

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 68). Complete each item by marking "X" 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 The Tabernacle

other name/site number AL-262

2. Location

street & number 829 Holland Road

not for publication N/A

city or town Scottsville

vicinity N/A

state Kentucky

code KY

county Allen

code 003

zip code 42164

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 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.)



David L. Morgan, SHPO and Executive
Director, KHC

6-22-01
Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office
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 commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and bureau

Date

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

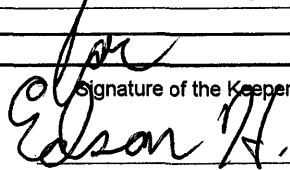
entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the
National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the
National Register.

removed from the National Register
Register.

other, (explain): _____


Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

8.2.01

The Tabernacle
Name of Property

Allen County, Kentucky
County and State

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.)
NA

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)

Religion/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation no foundation
walls wood/board and batten
roof asphalt shingle
other _____

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

The Tabernacle

Name of Property

Allen County, Kentucky

County and State

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.)

- X 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:

- X A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a 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)

Religion

Other-religious music (shaped-note singing)

Period of Significance

1912-1950

Significant Dates

1912

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Guthrie, Jim M./builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

see continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography see continuation sheet

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- 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
X Other

Name of repository:

Allen County Historical Society

The Tabernacle
Name of property

Allen County, Kentucky
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 6 acres

UTM References USGS 7.5 minute quad: Petroleum, KY-TN 1954, revised 1994
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 6	5 7 2 9 6 5	4 0 6 6 7 5 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description see continuation sheet
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Maria Campbell Brent

organization Mudpuppy & Waterdog, Inc. date March 1, 2001

street & number 129 Walnut Street telephone 859-879-8509

city or town Versailles state KY zip code 40383

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 the SHPO or FPO) The Tabernacle is held in trust for all of the people of Allen County

name by the Scottsville-Allen County Tabernacle Trustees (contact person: Mr. Depp Britt, Trustee)

street & number 1730 Kay Brown Road telephone 270-622-6282

city or town Scottsville state KY zip code 42164

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.

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The Tabernacle

Scottsville, Allen County, Kentucky

Narrative Description

The Tabernacle, AL-262, is located on a large, wooded lot on the west side of Holland Road (State Route 100) about one-quarter of a mile south of Willow Road.

The Tabernacle was constructed in 1897 by J. M. Guthrie. The large wood-frame structure is square in plan. The exterior is board and batten. It has a pyramidal main roof, which is topped with a four-sided gabled cupola with slatted wooden vents in each face. This element is topped with a square wooden feature that mirrors the main roof and which, in turn, is finished with a small gabled feature that mirrors the main cupola feature, and which is vented on the east and west faces.

The exterior siding of the structure is board and batten vertical planks with a band of saw-tooth trim along the roof line. The east side of the building has three doors placed at irregular intervals and one window. The board and batten siding stretches from the roof line to the ground. The north face has four doors spaced at regular intervals along the face, and the siding stretches from roof line to the ground. The west side has one door and one window placed at irregular intervals. Approximately about three-quarters of the way down the west side is an addition which was placed on the building to house restrooms. It has a shed roof and is sided with board and batten siding and also has the saw-tooth trim along the roof line. The south face of the building has no exterior openings.

Alterations

The appearance of the Tabernacle has been altered somewhat during its 104-year history. Originally, the building was an open-sided wooden pavilion erected to shelter participants in sings and revivals from the elements. The roof, which has not changed since the building was constructed, was supported on large, square, wooden posts. The sides were open, with a narrow band of board and batten siding placed below the roofline, creating arched openings between each pair of supports.

After almost fifty years of use the building began to show signs of wear and in 1938 a movement was begun to make needed repairs. It was at this time that the building was enclosed. Large hinged doors and windows were placed in the arched openings along the sides of the building and board and batten siding installed. An enclosed platform, large enough to accommodate 200 singers, was added on the south side of the building. A wooden floor replaced the dirt and sawdust floor and the interior seating was improved, providing room for 1,200 people. The repairs and improvements were done, in large part, by the National Youth Administration, under the Works Progress Administration.

