

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
North of Cahaba, Alabama
Marion Sta. (to be moved to Marion)
Dallas Co.

ALA
HABS No. ~~18~~-734

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer
Ala. Polytechnic Inst., Auburn, Ala.

Project #^{ALA}ES-734
SAINT LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Martin's Station, Dallas County, Ala.

HISTORICAL DATA:

Built in 1854.

Architect: Richard Upjohn of New York.

Contractors: Davis Gunning, contractor.
A Mr. Likin, assistant.

Cost: \$5,000.

Ownership:

This church was originally erected at Cahaba, Alabama, by the Diocese of Alabama of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

About 1900, it seems to have come under the ownership of the Martin Estate, at Martin's Station, Dallas County, Alabama. A few years ago, the Martin Estate allowed their colored folks to use the church if they would put tin over the old roof.

Today, 1934, this church has again come under the ownership of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The building is to be moved to Marion, Alabama, where it is to be restored in connection with the present building of the Episcopal Church.

Cahaba:

Cahaba was, at one time, 1820 to 1826, the capital of Alabama. After the State Government was transferred to Tuscaloosa, on account of floods at Cahaba, the town struggled on until the Civil War. After the war, Cahaba gradually became abandoned. Today it is one of the dead towns of Alabama.

The celebrated New York architect, Richard Upjohn, built Saint Luke's Church at Cahaba in 1854.

While Cahaba had an Episcopal congregation as early as 1822, the services were then held in

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the homes of communicants or in the courthouse. The earliest official record of an Episcopal visitation was on May 15, 1852, when Bishop Nicholas Hamner Cobbs preached in Cahaba.

In 1853, one year before the church itself was erected, a rectory was built, and the Rev. J. M. Mitchell, Bishop Cobb's son-in-law, became the first resident minister.

Growth began at once and the parish prospered, but when the stir of war was calmed, the entire white population had emigrated and Cahaba and its church were given over to the bats and owls.

Martin's Station:

The second home of this building was at Martin's Station. In 1878, upon the request of about 20 Episcopalians living here, Bishop Wilmer allowed the church to be moved from Cahaba.

In 1893 John G. Murray, who was later to become presiding bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, undertook to minister as lay reader to seven of the so-called Alabama River missions, among which was Martin's Station. His services ended when he moved to Birmingham in 1896 as rector of the Church of the Advent.

Once more the church fell asleep and once more bats and owls invaded the building and roosted on the pews and rafters.

Occupied by Negroes:

A few years ago the Martin Estate allowed their colored folks to use the church provided they put tin over the old roof.

Marion, Alabama:

Today, the Marion congregation has completed final plans for its third home. It is to be removed to Marion, there to be erected as part of the present church.

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ARCHITECTURAL MERIT AND DATA:

The following is taken from the Dallas Gazette of March 31, 1854:

"The church is a pure specimen of the early English, or lancet style of architecture, and was built after designs by Upjohn, the celebrated architect, and published in his work upon rural churches. It consists of a nave, chancel and tower, the latter being upon the northwest corner. In situation, it is orientated, with the chancel, after the custom of the primitive churches, in the East. Its external walls are of upright plank battened, and upon the corners, and opposite each main arch, are supported by buttresses which are divided into stages and capped.

"The extreme length of nave and chancel is 78 feet. The extreme width from outside of buttress to outside, is 30 feet. The nave, or body of the church inside, is 58 feet by 22 feet, the side walls being 23 inches thick.

"There are six main truss arches, dividing the nave into five bays, starting about eight feet from the floor, and meeting at collar beams, about six feet from the ridge pole. The height of the walls is 17 feet. Resting upon them are rafters 26 feet long, making the whole height, from the floor to the ridge pole, 38 feet. The ceiling of the roof, which is heart pine, varnished to show the natural grain, is divided into three equal compartments by wall plate purloins and ridge pole. The plumb wall is of white plaster, hard finished, and the arches are grained to resemble oak, as are also the pulpit, reading desk, chancel rail and pews.

"The tower is carried up three stories, and is surrounded by an exceedingly graceful spire, making a height of 90 feet from the ground which deservedly attracts the admiration of all. Through it is the entrance to a gallery for servants extending across the west end or front of the church.

"The pews, 34 in number, without doors or divisions are 9-1/2 feet in length, and what we rarely find are sufficiently wide to allow the congregation to kneel comfortably. They are entered from a noble aisle,

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six feet in width, which runs the entire length of the church.

"Upon the right, at the chancel end of the nave, is a transept, 14 feet by 16 feet, with a separate entrance but communicating with the church which is occupied by the choir, and in which stands a Harmonium, an instrument, in the fullness and richness of its tones, resembling an organ. It was made in Paris. The chancel is 18 feet deep by 16 feet wide, and is ascended by two steps. The reading desk stands upon the right at the foot of the chancel arch. On the opposite side, just without the arch, is an octangular pulpit, raised two steps above the chancel floor. At the entrance of the chancel stands a massive font of freestone. At the east end of the chancel is the sacrarium, raised one step and railed off, in which is a plain white altar, whose only ornament is a quatrefoil and a bishop's chair of solid oak, much admired for its antique design, upon which is carved a mitre and cross. The ceiling is divided in the same way as that of the nave, and is supported by similar arches, except that they are pierced trefoil.

"The sacristy or vestry room, opening out of the chancel, is 10 feet by 12 feet. The windows of lancet form, are of plain enameled glass, set in metallic sash. The side windows, which are doublets, have richly figured borders. The chancel windows, large triplet, is of great beauty, and is universally admired, with its figured quarries and highly ornamented borders. In the center window is a dove, a wreathed cross and the monogram of Christ, I. H. S. The wide lights contain a lamb bearing a cross, a pelican feeding her young with the current of her own life, a font and chalice to symbolize the two sacraments. In the eastern gable of the nave, above the chancel arch is a beautiful circular window containing a monogram of the blessed trinity. The remaining windows are plain, with colored borders.

"The church is elevated upon a brick foundation of some five feet, far above all danger of freshet, even at its highest. The front of the church shows a width of 39 feet, including the tower, and is relieved by two windows opening into the gallery. A graceful stoop, or porch, protects the main entrance, which is in the center of the church."

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Building Committee for the Original Building: 1854.

Rev. J. M. Mitchell, rector in charge, Cahaba.
 R. M. Perine, of Cahaba.
 William Hunter, of Cahaba.

Committee that Moved Church to Martin's Station, 1878:

A. J. Martin, Martin's Station.
 J. F. Milhous, Martin's Station.
 Phil Milhous, Martin's Station.
 Walter Milhous, Martin's Station.
 Dr. R. M. Cochran, Martin's Station.
 John Dortch, Martin's Station.
 Charles Hunter, Martin's Station.

Committee to Move Church to Marion, Alabama, 1934.

Rev. S. H. Livingston, rector in charge at Marion.
 Rev. Charles Clingman, of Birmingham.
 Mr. A. W. Stewart of Marion.
 Major L. H. Baer of Marion.
 Mr. J. B. Clock of Marion.
 Mr. Algernon Blair of Montgomery.
 Mr. Weatherly Carter of Montgomery.

Source of Material:

Rev. S. H. Livingston, Saint Luke's Church, Cahaba,
 published in the Alabama Churchman for May 1931.

Peter Brannon, Curator of the Department of Archi-
 ves and History of the State of Alabama, Montgomery.

Fry's Cahaba, and Whitaker's History of the Church
 in Alabama.

Revised 1936, H. C. F.