

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 28 1986

date entered JUN 26 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic White Chapel

and/or common Grace Chapel

2. Location

street & number Rossview Road (State Road 237) N/A not for publication

city, town Rossview N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Montgomery code 125

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" 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 Rossview Community, c/o Dan Ross

street & number Route 3, Box 100

city, town Clarksville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37403

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Court House

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Clarksville state Tennessee

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located on a five acre site in Rossvie, Montgomery County, Tennessee, White Chapel and an adjacent cemetery are set among rolling farmlands interspersed with woods. The Chapel, constructed in 1866, is a one story weatherboarded building surmounted by a gable roof that was originally covered with slate, but is now covered with asphalt shingles. Approximately forty-five feet by twenty-five feet in size, the Chapel was constructed on piers and now rests on concrete blocks. To the west of the church is the cemetery, while to the southeast is a pond. A copse and fences separate the church from surrounding farms.

The chapel faces north towards Rossvie Road (SR237). A small narthex with a molded cornice and carved wood cross are located at the facade. Behind the narthex, the principal entry is a paneled double leaf door surrounded by molded casings and capped by a transom light. A pedimented gable with molded horizontal and raking cornices is the only other architectural feature on the facade.

Both the east and west elevations are symmetrically proportioned, each displaying three 6/6 double hung sash windows flanked by louvered shutters. The south or rear elevation originally contained a single window, but this was covered in 1897 when the church was renovated.

In 1907 a full stone foundation replaced the stone piers and a small basement entry was placed on the south elevation. During the 1940s, the present concrete block foundation was constructed.

The interior of the chapel contains the original wood pews and molded window casings. The ceiling is characterized by a slight pitch. White Chapel was renovated in 1897, in the words of the 1898 Diocesan Report, "by building a chancel and adding an altar, lectern, prayer desk, and altar rail." These are still in place and use. The raised chancel is constructed of wood and embellished with fleur-de-lis designs. The chancel renovations of 1897 occurred at the latter end of the Chapel's era of greatest historical significance and were planned and financed by the original White Chapel group, including Edward B. Ross and Joseph B. Killebrew, who were listed on the Chapel's vestry in that year. Unobtrusive overhead electric lights, ceiling tiles, and oil heater (ca. 1920s) at the north end of the nave were added after 1920.

The only surviving dependency is the cemetery, which, among others of the White Chapel group, contains the Killebrew family graves. Also at the far west of the plot is a small park maintained by the people of the Chapel and features a sculpture by Remo Russo, a local artist associated with the Chapel into the 1960s. The chapel has undergone few recent alterations and retains a high degree of integrity. (The cemetery is a contributing site.)

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1866-1936 **Builder/Architect** E. B. Ross

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

White Chapel is being nominated under National Register criteria A and B for its historic significance in Rossvie, Montgomery County, and Tennessee. It has statewide significance because of its association with Joseph Buckner Killebrew and the White Chapel Movement, an agrarian and educational reform movement of wide ramifications throughout Tennessee and the South. Joseph Buckner Killebrew, viewed by historians as the primary spokesman for the New South Movement in Tennessee from 1871 to 1881, helped build the Chapel, plan the 1897 renovation, and was first president of the Farmers' Club, founded in the building in 1870, which launched the White Chapel Movement and his career as a publicist and in state government. Living on an adjacent farm, he and his family were closely associated with the Chapel and involved in local reform efforts until his death in 1906, despite spending much time in Nashville and on tours. Killebrew, his wife, and several children are buried in the Chapel's cemetery. Others among the White Chapel membership were less prominent in the state but still significant locally in fostering agricultural, and educational reforms through the first decade of the twentieth century. Through much of the 1930s local social and educational activities were still carried on at the church. White Chapel, constructed in 1866 and renovated in 1897, is a well-preserved example of a rural community church that retains its historic and architectural integrity.

Beginning as an Episcopal mission, Rossvie's White Chapel was intended as a community church for all denominations having members in the area. The first log building, erected in the 1850s, and the present church, erected in 1866, served as both a community chapel and a schoolhouse. Edward B. Ross, an Episcopal layreader and later (1887-1910) the permanent deacon in charge of the Chapel, was the leader of a community effort to build the simple frame chapel. The church also served as a community center for a wide variety of activities designed to improve the lives of its rural constituency. Under Episcopal auspices in the 1860s, the Chapel's Sunday school turned into a literacy campaign for those children who could not afford tuition for school. This activity lasted for some thirty years. The placing of books into poorer rural homes soon led to other relief work distributing food and clothing to those in need. The effort, organized by the women of the Chapel, lasted, with some interruptions, into the 1930s.

