NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 16A). 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 Oakley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

other name/site number N/A

2. Location

street & town County Road 485 at intersection of County Road 486 (east side) N/A not for publication

city or town Tebbetts X vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Callaway code 027 zip code 65080

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 the 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.)

Mark A. Miles October 29, 2008

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

☐ 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.
☐ other, (explain:)

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	1	buildings
1		sites
1		structures
		objects
3	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious facility

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Gable Front Church

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Wood
Synthetics: Vinyl
roof Asphalt
other

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

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

8. Description

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ **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:

☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or 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)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

Period of Significance

c.1878-1958

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

☒See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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
☐ Other Name of repository:

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property one acre

UTM References
(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	1/5	5/9/0/2/1/0	4/2/7/6/1/1/0
2	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / /
3	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / /
4	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / /

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No.

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

☒See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title See continuation pages

organization _____ date _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code 0

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

name/title AME Church, Missouri Conference, St. Louis-Columbia Distirct

street & number P.O. Box 28254 telephone _____

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code _____

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.

Summary:

The Oakley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church is located approximately 1 mile north of Tebbetts, Callaway County, at the intersection of County Roads 485 and 486. The one acre property is on a hill overlooking surrounding agricultural land and contains three contributing resources: the church, cemetery, and cistern. Constructed in 1878, the frame, gable front church sits on a concrete foundation. Due to the slope of the lot from back to front, the narrow double leaf entry is several feet from the ground and is accessed by a flight of concrete steps. Though the church has been covered in vinyl siding, the original windows are intact as are the interior finishes. To the northeast is a small cistern covered with a concrete pad. Approximately 54 feet to the north is a frame parsonage/dining hall constructed c. 1962 (non-contributing). The parsonage/dining hall has a low pitched gable roof and sits on a concrete foundation. Behind the church is a small cemetery. Graves in the cemetery face roughly east in long, north-south running rows. Though some alterations have been made to the church building, the site as a whole is largely unaltered and reflects the period when the church and grounds were the center of a small but vital rural African American community in Callaway County.

Elaboration:

Setting:

The Oakley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church and its associated dining hall and cemetery are located at the crest of a hill overlooking neighboring agricultural and pasture land. County Road 485 curves around the south and west sides of the one acre lot and County Road 486 tees at the southwest corner. The lot itself is slightly mounded with the highest point near the middle of the cemetery. The rest of the lot slopes down slightly in all directions. The church and dining hall are located in the eastern portion of the lot with the cemetery to the west. There are scattered large trees on the property and there are some plantings, such as yucca bushes, typical of rural cemeteries. A row of trees marks the north and east boundaries and County Road 485 marks the south and west edges.

Oakley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1878, contributing building:

The chapel sits near the southwest corner of the property. It is a one story frame building with a steeply pitched front-gable roof. The foundation is parged with concrete and measures 24' 6" X 36' 6." From the road, a concrete sidewalk leads to a set of steps and a stoop providing access to the centered entrance. A simple pipe railing extends on both sides of the steps and stoop. The entrance appears to consist of a 2-panel door with paneled sidelight, however, the narrower sidelight is also hinged and was likely used to widen the entrance to provide access for caskets. The entrance is topped by a 2-light transom. The transom is shaded beneath a metal awning. A goose neck light fixture is located above the entrance.

The north and south elevations of the church are identical. Three tall, narrow 2/2 wood windows are located at even intervals on each side. The middle window of the south side has a window air conditioning unit, and a small propane tank is located near the southeast corner. The rear of the building is unadorned and contains no fenestration. Though the exterior has been clad in vinyl siding, the width of the siding is consistent with historic clapboards and it does not appear to cover any significant architectural features.

The interior of the building, consisting of one large room, is unaltered and appears to date from the original construction of the church in 1878. The walls are plastered and there is a low wainscoting consisting of vertical boards and a simple molding. The window and door trim is slightly pedimented at the top and has plain boards on either side. The ceiling is coved and is covered in stained tongue and groove boards. Pendant lights dating from c. 1930 hang from the ceiling. A raised, two step dais extends across approximately 2/3 of the west wall. A low balustrade fronts the dais. The lectern is located on the top step. The building has a center isle with a row of hand made pews on either side. The pews, measuring approximately 8' X 1' 6", have a straight back and narrow seat.

Cistern, c. 1900, contributing structure:

A cistern topped by a concrete pad is located just north of the northeast corner of the church. It is unknown how old or deep the cistern is, but it was likely built in the early 20th Century.

Parsonage/Dining Hall/Sunday School Room, c. 1962, non-contributing building:

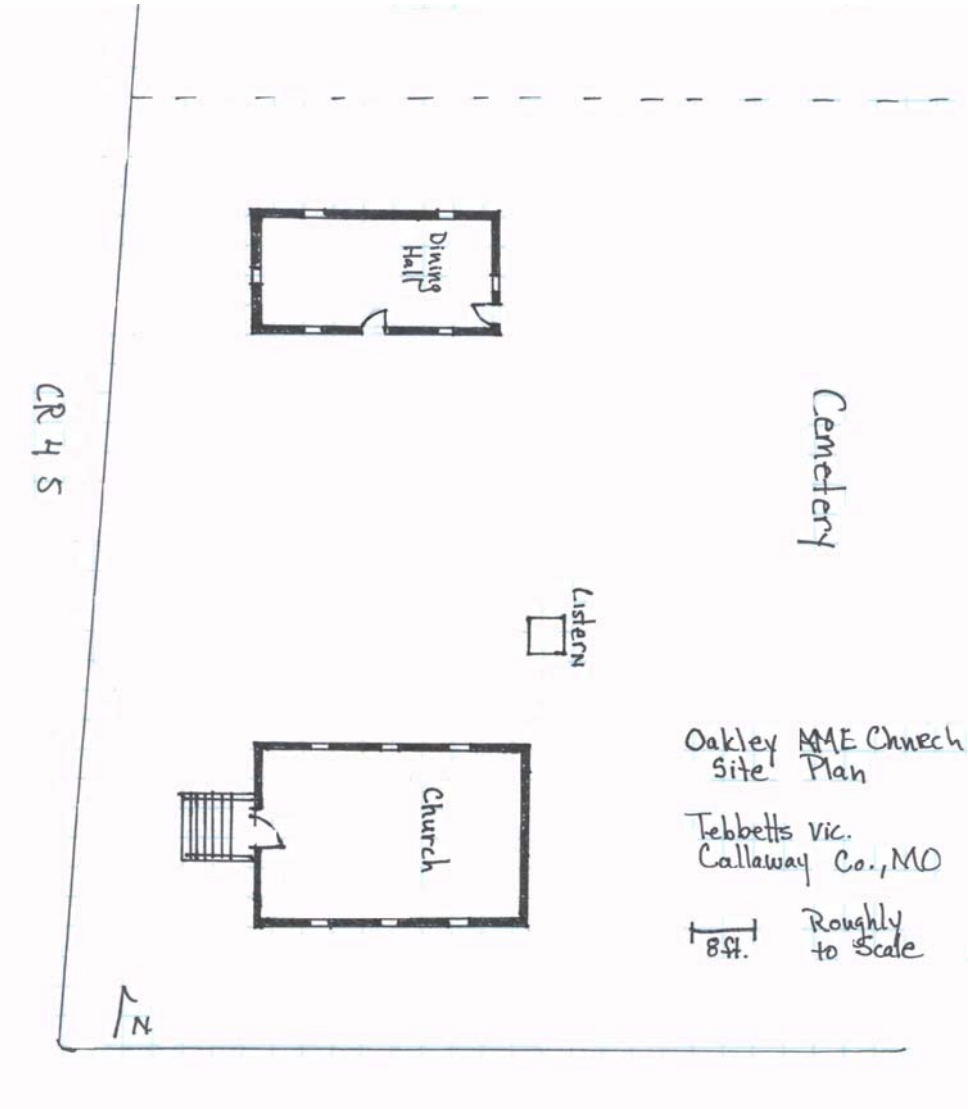
The parsonage that previously stood north of the church was replaced c. 1962 with a simple dining hall/class room building. The narrow, frame building has coved wood siding and a low pitched hipped roof. The building sits on a concrete foundation and measures 16' 2" X 32' 2". The main entrance to the building faces south toward the church. A wood panel door is centered on the south elevation and is flanked by two, 2/2 wood windows. A secondary entrance is located on the east façade of the building as is a 2/2 wood window. The north elevation has two evenly spaced, 2/2 windows. The east, street facing elevation, has the gable. A 2/2 window is centered on this elevation.

The interior of the dining hall is simply adorned. A kitchenette is located in the eastern section of the building. The kitchen area is separated from the dining area/class room by a counter. The western portion of the building is taken up by small men's and women's restrooms. The interior is simply finished with plasterboard walls and ceiling. The floor is wood and is partially covered by linoleum.

Cemetery, c. 1878, contributing site:

The eastern portion of the site consists of an open cemetery. Graves face east and are arranged in rough rows running north and south. Grave markers are generally low cement or stone slabs with square or segmentally arched tops. There are a scatting of short obelisks with decorative finals. Some graves are also marked by plantings typical of rural cemeteries, notably yucca bushes. There are approximately 80 known burials in the cemetery, roughly 70 of which are marked by stones or other types of markers.

