

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

RECEIVED MAR 04 1992

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church other names/site number SP-T-107

2. Location

street & number East side of Jefferson St. btwn. Red Row Alley & Reazor St., city, town Taylorsville state Kentucky code KY county Spencer code 215 zip code 40071

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked), public-local, public-State, public-Federal. Category of Property: building(s) (checked), district, site, structure, object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 0, Total 1.

Name of related multiple property listing: NA. Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0.

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: David L. Morgan, State Historic Preservation Officer, Kentucky Heritage Council. Date: 2-25-92.

In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: State or Federal agency and bureau: Date:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register (checked), determined eligible for the National Register, determined not eligible for the National Register, removed from the National Register, other (explain:). Entered in the National Register: Signature of the Keeper: Date of Action: 4/2/92.

**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)

LATE VICTORIAN/ Other:

Victorian-era vernacular

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/limestone

walls WOOD/weatherboards

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD/decorative shingles

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Black Ethnic Heritage  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

c. 1895 - 1941  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

ca. 1895  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property approximately 0.2 acres

UTM References

A 

16	64	54	20	42	10	55	0
Zone	Easting			Northing			

B 

Zone	Easting			Northing			

C 

Zone	Easting			Northing			

D 

Zone	Easting			Northing			

Taylorsville, Ky. Quadrangle

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is indicated on the accompanying Spencer County Identification Map. It includes the front portion of Lot T2-23-9 but excludes a long narrow leg at the rear that extends to the east.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See Section 7, Continuation Sheet 3.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Carolyn Brooks, Historic Preservation Consultant  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date December 9, 1991  
street & number 1288 Bassett Avenue telephone 502 456-2397  
city or town Louisville state Ky. zip code 40204

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church  
Spencer County, Ky.

## DESCRIPTION

Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church (SP-T-107) is a small wood-framed building constructed between 1882 and 1916, probably about 1895. The nave-plan church has a gable roof, a square corner entrance tower, and Victorian-era vernacular detailing. It is located on a small grassed lot on Jefferson Street in an area of Taylorsville historically associated with the black community. The church is still an active church with a very small congregation of about twelve elderly worshippers. The church retains nearly all of its original fabric. It was, however, until recently, in seriously deteriorating condition with major damage to the main sill and floor joists. The congregation has just begun to repair the building. In the process of working on the building an 1895 penny was found in the wall, supporting the belief that the church may have been constructed at this date.

The church sits on a rough, dry-laid limestone foundation. Its walls are sheathed with weatherboards except in the pediment area of the front-facing gable end which is detailed with decorative hexagonal and saw-tooth shingles. Until recently a wide board covered the main sill on the front facade and wrapped around the corner tower. This as well as the first few rows of weatherboards have been removed in order to repair and replace where necessary the main sill and the floor joists. The repair work has been done, but the weatherboards and sill board have not yet been replaced. Windows, located three along each side and one in the center of the front facade, are four-over-four double-hung sash. The southwest corner tower is square with doors on two sides. It is topped with a square pyramidal-roofed projection that sits on the main hipped roof. Tall, narrow vents in the upper portion of the tower have been filled in. The doors are historic four-panel doors.

On the interior the church is one large room with the only entrance from the corner entrance tower. The space has a cove-like ceiling formed from following the angle of the rafters. A chimney flue for a stove rises between the center and east windows on the north side wall. The floor has 3 and 1/2" board floors; walls have vertical board wainscoting and plaster above; the ceiling and pediment areas of the end walls are sheathed with tongue-and-groove boards. The door and windows have simple narrow board surrounds. The interior door has five horizontal panels. At the east end of the building a low asymmetrically-shaped platform serves as an

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church  
Spencer County, Ky.

altar area. The foot-high platform is finished with tongue-and-groove boards along its sides and has a low railing. A large number of very old free-standing pews constructed with cut nails are located in the sanctuary. These probably predate the present building.

## Boundary Justification

Minor Chapel A.M.E. Church fronts on Jefferson Street between Red Row Alley and Reasor Street. Much of the area between Jefferson Street, Reasor Street, Railroad Street, and Red Row Alley where the church is located has been associated with the black community since at least the 1880s. A number of historic residences in the area have been torn down in recent years. Remaining structures include a few historic residences, some so deteriorated that they are vacant, this church and Second Baptist Church (SP-T-108), and some non-historic houses. To the north of the Chapel is a small non-historic house. To the south is Second Baptist Church which has been determined ineligible for nomination due to integrity problems. To the east and rear of the church is the Perry Shelburne House (SP-T-48), a large and important house historically associated with a member of Taylorsville's black community. The area lacks the historic integrity to be nominated as a district, but Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church and the Shelburne House have been identified as buildings that are individually eligible for the National Register.

