

(Thematic Group)

JUL 26 1988

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P. O. Box 466
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Historic Name: First Baptist Church

Common Name: First Baptist Church

Location: North side D'Olive Street, two blocks west public square,
Bay Minette

Verbal Boundary Description:

Block 178, Town of Bay Minette. Begin at a point on the southeast corner of Second Street and McMillan Avenue, proceed in a northeasterly direction 300 feet to Hall Avenue, thence 36 feet in a southeasterly direction to D'Olive Street, thence 308 feet in a southwesterly direction to McMillan Avenue, thence 89 feet in a northwesterly direction to the point of beginning.

Acreage: .6

UTM: 16/425/770/3416/900

Date of Construction: 1914

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Statement of Significance

Criterion C-Architecture:

The First Baptist Church of Bay Minette is significant as the earliest surviving Baldwin County example of a church constructed of brick and stone. This masonry architecture, reflecting the means of the congregation, was fully in step with new construction in the prosperous county seat and contrasted with the previous frame buildings erected by the congregation.

Integrity:

First Baptist Church of Bay Minette, though abandoned by the congregation in 1962, retains its integrity of location, materials and design. Exterior integrity is good. Water from broken downspouts has damaged some of the brick and a few of the stained glass windows are broken. The two-story rear annex (c. 1925) matches the church in scale and materials.

Interior integrity is good. The original pews have been sold and some plaster is falling from the east wall under the balcony (the result of the broken downspouts). The interior space is presently used for storage.

Description:

The First Baptist Church of Bay Minette occupies a wedge-shaped block just southwest of the public square. The northeastern half of the block is planted

in grass, allowing an unobstructed view of the church, which sits on the southwestern half of the block. The Church is a one-story, brick structure, 5x4 bays with cross gables on a hip roof mass. The facade is dominated by a pedimented portico with Tuscan columns distyle in antis (two freestanding columns and one engaged on either side). The pedimented gable is stuccoed with a boxed cornice and pent. Three globe lights hang from the pent in front of the entablature. There are two front doors, one on each side of the two freestanding columns, with the center wall brick.

The doors themselves are wood panel with a molded panel above and then a headed stained glass window over all. Double wooden panel doors are present at each end of the portico, leading into a vestibule on each side. The vestibules flank the portico on each side. They are one story with flat, parapeted roofs, rectangular stained glass windows with stone lintels and sills and stone water table. Side windows are round topped with stone sills. Corbeled brick bands run along the middle of the structure and over the tops of the windows. The north and south gables are stuccoed with pents and boxed, beaded board cornices.

Connected to the rear by a one-story passageway is a two-story annex constructed circa 1925. This rectangular brick building is 4x9 bays with 1/1 windows (stone sills and lintels), water table, beaded board cornice and a hip roof. The materials and scale well match the Church.

