

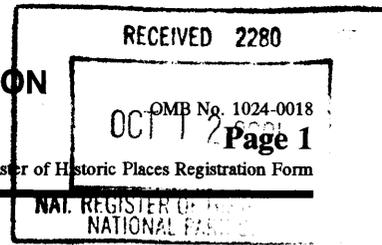
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Rapides Parish, LA

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1255

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Emmanuel Baptist Church

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number 430 Jackson St. Not for publication: NA

City/Town Alexandria Vicinity: NA

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: Rapides Code: 079 Zip Code: 71301

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: Statewide: Locally: X

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Jonathan C. Fricker, LA Deputy SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Date October 9, 2001

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Rapides Parish, LA

Page 2

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
Determined eligible for the National Register
Determined not eligible for the National Register
Removed from the National Register
Other (explain):

Handwritten signature of the Keeper

Signature of Keeper

Handwritten date: 11/21/01

Date of Action

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing
1
1

Non contributing
buildings
sites
structures
objects
0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

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NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

## Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Rapides Parish, LA

Page 3

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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### 6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: religion                      Sub: religious facility  
Current religion                      Sub: religious facility

### 7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Gothic Revival

#### Materials:

Foundation: brick  
Walls: brick  
Roof: asphalt  
Other: cast stone

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NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

## Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Rapides Parish, LA

Page 4

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Dedicated in 1950, Emmanuel Baptist Church is an unexpectedly late but nonetheless convincing example of the Gothic Revival in its twentieth century permutation. Located on a corner in downtown Alexandria, the church is finished in beige brick veneer and accented with cast stone. It is part of a large complex of Emmanuel Baptist buildings; however, it is the only building being included in this nomination. The other buildings are either less than fifty years old, or in one case, an early twentieth century building whose present appearance dates from 1960. Interestingly, much of the later construction at Emmanuel took its architectural cue from the sanctuary. Alterations take the form of a large rear addition rather than loss or modification of original fabric.

Like many a twentieth century Gothic Revival church, Emmanuel Baptist is Gothic in details and features rather than overall composition. The design source is the middle period of Gothic architecture (c.1280- 1350), the so-called Decorated phase in England. And while Emmanuel Baptist's decoration is quite low-key when compared to its ancient prototypes, it is, within its context, an extensively detailed building, especially for 1950. Gothic motifs are everywhere, both on the exterior and interior, including the light fixtures.

The church is articulated as a rectangular mass with a bell tower attached at a front corner. The basilican plan worship space reads on the exterior as a large two story gabled building with side aisles under one-story shed roofed extensions. Much of the great gabled façade is taken up with an enormous pointed arch at the center done in cast stone. The arch is formed of multiple layers of ribbing springing from slender superimposed columns. Inscribed within the large arch is a pointed arch design at each side. These arches spring from slender superimposed columns located between the three entrance doors. At the very top of the large pointed arch is a rose window formed of two different trefoil designs. The remainder of the surface above the doors is filled with mainly trefoil designs. A quatrefoil at the center, below the rose window, features the church's name in Gothic lettering. Above the great central pointed arch, extending to almost the top of the gable, is a very thin opening with a pointed arch. In a nod toward the real Gothic, the architects (Favrot and Reed) used various thin elements suggestive of buttresses. Of course, unlike their ancestors, they are decorative rather than structural.

Rather than being an integral part of the composition, as seen in true Gothic churches, Emmanuel's bell tower is attached at one corner. Of two stages, it is accented at the corners with buttress-like elements. The tall first stage, which ends at the bottom of the façade gable, features a tall, very thin unglazed opening on its primary elevations. The more richly ornamented second stage features, on each elevation, openwork double pointed arch windows with tracery. The tower culminates with an attempt at crenelation. The tower is accessed on the side elevation via a Tudor arch opening flanked by original Gothic style light fixtures with repeating tracery designs and quatrefoils.

The bays on the long side elevations are marked by buttress-like superimposed piers. The upper stories are pierced by pointed arch windows set within square head cast stone frames. The windows are filled with figural stained glass and are ornamented with cast stone tracery. The spandrels feature a Gothic design. The windows at ground level, along the shed-roofed side aisles, are of a simple square head design for the first five bays. They too are filled with figural stained glass. Round arch windows are found at the rear of the one story sections.

Emmanuel Baptist's interior survives virtually unaltered. Its configuration is more typical of

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

## Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Rapides Parish, LA

Page 5

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

traditional Anglican/Episcopal or Catholic churches than Baptist. Instead of the standard Baptist auditorium plan (with little in the way of spatial delineations), Emmanuel has a nave with side aisles (one on each side). The aisles are set off from the nave by a flat arch arcade. The side walls are of the same beige brick as the exterior. The interior's focal point is a broad Tudor arch which gives way to a deep recessed area -- in the manner of a chancel -- a configuration unusual in Baptist churches but common in traditional English churches. The chancel-like space provides for choir seating and behind that, a wood-accented baptismal pool. Crowning the baptismal pool is a lacy Gothic design with an element to each side resembling a crocket. On the back wall is a large square stained glass window depicting Christ with open arms.

