

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: First Presbyterian Church  
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 406 Avenue A

CITY OR TOWN: Palestine

VICINITY: N/A

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A

STATE: Texas CODE: TX

COUNTY: Anderson

CODE: 001 ZIP CODE: 75801

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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

*Curtis J. Russell*

Signature of certifying official

5-5-98  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

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 the Keeper

Date of Action

*Edson H. Beall* 6-11-98



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**5. CLASSIFICATION**

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**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** Private

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** Building

<b>NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTING</b>	<b>NONCONTRIBUTING</b>
	1	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	0	0 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	1	0 TOTAL

**NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER:** 0

**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:** Historic and Architectural Resources of Palestine, Texas

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

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**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:** RELIGION/religious facility

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:** RELIGION/religious facility

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

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**ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** Late Victorian: Second Gothic Revival

**MATERIALS:** FOUNDATION BRICK  
WALLS BRICK  
ROOF ASPHALT  
OTHER GLASS/stained; METAL; STONE

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-6)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 5

First Presbyterian Church  
Palestine, Anderson County, Texas

The First Presbyterian Church at 406 Avenue A is a brick institutional building with a modified rectangular plan and load-bearing masonry construction. The church exhibits a variety of stylistic ornament but appears as a Gothic Revival building with some Italianate and Romanesque Revival features. Pointed-arched windows, decorative buttresses, and steeply pitched gables with stone coping are indicative of the Gothic Revival style. The corner tower with its large round-arched hoodmolds and paired round-arched windows reflect the Italianate style, while the series of round-arched windows on the facade suggest the Romanesque Revival style. The church, which faces north onto Avenue A, is in a commercial area between the courthouse square and the central business district. The church has undergone several renovations since its construction, but still retains much of its historic character and a high degree of its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The First Presbyterian Church was built on a relatively level lot in the middle of the 400 block of Avenue A. A concrete sidewalk extends along the north border of the property, toward the primary entrances. A parking lot is east of the church and a driveway extends behind the building. Vegetation on the property includes a grassy lawn that serves as a buffer between the street and building and small shrubs that have been planted along the base of the church, obscuring the brick foundation. The church has a modified rectangular plan and was built with load-bearing construction. A large, front-facing gabled roof with asphalt shingles covers the church's sanctuary. Smaller gables, also covered with asphalt shingles, extend over side wings, while the corner tower has metal and wood shingles.

The facade faces north onto Avenue A and the dominant feature is the tall spire at the northeast corner. One of two front entrances is at the base of the spire; the other is in a small gabled extension at the northwest corner. Each entrance includes a pair of wooden doors under a round arch with a keystone. The gabled extension at the northwest corner has stone coping and corbeling indicative of the Gothic Revival style. The main section of the facade includes a series of stained-glass windows on both floors. Each ground-floor window is set within a round arch and the entire series of windows is linked with stone hoodmolds and continuous string course, suggestive of the Romanesque Revival style. A broad stone string course divides the facade into two sections and the upper part includes a series of stained-glass windows under a single round arch. The corner tower, which has a dedication stone, best illustrates the church's eclectic stylistic design. The buttress-like corner piers with stone coping reflect the Gothic Revival style; while the paired round-arched windows within a broader round arch are associated with the Italianate style. The steep spire, which was added two years after the sanctuary was completed, has embellishment indicative of both the Italianate and Gothic Revival styles.



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 6

First Presbyterian Church  
Palestine, Anderson County, Texas

The east elevation has round-arched openings and non-structural buttress. The projecting gabled extension has stone coping and a 3-part window arrangement. A Sunday School auditorium and pastor's study were added onto the west side of the original sanctuary in 1900. A 1-story brick education wing, erected in 1973, extends from the southeast corner of the building and is relatively unobtrusive to the property's overall historic character.