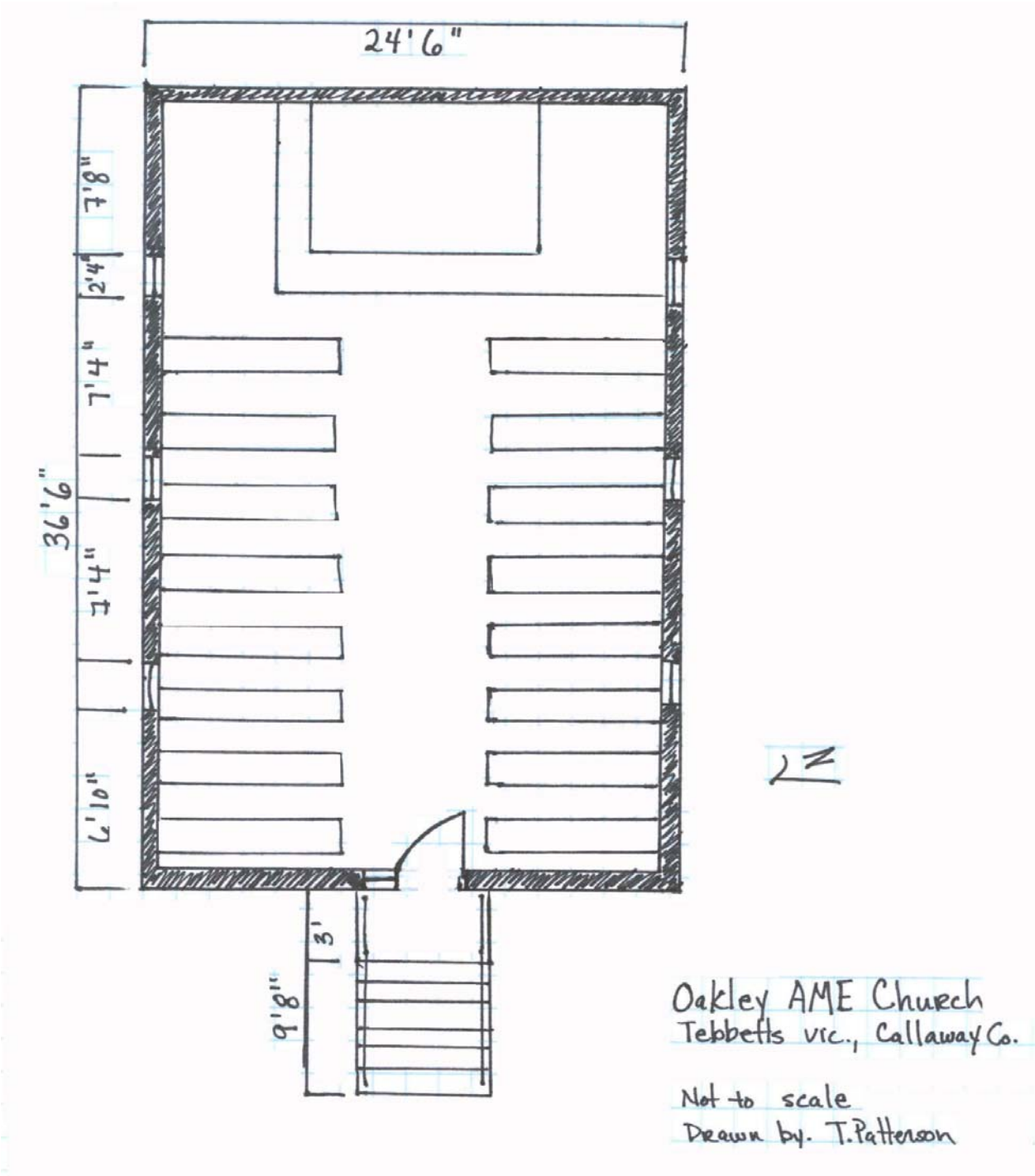
Site Plan, drawn by T. Patterson.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Oakley Chapel AME Church Floor Plan



Summary:

Oakley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, located north of Tebbetts, Callaway County at the intersection of County Roads 485 and 486, is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK. The nomination also meets Criterion Consideration A, because it derives its primary significance from its association with Callaway County's historic African American population rather than religion. Apparently the first of several AME churches established in Callaway within two decades of the end of slavery, Oakley Chapel is the last active AME church in the county and one of only a few associated with the efforts of formerly enslaved people to establish themselves and their community as respected participants in an often hostile political, social and economic arena. The chapel and associated cemetery, like the annual basket supper it has sponsored for 130 years, still calls and re-calls the now scattered community to itself. The period of significance is c. 1878 to 1958, the date of construction through the fifty year closing date for periods of significance where activities begun historically continue to have importance but no more specific date can be defined.[1]

Historic Background:

Origins of the African Methodist Episcopal Denomination

Oakley Chapel AME Church is steeped in the rich cultural and religious traditions of the "methodism" developed by John and Charles Wesley as it was shaped in what became the United States by racial tension and African Americans' search for equality and self-governance. In November, 1787 – twenty-three years after the founding of St. Louis and thirteen years after John Wesley had published his "Thoughts on Slavery"– African Americans who had been drawn to St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia by the preaching of Richard Allen and Absalom Jones "convened together, in order to take into consideration the evils under which they laboured." As Bishop Allen and his colleagues Daniel Coker and James Champion would later recount, they had "arisen"

> from the unkind treatment of their white brethren, who considered them a nuisance in the house of worship, and even pulled them off their knees while in the act of prayer, and ordered them to the back seats. From these, and various other acts of unchristian conduct, we considered it our duty to devise a plan in order to build a

[1] Allen Chapel AME was founded on the south side of Ninth street in Fulton in July 1883, and moved before 1900 to the north corner of Ninth and Westminster. It left the AME conference in 1979 and was dissolved after 1984. Cave's Church -- like Oakley Chapel a simple frame gable-front building -- was built during the 1880s, closed in 1949 . By 2001 only its foundation remained. *History of Callaway County, Missouri* (St. Louis: National Historical Co., 1884), 213; *A History of Callaway County, Missouri* (Fulton: Kingdom of Callaway Historical Society, 1984), 37, 82, 137, 145.

house of our own, to worship God under our own vine and fig tree.[2]

While the Philadelphians were planning a church, John Clark, a Scot living in Illinois, became the first Methodist missionary to cross the Mississippi river into Spanish Catholic terrain. After having been impressed into the British navy and imprisoned in Havana by the Spanish, he made his way to London where he was converted to Methodism. Dispatched to Georgia as a missionary, he came to share John Wesley's abhorrence of slavery and left the circuit to which he had been assigned because he was unwilling to accept as salary a purse gleaned from slave labor. Between 1789 and 1804 Father Clark established and continued to visit Methodist classes near St. Louis at "the settlement near the Spanish pond, north of St. Louis; the settlement between Owen's Station (now Bridgeton) and Florrissant [sic]; and the settlement called Feefe's [sic] creek."[3]

Looking back at the first decades of the nineteenth century from the vantage point of 1855, his Baptist biographer John Mason Peck regarded Clark as a Baptist "Friend to Humanity" rather than a Methodist missionary. Feeling it necessary to defend both his friend and the Baptist churches that had began calling themselves "Friends to Humanity" around 1807, against the charge of radicalism, Peck attributed Clark's anti-slavery stance to his own experiences of captivity and made it clear that he and the other Friends to Humanity "differed widely from modern abolitionists of the Northern States and England." This was certainly the case in the Missouri territory. Unlike John Wesley, Missouri "Friends to Humanity" did not regard slaveholding as a "sin per se." They might buy slaves and prepare them for freedom or assist them in buying their freedom from others, but they refused to violate the law by aiding them to escape or hiding them. Like Peck, they were careful to preach in a manner acceptable to slaveholders.[4]

Such caution held less interest for Richard Allen and his colleagues. Nonetheless, despite the reluctance of even the Methodists in the industrializing East to join John Wesley in attacking slavery, and the fact that his fellow exhorter Absalom Jones and the majority of those who had left St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church had in 1793 turned to the Protestant Episcopal

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[2] Richard Allen, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: Richard Allen and Jacob Tapisco, 1817), 3.

[3] John Mason Peck, *"Father Clark." or. The pioneer preacher: sketches and incidents of Rev. John Clark by an old pioneer* (New York: Sheidon, Lamport & Blakeman, 1855), 228-33. Whether established by Methodist circuit riders in the late 1700s or African Methodist Episcopal circuit riders after the Civil War, Methodist classes and the discipline associated with them came directly from John Wesley's "Rules of the United Societies" (1743); see Richard Allen, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: Richard Allen and Jacob Tapisco, 1817), 97.

[4] *Father Clark*, 256-58; Janet Rowland Miller, Kristin E. S. Zapalac and Tiffany Patterson, Coldwater Cemetery NR nomination (5/19/04).

Church, Allen continued to believe in the Wesleys' Methodism. There was, he would later write,

> no religious sect or denomination would suit the capacity of the colored people as well as the Methodist; for the plain and simple gospel suits best for any people; for the unlearned can understand, and the learned are sure to understand; and the reason that the Methodist is so successful in the awakening and conversion of the colored people, the plain doctrine and having a good discipline. [5]

After considerable struggle, including two successful lawsuits filed by Allen, the Black Philadelphians had established their own house of worship, but saw that "our coloured friends at Baltimore, were [being] treated in a similar manner, by the white preachers and trustees, and many of them drove away; who were disposed to seek a place of worship for themselves, rather than go to law." In April 1816, when it had become abundantly clear that "many of the coloured people, in other places, were in a situation nearly like those of Philadelphia and Baltimore," Allen, Coker and Champion called a general meeting of African American Methodists.

> Delegates from Baltimore, and other places, met those of Philadelphia, and taking into consideration their grievances, and in order to secure their privileges, promote union and harmony among themselves, it was resolved, "That the people of Philadelphia, Baltimore, &c. &c. should become one body, under the name of the African Methodist Episcopal Church." . . . on the 11th April, 1816, Richard Allen was solemnly set apart for the Episcopal Office, by prayer and the imposition of the hands of five regularly ordained ministers. At which time, the General Convention held in Philadelphia, did unanimously receive the said Richard Allen as their bishop, being fully satisfied of the validity of his Episcopal Ordination.[6]

Neither Bishop Allen's ordination nor the successful conclusion to the lawsuits eliminated the suspicion faced by the first Christian denomination in the Western hemisphere under African American leadership. Half way across the continent and despite their admiration for Wesley and Clark, European American missionaries such as Clark's biographer John Mason Peck and Methodist circuit rider John Scripps were even more circumspect than the small – and short-lived – Baptist "Friends to Humanity" community Clark had established in St. Louis County.

In Callaway County, slaveholders such as Samuel Boone, grandson of a Baptist preacher and nephew of Daniel Boone, helped build the first Baptist church in 1820. As was the case with the

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[5] Richard Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen. To which is annexed The Rise and Progress of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Martin & Boden, 1833), excerpted in *My Soul Has Grown Deep: Classics of Early African-American Literature* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2001), 22-69, here 23-32.

[6] Allen, *Doctrines and Discipline*, 4-10.