Among the interior's most notable elements is the ceiling treatment. Although not a hammerbeam ceiling, it is reminiscent of one. The pitched roof ceiling (painted off-white) is crisscrossed by dark wood beams. Spanning the width of the nave are decorative beams accented at the corners with Gothic motifs in an openwork pattern. Hanging from the ceiling on long cords are the original light fixtures with their various Gothic motifs. The upper story Gothic windows have the same surround treatment as on the exterior -- i.e., a pointed arch set within a square head frame with a Gothic motif in each spandrel. The sense of antiquity is enhanced by Emmanuel's impressive stained glass windows. They were installed in 1950 and subsequently sponsored as memorial windows. Depicting Biblical scenes, they are formed of small pieces of glass. The dominant color is deep blue, with reds and golds used principally as accent. Other noteworthy interior features include the original altar furniture with Gothic designs, the original pews, a dark wood balcony featuring crocket-like elements and the entrance lobby. The lobby has a Jacobean style ceiling, numerous dark wood doors with multiple panes, and its original light fixtures.

### Alterations/Assessment of Integrity:

In 1960, a quite large complimentary addition was made at the rear (see attached sketch map). An arcade connects the enlarged building to other buildings in the complex. While the footprint of the addition is admittedly larger than the original sanctuary, the addition is located at the rear, allowing the 1950 building to "take center stage" so-to-speak. And, very importantly, the 1950 church retains all of its original Gothic Revival character.

### INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL PHOTOS

Photographer: Donna Fricker

Location of Negatives: LA SHPO

Date Taken: July 2001

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Rapides Parish, LA

Page 6

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A\_ B\_ C\_X D\_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A\_X B\_ C\_ D\_ E\_ F\_ G\_

Areas of Significance: architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1950

Significant Dates: 1950

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Favrot and Reed, Architects (New Orleans)
Jacoby Stained Glass Studios, St. Louis

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

## Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Rapides Parish, LA

Page 7

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Emmanuel Baptist Church is of local architectural significance as an important example of the Gothic Revival style in Rapides Parish. Of the limited number of fully developed Gothic Revival churches in the parish (5), the strongly articulated Emmanuel Baptist is important because, with its late date, it represents the remarkable tenacity of a style considered to be the true Christian style.

Regarded by its proponents as “truthful” and inherently Christian, the Gothic Revival emerged in America in the 1840s by way of England. Although its use was not entirely restricted to churches, it is most closely associated with religious architecture. The style’s popularity is largely the result of a reform effort within the Anglican Church in the 1830s known as the Ecclesiological Movement – a movement which left us the enduring notion that Gothic is a Christian style *per se*, and as such is singularly appropriate for churches. The Ecclesiological Movement reached the United States by the 1840s, where it spread through the Episcopal Church. Proponents of the movement believed the Middle Ages to have been an “Age of Faith” in which devout people built “good buildings.” These “good buildings” (medieval Gothic churches) were by definition Christian and were considered the most appropriate models for church architecture. The movement’s tenets eventually spread beyond the Episcopal Church to indirectly influence members of many Christian denominations. Thus, it is largely as a result of the Ecclesiological Movement that the Gothic Revival became the church style of choice for Victorians and later generations of Americans. This influence lasted well into the twentieth century, although it is usually thought to have its last major historic phase in the 1920s.

Emmanuel Baptist is significant in and of itself as a strongly articulated example of the twentieth century Gothic Revival within Rapides Parish. A survey done for the Division of Historic Preservation in the 1980s documented 4,932 buildings in the large rural parish which were fifty years old or older. Most are in the two population centers – Alexandria, with a population of roughly 50,000, and Pineville, with about 16,000. Of Rapides’ thousands of historic buildings, only nine are in the Gothic Revival style, and four of these (all simple frame churches) are very hesitantly styled. Of the five major Gothic Revival churches, two are from the 1850s, two are late nineteenth century, and one, the candidate, is from 1950 (although it looks 1920s).

Perhaps Emmanuel Baptist’s greatest significance lies in its very late date – well into the modern era when glass boxes and ranch houses were the norm. In choosing such a traditional look, church officials, whether they knew it or not, were still being influenced by the Ecclesiological Movement. In short, as its proponents wished, Gothic was the style that came to mind when thinking of building a new church – it was the true Christian style.

#### Historical Note:

The Alexandria and Pineville Baptist Church was organized in Pineville (just across the Red River from Alexandria) on September 6, 1881, with twelve members. The name of the church was changed to Emmanuel Baptist Church on March 30, 1892. In 1897, a wooden sanctuary was erected at the present site in Alexandria. A brick education building was completed in 1920. On September 10, 1950 the present brick sanctuary in the Gothic style was dedicated. In 1960 the education building was extensively remodeled to match the new sanctuary and a complimentary large addition was added to the rear of the sanctuary.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

## Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Rapides Parish, LA

Page 8

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Rapides Parish Survey, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Emmanuel Baptist Church Records.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
- 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): Emmanuel Baptist Church

### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:     **Zone Easting Northing**  
                          15    552600   3464100

Verbal Boundary Description: See attached sketch map.