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## 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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### 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 VALUE, 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:** A

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:** Architecture

**PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:** 1887-1888; 1890; 1900; c. 1905

**SIGNIFICANT DATES:** 1887-1888; 1890; 1900; c. 1905

**SIGNIFICANT PERSON:** N/A

**CULTURAL AFFILIATION:** N/A

**ARCHITECT/BUILDER:** Dodson & Dudley, architect (1888); Wolff, Joseph F., builder (1888)  
Maffitt, Cicero S., architect (1890); Scott, G.T., builder (1890)

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** (see continuation sheets 8-7 through 8-8)

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## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY** See bibliographic references of the associated historic context, *Community and Regional Development of Palestine, Texas: 1846-1945*.

**PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):** N/A

- ☐ 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 (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:



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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7

First Presbyterian Church  
Palestine, Anderson County, Texas

The First Presbyterian Church was organized by 18 charter members in 1849, one year after Palestine's founding, and is the city's oldest church building to have continuously served a single congregation. The congregation outgrew its original building by the late 1880s, and in 1887 they began construction of a new structure to accommodate their growing numbers. Although the 1887 church was built in the Gothic Revival style, it also incorporates various Italianate and Romanesque Revival elements. Evaluated within the context of *Community and Regional Development of Palestine, Texas: 1846-1945*, the First Presbyterian Church is nominated at the local level of significance to the National Register under Criterion C as an outstanding example of late 19th century, Gothic Revival-style ecclesiastical architecture.

Reverend Daniel Baker and Reverend J.N. Becton organized the First Presbyterian Church of Palestine on November 3, 1849, one year after the county seat was founded, and many years before the arrival of the railroad. The 18 charter members included some of Palestine's most prominent citizens, including W.B. Files, Fenby Files, D.C. Hunter, Mrs. Elijah J. DeBard, Lucy Churchchain, F.J. Churchchain, J.F. Walton, Amelia Walton, J.C. Wortham, Eliza J. Wortham, Mrs. D.A. Calhoun, G.W. Tuggle, Paulina C. Jowers, and E.M. Roberts.

The young church built its first house of worship on North Church Street. With the 1872 arrival of the railroads to Palestine came an increase in population, which strained capacities for existing institutions such as the First Presbyterian Church. By the late 1880s, the congregation had outgrown its original building and purchased a lot on March 7, 1887 on Avenue A for construction of the present building. The new church was completed the following year. The cornerstone of the building, which was laid July 12, 1888, lists members of the building committee, including S.M. Luckett, A.W. Gregg, G.R. Cooke, J.N. Link, W.M. Lacy, P.A. Kolstad, J.B. McKnight, Dr. J.H. Grant, and Dr. J.W. Douglas.

Although the building's appearance has evolved over the years, it still retains its historic integrity and strongly conveys its pre-World War II character. W.C. Dodson, a highly regarded and successful architect based in Waco, Texas, served as the original architect. Dodson is best known for his courthouse designs, most notably the Hill County Courthouse in Hillsboro. It is likely that members of the church building committee were impressed by the sophisticated courthouse design Dodson provided Anderson County in 1885 and hired him for the construction of their own facility. The church's original contractor was Joseph Frederick Wolff, who made the bricks used to construct the church from clay excavated at a local pit that later became Spring Park Lake. In 1890, just two years after erecting the church, the congregation hired local architect and builder C.S. Maffitt to design the silver spire, which was built that same year by contractor G.T. Scott. A 1900 building



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Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 8

First Presbyterian Church  
Palestine, Anderson County, Texas

program added the present Sunday School Auditorium and pastor's study on the west side of the building, and the 2-story rear educational wing was completed about 1905. A donation from Andrew Carnegie enabled the church to install an organ in April 1904. The church constructed a new Christian Education Building in 1972 on a lot immediately west of the old sanctuary and refurbished the old Palestine Herald Press Building for its use in 1981. The church also purchased and transformed the Crockett Junior High School cafeteria into a youth center in the mid-1980s. The various additions to the church during the early 1900s are indicative of the growth of the congregation, as well as the continued economic growth and prosperity in Palestine at the turn-of-the-century.

