

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

New Submission     Amended Submission

### A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945

### B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying them, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Early Religious Development in Missouri, 1700 to c. 1945

Rural Church Architecture in Missouri, 1700 to c. 1945

### C. Form Prepared by

name/title Tiffany Patterson  
organization Missouri State Historic Preservation Office date December 2010  
street & number P.O. Box 176, telephone 573-751-7800  
city or town Jefferson City state Missouri zip code 65109

### D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

  
Signature of certifying official Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO

See continuation sheet  
FEBRUARY 23, 2011  
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

---

### Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	Page Numbers
<b>E. Statement of Historic Contexts</b> (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	
Early Religious Development in Missouri, 1700 to c. 1945	E-1
Rural Church Architecture in Missouri, 1700 to c. 1945	E-5
<b>F. Associated Property Types</b> (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	
Gable End	F-1
Center-steeple	F-5
Side-steeple	F-9
Side-gable	F-13
Twin-tower	F-16
Steepled-ell	F-20
T-plan	F-24
Temple front	F-28
Other	F-31
<b>G. Geographical Data</b>	G-1
<b>H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods</b> (Discuss the methods used in developing the public property listing.)	H-1
<b>I. Major Bibliographical References</b> (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	I-1

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.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. E Page 1

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

## E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

### Early Religious Development in Missouri

*Religion is given but scant respect, or to speak more correctly, is totally neglected, whether because of the abandonment of the obligations which distinguish a Catholic from a gentile given over to every excess without fear of punishment imposed by the laws, as they have no law and no justice which restrains them, or for lack of a spiritual minister to correct, instruct, and withdraw them from the license in which they are living, forming a small rabble, which is no wise different from the very savage."*

--Don Pedro Piernas, Lt. Governor of Upper Louisiana, 1769<sup>1</sup>

Despite Piernas' negative assessment of religious life in settlement period Missouri, religion and religious architecture have been significant to Missouri's culture since the earliest days of exploration. One of the first Europeans to set foot in what is now Missouri was Jesuit Father Jacques Marquette who, with Louis Joliet, landed on its shores in 1673. Jesuit missionaries were some of the first to make inroads into the region, including Father Gabriel Marest who established a small settlement with a band of Kaskaskia Indians along the River Des Peres in 1700. Though short-lived, the settlement included, among other buildings, a small chapel.<sup>2</sup>

Nearly 70 years would pass before the construction of the next church building in Missouri, though Catholic services were held sporadically throughout the early exploration and settlement period. The French and, later, the Spanish established Catholicism as the state religion of the Upper Louisiana Territory but as Don Piernas noted, lack of priests to provide spiritual guidance led to lackadaisical religious practice among settlers. It was at the urging of Piernas that residents constructed the first church in St. Louis, Missouri's second church building, in 1770. Over the next six years, Fathers Gibault, Valentine and de Limpach officiated services in the church in their turn. In 1774, plans for a new church were made and Piernas assessed residents for funds to help build it. Due to several factors including Piernas' return to New Orleans, the new structure was not completed until 1776.<sup>3</sup> Either the 1770 church or its immediate successor was depicted in 1850 as being a long, narrow, gable-end

---

<sup>1</sup> "Report of Don Pedro Piernas to Gov. O'Reilly Describing the Spanish Illinois Country Dated October 31, 1769." Houck, Louis, ed. *The Spanish Regime in Missouri, Vol. 1*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 1909, pp. 70-71.

<sup>2</sup> William E. Foley. *A History of Missouri, Vol 1: 1673 to 1820*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, pp. 1-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. E Page 2

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

log building on a large fenced lot. It was flanked on one side by a graveyard and on the other by a side-gable priest house.<sup>4</sup>

For the next 30 years, Catholicism was the only recognized and publically supported religion in Missouri and the rest of the Upper Louisiana Territory. Under Spanish administration, the crown provided land in the territory for churches and cemeteries, and helped pay the salary of clergymen. It was under Spanish rule, however, that the first Protestants began to enter the territory. In fact, Spain encouraged American settlers to enter the territory with the expectation that these new arrivals would, within a generation, become loyal subjects of Spain and the Catholic Church. The government prohibited non-Catholic services and required new settlers to convert to Catholicism, but these strictures were rarely strictly enforced. Itinerant protestant ministers made forays into Missouri under the nose of the territorial governor, though most kept a low profile.<sup>5</sup> Thomas Johnson, a Baptist, reportedly led the first Protestant service in Missouri in 1799 in Cape Girardeau County though earlier, private services were likely conducted.<sup>6</sup>

The Louisiana Purchase transferred ownership of the Upper Louisiana Territory to the United States in 1804 and also opened the doors to religious freedom in the region. The Methodists and Baptists, notably, made early inroads into the territory. The Baptists established a congregation in Twappity (present day Scott County) in 1805, and the Bethel Baptist congregation constructed the first Protestant meeting house in Missouri near Jackson, Cape Girardeau County, in 1806. Depictions of this building show a side-gable log building measuring roughly 24' x 30'.<sup>7</sup> Unlike Baptists, whose ministers usually settled in a community, Methodist conferences initially hired itinerant ministers, or circuit riders, to service far-flung settlers and communities. John Travis was appointed to ride the first Missouri circuit in 1806 and soon reported a membership of 100. By 1810, there were five circuits and over 500 members in Missouri.<sup>8</sup>

With few exceptions, early religious congregations in frontier Missouri met in homes, commercial buildings, courthouses, or in the case of camp meetings, in tents or unsheltered in fields. Some camp meeting locations eventually became the sites of permanent structures. William Williams, for example, set aside land in Cape Girardeau County for the purpose of holding Methodist camp meetings, hosting the first in 1810 with several more in succeeding

---

<sup>4</sup> James Neal Primm. *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764-1980*. Third Edition. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998, p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Foley, pp. 54-55.

<sup>6</sup> Williams, Walter, ed. *The State of Missouri: An Autobiography*. Columbia, MO: E.W. Stephens Press, 1904, p. 211.

<sup>7</sup>The Missouri Baptist Historical Commission recently (c. 2010) reconstructed this church using some of the original logs.

<sup>8</sup> Foley, pp. 180-181.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. E Page 3

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

years. In anticipation of the Missouri Annual Conference of 1819, a log building was constructed on the site. Named for Bishop William McKendree, the McKendree Chapel is extant and is the oldest Protestant meeting house in Missouri. The small log church, measuring approximately 30' x 35', was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1987.<sup>9</sup>

New Missourians, especially those outside large settlements, tended to prefer Protestant denominations that lacked a strict hierarchical church structure. Baptist, Methodist, Disciples of Christ/Christian, and to a lesser extent Presbyterian churches, allowed for much autonomy in the individual congregations. While churches of these denominations may have joined in associations for social and other purposes and may have received some assistance from established organizations in the East, individual churches largely took on the responsibility of funding church construction, holding Sunday Schools, and other activities. This general preference is seen in statistical data from the U.S. Census. For example, in 1890 there were 1,755 Baptist church buildings in Missouri claiming 159,371 members. By contrast, the Protestant Episcopal Church—which had a well-established hierarchical structure—boasted only 86 churches and 8,952 members in the state. Twenty of these churches were in the City of St. Louis.<sup>10</sup>

The Catholic Church in Missouri experienced a period of decline immediately following the Louisiana Purchase. Priests, previously supported by the Spanish Crown, left leaving a void in local parish churches. The coming of Bishop William Louis de Bourg in 1818 began a revival in the territorial church. The recently appointed Bishop of Louisiana and the Floridas launched a campaign to establish educational facilities in Missouri to train new priests—providing a ready supply for developing parishes on the frontier.<sup>11</sup> One result of de Bourg's efforts was the creation of a seminary and college at St. Marys of the Barrens Parish in present-day Perry County in 1818. The original church on the site has been replaced several times, but a depiction of the first building shows a log, gable-end structure with a large stone chimney.<sup>12</sup> This building type seems representative of early church buildings in Missouri, regardless of religious affiliation.

Americans constituted a significant portion of new settlers in the Missouri Territory and influenced its religious makeup. European immigrants, some of whom settled in the East

---

<sup>9</sup> Marybelle Mueller and Jim Denny. "McKendree Chapel, Cape Girardeau County, Missouri." National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1987.

<sup>10</sup> Department of Interior, Census Office. *Report of Statistics of Churches in the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894. Published online at: [http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1890a\\_v9-01.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1890a_v9-01.pdf). Accessed 10/27/2010.

<sup>11</sup> Foley, pp. 184-185.

<sup>12</sup> Carlene Rauh. "St. Mary's of the Barrens Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1995.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. E Page 4

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

before coming to Missouri, also significantly impacted both settlement and the religious diversity of the state. German settlement, beginning in 1799 and growing in the 1830s through 1850s, both enlivened the Catholic Church in Missouri and brought with it a wealth of Protestant beliefs and denominations. As early as 1799 a German settlement began forming along the Whitewater River in Southeast Missouri.<sup>13</sup> At the request of this community, Rev. Samuel Weyberg, a minister of the German Reformed Church, arrived in the territory in 1803 with a group of settlers from North Carolina.<sup>14</sup> This was the first of a long line of German Protestant denominations to enter Missouri, though one that is lesser known than the Lutheran. Lutheranism was introduced to Missouri by a migration of some 600 Saxon-Lutherans who arrived in St. Louis in 1838 and settled as a colony in Perry County. This group was the foundation of the denomination in the state and out of this group grew the Missouri Synod.<sup>15</sup> Other German Protestant denominations in Missouri included German Evangelicals, German Brethren and “Dunkers.”

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Missouri had a wide variety of religious adherents representing Christianity, Judaism, and numerous other beliefs. In *The State of Missouri: An Autobiography*, Walter Williams noted approximately 40 religious organizations with congregants in Missouri. The Catholic Church in Missouri claimed the most members at 292,000 at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and boasted 306 churches and 181 stations and chapels. The number of Catholic church buildings, however, paled in comparison to some of the state’s Protestant denominations. The state’s Baptists claimed 1,837 churches; the Methodists (Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal-South, and Colored Methodist Churches combined), 1,926; and the Disciples of Christ/Christian some 1,700 buildings.<sup>16</sup>

Between 1906 and 1926, the number of church congregations in the state declined significantly from 9,154 to 7,891 (excluding Jewish congregations). The number of church members, however, increased over the period by 7.7% to 1,504,674 in 1926.<sup>17</sup> These contrasting statistics may reflect shifting populations. Urban and suburban churches likely gained members while the declining rural population closed church buildings, many of which had small congregations to begin with. The state’s population and its religious center was still

---

<sup>13</sup> Louis Houck. *History of Missouri, Vol. 2.: From the Earliest Explorations and Settlements until the Admission of the State into the Union*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1908, p. 188. Published online at: <http://digital.library.umsystem.edu/>, accessed 10/28/2010.

<sup>14</sup> Louis Houck. *History of Missouri, Vol. 3.: From the Earliest Explorations and Settlements until the Admission of the State into the Union*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1908, pp. 204-205. Published online at: <http://digital.library.umsystem.edu/>, accessed 10/28/2010.