The building sits on a small, grassed lot of approximately 0.25 acres. There is little landscaping. A large but somewhat unhealthy oak tree is located in front of the church and a stone path leads from the street to the front entrance. The church property fronts on Jefferson Street. The boundary for the nomination is an approximately 75' by 105' city lot which includes the majority of the property presently and historically associated with the church. This boundary allows for the nomination to recognize the church's historic setting. A small, approximately 25' by 70' extension of the property at the southeast rear corner has been excluded because it contributes nothing to the significance of the property.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church  
Spencer County, Ky.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church (SP-T-107), built about 1895, is significant in terms of National Criteria A and Criterion Consideration A in the area of Black Ethnic History. The church has been evaluated within the context Black Ethnic History in Taylorsville, a context that was developed as part of a comprehensive survey of the community that was completed earlier this year. The building has been determined significant in terms of Ethnic History as the most intact institutional building remaining in Taylorsville to document its black community, a community which has existed alongside Taylorsville's white population since the town's inception. The period of significance associated with the property is c. 1895 to 1941, the time during which the church served as an important institution for the black community.

Within the town are a small collection of churches, two of which are associated with the context of Black Ethnic History in Taylorsville. The two surviving black churches are substantially smaller and less finely finished than the churches associated with Taylorsville's white congregations. They are very small, plain wood-framed structures that contrast with all the historic white churches which are much larger brick buildings with much more elaborate detailing. Of the two black churches, only Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church retains a sufficient degree of integrity for listing in the National Register.

## Black Ethnic History in Taylorsville

Spencer County has had a black population from the time it was first settled. As in much of the rest of Kentucky, the first inhabitants, many from the slave owning areas of Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina, brought slaves with them as they moved west. The state was admitted to the Union in 1792 as a slave state, and in a county that established itself early on as agricultural, the slave population quickly grew. In 1830, the first year that Spencer County appears in the census, there were 1513 black slaves reported, comprising 22% of the county's population of 6812. In addition, 18 free blacks were listed. By 1860, in the last census before emancipation, the slave population of 2205 represented 36% of the county's 6188 people. At this date there were only 9 free blacks listed, down from a high of 32 in 1850. Free blacks who had the chance must have chosen to move, probably to urban areas such as Louisville.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetMinor Chapel, A.M.E. Church  
Spencer County, Ky.Section number 8 Page 4

After the Civil War, census figures show an immediate drop in the black population to 1479, followed by a period of relative stability. Another dramatic drop between 1900 and 1910 saw the black population decline from 1251 to 758. This was followed by years of slow out-migration leaving the county with only 480 blacks or 7% of the population by 1940.

The black population of Taylorsville is more difficult to track due to lack of specific figures for most census years. The 1830 census lists 81 blacks out of a total town population of 286 which represents 28% of the population. One free black male also was a resident. Of the 39 households in town all but 10 had slaves, ranging in number from 1 to 8. Ten years later in 1840, the black slave population had grown to 107 out of 391 or 27% of the population. There were also 5 free blacks living in town.

Nothing is documented about how or where these early slaves lived. It is assumed that, as in other Kentucky town settings, they occupied all or portions of various outbuildings such as kitchens, stables, or small, rough dwellings at the rear of their owners' property. None of these buildings remain with the possible exception of one brick cottage probably dating from the 1830s or 1840s (SP-T-22). This cottage, associated with the Ralph Lancaster House, a fine brick house demolished in the 1980s, could have been a slave cabin although its solid brick construction suggests that it was originally built as a small house, perhaps for Lancaster himself.

The occupations of the slaves are also undocumented, but it is presumed that in a town such as Taylorsville they served principally as domestic servants and as laborers in the various trades run by their owners.

