

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 02001260

Date Listed: October 31, 2002

Property Name: Evergreen Congregational Church and School

County: Grady

State: Georgia

none
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.

for Daniel J. Vivian
Signature of the Keeper

October 31, 2002
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

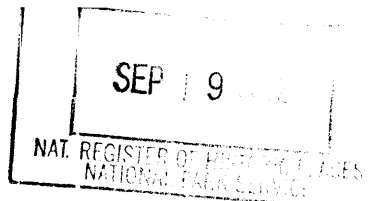
Section 8. Statement of Significance

"1904" is hereby deleted as a significant date because it is not within the period of significance.

The Georgia State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

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



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 Evergreen Congregational Church and School
other names/site number N/A

1260

2. Location

street & number 497 Meridian Road
city, town Beachton () vicinity of
county Grady code 131
state Georgia code GA zip code 31792

() not for publication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:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	2	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	2	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 C. Lewis 9.10.02
Signature of certifying official Date

for W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
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
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain:
- see continuation sheet

Daniel J. Vivian 10/31/02

for _____
Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Religion: religious facility, church school, church-related residence

Current Functions:

Religion: religious facility, church school

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

No style

Materials:

foundation	Concrete
walls	Concrete
roof	Metal
other	Wood

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Evergreen Congregational Church and School is located in the rural African-American community of Beachton in Grady County in southwest Georgia. Beachton is a small community south of Thomasville, Georgia and just north of the Florida state line. The two-acre Evergreen property is a mostly open grass lawn with a historic church and school set side by side along Meridian Road (photos 1-2). A small stand of pine trees between the buildings and the road and a few pine and oak trees on the southwest side are the only trees on the property. Foundation plantings around both buildings include azaleas, redbud, and nandina (photos 3 and 8).

The Evergreen church is a gable-front church with an entrance porch and cupola (photo 3). Constructed in 1928, the church is built of concrete block and wood lath with a stucco finish. The gable-roofed portico is supported by four posts. Two posts rest on the concrete steps, the outer posts are set directly in the ground. The front gables of the both the portico and the roof are clad in beveled weatherboard. The roof is covered with sheet metal and surmounted by a pyramidal-roofed cupola. Four pilasters are located between the sash windows on each side of the church. Between 1989 and 1991, the congregation built a 30-foot long annex to the rear of the church (photos 4-5). The annex is constructed of concrete block with steel lath and stuccoed to match the original church. Entrances are located on each side of the annex.

The sanctuary, which represents most of the church's interior space, seats 250 people (photos 6-7). It features two rows of pews divided by a center aisle with a raised rostrum at the southeast end. The rostrum accommodates clergy and a choir and is framed by a segmental proscenium arch and two enclosed side passages to the rear annex. The annex includes the pastor's office, two restrooms, a choir room, and a conference area.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

The church, especially the interior, has been altered since its construction in 1928. In 1972, the plaster walls in the auditorium were covered with paneling. An acoustical tile ceiling, fluorescent lights, chandeliers, new pews, and hollow-core doors were also added. The original yellow pine floors survive. The two-over-two-light sash windows were replaced by one-over-one-light sashes.

The school, built in 1911, is a one- and one-half-story cruciform-plan building with classrooms on the first floor and quarters for teachers above (photos 8-9). The school was designed by James E. Wright, a member of the Evergreen congregation. The school was constructed with poured-concrete reinforced with steel wire. The wood forms, sometimes even the wood grain, are visible in the horizontal bands across the exterior of the school. The window sills and lintels are also poured concrete. The exterior is distinguished by an enclosed entrance porch topped by a gable-roofed balcony. The steeply pitched side-gable roof features exposed rafter ends, interior end chimneys, and dormers across the front and rear (photos 5 and 11). The roof is covered with metal shingles and the gable ends are clad in weatherboard. The cornerstone is located on the northwest corner and reads: Grady County/Training School/A.M.A 1911 (photo 10).

