

"Chapel of the Cross," Mansdale, Mississippi
Madison Co.

HABS No. 17 - 3
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Miss.
45-MAND,
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 17

Historic American Buildings Survey
A. Hays Town, District Officer
Standard Life Building
Jackson, Mississippi

HABS
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CHAPEL OF THE CROSS
Near Madison, Madison County
Mississippi

Owner: Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi.

Date of Erection: 1849. Completed 1851.

Architect: Wills, and Englishman.

Builder: No record.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: One.

Materials of Construction: Brick.

Other Existing Records: See text.

Additional Data: See following pages.

C H A P E L O F T H E C R O S S

Near Madison in Madison County Mississippi

Erection of the Chapel of the Cross was begun on "Annandale" plantation in 1848 by Mrs. Margaret Johnstone, in memory of her husband, John T. Johnstone, who died the year before; and was buried in the family cemetery lot, which adjoins the rear line of the Chapel.

.Plans for the Chapel were drawn in ^{NEW YORK} England by an architect named ^{FRANK} Wills. The construction, which lasted until 1851, was supervised by an Associated Architectural firm from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, one member of which remained on the job until its completion.

.The Chapel and ten acres of land were given to the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi in 1853.

.Many of the South's prominent statesmen visited "Annandale" and "Ingleside," and worshipped in the Chapel; some of the South's leaders are buried in its grave yard.

Compiled from
Journals of the Episcopal Diocese
of Mississippi
and
Mrs. Thompson, descendant of
J. T. Johnstone

C H A P E L O F T H E C R O S S

Near Madison in Madison County Mississippi

The old plantation Chapel lays little claim for historical importance, its chief interest comes from its architectural merit and quaint picturesqueness. The charm of graceful architecture in harmony with natural surroundings creates an unusually picturesque scene from the grave yard. The little Gothic gem appears to have grown out of the ground. The red brown clay bricks, burned on the site by slaves of "Engleside" and "Ammandale" are mellowed with age and softly complement the damp green moss of the old wood shingle roof. Adding to this rustic effect is a rugged cast-iron fence, of a design of oak branches and leaves intertwined with rose vines.

.Even with this impression of antiquity and obsolescence one does not lose sight of the splendid architectural design and perfection of detail. The principal elevation is a built-up mass of stepped buttresses appearing to retain the steep roofs thrust. The center of the wall, starting with two buttressed pilasters, extends its full wall thickness through the ridge and terminates in a parapet with a steep pitched shingle roof under which is an arched Gothic opening, at one time housing the bell. The wrought-iron bell rod is still through the opening at its spring line. Five large circular wrought iron tie rods heads following the roof pitch lend further interest.

.The right side is the entrance elevation. Here the brick wall is low and is pierced by narrow slit pointed arch windows, flanked by heavy stepped buttresses with caps of one piece moulded brick. Between the buttresses is a cornice band of brick dentils, and underneath the steep wash of the window sills is a base band of projecting moulded brick.

In the second bay near the front is the entrance, a Gothic arched deep recessed cypress double door entering the vestibule. The vestibule is covered by a steep pitched roof, the eaves of which are very low, almost touching the ground, and the ridge breaks into the major roof. At the Chancel section there is a break in the wall and the roof line drops below the nave's roof.

The rear elevation, viewed in perspective, presents the most interesting mass, the Chancel section being narrower than the Nave, follows the same outline, but has a pitched parapet, at one time terminating in a Cross, the base of which is still in place. The coping is of moulded brick, and one side is almost entirely gone, leaving a rough outline. There are three slit windows in the wall, the center of which is tallest, recalling in the group the general line of the roof. Under the base band is a circular arched opening used as access to the under house portion.

The left side is very similar to the right, with exception of entry; the organ niche and Sacristy to the left, the Communion Rail, the Chancel Sanctuary and the Altar in the usual Chapel arrangement. Overhead are early English formed hammer-beam trusses, with moulded wood purlins and rafters. The trusses spring from stone corbels. On top of the brick walls are two wood plates separated by brick and tied at intervals with dove-tailed wood cross pieces. The walls were originally plastered on hand split wood lath, attached to wood furring. Very little of the plaster remains. A few of the furring strips are still in place. There is evidence of an original Gothic moulded plaster cornice from the stairs on the trusses.

The Altar, Sanctuary, Chancel, Furniture and rail are still in place. They are hand-carved oak, made in England. The Baptismal Font is an interesting antique. All of the stained glass windows sent over from England have long since been destroyed. The original solid brass hardware is still in its original condition.