Methodist church from which Richard Allen and Absalom Jones had withdrawn, Boone's Bethel Baptist undoubtedly had black members. It is likely all were held in slavery. Two years before it was built, circuit rider John Scripps had enrolled "Mrs. Ramsey, her father-in-law, Mrs. Ferguson and Brother Tom (the name he principally went by), an old Methodist negro" as the first members of one of the county's first Methodist classes. Scripps' phrasing suggests that Brother Tom, at least, had become a Methodist before his arrival in Missouri, but neither Scripps' phrasing nor a later account giving Brother Tom's last name as Nash, the family name of the man in whose home Scripps had also preached, nor the earliest surviving federal census reveals whether Brother Tom had settled in Missouri of his own volition or had been brought to the territory as human property. [7]

Given the preponderance of slave-holders from Virginia and Kentucky among those who settled Callaway County before statehood, the latter supposition is the more likely. By 1830, when the earliest surviving census was taken, almost 24% of the people in the county were held in slavery. Only one of the 1,457 African Americans recorded by the census taker was free -- and that middle-aged woman was living in William Baker's household, where an older man was still held in slavery. [8]

Sarah Jane Woodson Early, Oberlin-educated school principal, teacher at Wilberforce and widow of an early Missouri AME preacher, recalled her husband saying, "Our Church wherever established was called an abolition church, which made the slaveholders suspicious of its proceedings, and sometimes the members and local preachers were brought before courts of justice to answer for the absence of some slave who had made his escape." Small wonder, then, that the AME missionaries who crossed the Mississippi in the 1830s and 1840s found their time better spent evangelizing the larger free population of St. Louis and the older towns along the Mississippi than the enslaved population in "little Dixie," the Missouri river counties running west from the eastern boundaries of Callaway and Cole, settled from Virginia and Kentucky. Although still small in numbers at 220, in 1830 "free people of color" made up over 7% of the African American population of St. Louis city and county. As had been the case with Richard Allen, Jordan Winston Early did not begin his ministry in the AME church, but as an enslaved exhorter for the Methodist Episcopal church. After his conversion and baptism by John S. Barger, a Virginia-born Methodist who joined the Missouri conference in 1831,

> [Early] was allowed to lead prayer meetings and to lead singing, and to assist in other duties of the church. He was appointed Superintendent of the Sunday-school,

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[7] William Smith Bryan, Robert Rose and William W. Elwang, *A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri* (Columbia, MO: Lucas Bros., 1935), 306-06; Walter Williams, *A History of Northeast Missouri*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1913), 290n; J. T. Ferguson, letter to the Old Settlers' Meeting (11/10/1883), reprinted in *History of Callaway County, Missouri* (St. Louis: National Historical Co., 1884), 434-35.

[8] 1830 federal census, Callaway county, MO, Roll 73: 73, 75.

> in which he obtained good success. He took much delight in performing such duties as he was able, and in them he felt great liberty. … he commenced at once to exhort his fellowmen to flee from the wrath to come, and wherever he could find the opportunity he did not fail to proclaim the message received from God for the redemption of his fellowman.

"Feeling great liberty" and "redemption" were not simple metaphors for Early -- having lost his mother at a young age, he was brought to Missouri by his owner. "When about eighteen years of age I formed a resolution that I would learn to read and write. Being in bondage, of course, I had no opportunity to attend school." His involvement with the Methodist church led him to take seriously the clergy instructions John Wesley had taken directly from the Anglican bishop's instructions to his ordinands: "Consider how studious ye ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures, and in framing the manners both of yourselves and of them that specially pertain unto you, according to the rule of the same Scriptures." As had been the case for Richard Allen, Early welcomed the command to read and learn, even if finding the opportunity to do so was a challenge even before the Missouri General Assembly outlawed schools for "slaves, free negroes and mulattoes" in 1847:

> I embraced every opportunity to improve my mind so that I might be better prepared to perform the duties that were incumbent upon me in my religious career. … I made my desires known to a Presbyterian minister who seemed to have great sympathy for me. He proposed to teach me in the evenings if I would come to him. [9]

Although conference records place the Quinn's arrival on the banks of the Mississippi in 1840, according to Early's account it was in 1832 that William Paul Quinn brought the African Methodist Episcopal message to the African Americans of St. Louis and Brooklyn, Illinois. Also according to Early's account it was in 1836 that he received a new license to preach – in the AME church. That his account may be more accurate than is usually supposed is suggested by the fact that after several years of meeting in private homes, Charles Keemle listed the "African (Methodist) Church, corner of Greene and Seventh streets," with Illinois-based John Anderson as pastor in his St. Louis Directory for 1840-41.[10]

So successful was Quinn as a church planter that in 1842, the Ohio Conference of the AME church declared:

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[9] Sarah J. W. Early, *Life and Labors of Rev. Jordan W. Early* (Nashville: A.M.E. Church Sunday School Union, 1894), 16-19; James A. Handy, *Scraps of African Methodist Episcopal History* (Philadelphia: A. M. E. Book Concern, [1902]), 345. For a comparison of Wesley's adaptation with the Anglican original: Adrian Burdon, *Authority and Order: John Wesley and His Preachers* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 93.

[10] Although most sources give the date of Quinn's arrival in Missouri as 1840, see Early, *Life and Labors*, 21-24; Charles Keemle, *St. Louis Directory for 1840-41* (St. Louis: Keemle, 1940) , 47.

> The Western Christian Mission, as devised by the General Conference, held in the city of Baltimore, in 1840, and prosecuted by Rev. Wm. Paul Quinn, in the States of Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, is the greatest Christian enterprize [sic] ever undertaken by the African M. E. Church since its rise and progress in our country. . . God, in his providence, having eminently endowed him with the necessary qualifications for the arduous and often dangerous task of planting the "standard of the Cross" in those then Western wilds. The writer has often heard him preach, when it was absolutely dangerous to be either in the house or out of it; when the greater portion of his audience were either "mobocrats" or "lewd fellows of the baser sort;" and when the "Amens" and "Hallelujahs" came louder from the children of the wicked one than from the children of light.[11]

By 1840, things had also changed in Callaway County -- the census taker could report that 22 of the county's 3,164 African American inhabitants were free. In 1834, Josiah Ramsey, the appointed leader of the Methodist class established by John Scripps in 1818, showed himself not only "a pious old man, [who] held a prayer meeting every Sabbath at some place in the neighborhood," but also a Methodist who at his life's end freed the eleven adults and fourteen children (each of the latter to be bound out until the age of twenty one) he owned. Perhaps he, like John Clark, had been influenced by his own experience – captured by Native Americans when he was quite young, Ramsey was said never to have been certain that the European American who had later claimed him was in fact his biological father.[12]

Despite Ramsey's deed, the proportion of Callaway's inhabitants held in slavery had increased to almost 27% of the county's population by 1840. In 1850, the percentage of people held in slavery peaked at 28.4%, but the actual number of people held as property continued to climb throughout the prewar years, reaching 4,523 in 1860. Of course the figures reported to the tax collectors that year were lower than the census takers' – the county's taxable property included 463,380 acres of land valued at $2,307,089, 4,360 slaves valued at $1,689, 592 and $1,051,417 in cash.[13]

Free at Last

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[11] Benj. T. Tanner, *An Apology for African Methodism* (Baltimore: s. n., 1867), 145-46, 312-13.

[12] Ferguson, letter (1883), in *History of Callaway County*, 434-35; Callaway County Deed Book D, 54; accessed online 6/29/2008 at *http://genforum.genealogy.com/mo/callaway/messages/248.html* William S. Bryan, *A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri* (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand, 1876), 367.

[13] Census statistics derived from figures from Historical Census Browser maintained at the University of Virginia, accessed 6/18/2008 at *http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/ stats/histcensus/* Nathan H. Parker, *Missouri as it is in 1867: An Illustrated Historical Gazetteer* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1967), 203.

In June 1863 the delegates to the constitutional convention of 1861 passed a gradual emancipation act that freed all of those held in slavery in Missouri by July 4, 1870. On January 11, 1865, three months before the war's end, the delegates to the constitutional convention of 1865 met to cast their votes to replace the 1863 provision with one that required immediate emancipation. Thomas B. Harris of Concord, Callaway County, was one of only four who voted against the Missouri's new Emancipation Proclamation. Apparently the African American population felt that Mr. Harris rather than Mr. Ramsey reflected the general attitude of the rulers of the Kingdom of Callaway -- the first census after freedom showed the county's African American population had dropped precipitously between 1860 and 1870, from 28% to less than 18% of the county's population. Their fears were quickly validated, often in ways more violent than the continuing positive assessment of Mr. Harris' vote demonstrated in a county history published in 1884:

> Widely and favorably known, not only as a man of integrity and good business qualifications, but as a public spirited citizen, . . . in 1864 [Thomas B. Harris] was elected to the State constitutional convention, in which he distinguished himself by his fearless advocacy of the rights of the people. [14]

The same county history reported that Dr. Nathan L. Rice, "that great logician and theologian" had conducted

> one of the greatest religious revivals that ever occurred anywhere in Fulton, commencing at the Presbyterian Church, February 6, 1874, and continuing till March 22, same year. One hundred and twenty persons connected themselves with the Presbyterian Church alone. As many more attached themselves to other churches.

In fact, the peripatetic Rice had been in Fulton as the orator for the laying of the cornerstone on Westminster College on July 4, 1854, and had been serving as president of the same institution since 1868. Shortly after the great revival of 1874, he assumed the chair of polemic theology at the seminary in Danville, Kentucky. It would be difficult to image a more fitting conclusion to a career filled with debates over the major controversies of the time. An Old School Presbyterian who had made his reputation by debating baptism with Alexander Campbell, he was especially popular with certain congregations – including St. Louis' Second Presbyterian Church -- after a famous debate in 1845 in which he argued that slavery was not sinful *per se*.[15]

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[14] Harrison Anthony Trexler, *Slavery in Missouri, 1804-1865* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1914), 239; Parker, *Missouri as it is in 1867,* 424; *History of Callaway County* (1884), 658; census statistics derived from figures from Historical Census Browser maintained at the University of Virginia, accessed 6/18/2008 at *http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/ stats/histcensus/*

[15] *History of Callaway County* (1884), 209; Jonathan Blanchard and Nathan L. Rice, *Debate on Slavery: Held in the City of Cincinnati, on the First, Second, Third, and Sixth Days of October, 1845, upon the Question: Is Slave-holding in Itself Sinful, and the Relation Between Master and Slave, a Sinful*

The newly minted citizens who remained in Callaway County demonstrated considerable fortitude. They were a hardy lot, farmers accustomed to the rigors of rural life and eager to exercise their right to have their marriages and familial bonds legally recognized. By the end of 1865, 75 couples, many with several children, had taken advantage of this chance to gain legal protection for the cherished relationships slavery had threatened. In contrast to some of the entries in marriage registers in more urban areas with larger percentages of free people before the war, these entries did not record any previous religious ceremonies – all were listed as having been performed by justices of the peace some days before they were recorded in a register kept apart from that in which marriages between European Americans were recorded. A typical entry reads:

> Married on the 1st day of October 1865
> George Bush to Matilda Alexander by Wm F Dunn Justice of the peace and registered the names of the following children to wit
> Calip Bush Stephen Bush Motin Bush Jane Bush Martha Bush Charity Bush
> Jemima Bush Samuel Bush Samuel Bush all of this county. Colored folks
> Wm F Dunn J.P
> Filed & Rec. Oct 4th 1865
> Thos B. Nesbit Rec.