An essential element of this rural social reform effort was the White Chapel Movement, a farmers' organization which fed into the Grange and the Eastern Dark Fire Tobacco Association. On March 12, 1870, Joseph Buckner Killebrew, an influential tobacco grower who helped erect the Chapel, began a "Farmers' Club," in his words, "at the church near my farm." The club and the resultant agitation was soon called the White Chapel Movement in the local press. Killebrew became its first president. At the inaugural meeting he delivered an address to describe "the drawbacks to agriculture in Tennessee" in the wake of the Civil War and to suggest economic improvements and political reforms. His analysis became the foundation for agricultural reform programs advocated in the area and the state for the rest of the century.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 5 Acres

Quadrangle name Sango, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard P. Gildrie

organization History Dept., Austin Peay State University date December 5, 1985

street & number 330 Peterson Lane telephone 615-648-7932 (office)

city or town Clarksville state Tennessee 37040

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Hayer

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 5/23/86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John A. Brown
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 6-26-86

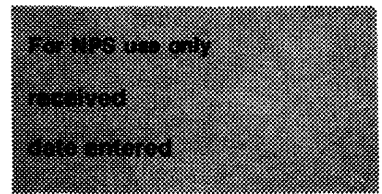
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Continuation sheet White Chapel

Item number 8

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Killebrew's speech was turned into a pamphlet, Montgomery County: Its Agricultural and Mineral Wealth (Clarksville, 1870), which was quite influential among Southern reformers and propelled Killebrew into state and then national prominence. In demand as a speaker throughout Middle and West Tennessee by the summer of 1871, he was appointed agricultural editor of the Nashville Union and American in January, 1871. His work led to the creation of the Bureau of Agriculture that year. As Secretary of the Bureau, he compiled the massive Introduction to the Resources of Tennessee (Nashville, 1874), the most sophisticated analysis of the State's economy done in the nineteenth century.

Not surprisingly, given his continuing connection to the people of White Chapel, Killebrew also became heavily involved in educational reform. A strong advocate of founding public schools, particularly in rural areas, he became an agent of the Peabody Education Fund and was instrumental in the passage of the 1873 Public School Law which still provides the framework for the state's system.

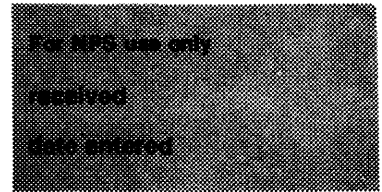
The local activities of other members of the White Chapel Movement have yet to be studied seriously. However, some preliminary investigation indicates their importance and the continuing role of White Chapel in agricultural reform. E.B. Ross, the Chapel's layreader, became the first president of the Clarksville Tobacco District Council of the Patrons of Husbandry in 1873, which marks the area's formal entrance into the Grange. By 1874 Major Thomas F. Henry, an ex-confederate officer and son of Gustavus A. Henry, the political patriarch of the county, was a "lecturer" on agricultural improvements and war, organizing chapters of the Patrons throughout Montgomery and neighboring counties. Members of the White Chapel group (E.B. Ross, T.F. Henry, H.D. Marshall, and Killebrew himself) regularly gathered data on local crops and markets and, through the local press, published the results and made recommendations into the early 1900s.

By the 1880s Killebrew's "Farmers' Club," with its ties to the Patrons of Husbandry, had spawned the Montgomery County Farmers' Association involving an elaborate organization and a much larger active membership. In 1883 the Association had an "Executive Committee" of eleven farmers from throughout the county. The group also formed investigatory committees, each of about eight members, on the following topics: "General State of Agriculture," "Condition and Improvement of Stock," "Statistics," and "Public Roads." The membership of the committees retained the familiar White Chapel names. The work continued through the 1890s, with White Chapel remaining a Lodge. Killebrew and his fellows were still active members. In 1904, the Eastern Dark Fire Tobacco Association, which still exists, was formed, largely by men who grew up within the agricultural reform movements begun at White Chapel a generation before.

To date relatively little work has been done on the political impact of farmers' groups in Tennessee during the Gilded Age, much less on Montgomery County's experience. Yet a cursory reading of local newspapers indicates that a major goal of the White Chapel Movement was the establishment of a railroad commission, a suggestion strongly seconded by the Clarksville Tobacco-Leaf, which virtually became their "house-organ." Railroad politics continued to agitate the state into the twentieth century. On other issues, such as roads, public schools, and even dog licensing, these organizations were vociferous.

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Continuation sheet White Chapel

Item number 8

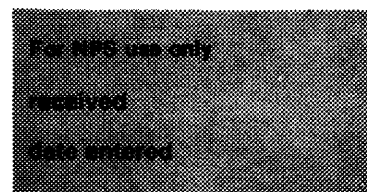
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But more study is necessary to determine much about their effectiveness.

In summary, White Chapel has historical significance on both the state and local level. During the last third of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century it was a community center for an articulate and influential rural society which launched Joseph B. Killebrew's important career, fostered social and educational reforms, and laid the foundation for this region's most important agricultural organizations. In addition, local activities for educational and social reform continued into the 1930s.