Though religious properties are not normally considered for National Register designation, the First Presbyterian Church of Palestine is a local architectural landmark that is significant under Criterion C. The historic resources survey identified only 13 historic (pre-1945) churches in Palestine, and with the exception of the Nicholas J. Clayton-designed Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the First Presbyterian Church is the city's premier example of ecclesiastical architecture. The basic design of the church is in the Gothic Revival style, but also incorporates some Romanesque Revival and Italianate elements. When completed in 1888, the First Presbyterian Church was among the city's most finely detailed and designed buildings and remains an important physical and architectural landmark in Palestine.



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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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**ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** less than one acre

**UTM REFERENCES**

**Zone Northing Easting**  
15 251000 3516940

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Palestine Original Town Site; Block: 105; Lot: 2.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary follows the lot and block historically associated with the property.

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY** (with assistance from Amber Degn, THC Historian)

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**NAME/TITLE:** David Moore (Project Director), Matt Goebel (Historian)

**ORGANIZATION:** Hardy-Heck-Moore & Associates      **DATE:** February 1994/March 1998

**STREET & NUMBER:** 1414 West Sixth Street      **TELEPHONE:** (512) 478-8014

**CITY OR TOWN:** Austin      **STATE:** TX    **ZIP CODE:** 78703

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**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

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**CONTINUATION SHEETS**

**MAPS** N/A

**PHOTOGRAPHS** PHOTO 1: Daniel Hardy - Photographer; February 1994; Original negatives on file with the Texas Historical Commission; Oblique view of north and west elevations, camera facing southeast.

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS** N/A

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**PROPERTY OWNER**

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**NAME:** First Presbyterian Church

**STREET & NUMBER:** 406 Avenue A      **TELEPHONE:** (903) 729-5730

**CITY OR TOWN:** Palestine      **STATE:** TX    **ZIP CODE:** 75801



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY First Presbyterian Church  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Palestine, Texas MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Anderson

DATE RECEIVED: 5/15/98 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/26/98  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/11/98 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/29/98  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 98000695

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6.11.98 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the  
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N