Boundary Justification:

As noted previously, the candidate is the only historic building in a large church complex. (The other buildings are either less than 50 years old, or in one case, a 1920 building which was completely remodeled in 1960.) Because the complex is fairly tightly packed, the boundaries cut closely around the candidate on the south side, including cutting through an open arcade connecting the candidate to another building. Otherwise the boundaries follow curblines.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION**

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Rapides Parish, LA**

**Page 9**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title: National Register staff

Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: August 2001

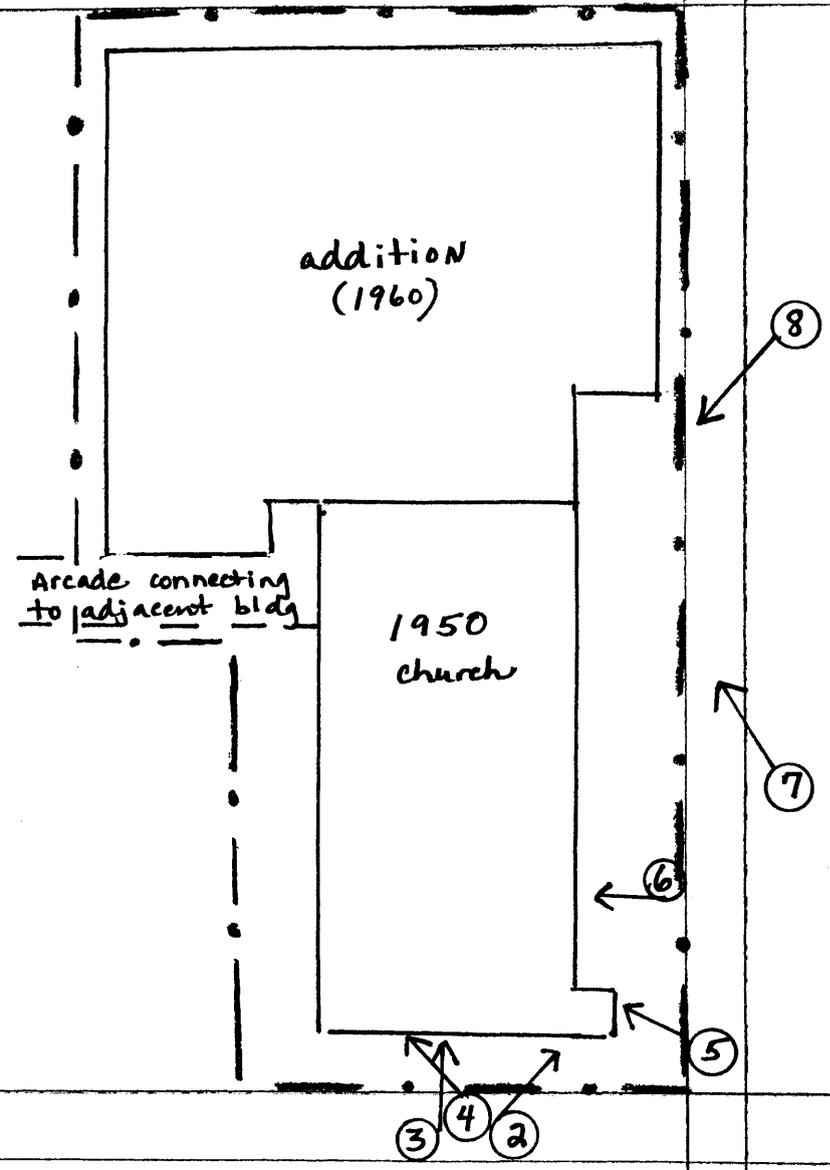
**PROPERTY OWNERS**

Emmanuel Baptist Church  
Box 866  
Alexandria, LA 71309

318-442-7773

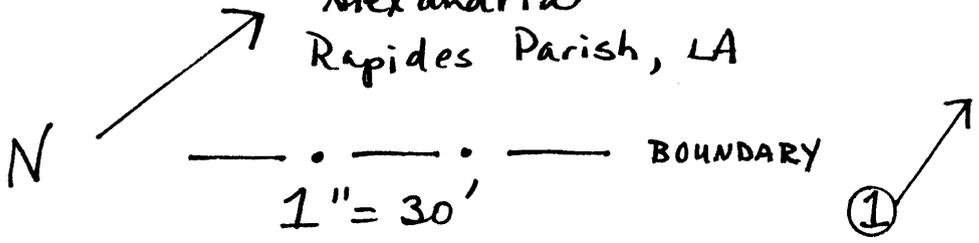
Beaugard St.

Remainder of  
Emmanuel Baptist  
Complex



Jackson St.

EMMANUEL Baptist Church  
Alexandria  
Rapides Parish, LA



4th St.