

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

**1 Name of Property**

historic name Warren Street M. E. Church

other names/site number Warren Street United Methodist Church

**2 Location**

street & number 201 South Warren Street [n/a] not for publication

city or town Warrensburg [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Johnson code 101 zip code 64093

**3 State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [XX] 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 [XX] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [XX] locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ] )

Claire F. Blackwell Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO 4 Nov. 96 Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4 National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [ ] entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- [ ] determined eligible for the  
National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- [ ] determined not eligible for the  
National Register.
- [ ] removed from the  
National Register
- [ ] other, explain  
See continuation sheet [ ].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district			
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0	structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0	objects
		1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

RELIGION/religious structure

**Current Functions**

RELIGION/religious structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

GOTHIC REVIVAL

**Materials**

foundation Sandstone  
 walls Brick

roof Asphalt  
 other Wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

**A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

**B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

Property is:

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or grave.

**D** a cemetery.

**E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

**F** a commemorative property.

**G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK  
ARCHITECTURE

**Periods of Significance**

1899-1946

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person(s)**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

King, John W./UNKNOWN

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9 Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10 Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

**UTM References**

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	435300	4290410			

C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing
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[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11 Form Prepared By**

name/title Roger Maserang/Historic Preservation Coordinator  
organization Pioneer Trails Regional Council date May 15, 1996  
street & number 122 Hout Street telephone 816/747-2294  
city or town Warrensburg state Missouri zip code 64093

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name Warren Street United Methodist Board of Trustees  
street & number 502 Aspen Way telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Warrensburg state Missouri zip code 64093

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Warren Street M. E. Church  
Johnson County, MO

Completed in 1899, Warren Street Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 201 South Warren Street, in Warrensburg, Missouri, is a brick, one-story, steepled-ell church building. The primary entrance is in the base of a square tower with a concave dome and a gabled cornice. Essentially a vernacular church building despite its small-city location, details such as the tower and round windows with a quatrefoil pattern in the three gabled facades give the Warren Street M.E. Church a more distinctive appearance. Except for Gothic-head windows and the foil patterns, which suggest a Gothic Revival influence, there are no strong architectural references. However, the Warren Street M.E. Church is probably the most complex 19th century religious building erected for a black congregation within the Show-Me Region. The church name and the year construction began, 1898, are carved in a stone panel centered in the west facade. Located a short block from the Missouri Pacific Railroad (now the Union Pacific) right-of-way, the Warren Street M.E. Church is in a part of Warrensburg which, physically, has experienced only moderate change since the period of construction. In addition to the building's authentic setting, integrity of design, materials, workmanship, association and location are also retained. There are no other structures on the church property.

The Warren Street Methodist Episcopal Church faces west from its site on the southeast corner of Warren and Madison Streets. The church is constructed of orange-tinted bricks laid in stretcher bond. It rests on a foundation of rock-faced sandstone blocks, which are painted white. Since the building is on a corner lot which slopes toward the front, the foundation tapers rearward and ultimately disappears from view. The building consists of an east-west wing containing the auditorium, with a short, perpendicular side wing on the north. The gray, asphalt shingled roof is penetrated by two square brick chimneys. A bell tower with a concave, four-sided dome rises from the intersecting wings on the northwest. A hipped roof capping the tower is of approximately the same height as the gable ridges. Lawn area surrounds the church, and the immediate neighborhood is residential consisting primarily of older, small, relatively plain houses, as well as vacant lots. The site of the church parsonage is just south of the building but a short flight of concrete steps is all that remains.

Exterior dimensions of the church's primary east-west wing are 28 feet wide by 50 feet deep. The side wing, also 28 feet wide, increases the church's maximum width by 14 feet, to 42 feet.

Bricks of a somewhat lighter hue are used to emphasize corners and window openings. Also, two courses of the same lighter-hued brick are used to simulate a beltcourse, providing a decorative, unifying horizontal line around the building at the level of the lugsills. The bricks used in construction of the Warren Street M.E. Church are said to have come from a kiln in Knob Noster, a neighboring town. Many bricks have badly damaged, pitted surfaces caused by sandblasting prior to remortaring in the 1970s. Rafter ends are shaped and the eaves are painted white. An unmarked cornerstone, presumably sandstone which has been painted white, is in the northwest corner of the Warren Street elevation.

Gothic-head, double-hung windows with original wood sash are found in all four elevations. Most lugsills are sandstone; some are concrete. Two pointed arch lights, a diamond-shaped light and two rectangular lights are in the upper sash of the 5/4 windows. Round windows with a quatrefoil pattern and clear glass are centered in the three gabled ends. In these windows, square central sections are

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pivoted. Except for the diamond-shaped lights which are clear glass, original panes of the Gothic windows are frosted. Sash are painted white.

Window fenestration is symmetrical. The west gable end, which fronts on Warren Street, has five windows: a round window high in the gable, two Gothic-head windows flanking it at a lower level, and two segmentally-arched basement windows in the sandstone foundation directly below the Gothic windows. This gable also contains a centered stone panel (below the round window) bearing the inscription "WARREN STREET/M.E.CHURCH/1898." The east gable contains a round window plus an entrance into the chancel. The north gable contains a round window flanked at a lower level by two Gothic windows but in this gable, the Gothic windows are more closely spaced than in the west. Four evenly-spaced Gothic windows are in the long south wall. One of the openings is covered with a white-painted panel where a small, frame furnace room with a shed roof abuts the brick wall. This elevation also has two segmentally-arched window openings in the foundation. Individual Gothic windows are located in the north tower wall, in the north ends of the rectangular wing, and in the east and west ends of the intersecting wing.

The largest Gothic arch is above the main entrance, in the west elevation of the tower. This arch is partially obscured by a shedroof over a concrete porch. Two original outside doors with panels have been replaced by modern, flat-surfaced doors. From the porch deck, a flight of concrete steps covered with green all-weather carpet leads to a landing and then to a short flight of steps and the public sidewalk. A secondary entrance with a round arch is in the east end of the main block.

The tower interior serves as a small vestibule. Upon entering the tower/vestibule, tall paneled doors on the right (south) provide access to the rear of the sanctuary, while an accordion-type "door" in what would be the tower's east wall provides access to the narthex or main vestibule within the intersecting side wing. This wing, which served as a dining hall before the basement was finished, contains restrooms, a family room and a vestry area. Vinyl, accordion-type partitions are between the narthex and sanctuary.

Although the Warren Street M.E. Church is a steepled-ell building, its 26' x 48' sanctuary is arranged as if it were a simpler gable-end design, with the elevated chancel at the east end of the main rectangular wing. Because the side wing is significantly smaller than the primary wing, the possibilities for a large interior seating area often permitted by the steepled-ell form are irrelevant. The congregation sits in two rows of oak pews arranged along a wide central aisle. An organ and piano are in the space between the pews and chancel. The north side of the chancel contains a preaching lectern, the south portion has choir seating and a soloist lectern, and an altar is centered against a drapery in the north wall. At the rear of the sanctuary, a stairway descends to a 23' x 29 1/2' basement dining area under the west portion of the building. An acoustic ceiling prevents interior viewing of the building's round windows and vaulted ceiling.

Interior walls of the sanctuary are covered with beige wallpaper above painted wainscoting. The paneled doors at the rear of the sanctuary, wainscoting and other millwork are painted a shade of rose which complements mauve wall-to-wall carpeting. Curtains are beige. Pews have dark red cushions. Above the lowered ceiling, the plaster walls and vaulted ceiling are painted blue. Woodwork in the

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Johnson County, MO

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narthex as well as in the base of the tower is painted white. A low chancel railing has been fabricated from plywood, pine boards and veneer wall paneling. Pews and other furniture are relatively new.

Readily visible historic materials inside the church include the windows and their surrounds, wainscoting which is present in the narthex as well as the sanctuary, and tall paneled doors between the tower/vestibule and the rear of the sanctuary. Although the vaulted ceiling is out of view, the area above the lowered ceiling is intact. The church bell remains in the tower but is not used.

In the 1960s, partition walls were added for two bathrooms and a family room in the narthex, and ceilings were lowered throughout the building in an effort to reduce heating costs. The basement which originally had a dirt floor was finished for use as a dining area, among other things, in about 1970. Other alterations have been minimal since the building's construction some 96 years ago.