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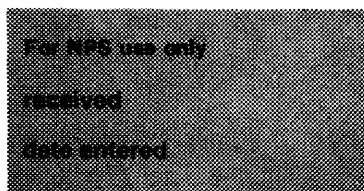
Continuation sheet White Chapel Item number 9 Page 2

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- Clarksville Chronicle, esp. 14 Dec. 1878, 13 Sept. 1879, 25 July 1883, 8 Nov. 1884, 31 July 1885, 5 Sept. 1885, 3 Dec. 1891.

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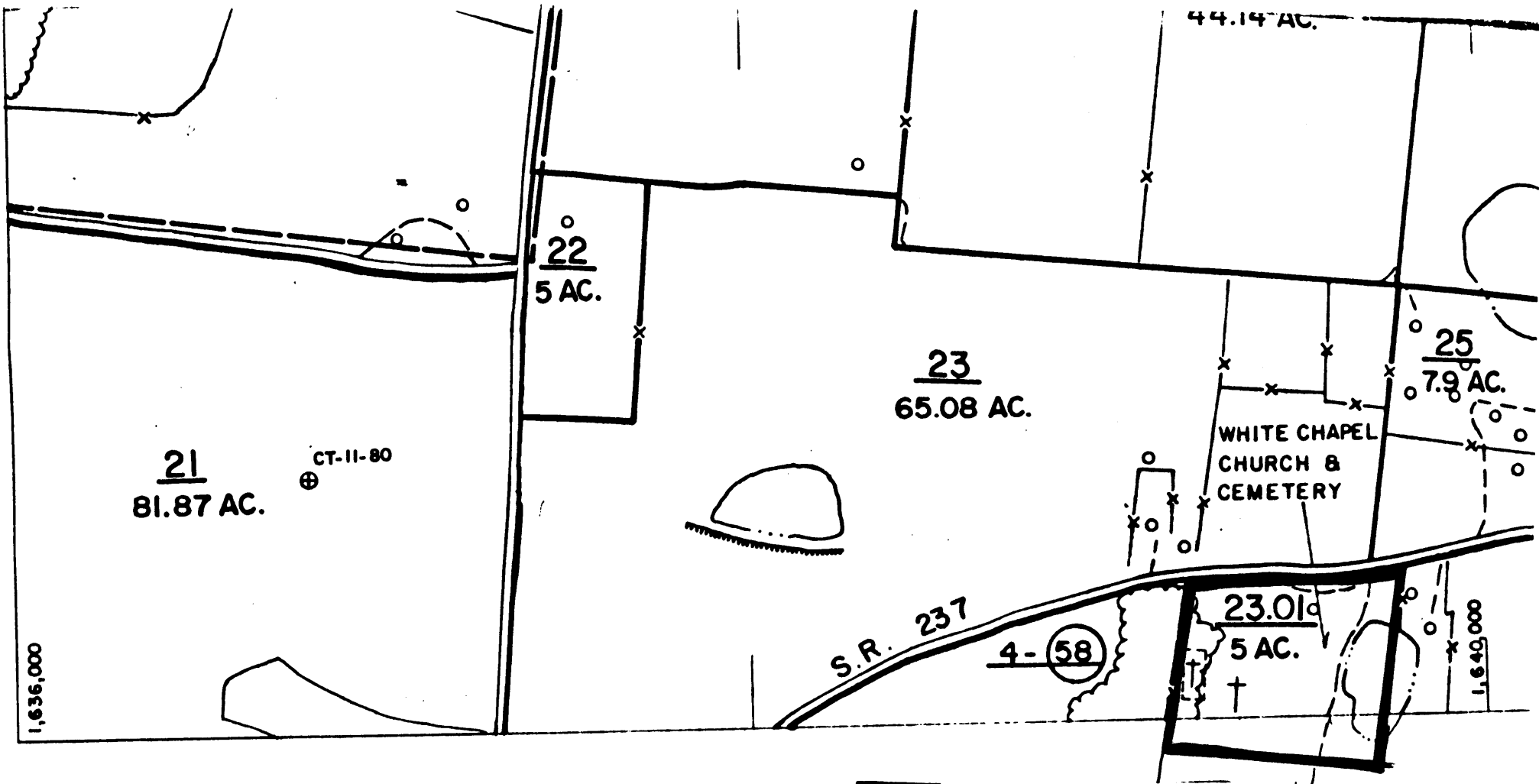


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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The nominated property is approximately rectangular in shape and five acres in size. It is bounded on the north by Rossvie Road (SR237) and on the south, east, and west by adjacent property lines. (See tax map.) It includes enough land to protect the historic setting and architectural integrity of White Chapel.



PREPARED FOR
TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION
 BY
TENNESSEE MAPPING AND ENGINEERING SERVICE, INC.
 NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
 AND
WILLIAMS-STACKHOUSE AND ASSOCIATES
 SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

White Chapel
 Rossvie Road
 Rossvie, Montgomery County, Tennessee

TAX MAP 1" = 400'