The interior of the school remains largely unchanged since it was built in 1911. The first floor is devoted to the classroom and kitchen, each with its own front entrance (photos 12-13). The classroom and kitchen are separated by six four-panel wood doors that fold to create a single large space. Blackboards are located on the classroom walls. The classroom is carpeted and the walls in both the classroom and the kitchen have been paneled, probably in 1972 when the congregation paneled the sanctuary. The south side of the building features the women's rest room and lounge and the study. The study features plaster walls and a fireplace (photo 15). The rear ell comprises the men's restroom and the wood stair (photo 14). Like the floor above, the rear ell features original beaded board.

The second floor of the school features four bedrooms that were used to accommodate teachers. A central hall spans the depth of the building with the stairs at the rear and the balcony at the front. Each bedroom is entered from the hall and includes a dormer window and a gable-end window. (photos 16-18). The floors are wood and the walls and ceiling are mostly beaded board.

The Evergreen Congregational Church and School retains a high level of historic integrity. Although the church has been altered, it retains sufficient elements of its historic design to contribute to the significance of the property. The school, a rare surviving resource, retains a higher level of historic integrity. Its original design, materials, and craftsmanship are evident. This is seen in the rough finish on the poured-concrete walls, which indicates the work of congregation members and not skilled laborers.

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):

Ethnic Heritage: Black
Religion
Education
Architecture

Period of Significance:

c.1911-1959

Significant Dates:

1904 –Evergreen Congregational Church, established the previous year, occupies its current site.
1911 – School built.
1928 – Church built.
1957-1959 – Andrew Young pastorate at Evergreen Congregational Church.

Significant Person(s):

Andrew Young

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

James E. Wright (architect)

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Evergreen Congregational Church and School is an important landmark in the rural African-American community of Beachton in Grady County in southwest Georgia. The church and school served as the center of the black community in both religious and secular matters. Congregation members gave land for the church and school and provided labor for their construction. The church also served as the first pastorate for Andrew Young, a leader of the American Civil Rights Movement, United Nations Ambassador, and two-term mayor of Atlanta.

The Evergreen Congregational Church and School is significant the area of black ethnic heritage because the church played a central role in the lives of blacks living in the rural African-American community of Beachton. After emancipation, African-American community life was centered on the church. Evergreen was the first church in Beachton to provide schooling to African-American children in the community. Evergreen was also used as a community hall for such activities as voter registration drives, meetings with county commissioners, farm agents, home demonstration agents, 4-H Boys and Girls Clubs, and Boy Scouts.

Evergreen Congregational Church and School is significant in the area of religion because it is one of the few congregational churches built in Georgia during the first half of the 20th century. (Others are First Congregational Church in Atlanta and Bethany Congregational Church in Thomasville.) Congregationalism, a denomination that emphasizes missionary work, is rooted in New England. Following the Civil War, the American Missionary Association, the missionary arm of the United Church of Christ, became very involved in the education of African-American children in the South. The American Missionary Association established Bethany Congregational Church in nearby Thomasville for the express purpose of providing for the religious needs of black children attending the Allen Norman and Industrial School in Thomasville. The Evergreen Congregational Church was established in 1903 also under the auspices of the American Missionary Association.

The Evergreen Congregational Church and School is significant in the area of education because, under the auspices of the American Missionary Association, it provided a school in Beachton for African-American students whose educational needs were not met by the public schools. The Evergreen school was begun in 1903 and has used this building from 1911 to 1938. The building housed classrooms on the first floor and living quarters for teachers on the upper floor. Between 1916 and 1938, the county ran the school as the Grady County Training School. The Evergreen church and school are important because both the church and school survive. It is especially important because the school with its intact interior—classroom, kitchen, folding doors, upstairs teachers quarters—retains a high level of historic integrity.

The Evergreen Congregational Church and School is significant in the area of architecture because it is an excellent example of an early 20th-century church and school complex in rural in Georgia. Churches founded and built by blacks in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were usually plain, one-room frame structures of a rectangular shape with gable roofs. They had little or no ornamentation or architectural detailing. Sometimes the church had a rectangular wooden steeple, a

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

central tower mounted on the roof, or a tower at one or both front corners. Often these towers were later additions. Side or rear wings may also have been added after the church was originally constructed. The entrances of rural churches were centered. Interiors were usually finished with paneling or plaster and the ceilings were often unfinished.