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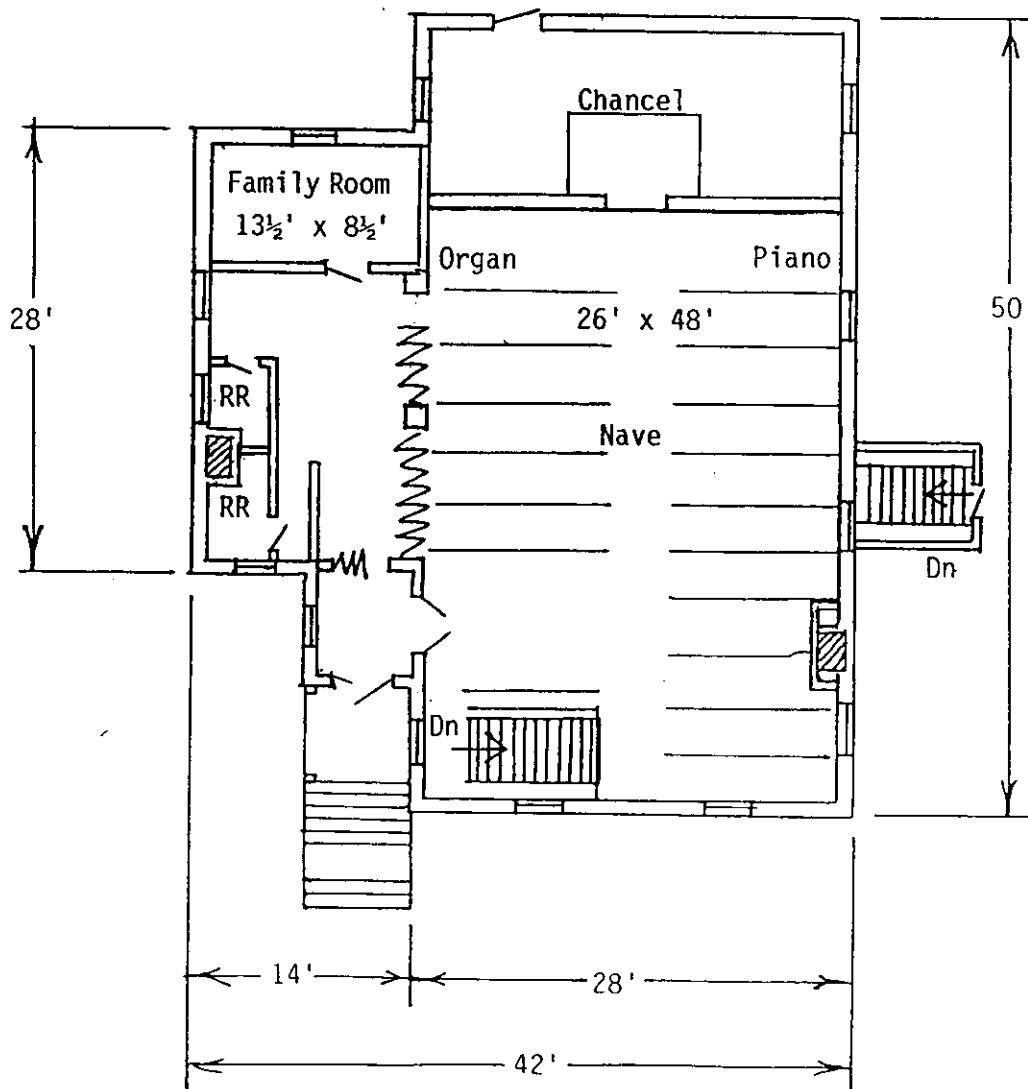
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First Floor Plan  
Scale: 1" = Approximately 12'





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The Warren Street Methodist Episcopal Church, 201 S. Warren St., Warrensburg, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C in the areas of ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK and ARCHITECTURE. Constructed in 1898-99 and in continuous use, the Warren Street M.E. Church is a building directly associated with Warrensburg's historic African-American community, erected by a local black denomination which traces its beginnings to the early post-Civil War years when blacks began to exercise their new freedoms. By its existence, the Warren Street M.E. Church building symbolized black success at achieving self-determination through ownership of property. Over the years the black church has transcended its purely religious function, providing a community focus for social and recreational activities. Its various preachers have held positions of respect and responsibility within the larger black community as well as within the church. Also it is the most complex of Warrensburg's church buildings erected for a black congregation, with such features as a tower containing the entrance, round windows with a quatrefoil design, Gothic-head windows and brickwork in two shades of orange. The Warren Street M.E. Church clearly exemplifies the vernacular steeped-ell form, rendered in brick. The Warren Street M.E. has further significance as one of a dwindling number of historic black churches with integrity in Missouri. The building's period of significance is from the time of its completion in 1899 through 1946, the arbitrary cut-off date for National Register properties. A strong impression of the building's past is easily conveyed, since high integrity is retained and the immediate environment has largely been bypassed by city development.

Methodism reached Missouri in 1798, some 14 years after the Methodist Episcopal Church had been organized in America. The first preacher was John Clark, who had known the movement's founder, John Wesley. Speaking from a boat, in 1798, Clark is said to have delivered the first Methodist sermon west of the Mississippi River to settlers in what became the present town of Herculaneum. For the next several years, while Missouri remained Spanish territory, Clark, who lived in Illinois, repeatedly crossed the Mississippi to visit settlements and preach Methodism.<sup>1</sup>

Many blacks initially responded to Methodism because of the church's opposition to slavery. But the slavery issue ultimately led to a division of the M.E. Church into separate denominations, a division that lasted nearly a century. In 1845, the pro-slavery Southern Conference formed the M.E. Church, South. When Missouri Methodists voted allegiance to the Southern Methodists, many black members nonetheless remained in the church until slavery was abolished. Black Methodists who ultimately left the M.E. Church, South, joined white denominations which had opposed slavery, or formed their own churches.

After the Civil War, in response to the wishes of many blacks as well as a sense of duty, the M.E. Church established a separate system of black churches. These churches remained an integral part of the Methodist system, unlike the Colored Methodist Episcopal churches established in 1870 by the M.E. Church, South, which were separate and autonomous units.<sup>2</sup> Another option for Missouri blacks drawn to Methodism was to join or organize an African Methodist Episcopal Church. Beginning with the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Philadelphia in 1794, A.M.E. congregations were often founded in response to

<sup>1</sup>Tucker, Frank C., The Methodist Church in Missouri, 1798-1939. Nashville, Tennessee: Parthenon Press, 1966, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Tucker, op cit., pp. 179-181; 246-248.

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local racial conditions. However, the A.M.E. Church adopted most of the doctrine of the original M.E. Church.<sup>3</sup> Many blacks also organized churches of the Baptist denomination, and this was the case in Warrensburg where Baptist as well as Methodist denominations were organized soon after the Civil War, followed (prior to 1881) by a local A.M.E. church.<sup>4</sup>

Warrensburg's black settlement began in a camp vacated by soldiers when the Civil War ended. This camp is believed to have been at the west edge of the original town of Warrensburg, which came to be known as Old Town.<sup>5</sup> Most blacks remained in Old Town when white businesses deserted their Main Street locations for more favorable sites to the southeast, in anticipation of the arrival of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Many white residents also remained in Old Town.

Exercising their new freedoms, including the right to own land, the emancipated blacks soon organized two local churches. One of these was a Baptist church, organized in 1864, and the other was a Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in 1866.<sup>6</sup> After emancipation, it seemed more important for many blacks to experience self-determination and to be independent than to be integrated, and the responsibility of having separate church buildings clearly provided a level of independence. The first two M.E. church buildings used by the Warren Street congregation are no longer extant but the third, constructed in 1898-99, continues to serve a portion of the city's black community. The Warren Street M.E. Church, known today as the Warren Street United Methodist Church, is significant for its direct association with Warrensburg's historic African-American heritage. Its leaders have provided social as well as religious leadership, and in addition to its religious function the building has offered a focus for various social activities within the black community.

At the time the Warren Street church was constructed, most local blacks still lived in the Old Town area and the Cave Hollow area farther west. Many turn of the century blacks were employed as laborers and porters on the Missouri Pacific Railroad, and by contractors and others seeking general laborers. Warrensburg hotels and the Pertle Springs resort provided employment for blacks as cooks and in other areas. Many female blacks worked as domestics throughout the town. Although Warrensburg's schools and churches were segregated, blacks otherwise felt free to move about the community of which they were a vital part. Although the local press of the period was white-oriented, black activities were occasionally reported, primarily by the Standard-Herald which was much less bigoted than the rival Journal-Democrat. Black church news was rarely reported compared with happenings in the white church, coverage of which had become routine, but at least two brief news

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<sup>3</sup>Dickerson, Dennis C., "The Past Is In Your Hands: Writing Local A.M.E. Church History," pamphlet, privately printed, 1989, p.2.

<sup>4</sup>According to the 1881 Johnson County history, an A.M.E. church with a "small" membership existed in Warrensburg and "occasional" services were held in the First Baptist Church.