<sup>15</sup> James Denny. “Bergt, Christian A., Farm (Saxon Lutheran Memorial), Perry County.” National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1980.

<sup>16</sup> Williams, pp. 211-214.

<sup>17</sup> United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Religious Bodies: 1926, Vol. 1*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1930.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. E Page 5

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

largely rural in 1926. Roughly 78% of church buildings and church membership was classified by the census as “rural.” Accordingly, 5,525 church edifices were located in rural areas of the state.<sup>18</sup> The 1936 census of religious bodies showed a further decline in rural church building numbers, with 3,792 rural church edifices counted.<sup>19</sup>

The U.S. Census Bureau stopped collecting data on religious bodies and their associated buildings and memberships after 1936. While some data on religious bodies is maintained by private organizations today, it is unknown how many historic (pre-1945 for the purposes of this report) church buildings are located in Missouri and what the distribution is between urban and rural areas. There is also a lack of comprehensive architectural and historic survey of the state’s historic resources, and the age of existing data, much dating from the 1970s and 1980s, limits its viability for current statistics. Additionally, many of the church buildings identified in rural historic resources surveys were abandoned, or have since been abandoned by their congregations. Despite this, there are enough data in the historic record and in existing survey to allow for a typology of rural churches in Missouri based on architectural features.

### Rural Church Architecture in Missouri, 1700 to c. 1945

Peter Williams, a Professor of Religion and American Studies, noted that in much of the Trans-Mississippi West, “a settled church presence [was] achieved sometimes decades beyond the time of first settlement. Make-do and innovation were the watchwords for churches as for other aspects of life.”<sup>20</sup> This was certainly true in early settlement period Missouri where low population, scattered settlement, and lack of local clergy delayed the organization of churches and the construction of church buildings. Even in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, churches were not always able to construct their own buildings. There are numerous examples of historic churches worshiping in homes, courthouses, and schools. Some churches of different

---

<sup>18</sup> “Edifices” were defined as “a building used mainly for religious services,” and buildings such as halls, school houses, or private residences used for church services. Rural is roughly defined by this census as being located in towns of less than 2,500, or in unincorporated areas of less than 10,000 population or a population density of less than 1,000 per square mile. Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> A loss of over 1700 church edifices in rural areas over a 10 year period seems excessive, even for the Depression Era. The drop in number may reflect changes in how “rural” was defined by the 1936, which differed from the 1926 census definition. Additionally, closure of churches and lack of response to the census report likely accounts for some of the significant drop in numbers. So, many of the edifices reported in 1926 may have still been extant, simply no longer in use for religious purposes. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Religious Bodies: 1936, Volume 1, Summary and Detailed Tables. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1941, pp. 166-167.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Williams. *Houses of God: Region, Religion, and Architecture in the United States*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997, p. 211.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. E Page 6

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

denominations partnered to build “union” church buildings. This is true throughout the historic period (c. 1770-c. 1945), and evidenced by census records. For example, the 1936 United States Census reported 6,016 church organizations in Missouri and 5,327 church edifices.<sup>21</sup>

Other than a barely mentioned mission chapel constructed in 1700, the first known church building in Missouri was constructed in St. Louis in 1770. The construction of this building would likely not have occurred at that early date had it not been for the arrival of Don Pedro Piernas, the new Lt. Governor of Upper Louisiana. Piernas was appalled by the residents’ lack of respect for religious observance and pushed to raise funds for a church structure. Based on illustrations of the church (or possibly its immediate successor), it was a small log structure with a gable roof.

As with St. Louis’ first Catholic Church, in design there was little to differentiate a purpose-built church from other buildings. Williams noted of the frontier that “the first buildings designed specifically for worship shared the same makeshift character as secular buildings.”<sup>22</sup> He goes on to state that in areas where lumber was plentiful, “log churches were the norm.”<sup>23</sup> This is certainly true in most of Missouri. Accounts of the state’s early churches including the first two in St. Louis and the first Protestant church in the state (Bethel Baptist, 1806) describe log buildings. Numerous county and individual church histories also indicate the use of log construction for early churches. An account of the Salem Baptist Church (established c. 1820) in Callaway County provides what was likely a typical description of such a building:

Here the colonists met and built a substantial hewed log house, about twenty by twenty-four feet square. They raised it up very tall, put a shingle roof on it, a rough floor in it, painted up the body with mortar made of lime and sand . . . They made seats by splitting logs and putting legs in them. There was one small window put in the north side, and they placed a rude pulpit under said window—the pieces being pinned together with wooden pins. A small stove was procured somehow, and placed near the center of the room, with the pipe running through one of the eight by ten window panes.<sup>24</sup>

Though a little larger than the Salem Baptist, the McKendree Chapel constructed in 1819 and still standing in Cape Girardeau County, provides a physical example of early church design in the state.

---

<sup>21</sup> Religious Bodies: 1936, p. 160.

<sup>22</sup> Williams, 212.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *History of Callaway County, Missouri*. St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1884, 505. Published online by Missouri Digital Heritage at: <http://cdm.sos.mo.gov>, accessed October 29, 2010.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. E Page 7

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

Missouri's plentiful forests and varied rate of growth made log a popular material for churches for approximately 100 years. Extant examples date from 1819 to c. 1880. The oft romanticized image of a rough hewn log building on the Missouri frontier may be a false one, however. In many cases these log buildings were clad in clapboard siding, either originally or within a few years. Though the clapboards were removed from the McKendree Chapel in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there are photos of the property clad in narrow horizontal siding. The Salem Baptist Church, described above, was by the 1880s "of logs, which have since been weatherboarded."<sup>25</sup>

While a convenient and readily available material, log construction limited the dimensions of a church. As congregations grew, they often felt the need for a larger church building. Availability of materials remained a factor in church construction, especially in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Missouri had a wealth of natural resources for building purposes including stone, clay for brick making, and lumber which could be milled locally at an early date in many areas. Based in a sampling of surveyed rural church buildings in Missouri, frame dominated. However, the state has some fine examples of early brick and stone churches. The Concord Presbyterian Church (c. 1840) in northern Callaway County, and the Pleasant Ridge United Baptist Church (c. 1844) in Platte County are both fine examples of rural brick church construction. The St. Paul and St. Peter's Catholic churches (both constructed c. 1860) in Ralls County are examples of native stone construction.

Williams notes that factors such as the region in which a church was constructed, the tradition or denomination of the builders, and social class played a role in church design. However, in much of rural Missouri, ease of construction may have been the dominant factor. As noted by Williams, churches in the Great Plains were "usually designed by a clergyman or local laity who drew on their memories of the eastern United States or parts of Europe from which they had come for a few minimal distinguishing stylistic cues. These were usually erected with a communal effort."<sup>26</sup> Though few of the Missouri church histories consulted during this study referenced a designer, many indicated the communal effort of the congregation to construct the church building. A few hired a builder to oversee construction, but much of the labor was volunteered by congregants.

The use of local materials and largely unskilled labor resulted in a narrow range of church designs in rural areas of the state during much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Based on illustrations and extant church structures from the period, most rural religious buildings had rectangular footprints and a gable roof (gable-end type). A variation on the gable-end church involved the construction of a tower (usually square) centered in the front or at one corner of the church (center or side-steeple types). Construction of gable-end or towered churches crossed

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Williams, p. 213.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. E Page 8

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

denominational and, sometimes, other religious lines. Gable end church buildings in Missouri, for example, are associated with Catholic parishes, all major and most minor Protestant sects, and at least one Jewish congregation.

The majority of rural churches constructed throughout the historic period were utilitarian with no decoration. However, nationally popular architectural styles influenced church construction even in rural areas. Stylistic elements usually did not change the form of the church, but were instead applied ornamentation often in the form of fenestration shape or decorative window and door hoods. The simple church forms lent themselves well to the Greek Revival style, though Gothic Revival seems to have had the greater influence on rural church architecture based on extant historic buildings. Construction of the first railroads in the 1850s and the exponential growth of lines throughout Missouri in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought some changes to rural church architecture. Ready availability of decorative woodwork seems to have been the most noticeable change, as many church buildings had decorative wood shingles, scrolled brackets and other decorative elements applied.

The coming of the railroad and subsequent growth in population also seemed to impact church form in rural areas of the state. Gable-end and towered variations continued to dominate, but church types with more complicated footprints began to be seen in the state's rural areas and small towns beginning in c. 1890. The most common new form was the steepled-ell church building. With L or asymmetrical T-shaped footprints, cross gable roofs, and towers located in the intersection of the gables, these church forms seem to reflect popular Victorian forms. The multiple gable-ends provided space for bold fenestration such as large Gothic or round-arched windows, imbricated shingles and other decorative woodwork. Availability of skilled builders and, occasionally, architects may have also popularized this form in rural areas. For example the cross-gabled and towered Mt. Carmel Methodist Church in rural Saline County (NR listed 11/10/2009) was designed and built by Edgar and Chastain Page, brothers and master builders working out of nearby Marshall, Missouri. The McCredie Methodist Church in Callaway County is a small steepled-ell church designed by M. Fred Bell, an architect of statewide renown who lived in nearby Fulton.

Mail-order catalogs and railroad shipping also brought some new materials to rural church construction. In addition to the previously noted prefabricated wood millwork, rural churches also purchased pressed metal roofing and decorative stamped shingles and elaborate metal steeples. The Mokane Methodist Church in southern Callaway County has been altered but retains its stamped metal roof shingles and decorative metalwork in the gable ends. Elaborate tower tops and belfries such as that found on the Zion Methodist Church in rural Perry County, also dot the landscape. Decorative elements were the most common new materials found on rural churches, but new building materials also influenced church architecture. Concrete, notably, made an appearance in rural areas in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Used

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. E Page 9

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

primarily for foundations, some congregations adopted concrete as their major building material. There are several rusticated concrete block churches in rural Missouri including the National Register listed Waldensian Presbyterian Church in rural Barry County. Constructed in 1908, this church combines the traditional center steeple form with stone-like concrete block construction. Concrete block masonry construction continued to be used into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, though rusticated blocks were exchanged for more utilitarian concrete masonry units.

Availability of mass-produced architectural features had an impact on church architecture, evidenced by remnants of those products on extant buildings. It is more difficult, however, to assess how the availability of other resources such as plan books may have affected rural church design. Episcopalian Churches in Missouri and other areas of the country may be the easiest to link directly to plan books or church-prescribed designs. The Cambridge Camden Society closely linked architecture with liturgy and influenced designs of Anglican (a.k.a. Episcopalian) churches across England and the United States beginning in the 1840s. English emigrant and architect Richard Upjohn furthered adoption of Ecclesiological church architecture in the United States through his well publicized designs and plan books. Upjohn's Carpenter Gothic churches were especially popular among rural congregations (Episcopal and others).<sup>27</sup> Though rarely faithful interpretations of Upjohn's designs, several Episcopal Churches in Missouri retain characteristics of Carpenter Gothic design, notably board and batten siding. St. Paul's Episcopal in Iron County (NR listed 5/21/1969) may be one of the most faithful examples of Upjohn-influenced church architecture in rural and small town Missouri.