The Evergreen church is typical of African-American churches with the simple massing of its gable-roofed rectangular-shaped sanctuary and in its use of inexpensive materials, such as concrete block and stucco. The school was designed by James E. Wright, a member of the Evergreen congregation. It is a rare and especially important resource because its craftsmanship is evident in the rough finish on the poured-concrete walls, which indicates the work of congregation members and not skilled laborers. The interior with its classroom, blackboards, folding doors, kitchen, and upstairs teachers quarters conveys the building's function as a school.

The Evergreen Congregational Church and School is significant at the state level because of its association with Andrew Young, a leader of the American Civil Rights Movement, Ambassador to the United Nations, and two-term mayor of Atlanta. Born on March 12, 1932 in New Orleans, Young earned a bachelor of arts degree from Howard University in 1951. He later earned a bachelor of divinity degree from Hartford Theological Seminary as a minister in the United Church of Christ. Young first served as pastor at Evergreen Congregational Church in Beachton from 1957 to 1959. In his autobiography, *An Easy Burden* (1996), Young noted that the lessons he learned at Evergreen served him during the struggle for civil rights. During his pastorate at Evergreen, Young first became involved in the civil right movement. During the 1960s, he joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and served as an administrative assistant and later as Executive Director under Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1972, he was elected to Congress. In 1976, President Jimmy Carter appointed him United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Young served as mayor of Atlanta from 1981 to 1989. He was co-chairman of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games and currently serves as President of the National Council of Churches.

National Register Criteria

A – Evergreen Congregational Church is significant in the areas of black ethnic heritage, religion, and education because the church and school were major religious and social institutions in the rural African-American community of Beachton.

B – Evergreen Congregational Church is significant because of its direct association with Andrew Young, a leader of the American Civil Rights Movement, Ambassador to the United Nations, and two-term mayor of Atlanta. While at Evergreen, his first pastorate, Young, began his efforts to achieve equality for African Americans.

C – The Evergreen church and school are significant in the area of architecture because it is an excellent example of rural 20th century religious and educational architecture constructed by the African-American congregation.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

G – The period of significance for the Evergreen Congregational Church and School extends to 1959 to include the pastorate of Andrew Young. The church and school meets Criterion Consideration G because it continues to achieve significance into a period less than fifty years before the nomination. Young first pastored at Evergreen and it was during his two years in Beachton that he became active in the American Civil Rights Movement. The lessons he learned at Evergreen, according to his autobiography, served him during the struggle for civil rights in the American South.

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1904 when Evergreen Congregational Church moved to its current site in Beachton and ends in 1959, the last year Andrew Young pastored at Evergreen Congregational Church.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The Evergreen Church and School are the only resources associated with the nomination. Both are contributing resources. There are no noncontributing resources associated with this nomination.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

In 1903, a group Beachton residents organized the Evergreen Congregational Church. That same year, Jerry Walden, Jr., led a group of community men in erecting a one-room frame school building on a one-acre site that was donated by Please Hawthorne. This was the first school for black children in the area. In 1904, a frame church was built adjacent to the school. The programs and activities of the church and school were intermingled under the supervision of the pastors. Reverend William H. Holloway served as the first pastor from 1904 until 1910. He was followed by Reverend Henry S. Barnwell, who served until 1916. In 1924, after an eight-year vacancy, Reverend George W. Hannar served as pastor and as principal of the school. Reverend Hannar resigned in 1930 and was replaced that same year by Reverend W. J. Hill. Andrew Young served as pastor from 1957 to 1959. In 1974, Reverend Artis Johnson arrived and remains the current pastor.

From the beginning, the American Missionary Association assumed responsibility for the church and school because of negligence by the public schools in the education of African-American children. In 1910, an adjacent acre of land was acquired and a new school building was constructed the next year. The new school building featured classrooms on the first floor and living quarters on the floor above. In 1916, the school was renamed Grady County Training School when the county assumed partial responsibility for the school.

