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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

APR 04 1996

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

AHPP

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1. Name of Property

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Historic Name: Bigelow Methodist Episcopal Church, South

Other Name/Site Number: Bigelow Methodist Church / PE 0068

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2. Location

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Street & Number: W. of int. of Volman & Emma Streets

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Bigelow

Vicinity: N/A

State: AR County: Perry Code: AR 105 Zip Code: 72016

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Slater _____ 2-21-96
 Signature of certifying official Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
 State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

 Signature of commenting or other official Date

 State or Federal agency and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- _____ entered in the National Register _____
 _____ See continuation sheet.
- _____ determined eligible for the _____
 National Register _____
 _____ See continuation sheet.
- _____ determined not eligible for the _____
 National Register _____
- _____ removed from the National Register _____
- _____ other (explain): _____

 Signature of Keeper Date
 of Action

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6. Function or Use
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Historic: Religion Sub: Religious Facility

Current : Religion Sub: Religious Facility

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

Other: Plain Traditional

Materials: foundation Stone roof Asphalt
walls Weatherboard other

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

Summary

Constructed c. 1908, the Bigelow Methodist Episcopal Church, South is a single-story frame structure covered by a gable roof with a belfry.

Elaboration

Constructed c. 1908 on Volman Street, the Bigelow Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Bigelow Methodist Church) is a single-story frame structure resting upon a continuous fieldstone foundation. The walls are clad with white-painted, false bevel novelty siding, and the end gable roof is sheathed with composition shingles. There are no extant chimneys.

The front, or southeastern, elevation is symmetrical in composition and features central projecting bay with a double-leaf entrance. This bay is capped below the end gable roofline with a bellcast hipped roof that serves as the base for the belfry. The belfry extends only a couple of feet above the main roof and is covered by a shallow-pitched, end-gabled belfry. Both this roof and the main roof contain exposed rafter tails. The three eaves of the bellcast roof are closed, however, and trimmed with a wide frieze and architrave. A single-pane stationary window is placed above the double-leaf entrance, which has been retrofitted with modern, single-panel doors. A rectangular louvered wood vent is positioned in the center of the belfry on this elevation. The front elevation is further fenestrated by a pair of two-over-two, double-hung wood windows on either side of the central entrance bay.

Both side elevations feature five identical two-over-two windows arranged singularly. The only deviation in the two sides is a single-leaf, two-panelled wood door located between the fourth and fifth windows (to the rear) on the southwestern elevation.

At the rear of the building is a gabled-roof Sunday school room that was constructed on a stone pier foundation at the same time as the sanctuary. This room is flush with the southwestern side elevation of the sanctuary, but does not extend flush with the northeastern side elevation. The Sunday school room is fenestrated on both side elevations by three two-over-two windows on both side elevations and a solitary two-over-two window in the center of the rear elevation. These original wood windows duplicate those of the sanctuary. Originally, this room was separated from the main block by an open hallway. This hall was enclosed at some point and a single-leaf door placed on the southwestern elevation. The rear, or northwestern, elevation of the church is completed by a single two-over-two window at the rear of the sanctuary just east of the Sunday school room.

The interior of the church is modestly composed. Original features include the raised rostrum at the rear of the sanctuary, the original double-leaf, four-panelled wood doors leading into the vestibule, double-beaded board wainscoting that extends unusually high around the entire sanctuary, and equally distinctive diagonal wood flooring that connects in the center of the aisle. Noticeable alterations include the slightly lowered trey ceiling and the addition of pressed board trimmed with battens over interior walls above the wainscoting.

There are no outbuildings associated with the Bigelow Methodist Church.

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8. Statement of Significance
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A

Areas of Significance: Exploration/Settlement
Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1908 - 1920

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

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

Summary

The Bigelow Methodist Episcopal Church, South is being nominated under Criterion A with local significance for its association with the lumber mill boom era of Bigelow. Under Criterion C, the church is also locally significant for its relatively unaltered appearance that conveys firsthand the Plain Traditional-style religious architecture being constructed in small towns in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Elaboration

The town of Bigelow owes its origins to Gustave Carl Fredrick Wilhelm Klingelhoffer, who arrived in Little Rock with a colony of immigrants in 1833. Klingelhoffer and other members of the group scouted the Arkansas River Valley for three years before choosing land along the Fourche La Pave River. Klingelhoffer settled about two miles west of present-day Perryville and operated a ferry across the river at that site for about twenty years. In 1856, he moved downstream to a small mountain overlooking the river. Soon, a small settlement named Esau was established around Klingelhoffer's residence. A post office was established in 1880, and during this decade a

cotton mill and a shingle mill were in operation at Esau under the ownership of John M. Crist, who married Klingelhoffer's youngest daughter, Josephine.