Upjohn was not the only architect to publish designs for small churches. Several architects, many supported by organizations such as the Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada and the Southern Baptist Convention, published books about planning new church buildings or renovating older buildings to meet modern needs. Some publications, such as P.E. Burroughs' *A Complete Guide to Church Building*<sup>28</sup> included floor plans and illustrations for churches that would have been well beyond the means of most rural church congregations. Edmund deSchweinitz Bruher provided more practical plans in his *The New Country Church Building* and even provided an example of a modern rural church in Howard County, Missouri (Ashland Disciples of Christ Church). The book described the multi-purpose use of the rural building which, in addition to church services, housed club meetings, recreational opportunities, and even a publically accredited high school. All of these functions were housed in a "new brick building . . . of brown brick with a lofty cement basement." The church building had a large auditorium and two small classrooms on the main floor and a large

---

<sup>27</sup> Williams, p. 64.

<sup>28</sup> P.E. Burroughs. *A Complete Guide To Church Building*. Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1923.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. E Page 10

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

lecture room, two classrooms and a kitchen in the basement.<sup>29</sup> Without additional research into these and similar publications, and more survey of historic rural church buildings, it is impossible to surmise how much influence plan books and guides had on rural church design.

Church buildings are the most notable religious resources in the rural landscape, but often they share space with other important resources. Church buildings often became the nucleus for church and community functions beyond religious worship, and their lots reflect multiple uses. Other common church-related resources in rural areas include cemeteries with associated historic stones and plantings, parochial schools, parsonages/rectories, historic fences, and fuel tanks. Though increasingly rare, rural churches usually had one if not two associated privies. Other than the ubiquitous privies, cemeteries appear to be the most common resources related to historic church buildings. These cemeteries served a significant community function, as many church-related cemeteries were not restricted to church membership. Church cemeteries are generally located behind and/or to one side of the building. Less commonly, associated cemeteries are across the road or on nearby, though discontinuous, property. Rural church cemeteries generally are laid in long north-south rows with plots and markers facing east. Cemeteries should be considered important and characteristic features of rural church resources.

Parochial schools and parsonages/rectories are less common in the rural landscape. Based on a sampling from Missouri's architectural and historic surveys, most rural churches with such resources are either Catholic churches or associated with ethnic, usually German, congregations. The St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Holt County (NR listed 1/04/2008) is a good example of this. Founded by emigrants from Hanover in 1860, the German community grew so rapidly in the 1870s that the first building needed to be replaced by a large new structure with tall corner towers in 1893. The parochial school housed as many as 50 students with classes taught predominantly in German. Anti-German sentiment during WWI brought about the close of the parochial school in 1917, though the building remains.<sup>30</sup> Several rural Catholic churches such as Sacred Heart Parish in Osage County (NR listed 9/9/1982), and St. Lugar's in Henry County (NR Listed 4/13/1998) retain large rectories.

---

<sup>29</sup> Edmund deSchweinitz Bruher. *The New Country Church Building*. New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1917, pp. 39-41.

<sup>30</sup> Seth Jenkins. "St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and Parochial School, Holt County, Missouri." National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2008.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 1

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

## F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

### Church Types and Registration Requirements

As noted above, rural churches in Missouri fall into a few basic forms. Gable roof churches, and their towered variations, make up the vast majority of rural church examples. With modern transportation came a larger variety in building material, decoration, and at times more complex footprints and rooflines. To date eight subtypes of these basic forms have been identified using extant survey data. These rural church types are described below along with the framework for evaluating their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

#### I. **Property Type:** Gable-End Church

**Description:** The gable-end church type is characterized by its front-facing gable façade and symmetrical arrangement of fenestration. In most examples, the entrance is centered with single or double doors. However, two single-leaf entrances (two-door type) are not uncommon, notably in examples dating from c. 1840 to c. 1880. Transoms over doors are common features for all variations. Primary façades may have two windows flanking the central entrance. Additional fenestration on the primary elevation is by no means universal. Two-door examples generally do not have windows at the ground floor level. A round window in the gable is a common feature of the church type. Additionally, the type often has a short steeple with a four-sided spire at the peak of the gable roof.

Gable-end churches are small buildings, though width, length and roof pitch vary. They have a rectangular footprint and the longer side elevations are commonly 3-4 bays in depth, though relatively unaltered examples in survey files range in depth from 2-5 bays. Bays are usually marked by windows, though occasionally a secondary entrance is located on one of the long side walls. Organization of the rear elevation also varies. In many cases the back wall is blank with no fenestration or decoration. A few examples have apses, though 2-3 windows and/or an offset rear door is more common. Some examples with low pitched gable roofs can be found in survey data, but most Missouri examples have medium to steeply pitched front gable roofs. Variations in the type do not appear to correlate to period or region of construction, or the religious denomination housed in the building.

Examples of the church type were constructed using all types of materials and construction methods. Missouri examples include log, wood frame (balloon frame), brick (bearing wall and veneer), stone (bearing wall and veneer), and concrete block (rock

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 2

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

faced and plain concrete masonry units). There may also be heavy timber frame or fachwerk examples, though none were found in the sampling of surveyed churches used to develop property type descriptions. Foundations are usually stone, concrete or brick. When initially built, basements were not typical. However, a common early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century alteration for rural churches was to raise the building and construct a basement for classroom or kitchen space.

Exterior decoration varies and often depended on the financial wherewithal of the congregation, availability of materials and, to an extent, period of construction. Many examples are austere with little exterior articulation other than the building material. More austere examples generally have paneled entrance doors and rectangular, double-hung wood windows (single or multi-paned) with plain trim. The construction of very plain examples does not appear to correlate with period of construction. More elaborate examples might have decorative window hoods (often with pediments or entablatures), and/or Gothic or round arch windows. Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century examples often incorporate Victorian architectural elements commonly seen in residential architecture such as imbricated shingles, scrollwork vergeboards, and brackets. Entrance stoops are common as are single bay entrance porches. A few examples have historic full-width porches. Roof materials have commonly been replaced over time, and most examples currently have asphalt shingle roof covering. A few examples have wood or metal roofs.

Gable-end churches are characteristically one-room buildings. A few examples have original small vestibules, or small rooms at the rear of the building. Balconies are not common, though a few examples of the church type with balconies or slave galleries are known. In at least one example, the Washington Chapel AME Church, Wellington, Lafayette County (constructed c. 1880, raised c. 1995), a loft was constructed for use by the circuit riding minister. The interior typically has a vaulted ceiling.

Rural gable-end churches often have additional resources on the church lot, most commonly cemeteries and privies. Most examples of church-related privies found in the survey files were frame with shed or gable roofs. Privies were generally not as solidly built as churches, so many extant examples might be second or third generation. However, unless obviously new, these buildings are an important part of the setting and historic function of the gable-end church type. Cemeteries are also an important feature of many gable-end church lots. Cemeteries are often located to one side or to the rear of the church building, though some examples wrapped the rear and two sides of the building leaving an open lawn in front. Also, some cemeteries are located across the road from the church building. Cemetery layout varies, but in the majority of examples the graves are laid in long north-south running rows with grave markers facing east.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 3

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

**Significance:** Based on a sampling from architectural and historic surveys, the gable-end church is the most common historic rural church type in Missouri. Additionally, the state's earliest church buildings including the first church in St. Louis (1770, non-extant), and the state's oldest extant church building, McKendree Chapel (1819) were gable-end buildings. All 114 of Missouri's counties likely contain or once contained this church form. Most Missouri examples are historically associated with Protestant denominations, but the type seems to cross religious lines. Examples associated with the Catholic Church can also be found. Though not rural, there is even a small gable-end synagogue in Jefferson City which demonstrates the nearly universal acceptance of the type.

Ease of construction and financial constraints were likely the motivating factors to most rural congregations using the gable-end church type. These buildings were rarely architect-designed and in many cases the congregation did not even hire a professional contractor or builder. More often than not, labor to construct the building was volunteered. Even interior furnishings were often hand-made by members of the congregation.

Gable-end church buildings were constructed throughout the historic context period, c. 1819 to c. 1945. Missouri's oldest extant Protestant church building, the McKendree Chapel in Cape Girardeau County (NR listed 4/13/1987), is an example of the type. Constructed in 1819, the one-room log church has a centered entrance, two windows on each long side, and a stone fireplace on the rear wall. Churches of any type from Missouri's early settlement period are rare and most extant gable-end churches date from c. 1840 to c. 1930. However, the gable-end as a traditional church form lingers even in modern church design. Constructed in 1995, the Shiloh Methodist Church in Callaway County, shares many features with historic gable-end church types including the front gable roof topped by a short steeple, centered entrance, and rectangular footprint. Its scale and the complexity of its floor plan distinguish it from the traditional type.

Gable-end churches are significant features of the rural landscape. They represent the settlement patterns of rural Missouri and were important religious and cultural centers. This document focuses on evaluating church types for significance under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Because most gable-end church buildings were not architect-designed, only in rare cases might these buildings be considered a "work of a master." However even austere examples, if relatively unaltered, might embody the characteristics of the type, period, or method of construction. Additionally, due to workmanship or historically applied ornamentation, some examples may be significant for their artistic value or adaptation of popular architectural styles to a

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 4

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

vernacular form. Because the gable-end church type is ubiquitous, historically found in abundance across the state, the level of significance would be local.

**Registration Requirements:** To be considered architecturally significant and nominated under this Multiple Property Documentation Form, a gable-end church building must be a relatively pristine example of the type. It must retain the characteristic features, namely a gable-front roof, a centered or paired (two-door type) entrance, and rectangular footprint. Retention of original siding material and early or original windows is essential. Installation of exterior storm windows over originals, however, will not be considered a significant impact on architectural integrity. Neither will changes in roof materials be considered a significant impact on integrity unless its application alters the pitch or shape of the roofline.

As noted above, some gable-end churches are very plain with little or no applied ornamentation. However many examples have applied ornamentation or fenestration reflective of popular architectural styles, notably Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Classical Revival, and Late Victorian. Decorative elements applied at the time of construction or during a historic renovation of the property must be retained to a large extent for the building to be considered architecturally significant. Retention of historic steeples and spires is also important, though the loss of such a feature will not necessarily preclude the building from listing for significance in architecture if other features are intact. A common alteration to the gable-end church type is the addition of a modern steeple and/or spire. Again, this does not preclude the listing of the church if the new spire is proportionate in scale to the church and the building is otherwise an excellent local example of the type.

Preferably, architecturally significant church buildings will retain their original foundations. However, many examples were originally constructed on piers or masonry foundations that later needed to be significantly reinforced or repaired. Additionally, in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, many congregations solved the need for additional space by raising the church building and constructing a basement and new foundation. These alterations do not necessarily preclude listing in the National Register, if the nomination demonstrates that the building is otherwise a significant and representative example of the church type locally.

In addition to basements, many churches constructed additions to accommodate growing congregations or the need for kitchens, restrooms, and classroom/meeting spaces. Unlike basement additions, which do not alter the basic form and footprint of the building, rear additions and side ells may have a significant impact on architectural integrity. Additions may be acceptable if they are set back from the church façade, are located on a side or rear elevation, and do not obscure a significant building feature (such as an apse).