The marriages of two of the "children" listed bracketed that of the parents. Stephen Bush had already had his own marriage to Catherine Bradley recognized in a ceremony September 2, 1865. On January 21, 1866, his brother Calip (Caleb) Bush married Martha Hord. Fourteen years later the census takers reported that the county's African American community had experienced considerable immigration – at 4,431, it was 123 people short of its 1860 peak, but it was a community transformed – men and women proudly bearing responsibilities previously denied, attracting partners from the surrounding area and raising up children they could legally protect.[16]

Relation? Affirmative: Rev. J. Blanchard, Pastor of the Sixth Presbyterian Church. Cincinnati; Negative :N.L. Rice, D. D., Pastor of the Central Presbyterian church, Cincinnati (Cincinnati and New York: Wm. H. Moore & Co. and Mark H. Newman, 1846). By 1859, his position was little changed: cf. "False Statements," 328; "The Slave Trade," 362-69 and "Religious Instruction of Slaves," 521-23, all in *The Presbyterian Expositor: A Monthly Periodical*, ed. N. L. Rice (Chicago, 1859). On his career: *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. 9 (New York: Harper & Bros., 1889), 12.

[16] Doris J. Handy, *The Black Communities of South Callaway County Late 1800s thru Early 1840s* (Fulton: Doris Handy typescript, 2003), 16; "Black Marriages - Grooms, 1865 to 1921, Callaway County, Missouri," ed. Betty Brooks. Online at *http://www.usgennet.org/usa/mo/county/callaway/Slavery/Black Marriages_Groom.html* Census figures derived from the Historical Census Browser maintained at the University of Virginia, online at *http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/*

Many European Americans in the former slave states – as also in the former free states -- saw those legal changes as threats to their own socio-economic standing. Within a few years of the war's end African American schools had been set ablaze in northwest Missouri, in New Madrid, and in Fulton (Callaway County). Shots had disrupted the Christmas Eve service at St. Paul's AME Church in Columbia in neighboring Boone County, killing one and wounding another. The most extreme manifestation of those fears was the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, described in an April 22, 1868 article in the *Jefferson City Weekly Tribune* as a "weird organization" whose presence was perhaps overstated even in the states of the deep South. Although the writer claimed he was "no apologist" for the organization, he nonetheless regarded it as an understandable attempt to balance the "Loyal Leagues" and other supporters of Reconstruction.[17]

The tenor of articles appearing in the *Jefferson City Tribune* and the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* both before and after President Grant signed the Civil Rights Act of 1871 (AKA Ku Klux Klan Act), suggests that neither the reporters nor the urban papers' readers were expected to be sympathetic to the plight of the African Americans who were the targets of what one article described as "mere boyish frolic." Despite that attitude and the sizable Callaway crowd in the gallery the federal jury sitting in Jefferson City (in Cole County, just south of Callaway) in 1875, followed the tougher federal law under which they had been charged and found the two ring leaders of a brutal attack guilty of civil rights violations. During the trial and in his appeal of their convictions, Isaac Wingate Boulware, son of the founding pastor of Fulton's Liberty Baptist Church and attorney for the defendants, used the concept of states' rights to argue "that the colored men of Missouri did not attain their rights of citizenship by any act or law of Congress, but under [Missouri's earlier] Emancipation act" passed January 11, 1865 despite the no vote of his fellow Callawegian. Arguing that the Civil Rights Act of 1871 "did not contemplate the jurisdiction of the U.S. courts over cases of the alleged denial of rights to this class of people," i.e. those not held in slavery after January 1865, Boulware concluded that the result of the fact that the thirteenth amendment had been ratified after the passage of Missouri's emancipation bill "was if a colored man were wronged in Missouri, he had the same rights as any other man – white or black – and that the [federal] Civil Rights bill had had nothing to do with the premises."[18]

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[17] Lorenzo J. Greene, Gary R. Kremer and Antonio F. Holland, *Missouri's Black Heritage* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 93.

[18] "The State Capital: Adjudicating an Alleged Callaway Ku-Klux Conspiracy" and "A Darky's Tale," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (10/6/1875), 1; "The State Capital: The Callaway Ku-Klux—A Cunning Argument," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (10/11/1875), 5; "The State Capital: Two of the Callaway Ku-Klux Convicted," St. Louis Globe-Democrat (10/12/1875), 4; "The State Capital: Interesting Points Raised in the Callaway Ku-Klux Cases," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (11/13/1875), 1. When a newly-minted attorney, Isaac Wingate Boulware was one of the attorneys appointed to defend Celia. The typographical error "Isaac *M.* Boulware" in Melton A. McLaurin, *Celia, a Slave: A True Story* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 74, has unfortunately carried through all subsequent editions.

West of the cluster of Missouri river counties that made up "little Dixie," the Rev. James Madison saw a different revival in 1877. In a letter published in the *Christian Recorder*, the AME organ introduced into the South during the Civil War by the U.S. Colored Regiments, the AME preacher was pleased by his growing acceptance by his European American colleagues: "On Monday morning I received an invitation, to preach at the white M.E. church, South. I accepted the invitation and filled it to the best of my ability after which I was invited to preach for the white M.E. Church." His greatest interest was, however, his community's economic and moral achievements -- particularly their willingness to embrace the temperance movement – and the planting of churches and schools:

> Our people are doing well in this part of the country. Work is plentiful and wages liberal. If our people would learn to take care of what they make, and not so much beer, rum, tobacco and whisky, they would thrive much better than they do. However time, patience, and perseverance will eventually bring it about. Oh, that we would come to the old landmarks of Methodism, plain dress but neat and not try to follow so many fashions unbecoming Christians. Then we would get along just as well, and by taking care of his little earnings we would have something for a rainy day and sickness, to help a poor worthy friend. We need religion, elevation, wealth, and refinement. Brother preachers, much depends on us in this particular matter, as preachers and teachers. We should urge it in congregations and school houses. . . . . The Church prospers in this part of the Lord's vineyard, notwithstanding the hardness of the times. Rev. L. Mills of Liberty, Mo., has built a fine church, at Liberty this year, and got his people in it, and is moving on nicely. It was much needed. Rev. G.W. Guy, of Independence, Mo., is getting along well in his charge, on the 5th inst. the corner stone of his new church was laid masonically, by Past G. M., Moses Dickson, of St. Joseph, Mo. The church when completed will reflect credit on the pastor and congregation. Rev. P. North, of Pleasant Hill, Mo., is moving with his work. . . . Rev. Wm. Martin, of R.L. Junction, Mo., is holding things level with his charge. Rev. R. Ricketts of Kansas City, Mo., is carrying everything before him, he has built a fine brick church there this year that will seat 1500 people. Our church got burned down about 2 years ago. But under the administration of Elder Rickets, the latter house is greater than the former Rev. Wm. Henderson of Jefferson City Mo. has built a fine church this year, which was much needed. So you see by this letter that the Missouri Conference preachers are church builders as well as preachers.[19]

More often the chasms that had opened within Methodism were more difficult to bridge. In its account of the annual conference of the Missouri AME church held in Macon (Macon county)

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19 James Madison, "News from Missouri," *Christian Recorder* (Philadelphia, 8/16/1877).

earlier in 1877, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* noted that the conference had welcomed a visiting Methodist Episcopal preacher into its midst. And that his infelicitous comments had been decorously corrected of by an African Methodist Episcopal colleague. After announcing his desire "that [his] conveyance of greeting should not be viewed as a mark of weakness, but as made only through love," Rev. John W. Hughes of St. Louis went on to insist that "the M.E. Church does not ask the A.M.E. to return as did the prodigal son, acknowledging her sin, and asking to be made one of her hired servants, but to receive a child's place and a child's part in the affections of the mother."

Unwilling to assume the part of the child for himself or his denomination, Dr. H.M. Turner replied for the AME church that

> He was proud to reciprocate the greetings offered, and claimed for the church a similar spirit. The A.M.E. Church is as proud of Methodism, of the teachings of Wesley, as the M.E., and claims equal lineage. Its sacraments are as liberal, its doctrines as orthodox. He acknowledged a contingency, now long buried in the past, which justified a separation, and thanked God that the M.E. Church were moved with such a spirit as to send a polished son to extend the hand of unity. He offered back the hand of friendship, and hoped that the hatchet of discord might be buried forever.

The exchange may have been colored by the fact Rev. Hughes appears to have been appointed to deliver the ME convention's regards because of his skin color – "Hughes J. W. B[lack] M[ale] 50 Pastor Of The Meth. E. Church" was living in St. Louis at 1008 N. Eleventh when the census taker passed by in 1880.[20]

A Light on a Hill: Oakley Chapel AME Church

It was, by 1877, clear that the annual Missouri conference of the AME church was quite willing to sow churches in what to outsiders must have looked like the unpromising ground in Callaway County. And so it was that sixty years after Brother Tom Nash had joined the first Methodist class in the county, Caleb Bush – whose January 1866 marriage, like all those registered in the immediate aftermath of the war, had been celebrated by a justice of the peace -- joined Harrison Farmer and Solomon Tarlton in purchasing an acre of land on which to build the Oakley Chapel AME church., apparently the first in the county of that denomination.

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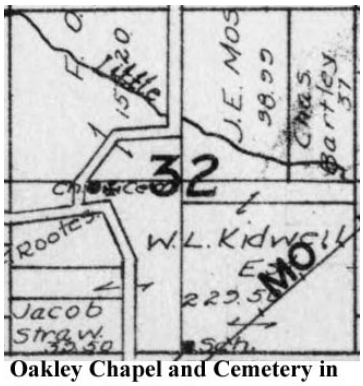
[20] "African Methodists. Proceedings of the Missouri Annual Conference," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (8/29/1877), 7; 1880 federal census: Saint Louis, MO Roll T9_717, p. 277.2000; ED 15. My thanks to John Finley of the Methodist Archives at Central Methodist College Library in Fayette, MO for his assistance in determining that it was Rev. J. *W.* Hughes, who had been appointed liaison to the AME convention during the 1877 ME convention in St. Louis, rather than the "Rev. J. H. Hughes" reported by the *Globe-Democrat*.



Oakley Chapel and Cemetery in 1930 Plat Book, Callaway County T45N R9W Sec32

The deed signed September 27, 1878, set aside the land commencing at a point where the Pecar ferry road crosses the North line of the South fractional half of section thirty two township forty five range nine running South Sixty yards, thence East Sixty yards thence North Sixty yards, thence West Sixty yards to the place of beginning…. In trust that they shall erect or cause to be built thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in United States.[21]

All three trustees bore the family names of Callaway countians who had owned not only land but people before January 11, 1865. It was, however, not one of these who had sold them the land for the nominal sum of one dollar, but rather William L. Kidwell, a Virginia-born farmer who could claim twelve human beings as property by the time he was 25. Ten years later the war had ended and he was a farmer with real estate valued at $5,000 and $1,200 in personal property -- and Harrison Farmer's wealthiest neighbor. Despite his name, Farmer was not a farmer; like most of the African Americans who remained in rural Callaway County after the war he was a day laborer with only $200 to his name. It may have been a shared Methodist faith that led Kidwell to sell the acre to Farmer and his fellow trustees for a token $1 – both Kidwell and his wife Winifred, Pennsylvania-born granddaughter of Presley Neville, friend to George Washington and former aide-de-camp to the Marquis de Lafayette, had abandoned the faith of their fathers and worshipped at the Rocky Branch Methodist Church until their transfer by letter to another Methodist church in 1888.[22]

Despite harsh economic conditions and the violence that continued to threaten African Americans and their institutions, neither the trustees nor the leaders of the Missouri conference of the AME church were interested in hiding the light they were kindling under a bushel. They

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[21] Callaway County Deed Book (Ms.) vol. 11: 474-77; Callaway County Courthouse, Fulton. Pecar ferry was presumably named for Donoya "called Pecars," one of the French settlers living in Cote Sans Dessein when the Anglo Americans began arriving in 1817. J. T. Ferguson, letter (1883), in *History of Callaway County* (1884), 434-35.

