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4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this 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): _____

Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

=====

5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<u>1</u>	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>religion</u>	Sub: <u>religious facility</u>
<u>funerary</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>religion</u>	Sub: <u>religious facility</u>
<u>funerary</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian--Gothic

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

roof Asphalt

walls vinyl

other Chimneys, brick; porch, wood,

shingle

Narrative Description

See continuation sheet

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ 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 (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☒ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a 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 (Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Period of Significance 1830-1905

Significant Dates 1830

1871

1905

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

See continuation sheet

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(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: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 2 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
2	—	—	—	4	—	—	—

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Susan L. Taylor, Research Assistant; Rebecca J. Siders, Research Associate

organization Center for Historic Architecture and Design
date July 15, 1997

street & number 307 Alison Hall, University of Delaware
telephone (302) 831-8097

city or town Newark state DE zip code 19716-7360

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets
USGS Map
Tax Parcel Map
Floor Plan
Photographs

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Property Owner

=====

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

name Bethel Methodist Protestant Church

street & number 172 A Route 304 telephone _____

city or town Andrewsville state DE zip code 19942

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page # 1 Bethel Methodist Protestant Church
Property Name
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The Bethel Methodist Protestant Church is located at the intersection of Andrewsville Road, Church Road, and Prospect Church Road in Andrewsville, Mispillion Hundred, Kent County, Delaware. Situated on two acres of land, the church is surrounded by a grassy field and woods to the east, woods to the south, and a small walled cemetery to the west.

Facing north, the one story, gable-front frame building retains its exterior appearance as an 1871 country church, while the interior reflects the renovations made in 1905. The church is rectangular in form, measuring 30 feet 6 inches wide by 40 feet 6 inches deep and sitting on a foundation of unknown material skim-coated with concrete. A small chancel extends from the south gable end, and a small porch protrudes from the north gable end. The exterior walls of the church, clad in vinyl siding that mimics the look of drop siding, rise to an asphalt shingle-covered gable roof pierced midway down the east and west elevations by brick chimneys.

The front (north) gable elevation is three bays wide with a central door flanked by two double-hung sash windows filled with non-figurative stained glass. A return box cornice and a small gabled porch highlight the north elevation. The porch extends the width of the entrance, which is filled with double raised panel doors. Above the doors is a stained glass transom which bears the inscription "1838-Bethel-1905." The meaning of the 1838 is unclear, though the 1905 date refers to the renovations of the church interior. Three steps lead up to the porch, which is characterized by alternating fishscale and diamond pattern shingles in the gable, and sawtooth trim below a spindle-work frieze. The porch and entry doors are flanked by double-hung, lead channel stained glass windows.

The east and west elevations of the church are identical, each containing four evenly-spaced double-hung sash windows filled with non-figurative stained glass. These windows are the only openings on the two elevations. The box cornice continues around the roof edge on all sides of the building.

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The rear or south elevation of the church displays a small chancel extending approximately five feet from the main section of the church. A single double-hung sash window filled with stained glass lights each of the east and west sides of the chancel.

While the plain, white exterior of the church identifies the building clearly as a late nineteenth century rural church, simple and functional, the interior reflects the early twentieth century prosperity of the church with its use of an elaborated decorating scheme including a pressed metal roof, stained glass windows, and molded woodwork. Completely open on the inside, the church interior is divided by two side aisles into three seating areas. The ten central pews are divided in half by a central division wall. The side pews are set at an angle to the front chancel. Running from the back of the church to the front, on the east side there are seven angled pews, a stove, a double pew facing both the stove and the chancel, and another angled pew. At the very front of the church three pews sit parallel to the side walls, facing the chancel. The west side is a reflection of the east side, with a few missing elements. The front facing pew directly next to the stove is missing, as are two of the front parallel pews.

The interior woodwork has all been painted with a fake wood grain. Sunken panels extend around the interior to waist level. The window and door openings are surrounded by plain casings topped by flat pediments. Each window is dedicated to a different person or group of people. The pews have curved arms. A small cupboard with a double-hinged door hangs in the northeast corner. The chancel area is recessed, the opening characterized by a flat pedimented surround. An altar rail with turned, open spindles surround the chancel area which is accessed by two rounded steps at the back corners. The interior spaces rises unimpeded to an angled ceiling of elaborately designed pressed metal. The rising side ceiling walls are covered with an interlocking Gothic arch pattern, rising to a flat patterned grid. Two ceiling fans run down the center, and four lights hang by chains from the four corners of the flat ceiling.