During the late 1940s electricity was installed in the building, the roof was repaired and a ceiling installed in the main, open, portion of the building to improve its acoustics. At some point the wooden floor,

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The Tabernacle

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installed in the 1930s, was replaced by poured concrete.

In 1989, under the auspices of the Kentucky Heritage Council, a project was initiated to restore the Tabernacle. During these renovations the roof was replaced and heating and cooling systems installed. The platform added to the south side of the building in the 1940s was removed and the building restored to its original footprint. A small, one-story, shed roof addition was made at the back of the building, at the northwest corner, to accommodate restrooms.

Present Condition

The Tabernacle is in very good condition. The building has been well maintained by the Board of Trustees, who are responsible for its upkeep. The building is structurally sound, well roofed and newly painted.

Statement of Integrity

The Tabernacle has retained its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, association and feeling.

The Tabernacle is located on the same 5+ acre wooded lot which was originally purchased for its construction. This area of Scottsville has remained undeveloped. Houses are widely spaced and only a half of a dozen buildings, one a church, are located within a quarter-mile of the Tabernacle. Even in the winter, when the trees are bare, it is difficult to see buildings on the adjacent lots to the north, south and east. Immediately to the west is a small house which is, more or less, contemporary with the Tabernacle. The location and setting of the Tabernacle have remained relatively unchanged since its construction and their integrity remains unimpaired.

In plan, outline and basic design the Tabernacle can still be recognized today as that which appears in photographs taken at the turn-of-the-century. The roof and cupola configuration of the Tabernacle have not changed since the building was erected in 1897. With the exception of the small addition for restrooms on the west (rear) of the building, the footprint of the original structure is the same as the 1897 building constructed by J. M. Guthrie. The exterior of the Tabernacle has changed little in appearance since it was enclosed in the late 1930s. The siding is still board and batten, painted white. The original roofing material is unknown. The current roofing is asphalt shingle, which was approved by the Kentucky Heritage Council. Over the years the Tabernacle has retained its integrity of design and materials.

The Tabernacle has, since its construction, been set aside for religious purposes. Since 1897 it has been used for revivals, church association meetings and conferences, singing conventions and 'meetings for all good purposes.' The building's architecture suggests a church, with the stacked roof elements rising to the heavens. Its exterior is plain and simple. Its setting is secluded, set well back from the road and surrounded by trees, as it always has been. The building sits in a shallow hollow on the side of a gradual

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The Tabernacle

Scottsville, Allen County, Kentucky

slope, which enhances its feeling of being set apart. Although newer buildings are present on Holland Road they are set at a distance from the Tabernacle and are difficult to see in most seasons. The surroundings of the Tabernacle have not changed since its construction in 1897. The building itself has changed little since 1938. The Tabernacle has retained its integrity of association and feeling.

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The Tabernacle

Scottsville, Allen County, Kentucky

Statement of Significance

The Tabernacle, AL-262, is eligible under National Register Criterion A and is significant locally within the context *The Tradition of Gospel Music in Allen County, Kentucky 1912-1950*.

During the latter part of the 19th century a revivalist movement, national in scope but particularly strong in the south, swept the Protestant community. Camp meetings and revivals, some lasting over a week, were frequent. Out of these gatherings emerged the gospel hymn - one of revivalism's most important contributions to southern religious practice.¹

At the same time, Ruebush-Kieffer Publishing began the large scale promotion of gospel music written using a sight reading system based on seven differently shaped notes. By the turn of the century dozens of companies were publishing gospel music and sending representatives into rural communities to teach the seven-shape note system of sight reading. Informal singing schools proliferated. The advent of a new songbook became an eagerly anticipated event.²

Allen County shared in the revival of religious fervor which swept the nation in the last quarter of the 19th century. In 1897 a revival, which lasted three weeks and was attended by hundreds of people, was held in a grove of trees just outside of Scottsville, on the Holland Road (State Route 100). Soon afterward the City of Scottsville purchased the land where the revival had been held and commissioned the building of a structure to be open to all for religious purposes – The Tabernacle.³

