later exceeded 200. During this peak period a full-time pastor, who

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

resided in the parsonage, was assigned to Stillmore. The devastation wrought by the boll weevil in the late 1920s and 1930s resulted in the decline of small towns throughout Georgia as residents relocated to urban areas in search of employment. Membership in the Stillmore Methodist church declined. Worship services were held on the second and fourth Sundays of the month and periodically throughout the week. During the 1930s and 1940s, other area Methodists churches, including Wesley, Oak Park, and Ebenezer, were placed in Stillmore's charge. The church remains active and is currently known as the Stillmore United Methodist Church.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Clark, William B. Historic Property Information Form. April 1996. On file at the Division of Historic Preservation, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, with supplemental information.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (N/A) N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued
date issued:
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): EM-ST-20

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.5 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 385900 Northing 3589800

Verbal Boundary Description

The property boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map, drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the church building and the lot historically associated with the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Stillmore. The National Register boundary follows the current legal boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Steven H. Moffson, Architectural Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth Street
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** December 20, 1998

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) (N/A) not applicable

name/title
organization
street and number
city or town state zip code
telephone

- consultant**
 regional development center preservation planner
 other:

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

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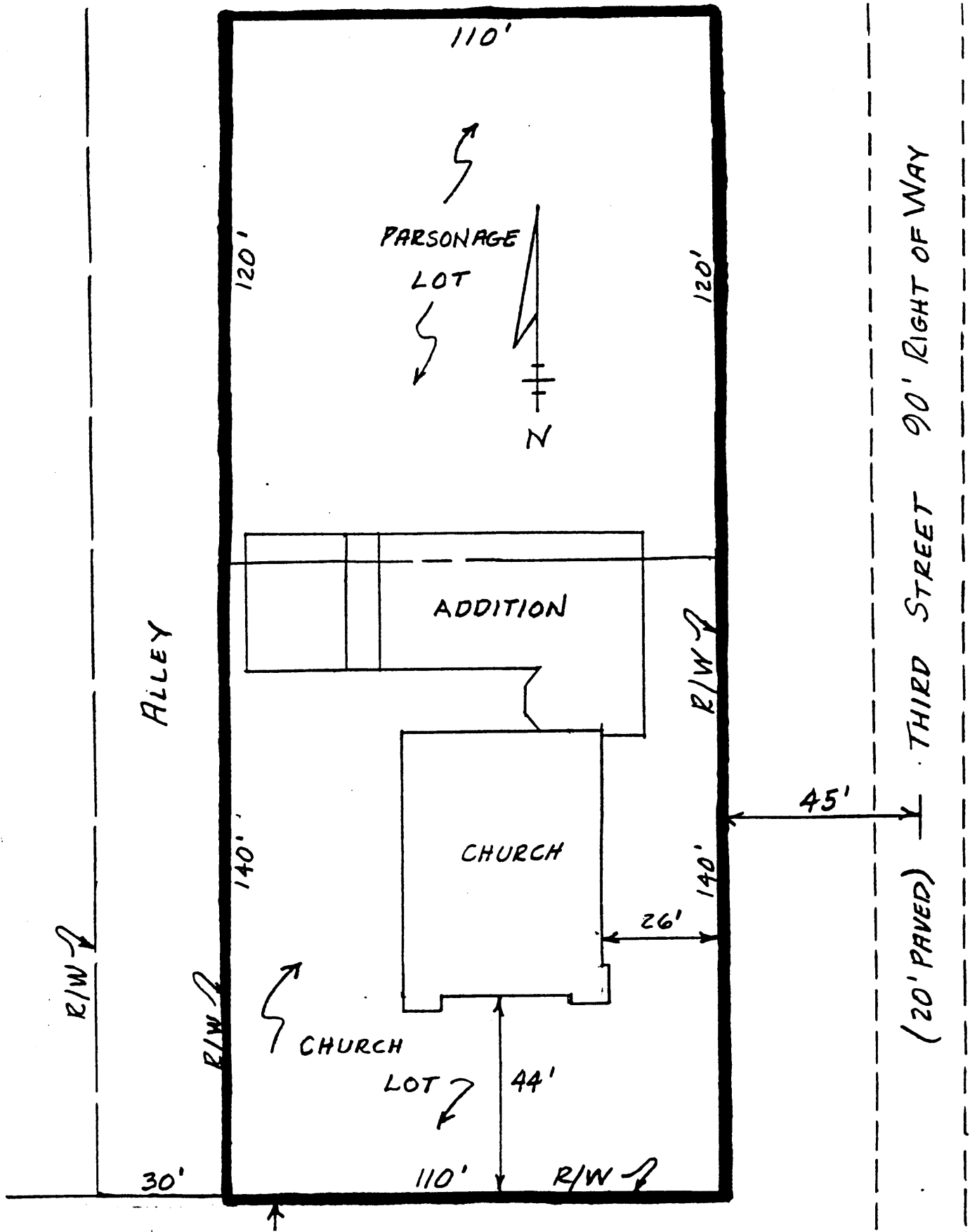
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Photographs