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 5

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

Additions must also be smaller than the original building. Nominations for churches with additions should also demonstrate that the church is also otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

The function of a historic church building was as a gathering place for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of rural church design. In general, to qualify for National Register listing, all churches should retain adequate integrity of original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the church during its period of significance. The retention of the open sanctuary space is of utmost importance.

For the purposes of this document "local" is defined as the county in which the church is located. A county-wide reconnaissance level survey of churches may be necessary to evaluate the architectural significance of a church building. To be eligible under architecture, a property must meet the registration requirements outlined in this document *and* be a significant representation of the type in the county in which it is located.

Though this document focuses on architecture, integrity of location remains an important consideration when evaluating the significance of a gable-end church building. Churches were historically associated with small rural communities and were often shared by multiple religious denominations, so they are tied to place. Additionally, rural churches often had associated historic resources such as cemeteries and privies. As extant privies and cemeteries are closely related to rural churches and are almost characteristic of the type, they should in most cases be considered contributing to nominated rural church properties.

### II. **Property Type:** Center-Steeple Church

**Description:** The center-steeple church type is a variation on the gable-end form, though as a type it has more variations in size and footprint. Like the gable-end form, the center-steeple type has a front gable roof and roughly rectangular footprint. The character defining feature of the type is a tall tower centered in the façade. In most examples, the tower contains the church entrance and is topped by a belfry and spire.

In their simplest form, center-steeple churches are one-room buildings with attached center towers. A few examples in the state such as St. Paul's Lutheran Church in St. Charles County and St. Joseph's Church in Zell, St. Genevieve County, began as gable-end churches with towers added decades later. Most examples in Missouri, however, were constructed as a unit.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 6

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

The center-steeple church type shows a complexity in floorplan and design not seen in historic Missouri examples of the gable-end type. Though the entrance is commonly located in the center steeple, there are several examples in which small pavilions containing entrances flank the center tower. There are also numerous examples of large center-steeple churches with transepts, multiple interior divisions, and ornate decoration on the exterior and interior. While many Protestant congregations constructed center-steeple churches, the type seemed to be especially popular among rural Catholic congregations. Of the 29 rural Catholic Churches in the sample used to identify types, 18 were center-steeple type buildings. The larger and more complex examples of the type tend to be Catholic churches. The size and interior complexity of most rural Catholic Church examples likely stem from the rituals of worship which require segmentation of interior space.

The character-defining tower is often as individual as the church with which it is associated. Many are square structures abutting the front of the building. Also common are towers integrated into the façade of the building, projecting a few inches or several feet from the main building block. Most are square, but there are a few examples of three to five-sided tower projections. Tiered towers are also common with a wide base, slightly narrower shaft, and smaller belfry. Belfries can be open, or marked by louvered vents. Most towers are topped by spires, but pyramidal roofs are common. Rare examples are topped by domes or mansards.

Center-steeple churches were often second generation buildings, constructed as churches outgrew their smaller frame or log buildings. As such, it would be rare to find a log example of center-steeple type. More commonly, these church buildings were constructed of frame, brick or stone. Rusticated concrete block examples can also be found scattered across the state. Roof materials include wood shingle, metal, slate, and more commonly replacement asphalt shingle. Foundation material varies and includes stone, concrete and brick.

Like the gable-end church, exterior decoration varied and depended on the date of construction, availability of materials, and the financial wherewithal of the congregation. Many examples are austere in their design, with rectangular fenestration openings, and little or no applied ornamentation. However, references to popular architectural styles, primarily Gothic and Romanesque Revival, are common. For example, a 1990 survey of rural Osage County included inventory forms for 20 historic rural churches. Thirteen of these were examples of the center-steeple type. Twelve of the examples had round or Gothic arch fenestration on the façade and/or sides of the building. The one example with simple rectangular windows, Fairview Church of Christ in Linn Township, had an open belfry with Gothic arched openings. Applied ornamentation such as wood verge

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 7

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

boards and imbricated shingles was also common. Ornamentation was often centered on the belfry, and many rural churches included highly ornamented tower tops. Round or Gothic arched openings, Victorian stick-style ornamentation, and decorative shingles are common elements seen on belfries. Some rural congregations also ordered pressed metal shingles, vents, and other elements from catalogs to add distinction to their towers and spires.

**Significance:** Based on the sampling from architectural surveys in Missouri which included 90 center-steeple churches, the center-steeple church is the second most common rural church type in the state. Historically, examples could be found in all of Missouri's counties, though their prevalence varied by county. For example in Callaway County, the gable-end type was by far the most common rural church type, with 24 extant examples at the time of the survey compared to 5 examples of the center-steeple type. In neighboring Osage County, across the Missouri River to the south, there were 13 examples of the center-steeple site compared to 3 examples of the gable-end type. Culture and ethnicity may have played a role in the local adoption of type. In Callaway County, the majority of the population historically came from the mid-south and were significantly influenced by denominations arising or gaining strength from the Second Great Awakening. Osage County, by contrast, had significant Catholic and German Protestant (Lutheran, and German Evangelical) populations.

The center-steeple church type had a more finite period of popularity than the gable-end type. Of the 70 examples used to develop the property type description, 64 were constructed between 1860 and 1919. Based on the information in the survey, it is unclear if the towers on the three that pre-date 1860 were original parts of the building or later additions. The popularity of the type dropped dramatically after 1919, with three examples dating from 1920 to c. 1949, one per decade.

In their simplest form, center-steeple churches are one-room buildings with an attached tower. Small examples were often constructed (without the aid of an architect) by the congregation. Often labor to construct the building was volunteered. More complex examples may have benefited by the expertise of a local builder, or even the assistance of a master builder or architect. Architect-designed examples are not uncommon in rural areas, especially among examples built for Catholic parishes. While funding for these churches may have come primarily from the congregants, parishes could appeal to the Diocese for design assistance. An example of the use of a master builder or architect can be found in the National Register-listed Sacred Heart Church in Rich Fountain, Osage County, built by "Goesse of St. Louis" in 1880.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 8

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

Center-steeple churches are significant features of the rural landscape. They represent the settlement patterns of rural Missouri and were important religious and cultural centers. This type grew in popularity between c. 1860 and c. 1919, peaking in the 1890s and first decade of the 1900s, based on the survey sampling. By this period in Missouri's history, the initial settlement period was over and populations tended to be more stable. The adoption of the more complex church form may reflect a greater sophistication and prosperity among rural populations. In many cases, extant center-steeple church buildings were second or third generation buildings for the congregation, built as earlier buildings were outgrown or required replacement due to deterioration or destruction by natural forces.

This document focuses on evaluating church types for significance under National Register Criterion C in the Area of Architecture. Unlike gable-end churches which were predominantly designed and built by church members, the center-steeple type includes both examples built by congregants and those designed by master builders or architects. Some examples of the type may be eligible for listing as a "work of a master" builder or architect. However, more austere examples, if relatively unaltered, might also be eligible as embodiments of a type, period, or method of construction. Additionally, due to workmanship or historically applied ornamentation, some examples may be significant for their artistic value or adaption of popular architectural styles to a vernacular form. Because the center-steeple church type is so common, historically found in abundance across the state, the level of significance for architecture would be local.

**Registration Requirements:** To be considered architecturally significant and nominated under this Multiple Property Documentation Form, a center-steeple church building must be a relatively pristine example of the type. It must retain the characteristic features, namely a gable-front roof, a projecting tower centered in the facade, and a roughly rectangular footprint. Retention of original siding material and early or original windows is essential. Installation of exterior storm windows over originals, however, will not be considered a significant impact on architectural integrity. Neither will changes in roof materials be considered a significant impact on integrity unless its application alters the pitch or shape of the roofline.

As noted above, some center-steeple churches range from very plain to highly ornamented. Many examples have ornamental brickwork or applied wood or metal architectural elements reflective of popular architectural styles, notably Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Classical Revival, and Late Victorian. When applied at the time of construction or during a historic renovation of the property, decorative elements must be retained to a large extent to be considered architecturally significant. Retention of the historic tower topped by belfry and/or spire is also essential, though some changes to the

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 9

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

belfry may be acceptable if significant decorative features remain. For example, it was not unusual for an open belfry to be infilled with vents, screens or siding. If the original openings and applied decoration is still evident, these alterations will not necessarily preclude the building from being listed in the National Register.

Preferably, architecturally significant church buildings will retain their original foundations. Due to their relatively late date of construction, many examples of this type were built with basements for social and other functions. However, many examples were originally constructed on piers or masonry foundations that later needed to be significantly reinforced or repaired. Additionally, in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, many congregations solved the need for additional space by raising the church building and constructing a basement and new foundation. These alterations do not necessarily preclude listing in the National Register, if the nomination demonstrates that the building is otherwise a significant and representative example of the church type locally.

In addition to basements, many churches constructed additions to accommodate growing congregations or the need for kitchens, restrooms, and classroom/meeting spaces. Unlike basement additions, which do not alter the basic form and footprint of the building, rear additions and side ells may have a significant impact on architectural integrity. Additions may be acceptable if they are set back from the church façade, are located on a side or rear elevation, and do not obscure a significant building feature (such as an apse). The addition should also be proportionate to the size of the original building. Nominations for churches with additions should also demonstrate that the church is also otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

The function of a historic church building was as a gathering place for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of rural church design. In general, to qualify for National Register listing, all churches should retain adequate integrity of original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the church during its period of significance. The retention of the open sanctuary space is of utmost importance.

For the purposes of this document “local” is defined as the county in which the church is located. A county-wide reconnaissance level survey of churches may be necessary to evaluate the architectural significance of a church building. To be eligible under architecture, a property must meet the registration requirements outlined in this document *and* be a significant representation of the type in the county in which it is located.

Though this document focuses on architecture, integrity of location remains an important consideration when evaluating the significance a center-steeple church building.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 10

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

Churches were historically associated with small rural communities and were often shared by multiple religious denominations, so they are tied to place. Additionally, rural churches often had associated historic resources such as cemeteries and privies. As extant privies and cemeteries are closely related to rural churches and are almost characteristic of the type, they should in most cases be considered contributing to nominated rural church properties.

### III. **Property Type:** Side-Steeple Church

**Description:** The side-steeple church is another variation of the gable-end type and the third most common rural type in Missouri based on a sampling of rural surveys. While still common, the side-steeple type is much fewer in number than the center-steeple type, with only 56 examples in the survey sampling. The type is characterized by a dominant front gable, and a large tower either integrated into the corner of the façade (most common) or free standing and attached to the front corner of the building. In the majority of examples, the steeple marks the entrance of the building and even when integrated into the façade, also houses a small interior foyer. The location of the steeple to one side of the façade provides an expanse of wall space for decorative or other features. This usually takes the form of grouped windows or large Gothic or round-arched windows. In a few examples, an entrance articulated with a decorative surround is centered in the façade.

In their most basic form, these buildings are one room with a rectangular footprint. The tower may also act as a small foyer space. Though few identified examples of this type are as complex in footprint or interior layout as the larger examples of the center-steeple type, some complexity in floor plan is common. Most often, this takes the form of an apse on the rear or side of the building. Cross gables over small transepts are also known, but are not common.