The Tabernacle was constructed that same year by Jim M. Guthrie, a master builder, with the help of several local citizens. Although built on land purchased by the City of Scottsville, and built under the city's direction, The Tabernacle was to be owned by no individual or group. It was to be held in trust for the people of Allen County and was to be used only for religious purposes. After the structure was completed the local Circuit Court Judge appointed a board of trustees to oversee the maintenance and use of the building.⁴

The motivation behind the building of The Tabernacle is unknown. Revivals, all-day sings and singing schools were all immensely popular religious activities at the turn-of-the-century. The city fathers may simply have decided to provide a formal venue for such activities. If there was any individual benefactor behind the construction of The Tabernacle, his or her name has been lost. Whatever the reason for its construction, The Tabernacle soon became associated with all-day sings using the popular shaped-note songbooks and its construction has been called: “[a] boost to local gospel music like nothing before or since . . .”⁵

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The Tabernacle

Scottsville, Allen County, Kentucky

Since its construction The Tabernacle has been used for a multitude of purposes including church meetings and conferences, community revivals and camp meetings, but it is its long and close association with gospel music, in particular the Allen County Singing Convention, an association which continues today, which sets it apart. The sings held in The Tabernacle were, and are, important religious and social occasions, occasions which involved the whole community. The Tabernacle serves as a visual reminder of the importance which this music holds for Allen County.

The Tabernacle is locally significant for its association with and ties to the vital tradition of gospel music which has played such an important part in the community of Scottsville and Allen County. This association is detailed in the context, *The Tradition of Gospel Music in Allen County, Kentucky 1912-1950*, which follows.

The Tradition of Gospel Music in Allen County, Kentucky 1912-1950

Introduction

Sacred music has long held a position of importance in the South and elsewhere in the nation. As early as 1700 singing schools were conducted to improve the quality of a congregation's singing. About 1800 a system designed to help singers read music easily was developed which assigned a specific shape to each note of the scale. This system, which used four shapes, proved immensely popular in the South among the rural population with little education. One of the most popular of the four-note tunebooks was *The Sacred Harp*, published in 1844, and still in use in areas of the rural South. The four-shape system was, in time, supplanted by a system using seven shaped notes. The rise in popularity of the seven-note system corresponded to a proliferation of song books issued by music publishing companies which featured both traditional hymns and new works. The huge popularity of gospel music sung by the shape-note method precipitated the formation of hundreds of local "singing conventions" which gather on a regular basis for all-day sings. Gospel music sung by the shaped-note method flourished from the turn-of-the-century until about 1950, reaching its peak of popularity in the 1930s. Although less frequently organized than in past years, gospel music sings are still an important musical tradition in many communities.⁶

Southern Religion, Revivalism and Gospel Music

Few would dispute that religion has always been important component of life in the rural South, and Scottsville and Allen County are no exceptions. The first church in Allen County was founded in 1801, eleven years before the creation of the county. By the 1840s, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and the Church of Christ had established congregations in Allen County and Scottsville.⁷

Revivalism, characterized by the conversion of new members and the rededication of existing members to

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the church, has been an important factor in Protestant Christianity in the South since the early 18th century, playing an important role in both mainstream and small denominations. Revivalism has taken two predominant forms. The first is the “spectacular general awakenings” which have swept the religious community to become national movements. The second, deriving in part from the national movements, are “revival meetings,” which are held by local southern religious organizations in an ongoing effort to bring new members into the church.⁸

The first period of general revival, called the *Great Awakening*, took place in the mid-18th century. The second, the *Second Awakening* or *Great Revival* took place between 1795 and 1805. The third began in the latter part of the 19th century and quickly became national in scope. While sermons in individual churches could reach small numbers of people, the revival meeting served as an effective mechanism for delivering the message to large numbers of the faithful and an opportunity to bring others into the fold.⁹