<sup>5</sup>Gress, Lucille D., An Informal History of Black People of the Warrensburg Area, Warrensburg, Mo.: The Mid-America Press, Inc., 1993, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup>These are the dates given in the 1881 history of Johnson County for Warrensburg's two oldest black churches, the First Baptist Church (today's Shiloh Baptist Church) and the Methodist Episcopal Church (today's Warren Street United Methodist Church), respectively.

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items were published concerning construction of the Warren Street M.E. Church. If sufficiently prominent people were involved, black weddings and other social happenings involving blacks were likely to be reported. Stories about shootings, stabbings and general calamities also were reported.

Church records apparently do not exist for the early years of the Warren Street M.E. Church. The list of pastors is incomplete. The 1881 Johnson County history identifies the founder of the Warren Street M.E. Church in 1866 as Rev. H. Glenn.<sup>7</sup> Pastors were frequently reassigned, and only a few of the names from the early years are known today. In 1881, the pastor was Rev. B. F. Steele. In 1895, the pastor was Rev. Abbott. When the present building opened in 1899, the pastor was probably Rev. J. W. Brown.<sup>8</sup> In 1908, the pastor was Rev. Bohannon. In 1912, the pastor was Rev. J. L. Brooks. In 1920, the pastor was Rev. J. D. Evans.<sup>9</sup> In the late 1930s, the pastor was James McKnight.<sup>10</sup>

Charter and early members include Charles Reed, C. W. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Herndon, George Grant, Jacob White, Luther Johnson, Harriett Bryant, Mary Gibson, Phillip Walker, Mr. and Mrs. Minor Berry, Mr. and Mrs. James Bradford, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Simpson, Mrs. Rebecca Ewings, Abraham Fewel, Fred Ritchie, Abe Reynolds, Mr. and Mrs. Amos Patterson, Mary Liza Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. John Dunn, Dinah Owens, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lee, Evelyn Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Becky White, Mrs. Josephine Jackson, M. J. Holmes, Marshall Miller, Rev. and Mrs. S. P. Johnson, Frances Brown, Mrs. Charles Suttington, John Edwards, William Goodwin, Tom Greenlee, Bill Taylor, Clifford Davis, Maggie White, John Jackson, Maggie Morton, Mr. and Mrs. Plumber and Mr. and Mrs. Lucas.<sup>11</sup>

By the time the present Warren Street M.E. Church building was constructed in 1898-99, two additional black Methodist denominations were active in Warrensburg, along with two black Baptist churches. The Methodist persuasion by this time included the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in ca. 1880 and still active as the Holbert Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Warrensburg African Methodist Episcopal Church, probably organized in the 1870s. Interestingly, the 1908-09 city directory lists only one church building on Warren Street, the Warren Street A.M.E. Church at Warren and Madison Streets (the location of the present church building). Whether there

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<sup>7</sup>The church is listed in the county history as the M.E. Church (Colored) rather than as the Warren Street M.E. Church, apparently because the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (Holbert Chapel C.M.E. today) did not exist or escaped the attention of the editors although it is believed to have been organized during the early 1880s. After the C.M.E. Church was organized on Main Street, references to the original black M.E. Church in Warrensburg included the Warren Street prefix.

<sup>8</sup>On Feb. 24, 1899, Warrensburg's Weekly Standard-Herald contained a paragraph about a birthday party for Rev. J. W. Brown, pastor of the Warren Street M.E. Church. The party was at the parsonage.

<sup>9</sup>"Warren Street United Methodist Church Homecoming Anniversary Celebration 1990" program.

<sup>10</sup>Sources in addition to the 1881 county history include Warrensburg city directories for 1895-96, 1900-01, 1908-09, and 1912-13, plus the WPA church records form, dated 1939. The 1900-01 directory lists no pastor for the Warren Street M.E. Church, although this edition lists pastors for the city's four other black churches.

<sup>11</sup>These names are from the 1881 Johnson County history (page 408), which identifies the church as the M.E. Church (Colored), from the WPA church records survey form for the Warren Street M.E. Church (colored), dated March 29, 1939, and from the property abstract.

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was a brief merger of these denominations in Warrensburg or this was simply a publisher's error is unknown. No references to a merger were found by the preparer, and older members doubt that it occurred although members of the African congregation (including Mrs. Bell Taylor) are known to have joined the Warren Street M.E. Church.<sup>12</sup> In any case, the Warrensburg A.M.E. Church apparently was defunct by 1920. Also in ca. 1880, another group of Baptists formed a Second Baptist Church in Warrensburg. This denomination apparently became defunct between 1895 and 1900, while the First Baptist Church/Shiloh Baptist Church remains active today. Holbert Chapel and both Baptist churches were on Main Street in the heart of Old Town, while the Warren Street M.E. and A.M.E. churches were on the periphery between Old Town and New Town, south of the railroad right-of-way.

By 1918, there were a dozen black churches in Johnson County including four in Warrensburg, the county's largest city. Countywide, black churches had 437 members. In Warrensburg's four churches, the combined black membership was 202. The Baptist and Methodist Episcopal denominations were virtually of equal size, with 79 and 78 members, respectively. Countywide, the combined Methodist and Methodist Episcopal denominations had 211 members; the Baptists also had 211 members. The "Colored Methodist Church" had the third largest black congregation in Warrensburg, with 30 members. The soon-to-be-defunct African Methodist Church was the smallest, with 15.<sup>13</sup> By the late 1930s, the Warren Street M.E. Church's membership had fallen to approximately 50.<sup>14</sup> Today the Warren Street M.E. Church has approximately 60 members.

Recently, Warrensburg's First United Methodist Church (formerly the Gay Street Methodist Church, South) invited the Warren Street congregation to join its ranks. Ultimately, members say, these churches may merge if it can be arranged for the present Warren Street building to be kept in service.

The Warren Street M.E. Church is the third and, by far, most substantial of the Methodist Episcopal denomination's black church buildings in Warrensburg.<sup>15</sup> While the steepled-ell church is a common vernacular form in Missouri, the Warren Street M.E. Church appears to be the only relatively unaltered brick example from the late 19th century within the Show-Me Region.<sup>16</sup> The Warren Street M.E. Church was constructed of brick for the sake of durability (the previous frame building was destroyed by fire), and its few elaborations such as Gothic-head and round windows plus a bell tower with a concave dome are classic elements of church architecture. By using bricks of a lighter hue in the building's

<sup>12</sup>Interview with Alice Josephine Jones, former church secretary, June 19, 1996.

<sup>13</sup>Cockrell, Ewing, History of Johnson County, Missouri, Topeka, Kansas: Historical Publishing Company, 1918, pp. 413-414. Presumably, Cockrell's "Colored Methodist Church" reference is for the black M.E. church on Main Street.

<sup>14</sup>WPA Church Records Form, dated 1939.

<sup>15</sup>Records are sketchy but apparently the denomination's first and second buildings were one and the same, although that frame structure's location was changed.

<sup>16</sup>Two other steepled ell church buildings, both of frame construction, were evaluated in a 1993-94 survey of 19th Century church buildings in the Show-Me Region. Buildings selected for the survey were compiled from the computerized Missouri Cultural Resources Inventory.

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corners and window openings, the brickmason managed to highlight them simply and inexpensively. Although the Warren Street M.E. Church is more elaborate than two other local black church buildings of the late 19th century, its practical qualities are in keeping with Methodist traditions of frugality and simplicity.

In September 1898, Warrensburg contractor John W. King was awarded the contract for constructing a new Warren Street M.E. church building. The Warrensburg Standard-Herald reported the delivery of foundation stone and said excavation was expected to begin on October 3.<sup>17</sup> Since the previous church had been badly damaged by fire, the congregation wanted a more substantial building and decided on a brick structure with a roof of "fire-proof" shingles. Contributions from members were used for purchasing the brick from a kiln at Knob Noster.<sup>18</sup> By mid-December of 1898, the church was "rapidly approaching completion and will be entirely enclosed in a few days," the Standard-Herald reported. Cornerstone ceremonies were scheduled for Jan. 1, 1899.<sup>19</sup> The pastor during this period was Rev. J. W. Brown.<sup>20</sup>

King was one of five contractors listed in Warrensburg's city directory for 1900-01. Advertising himself as an architect as well as a contractor and builder, King offered to furnish plans, specifications and estimates on short notice. Although King's ad includes a drawing of a spectacular Queen Anne mansion, this was simply a generic illustration used by the publisher in that year's directory. King apparently left Warrensburg within a few years of the church's completion. He arrived in Warrensburg too late for listing in the 1895-96 directory, and was gone by the time of the 1908-09 directory. Born in Missouri in 1859, King rented a house on East Gay Street where he lived with his wife Martha and son Benjamin at the time of the 1900 census. His occupation was listed as carpenter in the census. At this point, no other buildings constructed by King have been identified in Warrensburg.