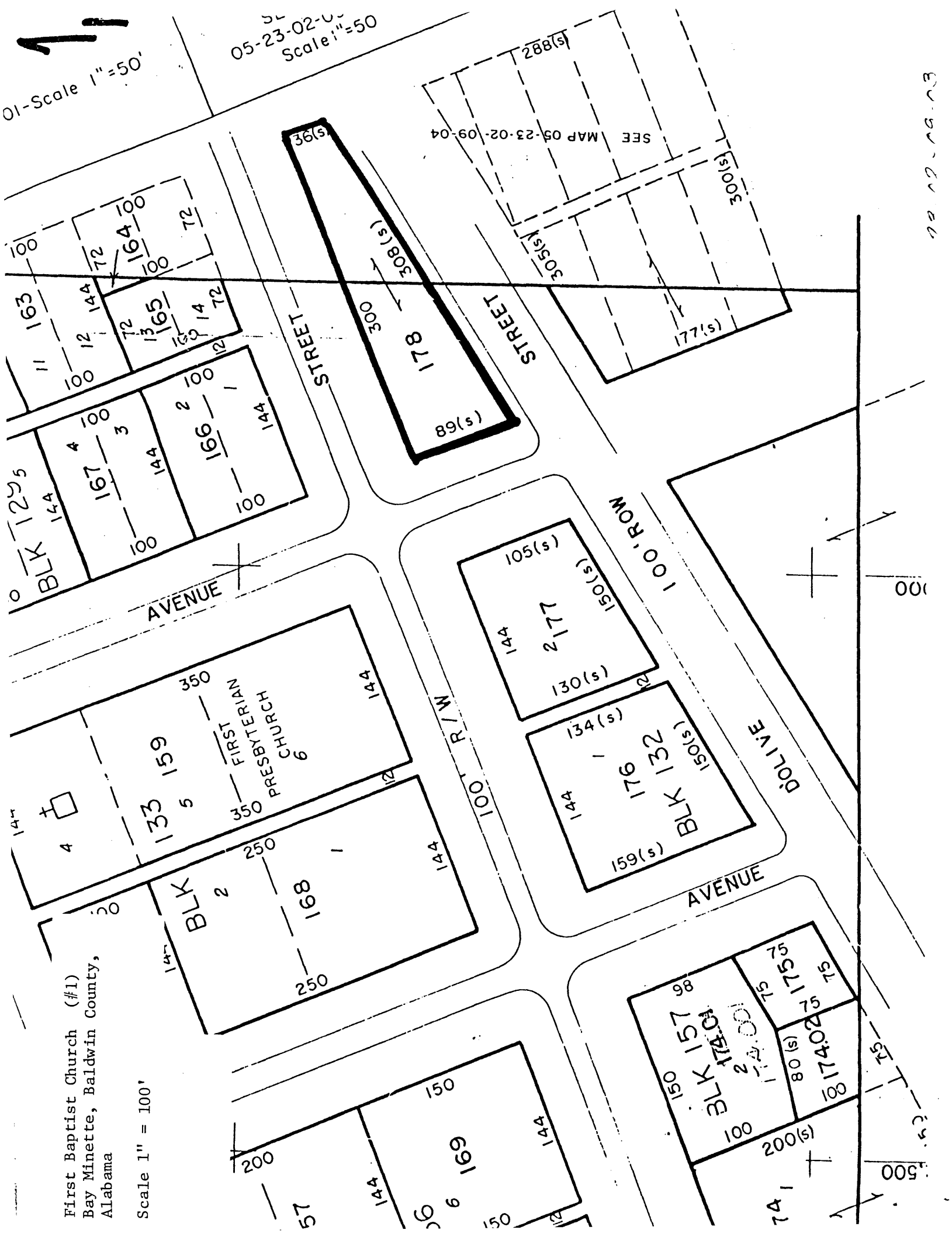
The sanctuary consists of a single, large room with a curved balcony along the east wall (over the entrances). The balcony has a paneled front and a paneled stairwell leads up to it (parallel with the east wall and between the entrances). Three boxed columns with capitals are spaced in the balcony with a single, centrally located, iron column below. The pulpit and choir stall (south of the pulpit) are curved with paneled fronts and chamfered rails. The floor is tile over wood. Ceilings are varnished beaded board with east-west beams and beaded board pilasters run down the west wall on either side of the pulpit. Paneled wainscoting runs all around the sanctuary and an arched opening behind the pulpit has three wooden doors with a stained glass fanlight above. All walls are plastered.

Historical Summary:

Bay Minette came into being when the L&N laid track across north Baldwin County in 1865. The town became a lumber and market center for much of the county. In the earliest years Baptists and Methodists worshipped together in a brush arbor. In 1870 they built the Union Church and alternated services. By 1878 the Baptists were strong enough to build their first church which stood until 1895 when another was erected. By the early 1900s the congregation once again outgrew its frame building and more ambitious plans were laid. A contract was finally let in June of 1915; the building was to cost \$5,300 exclusive of windows and pews. The lot, close to the square, was purchased for \$500. By October of 1915 the Baldwin Times noted the addition of the Baptist Church to Bay Minette's "metropolitan arcade, where a bank and several stores face each other in bona fide Gotham style." (Baldwin Times, 10/7/15) The annex was added in 1925. Despite this the congregation outgrew the brick edifice and abandoned it in 1962 for a new building some blocks north of the square. The 1915 structure now serves as storage.