Music was always an important part of these religious revivals. In fact, one of the most important contributions to emerge from the revivals of the late 19th century was the gospel hymn, hymns which have since become standards in all mainstream denominational hymnals. White gospel music as a recognized form emerged about 1880. Its roots were in camp meeting songs, the tradition of singing schools, shaped-note sings and folk music which, infused with elements of popular music, combined to eventually emerge as a genre recognizable today as gospel music.¹⁰

The growth of white gospel music was sparked by two events occurring in the 1870s, the emergence of the Ruebush-Kieffer Publishing business, formed in 1866 by Aldine S. Kieffer and Ephraim Ruebush, and the publication of a series of books of “general hymns” by Ira D. Sankey and Phillip P. Bliss. These two events led, ultimately, to the wide-spread use of the seven-shape note system, the growth of dozens of gospel music publishing firms and the proliferation of singing schools organized by these firms and, finally, the rise of hundreds of local singing conventions.¹¹

Singing Schools, Shaped Note Music and Gospel Hymns

Singing schools, taught according to traditional methods, made their appearance about 1700 as part of an effort to reform congregational singing. In 1801 a simplified system of musical notation was developed based on “shaped notes” was developed. This system was based on four basic shapes, one for each note - fa, sol, la, and me. A triangle was assigned for fa, an oval for sol, a square for la, and a diamond for me. Using this system almost anyone could quickly learn the basic rhythms and harmonies needed to sing hymns. By the time of the Civil War over thirty tunebooks based on the shaped note system had been compiled, mostly by southerners. Southern singing masters began to introduce “folk hymns” into the tunebooks, melodies from oral tradition which were harmonized in a native idiom and set to sacred music. Camp music and revival songs also began to make their way into the tunebooks.¹²

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In 1851 Joseph Funk published *Harmonia Sacra*, fondly referred to as “Hominy Soaker” in the South. Funk’s songbook was based on a shaped note system he developed which used seven shapes for different notes rather than four. Although the more traditionally minded continued to adhere to the four-note system songbooks, such as *Sacred Harp*, Funk’s system found many supporters. Fifteen years after the publication of *Harmonia Sacra*, Aldine S. Kieffer, Joseph Funk’s grandson, formed a music publishing business, Ruebush-Kieffer, and began to actively promote the seven-shape note system developed by his grandfather. He founded the South’s first Normal Singing School in 1874 and started a periodical called the *Musical Million* to help develop local singing conventions and spread news of rural singing schools. The company trained hundreds of individuals who later became writers and singers. The hugely successful publishing company became a model for dozens of other gospel publishing companies which flourished in the South between 1875 and 1955, many of them started by individuals who had received training and experience at Ruebush-Kieffer.¹³

The four and seven note systems brought gospel music to a wider audience and allowed people with little or no musical training to participate in the making and creation of this music. By the end of the 19th century numerous publishing companies were turning out song books based on the seven-shape note system, providing an outlet for hundreds of amateur songwriters. Most of these new songs were more rhythmical, more sentimental and more optimistic than older hymns and they were often patterned on popular secular songs. “Gospel music” had arrived.¹⁴

Gospel Music in Allen County

Much of the South came under the influence of itinerant shape-note teachers between 1800 and 1875, but the majority of teachers were local, such as Hewlett Butrum, who taught early seven-note schools in Allen County. Most churches sponsored one singing school each year, although a few had as many as three. Singing schools were rooted in conversion-centered religion, exemplified by the revival, and many people attending them expected an emotional experience while learning to sight-read music. It was the teacher, however, who determined the religious content, or lack thereof, in any given singing school. While church-based singing schools provided musical education, they also gave rural and small town residents a chance to come together and socialize. People would come from great distances to attend a singing school and to take advantage of the opportunity to meet with friends and neighbors and make the acquaintance of new people.¹⁵

The influence of the singing schools swept across the region, touching every church as people fell in love with the new music based on seven-note instruction and singing school teachers were eagerly courted. In the first half of the 20th century thirty-four teachers provided instruction in shape-note singing in Allen County. Singing teachers were held in high regard, as W. L. Montell records: “. . . the singing school teachers were just a notch below God in the eyes of local residents. They were respected, appreciated and admired beyond all measure . . .”¹⁶