[22] 1876 Missouri state census, Township 44, Range 10, Callaway county: 5, 11, 15. Federal censuses for Callaway county, MO: 1860, federal slave schedule, District 18, 28; 1870, Cedar, M593_764, 300; 1870, Cote Sans Dessein, M593_764, 302; 1880, Cedar, T9_677, ED 26, 493.2; 1880, Cote Sans Dessein, T9_677, ED 28, 525.2; 1910, Summit: T624_774, ED 41, 5B and 9A. William Henry Egle, *Pennsylvania Genealogies: Scotch-Irish and German* (Harrisburg: Lane S. Hart, 1886), 480-83; National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, vol. 108, 122; Rocky Branch Methodist Church, Register of additions and transfers (Ms. 1869-1896), 72-73. Kingdom of Callaway Historical Society, Fulton.

sited their church, cemetery and parsonage on a hill where they could be seen by their neighbors, across the road from a pond suitable for baptisms and surrounded by the fields and scattered homes of the community to whom they would offer sanctuary, spiritual and physical nourishment and Wesleyan discipline. To set aside land and build a church and a parsonage was a substantial commitment on the part of the community – one that marked its intention to remain in Callaway County. Although the records do not reveal whether the trustees and their families actually joined the AME church, and no information survives regarding of Oakley Chapel's first pastor Ben McCollough, it is clear that Oakley Chapel was the heart of the community even for those who were not class members but had come to revivals and basket suppers for entertainment, fellowship, news and education rather than conversion. [23]

Family relations, social, educational and religious events formed the bonds that maintained their fragile community. Although the early history of Oakley Chapel AME Church is murky, it is clear that the decline in the African American population in Callaway County in general and southern Callaway County in particular only enhanced the role of the church in the maintenance of community. Census records from 1870 show approximately 280 African Americans in Callway County's Cote Sans Dessein and Cedar townships. By 1920, these two townships still contained roughly 200 blacks. Based on last names showing in the 1870 and later censuses, many were – like Oakley Chapel's first trustees -- former slaves of local landowners. While some, such as the Caves, purchased or were given land after 1865, and developed a distinctive community (Dixie, approximately 7 miles north of Oakley Chapel, had its own chapel, usually visited by the minister who served Oakley Chapel), other farmers and laborers formed less formal, though strong communities. Oakley Chapel was the center of one such community. Though it likely drew congregants from across Cote Sans Dessein and neighboring townships, there were several African American families living on "The Ridge" west of the church (along CR 486) and in "the Hollow" north and east of the building (along CR 485). The church became a social center, school, and the grounds the last resting place of many of the African Americans who once populated the areas.[24]

As was the case with Caleb and Martha Bush, Solomon Tarlton and his wife Eliza "Lizzie" Tarlton, and Harrison "Harry" Farmer and his wife Frances "Fanny" Farmer could neither read

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[23] Dennis C. Dickerson, historiographer of the AME church, has been unable to locate additional information on Oakley Chapel, its congregation or the tenures of the likely local ministers who served there in the archives of the national church. For complaints about lack of records from an early source, see Daniel A. Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville: A.M.E. Sunday School Union, 1891), vii.

[24] For the purposes of this nomination, Southern Callaway County is defined as the following political townships: Cedar, Summit, Caldwell, St. Aubert, and Cote Sans Dessein; Handy, *The Black Communities of South Callaway*, p. 35-68; cf. Brett Rogers, "The World the Caves Made: A Missouri Slave Community in Freedom," *Missouri Folklore Society Journal*, vol. 23 (2001), 55-88.

nor write. Still counted as human property in 1860, each had come of age in a period in which the laws of the state threatened anyone who kept a school for the education of African Americans, regardless of their legal status. Although such schools were openly advertised in association with African Baptist churches under the heading "Academies and Schools Independent of the Board of Education" in the St. Louis directories of 1859 and 1860, and openly kept in Hannibal and St. Louis during the Civil War by Hiram Rhodes Revels and Blanche Kelso Bruce, AME ministers who would become the first African Americans to serve in the U.S. Senate, they did not exist in antebellum Callaway County.[25]

Even after the new state constitution of 1866 required each board of education to maintain schools for African Americans whenever the number of potential students under 21 years of age exceeded twenty, education was not readily available and good teachers were not necessarily sought out by the European Americans charged with fulfilling that obligation. In 1869, when James Milton Turner accused Thomas A. Russell, the superintendent of Callaway county's schools, of hiring unqualified teachers for the African American schools, the superintendent retorted: "any such colored person need not so far as he is concerned know the English Alphabet." Small wonder that Callaway was, according to Turner, the worst of Missouri's counties as far as its willingness to fulfill its educational responsibilities was concerned.[26]

That these needs could be put to good use by those who wanted to convert their visitors was clear to a school teacher who in 1877 moved from Oberlin to Plattsburg, Missouri:

> I was called here last September to teach school. When I came I found that the school had been for the past six years under the supervision of teachers whom it would seem were not interested in the future welfare of our people. School began on the first Monday in September with 17 pupils; but they kept coming every day until it ran up to 54. We then went to work to prepare for an exhibition for the holidays, and on the 23rd of December we came before the public, for the first time, and it was a perfect success; every one was highly pleased, there being more white people present than ours. My former teacher, Prof. W.J. Johnson of Oberlin was present. Miss Fannie Pierson of St. Joe, presided at the organ. The music was said to be superb. Six of my scholars have come over on the Lord's side, and eight more are

[25] Federal censuses for Callaway county, MO: 1860 federal slave schedule District 18, 28;1870 Cote Sans Dessein: M593_764, 302; Lorenzo Johnston Greene, Gary R. Kremer and Antonio Frederick Holland, *Missouri's Black Heritage* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 68; "Hiram Rhodes Revels" and "Blanche Kelso Bruce," online *Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress* searchable at *http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biosearch/biosearch.asp*

[26] Gary Kremer, *James Milton Turner and the Promise of America* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 31-32; Thomas B. Harris, the Callawegian who had voted against immediate emancipation in 1865, was a director of the Fulton school district in 1868 and 1870: *History of Callaway County* (1884), 204.

> seeking. I write this young men has what can be done for the elevation of our race. We should not forget, our people are scatted all through the country, in every hamlet, village and town.[27]

Although not really large enough to be called even a hamlet, there was, in fact, a school at the Cave settlement some 7 miles north of the acre on which Oakley Chapel would soon stand, but it appears initially to have been lodged in Tom Cave's log house. When that small county-funded school disappeared not long after 1900, the families in Cave's settlement paid Luther Cave to teach their children in the Cave AME Church. Later classes were taught by Lena Cave in a neighbor's house. By 1928, the children from that community were forced to walk four miles each way to attend a county-funded school in another log building west of their settlement and South of New Bloomfield. Sadly, on June 7, 1940 the *Kansas City Call* would report that "The Caves school was the only rural Callaway school (colored) to present reading circle certificates. Certificates were presented to Vernice Cave and Mary Ferguson."[28]

Since the few records that survived from the early decades of Oakley Chapel AME were placed behind the cornerstone when the church's foundation was reworked, there is little information about how parents dealt with the difficulties of providing their children with the education they themselves had been denied. According to the sparse public school records, Callaway District school #106 ("Hord Colored") northwest of Tebbetts served the students around Tebbetts from the 1870s thru 1928. What is very clear is that education was a priority for them as it had been for the leaders of the African American Episcopal Church from its inception. Richard Allen and Jordan W. Early before them had dealt with the same issues even if in a setting in which a larger percentage of their community had achieved freedom. [29]

Education, even erudition, was increasingly required of the clergy as they sought to raise their standing and that of their community within the larger society. The publication of this resolution in 1882 suggests that the goal was not always easily achieved:

> WHEREAS, The discipline makes it the duty of each annual conference to spend one day for literary purposes, debates, reading essays," etc. and
> WHEREAS, In compliance with this regulation, the Missouri Conference is thoroughly organized into a Conference Literary and Historic Association, and the Board of Managers has neglected or failed to arrange and publish a program of exercises for our ensuing annual conference, therefore, I deem it my duty to request each member to prepare a paper on some appropriate topic and have the same ready to read on such a day as shall be designated for our literary association. Brethren,

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27 B. T. Perkins, "Word from a Missouri Tour," *The Christian Recorder* (Philadelphia: 3/8/1877).

28 Rogers, "The World the Caves Made," 55-88, esp. 60, 70.

29 Gary Kremer and Brett Rogers, Oakley Chapel AME Church Survey (6/30/2000), 2.

> duty to the church, posterity and ourselves calls. Shall we not obey?[30]

It would have been difficult for the 1882 speakers to top the erudition and utility of the previous year's program:

> PROGRAMME FOR THE MISSOURI Conference Literary and Historical Association. 1st "Our Conference Literary Association and its Work," by G.W. Guy; 2nd. Essay on the biography of Martin Luther, by L.W. Bird; 3rd. "Necessity of Intellectual Improvement," by J.C.C. Owens; 4th. "Monograph of St. Paul's Chapel," St. Louis, Mo., by W.A. Dove; 5th. Essay on English Grammar and its use in obtaining a knowledge of the Scriptures, by T.W. Henderson; 6th Essay on Morals, by J.M, Wilkerson; 7th. Sacred Geography by W.B. Ousley; 8th. Essay Biography of Mother Baltimore, by W.H. Sexton; 9th. Essay on Moral Science, by W.H. Sexton; 9th. Essay on Moral Science, by A.J. Burton; 10th Essay on Logic, by J.W. Taylor; 11th History of the Missouri Annual Conference by G.W. Gaines; 12th. History of the late Bishop Paul Quinn by Berrell Mitchell.[31]

There were other achievements – and other challenges ahead. In 1883, the U.S. Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the Civil Rights Act of 1875 which had guaranteed equal treatment in public accommodations. In 1886, Prof. J. M. Rutledge became the first African American to run for county-wide office in Callaway County. If the Missouri Conference's Literary and History Association pushed more in the direction of W.E.B. Dubois than in that of AME Bishop Benjamin Tanner or his latter day successor Booker T. Washington, the successful three-day fair staged a year later by the Colored Agricultural and Mechanical Society of Callaway County in the week following the segregated Callaway County Mechanical and Agricultural Society's exhibition brought together the focus on the land that had characterized leaders from St. Louis Baptist preacher John Berry Meachum (1846) and Bishop Tanner (1867) to Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute with the growing interest in mechanization, and presaged the coming pressure to abandon the rural pursuits for jobs in more urban areas. In 1893, the MKT rail road was laid along the floodplain north of the Missouri River, bringing mechanization, a depot, a post office and the village of Tebbetts to Oakley Chapel's neighborhood if not its doorstep. Even the families who did not want to seek out jobs in urban factories would soon be forced to consider alternatives by the closure of schools, the inevitable result of the segregated school system and the regulations that governed their very existence.[32]

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[30] "Notice to the Members of the Missouri Annual Conference," *The Christian Recorder* (8/3/1882).

