

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR LISTED

JUN 09 1998

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

AHPP

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: Two Bayou Methodist Church and Cemetery

Other Name/Site Number: OU0079

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2. Location

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Street & Number: Ouachita County Road 125

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Camden

Vicinity: x

State: AR County: Ouachita

Code: AR103

Zip Code: 71701

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>3</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Two Bayou Methodist Church
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Ouachita County, Arkansas
County and State

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State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Sater
Signature of certifying official

5-28-98
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

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 and bureau

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5. 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

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. Function or Use

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Historic: RELIGION Sub: religious facility
FUNERARY cemetery

Current : VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub:
FUNERARY cemetery

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

OTHER: Plain Traditional
Greek Revival

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Materials: foundation STONE/sandstone roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD/weatherboard other

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Describe present and historic physical appearance:

Summary

Located at the end of Ouachita County Road 125, the Two Bayou Methodist Church was built by J. T. Mendenhall c. 1875. This vernacular one-room church building with modest Greek Revival details rests upon unmortared stone piers, and is covered by a composition shingle, gable roof. All the windows in the church are four-over-four, double-hung wood windows. The exterior is clad in weatherboard while the interior walls and tray ceiling are clad in horizontal flush wooden planking.

Along with the church building an adjacent cemetery is being nominated to the National Register as a contributing site. Over one-hundred-and twenty marked and unmarked graves in the cemetery date before 1948. Only sixty-two gravestones date after 1948. The two historic privies, located behind the church and cemetery, are also included as contributing outbuildings in this nomination.

laboration

Built around 1885, the Two Bayou Methodist Church is a rural one-room church located on a gravel county road four miles west of Camden. Designed in a restrained version of the Greek Revival style, the exterior of the building retains the vast majority of its original features. The Greek Revival influence is hinted at by details such as the uncomplicated pilasters, a wide band of trim under the gable returns, two slightly pedimented front doors, and the rudimentary cornices over the windows. Low pitched roofs and six-over-six windows are typical of the Greek Revival style. In contrast, the moderately steep pitched roof and four-over-four, double-hung wood windows mark this building as a vernacular interpretation of the style. Its asphalt shingle gable roof and weatherboard walls rest upon stacked rock piers.

The front, or western, elevation contains two symmetrically placed single-leaf entrance doors. Simple trim surrounds the identical four-panel doors, which are crowned by slightly pedimented lintels. Because of the deterioration of the previous wooden stairs, each door now has five newer wooden stairs leading up to it. The metal handrails beside the stairs are also a recent addition.

The side, or northern and southern, elevations are fenestrated by four symmetrically placed, four-over-four, double-hung wood-framed windows. The rear, or eastern, elevation contains two symmetrically placed four-over-four, double-hung wood-framed windows.

The simple design of the building continues on the interior. The walls of the single open room are clad with the original wood planks, while wide floor boards, with square nails, cover the floor. Uncomplicated moldings highlight the windows and the tray ceiling. Pews decorated with Gothic arch panels, and scroll armrests are historic additions to the interior as is the piano. According to Mrs. Haltom, a longtime member of the church, her father hauled the pews in a wagon from the old Camden Opera House to the church in the 1920s. Two aisles, leading from each entry, divide the pews into three sections. The center row of pews is full-sized, while the side-aisles are composed of half-sized pews permanently attached to the walls. The top scroll of the armrests on the eighth row is sawn vertically in half to accommodate the swing of the two doors. On the north interior wall is a brick flue; however, the wood burning stove has been removed. At the eastern end of the church is a lectern flanked by a pair of matching square columns.

The interior and exterior of this church are without any modern additions except for the composition shingle roof that replaces the historic wood shingle material, and the metal rails beside the wooden stairs.

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Two historic privies are located behind the church and cemetery and are included as contributing outbuildings in this nomination. A large stump between the church and cemetery is all that remains of an oak tree. Inside the knot on its south side, one can still see the empty square where a plank once was fitted to help the ladies dismount from their carriages and wagons.