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Several large shade trees stand around the church. The small cemetery on the west side of the church is very plain, with only a low cement curb separating it from the surrounding grass. The cemetery contains no significant landscaping and holds only one or two gravestones.

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The Bethel Methodist Protestant Church is significant under criterion C, for its representation of the rural Methodist Church built and rebuilt in mid- to late-nineteenth-century Delaware. These small rural churches are readily identifiable by both exterior and interior features. The interior of this church also represents the type of modifications made to some churches during the prosperous period of the early twentieth century.

Henry Boehm, one of the early founders of the Methodist movement in America stated that: " The Peninsula that lies between the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays . . . was the garden of Methodism in America."¹ Methodism in America began in Delaware with the preaching of George Whitefield on the Delmarva peninsula during the mid-eighteenth century. As an ordained Anglican clergyman, Whitefield had already gained a reputation as an evangelist in England and Wales, and aligned himself with a group of Oxford University religious reformers, headed by John and Charles Wesley, called Methodists. While he was in the Delaware region, Whitefield preached to large crowds, and made a profound impact on the religious organization of the area. His preaching lead to the development of small congregations who practiced some of the tenets of Methodism, and were the direct ancestors of the Methodist churches that grew out of Francis Asbury's later mission.

In 1771, John Wesley sent an official missionary to America, Francis Asbury. In 1784, Asbury, together with Thomas Coke, another of Wesley's ambassadors, established a Methodist church independent from the rules and strictures of the Anglican church in America at a meeting in Barratt's Chapel in Kent County, Delaware. This newly independent church urged changes in individual lives, including an active participation in the church and with God. This emphasis on direct participation lead to the development of camp meetings, an outdoor revival-type meeting that lasted for several days and involved thousands of people listening to God's word being spoken by an itinerant preacher. Methodism also raised questions concerning the nature of Delmarva's religious, social, political, and economic institutions, including the American Revolution and slavery.

¹William Henry Williams, The Garden of American Methodism: The Delmarva Peninsula, 1769-1820 (Wilmington, DE: Peninsula Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1984), xiii.

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Throughout the history of Methodism, Peninsula Methodism worked hard at preserving the Wesleyan heritage that included a dedication to personal improvement, a strong work ethic, and a belief that one had to continually strive for spiritual perfection.

As Methodism evolved in the region, several different groups arose in response to questions of the organization and traditions of the church. Two such examples were the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Protestant Church. The Methodist Episcopal Church developed as the direct descendant of the Anglican church in America. The Methodist Protestant schism developed in 1828-30. It arose from a desire by the laity to be represented at the Annual Conference, which in the Methodist Episcopal Church was open only to itinerant preachers. Some members of the church were also concerned with the absolute power of the bishop to assign itinerants to circuits.

The Bethel Methodist Protestant Church in Mispillion Hundred was one of the very earliest Methodist Protestant Churches in America, having been organized prior to 1830. At that time the congregation had a church erected and were worshipping in it.² The present church building was built in 1871, at a time when many rural churches throughout the state were being built and rebuilt. Masten's Methodist Episcopal Church in Mispillion Hundred was built in 1873; Prospect Church in Mispillion Hundred was rebuilt in 1877; the Kenton M. E. Church in Kenton Hundred was rebuilt in 1877; and the Methodist Episcopal Church at Milford was also rebuilt in 1871.³ Other than these bare facts, there is little documentation on the development and growth of the church.

The Bethel Methodist Protestant Church is an excellent example of the small, frame country churches commonly built towards the end of the nineteenth century. Usually built of frame, rectangular in shape, one story high, with an open plan and small chancel at one end, the churches were simple and functional, but recognized as distinctive

²E. C. Hallman, The Garden of Methodism (Peninsula Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1948), 236.

³J. Thomas Scharf, History of Delaware vol II. (Philadelphia: L. J. Richards & Co., 1888, reprint 1990).

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elements on the rural landscape of Delaware. These churches were often the only public building in very small rural communities, and reflected not only the pride of the people in building and maintaining their own place of worship, but also their beliefs and sense of community. The Bethel Church retains much of its architectural integrity, with the only significant change being the addition of vinyl siding that reproduces the look of the original siding. Many other churches of the same period have been altered with the addition of Sunday School wings and bathrooms, but the Bethel Church retains its original form and plan.