Prior to construction of the present building, the denomination used a frame building for worship, apparently at the same location, which was gutted by fire on April 22, 1898. A local newspaper reported the fire in "a frame structure located south of the Electric Light House" but apparently got the denomination wrong, identifying the burned building as "the Baptist church of the colored congregation." The loss was covered by insurance, the paper said. The frame building that burned is said to have been "torn down and moved" from its original location on the north side of Ming Street to the site of today's brick building.<sup>21</sup> During the approximately eight months between the fire and completion of the

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<sup>17</sup>Weekly Standard-Herald, Warrensburg, Sept. 30, 1898.

<sup>18</sup>Alice Josephine Jones, former church secretary, recalled being told that members were asked to purchase bricks in groups of 25 from a kiln at Knob Noster. She said the cost was probably two or three cents per brick.

<sup>19</sup>Weekly Standard-Herald, Warrensburg, Dec. 16, 1898.

<sup>20</sup>Weekly Standard-Herald, Warrensburg, Feb. 24, 1899.

<sup>21</sup>The Journal-Democrat, Warrensburg, Apr. 29, 1898; Weekly Standard-Herald, Warrensburg, Dec. 16, 1898; WPA Historical Records Survey, 1936.

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Warren Street M. E. Church  
Johnson County, MO

present building, the Warren Street congregation is believed to have met in the nearby A.M.E. Church or possibly the C.M.E. Church on Main Street.

Warrensburg has other black resources from the 19th century, including two church buildings and a former black schoolhouse, all of which are frame buildings. The Holbert Chapel C.M.E. Church, a gable front building constructed in 1889 with a 1916 side-wing addition, is potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, as is the old Howard School (more recently the Jesus Saves Pentecostal Church), a rectangular, hipped-roof building with a front gable and a modern church addition in back. The Shiloh Baptist Church, the main portion of which was also constructed in 1889, has been greatly altered and does not appear eligible for National Register listing.

In 1939, WPA worker Helen Davis noted in her report on the Warren Street M.E. Church that the present building was essentially undamaged "outside of hard wear."<sup>22</sup> With the exception of sandblasting which greatly damaged many of the bricks in the 1970s, this seems to summarize the building's condition today after nearly a century of use. Its age is showing but it remains a unique, serviceable building with a significant place in Warrensburg's architectural heritage.

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<sup>22</sup>Mrs. Davis, of Knob Noster, accomplished her 1939 survey of church buildings in Warrensburg (as well as other area towns) by examining local records, interviewing church members, and visiting sites. A microfilm copy of the WPA report is in the collection of the State Historical Society of Missouri.

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Warren Street M. E. Church  
Johnson County, MO

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Gress, Lucille D., An Informal History of Black People of the Warrensburg Area, Warrensburg, MO:  
The Mid-America Press, Inc., 1993.

Interview with Lucille D. Gress, May 22, 1996.

Interview with Alice Josephine Jones, May 22, 1996.

Interview with Reverend Joseph Alexander, Verna Brown, Alice Josephine Jones, Ruth Titus Harvey  
and Margaret Davis, June 19, 1996.

Missouri Historic Inventory Survey Form No. 69, "Warren Street United Methodist Church," Eastern  
Johnson County Survey, April 1986. Copy in Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory, Missouri  
Department of Natural Resources, Jefferson City, MO.

Works Progress Administration Survey of State and Local Missouri Historical Records Survey, Missouri  
Historical Records Survey, Johnson County, "Warren Street M.E. Church (colored)," 1936 (Church  
Records Form dated March 29, 1939).

Verbal Boundary Description:

Lots 47 and 48 of Holden's 3rd Addition City of Warrensburg, Johnson County, Missouri.

Boundary Justification:

Boundaries are those of the two 50' x 100' lots historically associated with the church building (Lots 47  
and 48 of Holden's 3rd Addition), on which no other properties are extant.

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Warren Street M. E. Church  
Johnson County, MO

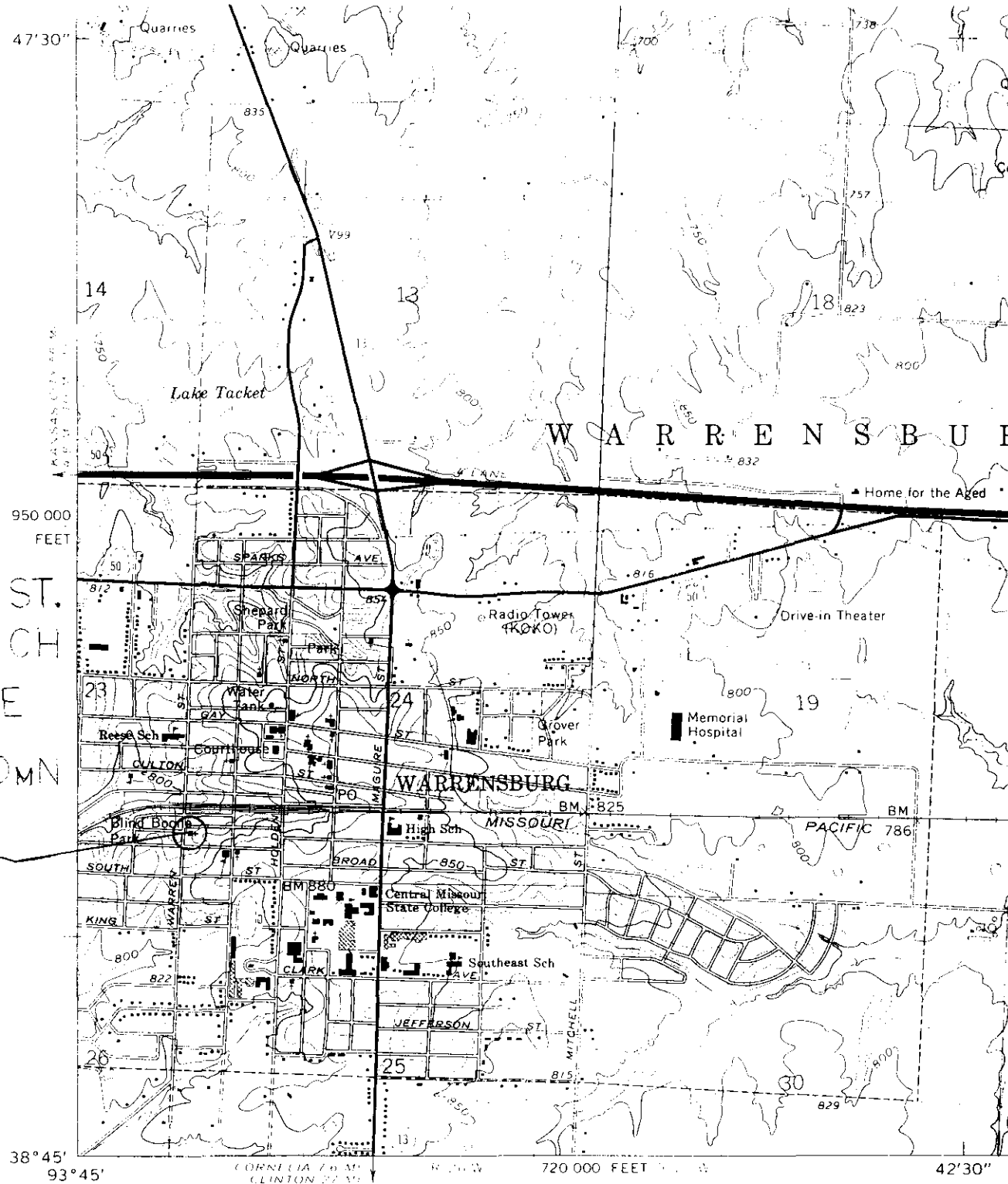
The following information is the same for all photographs:

Warren Street M. E. Church  
200 S. Warren St., Warrensburg, Johnson County, MO  
Date: May 1996  
Photographer: Roger Maserang  
Negative Location: Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Program  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

- #1: View from Warren Street, facing south
- #2: View from northwest
- #3: View from west
- #4: View from north
- #5: View from southwest
- #6: View from south
- #7: View from east
- #8: Detail of entrance, facing east
- #9: Interior of sanctuary, facing east
- #10: View from chancel, facing west
- #11: Looking northwest from chancel
- #12: Chancel view facing northeast
- #13: Rear wall of sanctuary, facing west
- #14: Family room, facing north
- #15: Basement dining area, facing west