Also part of the Two Bayou Methodist Church nomination is the adjacent cemetery with more than one-hundred-and-twenty marked and unmarked graves dating before 1948, and another sixty-two gravestones dating from 1948. The cemetery is located just south of the church. All grave markers face the church to the north and are arranged in parallel lines. The cemetery is surrounded by a modern chain-linked fence. The oldest marked grave is that of Thomas A. Stuart who died in January 8, 1850 at the age of twenty. The most elaborate monument is that of Glorvenia C. Nolen. This white marble monument stands approximately six-feet tall and bears the inscription, "SACRED/to the memory/OF/ GLORVENIA C./Wife of/ FRANK S. NOLEN/&/Daughter of REV BLANTON P. & E. M. BOX/Born in Ala./March 6th 1839/DIED/in Sevier Co. Ark./Dec. 5th 1859/." Inscribed at the bottom of the monument is the carver's name, "J. Jennings/ Camden Arkansas." He is also responsible for the carving of several other gravestones in this cemetery and in the Oakland Cemetery in nearby Camden. Of the estimated one-hundred-and-eighty-two graves, 65 percent are historic. This percentage is likely to remain relatively stable, because of the small number people associated with the church (the church ceased to be part of a preaching circuit in the late 1940s).

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8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: state.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1875

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Significant Dates: c. 1875

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: J. T. Mendenhall (builder)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Summary

The Two Bayou Methodist Church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C with statewide significance as an excellent example of a rural, one-room Plain/Traditional style church built in the late 19th century. The interior and exterior of this church are without any modern alterations, except the composition shingles covering the wood shingles and the addition of metal handrails next to the newer wooden stairs. Contributing to this nomination are the adjacent cemetery and two historic privies.

Elaboration

The history of worship at the site where the Two Bayou Methodist Church now stands is quite long. The earliest known worshipers at the site held services under brush arbors. Before the Civil War a more permanent log building was constructed that was destroyed during the Civil War and replaced by another log building. Around 1875, this log building was replaced by the current Two Bayou Methodist Church which was constructed by J. T. Mendenhall.

Because the Two Bayou Methodist Church was never at the center of a preaching circuit, very little is known about its earliest history. If there was an organized preaching point at Two Bayou prior to 1848, the probability is that it was on the same circuit as Camden because of the town's proximity. By 1864 when Buena Vista (another neighboring community) appears in the circuit records, Two Bayou was an organized church. In 1942, the regular circuit dropped Two Bayou Methodist Church, the congregation became part of another circuit for a few years. However, by

In the late 1940s regular services ceased. The remarkable preservation of the church and its cemetery is due to devoted upkeep by its trustees. The building is still used once a year for a homecoming held every September. The building and its cemetery are owned by the Trustees of the Two Bayou Methodist Church.

The Two Bayou Methodist Church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C with statewide significance as a pristine example of a rural, one-room, vernacular church built in the late 19th century. The church is in near original condition and retains almost all of its original features. Examples of these features include: four-over-four windows, tray ceiling, stone piers, pilaster-like corner boards, pedimented door crowns, and cornice returns. Fewer than fifteen Arkansas vernacular rural, frame, church buildings are listed in the National Register. Of these the Ozan Methodist Church (listed 11/04/82) was destroyed around 1990, and the Williford Methodist Church (listed 11/27/92) is in a state of extreme neglect. Other rural churches although listed in the National Register with local significance display considerable alterations to their interiors and exteriors. Common exterior alterations include window replacements (Columbus Presbyterian Church listed 5/21/81), replacement of sandstone piers (Wesley Chapel listed 12/07/95), and the addition of modern porches (Houston Methodist Episcopal Church listed 5/20/94). The vast majority of the other significant churches also exhibit some application of modern wood paneling to their interior walls and ceilings, as well as the installation of electrical wiring. The Two Bayou Methodist Church survives as the best preserved of these increasingly scarce buildings. It is being nominated to the National Register with statewide significance as a one-room, vernacular church enhanced with Greek Revival-style elements and exhibiting a high level of architectural integrity. Also included in the nomination are the adjacent cemetery and two privies.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Spore, Kenneth L. A History of the First Methodist Church. Camden, Arkansas: The Historical Society of the First Methodist Church, 1944. p 197 - 200.

Rural Arkansas, Volume XL, Number 2. December 1985.

Interview with Ms. Virginia Wright, August 1997.

Interview with Ms. Virginia Haltom, August 1997, and January 1998.

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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 -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: approximately eight acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>503500</u>	<u>3711510</u>	B	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 4, Township 14

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outh, Range 18 West, beginning at the Northwest corner of said described lands and running South 310 yards, thence East 125 yards, thence North 310 yards, thence West 125 yards to the point of beginning, containing 8 acres, more or less, situated in Ouachita County Arkansas.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary contains all the property historically associated with the Two Bayou Methodist Church.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Amy Bennett, Survey Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 5/7/98

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