Following the Civil War many blacks left the county. Whether as many blacks, proportionally, left Taylorsville is unclear. The 1870 census lists 491 blacks out of a total of 1873 people in the district that includes Taylorsville. Just how many of this group lived in Taylorsville is impossible to determine. What is clear is that blacks in Taylorsville began to form a community. Many blacks may have remained with their former owners, continuing to work and live much as they had before, but others in Taylorsville began to buy land and build houses.

The Second Baptist Church, formed by the black members of the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church  
Spencer County, Ky.

First Baptist Church, was organized about 1866 according to a cornerstone on the congregation's present church. By 1882 (when the building appears in The Atlas of Nelson and Spencer County, Kentucky), the congregation was worshipping in a small frame building located on Jefferson Street. That building was demolished and replaced by the present wood-framed church (SP-T-108) in 1936.

In 1869 Lots 100 and 101 on the south side of Garrard Street near Point Street were deeded to Merritt Beard, Westley Minor, and Nathaniel Matthews, "men of color," to be held in trust "for the use of the colored population for the purpose of erecting a school house." By 1882 a small wood-framed school was in place on this lot. This school was doubled in size between 1901 and 1909. About 1920 a new wood-framed school (SP-T-116) was built on Jefferson Street near the Salt River bridge.

The schoolhouse on Garrard is reported to have been the original meeting place of Taylorsville's second black congregation which split off from Taylorsville's Methodist church. Probably in the late 1880s or 1890s they built their present sanctuary, Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church (SP-T-107) on Jefferson Street. The building is not indicated on the 1882 map of Taylorsville but is believed to have been constructed by 1895 when a State Gazetteer reported seven churches for Taylorsville. The seven churches are not named, but knowledge of existing churches at the time suggests Minor Chapel should be included in this count.

The two churches and the school are the only known extant historic institutional buildings associated with the black community in Taylorsville. These structures no doubt doubled as meeting halls and social spaces. According to long time residents and information gleaned from the Sanborn maps, the black population never established any stores in Taylorsville.

Blacks seem to have become property owners in Taylorsville quite early on and in larger numbers than in many Kentucky communities. It seems this was related to Taylorsville's slow development, the low price of land, and the relatively low standard of living of the entire community.

By the 1880s blacks had begun to congregate on the east side of town in the area adjacent to the railroad tracks and along Jefferson Street in the vicinity of the black Baptist church. The

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church  
Spencer County, Ky.

1882 map from the Atlas of Nelson and Spencer County, Kentucky indicates one home owner in the area known to be black (S. Thomas) and several others who are thought to have been (Squire Huston and W. Minor). Perry Shelburne obtained title to land on the west side of the tracks in 1880. J.W. Minor, one of the original trustees of the black school who may also have been the pastor for whom the A.M.E. Church was named, purchased a one-half acre lot on the east side of the railroad in 1886. Unfortunately almost all the houses associated with these early land acquisitions have been lost. The one exception is the Perry Shelburne House (SP-T-48), a substantial two-story house of unusual size for a black family of the period, believed to have been constructed in part about 1880.

Blacks are known to have owned land and built houses along the east end of Reasor Street (SP-T-104 and SP-T-105) and along the south end of Jefferson Street (SP-T-115) in the early 1900s. Red Row Alley, running parallel to and north of Main Street east of Jefferson Street was built up with houses for blacks sometime before 1916. These houses are presently abandoned and in ruinous condition. For many years these were rental properties. Somewhat later, in the 1940s, a cluster of black ownership developed along the west end of present day Garrard Street, then Water Street.

Because the town was so small blacks and whites lived in very close proximity, but clearly within the town there were tiny neighborhoods perceived to be black or white. Turn-of-the-century deeds for several of the properties located on the east end of Main Street prohibited selling the land to blacks.

Today, blacks still tend to live in the peripheral areas they have inhabited historically, although some now live in several units of low-income housing located in the center of Taylorsville. School integration began in 1958 and was completed by 1962 or 1963. The 1990 preliminary census lists only 63 blacks in Taylorsville. In spite of the very low black population in recent years, Taylorsville had a black mayor, Bobby Irvine, from 1980 through 1985.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 7

Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church  
Spencer County, Ky.