The interior of the Bethel Church is an excellent example of early-twentieth-century church architecture. The angled pews, restrained Gothic moldings and surrounds, and the elaborate Gothic pressed-metal ceiling suggest the financial ability and desire of the local congregation to renovate their church building to reflect the strengths and traditions of the Methodist Church in Delaware. By choosing a Gothic style with which to decorate their church, the congregation elected to emphasize the strength of their faith, in much the same spirit as the Gothic cathedrals from which they drew their patterns. The interior renovation also served as a testimony to the congregation's willingness to maintain and improve their place of worship, just as they were directed by the teachings of the church to maintain and perfect their own characters and faith. Serving not only as a testimony to the strength of the church, but also as a tribute to the people who made the church possible, the Bethel Church building is a unique and artistic interpretation of the common rural church tradition.

The Bethel Methodist Church is significant under criterion C for its architectural representation of the values associated with the Methodist Church in Delaware. Its significance is evidenced through its history as one of the first congregations who chose to separate themselves from the Methodist Episcopal Church in order to seek more freedom of choice at a time when the freedoms of men were still relatively new in America. More importantly, the church displays its significance through its architecture. Built as a symbol of faith and community at a small, rural crossroad in Kent County, the congregation embellished and improved their church with care. They chose to glorify their faith and belief in their church not on the outside, which would

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have differentiated the building to all who passed by, but on the inside, where only those who worshiped could appreciate its inner strength and beauty. The church preached self-improvement, not self-glorification. The congregation of the Bethel Church took this to heart, not only in terms of their individual actions, but in terms of their church, which was the outward representation of their faith.

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Bibliography

Hallman, E. C. The Garden of Methodism. Peninsula Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1948.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Delaware. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: L.J.Richards & Co., 1888, reprint 1990.

Williams, William Henry. The Garden of American Methodism: The Delmarva Peninsula, 1769-1820. Wilmington, Delaware: Peninsula Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1984.

Daniel, Martha, Susan Taylor, and Rebecca Siders. "Mount Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Church National Register Nomination." Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, 1997.

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Boundary Description

Located in the town of Andrews ville, in Mispillion Hundred, Kent County, Delaware, the Bethel Methodist Protestant Church sits on a 2-acre parcel of land located on the southwest corner of the intersection Of Andrews ville Road, Church Road, and Prospect Church Road. The property is bounded on the north side by Andrews ville Road and on the east side by Church Road. From the intersection, the property extends west along Andrews ville Road 500 feet, then turns and runs back 200 feet in a southerly direction. At that point the line turns and runs east 400 feet to Church Road. The property line follows Church Road 175 feet back to the corner. These property boundaries are delineated by a thick black line on the enclosed tax parcel map.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the land on which the church sits are the same boundaries given in a deed dating from 1908, at which time the property was divided from a larger tract. This boundary includes the small walled cemetery historically associated with the church and its congregation.

