

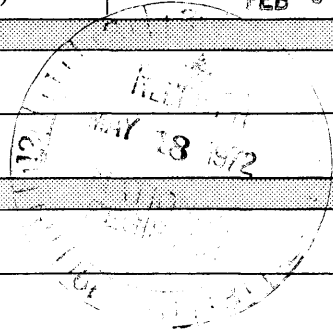
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Mississippi
 COUNTY: Jefferson
 FOR NPS USE ONLY
 ENTRY NUMBER: FEB 6 1973
 DATE: FEB 6 1973

5/1/73

HB 200000



1. NAME

COMMON: Rodney Presbyterian Church
 AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
 CITY OR TOWN: Rodney
 STATE: Mississippi CODE: 28 COUNTY: Jefferson CODE: 063

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)		<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment			
<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum			
<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific			
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>being restored</u>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Comments			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mississippi Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy
 c/o Mrs. E. A. Smith, President
 STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 25
 CITY OR TOWN: Yazoo City STATE: Mississippi CODE: 39194 28

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Office of the Chancery Clerk
 STREET AND NUMBER: Jefferson County Courthouse
 CITY OR TOWN: Fayette STATE: Mississippi CODE: 39069 28

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey
 DATE OF SURVEY: 1936 Federal State County Local
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Division of Prints and Photographs
 STREET AND NUMBER: Library of Congress
 CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 08

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Rodney Presbyterian Church, located on the edge of the Mississippi River lowlands at the foot of the Petit Gulf bluffs, is a two-story brick structure 36 feet by 50 feet six inches. It has a stucco-over-brick retaining wall, and a wrought-iron fence with ornate but delicately patterned gate separates the church from the adjoining street. The setting is emphasized by a series of five steps extending the width of the facade and flanked by low brick walls. The walls terminate in square brick columns with pyramidal caps, although only the column on the south side is intact.

The facade (west elevation), laid in Flemish bond, features two double-leaf entrances with paneled jambs and fanlights. Arched courses of brick stretchers form a voussoir effect above the doorways, the single window between them, and the three windows on the second floor. Above the center window of the second floor the brick fabric shows damage caused during the Civil War by a projectile from a 30-pounder Parrott rifle. The rounded headings of all the windows of the second floor are false, being walled over on the interior with brick. The shaped gable of the facade rises to an octagonal belfry based on a platform with molded frieze and cornice. Columns with flaring, composite-type capitals divide the shuttered apertures, and the whole is topped by a half-spherical shaped roof. During the exterior restoration the belfry was almost completely rebuilt except for the columns, which were reused. The roof of the church has been covered with fireproof simulated shingles and most of the window sills have been replaced.

The north and south elevations are similar and feature rows of long windows with green shutters (recently installed) and round-arch headings which correspond with the fanlights of the doorways. Double bands of denticulated brick run beneath the eaves. The two elevations do differ, however, in that a paneled door leading to the balcony and four windows are on the north side, and five windows are on the south side. On both elevations are the scars of chimneys which have been removed since it is thought that they did not exist prior to 1870.

According to John Montgomery, AIA, restoration architect the original floor plan of the Rodney Presbyterian Church consisted of a narthex (29 feet six inches by 9 feet six inches); an auditorium with two side isles and pews in the center; a raised pulpit on the west elevation; and a balcony over the narthex. Mr. Montgomery also states that shortly after the completion of the structure, a portion of the narthex was taken in for an organ recess. Present restoration plans call for replacing the narthex with north and south foyers, with an organ recess separating the foyers. The north foyer will have a doorway to a closet under the stairwell, while the south foyer will

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provide entrance to the organ recess. Located behind three square columns at the rear of the auditorium the recess will be entirely enclosed on its north side.

The auditorium will consist of two side isles with boxed pews in the center, similar to the original floor plan, and a pulpit. Smaller single pews will be placed in each rear corner of the auditorium. The pulpit will be raised to the height it is thought to have been before being lowered in 1884 when the church was repaired. It will be centered under the middle window of the east elevation and project approximately four feet, with narrow steps on each side. The face of the pulpit will feature a plain panel flanked by two pilasters, and the pulpit rail will be copied from the existing balcony rail. New rows of pews, matching the present ones in the center, are to be placed on each side facing the pulpit.

