

PH#366846

AREA 51221

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 21 1975
DATE ENTERED MAY 6 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Christ Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Route 553

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Church Hill

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fourth

STATE
Mississippi

CODE
28

COUNTY
Jefferson

CODE
063

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi

STREET & NUMBER
P. O. Box 1636

CITY, TOWN
Jackson

VICINITY OF

STATE
Mississippi

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Office of the Chancery Clerk, Jefferson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
P. O. Box 145

CITY, TOWN
Fayette

STATE
Mississippi

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historic American Buildings Survey (3 photos)

DATE
1934, 1936

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN
Washington

STATE
D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Standing on a remote hill in rural Jefferson County, Mississippi, is Christ Church, a picturesque Gothic Revival structure completed in 1858. It was designed by Natchez architect J. Edward Smith, about whom very little is known. His skillful handling of Gothic proportions, forms, and details indicates, however, that he was a trained professional, thoroughly versed in the Romantic architectural vocabulary. He seems also to have been selectively concerned with the "honesty" of construction, for Christ Church is one of the few Gothic Revival buildings in the state having a functional hammer-beam roof. This late-medieval construction form is also "honestly" expressed on the exterior.

Christ Church is built of brick, stuccoed and scored to imitate ashlar masonry. It is now a deep grey, but traces of its original salmon color remain in protected areas. A simple rectangle, the nave is four bays long with narrow lancet windows set between buttresses that rise to the level of the interior hammer-beam braces. The entrance porch is placed at the north gable and, like the nave itself, is treated with buttresses, arched openings, drip stones, and a stucco representation of the interior hammer-beam ceiling. Formed in a very similar manner is the chancel at the nave's south end, which is flanked by a low vestry room and a choir with shed roofs.

From the low porch, a Tudor arch opens into the spacious nave divided into two aisles by the original painted pews. The dramatic focal point of the interior is the splendid hammer-beam ceiling, which is grained to imitate dark oak. Before it dried, the graining was signed and dated (May 17, 1858) by three of contractor N. L. Carpenter's workmen. Two wooden columns at the north end support the slave gallery, which is reached from the porch by a tiny stair and protected by a paneled rail that is decorated with the quatrefoil figure. A tall lancet arch frames the chancel, which is separated from the nave by a rail repeating the lancet motif. The low-ceilinged vestry room east of the chancel is answered by the choir alcove, which is opened through a broad Tudor arch to the west. Leading to the adjacent graveyard from both the flanking chambers are doors with round-arched heads.

The integrity of the original structure and decorative fabric of Christ Church is remarkable. The twin lectern and pulpit are semioctagonal and are carved with appropriate Gothic motifs. The altar is divided into panels decorated with strapwork designs that flank a center, embroidered cross. Pews, chairs, and the marble font are also original furnishings. Although inoperative for many years, the original pipe organ, reported to be of Scottish manufacture, remains in place. Alterations to the exterior structure have been limited to the removal of the paired chimneys, which served an original furnace below the nave, and the disappearance of all corbels from which the drip stones and hammer-beam representations sprang.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1858

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

J. E. Smith

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Christ Church, constructed in 1858 for the first Episcopal congregation in the state, is revered as the "cradle of Episcopacy in Mississippi." Succeeding two earlier church buildings, the existing one is among the best-documented structures in the state. It is also a highly significant example of Gothic Revival architecture whose impressive integrity has been protected by its isolated location in rural Jefferson County.

Although the formal organization of the church antedates that of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi by only six years, events which led to its founding are traceable to the period of Spanish dominion in Mississippi. Christ Church was established by the Reverend Adam Cloud, a native of New Castle County, Delaware, who began his ministry in the Natchez District when the region was part of Spanish West Florida. During that period, he was banished from the District on a charge of "preaching, baptizing and marrying people contrary to the laws of the existing Government" (Jones, p. 94). Not until he returned, following the acquisition of the Mississippi territory by the United States in 1798, was the Episcopal denomination reintroduced into the area.