Bethel Methodist Protestant Church

CRS # K-848

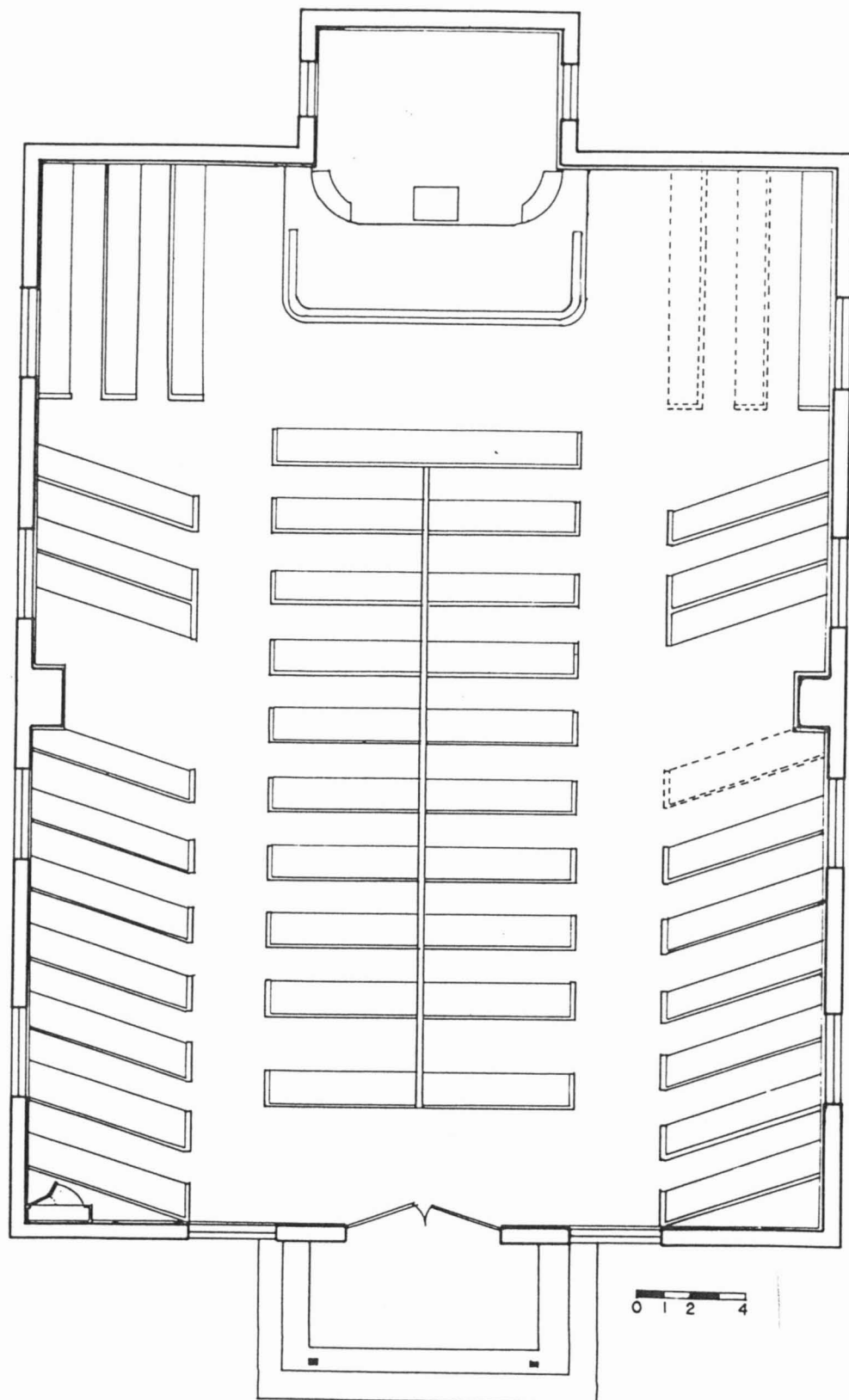
South west corner of the intersection of Roads 61, 114, and 304

