

Christ Episcopal Church and Parish House
302 W. Third Street (cor. Third and Holly Sts.)
South Pittsburg
Marion County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-45

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PARISH HOUSE

HABS No. TN-45

Location: 302 West Third Street (corner of Third and Holly), South
Pittsburg, Marion County, Tennessee

Present Owner
and Occupant: Christ Church Vestry, Reverend Jack Wilson, Christ
Episcopal Church, South Pittsburg, Tennessee

Present Use: church

Significance: Christ Episcopal Church and Parish House built in 1882-84
and 1888 respectively are notable examples of Victorian
Gothic country church architecture. The parishioners, of
British and northern United States origins, were the
founders of this rural industrial community. Christ Church
illustrates the tastes and social and religious
orientations uncommon to this area before the industrial
exploitation of this mountainous region in the
post-reconstruction years. The church is notable for its
entirely wooden construction and decor, hand-carved altar
and baptismal font, and stained glass windows.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of construction: church 1882-84; tower and rectory 1888;
school (parish house) c. 1889
2. Architect: Bishop Charles Todd Quintard, D.D., L.L.D., Bishop
of Tennessee, contributed the concept for the design.
3. Original and subsequent owners: legal description - Lots 9 and
10, Block 22, City of South Pittsburg, Marion County, Tennessee,
plat book L, p. 746, 1879 plat.

The following is an incomplete chain of title. After 1875, the
entire town was bought from various owners by Southern States
Coal, Iron and Land Company, Ltd. (chartered London, England).
James Bowron was in charge.

1880 - Three lots of land at corner of Fourth and Pease (Holly)
were donated to the church by the company, no deed.

1882 - Lots exchanged for present site, no deed.

4. Builders, contractors, and supplier: Joseph Lodge and A. Craven - superintendents of construction; Mr. Maveae - in charge of stone foundation; Fr. Oertel of Sewanee, Tennessee and New York - woodcarver for altar; Mr. Harvey - supplied wood for the building.
5. Original plans and construction: The following are excerpts of letters from Bishop Charles Todd Quintard to Joseph Lodge of Christ Church concerning church design.

November 4, 1882 - "...I sincerely hope that when you do put up a church - be it costly or otherwise you will have a graceful and churchly building - you can build gracefully of emplaned weather boarding. Have a good, deep, recessed channel - let your building be, at least, twice as long as it is wide - give your roof a steep pitch, etc."

November 15, 1882 - "You are doing well. Only go on and do better still. In the words of the apostle "abound more and more." Don't think of a bell. That will come. Use all the money you can get in putting up the church building. When you build be sure and have a good chancel. I mean one of good proportions. I heartily rejoice in the good work you have done. Be sure I will do all in my power to help."

6. Alterations and additions:

1888 - tower and rectory completed; school room (parish house) added in 1888 or 1889;

October 21, 1891 - organ installed; given by Mrs. Isabel H. Peters;

1892 - altar cross added;

May 8, 1893 - vestry minutes note that \$60.00 was paid to paint the church..."the colors were decided upon - a sort of grey for the body of the church and a deep brown for trimming;"

1894 - Marcell window added;

1915 - Hughes window, Tiffany Studios, New York, added;

Fall 1929 - new roof added (from Sears Roebuck Company - \$192.00); chimney repaired (Ned Marberry - \$40.00); addition to kitchen and parish house, cement, iron, paint, nails (Penn Dixie Corporation - \$57.00); lumber (Duffy Lumber Company - \$318.00); blocks laid (Samuel Brown - \$25.00).

c. 1929 - Bright window added;

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PARISH HOUSE
HABS No. TN-45 (Page 3)

June 7, 1930 - two coats of paint applied to exterior.

c. 1930 - fence removed with passage of no stock law; pipe organ (procured by subscription) built by M.P. Moeller, Hagerstown, Maryland;

1938 - Raulston window added (from Westminster Memorial Studios, New York);

1940 - Downing window added (from Westminster Memorial Studios, New York);

1960 - completed link between parish house and church (Bennett Brothers, South Pittsburg, builders);

April, 1961 - new rectory completed (received Gold Medallion for electrical excellence);

1963 - Hall window (in vestibule) added (from J. Whipple and Company, Ltd., Exeter, Great Britain);

1965 - reredos added (from J. Whipple, Exeter, Great Britain).