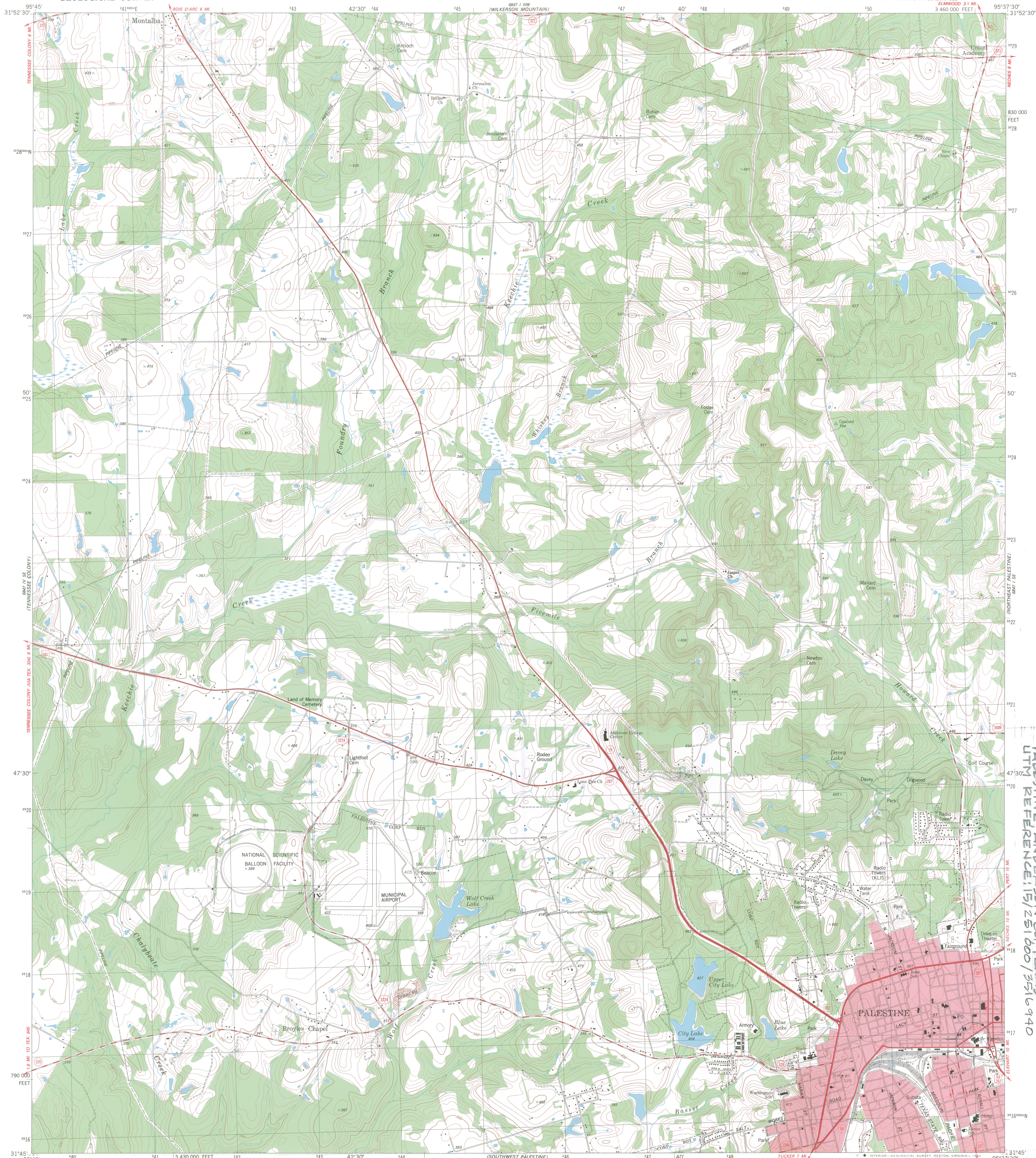
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

406 AVENUE A

PALESTINE, ANDERSON CO, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 1





Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1976. Field checked 1977. Map edited 1982

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Texas

coordinate system, central zone (Lambert conformal conic)

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15

1927 North American datum

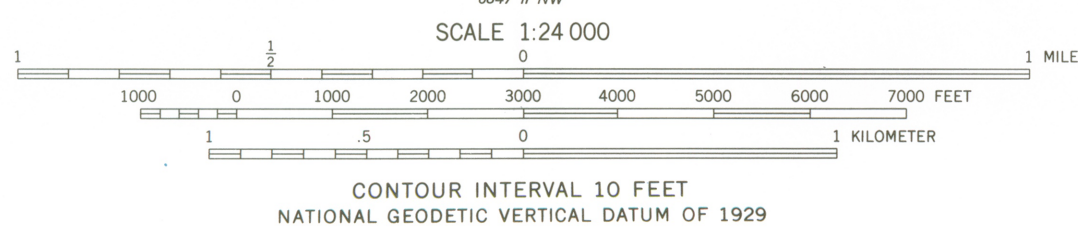
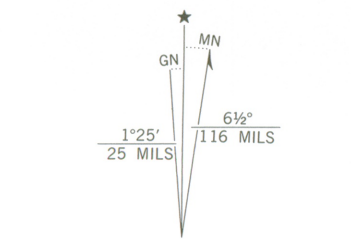
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983

move the projection lines 14 meters south and

23 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



MAPSCO  
1303 N. COLLINS # 417  
ARLINGTON, TX 76011  
(817) 276-1122  
METRO (817) 226-6101

NORTHWEST PALESTINE, TEX.  
SW/4 PALESTINE 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3145-W9537.5/7.5  
1982  
DMA 6847 1 SW-SERIES V882

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
400 AVENUE A  
PALESTINE, ANDERSON CO. TEXAS  
UTM REFERENCE: 15/251000/3516940