

PH# 365157

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JAN 5 1977

DATE ENTERED

APR 29 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

NAME

* HISTORIC Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

AND/OR COMMON

Same

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 303 West Main Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

New Iberia

— VICINITY OF

3rd-David G. Treen

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Louisiana

CODE

22

COUNTY

Iberia

CODE

045

CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

STREET & NUMBER 303 West Main Street

CITY, TOWN

New Iberia

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Louisiana 70560

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Clerk of Court, Iberia Parish

STREET & NUMBER P. O. Drawer 1208

CITY, TOWN

New Iberia

STATE

Louisiana

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE None known

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The records of the Church of the Epiphany indicate that the original building, "a neat and commodious structure," was built in the winter of 1857-1858 of cypress timbers and bricks made by slaves of native clay taken from the banks of the Bayou Teche. It was a one story, rectangular building, 34' wide and 74' deep. The architect and builder are unknown.

The records also indicate that in 1884 the exterior side walls were reinforced with buttresses and that a belfry was added. The building itself was otherwise untouched until renovations were undertaken in 1959. At that time the building appeared as shown in Figure 1.

In 1959 the building was enlarged by replacing the last 11' of the existing structure, which had deteriorated, and by adding to the rear a wing 15'6" by 52'. (See Figures 2 and 2a.) This addition allowed the Sacristies and altar area to be relocated, thus enlarging the seating area and providing space for a mechanical equipment room. Original brick was saved from the replaced section and used on the exterior of the addition. Details were constructed to match those of the existing structure.

The weakening original structure was stabilized by removing the truss and ceiling and roof load from the exterior walls and placing the load on boxed-in pipe columns at each truss. These columns rest on a poured concrete beam supported by two spread footings. A concrete slab floor was then poured to replace the wood frame flooring. (See Figure 3.) Interior finish work was done under the general direction of Perry Segura & Associates of New Iberia, Louisiana.

The Church of the Epiphany bears a strong resemblance to the small village churches of the English medieval period, not surprising in American Episcopal churches. The style incorporates simple masonry parapet facades and a steeply pitched roof. In Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method (17th Edition, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961, Page 387), a drawing of Boarhunt Church, Hants, England, is one example of this style. The wooden belfry, which was added to the Church of the Epiphany in 1884, bears a remarkable similarity to that of the Boarhunt church. (See Figure 4.)

At the Church of the Epiphany the architectural style is adapted to local materials in the modeling of the brickwork and in the wood details. Gothic details are seen in the pointed arches, the spires, and the traceried windows. The vestibule is a tall Gothic arch with parapet framing the recessed entrance of high wooden doors. The main facade wall contains a circular rose window and, above it, brick dentils which outline the peak. Finials designed as spires rest on protruding buttresses at each corner. The side walls contain fenestration set in pointed arches.

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Inside, the decor is so plain it must be called spartan. The walls and ceiling are white plaster with pale gray trim. The balcony, originally for slaves who attended church with their masters, is wood, painted gray, and supported by two square wood columns. An interesting little turning stair leads to the loft, and several old "slave pews" of two different sizes are still there. They bear markings which tradition says are the teeth marks of horses which ate hay piled in the pews when the church yard was used for the horses of Union soldiers during the Civil War. Holes in the seats were supposed to have been drilled to drain rain water.

The focal point of the interior is a stained glass window extending from floor to ceiling behind the altar. It is said that this beautiful window is a Tiffany piece. The colors are lovely muted tones dominated by an exquisite rose and accented with bright medium-blue lines. This window is the only color on the interior except for the side stained glass windows, including one at the rear which is quite brightly colored and different from the others. These windows were all added in the 1959 renovation. All are memorials.

The renovation undertaken in 1959, as stated before, strengthened the weakening structure and enlarged it to the west. The original slate roofing was removed and replaced by asphalt shingles to lighten the roof load. During the renovation it was necessary to strip the structure of its dense covering of vinca, which was apparently responsible for keeping the deteriorated rear wall erect, but today much of the wall surface is again green with regrown vines.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1857-1858

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany is significant locally because it is the oldest church building in Iberia Parish. Except for its brief period of Union occupation during the Civil War, the building has been in continuous use as a house of worship of the Episcopal Church since its consecration in 1858. Similar in style to Grace Episcopal Church in St. Francisville and Christ Episcopal Church in Napoleonville, it, like them, is a good example of the rural, brick Gothic Revival Church - modeled largely after medieval English village churches, - built in America during the mid-nineteenth century. Along with other Episcopal churches built during this period in Louisiana, the Church of the Epiphany is a product of the missionary movement of Bishop Leonidas K. Polk. The Church of the Epiphany also played a military role during the Civil War, in that contemporary records indicate that it was used by Union soldiers occupying New Iberia in 1863 as a barracks, a prison, a stable and a hospital.

The Church of the Epiphany was built during the winter of 1857-1858. Church records indicate that the cost was \$6,000, but there is no information concerning the architect or the builder. The Gothic Revival style is here adapted to local materials, in the modeling of the brickwork and in the wood details. The result is a relatively simple, although sophisticated, church created to merge current style with local building materials, skills and techniques. The land on which the Church was built was donated by Harvey Hopkins and was located on the Main Street at the west end of town.