By 1900, the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad (later Chicago, Rock Island, & Pacific) had extended its line to the south of Esau, and Prichard Niemeyer started operation of a small independent saw mill on the banks of the Fourche La Fave River. In the middle months of 1900, the Bryant Lumber Company opened and employed 175 people. Two years later, the Fourche River Lumber Company, the "giant of the lumber industry in Perry County," opened, and a serious economic boom was initiated. A company town was constructed from the edge of the river to within a quarter mile of the railroad, a distance of two miles. This town was soon known as "Graytown" since every company owned building and residence was indeed painted gray. Within Graytown was a large commissary, office building, and a fifty-three bed hotel.

Coinciding with this development was the demise of the original settlement of Esau. As the citizenry of Esau abandoned the old town for land nearer the railroad, a new community, which was also known as Esau, was established. In 1903, the Fourche River Lumber Company connected "new" Esau and Graytown with board sidewalks. In spite of their proximity, the two villages remained separate entities until 1905 when a group of thirty people petitioned Perry County to incorporate as the city of Esau.

At the height of the boom in 1910, the residents of Esau could boast their own local newspaper, "The Citizen's Press" and a telephone exchange. The town contained, among others, a hardware store, a jewelry store, a drug store, barber shop, two dry cleaning establishments, three general stores, an ice house, a baker, and a butcher shop. Other institutions were the State Bank, four hotels, and Patterson Hall, which was used for dances, balls, fraternity orders, parties, and other public functions. The population of Esau at this time was estimated at 10,000 people, and it was claimed to be the largest city between Little Rock and Fort Smith. While this figure is undoubtedly exaggerated (the 1920 census reveals a population of only 589), it is known that the numbers of workers employed by the lumber industry during the boom dramatically augmented the population of the original settlement.

In 1911, the citizens of Esau requested permission of the State's General Assembly to change their town's name to Bigelow in honor of N. P. Bigelow, the second president of the Fourche River Lumber Company. As the lumber industry continued to fuel Bigelow's growth, many citizens believed the county court should be relocated from Perryville to Bigelow. A county election was held in 1915 with Bigelow receiving twelve more votes than Perryville. The election was contested, however, and Perryville retained the county seat. By 1920, the lumber industry boom had nearly expired as most of the timber had been cut over, and in the following year the Fourche River Lumber Company closed. Hundreds of families left Bigelow in search of work, and many businesses failed. The boom era was over.

The Bigelow Methodist Episcopal Church, South was constructed c. 1908 during the boom years of the town on land donated by J. G. Smitherton in 1906. Little is known about the individual history of the church congregation other than the Methodist Church has continually held services in the building. Now known simply as the Bigelow Methodist Church, it is one of the few remaining structures in Bigelow from the boomtown era. As such, the church is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the early history and

economic zenith of Esau/Bigelow. Under Criterion C, the Bigelow Methodist Episcopal Church, South is also locally significant for its relatively unaltered appearance that conveys firsthand the Plain Traditional-style religious architecture being constructed in small towns in the first decade of the twentieth century.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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Information submitted by Bonnie Frey, July 1995.

"Living the Times . . . 1776-1976 A Bicentennial Tribute to Perry County."
Compiled by Heritage Committee Members. "Bigelow": pp. 40-47.

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:

- X State historic preservation office
_ Other state agency
_ Federal agency
_ Local government
_ University
_ Other -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A 15 533740 3872820 B
C D

Verbal Boundary Description:

Lots 10 and 11, Block 11 of the Town of Esau (Bigelow).

Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

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11. Form Prepared By
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Name/Title: Patrick Zollner, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: February 15, 1996

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201



Bigelow, Martindale, Ep. ...

Perry Co., Arkansas

UTM: 15/533740/3872820

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