Materials used to construct this building type vary. This type did not become popular in rural Missouri until the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so log examples of the type are currently unknown. Frame construction may be the most common, though brick examples are prevalent. Stone and rusticated concrete block examples are also found across the state. More recently constructed versions also include examples constructed of plain concrete masonry units. Foundations are commonly stone or brick, though concrete (block and poured) is common also. Roofing material includes slate, wood shingle, and metal (shingle and sheet), though replacement asphalt shingle is most common.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 11

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

The façade arrangement of this building type lends itself to ornamentation, and incorporation of shaped windows and applied decorative features seems more characteristic of this type than other gable-end variations. The adoption of this type by rural congregations coincided with the popularity of Queen Anne and other Victorian styles, so applied ornamentation such as brackets along the eaves, imbricated shingles in the gable ends, and decorative verge boards and finials are common. Round and Gothic arched fenestration, notably large centered windows in the façade, is also typical.

Though not centered in the façade, the tower remained an important decorative feature of the building. The ornamentation applied in the gable ends and around the fenestration was often mirrored on the tower. Towers associated with this church type are rarely freestanding. Instead, they are integrated into the main block of the building, though they often project slightly from the building's façade. Towers are often tiered with a slightly wider base, narrower shaft and decorative belfry. Many rural churches included highly ornamented tower tops. Round or Gothic arched openings, Victorian stick-style ornamentation, and decorative shingles are common elements seen on belfries. Some rural congregations also ordered pressed metal shingles, vents, and other elements from catalogs to add distinction to their towers and spires. Generally, the tower contains the entrance which might be reached by steps to a small stoop or covered entrance porch.

**Significance:** Based on a sampling from existing rural survey in Missouri, the side-steeple type is the third most common rural church form in Missouri. Examples can be found across the state, though they appear to be more common to small towns and crossroad communities than strictly rural settings. Relative complexity of construction including the integration of the tower, may have something to do with its lack dispersion among rural churches.

In comparison to the gable-end type, the side-steeple church had a relatively short period of popularity. The oldest example of the type in the sampling is the First Presbyterian Church of Keytesville, Chariton County, constructed in 1853. However, the current form may be the result of a 1900 remodeling of the building rather than original design. Of the 36 examples in the sampling, 29 were constructed between c. 1880 and c. 1919 and the 1890s appears to be the peak of its popularity. This period roughly corresponds with the popularity of Queen Anne and Late Victorian architectural styles, and elements of these styles are commonly seen on side-steeple church types.

In their simplest form, side-steeple churches are gable-end buildings with a freestanding tower attached at one corner. This type is relatively uncommon and in the majority of examples, the tower is integrated into the block of the building. Like many rural churches, these buildings were often constructed with volunteer labor. The relative complexity of

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 12

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

design of many of these buildings may indicate supervision by an experienced local builder, or in more prosperous congregations that a contractor was hired to construct the building.

Side-steeple churches are significant features of the rural landscape. They represent the settlement patterns of rural Missouri and were important religious and cultural centers. This type grew in popularity between c. 1880 and c. 1919. By this period in Missouri's history, the initial settlement period was over and populations tended to be more settled. The adoption of the more complex church form may reflect a greater sophistication and prosperity among rural populations. In many cases, extant side-steeple church buildings were second or third generation buildings for the congregation, built as earlier buildings were outgrown or required replacement due to deterioration or destruction by natural forces.

This document focuses on evaluating church types for significance under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Unlike the gable-end type which was predominantly designed and built by church members, the side-steeple type includes both examples built by congregants and those designed by master builders or architects. Some examples of the type may be eligible for listing as a "work of a master" builder or architect. However, more austere examples, if relatively unaltered, might also be eligible as embodiments of a type, period, or method of construction. Additionally, due to workmanship or historically applied ornamentation, some examples may be significant for their artistic value or adaption of popular architectural styles to a vernacular form. Because the side-steeple church type is relatively common, historically found across the state, the level of significance for architecture would be local.

**Registration Requirements:** To be considered architecturally significant and nominated under this Multiple Property Documentation Form, a side-steeple church building must be a relatively pristine example of the type. It must retain the characteristic features, namely a gable-front roof, a freestanding or integrated tower at one corner of the facade, and a roughly rectangular footprint. Retention of original siding material and early or original windows is essential. Installation of exterior storm windows over originals, however, will not be considered a significant impact on architectural integrity. Neither will changes in roof materials be considered a significant impact on integrity unless its application alters the pitch or shape of the roofline.

Unlike gable-end churches that tended to be unornamented, the use of applied ornamentation or references to popular styles was common on side-steeple church types. Many examples have imbricated shingles, or wood and metal ornamentation reflective of popular architectural styles, notably Gothic Revival and Late Victorian. When applied at

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 13

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

the time of construction or during a historic renovation of the property, decorative elements must be retained to a large extent to be considered architecturally significant. Retention of the historic tower topped by belfry and/or spire is also essential, though some changes to the belfry may be acceptable if significant decorative features remain. For example, it was not unusual for an open belfry to be infilled with vents, screens or siding. If the original openings and applied decoration is still evident, these alterations will not necessarily preclude the building from being listed in the National Register.

Preferably, architecturally significant church buildings will retain their original foundations. Due to their relatively late date of construction, many examples of this type were built with basements for social and other functions. However, many examples were originally constructed on piers or masonry foundations that later needed to be significantly reinforced or repaired. Additionally, in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, many congregations solved the need for additional space by raising the church building and constructing a basement and new foundation. These alterations do not necessarily preclude listing in the National Register, if the nomination demonstrates that the building is otherwise a significant and representative example of the church type locally.

In addition to basements, many churches constructed additions to accommodate growing congregations or the need for kitchens, restrooms, and classroom/meeting spaces. Unlike basement additions, which do not alter the basic form and footprint of the building, rear additions and side ells may have a significant impact on architectural integrity. Additions may be acceptable if they are set back from the church façade, are located on a side or rear elevation, and do not obscure a significant building feature (such as an apse). Additions should also be of smaller in scale than the original building. Nominations for churches with additions should demonstrate that the church is otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

The function of a historic church building was as a gathering place for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of rural church design. In general, to qualify for National Register listing, all churches should retain adequate integrity of original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the church during its period of significance. The retention of the open sanctuary space is of utmost importance.

For the purposes of this document "local" is defined as the county in which the church is located. A county-wide reconnaissance level survey of churches may be necessary to evaluate the architectural significance of a church building. To be eligible under architecture, a property must meet the registration requirements outlined in this document *and* be a significant representation of the type in the county in which it is located.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 14

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

Though this document focuses on architecture, integrity of location remains an important consideration when evaluating the significance a side-steeple church building. Churches were historically associated with small rural communities and were often shared by multiple religious denominations, so they are tied to place. Additionally, rural churches often had associated historic resources such as cemeteries and privies. As extant privies and cemeteries are closely related to rural churches and are almost characteristic of the type, they should in most cases be considered contributing to nominated rural church properties.

#### IV. **Property Type:** Side-Gable Church

**Description:** The type has much in common with its gable-end cousin, the primary difference being the location of the entrance. In the side-gable type, the roof is side gable and the entrance is located in the long wall. Like the gable-end, the side-gable type tends to be small with a rectangular footprint. Width, length and roof pitch vary, but the long wall is commonly 3-5 bays in width. Bays are usually marked by windows and doors. In most known examples, the entrance is centered and transoms over the door are common. The entrance is also often highlighted by another architectural feature such as a projecting foyer, small cross gable or narrow porch. Apses are common features of the long rear wall.

In comparison to most gable-roof type churches in the state, the side-gable church is uncommon. Of the sampling of over 560 rural churches used to develop property types only 14 were side-gable examples from the historic (pre-1945) period. Despite the small number of examples, they were built using a variety of materials and methods including log, brick and frame. Historic stone or rusticated concrete block examples may exist, though none were found in the survey sampling. More recent examples (post c. 1950) include churches constructed of concrete masonry units. Foundations are generally concrete, stone, or brick. Roof materials vary, but are generally replacement asphalt shingle.

Exterior decoration varies and often depended on the financial wherewithal of the congregation, availability of materials, and to an extent, period of construction. Most examples in the survey sampling were austere with little exterior articulation other than the building material. More austere examples generally have paneled entrance doors and rectangular, double-hung windows (single or multi-paned) with plain trim. More elaborate examples may have decorative window surrounds or steepled entrance foyers or porches.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 15

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

Side-gable churches from the historic period are characteristically one-room buildings. A few examples have original or early small entrance foyers or small rooms off the rear apse. The interior typically has a vaulted ceiling and the pews are generally arranged to face a center point along one of the long interior walls.

**Significance:** Though uncommon in comparison to gable-end and other rural church types, the side-gable church is an old and important type in the state. In fact, the first Protestant church constructed in Missouri, the Bethel Baptist Church (1806), was a side-gable building. The small building was recently reconstructed (c. 2009) using some of the original logs. Another early example is the Fee Fee Church in St. Louis County (1829). This building from the early statehood period is constructed of brick with an entrance centered in its five bay façade. Extant examples of any church type from the settlement and early statehood period of Missouri are rare, and most known historic examples of this type date from c. 1890 to c. 1945. Based on survey data, the side-gable church was never widely adopted though as a traditional form its influence is still seen in modern church design. For example a survey of rural church buildings in Callaway County identified six side-gable churches all constructed since c. 1980. Only one extant historic example, heavily modified, remained in the county. The scale and complexity of the interior floor plan distinguish recent examples from their historic predecessors.

It is unknown why this church form was not more popular. Based on ease of construction, this type is on par with gable-end church types. Known examples appear to be simple in design and were likely constructed by volunteers from the congregation or community. The National Register-listed Camp Ground Church in Sullivan County is a good example of this. Built in 1901, the church was constructed not for a single congregation but was available to all orthodox denominations. Funding and labor came from locals, many of whom had used the land on which the church was constructed as a site for religious camp meetings.

Side-gable churches are significant features of the rural landscape. They represent the settlement patterns of rural Missouri and were important religious and cultural centers. This document focuses on evaluating church types for significance under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Because most side-gable church buildings were not architect-designed, only in rare cases might these buildings be considered a “work of a master.” However even austere examples, if relatively unaltered, might embody the characteristics of the type, period, or method of construction. Additionally, due to workmanship or historically applied ornamentation, some examples may be significant for their artistic value or adaptation of popular architectural styles to a vernacular form. Though relatively uncommon, rural churches are closely tied to location

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 16

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

and their design was influenced by local events and traditions, so level of significance for architecture would be local.

**Registration Requirements:** To be considered architecturally significant and nominated under this Multiple Property Documentation Form, a side-gable church building must be a relatively pristine example of the type. It must retain the characteristic features, namely a side gable roof, an original entrance in the long side wall, and a rectangular footprint. Retention of original siding material and early or original windows is essential. Installation of exterior storm windows over originals, however, will not be considered a significant impact on architectural integrity. Neither will changes in roof materials be considered a significant impact on integrity unless its application alters the pitch or shape of the roofline.