In 1925, the original frame church was demolished. The new concrete-block church was completed in 1928. In 1942, electric lights were installed and indoor bathrooms were built. Between 1989 and

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

1990, an annex was built on the rear of the church to house the pastor's office, choir room, and restrooms.

In 1938, the educational programs at Evergreen were moved by the county to another location. The Evergreen school was then used as a community hall for such activities as voter registration drives, meetings with county commissioners, farm agents, home demonstration agents, 4-H Boys and Girls Clubs, and Boy Scouts. The school is currently known as Evergreen Recreation Center and serves as the fellowship hall for Evergreen church.

A number of church members played important roles in the history and development of Evergreen Congregational Church. Jerry Walden, Jr., was born in Grady County in 1869. He went to the public school in Thomas County and later attended Morehouse College in Atlanta. In 1903, Walden led a group of community men in erecting a one-room wood school building on a one-acre site that was donated by Please Hawthorne. This was the first school for black children in the area. Walden was the first African-American teacher in Beachton. He taught in Beachton until his death in 1935.

Please Hawthorne was born in 1854 in rural Grady County. He spent much of his life operating a general merchandise store in the Beachton area until his death in 1927. In 1903, he donated a one-acre site on which Jerry Walden, Jr., built the Evergreen school.

Joanna Greenlee was born in 1863 in Bainbridge, Georgia. After public school in Bainbridge, she attended the Allen Normal School in Thomasville, graduating in 1896. Later, she attended Fisk University in Nashville. By 1906, Joanna was working as the school principal at the Evergreen school in Beachton. She traveled frequently throughout the northern United States raising funds for the school. She continued to work at the school until her death in 1916.

Anna Heywood Mason, a former owner of the Susina Plantation in Grady County, was active in the construction of the Evergreen school. Daniel Glenn, a chef at the Susina Plantation, was a community advocate for education.

James E. Wright, the architect of the school building, received a degree in architecture from Tuskegee University. He was born in Brunswick, Georgia in 1887 and settled in Thomasville in 1914. He died in 1972.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bryant, Mishie M. Evergreen Congregational United Church of Christ and Evergreen Church School-Historic Property Information Form. 2001. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 2 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 774160 Northing 3402760

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundary follows the current legal boundary and contains the Evergreen and School on the two-acre tract historically associated with the church and school.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Steven H. Moffson, Architectural Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 156 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 101
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** September 1, 2002
e-mail steven_moffson@dnr.state.ga.us

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

name/title Mishie M. Bryant, Trustee
organization Evergreen Congregational United Church of Christ
mailing address 512 Junius Street
city or town Thomasville **state** GA **zip code** 31792
telephone (912) 228-1464
e-mail N/A

- () **property owner**
- () **consultant**
- () **regional development center preservation planner**
- (x) **other: church trustee**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Jerry Metcalf, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
organization (if applicable) Evergreen Congregational United Church of Christ.
mailing address 721 Mercy Seat Road
city or town Thomasville **state** GA **zip code** 31792
e-mail (optional) N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Evergreen Congregational Church and School
City or Vicinity: Beatchton
County: Grady
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: April 2002

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 18

1. School (foreground) and church (background), photographer facing northeast.
2. Church (foreground) and school (background), photographer facing southwest.
3. Church, photographer facing east.
4. School (left) and church (right), photographer facing west.
5. School (left) and church (right), photographer facing north.
6. Church, interior, photographer facing southeast.
7. Church, interior, photographer facing northwest.
8. Church (background) and school (foreground), photographer facing northeast.
9. School, main façade, photographer facing southeast.
10. Cornerstone on northeast corner of school, photographer facing southeast.
11. School, photographer facing west.
12. School, interior, classroom, photographer facing south.
13. School, interior, classroom, photographer facing east.
14. School, interior, rear stair hall, photographer facing northeast.
15. School, interior, study, photographer facing south.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

16. School, interior, second floor, northeast bedroom, photographer facing northeast.
17. School, interior, second floor, northwest bedroom, photographer facing north.
18. School, interior, second floor southeast bedroom, photographer facing southwest.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)

Meridian Road

284'

311'

School

Church

6
2 AC.