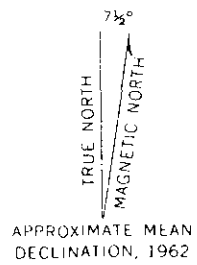


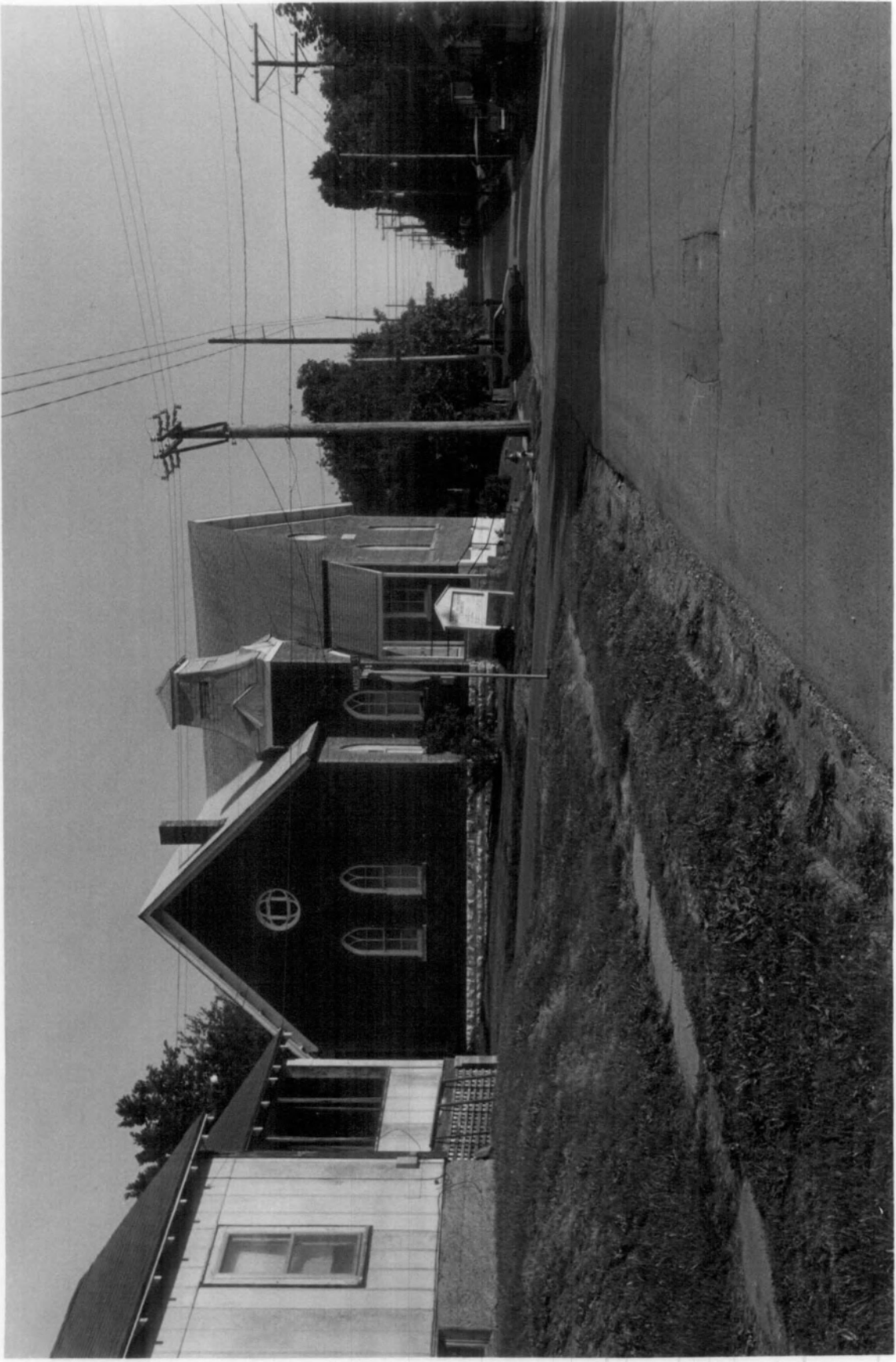
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 N.E. CHURCH  
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 514291420MN