B. Historical Context: Some of the primary people involved in the building of Christ Church were the following:

Bishop Charles Todd Quintard, D.D., L.L.D. - author, Bishop of Tennessee, Chancellor of the University of the South;

Joseph Lodge - prime mover in the industrial development of South Pittsburg;

Reverend Joseph Hayton Blacklock - first rector of Christ Church and contributor to the growth and development of the Episcopal Church in east Tennessee.

The events and development at South Pittsburg provide background for not only the erection of a small country church but the initial and continued impact of wealthy and educated Englishmen, industrialism, and exploitation of the southern economy. The influence of these events is similarly illustrated in the growth and development of Birmingham, Alabama and the vast forest land ownership of Bowaters Corporation.

The lands along the Tennessee River nestled under the ridges of the Cumberland Plateau were occupied by small-scale, primarily self-sufficient farmers until the years of Civil War reconstruction. After the collapse of the southern economy and the increasing speed of industrialization and railroad mileage expansion, the untapped mineral and forest resources of the Cumberland Plateau attracted the

attention and investment of many capitalists from the east coast and abroad, especially Great Britain.

By 1870, Battle Creek Coal and Iron Company owned much of the plateau lands and they initiated vast mining operations. Locations for collection tips and bins as well as company offices were sought.

The site of South Pittsburg was selected on account of the nearby iron and coal fields and the river access. In 1870, James Bowron from England began construction of an iron furnace here and he attracted many of his friends and business associates to invest. By 1873 a syndicate was formed with Bowron as the local agent. Plans were set forth that same year to expand the budding village into a great iron and industrial city like the Pennsylvania city for which it was named. Soon the syndicate converted into a corporation chartered in London as the Southern States Coal, Iron, and Land Company, Ltd. It has also been called "the old English Company."

Prepared by: Joseph L. Herndon
Team Historian
HABS
September 1974

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This church and its adjacent parish house are among the few frame Gothic Revival buildings in the State of Tennessee. This group and a similar group at Rugby, Tennessee together exemplify the imaginative understanding of high style design associated with the Episcopal church in east Tennessee in the Victorian era.
2. Condition of fabric: The structure has been well maintained and is in excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The church and parish house, parallel structures, are joined by a classroom/office wing to create a U-shaped plan. The church is a three-bay, 27 feet wide building that is 57 feet long. A 15 x 16 feet sacristy juts out from the southeast facade of the nave, 33 feet from the front facade. The parish house, also a three-bay structure, is 21 x 54 feet, and is connected to the church by a classroom/office addition. The addition is 33 x 15 feet, and is set back 21 feet from the

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PARISH HOUSE
HABS No. TN-45 (Page 5)

facade of the parish house and 27 feet from the facade of the church. The entire complex is a single story in height.

2. Foundations: Common bond brick, stuccoed on the front and sides.
3. Walls: Horizontal clapboarding provides the majority of the wall surface, with vertical flushboarding below, in an exterior wainscoting beneath the window sill level. Flared baseboards at the bottom edge of the walls deflect water from the foundation. The gables are separated from the wall area below by pent eaves, the former of vertical board and chamfered batten finish. All the wall surfaces and the trim are painted white.
4. Structural system: Wood-frame construction is used throughout the complex.
5. Porches: The small, single-gabled porch in front of the bell tower in the center of the facade of the church seems to have provided the model for the two identical porches in front of the parish house and the office/classroom wing. Jigsaw cutout verge boards with a dropped pendant under the eaves are supported by two square columns in front, and two matching pilasters on the face of the building behind. A three-sided staircase of glazed brick in three-tiers in front of each entrance provides access to the interior. Also, there are two brick steps in front of the sacristy entrance, and the same in front of the rear door to the classroom/office wing.
6. Chimneys: There are two chimneys, the oldest of which rises above the south slope of the sacristy roof. The newer one is found above the north slope of the connecting wing.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The front doorway of the church is composed of double doors, with a pointed arch transom. The sacristy entrance is also pointed, with but a single door, while that of the parish house is square-headed, as are those of the classroom/office wing. The doors of the church are the most notable exterior feature: they are panelled with trefoil and quatrefoil patterns.
 - b. Windows: Wooden double-hung windows with single pane sash are used on all the facades. The windows of the church and the parish house are lancet-shaped, and those of the classroom/office wing are rectangular. Lancet-shaped louvers are used in the second story of the bell tower, and circular vents are employed in the gable ends of the church and the parish house.