As noted above, some side gable churches are very plain with little or no applied ornamentation. In the sampling, elaborate exterior ornamentation is rare although some examples have applied ornamentation or fenestration reflective of popular architectural styles such as Gothic Revival, Classical Revival, and Late Victorian. When applied at the time of construction or during a historic renovation of the property, decorative elements must be retained to a large extent to be considered architecturally significant.

Preferably, architecturally significant church buildings will retain their original foundations. However, some examples were originally constructed on piers or masonry foundations that later needed to be significantly reinforced or repaired. Additionally, in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, many congregations solved the need for additional space by raising the church building and constructing a basement and new foundation. These alterations do not necessarily preclude listing in the National Register, if the nomination demonstrates that the building is otherwise a significant and representative example of the church type locally.

In addition to basements, many churches constructed additions to accommodate growing congregations or the need for kitchens, restrooms, and classroom/meeting spaces. Unlike basement additions, which do not alter the basic form and footprint of the building, rear additions and side ells may have a significant impact on architectural integrity. Additions may be acceptable if they are set back from the church façade, are located on a side or rear elevation, and do not obscure a significant building feature (such as an apse). The addition should also be smaller in scale than the original building. Nominations for churches with additions should also demonstrate that the church is also otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 17

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

The function of a historic church building was as a gathering place for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of rural church design. In general, to qualify for National Register listing, all churches should retain adequate integrity of original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the church during its period of significance. The retention of the open sanctuary space is of utmost importance.

For the purposes of this document "local" is defined as the county in which the church is located. A county-wide reconnaissance level survey of churches may be necessary to evaluate the architectural significance of a church building. To be eligible under architecture, a property must meet the registration requirements outlined in this document *and* be a significant representation of the type in the county in which it is located.

Though this document focuses on architecture, integrity of location remains an important consideration when evaluating the significance a side-gable church building. Churches were historically associated with small rural communities and were often shared by multiple religious denominations, so they are tied to place. Additionally, rural churches often had associated historic resources such as cemeteries and privies. As extant privies and cemeteries are closely related to rural churches and are almost characteristic of the type, they should in most cases be considered contributing to nominated rural church properties.

### V. **Property Type:** Twin Tower Church

**Description:** The twin tower type is a common urban church form, but can also be found scattered across Missouri in small towns and crossroads communities. It is uncommon, though not unheard of, to find this type in a strictly rural setting. The type is characterized by a gable flanked at each corner by towers. Towers generally project slightly from the façade, but are rarely freestanding features. Most are integrated into the main block of the building. The towers can be identical, though in most examples in the survey sampling the towers are of differing heights and ornamentation. Entrances can either be centered in the façade or located in one or both of the towers. Height and roof pitch vary on these buildings as does roof shape. Towers are generally 1-3 stories and the main block is usually 1 to 2 ½ stories in height. Many examples have a gable-end roof, though transepts are common. In some examples, the roof is cross gable, giving the building a roughly square rather than rectangular footprint.

The twin tower church type shows a complexity in floorplan and design not seen in historic Missouri examples of the gable-end type. As noted above, roofline and footprint vary, as does the complexity of the interior arrangement. Unlike many rural churches that

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 18

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

are one large room, the interior of a twin tower building may have multiple rooms in addition to the large sanctuary. Additionally, many examples have interior balconies or organ lofts. Like side-steeple churches, twin tower churches are characteristically ornamented. They often have round or Gothic arched openings, rose windows, and applied ornamental details such as tracery, imbricated shingles, and elaborate cornices. Brick examples may also have ornamental brickwork around fenestration or along the roofline.

The character-defining towers are often as individual as the church with which they are associated. Many are square structures projecting slightly from the corners of the church, but examples of six or eight sided towers can also be found in rural areas. Tiered towers are also common with a wide base, slightly narrower shaft, and smaller belfry. Belfries can be open, or marked by louvered vents. Most towers are topped by spires, but pyramidal roofs are common. Rare examples are topped by domes or mansards.

Twin-tower churches were often second or third generation buildings, constructed as churches outgrew their smaller buildings. As such, it would be unlikely to find a log or heavy timber frame example of the type. Brick and frame examples are most common. No stone examples were found in the survey sampling, but stone or rusticated block examples might exist in the state. Roof materials include wood shingle, metal, slate, and replacement asphalt shingle. Foundation material varies and includes stone, concrete and brick.

As noted above, the twin tower is a relatively uncommon rural property type. Two rural or small town examples are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places: St. Mary's Church in Adair County (1904-05) and St. John's Lutheran in Holt County (1893). St. Mary's is a frame example with entrances in the gable end sheltered under an arcaded porch. The gable is flanked to one side by a tall tower with spire and round arch fenestration, and on the other by a shorter, multi-sided domed tower. St. John's is constructed of brick with round and Gothic arch fenestration. The entrances are located in the square corner towers. Though the tower blocks are roughly the same height, the spire of one more than doubles its height. A small open belfry caps the second tower.

The few examples of this type in the survey sampling were often associated with large, relatively prosperous congregations. Due to this, the church was often the center of a larger complex of related buildings. St. Mary's, for example, had an associated parsonage and church hall. The St. John's National Register nomination includes a historic parochial school building. Cemeteries are also common to this property type. Cemeteries are often located to one side or to the rear of the church building, though some examples wrapped the rear and one or both sides of the building. Cemetery layout

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 19

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

varies, but in the majority of examples graves are laid in long north-south running rows with grave markers facing east.

**Significance:** As a group, the twin tower type may be the most “high style” rural church type architecturally. All examples in the survey sampling reference revival style architectural movements, notably those associated with European ecclesiastical architecture such as Gothic and Romanesque. The complexity of construction, elaborate ornamentation and large massing would have put this type beyond the reach of most rural congregations. This is reflected in the relative rarity of the type in rural areas and limited representation in the survey sampling. Only five examples in the survey sampling could be definitively identified as the twin tower type. The churches in the sampling date from c. 1890 into the 1920s.

Though some of the labor to construct twin tower churches may have been volunteered by the congregation, these churches generally benefited from the expertise of a skilled builder. The two National Register listed examples (St. John’s and St. Mary’s) were constructed by local contractors. The Holy Family Catholic Church in Freeburg, Osage County, was designed by an architect, Henry P. Hess of St. Louis. Hess was a prolific architect in St. Louis and designed numerous churches, church halls, rectories and schools for the dioceses in St. Louis and across the state. Though the designer and builders of the other examples in the survey are unknown, it is likely that an architect or skilled builder was responsible for design and construction.

The size of these buildings and heights of their spires makes them a prominent, if uncommon, feature of the rural and small town landscape. They represent the settlement patterns of rural Missouri, notably for their common association with ethnic groups or communities that developed due to common heritage or religious beliefs. The focus of this document is on evaluating church types for significance under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Due to their complexity of design and common association with local builders or architects, this type may be considered a “work of a master.” Additionally, due to design and workmanship, examples may also be significant for their artistic value. In most cases, due to their association with local events and settlement patterns, significance will be local. However, due to their rarity in rural settings and the quality of design, some examples may be considered of statewide significance.

**Registration Requirements:** To be considered architecturally significant and nominated under this Multiple Property Documentation Form, a twin tower church building must be a relatively pristine example of the type. It must retain the characteristic features, namely a gable-front flanked by corner towers. Retention of original siding material and early or original windows is essential. Installation of exterior storm windows over originals,

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 20

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

however, will not be considered a significant impact on architectural integrity. Neither will changes in roof materials be considered a significant impact on integrity unless its application alters the pitch or shape of the roofline.

Rural examples of twin tower churches are characteristically "high style." They reference historic ecclesiastical architecture, notably Romanesque and Gothic Revival, in their fenestration. Decorative brickwork or applied ornamentation on the façade and side elevations reinforced the references to historically popular architectural styles. When applied at the time of construction or during a historic renovation of the property, decorative elements must be retained to a large extent for the church to be considered architecturally significant. Retention of the historic towers topped by belfry and/or spire is also essential, though some changes to the belfry may be acceptable if significant decorative features remain. For example, it was not unusual for an open belfry to be infilled with vents, screens or siding. If the original openings and applied decoration is still evident, these alterations will not necessarily preclude the building from being listed in the National Register. Though the examples in the sampling retained historic spires, the loss of a tall decorative spire was not unusual among towered/steepled church types. In most cases the loss of a spire would be considered a significant blow to historic integrity, though one that might be mitigated by the overall retention of character defining features.

Preferably, architecturally significant church buildings will retain their original foundations. Due to their relatively late date of construction, many examples of this type were built with basements for social and other functions. However, many examples were originally constructed on piers or masonry foundations that later needed to be significantly reinforced or repaired. Additionally, in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, many congregations solved the need for additional space by raising the church building and constructing a basement and new foundation. These alterations do not necessarily preclude listing in the National Register, if the nomination demonstrates that the building is otherwise a significant and representative example of the church type locally.

In addition to basements, many churches constructed additions to accommodate growing congregations or the need for kitchens, restrooms, and classroom/meeting spaces. Unlike basement additions, which do not alter the basic form and footprint of the building, rear additions and side ells may have a significant impact on architectural integrity. Additions may be acceptable if they are set back from the church façade, are located on a side or rear elevation, and do not obscure a significant building feature (such as an apse). Additions should also be smaller in scale than the original building. Nominations for churches with additions should also demonstrate that the church is otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 21

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

The function of a historic church building was as a gathering place for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of rural church design. In general, to qualify for National Register listing, all churches should retain adequate integrity of original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the church during its period of significance. The retention of the open sanctuary space is of utmost importance.

For the purposes of this document "local" is defined as the county in which the church is located. A county-wide reconnaissance level survey of churches may be necessary to evaluate the architectural significance of a church building. To be eligible under architecture, a property must meet the registration requirements outlined in this document *and* be a significant representation of the type in the county in which it is located. As a relatively rare rural church type, some examples of the type may be of statewide significance. As with local significance, additional survey and evaluation may be necessary to assess level of significance beyond local.

Though this document focuses on architecture, integrity of location remains an important consideration when evaluating the significance a twin-tower church building. Churches were historically associated with small rural communities and were often shared by multiple religious denominations, so they are tied to place. Twin tower churches were also often part of larger complexes of church buildings containing parsonages or rectories, parochial schools, and parish halls. Some examples of the type may have been constructed with indoor plumbing, but privies would still have been common in rural locations in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when most examples of the type were built. Additionally, cemeteries are commonly associated with the type. Extant resources that were part of the original complex should be considered significant features of the type and should in most cases be considered contributing to nominated rural church properties.

### VI. **Property Type:** Steeped-Ell Church

**Description:** The steeped-ell church type is characterized by an intersecting gable roof with a stand-alone or integrated tower at the ell. The tower marks the entrance of the building and even when integrated into the façade, also generally houses a small interior foyer. The location of the tower in the ell, and the intersecting gable roofs provide two broad gable walls for decorative or other features. This usually takes the form of grouped windows or large Gothic or round-arched windows. Additionally, it is common for the gable to be pedimented and infilled with intricate shingles or stickwork and to have decorative verge boards.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 22

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

The intersecting gable roof allows for additional interior space in steepled-ell churches. Some examples take advantage of this space by incorporating larger narthexes, classrooms, or office space. The majority of rural examples, however, were essentially one large room with a small foyer in the tower. Apses are also common to this church type.