The balcony will contain an isle with three pews on each side, and a stairladder to the belfry, which has four major supports approximately 12" x 12". The two supports on the south side were damaged by shelling during the Civil War, about half of each one being splintered and torn away. The bell which hangs above was made by Buckeye Bell Foundry, Cincinnati, in 1859.

Restoration plans also call for the walls, which are 20 feet 4 inches high, to be replastered and new bases added. The auditorium floor will be relaid to resemble the floors of the balcony, thought to be original, and hardware in the style of the period will be installed.

The Rodney cemetery, located on the wooded bluff east of the church, contains graves of the early citizens of the community and of Saint Joseph, Louisiana (across the river from Rodney), as well as graves of river travelers. Many are enclosed with ornate wrought-iron fences, but the cemetery has been abandoned for some years, and some of the neglected graves have fallen into ravines. Confederate trenches are located within the cemetery, with the main earthworks on the bluffs behind, overlooking the old river bed. These defenses, erected during the Civil War, give a commanding view of the area and consist of approximately four to five hundred yards of trenches and battery positions. They are in a remarkable state of preservation.

3. SIGNIFICANCE

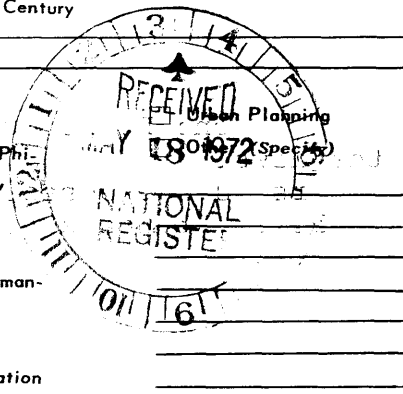
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **ca. 1832**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation		



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Rodney Presbyterian Church, located in the old abandoned river town of Rodney, Jefferson County, probably had its beginning 1828, when the Mississippi Legislature granted a charter of incorporation to the "Presbyterian Church of Petit Gulf," January 26, 1828. Also in this same act (charter), Bethel Church in adjoining Claiborne County was incorporated.

From the earliest days of settlement, the area around Rodney had been known as Petit Gulf since a small eddy had formed in the Mississippi River at Rodney. However, shortly after the churches received their charters, the town was incorporated by the legislature (February 13, 1828), specifying that the community be known as Rodney rather than Petit Gulf.

The only known official church record pertaining to the Rodney Presbyterian Church is The Record Book of Rodney Presbyterian Church which states that the members of Bethel Church worshipping at Rodney petitioned the Presbytery of Mississippi in January, 1852, to be organized as a separate church from Bethel Church, and to be known as the Presbyterian Church of Rodney. Permission was granted by the Presbytery the following month, with the Rev. J. R. Hutchison assigned to organize the Rodney church. By the end of the year, trustees were appointed and plans were made to have the church incorporated, but evidently a charter was not issued by the state.

Although there are no earlier records available, the Rev. John E. Hutchison (1807-1878), who was a supply minister to the Rodney congregation for one year in 1830, gives evidence in his published memoirs of 1874 that there was Presbyterian activity in Rodney prior to the erection of the present church. According to Hutchison, there were only two members of the Presbyterian faith when he first came to Rodney, and services were held in a bar-room. Hutchison also states:

Early steps were taken to erect the present brick church at Rodney. It was dedicated to the worship of God on the first day of January, 1832, by the preaching of a sermon

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historic American Buildings Survey. "Presbyterian Church," 1936; 2 photographs.

Hutchison, Rev., I [sic] R. Reminiscences, Sketches and Addresses, Selected From My Papers During A Ministry of Forty-Five Years in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Houston: E. H. Cushing, 1874. Pp. 17-18, 29-34.