284'

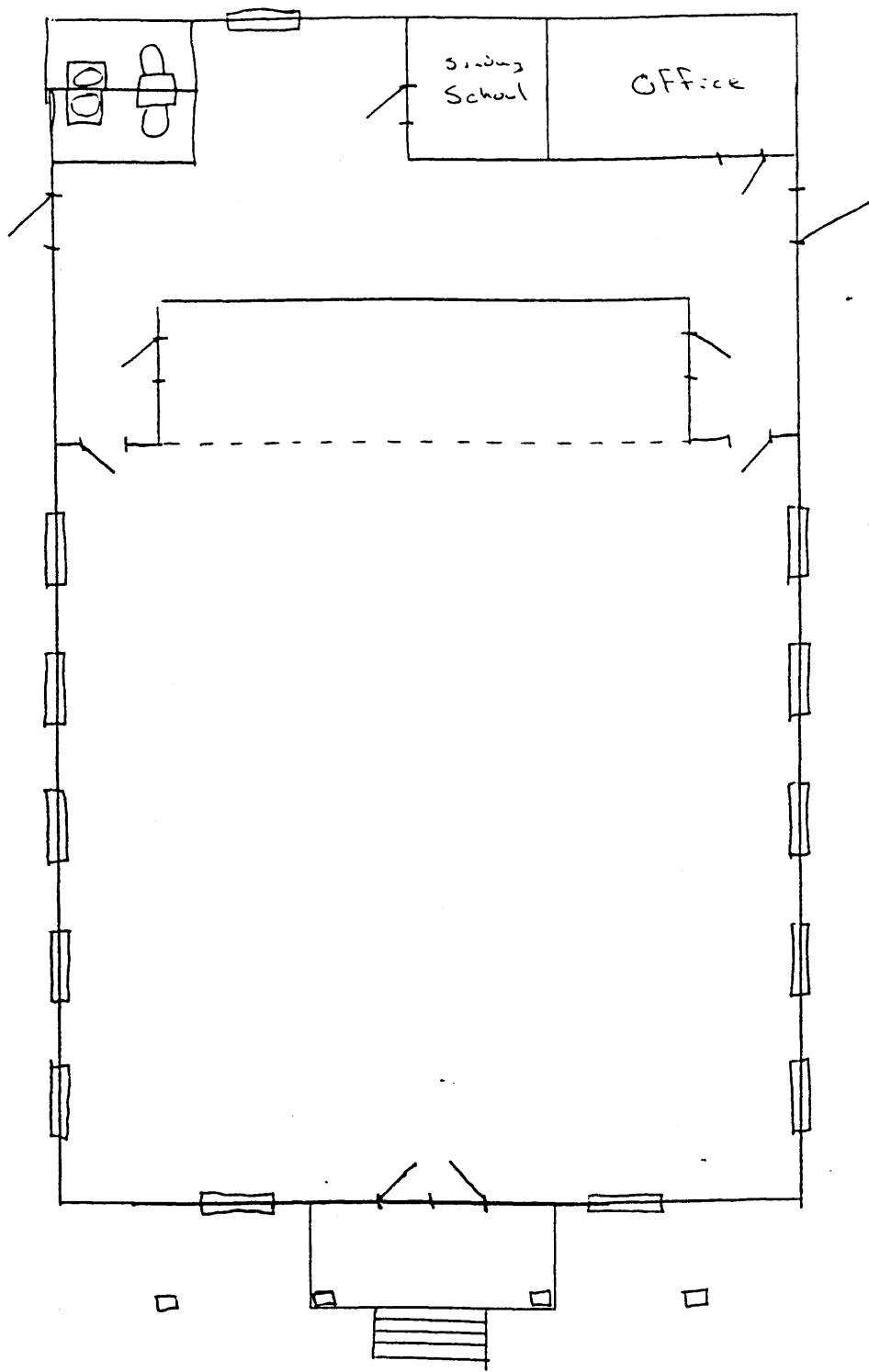
**Evergreen Congregational Church
and School**
Grady County, Georgia
Sketch Map