[31] "Programme for the Missouri Conference Literary and Historical Association," *The Christian Recorder* (5/19/1881).

[32] "Republicans of 'The Kingdom," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (9/26/1886); "Callaway County (Mo.) Fair," S*t. Louis Globe-Democrat* (8/30/1887); "Colored Fair at Fulton, Mo.," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (9/4/1887).

When the old district school #106 was abandoned in 1928, classes were moved to Oakley Chapel. A surviving program for the "Tebbetts School Graduation and Closing Exercises to be given April 27, 1933 at the A.M.E. Church" documents the impressive achievements of the students and their teacher, the daughter of Oakley Chapel's pastor. After an invocation by Oakley Chapel's Rev. H. L. Higginbotham bracketed by the "Desert Song," "Santa Lucia," and the "Neapolitan Boat Song," the students performed an apparently comic version of Cinderella including "King Gudluk" and "Baron de Short." The heart of the program followed, introduced by "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and the "National Anthem." Seriousness was clearly in order as friends, families and Marie Higgenbotham, the only teacher listed, listened to orations by Mary Blanche Pannell and Virginia Dorothy Davis on "Man's Battle against Disease" and "The Negro in Our History."[33]

Sadly, the Depression and the job programs designed to alleviate its impact decimated fragile farming communities such as the area around Tebbetts. It was not long before the number of African American school children in the neighborhood had dwindled to the point that the county was no longer required to fund the school at Tebbetts/Oakley Chapel. By 1940, the county's African American population had dropped to 2,472; most of the 766 who were under twenty years of age lived in Fulton or small towns. In rural areas public education for African Americans was not even "separate but equal;" it was non-existent. By the time Doris Jean Smith was old enough to attend school there was no school whose door she could enter within walking or even wagon distance. She has written feelingly of the necessity to leave her grandparents' log cabin near Tebbetts, where she had spent her childhood, in order to take the train to Kansas City where her mother had found a job – all so she could attend school. Not only would she miss her grandmother's cooking – she would also miss seeing her friends at Oakley Chapel every second and fourth Sunday. During the 1940s the pastor was Rev. D. G. Clarkson and the Sunday school was overseen by Alonzo Cave.[34]

The summer months when Doris Smith came home from school were filled not only with gardening and picking fruits and vegetables – they were also the time to share the harvest with friends and neighbors. Each church scheduled its annual basket supper so that everyone would be able to attend each supper in turn. Of course Mother's Day was set aside for special exercises and Memorial Day was a time for cleaning the cemetery grounds and decorating graves in the cemetery East of Oakley Chapel. The earliest marked grave in the cemetery holds the infant son of G.W. Ferguson (b. June 1881, d. September 1881). Other stones designate the final resting places of the infant's mother and other Fergusons, as well as members of the King, Pannell, Farmer, Hord, Cave, Franklin, Harland, Gathright, Bartley, Smith, Nash, Endicott and Ewen

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33 "Tebbetts School Graduation and Closing Exercises to be given April 27, 1933 at the A.M.E. Church" (typed program) in Handy, *Black Communities of South Callaway*, 20.

34 Doris J. Handy to Kristin Zapalac, letter and enclosures (6/28/2008).

(Ewing) families – all laid to rest in the churchyard before 1950.[35]

Basket suppers filled the remaining summer months. Oak Chapel Baptist Church in Guthrie hosted a basket supper on the second Sunday in June; Log Providence held its basket supper in the third Sunday; Oakley Chapel's homecoming and basket supper took place on the fourth Sunday in June and drew visitors from New Bloomfield, Jefferson City, Holt Summit, Wainright, Cedar City and Fulton; the basket supper in New Bloomfield's Paris park on the first Sunday in July drew visitors from Dickson, Jefferson City, Holt Summit and Hannibal; Mt. Vernon's basket dinner took place on the fourth Sunday in July; St. Paul M.E. in New Bloomfield held its basket supper on the second Sunday in August. As if that were not enough to fill a Sunday afternoon, there were also ice cream socials to attend … and sermons and socializing to fill the hours between the meals![36]

By 1949, Cedar Grove AME (Cave Church) was in need of repairs beyond the capacity of a congregation that had been reduced in size by the relocation of family breadwinners to urban areas where jobs were available. The decision was difficult, but the church was closed and its walnut pews donated to Oakley Chapel when that building was remodeled in 1954. Rev. H. R. Galbreath, who served both churches, transferred sixteen members from Cave to Oakley Chapel where they were welcomed with open arms. A smaller number joined churches in Fulton and New Bloomfield.[37]

There went out a Sower

Despite the declining African American population in rural Callaway County, Oakley Chapel AME Church continued to thrive into the 1960s, largely due to the efforts of Rev. Marjorie L. Casson. Four years after the closing of Cedar Grove AME, and only five years after the AME church approved the ordination of women, the enlarged congregation that had seen pastors come and go for seventy five years welcomed the Rev. Marjorie L. Casson to its pulpit. As was the case with her predecessors -- Jarena Lee, who in 1817 had been licensed (but not ordained) to preach by Bishop Richard Allen; Sarah Hughes, who had been ordained sixty-eight years later by Bishop Henry McNeil Turner only to see that action rescinded by conference two years later; and Rebecca M. Glover, who had been ordained in Washington D.C. in 1948 – she did not wait

[35] Though there are no references to the cemetery in the original deed or on the earliest plat maps of Callaway County, it is likely that burials took place on the Oakley Chapel Grounds within months or years of the chapel's construction. Doris J. Handy, *Oakley Chapel A.M.E. Church Cemetery Update* (2007), n.p.

[36] This information is compiled from the *Kansas City Call* clippings from 1940 and 1941 collected in Doris J. Handy, *The Black Communities of South Callaway County, Late 1800s thru Early 1940s*, 78-87.

[37] Handy, *The Black Communities of South Callaway*, 11; "New Bloomfield, Mo.," *Kansas City Call* (6/13/1941).

for ordination to begin preaching.[38]

Having felt called to preach at age fourteen in 1923, Rev. Casson had been speaking in religious meetings and teaching school children for some years before she took up her duties at Oakley Chapel and several sister churches. In an article announcing that she would be preaching at the Sunday service at Gillum Memorial African Methodist Church in Moberly, she was described as an "evangelist from Kansas City" whose sermon was "the beginning of a church loyalty advance or procedure through difficulties" to which "Christians of all religious faiths are welcome." She also appeared in April of the following year as the guest speaker in a special program given by the Women's Society of Christian Service.[39]

By 1948, when Sarah Hughes was ordained in Washington, Marjorie L. Casson was one of four teachers at Lincoln School in Fayette, Missouri. Neither her teaching career nor the fact that she also played the piano for performances by the seven grades in the school at fund raisers for the Lincoln school in Moberly lessened her evangelical fervor. In 1949, "Miss Marjorie Casson and her gospel singers of Brunswick" were performing at Grant Chapel AME Church under the sponsorship of the Sunday School. A year later she was again accompanied by her singers when she appeared as guest speaker at the morning worship service in Chillicothe at Bethel AME Church while the pastor was visiting another church. It was, according to the article, "Woman's Day at Bethel" complete with a mistress of ceremonies. Her next appearance at Bethel marked a sea change to the mainstream albeit still as Miss rather than Rev. Casson:

> Morning worship, 11 a.m.—Miss Marjorie Casson, *the pastor of our church in Fayette, Mo.*, will bring the message, and her group of singers will furnish the music.
> At 3 p.m., under the auspices of the Brotherhood Club, Miss Casson and her group will appear again.
> Don't fail to hear them.[40]

As had historically been the case with local preachers, filling the pulpit was by no means her

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[38] Martha S. Jones, "'Make us a power': African American Methodists debate the 'woman question,' 1870-1900," in *Women and Religion in the African Diaspora: Knowledge, Power, and Performance*, edited by R. Marie Griffith and Barbara Dianne Savage (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 128-54; Jualynne E. Dodson, *Engendering Church: Women, Power, and the A.M.E. Church* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002); Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, 178.

[39] Sheniqua Faulkner, "Life Stories: Rev. Marjorie Louise Casson," *Columbia Missourian* (4/21/2005); untitled articles, *Moberly Monitor* (10/31/1942), 2 and (11/7/1942), 2.

[40] "Fayette Pupils Give Program at Lincoln," *Moberly Monitor* (4/16/1948), 4; "Brunswick Singers at Grant Chapel," *Moberly Monitor* (10/1/1949), 7; "Bethel A.M.E. Church," *Chillicothe Constitution Tribune* (9/9/1950), 2; "Bethel A.M.E. Church," *Chillicothe Constitution Tribune* (3/9/1951), 2 (italics added).

only job. When schools opened in Brunswick in Fall 1952, as Brown v. Board of Education was being re-submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court, Miss Marjorie Casson was one of the two teachers teaching the 49 students in grades 1-8 at Blanche Kelso Bruce School. When school opened a year later she was not only the new pastor at Oakley Chapel AME, charged with raising funds for the planned remodeling and holding services twice a month; she was also a school teacher five days a week in a town more than 120 miles away. There was, however, good news on that front – she and her students would find their classes more comfortable thanks to the new chimney and extensive roof repairs as well as new chairs, textbooks and a flagpole. Finally, she was also a student – at age 44 she became the first African American student at Central Methodist University in Fayette, Missouri.[41]

1954 was a busy year for the Oakley Chapel congregation and for Miss Marjorie Casson, one in which she must have put many miles on her automobile driving back and forth between Oakley Chapel, where remodeling was underway, her classes at Central Methodist and Brunswick where an entire school system was being remodeled. As the 1954 school year began, the school administrators in Brunswick, like those around the country, were attempting to come to terms with the decision delivered by the U.S. Supreme Court on May 17, 1954. The headline just before the beginning of the new school year began innocuously enough: "School Opens This Monday; Substantial Increase in Students Expected," but quickly got to the point:

> No Integration Plans
> … . While the B.K. Bruce School will be continued this year and Negro students taking high school course will attend the state-operated Dalton Vocational School as has been the practice in recent years.[42]

Miss Casson continued to balance her responsibilities to her churches, her college classes and her students at Blanche Kelso Bruce in Brunswick until the beginning of the 1957 school year, when the school board's unanimous decision to close Bruce Elementary and stop bussing high school students to Dalton went into effect. Five years later, integration was still going well; African Americans were on the honor rolls, one was president of Future Homemakers of America and another was a cheerleader. Miss Casson was not, however, among their teachers. When B. K. Bruce closed in 1957, Miss Casson had a B.A. in education from Central Methodist University in hand and had accepted a new position teaching the upper grades at the Lincoln School in the still-segregated Keytesville school district, a move that shortened her commute from school to both home and church by only ten miles, but allowed her to continue to teach

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41 "Nearly 600 Pupils Enroll at Brunswick: Public Schools Show and Increase of 24 Over Last Year's Figures," *Moberly Monitor* (9/5/1952), 11; "Classes Begin On August 31 at Brunswick," *Moberly Monitor* (8/19/1953), 7; Faulkner, "Life Stories: Rev. Marjorie Louise Casson," *Columbia Missourian* (4/21/2005).

