## MULTIPLE RESOURCES OF ANNISTON CALHOUN COUNTY, ALABAMA

Historic name: Temple Beth-El Owner: Church Beth-El Temple

Common name: Temple Beth-El 301 East Thirteenth Street

Anniston, Alabama 36201

Address: 301 East Thirteenth Street

Acreage: less than one acre UTM: 16/608860/3725000

Verbal Boundary: Anniston City Land Company Map, Block 20, Lot 6, measuring 99.99

feet on Quintard and 190 feet along the north line of Thirteenth St.

Architectural Design: Byzantine influences

Date of Construction: 1891

Statement of Significance:

## Criterion C - Architecture:

Temple Beth-El is significant architecturally as a good local example of a vernacular Neo-Romanesque religious building with Byzantine influences, which are displayed in the rounded lintels that cap the arched windows and circular moldings on the Quintard Avenue facade and by the unusual high dome and the Eastern-influenced finials on the tower.

## Description:

The Jewish temple, located on the northeast corner of Quintard Avenue and Thirteenth Street, is a one-story rectangular building of brick, stucco, and wood covered by a gabled roof. The dominant feature is the square entrance tower at the southwest corner of the building. In the brick first stage are two double doors (facing the two streets) surmounted by arched transoms filled with art glass, and surrounded by a molded architrave. At the second stage, which is stucco, a menorah faces Quintard Avenue, possibly screening the original belfry opening, and an arched, louvered vent faces south. Four original finials cap the second stage, and the whole is covered by an octagonal wooden dome with its original finial.

In the front of the main body of the synagogue itself (the west elevation) is a triple arched window with a rose window above that, and another, smaller menorah. The sides of the temple, four bays deep, have arched windows interspersed with brick pilasters. All windows have original colored glass in diamond patterns.

The interior of the structure has been modernized, but the original oak pews remain with scroll-cut ends with lettering. There are nine pews on either side of a central aisle. The original golden oak classical lecturn on the south side of the platform has slender attenuated colonettes with egg-and-dart molding embellishing the paneling as well as the cornice around the top of the lecturn. The ark of the covenant rests in an arched recessed niche at the back of the platform.

To the east of the temple and adjoining it, an annex was added in 1950 for classrooms and social activities.

## Historical Summary:

The small but distinctive temple houses the only Jewish congregation in Anniston. The group has met continuously from the time it was organized, and though never large, has been a contributing force in Anniston's development, exemplifying the brotherhood attained between Christians and Jews in the model city.

"Temple Beth-E1" translated means "the House of God" and it was built and furnished at a cost of \$2,200 through the efforts of the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society, a group that numbered about 14. The women, headed by Mrs. Anselm Sterne, presented the building debt free to the congregation. Dedication services were held December 8, 1891. Even though the group was small, they held services every week under the direction of lay readers. Anselm Sterne was largely responsible for organizing the congregation in 1888 and served as lay reader for a number of years. As an indication of this relationship, a plaque in the church's library reads, "To honor Alfred Caro the Menorah on the tower is presented to Temple Beth-E1 by his many Christian friends in appreciation of his outstanding contributions to our community activities." The menorah was dedicated during Brotherhood Week in 1974.

Rough Sketch Map

#18 Temple Beth-El

Anniston, Alabama