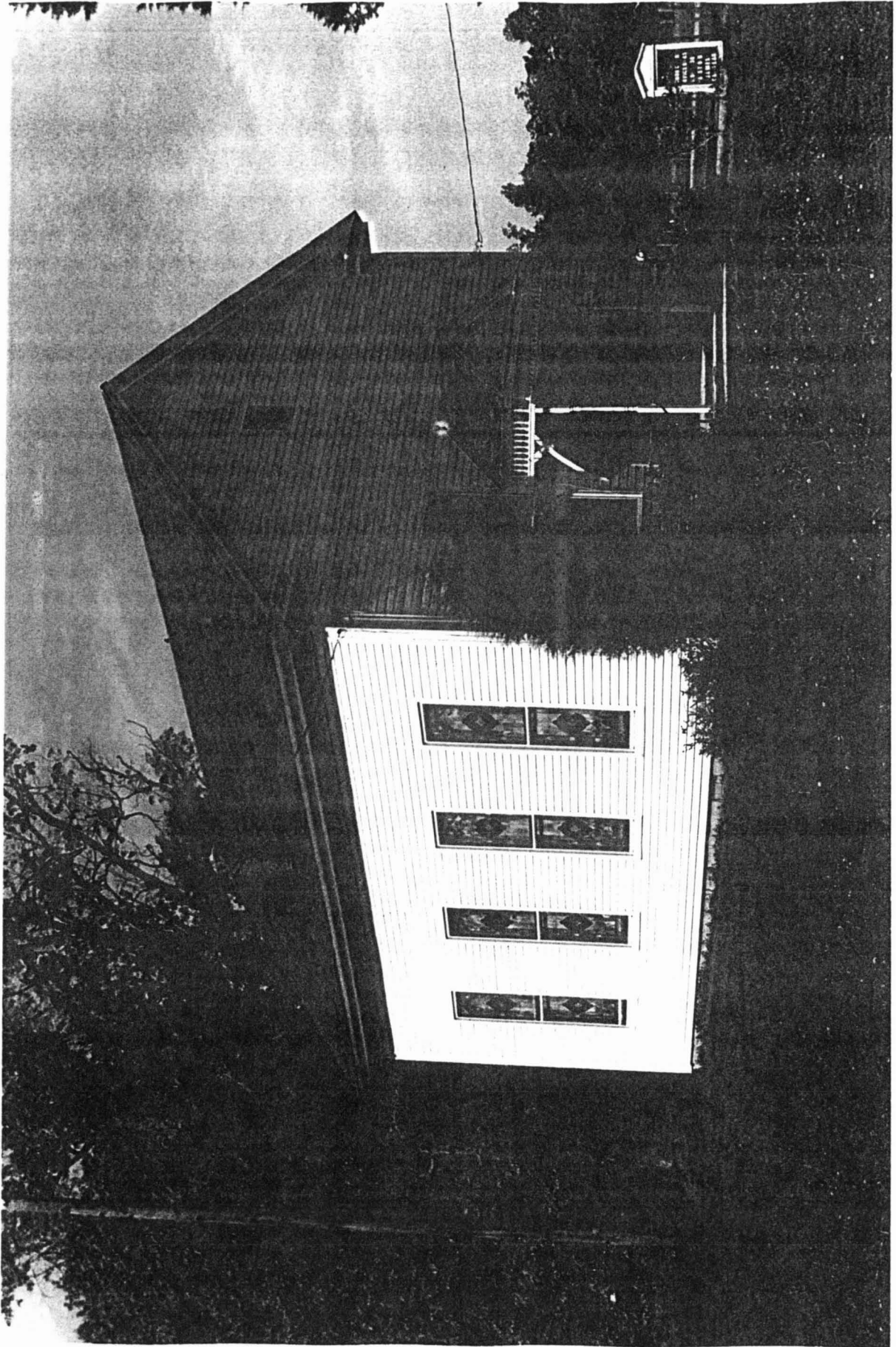
Andrewsville

Thspillion Hundred

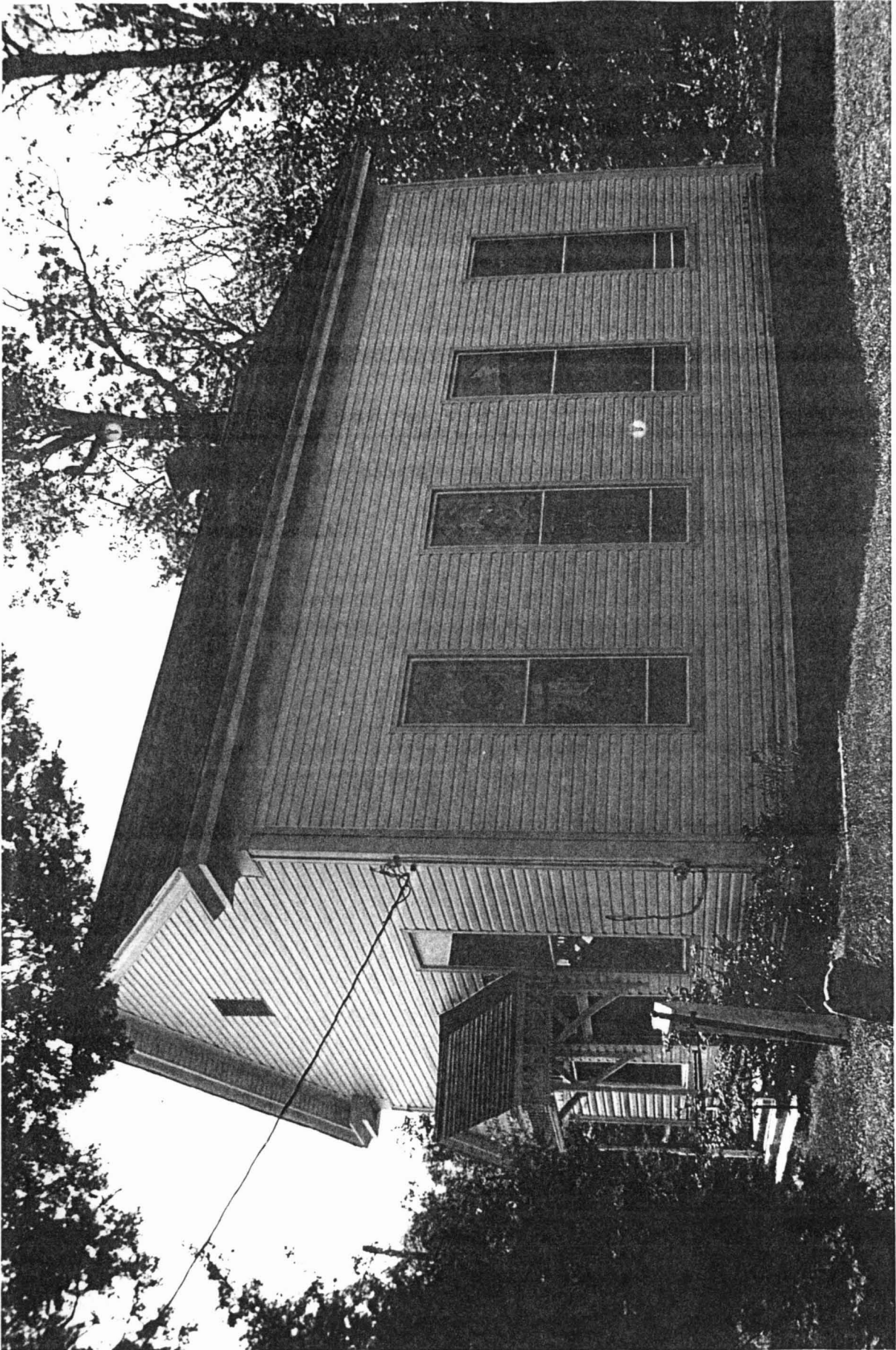