42 *Moberly Monitor* (8/27/1954), 2.

students who needed her care as well as her teaching skills.[43]

Rev. Casson continued to preach – and to marry, baptize and bury people -- at Oakley Chapel for 25 years. Under her leadership, the congregation remodeled and rededicated the church in 1954, and constructed a new dining room in 1962. In 1964, the church still boasted 37 members and even the oldest members still helped set out tables for the basket supper on the fourth Sunday in June. The world had nonetheless changed.

When Oakley Chapel was founded African Americans made up over eighteen percent of the population of Callaway county; by the 2000 census that figure had fallen to less than six percent. In 1880, a substantial percent of the more than 4,400 African Americans in the county lived in rural areas; today over seventy-five percent of the 2,300 live in Fulton, which retains several historically black residences and institutions, one of which--George Washington Carver School--is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1999, Gary Kremer and Brett Rogers identified 10 of the county's rural and small town historic African-American resources, all schools or buildings used for educational purposes. Of these, five had been significantly altered, and another was in an advanced state of deterioration. Of the relatively intact buildings, only Oakley Chapel was still in use by descendents of the county's historic African American community. Oakley was also the only identified building located in the southern section of Callaway County. At least one well-preserved house associated with a former member of the church is located less than 1/10 mile northwest of the church building. The surviving buildings are all essential to the story of the African American residents of rural Callaway County, but Oakley Chapel and its cemetery represent the focal point of the black community that once lived and worked near the land set aside in 1878 as a gathering place by and for citizens who had survived slavery.[44]

Today

Oakley Chapel's annual basket supper took place in 2008 on the fourth Sunday of June just as it has for 130 years. Although there are only three active members in the congregation, and services are held monthly, the basket supper was successful effort by the dedicated volunteers. It raised $1,000, which will – as usual – go toward the upkeep of the chapel. More importantly, it drew people from other churches nearby as has always been the custom. And still more people came from St. Louis and other communities at a distance just as they had in the 1940s when the

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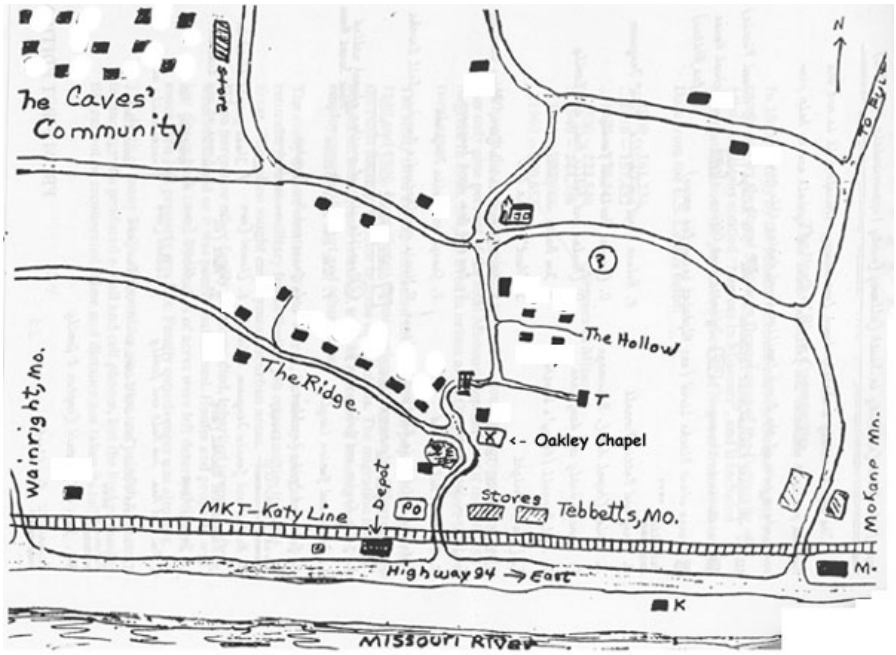
[43] Interviews of Superintendents V.C. Henderson and Huff, *Kansas City Star* (2/7/1968), accessed 6/28/08 at *http://jard.homeip.net/brunswick/history/schools.html;* Faulkner, "Life Stories: Rev. Marjorie Louise Casson," *Columbia Missourian* (4/21/2005).

[44] 2000 census data from *http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en* Gary R. Kremer and Brett Rogers, *African American Schools in Rural and Small Town Missouri: The Missouri River Valley* (William Woods University, June 30, 1999).

Kansas City Call was publishing lists of visitors drawn up by the ladies who served as the paper's eyes and ears. As always, those who came paused by the graves to see whose names they recognized and to ask one another how this one is related to that one.

Although the records are few, there are now at least 80 known burials in the cemetery, approximately 70 of which are marked by tombstones or other types of markers. Most of those buried here were members of the church, or relatives of members, though several former residents of the Cave's community, located approximately 7 miles north of Oakley, were buried in the cemetery after the Cave church and cemetery went into decline in the 1930s and 1940s. As was the case when Oakley Chapel was founded, many of the surnames of those buried in the cemetery are tied closely to the once-large slave population in Callaway County, and are shared by white land owners that once owned large farms in the area. Though most of marked graves are for people born after the end of slavery, many were descendents those enslaved on local farms and plantations. The Oakley Chapel and its associated cemetery, mark one of the few intact African American-related properties in Southern Callaway County. [45]

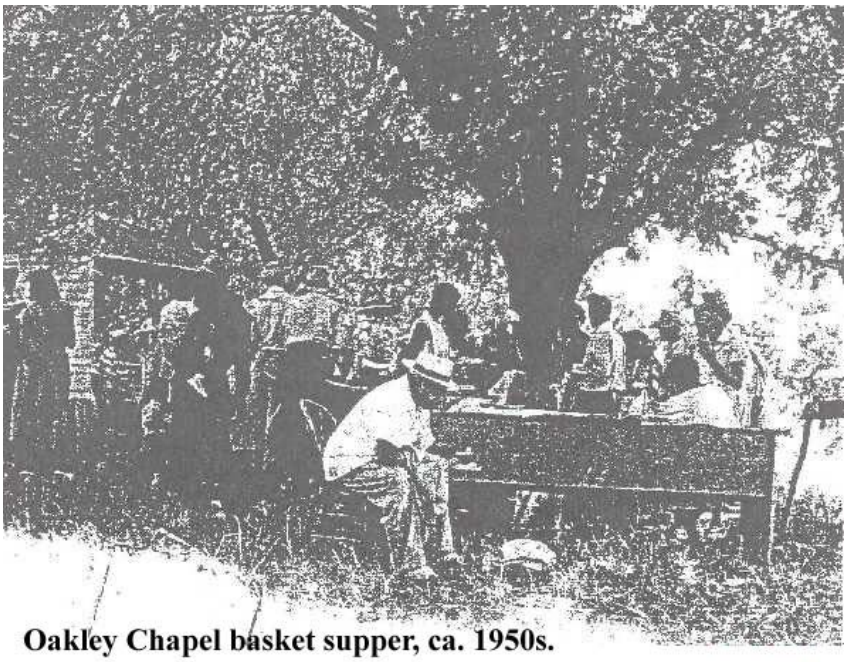
[45] Handy, *Oakley Chapel A.M.E. Church Cemetery Update*, n.p.; interview with Mrs. Handy, 6/23/2008.



Doris J. Handy, sketch map of Black communities, c. 1940.
Map & key: *Black Communities of South Callaway*

Oakley Chapel AME Church Cemetery.
Source: Handy, *Oakley Chapel Cemetery Update.*

Students attending school at Oakley Chapel, c. 1921-22.
Source: Handy, *Oakley Cemetery Update.*



Oakley Chapel basket supper, ca. 1950s.
Source: Handy, *Black Communities of South Callaway.*

William Pannell House, ca. 2007
Source: Handy, *Oakley Cemetery Update.*

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property is located in the political township of Cote Sans Dessein in Callaway County, Missouri and is described by the deed on record at the Callaway County Courthouse as: "Commencing at a point where Pacar ferry Road [CR 485] crosses the North line of the South fractional half of section 32 township forty five range nine running South Sixty yards, thence east Sixty yards, thence North Sixty yards, thence West Sixty yards to the place of beginning."

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundaries included all of the land currently and historically associated with the Oakley Chapel AME Church and cemetery.

Form Prepared by:

Initial submission and research: Doris Handy, 6490 CR 325, Fulton, MO 65251

Additional research, writing and editing: Tiffany Patterson (Section 7) and Kris Zapalac (Section 8), Missouri Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, MO 65109

Photo Log

The following is true for all photographs except those imbedded in Section 8:

Oakley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church
Tebbetts vic., Callaway County, Missouri
Photographer: Roger Maserang, State Historic Preservation Office
Date of photographs: January 7, 2008
Location of Negatives: Missouri State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, MO, 65109

1. North façade and stairs, facing south.
2. North and west elevations with dining hall to the left, facing southeast.
3. South and east elevations with cistern in foreground next to trees, looking northwest.
4. South elevation and cemetery, looking north.
5. Interior, looking south.
6. Interior, looking north.
7. Dining Hall building, west and south elevations, looking northeast.
8. Dining hall interior, looking north.

