

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions. Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete the appropriate box in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Alabama Methodist Church

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number LA Hwy Alt 2 N/A not for publication

city or town Bernice  vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Union code 111 zip code 71222

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Gerri Hobdy February 21, 1995  
Signature of certifying official/Title LA SHPO, Dept. of Date  
Culture, Recreation & Tourism  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

Elson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper  
Entered in the National Register 3-30-95 Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1            |                 | buildings  |
|              |                 | sites      |
|              |                 | structures |
|              |                 | objects    |
| 1            | 0               | Total      |

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

no style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

Period of Significance

1895

Significant Dates

1895

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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

Name of repository:

Name of Property \_\_\_\_\_

County and State \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property @ 3 acres \_\_\_\_\_

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |       |                       |                           |
|---|-------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 1   5 | 5   2   5   7   0   0 | 3   6   3   5   5   8   0 |
|   | Zone  | Easting               | Northing                  |
| 2 |       |                       |                           |

|   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| 3 |      |         |          |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 4 |      |         |          |

 See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title National Register Staff \_\_\_\_\_

organization Division of Historic Preservation \_\_\_\_\_ date January 1995 \_\_\_\_\_

street &amp; number P. O. Box 44247 \_\_\_\_\_ telephone 504-342-8160 \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Baton Rouge \_\_\_\_\_ state LA \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 70804 \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Bernice Historical Society \_\_\_\_\_

street &amp; number P. O. Box 186 \_\_\_\_\_ telephone N/A \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Bernice \_\_\_\_\_ state LA \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 71222 \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Alabama Methodist Church, Bernice vic., Union Parish, LA

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| <b>RECEIVED 413</b>                                     |
| <b>FEB 27 1985</b>                                      |
| INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION<br>NATIONAL PARK SERVICE |

The Alabama Methodist Church is an unstyled frame country church located in a rural setting a few miles northwest of the small town of Bernice. The building is set just a few yards back from Louisiana Highway Alt. 2. It has received very few alterations since its 1895 construction.

The simple, pitched roof, gable fronted building's distinguishing exterior feature is a central entrance tower. The tower's first stage is marked by a slightly projecting gable above the door. Then the tower rises above the main roofline in one stage to culminate in an open belfry with a steep faceted spire crowned by a finial. The tower combined with the relatively steep pitch of the main block produces a very vertical building, especially when viewed head on. While the main portion of the church and the tower are sheathed in clapboards, the belfry is built of vertically placed planks. It has a decidedly "homemade" look to it and is leaning slightly to the right as you face the church. Five evenly spaced square head, four over four windows pierce the side elevations, while a small two over two square head window is located on each side of the first stage of the entrance tower. There are two doors on the rear elevation, one to each side. The gabled entrance features fascia boards and corner boards echoing those found on the main block. To each side of the double entrance doors, and of the same height, is a single molded panel. The building rests on blocks of ironstone native to the area. The only exterior alterations are concrete steps with simple metal handrails at all three doors.

Typical of North Louisiana churches of this type is the relatively simple, stark interior. The walls and vaulted ceiling are sheathed in varnished beaded boards. Alabama Methodist is slightly more elaborate than many of its type in that the boards are laid diagonally on the side walls and portions of the wall behind the altar. There is also a wainscot. The simple box-like pews give every indication of being original. The only alteration to the interior is the subdivision of the nave to create a shallow meeting room across the front of the church. This was done in a sensitive manner because the inserted wall's sheathing is very similar to the original (the same gauge and laid diagonally). The wall is pierced by three doors, the central one of which is obtrusive in character. The shallow space across the front of the church created by the wall insertion retains its original character except that the boards covering the walls and ceiling have been painted.

