

JUL 26 1988
#3

Rural Churches of Baldwin County

(Thematic Group)

Contact: Chester Hunt, Custodian
P. O. Box 735
Fairhope, Al. 35233

Historic Name: Lebanon Chapel A.M.E. Church

Common Name: Lebanon Chapel A.M.E. Church

Location: Bounded by Young Street on the west and Middle Street on the north.

Verbal Boundary Description:

Begin at a point on the southeast corner of the intersection of Young and Middle Streets, proceed east 338 feet to a point, thence south 390 feet to a point, thence west 70 feet to a point, thence north 210 feet to a point, thence 283.7 feet in a northwesterly direction to a point, thence 158 feet north to the point of beginning.

Acreage: Approximately 1.5

UTM: 16/414/200/3375/840

Date of Construction: 1923

Architect/Builder: W. B. Pearson

Statement of Significance

Criterion C-Architecture:

Lebanon Chapel A.M.E. Church is significant as the finest example of concrete block construction in a religious context in Baldwin County. It's central tower, quoins, denticulation and belt course distinguish it as the highest style building in the local black neighborhood.

Integrity:

Lebanon Chapel A.M.E. Church retains its integrity of location, materials and plan. Exterior alterations are limited to new window panes (1980) and a one-story clay tile, shed roof addition to the rear (1960). Interior alterations include new pews and carpet down the center aisle. Walls and vaulted ceiling are original and unaltered.

Description:

Lebanon Chapel A.M.E. Church is located on the southeast corner of Young and Middle Streets near the southeastern limits of Fairhope. The building is a 3 by 5 bay, one-story, gable roofed ornamental concrete block structure. The facade is dominated by a central square tower divided in three sections. The lower half is concrete block with a pair of wooden doors with lancet panels. The top half of the tower is stuccoed and divided in two by molding. Louvered lancets are in each face. The bellcast hip roof has a boxed cornice with

brackets all around. The facade at either side of the tower has a stuccoed parapet accented by a bell-shaped roof on the corners. Concrete block details include smooth quoins, lintels and belt courses; water table and dentil work around the cornice. All windows are double hung sash with round tops. The rear gable is stuccoed. Two rear windows are partially blinded by a one-story, shed roof, tile block addition. There are rear entrances on either side of this.

The church is entered through the tower via two sets of double wooden doors, one into the tower and one into the building. The church is one room with plastered walls and vaulted, beaded board ceiling with exposed trusswork. The altar and pews are recent and the hardwood floor is a replacement as well. There is a small chamber on each side of the altar for the choir and pastor with access behind the altar for the choir.

Historic Summary:

The early Fairhoppers believed in universal equality. Yet if their experiment was to survive in the deep South, it had to be for whites only. Relations between blacks and the Single-Taxers were cordial, though the former resided largely outside the southern city limits in the communities of Tatumville and Houstonville. Some Single-Taxers, including E. B. Gaston, disapproved of black disenfranchisement and roundly condemned the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920s. Blacks in Fairhope sought solace and strength not from well-meaning Utopians however, but from their churches. Lebanon Chapel A.M.E. Church organized with some twenty members and began construction of a building in 1923. The project was supervised and carried through to completion by one of the congregation, Warren B. Pearson. Pearson was a mechanic and builder who lived just north of Fairhope in Volanta. His choice of ornamental concrete block for the new church was well within the building tradition then prevalent in Fairhope. The Courier contains no mention of the completion of the building, one of the finest churches in town. Lebanon Chapel A.M.E. Church continues to serve a small congregation of about fifty people.

Contributing Building 1

Scale 1"=100'