National Register Boundary **—————**

Approximate Scale: 1" = 95'



North



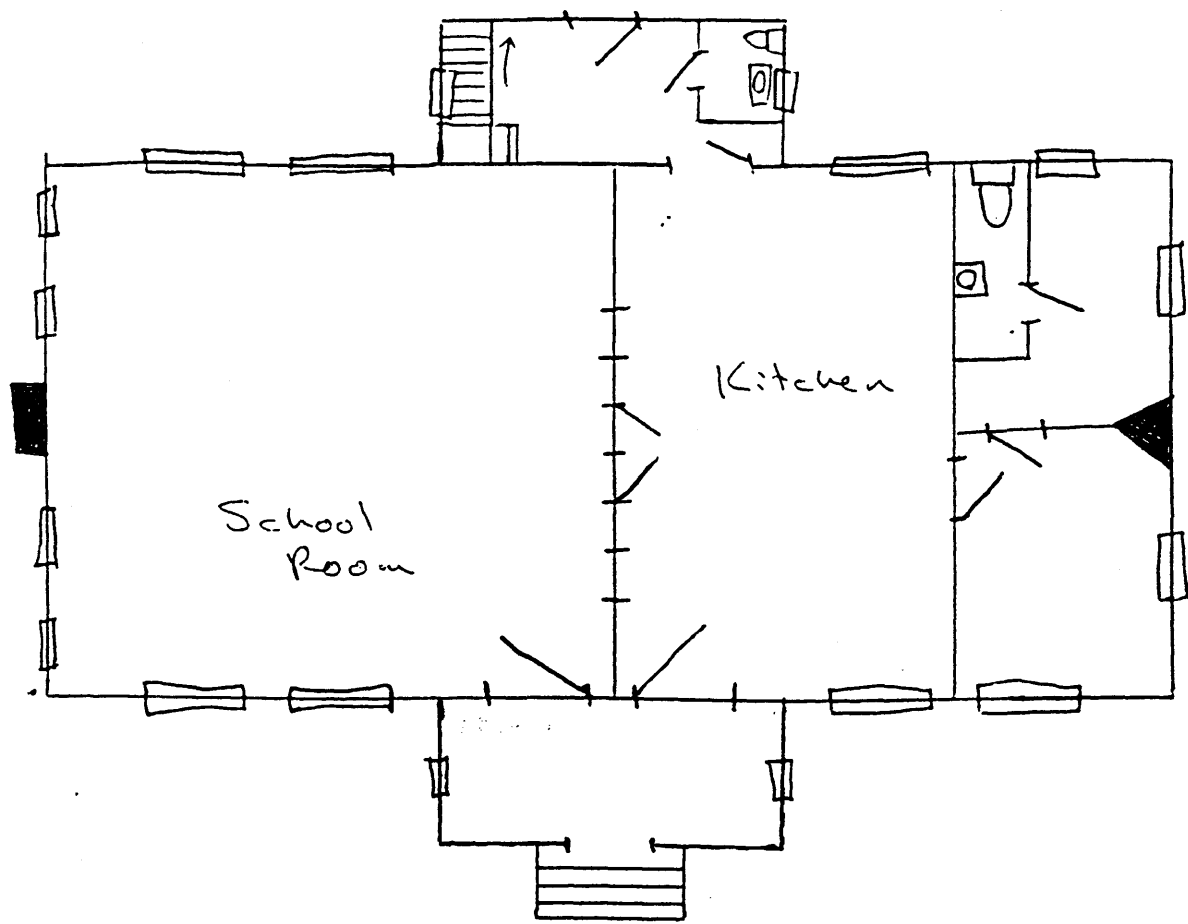
**Evergreen Congregational Church
and School**

Grady County, Georgia

Church Floor Plan



No Scale



**Evergreen Congregational Church
and School**
Grady County, Georgia

School Floor Plan

No Scale

North
↙