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By the turn-of-the-century, 'graduates' of the Ruebush-Kieffer Company had started publishing companies in Georgia, Texas, Arkansas and Tennessee. These companies published new books each year. These songbooks were paperback, printed on cheap paper and were affordable, selling for twenty-five to thirty-five cents. Their arrival each year was eagerly anticipated. One of the most successful and influential was the James D. Vaughan Music Company. In the early 1900s Vaughan Publishing, and others, began to send salesmen into communities who not only sold song books, but helped establish singing schools as well. These efforts bore fruit in Allen County in 1911 when the Pioneer Singing Class of Allen County was established by Andrew J. Dixon and another was established by L. E. Butrum. Over the years many others followed. The popularity of this mode of singing led many of the churches in Allen County to organize musical events to utilize the shaped-note method.¹⁷

Out of the singing classes grew phenomena which seem to have been peculiar to Kentucky, and which local people referred to simply as "singsings." Local singsings were often all-day events, scheduled one or more times a year. Although rooted in evangelical religion, the major purpose these informal events was to provide people with a chance to sing and to socialize. These "sings" went on all day and well into the evening, interrupted only for "dinner on the ground" at noon. Sings were multi-denominational affairs, open to all who wished to participate. Members of singing schools from far and near would come and a spirit of lighthearted competition often developed as classes tried to out-do each other. Sings were widely publicized and were often attended by representative of music publishing companies, who would have their latest songbook for sale and in fact, the new songbooks were one of the major attractions. All of the songs were written to be sung in shape-notes and in four-part harmony. As the popularity of shape-note singing grew in Allen County sings began to be held at The Tabernacle. In 1911 such an all-day sing drew a huge crowd.¹⁸

The county-wide shape-note singing conventions were an outgrowth of the singing classes and the informal all-day sings. The conventions covered a much larger geographic area than the informal sings and were almost always scheduled at regular intervals. There was no teaching at a convention. These were public events which developed as a way to show off the abilities of singing classes and church choirs. The music companies were dominant forces at the conventions and encouraged their formation. In Allen County, "A bastion of four-part harmony singing from the earliest times to the present day," the popularity of the Pioneer Singing Class, in particular, and singing schools and church sings in general, led to the formation of the Allen County Singing Convention in 1912.¹⁹

The Allen County Singing Convention was the first singing convention formed in south-central Kentucky, the center of gospel music in the Commonwealth. It was organized by James D. Vaughan, of Vaughan Publishing Company, L. E. Butrum, W. T. Steenbergen, J. F. Taylor, Daily C. Gains, A. B. Willoughby, Virgil McGuire, Charlie Lamb and G. H. Dillard, many of whom had organized singing schools. The singing convention was central to every aspect of gospel music providing a platform, from which singing school teachers,

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songbook publishers local choirs, and later, professional and local quartets, could promote or present their schools' products and skills. From its formation the Allen County Singing Convention adopted The Tabernacle as their official home.²⁰

Always looking for new ways to promote gospel music, and the songbooks published by Vaughan Publishing, James D. Vaughan organized numerous quartets made up of the music company's singing teachers. Beginning about 1920 the quartets toured the South, giving free concerts and performing at sings. They were extremely popular and spawned a movement toward the creation of local, amateur, quartets. The movement was slow to gain momentum and, initially, there was little room for quartets at sings of any kind. The song leaders were the centers of attention. As one singer recalled, "Everybody sang with everybody else, led by a song leader, who was a really big cheese if he was good."²¹

For a number of years the class sings and church choirs continued to claim the greatest number of adherents but, eventually, the popularity of the quartets grew. Over the years Allen County has produced over eighty quartets which have performed at the Tabernacle, around the state, the region and the nation, almost thirty of whom have recorded professionally. The West Allen Quartet was the first and, perhaps, the most famous created as a direct result of the creation of the Allen Singing Convention. Others include the Sunshine Quartet, the Liberty Quartet, the Deep South Quartet and the Cumberland Boys. These singing groups made records and carried the spiritual message of gospel music across the country through sings and the airwaves.²²