8. Roof: The intersecting gable roofs are covered with dark green asphalt shingle roofing. The eaves are slightly flaired and rest on simple, curved, cutout wooden brackets.
9. Bell tower: This distinctive feature of the church facade is two stories high with an open belfry above, capped by a steep, flaired pyramidal roof. The belfry has a balustrade of vase-shaped cut-out slats.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The entrance to the church is in its center bay, at the base of the bell tower. A small narthex opens into the nave where twenty pews, ten on each side, are placed between three aisles, the largest of which is in the center, with the others along the walls. A communion rail separates the nave from the sanctuary, where access to the sacristy is gained by a single door to the right. In the center, two long steps provide elevation to the level of the platform on which rests the altar. To the left is the organ, a small choir box, and a single door leading to the classroom/office wing.

The outside entrance to the adjoining wing is also in its center bay, opening into a short hallway which turns right to give access to the church (through the just-previously mentioned doorway). The righthand (eastern) half of this wing is devoted to three offices and two restrooms astride this corridor, while the lefthand (western) half of the wing is devoted to a single classroom.

This in turn is connected by a doorway to the parish house, now used as a parish hall, which is also accessible from the exterior through its center bay front entrance. At the northernmost end of the parish hall (the end opposite the entrance) there is a two-step, raised platform and two doors, one near each corner, leading to a classroom on the left, and a serving kitchen on the right.

2. Flooring: Narrow varnished hardwood flooring is found throughout the church and the parish hall. Linoleum tile is used elsewhere, except in the offices, which are carpeted.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: The church walls have a wooden vertical wainscoting up to the window sill level with diagonal hardwood strips in a chevron pattern above. The walls of the parish house are of plaster, above and below the chairrail, and those of the office/classroom wing are of plasterboard. All are painted white.

4. Doorways and doors: Gothic arched, panelled, solid wooden doors, with heavy, molded trim in dark varnish are used on the interior the church. In the parish house, rectangular doorways with molded architrave trim and six panel (double tier arrangement) doors are used; elsewhere recent hollow core doors and simple trim are employed.
 5. Decorative features and trim: Both the altar and the baptismal font are elaborately carved. The latter in particular, an octagonal font of wood, surmounted by a cross, is supported by four miniature composite columns on which rest two intersecting trefoil Gothic arches.
 6. Hardware: Cast hinges, doorhandle plates and stamped doorknobs decorated in the Eastlake manner are found in various locations in the church.
 7. Mechanical equipment: Small gas heaters are used in the sacristy and in the main office. Incandescent bulbs are used in the parish house and its adjacent classroom, although fluorescent tube fixtures are used in the offices. Early twentieth century incandescent fixtures are used in the church, supplemented by incandescent spotlighting of the altar. The plumbing fixtures are all of recent installation.
- D. Site and surroundings:
1. General setting and orientation: The church, its parish house and their connecting additions all face south 30 degrees west, on a corner lot at the edge of a residential neighborhood.
 2. Historic landscape design: The setting for the church has remained essentially unchanged, with the exception of additional trees and plantings.

Prepared by: Michael A. Tomlan
Supervisory Architect
1974 East Tennessee HABS Project
August 1974

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Primary and unpublished sources:

"Christ Church Episcopal," a paper by John Kellerman - church records, rectory.

Christ Episcopal Church parish Register Volumes I-III.

"A Compendium of Local Biography," 1898, no author - church records, rectory.

Marion County Deed Books, Marion County, Courthouse, Jasper, Tennessee.

Minutes of Brotherhood of St. Andrew No. 623 - church records, rectory.

Minutes Chapter 61 Daughters of the King - church records, rectory.

Minutes of Men's Service Club Christ Church - church records, rectory.

"Uncle Leslie's notes on early Christ Church" - church records, rectory.

B. Secondary and published sources:

Kelly, Martelia Cameron. A History of South Pittsburg, Tennessee, the First One Hundred Years. (South Pittsburg, Tennessee: Hustler Printing Company, Inc.) 1973.

Lodge, Mrs. R.L.. Interview. 500 Magnolia Avenue, South Pittsburg. Daughter-in-law of Joseph Lodge (a church founder), member of church and holder of letters from Bishop Quintard to Joseph Lodge. 1974.

Pig Iron Rough Notes. Biography of Joseph Lodge. January 1927.

Wilson, W. Jackson. "A Parish Priest on a Medical Team: One Model for Ministry in a Mountain Town." St. Luke's Journal. Volume XVII, No. 3, June 1974, p. 79.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief, in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the East Tennessee Historical Society. It was completed during the summer of 1974. Holly K. Chamberlain, HABS historian, edited and transmitted the documentation to the Library of Congress in January, 1988.