Kent County

Delaware





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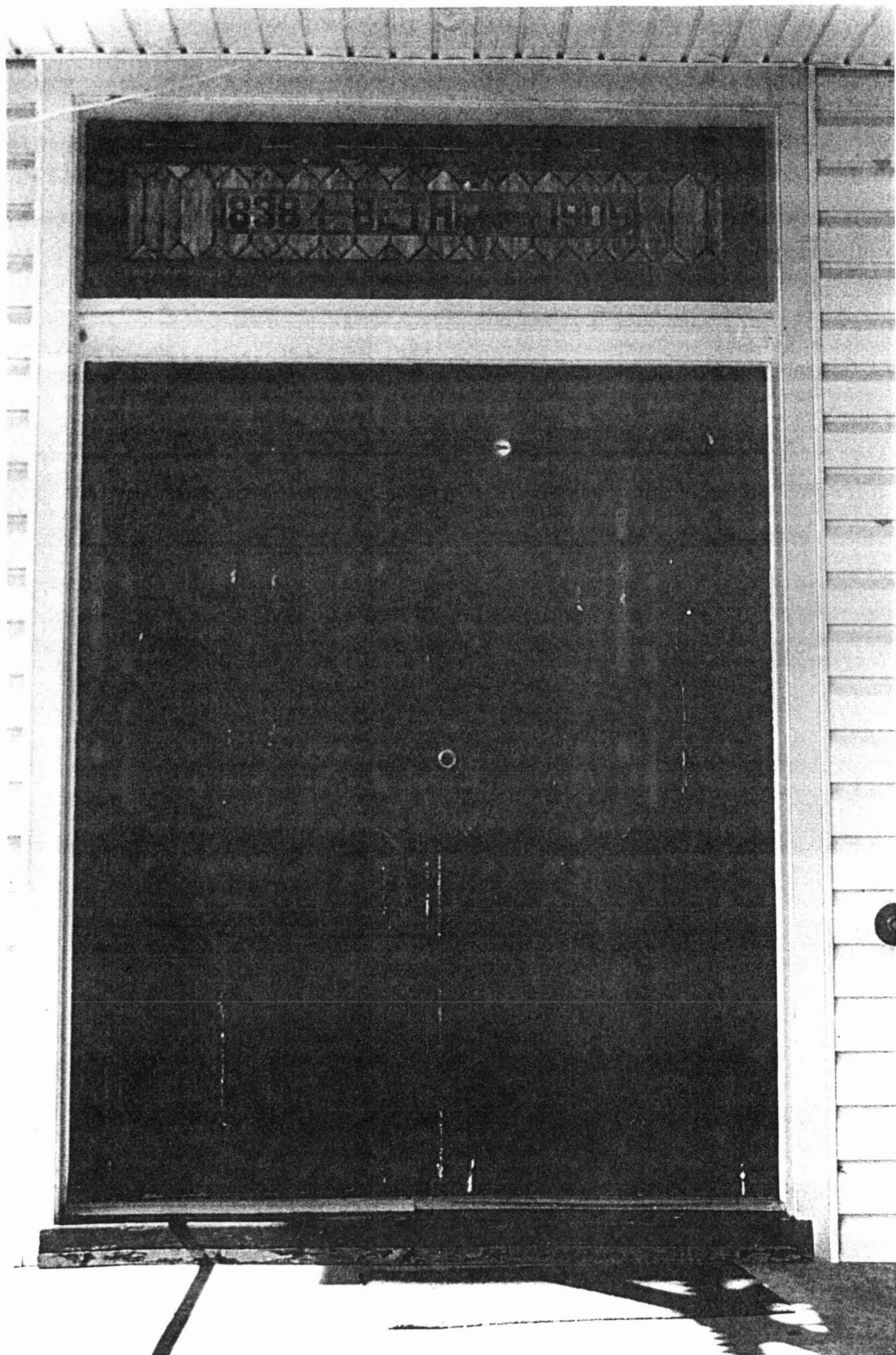