In ca. 1820, Cloud saw to the construction of the first Christ Church, a log building, on Population Ridge near Cole's Creek in southwestern Jefferson County. The congregation's second building was consecrated on December 27, 1829, by Thomas Church Brownell, bishop of Connecticut. Erected one mile west of the first church, on 1.4 acres of land sold to the church for five dollars by parishioner James G. Wood, the structure cost \$3,175. The Mississippi diocesan Journal of that year exclaimed that "too much praise" could not be given the congregation's "laudable exertions," and it commended the members who, though few in number, had "erected a very neat and commodious brick Church" (Journal, 1828, p. 6). The community that grew up around the church took its name from the structure, which dominated the landscape from the top of a hill.

The present Christ Church was built in 1858 near the site of the second structure on adjoining land given by a member of the church, Mrs. Jane Payne. Minutes of the vestry meeting for November 17, 1856, proposed that the new building be adapted "to the wants and tastes of a country congregation, consulting to comfort and convenience before architectural elegance and beauty." Natchez architect J. Edward Smith designed the church, N. L. Carpenter of Natchez was awarded the building contract, and Robert Scudamore was the plasterer. Bricks reclaimed from the earlier structure were used in construction. On June 13, 1858, the new church was consecrated by William Mercer Green, bishop of Mississippi, who wrote: "On approaching the site of the

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Burger, Nash K. "Adam Cloud, Mississippi's First Episcopal Clergyman." Journal of Mississippi History 1(1947):88-97.

Burger, Nash K. and Capers, Charlotte. "Episcopal Clergy of Mississippi, 1790-1940." Journal of Mississippi History 2(1946):59-66.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.4 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	5	6	6	6	9	5	0	3	5	1	0	0	2	5
ZONE			EASTING					NORTHING						

B

ZONE			EASTING					NORTHING						

C

ZONE			EASTING					NORTHING						

D

ZONE			EASTING					NORTHING						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE William C. Allen, Architectural Historian
W. Norman Chronister, Research Assistant

November 3, 1976

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

(601) 354-6218

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 571

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Elbert R. Hilliard

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE November 19, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Director, Chief

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

5/6/77

ATTEST:

Charles Adkins
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5-6-77

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8 - SIGNIFICANCE

old Church, I was pleased to find in its stead a structure not only more commodious and Church-like, but most tasteful in style, and becoming in all adornment" (Journal, 1858, p. 46).

In 1864, the church was occupied by Union forces, and a notation in existing church records relates that services were "interrupted by the Civil War which desolated our country and desecrated its churches. . . ." (Christ Church [Protestant Episcopal] Records, N.p.). In 1867, the Mississippi diocesan Journal reported that the parish, "once wealthy and flourishing," had been without the services of a rector for three years, he being "absent on duty as Chaplain in the Army," and in 1870 Christ Church was still "suffering . . . for want of a rector" (Journal, 1870, p. 25). Although through the years the church has been reduced to its present status of a mission station, it stands as one of the most prominent structures in the state.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jackson. Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Christ Church Vestry Minutes, 1856, 1857, 1858.

Jones, John G. A Concise History of the Introduction of Protestantism into Mississippi and the Southwest. St. Louis: P. M. Pinckard, 1866.

Journal of the Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi. Natchez: William C. Grissam & Co., 1828.

Journal of the Fortieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi. Jackson: Daily and Weekly Clarion Steam Printing Establishment, 1867.

Journal of the Forty-third Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi. Jackson: Clarion Steam Printing Establishment, 1870.

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9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Subject File. Christ Church.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Subject File. Church Hill.

Natchez (Miss.) Daily Courier, June 19, 1858.

Works Progress Administration. Inventory of the Church Archives of Mississippi. Mississippi Historic Records Survey Project sponsored by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi, 1940.