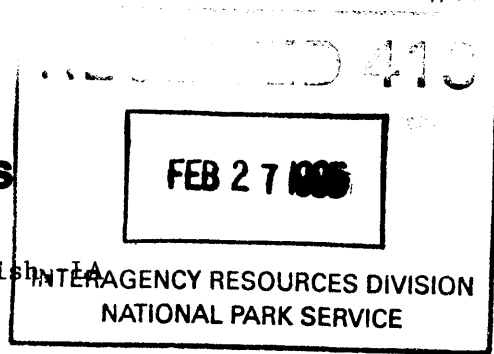
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Continuation Sheet**

Alabama Methodist Church, Bernice vic., Union Parish, LA

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Assessment of Integrity

All in all, the Alabama Methodist Church is very well preserved. It is virtually unchanged on the exterior and retains the bulk of its original interior character, including its wall and ceiling sheathing, wooden floors, and pews. As noted above, the subdivision was done sensitively.

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Alabama Methodist Church, Bernice vic., Union Parish, LA

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The Alabama Methodist Church is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is a rare surviving example of an important North Louisiana building type.

The building is a well preserved example of a simple frame country church. As such, it represents a local North Louisiana unpretentious building tradition associated with the settlement patterns of the region. Distinctly different from the older French Catholic southern part of the state, North Louisiana was settled in the 1840s and '50s by Anglo-Saxon Baptists and Methodists migrating westward from the Upland South. The founders of Alabama Methodist arrived in the area in 1849 after a long journey from Shelby County, Alabama. According to tradition, the first church on the site was a log building.

Historically, North Louisiana was characterized by small farms and disbursed settlement patterns. Churches typically were located in remote rural settings. Even in 1895, when the present Alabama Methodist Church was built, the nearest community of any size was roughly twenty miles away. (Bernice, about five miles away, was not founded until 1899, when the railroad arrived.) From an architectural standpoint, these churches are known for their simple, unadorned, often quite stark character, whether they be from the 1870s (the date of the earliest surviving example) or the very early years of this century. The typical surviving example is a rectangular, pitched roof, gable end building of frame construction with little in the way of decorative detailing (i.e., Alabama Methodist but without the tower).

While they were scattered across North Louisiana historically, churches of the type described above are now rare survivors. For example, Alabama Methodist is the only one remaining in Union Parish, and there are most likely less than a dozen in the eastern half of northern Louisiana where Alabama Methodist is located.

For the most part, churches of this type have been the victim of population shifts. In remote locations, they no longer had congregations large enough to support them by the 1950s and '60s. And, of course, once vacant, a building's future is very insecure. Those that have managed to survive are generally not in full-time use, but have an active and dedicated support group and are used occasionally, with the most popular event being an annual homecoming with dinner on the grounds.

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Alabama Methodist Church, Bernice vic., Union Parish, LA

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The Alabama Methodist Church has not been in use as a church since the 1960s. Apparently by the mid-1970s the Methodist Church had plans to dispose of the building, but in 1976, the Bernice Bicentennial Committee took on its preservation as a project and the building was transferred to this group. In November 1994, the support group that grew out of this effort, the Alabama Methodist Church Corporation, deeded the church to the Bernice Historical Society.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Historic Structures Survey, Division of Historic Preservation.

Baldwin, John T., Jr. "Alabama Methodist Church: A North Louisiana Landmark." North Louisiana Historical Association Journal, Summer 1976.



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Alabama Methodist Church, Union Parish, LA

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**LEGAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

The following described property situated in Union Parish, Louisiana, to-wit:

Beginning at the NW/C of Sec. 31, T22N, R3W, proceed South along the West forty line 321 feet to the POB of the property herein conveyed: From this POB, proceed further South along the said West forty line 583 feet to a branch, thence South 70 degrees 38 minutes East along said branch 200 feet to its intersection with another branch, thence North 0 degrees 8 minutes East 105.9 feet along said branch thence North 557 feet to the South line of the Weldon Cemetery Association lot, thence west along the South line of Weldon Cemetery Association lot to the POB, being situated in NW/4 of the NW/4 of Sec. 31, T22N, R3W, and containing 3.001 acres, more or less.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

Boundaries follow property lines of parcel of land upon which church is located.