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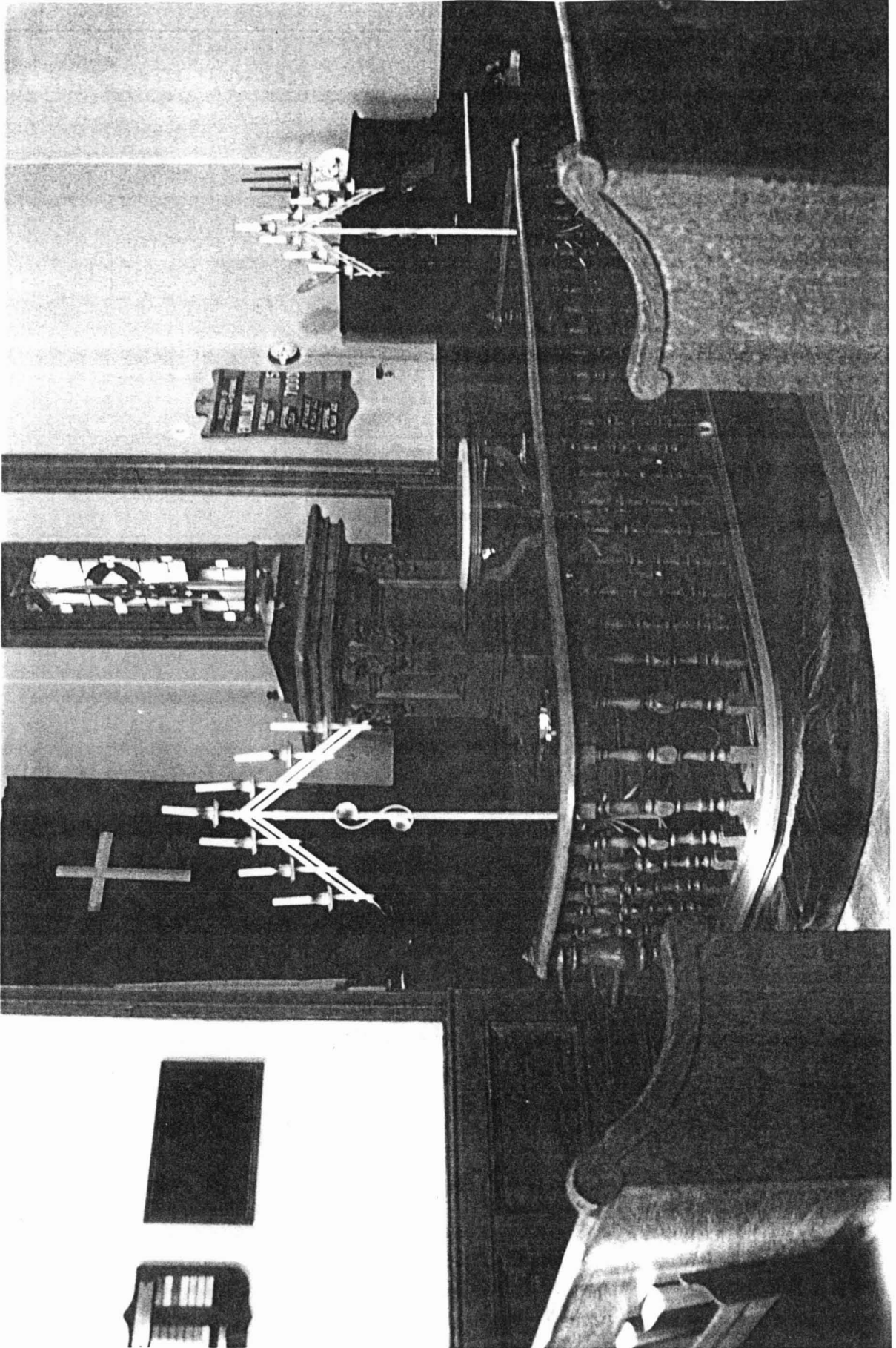
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