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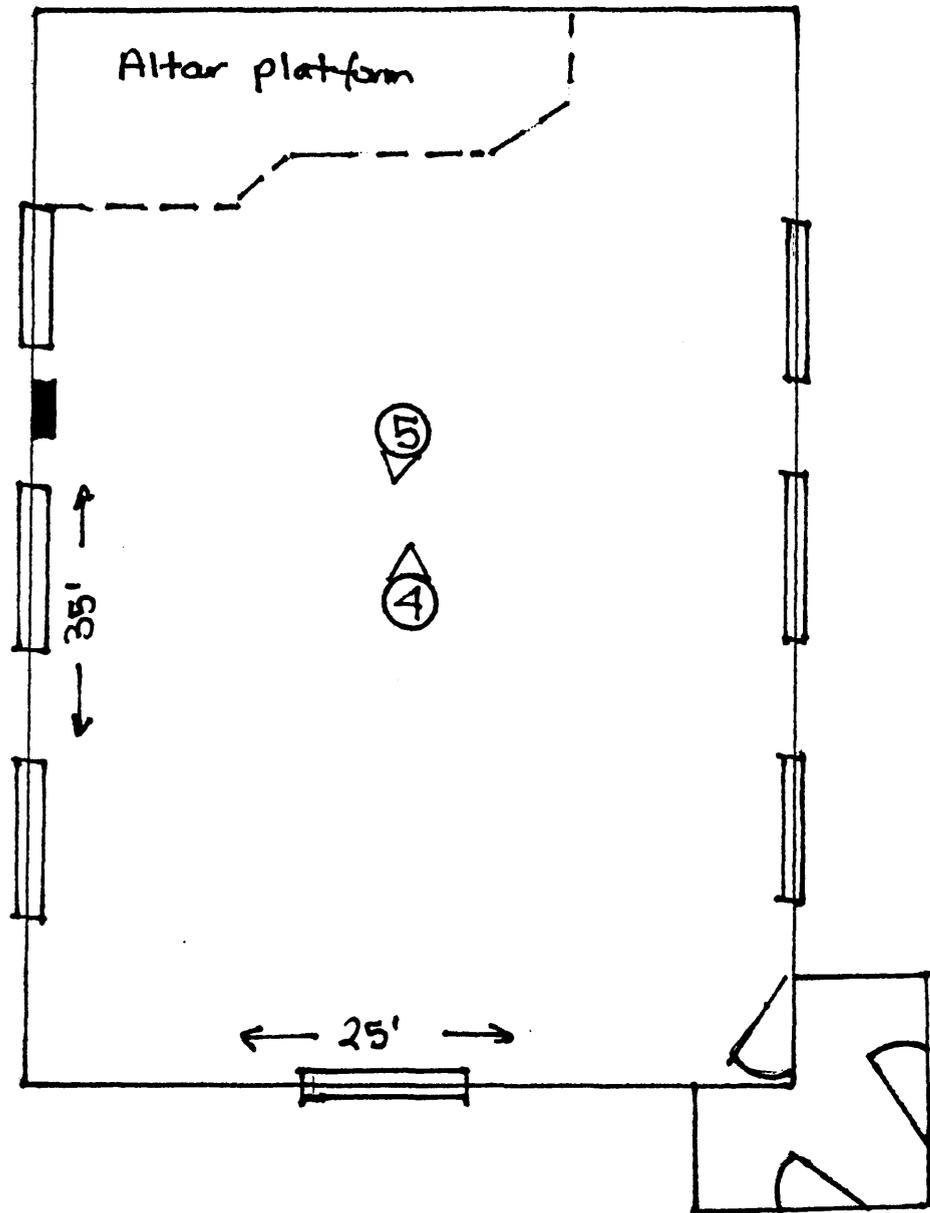
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Plan

North: ↖

Photo No. & Direction

of View: (4)



Minor Chapel, A. M. E. Church  
(SP-T-107)

Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church

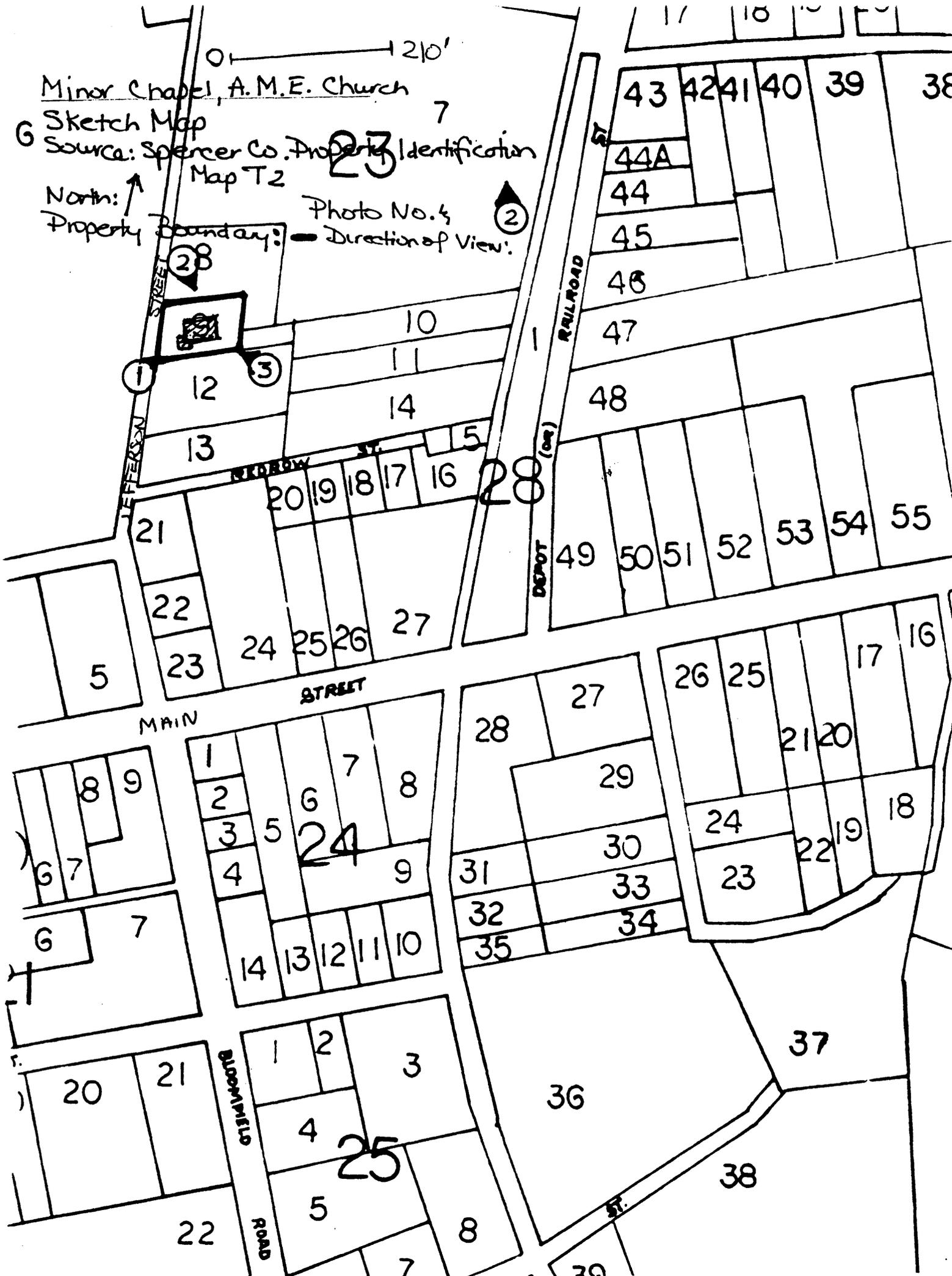
Sketch Map  
Source: Spencer Co. Property Identification Map T2

North: ↑

Property Boundary: —

Photo No. 4  
Direction of View: ↑

0 210'



23

1

3

2

28

MAIN STREET

STREET

BLOOMFIELD ROAD

RAILROAD

DEPOT

17

18

19

20

43 42 41 40 39 38

44A

44

45

46

47

48

49 50 51 52 53 54 55

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photos \_\_\_\_\_ Page 8

Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church  
Spencer County, Ky.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Minor Chapel, A.M.E. Church  
Jefferson Street  
Taylorsville, Spencer County, Kentucky  
Photographer: Carolyn Brooks  
Date: June, 1991  
Negatives on file with Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Ky.

(The above information is the same for all 5 photographs submitted with the nomination. Below the photographs are listed in the order of their photograph numbers and each view is described.)

1. Front facade and southeast side; photographer facing north.
2. Northwest side; photographer facing south.
3. Southeast side and rear; photographer facing west.
4. Sanctuary looking toward altar; photographer facing northeast.
5. Sanctuary looking toward back of church; photographer facing southwest.