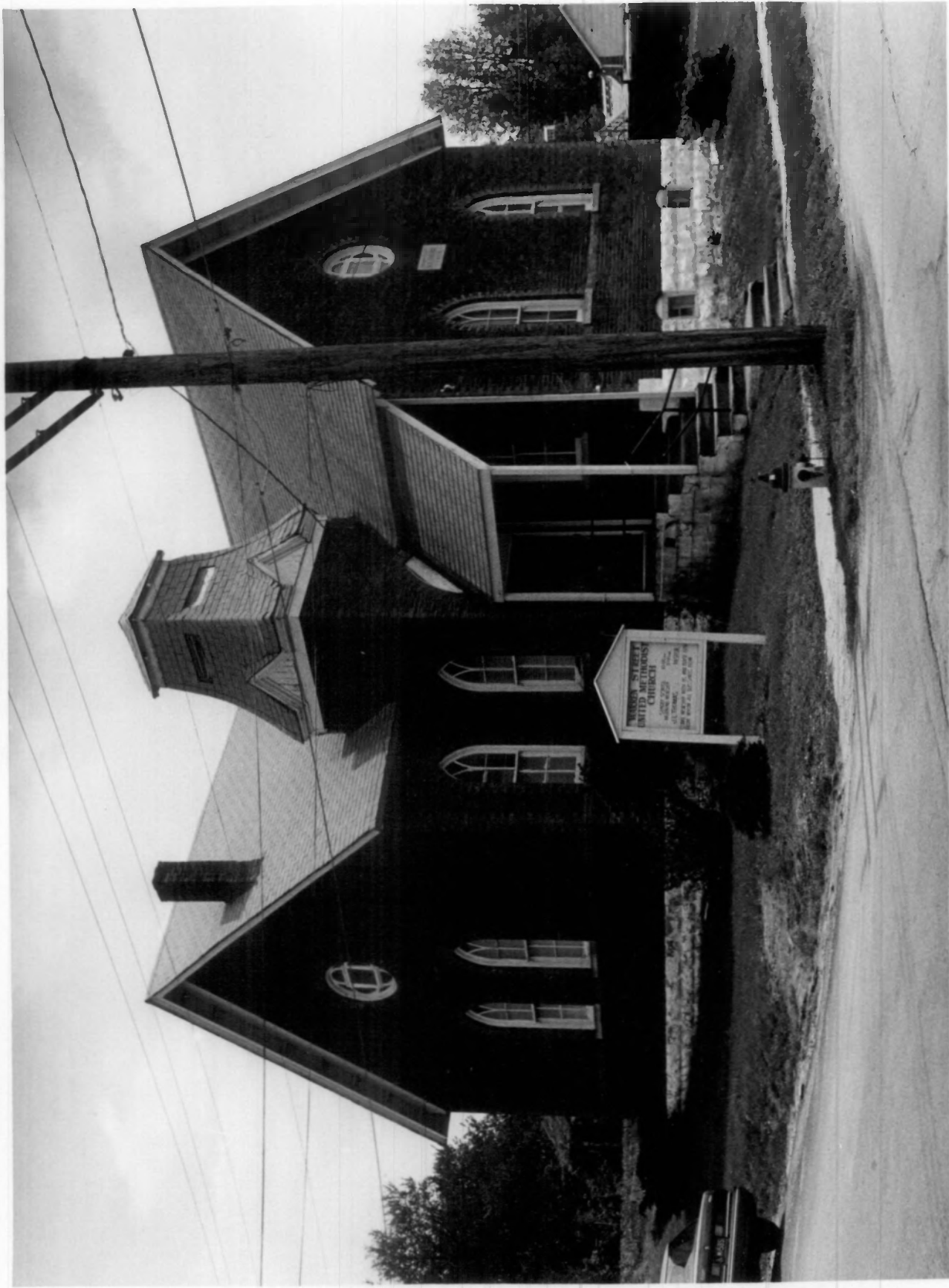


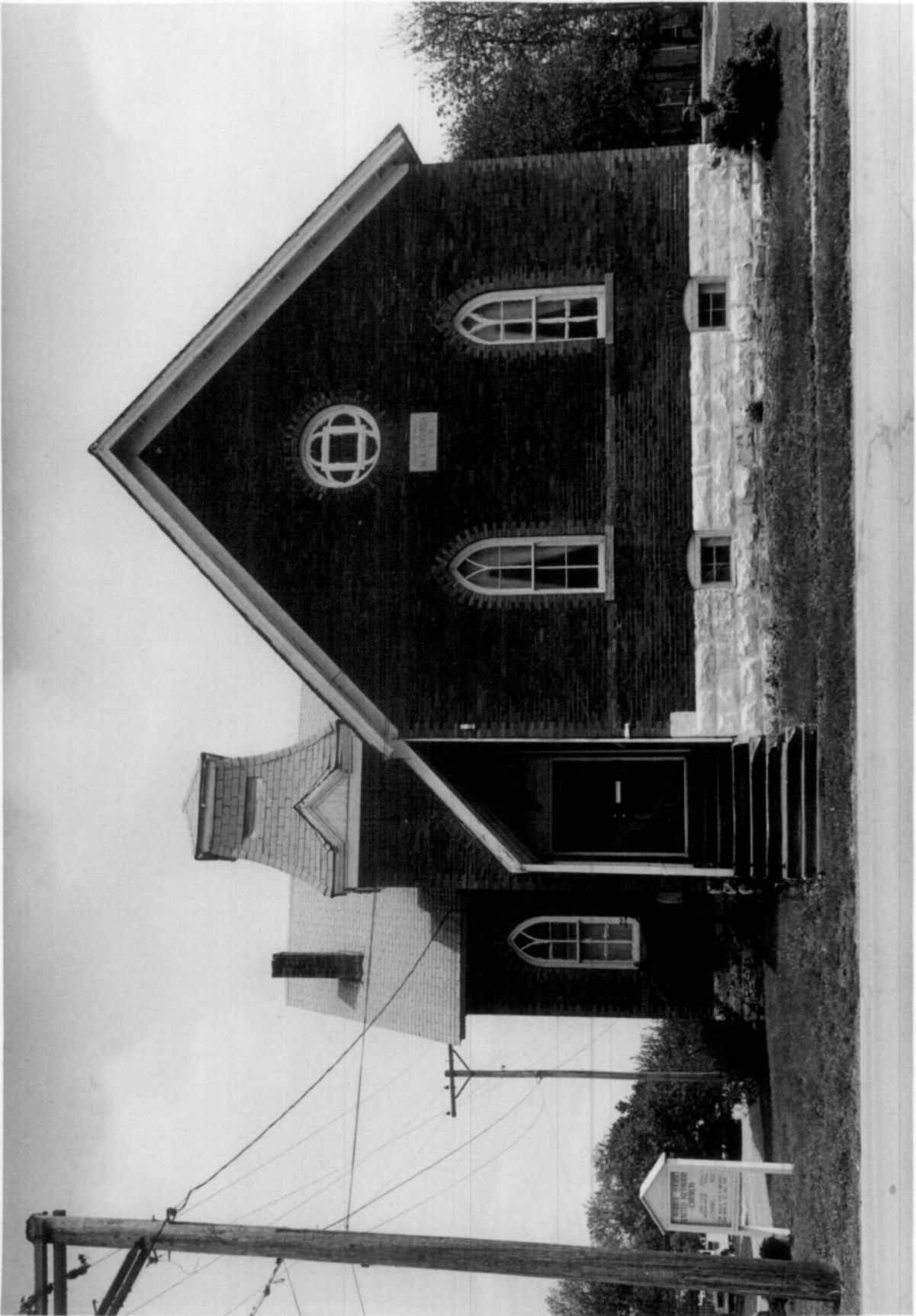
(CENTERVIEW)

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS and USC&GS  
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1958. Field checked 1962  
 Polyconic projection 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Missouri coordinate system, west zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue  
 Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown  
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