The Allen County Singing Convention held sings on the first Sunday in May and the First Sunday in September, a system which helped singing classes, and later, local and traveling quartets book dates in Warren and Simpson counties, Kentucky and Macon County, Tennessee. These counties, in turn, chose the second, third and fourth Sundays, respectively, for their sings. All of the major shaped-note publishing companies held classes and directed sings at the Tabernacle. Unlike many other singing conventions the Allen County Singing Convention never adopted any one company's song book as *the* book for their sings, all companies were welcome and most came, bringing their books and directors with them.²³

The popularity of the quartets continued to increase through the 1930s, although singing by church choirs remained popular. At this point in time the quartets were still tied by tradition to the shape-note music schools, and many of their members were shape-note teachers. Over the next several decades, however, gospel music began to change. In the 1940s and 1950s the popularity of gospel quartets reached their height and the Tabernacle hosted all of the best known groups. In the late 1950s, however, popularity of the sings began to wane. After World War II people's entertainment options increased, people had more money the time to pursue those options. People moved away from entertaining themselves and instead expected to be entertained. As emphasis on quartets increased, interest in singing schools declined. Quartets, duos

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and trios flourished. Many of the new singers had little grounding, or interest, in the shape-note tradition. Gospel music became more commercial in nature. Successful groups began to expect payment for attending sings and interest shifted to an emphasis on professional recording. For groups interested strictly in the commercial aspects of gospel music the singing convention held little appeal.²⁴

In spite of these changes, the tradition of shape-note schools and singing conventions still influences gospel music today. A few singing schools are still conducted each year and some quartets still stress early conventional style and four-part harmony. People continue to be attracted to traditional gospel music sung in the southern harmony style. While the mass popularity it enjoyed in the 30s and 40s has waned, the musical tradition endures.²⁵

For forty years the Allen County Singing Convention held regular sings in May and September. These sings attracted the largest crowds of any public event in Allen County. In the 1930s and 40s, at the height of the singing convention movement's popularity, thousands of people attended each Allen County convention at The Tabernacle. In May, 1941, over 6,000 (some reported 8,000) came out on a bright but chilly day for the Allen County Singing Convention meeting. The sings were not only religious gatherings but social occasions as well. Friends and neighbors from different denomination gathered at the Tabernacle. The people who attended often purchased new clothes for the semi-annual events, underscoring their social importance. The popularity of gospel music in Allen County is attested to by the fact that during these years Vaughan Music Company's publication, *Family Visitor*, was mailed to more subscribers in Allen County than in any other county in the entire South.²⁶

Even though the crowds are smaller, the tradition of shaped-note gospel music continues in Allen County. People still come to hear the simple joy and the powerful message of the music performed in perfect harmony. Sings continue to be held twice a year, and The Tabernacle is still the home of the Allen County Singing Convention. On July 4, 2000 The Tabernacle and the Allen County Singing Convention participated in the "Continental Harmony Project." For this national event, one community was selected from each state to host a music-related event reflecting the area's cultural and historical heritage. Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Composers Forum, the Scottsville event was documented by the Library of Congress.²⁷

Since its construction The Tabernacle has had a long and close association with gospel music, particularly with the Allen County Singing Convention, an association which began in 1912 and continues today. The sings held in The Tabernacle were, and are, important religious and social occasions, occasions which involve the whole community. The Tabernacle serves as a physical symbol of the tradition of shaped-note singing which is such an important part of Allen County's heritage. The Tabernacle, AL-262, is eligible under National Register Criterion A and is locally significant for its association with, and ties to, the vital tradition of gospel music which has played such an important part in the community of Scottsville and Allen County.