Oakley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church
Callaway County, Mo
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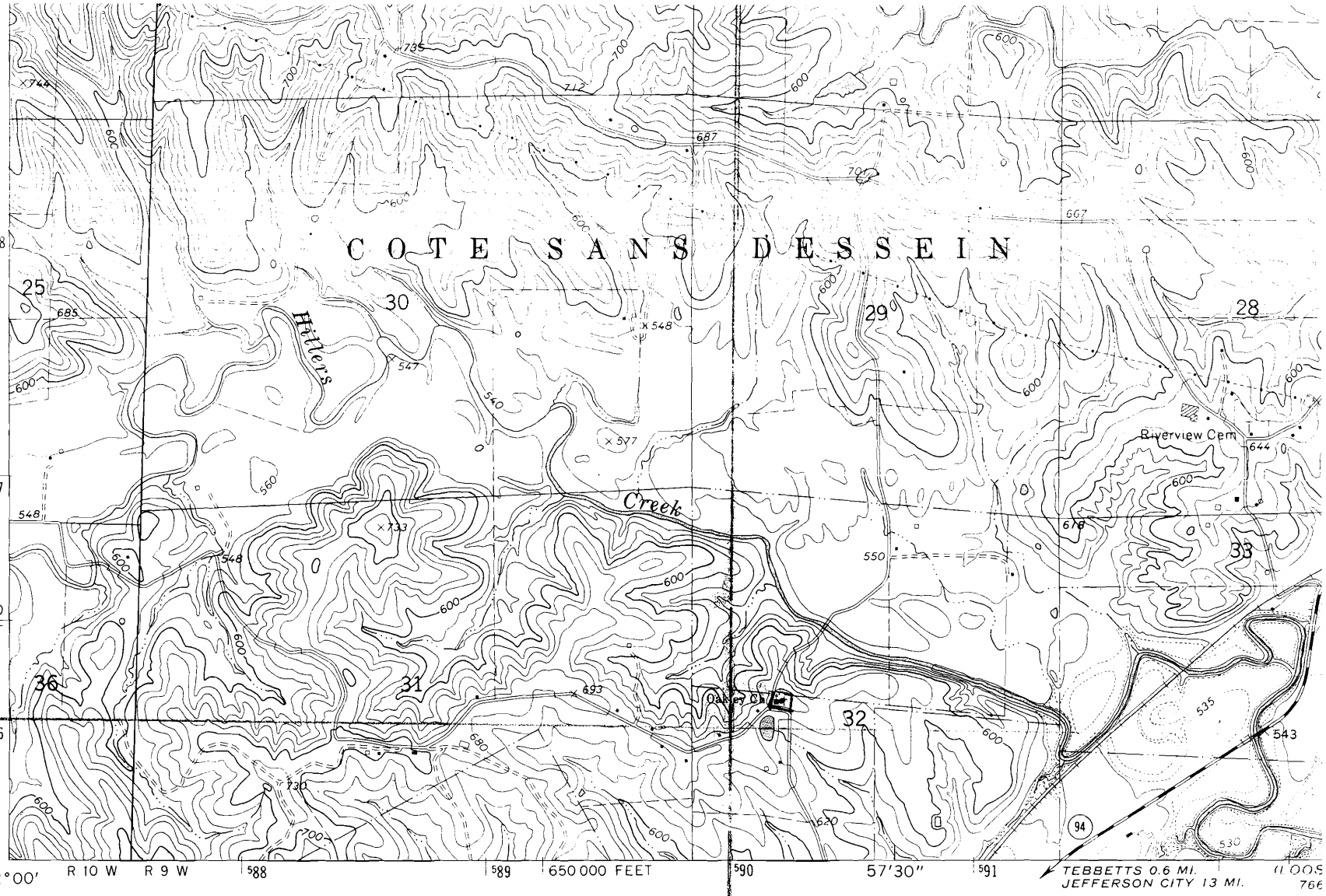

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Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1970. Field checked 1975

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Missouri coordinate system, central zone (transverse Mercator)
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue. 1927 North American datum

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

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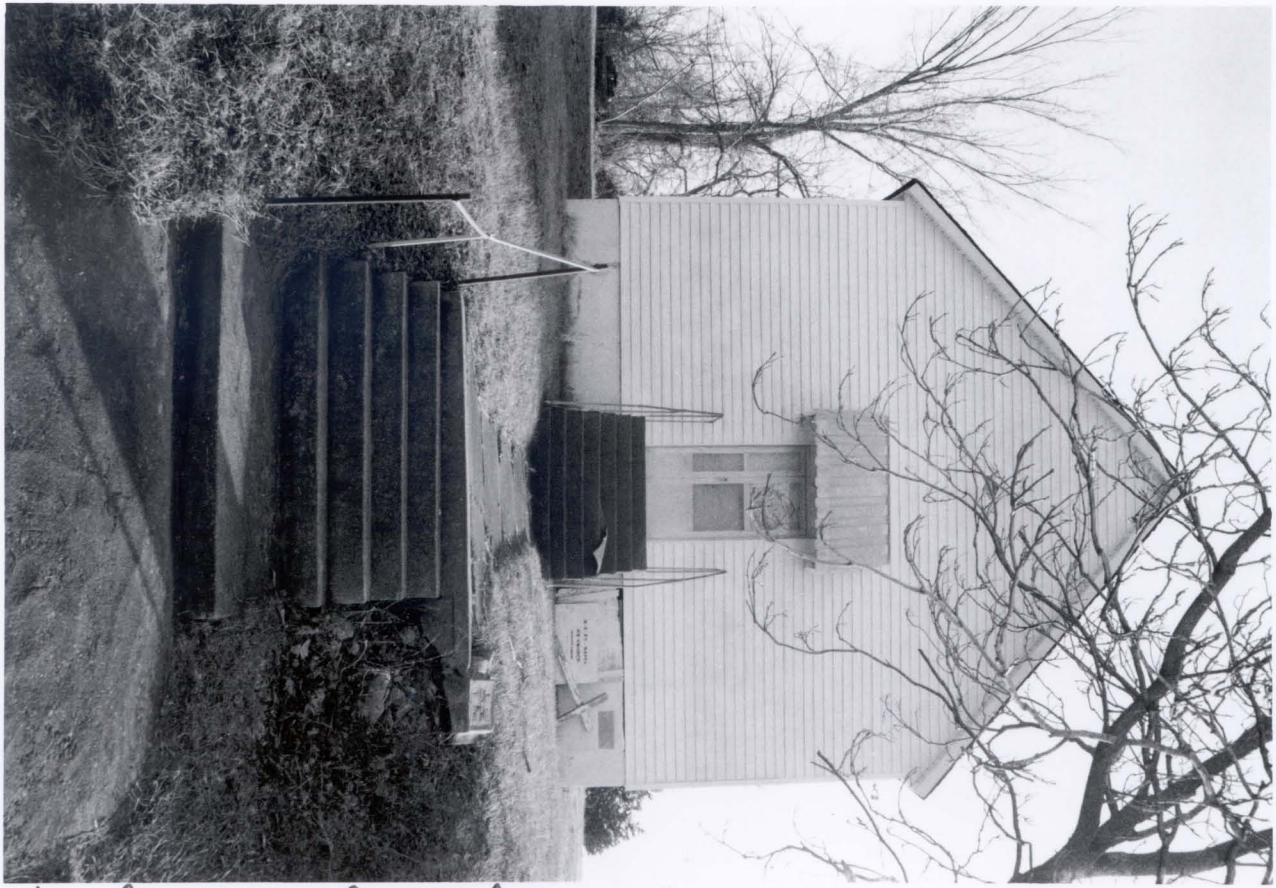

Oakley Chapel AME Church, Callaway County, MO 1

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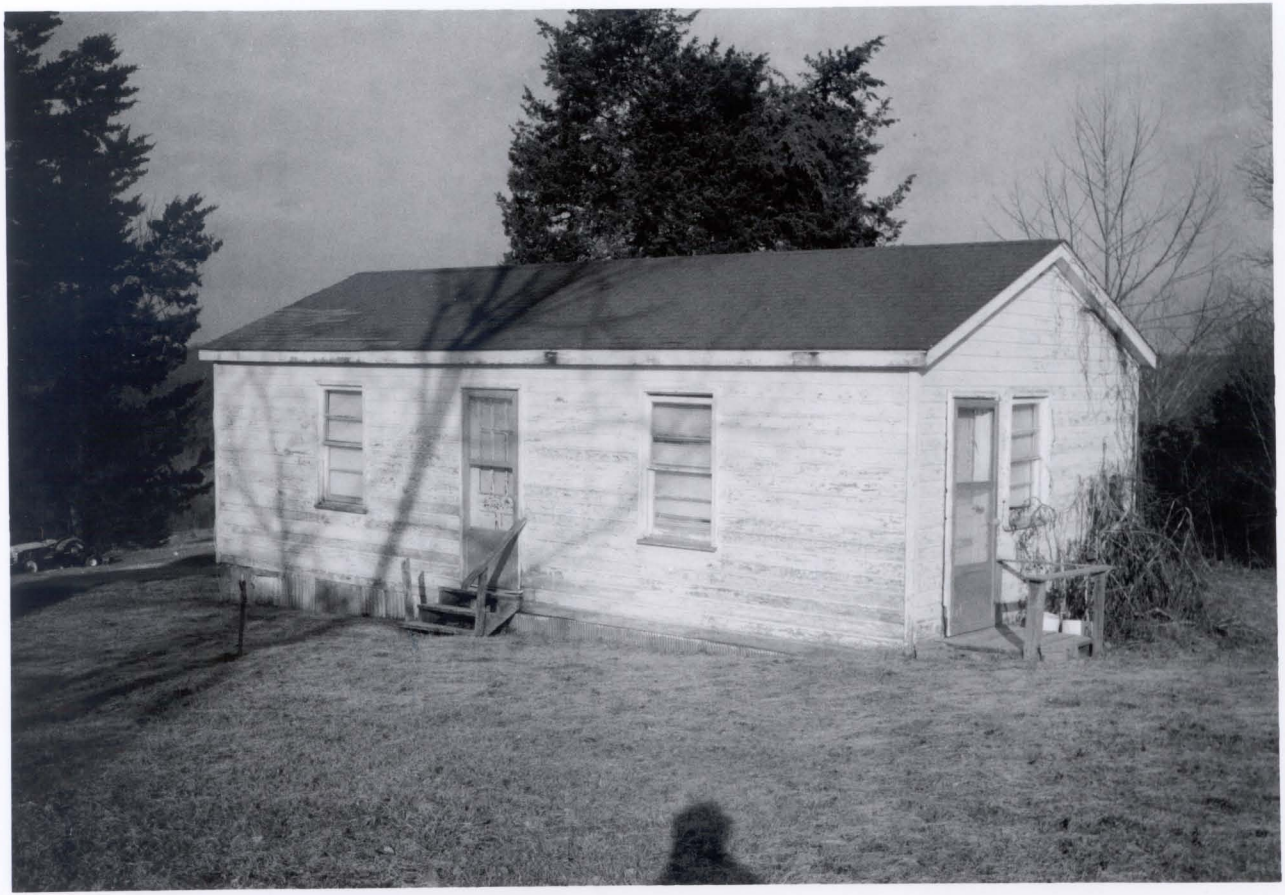
SERVING THE LORD
FOR 121 YEARS