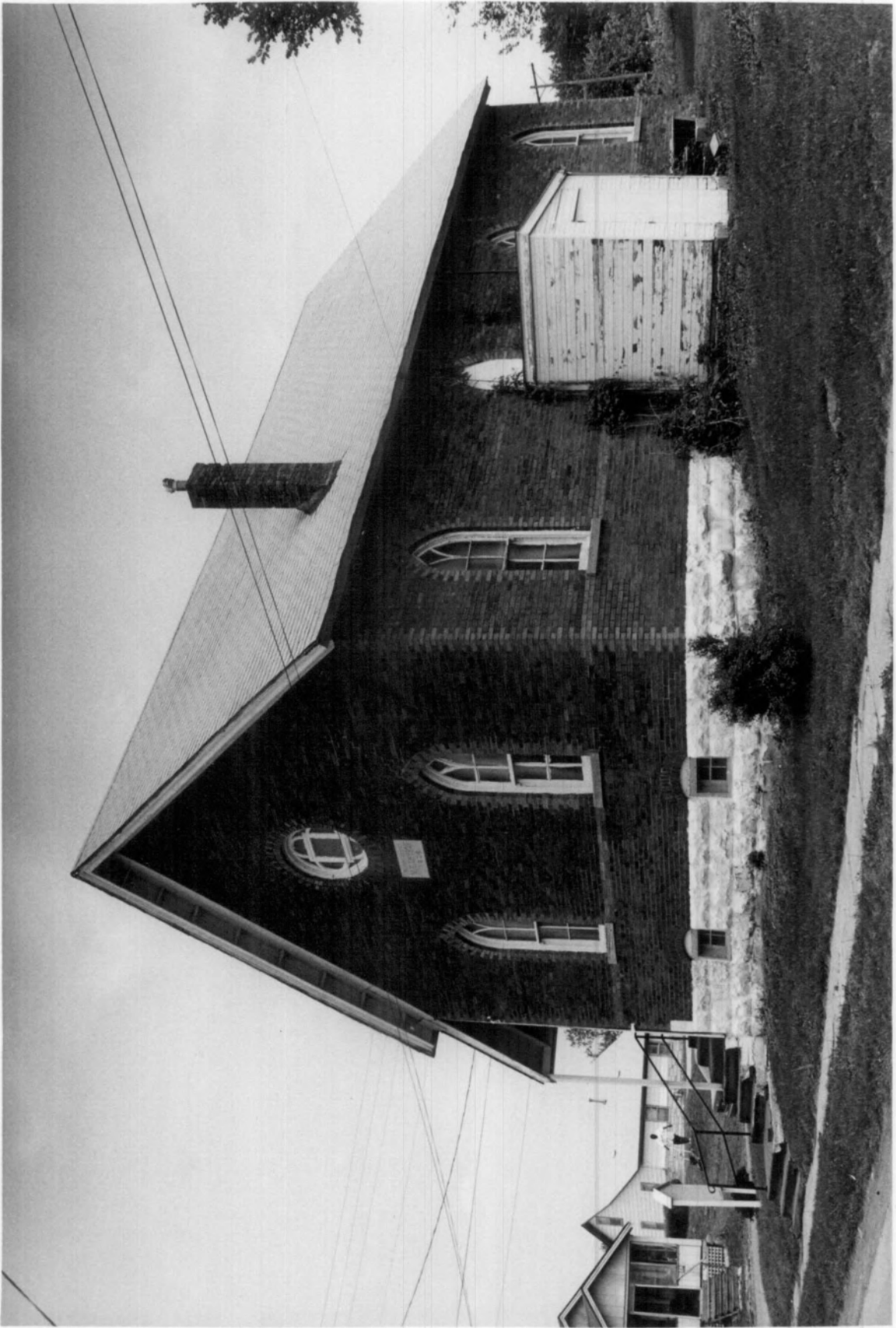


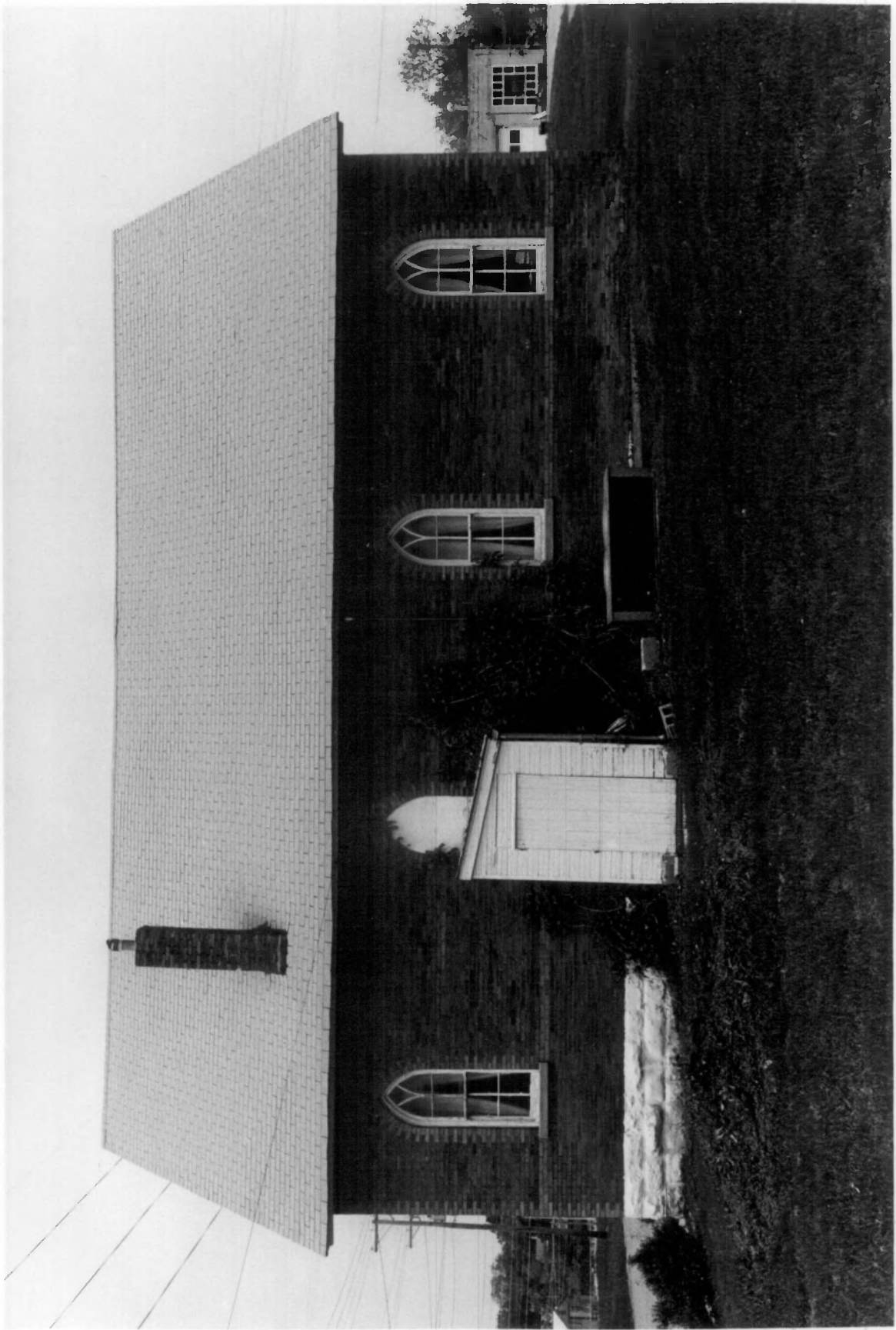


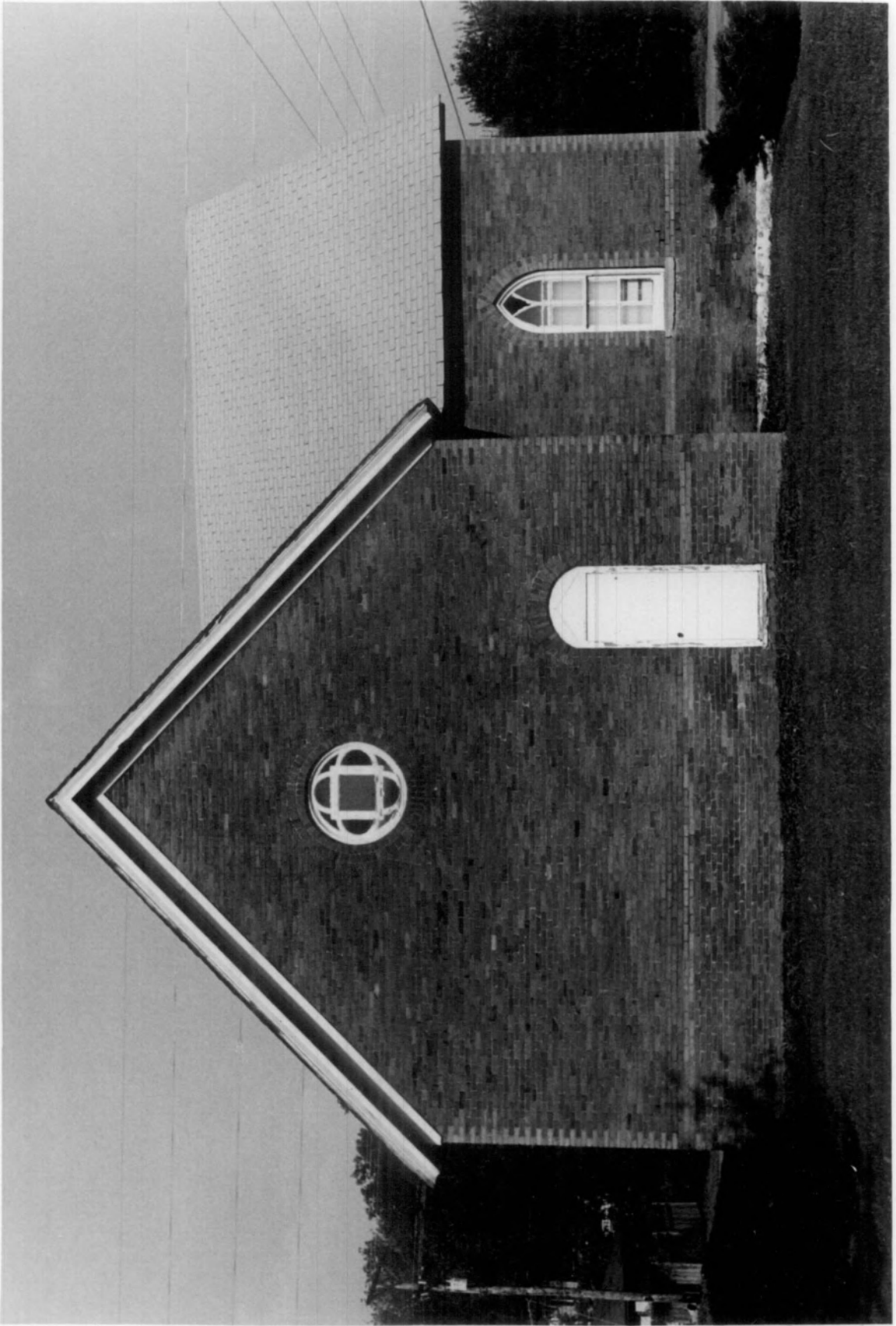




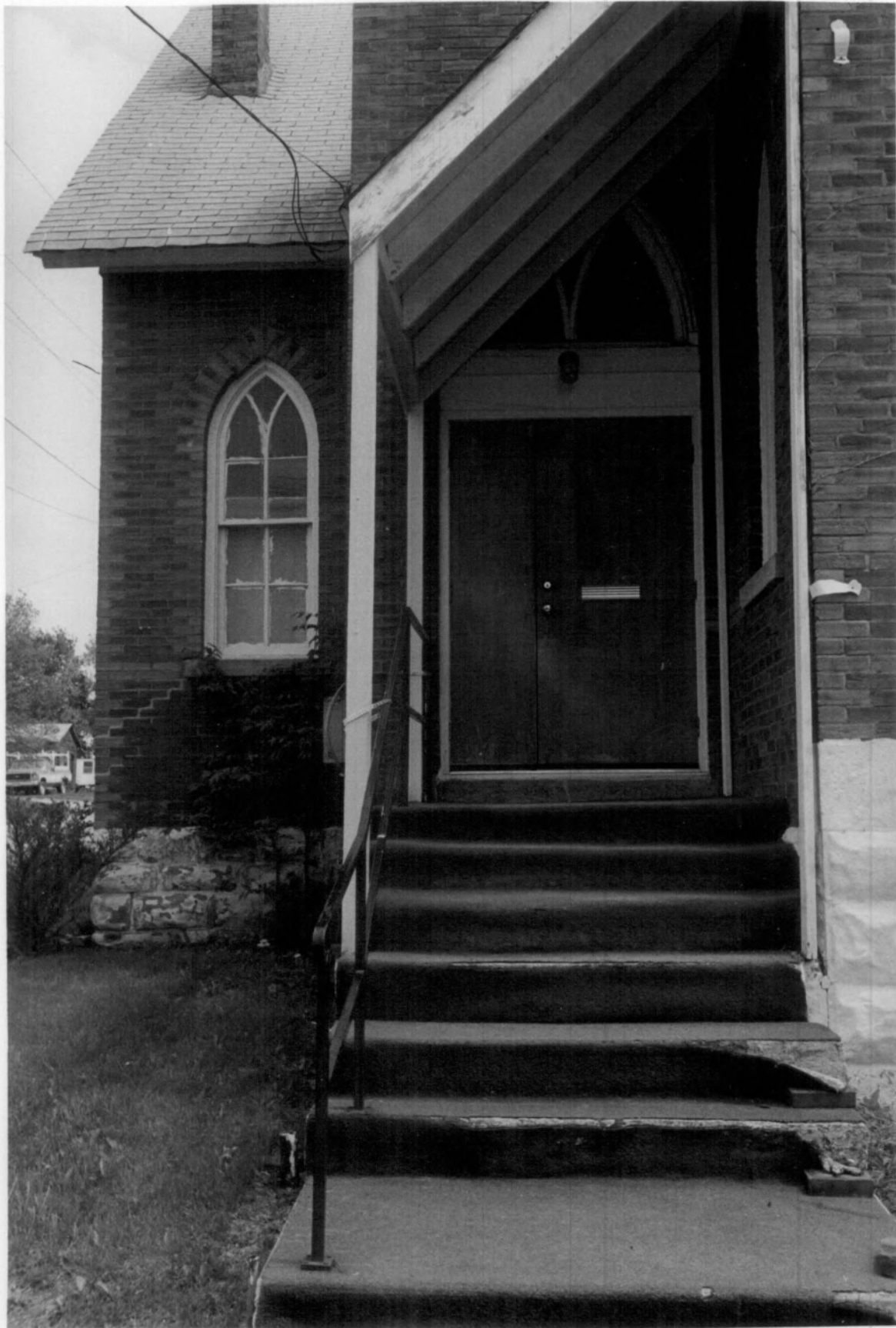






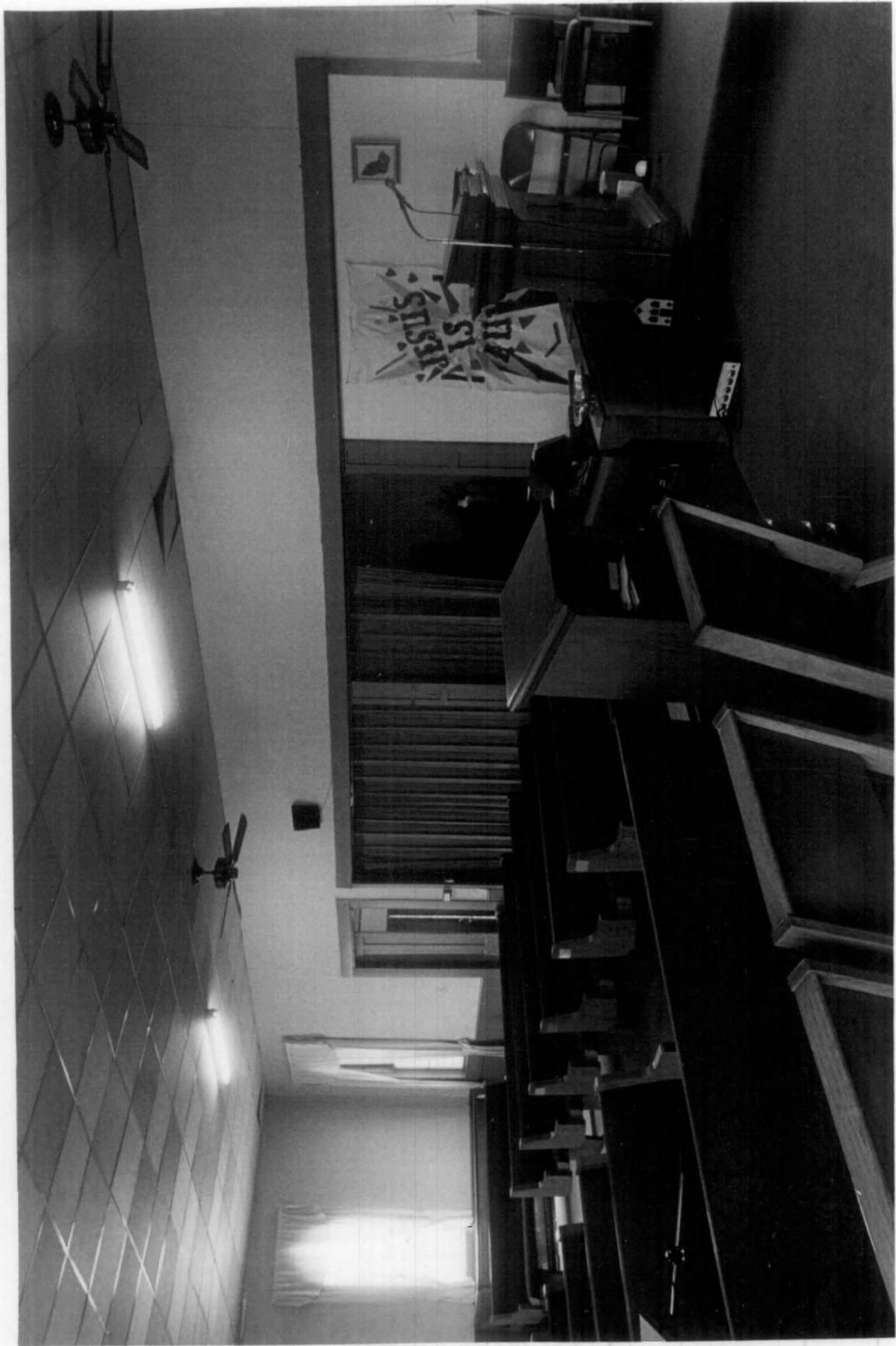


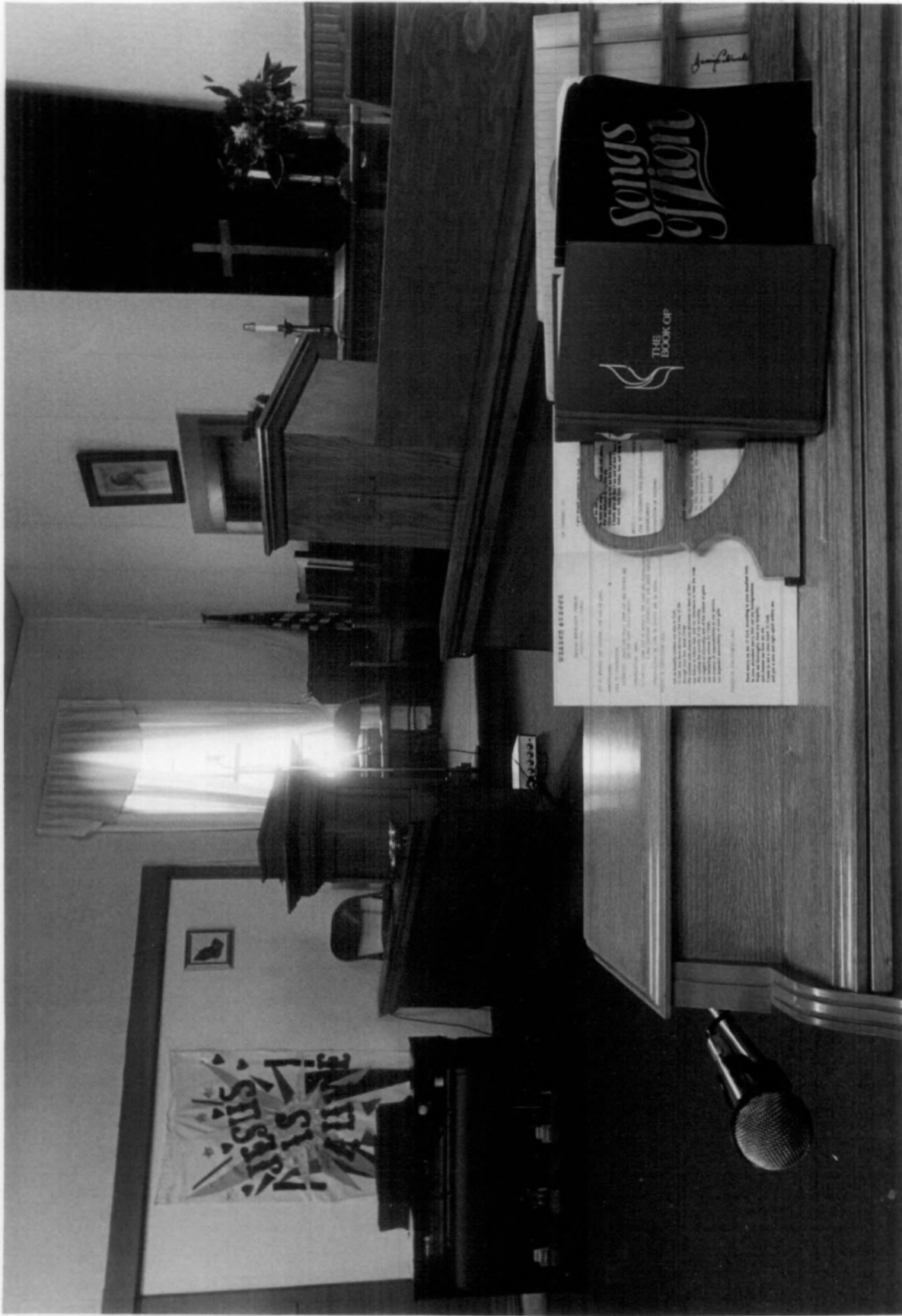












WESLEY'S HYMN

1. O God, thy power is great, thy love is true,  
Thy grace is free, thy mercy is to all;  
Thy goodness is thy glory, and thy love  
Is the foundation of our hope and joy.  
Thy grace is free, thy mercy is to all;  
Thy goodness is thy glory, and thy love  
Is the foundation of our hope and joy.

JESUS IS KING