Interviews:

Mrs. J. O. Jones, President, Rodney Foundation, Inc., P. O. Drawer 280, Gulfport, Mississippi, December 3, 1971.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	31°	51'	53"	91°	12'	27"			
NE	31°	51'	53"	91°	12'	15"			
SE	31°	51'	45"	91°	12'	15"			
SW	31°	51'	45"	91°	12'	27"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 22

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Clinton Ikerd Bagley, Jr. Historian

ORGANIZATION: Mississippi Department of Archives and History DATE: May 3, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:
P. O. Box 571

CITY OR TOWN: Jackson STATE: Mississippi 39205 CODE: 28

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name R. A. McLemore
R. A. McLemore

Title Director, Miss. Department of Archives and History

Date May 3, 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert M. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 2/6/73

ATTEST:
Wm. Monty L.
Keeper of The National Register

Date 1-29-73

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by Rev. Dr. Chamberlain.... After the house was finished it appeared that the builder still had a claim against it of \$1,500-which debt was quietly paid by Mr. David Hunt, a princely man, and the building released from all embarrassment.

In 1842, Hutchison returned to the area to teach ancient languages at Oakland College (a Presbyterian institution, located on the site of present-day Alcorn A & M College) and probably served as a supply minister to the Rodney congregation until 1852. Thus it is thought that the Rodney church originally served as a mission for Bethel Church until 1852. Hutchison also says that as Rodney grew into a thriving river town, its church flourished.

During the Civil War, on September 13, 1863, a slight skirmish occurred at the church. On that particular Sunday morning, the U.S.S. Rattler, a Union gunboat, had docked at Rodney only a few hundred yards from the front entrance of the church. One witness' account says that Acting Master Walter E. A. Fentress was invited to attend church services by a Reverend Mr. Baker, a Northern sympathizer, who was to preach that day. Captain Fentress, Ensign Simon H. Strunk, and approximately eighteen crewmen were in the church when they were captured by a small party of Confederate soldiers commanded by Lieutenant Cicero M. Allen of the 2nd Arkansas Cavalry. According to Lieutenant Allen's brother, who was in the party, pickets were posted the night before in the graveyard behind the church, which still contains the remains of Confederate earthworks. It is not certain if there were any casualties, but when word reached the Rattler, orders were given to bombard the town and church. Lieutenant Allen sent word that if the shelling did not stop, he would hang every prisoner in his charge. Thus the town and church were spared destruction, although the building still bears scars. The incident was the most military action witnessed by the people of Rodney during the Civil War.

In the mid-1860s a sand bar formed in the Mississippi River near Rodney, gradually causing the river to alter its course away from the community. In 1869 a fire almost completely destroyed the town, and its population further declined after the 1880s. These developments adversely affected the church membership. In 1923 the pastor resigned, leaving a congregation of sixteen; but, services probably continued for several years. Interest in the church was renewed by the Mississippi Presbytery when it held its fall meeting there in 1955. At that time plans were made to restore the church because "...of its beautiful structure, its inspiring past, and the Providential circumstances that have preserved it much as it was in by gone days, in a symbolic landmark

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of Presbyterianism." The project was subsequently abandoned because of lack of funds.

In 1966 the remaining members of the Rodney Presbyterian Church, with the consent of the South Mississippi Presbytery, conveyed the building to the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Shortly after the acquisition, a non-profit corporation, Rodney Foundation, Inc., was chartered to initiate plans for restoring the church. In the fall of 1968 the Mississippi Legislature appropriated \$40,000 to the United Daughters of the Confederacy for the "restoration, development and maintenance of the Church." The exterior has been restored to its appearance during the 1860s, when the church and the local area were at their zenith, and plans have already been made to complete the interior restoration when funds become available.

9.
Mr. John M. Montgomery, AIA, Jackson, Mississippi, November, 1971 - April, 1972.

Laws of the State of Mississippi: 1828. Jackson: Peter Isler. Pp. 16-17.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi:

"Minutes of Mississippi Presbytery." Fall, 1955. P. 18.

Rodney Presbyterian Church, February 1, 1852 - September 28, 1919 [1923]. The Record Book of the Rodney Presbyterian Church, Rodney, Mississippi, Including Historical, Sessional, and Statistical Sections. Pp. 1-4, 149, 490-491.

Rodney Presbyterian Church" Picture and Subject Files.

Office of the Chancery Clerk, Jefferson County Courthouse, Fayette, Mississippi. Deed Book I, pp. 497-500, and Deed Book 5-G, p. 241.

Personal inspection by Clinton Ikerd Bagley, November 11, 1971.

Turpin, J. Archer. "Fight in A Mississippi Church in 1863." Confederate Veteran, January, 1917, pp. 17-19.