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End Notes

- ¹ Dickson D. Bruce, "Revivalism," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, edited by Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina), 1989, pp. 1306-1307.
- ² Charles K. Wolfe, "White Gospel Music," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1013-1014.
- ³ Allen County Historical Calendar, "The Tabernacle," Vol. XXIII, 2000 and Allen County Historical Society, *The Beginning: A Pictorial History of Allen County, Kentucky*, Allen County Historical Society, (Scottsville, Kentucky), 1985, p. 70.
- ⁴ Allen County Historical Calendar, "The Tabernacle;" Allen County Historical Society, *The Beginning*, p. 70 and Bruce, in *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1306-1307. Note: Guthrie later built several other important religious buildings in Scottsville, including the Church of Christ, (1898) and the Baptist Church (1899).
- ⁵ Allen County Historical Calendar, "The Tabernacle;" Allen County Historical Society, *The Beginning*, p. 70 and William Lynwood Montell, *Singing the Glory Down: Amateur Gospel Music In South Central Kentucky 1900-1990*, (Lexington, Kentucky), p. 36.
- ⁶ Harry Eskew, "Sacred Harp," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1029-1031; Bill C. Malone, "All-Day Sings," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1039-1040; Davis Warren Steel, "Shape-Note Singing Schools," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1083-1084 and Wolfe, *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp.1013-1014.
- ⁷ H. H. Patton, *A History of Scottsville and Allen County*, (Scottsville, Kentucky), 1974, p. 13-19.
- ⁸ Bruce, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1306.
- ⁹ Ibid.; Wolfe, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1013.
- ¹⁰ Wolfe, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1014.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Don Cusic, *The Sound of Light: A History of Gospel Music*, (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1990), p. 95; Steel, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1083.
- ¹³ Cusic, *The Sound of Light*, pp.94-95; Wolfe, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1013-1014.
- ¹⁴ Wolfe, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1013-1014.
- ¹⁵ Montell, *Singing the Glory Down*, pp. 18-24
- ¹⁶ Montell, *Singing the Glory Down*, pp. 18, 226.
- ¹⁷ Cusic, *History of Gospel Music*, p. 95 and "Allen County Pioneer Singers," Clipping from the Allen County Historical Society vertical files, N.D.
- ¹⁸ Montell, *Singing the Glory Down*, pp. 31-32.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.; p. 35.
- ²⁰ G. H. Dillard, "Historical Events," Clipping from the Allen County Historical Society vertical files, N.D.
- ²¹ Ibid., p.36.
- ²² "Gospel Music Still Glories in Allen County," *The Citizen-Times*, June, 1993.
- ²³ G. H. Dillard, "Historical Events," Clipping from the Allen County Historical Society vertical files, N.D and Depp Britt, personal communication, February, 2001.
- ²⁴ Montell, *Singing the Glory Down*, pp. 91, 114.
- ²⁵ Montell, *Singing the Glory Down*, pp. 201-202.
- ²⁶ G. H. Dillard, "Historical Events," Clipping from the Allen County Historical Society vertical files, N.D. and "Allen County Singers Throng Tabernacle Hill During Convention Sun.," *The Citizen-Times*, May, 1940; Montell, *Singing the Glory Down*, p. 37.
- ²⁷ Depp Britt personal communication, February, 2001; "MTV didn't have anything on gospel music' so Allen County group puts together its own thing," *Park City Daily News*, June 29, 2000 and Montell, *Singing the Glory Down*, p. 46.

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The Tabernacle

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Tabernacle, AL-262, is located at 829 Holland Road (State Route 100) in the city limits of Scottsville, Allen County, Kentucky, on lot 4-46-4, as designated by the Allen County PVA. Approximately six acres of grounds surround the building, which sits slightly south of center in the property.

The southeast corner of the property is located at the intersection of Holland Road with old Holland Road and an unnamed lane/drive, located approximately 200 feet north of the intersection of Holland Road and Hade Bell Road. The boundary follows the unnamed lane to the northwest approximately 350 feet. The boundary line then turns to the north-northeast for approximately 900 feet, to the intersection with the Old Willow Road. The line turns to the east-southeast, following Old Willow Road for approximately 250 feet to the intersection of Old Willow Road with the old Holland Road. The boundary line then turns to the south, following the old Holland Road to the intersection with the unnamed lane and Holland Road at the southeast corner of the property.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The lot described above, Allen County PVA designation 4-46-4, is the same as that purchased by the City of Scottsville in 1897 for the purpose of building the Tabernacle.