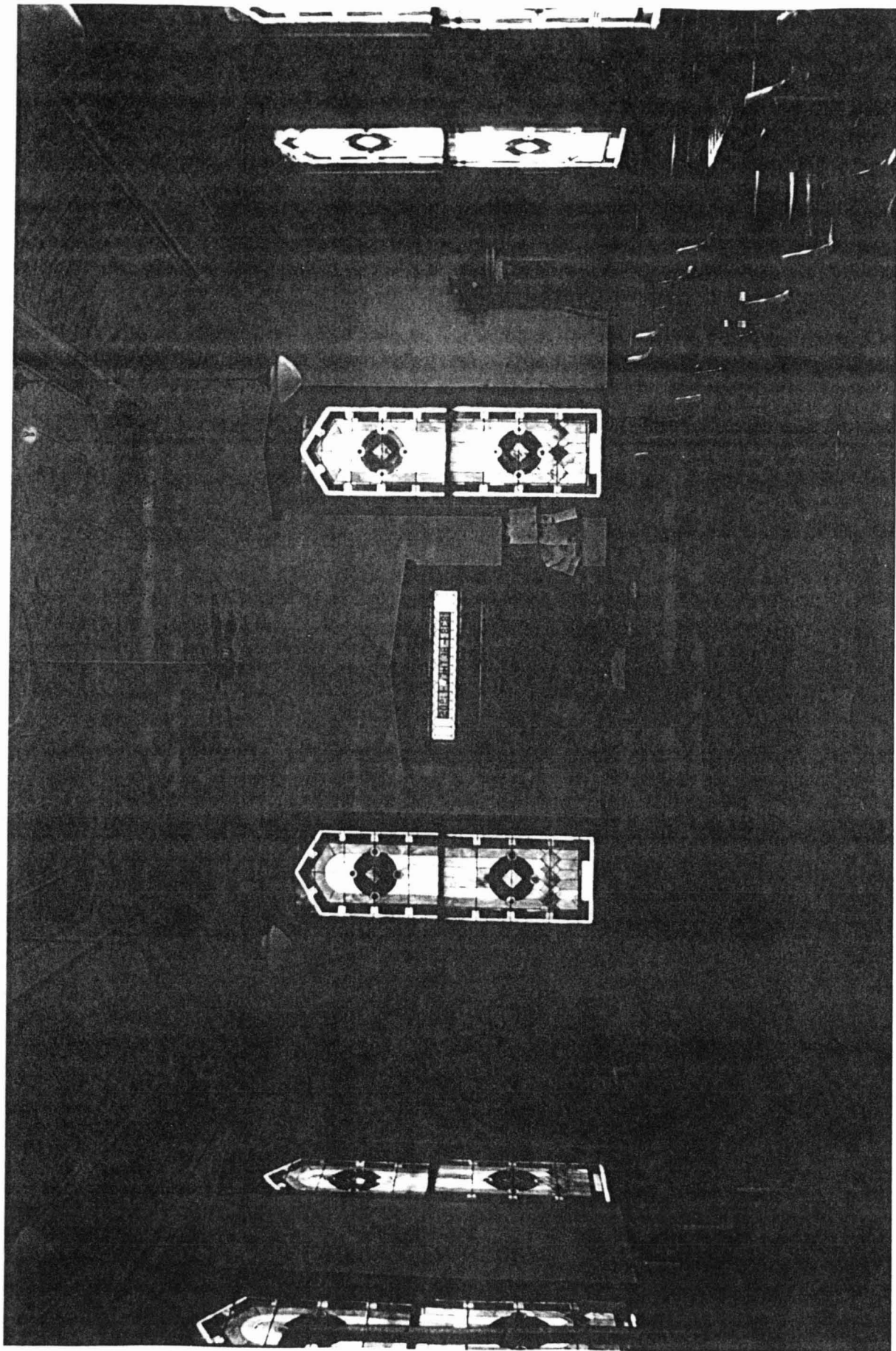




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