Materials used to construct this building type vary. This type did not become popular in rural Missouri until c. 1890 into the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so log examples of the type are currently unknown and are unlikely to have been constructed. Frame construction may be the most common, though brick examples are prevalent. There were no stone or concrete block examples in the survey sampling, though examples built of this material may exist. Stucco, though uncommon, is also known to have been used historically on this church type in Missouri. Foundations are commonly stone or brick, though concrete (block and poured) is common also. Roofing material includes slate, wood shingle, and metal (shingle and sheet), though replacement asphalt shingle is most common.

The façade arrangement of this building type lends itself to ornamentation, and incorporation of shaped windows and applied decorative features seems more characteristic of this type than other gable-end variations. The adoption of this type by rural congregations coincided with the popularity of Queen Anne and other Victorian styles, so applied ornamentation such as brackets along the eaves, imbricated shingles in the gable ends, and decorative verge boards and finials are common. Round and Gothic arched fenestration, notably large centered windows in the façade, is also typical. Stained glass windows are also common to this type. Steeped-ell churches are commonly decked out in Victorian architectural detail, but this church type continued to be popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Arts and Crafts movement was gaining popularity. Though less common, examples of the type with Craftsman detailing such as knee braces and stucco cladding may be found in the state.

Though not centered in the façade, the tower remained an important decorative feature of the building. The ornamentation applied in the gable ends and around the fenestration was often mirrored on the tower. Towers associated with this church type are either stand alone or integrated into the main block of the building, projecting somewhat to allow for an entrance foyer. Towers are often tiered with a slightly wider base, narrower shaft and decorative belfry and/or spire. Many rural churches included highly ornamented tower tops. Round or Gothic arched openings, Victorian stick-style ornamentation, and decorative shingles are common elements seen on belfries. Some rural congregations also ordered pressed metal shingles, vents, and other elements from catalogs to add

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 23

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

distinction to their towers and spires. Generally, the tower contains the entrance which might be reached by steps to a small stoop or covered entrance porch.

**Significance:** In terms of use among rural congregations, the steepled-ell church falls slightly behind the side-steeple type, at least in the survey sampling. Of the roughly 520 churches in the sampling, 44 were classified as steepled-ell types. The examples were located across the state. Though they appear to be more common in small towns and crossroads communities, there are several fine examples in more remote areas of the state. The intersecting gable roof which created two broad decorative gable walls actually lent itself to more open, rural settings, or at least large corner lots in towns and cities. The relative complexity of construction including the intersecting rooflines and integrated tower, may have something to do with its lack of dispersion in rural areas however.

The earliest examples of the type in the survey sampling date from c. 1880 and the latest to c. 1917. This period roughly corresponds with the popularity of Queen Anne and Late Victorian architectural styles, and elements of these styles are commonly seen on steepled-ell church types. This period also saw a rise in the popularity of the Arts and Crafts movement and it would not be unusual to find examples of the type with some Craftsman affinities.

As with many rural churches, the labor to construct the steepled-ell type may have come in part from the congregation. However, the relative complexity of design, use of manufactured ornamentation, and stained glass indicate congregations of some prosperity who likely had the wherewithal to hire a skilled contractor. The congregation of the Mt. Carmel Church in Saline County, for example, hired the Page brothers—skilled builders from the nearby town of Marshall—to construct their Gothic Revival styled steepled-ell building. In Callaway County, the McCredie Methodist Church consulted with Fulton architect M. Fred Bell to design their elaborately detailed building. This pattern of consulting a local builder or architect was likely followed in other areas of the state.

Steepled-ell churches are significant features of the rural landscape. They represent the settlement patterns of rural Missouri and were important religious and cultural centers. This type grew in popularity between c. 1880 and c. 1917. By this period in Missouri's history, the initial settlement period was over and populations tended to be more stable. The adoption of the more complex church form may reflect a greater sophistication and prosperity among rural populations. In many cases, extant steepled-ell church buildings were second or third generation buildings for the congregation, built as earlier buildings were outgrown or required replacement due to deterioration or destruction by natural forces.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 24

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

This document focuses on evaluating church types for significance under National Register Criterion C in the Area of Architecture. Unlike gable-end churches which were predominantly designed and built by church members, the steepled-ell type includes both examples built by congregants and those designed by master builders or architects. Some examples of the type may be eligible for listing as a “work of a master” builder or architect. However, more austere examples, if relatively unaltered, might also be eligible as embodiments of a type, period, or method of construction. Additionally, due to workmanship or historically applied ornamentation, some examples may be significant for their artistic value or adaption of popular architectural styles to a vernacular form. Because the steepled-ell church type is relatively common, historically found across the state, the level of significance for architecture would be local.

**Registration Requirements:** To be considered architecturally significant and nominated under this Multiple Property Documentation Form, a steepled-ell church building must be a relatively pristine example of the type. It must retain the characteristic features, namely an intersecting gable roof and a stand-alone or integrated tower located in the ell. Retention of original siding material and early or original windows is essential. Installation of exterior storm windows over originals, however, will not be considered a significant impact on architectural integrity. Neither will changes in roof materials be considered a significant impact on integrity unless its application alters the pitch or shape of the roofline.

Unlike gable-end churches that tended to be unornamented, the use of applied ornamentation or references to popular styles was common and almost characteristic of the steeple-ell type. Many examples have imbricated shingles, or wood and metal ornamentation reflective of popular architectural styles, notably Gothic Revival and Late Victorian. When applied at the time of construction or during a historic renovation of the property, decorative elements must be retained to a large extent for the church to be considered architecturally significant. Retention of the historic tower topped by belfry and/or spire is also essential, though some changes to the belfry may be acceptable if significant decorative features remain. For example, it was not unusual for an open belfry to be infilled with vents, screens or siding. If the original openings and applied decoration is still evident, these alterations will not necessarily preclude the building from being listed in the National Register.

Preferably, architecturally significant church buildings will retain their original foundations. Due to their relatively late date of construction, many examples of this type were built with basements for social and other functions. However, many examples were originally constructed on piers or masonry foundations that later needed to be significantly reinforced or repaired. These alterations do not necessarily preclude listing in the

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 25

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

National Register, if the nomination demonstrates that the building is otherwise a significant and representative example of the church type locally.

Many churches constructed additions to accommodate growing congregations or the need for kitchens, restrooms, and classroom/meeting spaces. Rear additions and side ells may have a significant impact on architectural integrity. Additions may be acceptable if they are set back from the church façade, are located on a side or rear elevation, and do not obscure a significant building feature (such as an apse). Additions should also be smaller in scale than the original building. Nominations for churches with additions should demonstrate that the church is also otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

The function of a historic church building was as a gathering place for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of rural church design. In general, to qualify for National Register listing, all churches should retain adequate integrity of original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the church during its period of significance. The retention of the open sanctuary space is of utmost importance.

For the purposes of this document “local” is defined as the county in which the church is located. A county-wide reconnaissance level survey of churches may be necessary to evaluate the architectural significance of a church building. To be eligible under architecture, a property must meet the registration requirements outlined in this document *and* be a significant representation of the type in the county in which it is located.

Though this document focuses on architecture, integrity of location remains an important consideration when evaluating the significance of a steepled-ell church building. Churches were historically associated with small rural communities and were often shared by multiple religious denominations, so they are tied to place. Additionally, rural churches often had associated historic resources such as cemeteries and privies. As extant privies and cemeteries are closely related to rural churches and are almost characteristic of the type, they should in most cases be considered contributing to nominated rural church properties.

### VII. **Property Type:** T-Plan Church

**Description:** T-plan church buildings are characterized by their footprint which forms a T. Each arm of the T is equal or roughly equal in length and width. The buildings have intersecting gable roofs, and the base of the T acts as a projecting front gable. In most examples, entrances are located on each side of the projecting gable, in the crook of the

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 26

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

T. One example of an entrance located in the projecting gable was found in the survey sampling. When located in the crook of the T, the entrances are generally marked by a small covered stoop, entrance porch, or small enclosed foyer.

The type shares some characteristics with both side-gable and the steepled-ell types. Like the steepled-ell, the intersecting roofs provide multiple gable ends for groups of windows (or large Gothic or round arch windows) and applied ornamentation. In most examples the fenestration pattern seen in the projecting front gable is repeated in one or both of the other gables, though sometimes at a slightly smaller scale. These windows generally provide light and ventilation to the sanctuary, though in some cases, the interior space may be divided to provide separate foyers, office space, or space for a classroom. The pews are typically aligned to face the long back wall which may have an apse behind the dais. While apses are common, they are not necessarily a characteristic of the type.

The broad gables and location of the entrance on a secondary wall allow room for ornamentation. Unlike the steepled-ell type, however, these small church buildings are generally not highly ornamented. Decorative elements are generally centered around fenestration and Gothic or round-arch openings are common. Gable ends may contain imbricated shingles, scrollwork verge boards or other applied details.

Most of the examples of the type in the survey sampling were of frame construction, though one rusticated concrete block example can be found in Camden County (Evans Chapel in Stoutland). The sampling only contained 13 examples that could be definitively identified as T-plan, so examples in brick or stone may exist in the state. Log or heavy timber frame examples would likely be unusual based on the period when this type was constructed. Most known examples of the type date from c. 1895 to c. 1940. Roof materials also vary, and include wood and metal; replacement asphalt shingle is most common.

**Significance:** In terms of use among rural congregations, the T-plan church is uncommon though not rare, representing 13 of the approximately 560 churches in the survey sampling. While not well represented in the sampling, examples were scattered across the state with one example known in Scotland County on the northern boarder and one in Stone County on the state's southern boarder. Unlike its cousin the steepled-ell, which is commonly located in small towns, most examples of the T-plan church are found in more rural settings. The design of the building with large windows on each leg of the T, seems most appropriate for settings that allow for large lots and open space on all sides of the property.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 27

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

While applied ornamentation such as imbricated shingles and round or Gothic arch fenestration is common, it is by no means characteristic of the property. This church type can be very plain with no ornamentation and simple groupings of flat arch double hung windows. The intersection gable roof and broad gabled walls did lend themselves to decoration. Decorative elements, however, largely depended on the tastes and financial wherewithal of the congregation, so much variation is seen even among the survey sampling.

As with many rural churches, the labor to construct the T-plan type may have come in part from the congregation. However, the relative complexity of design, use of manufactured ornamentation, and stained glass indicate congregations of some prosperity who likely had the financial means to hire a skilled contractor. The Liberty Christian Church in Callaway County, for example, was constructed in 1912 by local builder George Edward Hale for \$1,600. Though relatively unornamented, the church has grouped windows over segmental arch stained glass transoms in each gable end.

T-plan churches are significant features of the rural landscape. They represent the settlement patterns of rural Missouri and were important religious and cultural centers. This type grew in popularity between c. 1895 and c. 1940. By this period in Missouri's history, the initial settlement period was over and populations tended to be more stable. The adoption of the more complex church form may reflect a greater sophistication and prosperity among rural populations. In many cases, extant T-plan church buildings were second or third generation buildings for the congregation, built as earlier buildings were outgrown or required replacement due to deterioration or destruction by natural forces.