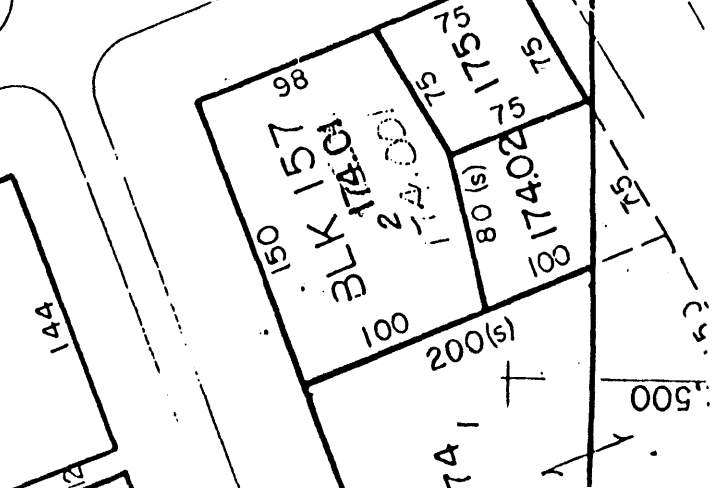
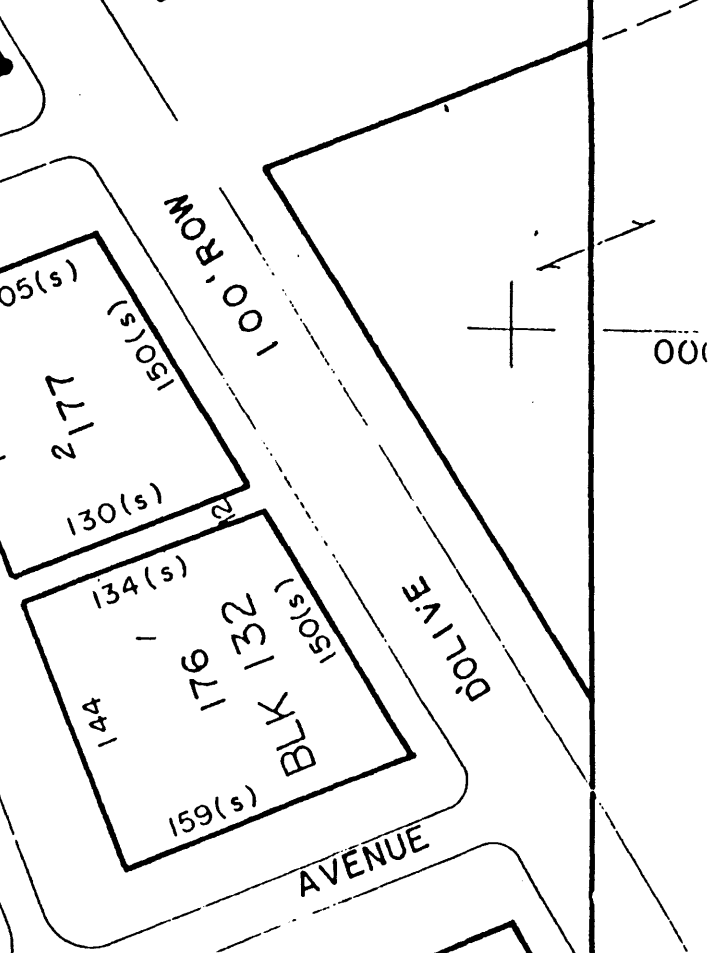
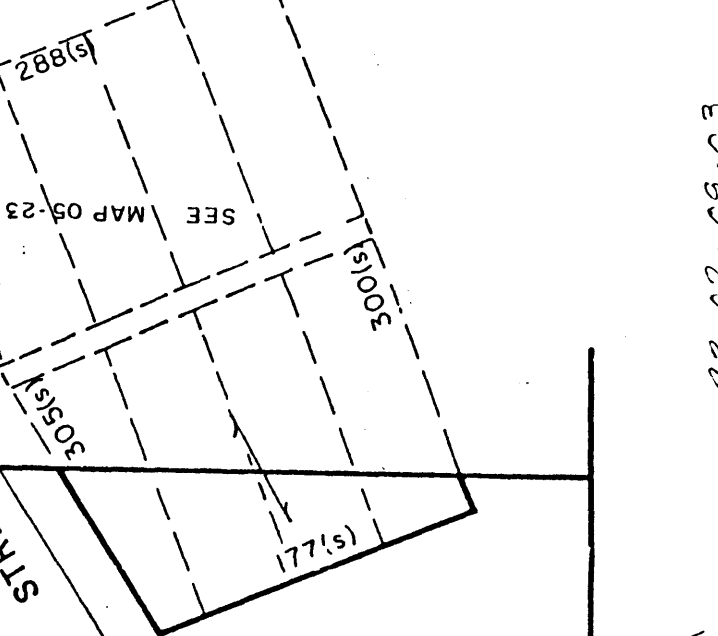
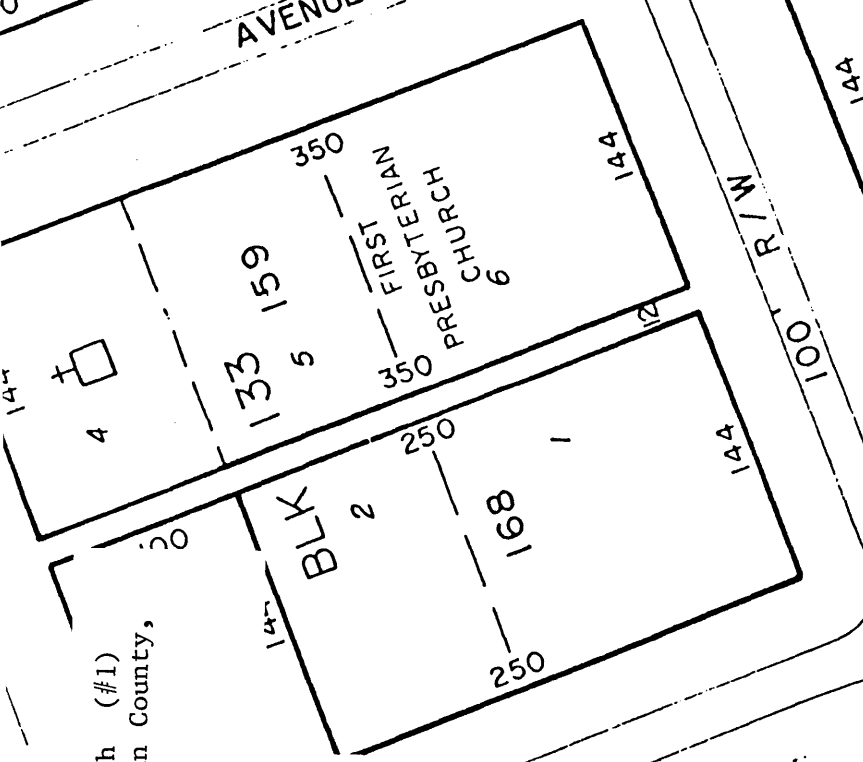
01-Scale 1"=50'

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Scale 1"=50'



First Baptist Church (#1)
Bay Minette, Baldwin County,
Alabama

Scale 1" = 100'



05-23-02-U

100

1500