Name of Property: First Methodist Episcopal Church
City or Vicinity: Stillmore
County: Emanuel
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: March 1997

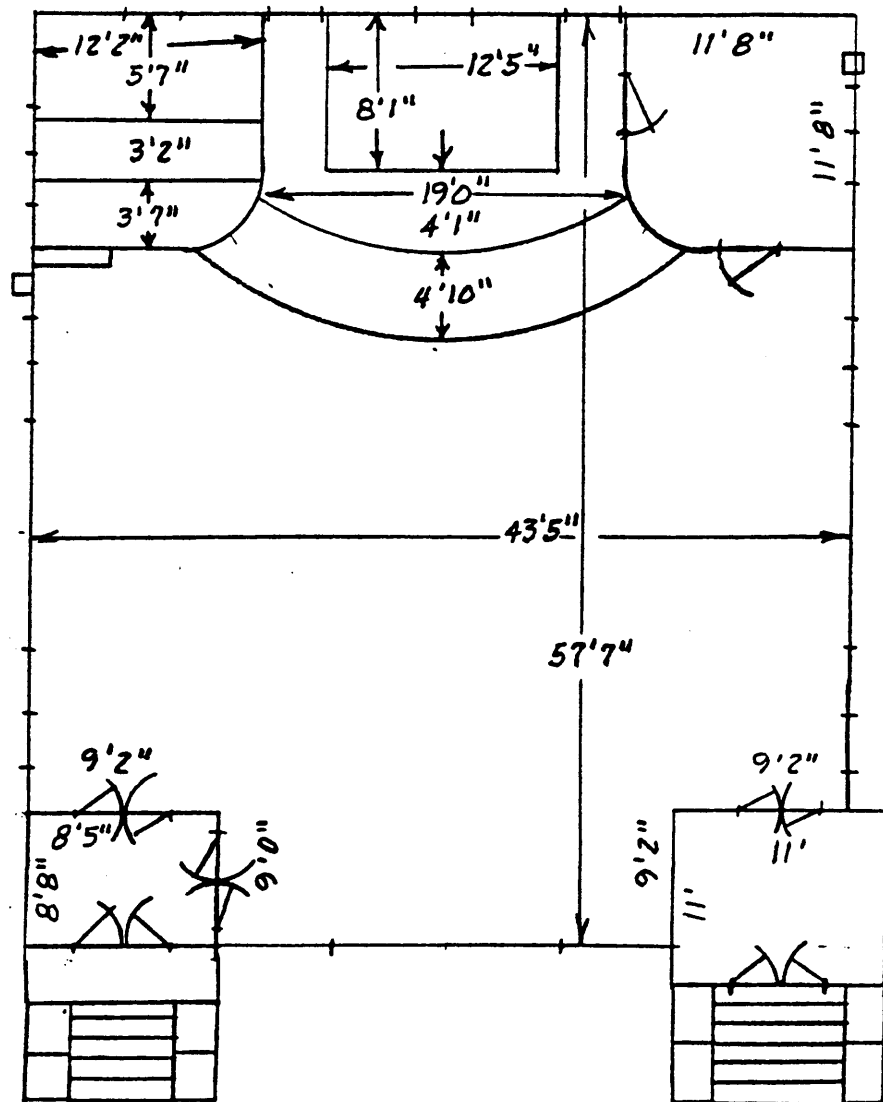
Description of Photograph(s):

1. Main facade and west elevation, photographer facing northeast.
2. Main facade and east elevation, photographer facing northwest.
3. Main facade and east elevation, photographer facing northwest.
4. East elevation, photographer facing west.
5. Main block and rear addition, photographer facing southwest.
6. Interior, view toward chancel, photographer facing northwest.
7. Interior, chancel, photographer facing northwest.
8. Interior, west wall, photographer facing west.
9. Interior, sanctuary toward rear, photographer facing southwest.



First Methodist Episcopal Church
 Stillmore, Emanuel County, Georgia
 National Register Boundary Map
 Scale: 1" = Approximately 30'
 North ↑

17.5'
 3RD. AVE. (20' PAVED) 75' RIGHT OF WAY
 20' PAVED
 90' RIGHT OF WAY



First Methodist Episcopal Church
 Stillmore, Emanuel County, Georgia
 Floor Plan
 No Scale
 North ↑