The Church of the Epiphany was consecrated in the spring of 1858 by the Rt. Rev. Leonidas K. Polk, first Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana. In an address delivered in 1834 at a convention held at Grace Church in St. Francisville, Bishop Polk had declared a four-fold challenge: (1) to make divine services available in English to a part of the country which had known only those in Latin, (2) to establish parishes among those settlers who had been Episcopalians before migrating to Louisiana, (3) to bring into the Church those as yet unchurched, and (4) to provide a ministry to the Negro population.¹ In the score of years during which Bishop Polk labored as a diocesan in Louisiana, the number of church buildings increased from three to thirty-three; the congregations from six to forty-seven for Caucasians and more than thirty for Negroes; the clergy from six to thirty-two; and the communicants from 222 to 1,859. The congregations of Negroes included 3,600 persons. The Church of the Epiphany demonstrates a response to this four-fold challenge of Bishop Polk.

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8. Significance (cont'd)

In April 1863, after Union forces captured New Orleans, the 19th Army Corps under command of General Nathaniel Banks came through the area to further protect New Orleans. The town of New Iberia was occupied on April 16. A young Union officer of the 52nd Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, wrote home to his family that one of his duties was the guarding of prisoners in the western part of the town. "The prison pen was a church, which perhaps never before saw so large a congregation."² When General Banks moved north, he left an occupation force behind. A medical detachment of the 130th Illinois converted a church into a hospital for the wounded. It is generally accepted that the church building referred to by the soldiers from Massachusetts and Illinois was the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany. A traditional tale of the Church is that the marks on some of the older pews, now kept in the balcony, were made by the teeth of horses of the Union soldiers, who placed the pews on the lawn with hay for their mounts and drilled holes in the seats to drain the rainwater. The history of the Diocese says that seats were removed and burned, the windows mutilated, and walls written on with charcoal, and there are church records of the cleanup work done after the departure of the Union Army. The walls were washed, the pews repaired and services again held.

Since that time the Church of the Epiphany has continued to play an important role in the spiritual life of the community.

¹Hodding Carter and Betty W. Carter, So Great A Good: A History of the Episcopal Church in Louisiana and of Christ Church Cathedral 1805-1955, (Sewanee: 1955), p. 58.

²J. F. Moers, History of the 52nd Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, (Boston: George H. Ellis, 1893), p. 153.

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Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

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9. Bibliography (cont'd)

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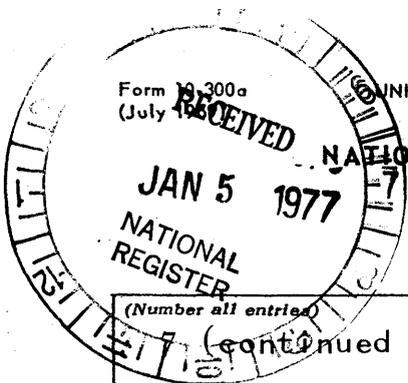
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Form 100-300a
(July 1963)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| STATE LOUISIANA | |
| COUNTY IBERIA PARISH | |
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| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | APR 29 1977 |



(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)
(continued 1)

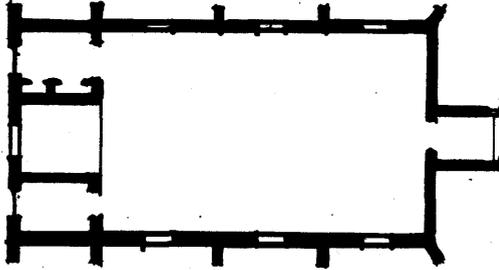


FIGURE 1

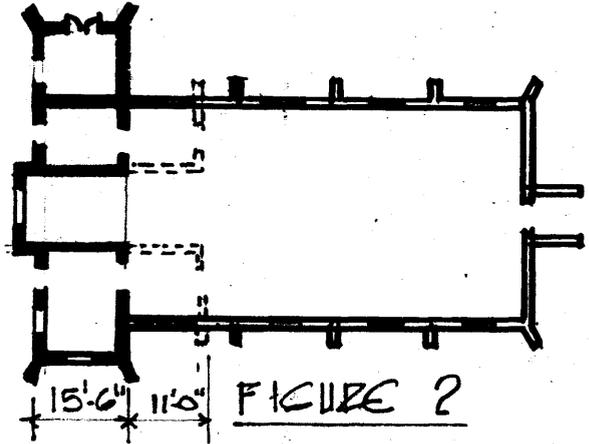


FIGURE 2

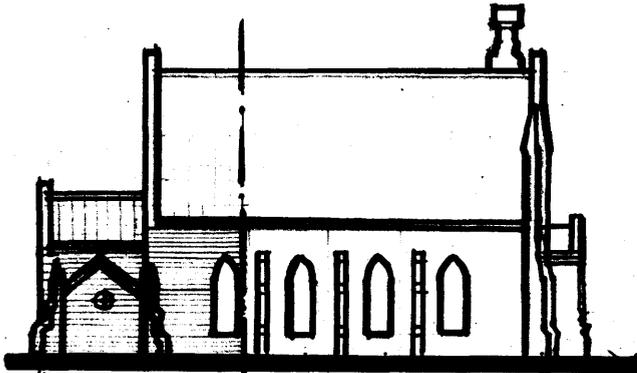


FIGURE 2a



(K) BOARDHUNT CH. HANTS



(N) PLAN

Figure 4

FIGURE 3