This document focuses on evaluating church types for significance under National Register Criterion C in the Area of Architecture. Unlike gable-end churches which were predominantly designed and built by church members, the T-plan type includes both examples built by congregants and those designed by master builders or architects. Some examples of the type may be eligible for listing as a "work of a master" builder or architect. However, more austere examples, if relatively unaltered, might also be eligible as embodiments of a type, period, or method of construction. Additionally, due to workmanship or historically applied ornamentation, some examples may be significant for their artistic value or adaption of popular architectural styles to a vernacular form. Though fewer in number than other church types, the type is found across the state so level of significance would be local.

**Registration Requirements:** To be considered architecturally significant and nominated under this Multiple Property Documentation Form, a T-plan church must be a relatively pristine example of the type. It must retain the characteristic features, namely an

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 28

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

intersecting gable roof and T-shaped footprint of roughly equal arms. Retention of original siding material and early or original windows is essential. Installation of exterior storm windows over originals, however, will not be considered a significant impact on architectural integrity. Neither will changes in roof materials be considered a significant impact on integrity unless its application alters the pitch or shape of the roofline.

Unlike gable-end churches that tended to be unornamented, the use of applied ornamentation or references to popular styles was common though not characteristic of the T-plan type. Many examples have imbricated shingles, or wood and metal ornamentation reflective of popular architectural styles, notably Gothic Revival and Late Victorian. When applied at the time of construction or during a historic renovation of the property, decorative elements must be retained to a large extent for the building to be considered architecturally significant.

Preferably, architecturally significant church buildings will retain their original foundations. Due to their relatively late date of construction, many examples of this type were built with basements for social and other functions. However, many examples were originally constructed on piers or masonry foundations that later needed to be significantly reinforced or repaired. These alterations do not necessarily preclude listing in the National Register, if the nomination demonstrates that the building is otherwise a significant and representative example of the church type locally.

Many churches constructed additions to accommodate growing congregations or the need for kitchens, restrooms, and classroom/meeting spaces. Rear additions and side ells may have a significant impact on architectural integrity. Additions may be acceptable if they are set back from the church façade, are located on a side or rear elevation, and do not obscure a significant building feature (such as an apse). Additions should also be smaller in scale than the original building. Nominations for churches with additions should demonstrate that the church is otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

The function of a historic church building was as a gathering place for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of rural church design. In general, to qualify for National Register listing, all churches should retain adequate integrity of original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the church during its period of significance. The retention of the open sanctuary space is of utmost importance.

For the purposes of this document "local" is defined as the county in which the church is located. A county-wide reconnaissance level survey of churches may be necessary to evaluate the architectural significance of a church building. To be eligible under

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 29

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

architecture, a property must meet the registration requirements outlined in this document *and* be a significant representation of the type in the county in which it is located.

Though this document focuses on architecture, integrity of location remains an important consideration when evaluating the significance a gable-end church building. Churches were historically associated with small rural communities and were often shared by multiple religious denominations, so they are tied to place. Additionally, rural churches often had associated historic resources such as cemeteries and privies. As extant privies and cemeteries are closely related to rural churches and are almost characteristic of the type, they should in most cases be considered contributing to nominated rural church properties.

### VIII. **Property Type:** Temple-Front Church

**Description:** The temple-front church is characterized by a classical portico that projects from the façade or is implied by a series of colossal pilasters across the front. Pilasters may support simple a entablature or pedimented parapet. Likewise, projecting porticos may be capped solely by an entablature or be topped by a pediment. Roof types vary, with flat and gable roofed examples in the sampling. Windows are generally flat arched, though decorative surrounds are not uncommon, and in a least one case Gothic arches were used. This building type tends to be boxy in massing providing a sense of monumental scale even on smaller versions of the type. Ornamentation is derived from classical architecture and is applied to provide a symmetrical orderly facade, though the classical orders are generally not adhered to academically. Brick seems to be the preferred construction material, though frame examples may exist. Wood or stone is often used for ornamentation, and the foundations are generally stone, concrete or brick.

Though closely linked to historic architectural forms and styles, temple-front churches are not highly ornamented. Ornamentation is often limited to the pilasters that divide the facade or the simple entablature or pediment. As most examples of the type are brick, ornamental brickwork around fenestration, at the cornice line or on the parapet wall is common. Some examples also have decorative cornices, fanlight transoms, and leaded or stained glass windows.

This is a rare property type in rural Missouri now, though it was likely prevalent during the 1850s and 1860s. Six of the seven examples in the survey sampling date prior to c. 1865; one of these examples is from the 1930s HABS survey and was demolished in the 1940s. The seventh example dates to 1935. Despite the small sampling, the disparity in construction dates may hold true as additional survey is conducted. All examples are

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 30

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

located in small towns rather than strictly rural areas, though simple rural examples reflecting Greek Revival architectural details were likely constructed.

Like other rural church types, the earliest examples of the temple-front church generally contained one large room, though small foyers or office spaces were not uncommon. Several examples of the type date to before the Civil War and are located in areas that had large slave populations. Several examples are known to have had slave galleries and at least one in the survey sampling, the Dover Presbyterian Church in Lafayette County, retained the slave gallery/balcony at the time of the survey (1994). Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century examples tend to be larger with more complex interior layouts to house classrooms, restrooms, and social halls.

**Significance:** Extant temple-front church buildings are uncommon in rural areas of the state. They, like the twin-tower type, tend to be associated with larger towns or urban areas. Historic examples of the type seem to date from two distinct periods: c. 1850 to c. 1870, and c. 1890 to c. 1940. This disparity in dates seems to reflect changes in popular architectural movements.

The early, c. 1850 to c. 1870, examples were constructed during a period when the Greek Revival dominated residential and institutional architecture nationally. After the Civil War church congregations began to adopt revival styles, notably those associated with historic European church architecture. Examples from c. 1890 through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century likely derive from the surge in popularity of Neo-classical and Colonial Revival architecture. Interestingly, some examples of the early temple-front types show the growing influence of the ecclesiastical movement in church architecture. The Glasgow Presbyterian Church (1860, National Register listed 1982) has the boxy symmetrical design and colonnade typical of the temple-front type, but also has Gothic arch windows.

Construction information on the churches in the sampling was not available, but their location in small towns and brick construction seem to indicate that the congregation hired a contractor or builder to at least oversee the construction of these churches. Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century examples were also most likely products of a master builder or had design assistance from an architect. Several antebellum examples were associated with slave-holding families, so a certain amount of prosperity was to be expected in these congregations. They could have well afforded to consult a local builder. Likewise, later examples were found in towns and larger congregations may have had the means of hiring a builder or architect. There were also numerous books on church planning and architecture published in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and congregations may have consulted these for ideas of design and layout.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 31

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

Temple-front churches are significant features of the rural landscape and small town streetscape. They represent the settlement patterns of rural Missouri and were important religious and cultural centers. This type had two distinct periods of development, both influenced by widely popular architectural styles. The first period was c. 1850 to c. 1870, reflecting the popularity and adoption of the Greek Revival as a national style. The second period, c. 1890 to c. 1940, reflects the popularity of Neo-Classical and Colonial Revival architecture in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This document focuses on evaluating church types for significance under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Unlike gable-end churches which were predominantly designed and built by church members, the temple-front type includes both examples built by congregants and those designed by master builders or architects. Some examples of the type may be eligible for listing as a “work of a master” builder or architect. However, more austere examples, if relatively unaltered, might also be eligible as embodiments of a type, period, or method of construction. Additionally, due to workmanship or historically applied ornamentation, some examples may be significant for their artistic value or adaption of popular architectural styles to a vernacular form. Because the temple-front church type is relatively common, historically found across the state, the level of significance for architecture would be local.

**Registration Requirements:** To be considered architecturally significant and nominated under this Multiple Property Documentation Form, a temple-front church building must be a relatively pristine example of the type. It must retain the characteristic features, namely the symmetrically placed pilasters or colonnaded portico on the façade and boxy massing. Retention of original exterior wall material and early or original windows is essential. Installation of exterior storm windows over originals, however, will not be considered a significant impact on architectural integrity. Neither will changes in roof materials be considered a significant impact on integrity unless its application alters the pitch or shape of the roofline.

Temple-front churches derive much of their association with architectural styles from their symmetrical façade arrangement and simple pilasters or columns. Brick examples often have some ornamental brickwork, and wood cornices or door surrounds are also common though not characteristic of the type. When applied at the time of construction or during a historic renovation of the property, decorative elements must be retained to a large extent to be considered architecturally significant.

Many churches constructed additions to accommodate growing congregations or the need for kitchens, restrooms, and classroom/meeting spaces. Rear additions and side ells may have a significant impact on architectural integrity. Additions may be acceptable

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 32

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

if they are set back from the church façade, are located on a side or rear elevation, and do not obscure a significant building feature (such as an apse). Additions should also be smaller in scale than the original building. Nominations for churches with additions should demonstrate that the church is also otherwise an excellent local example of the property type.

The function of a historic church building was as a gathering place for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of rural church design. In general, to qualify for National Register listing, all churches should retain adequate integrity of original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the church during its period of significance. The retention of the open sanctuary space is of utmost importance.

For the purposes of this document “local” is defined as the county in which the church is located. A county-wide reconnaissance level survey of churches may be necessary to evaluate the architectural significance of a church building. To be eligible under architecture, a property must meet the registration requirements outlined in this document *and* be a significant representation of the type in the county in which it is located. As a relatively rare rural church type, some examples may be of statewide significance. As with local significance, additional survey and evaluation may be necessary to assess level of significance beyond local.

Though this document focuses on architecture, integrity of location remains an important consideration when evaluating the significance a temple-front church building. Churches were historically associated with small rural communities and were often shared by multiple religious denominations, so they are tied to place. Additionally, rural churches often had associated historic resources such as cemeteries and privies. As extant privies and cemeteries are closely related to rural churches and are almost characteristic of the type, they should in most cases be considered contributing to nominated rural church properties.

### IX. Property Type: Other

**Description:** The church property types discussed above do not encompass all the types and forms of rural churches in the state. For example, the survey sampling included one octagonal church building and three small churches with pyramidal roofs. However, the sampling for these church types was too small to derive common characteristics or form a typology. These more uncommon types may still be eligible for listing in the National Register for association with the contexts outlined in this document.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 33

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

**Significance:** Churches are an important part of rural landscape and were an important social center for rural communities. Architecturally, they reflect the cultural traditions of the congregants, available material and construction expertise, religious traditions, and popular styles. The Stokes Chapel Methodist Church (c. 1895) in Pettis County is a good example of the mix of popular styles and traditional religious forms. The chapel's octagonal form was likely influenced by the preference of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist denomination, for round or octagonal buildings. The center steeple/tower and Victorian architectural details, however, reflect local traditions and popular tastes. Research into the architectural movements or traditions that influenced the design of "other" church types will be necessary as part of the nomination of individual buildings to the National Register.

**Registration Requirements:** To be considered architecturally significant and nominated under this Multiple Property Documentation Form, "other" type churches must be relatively unaltered from their historic appearance. Retention of original siding material and early or original windows is essential. Installation of exterior storm windows over originals, however, will not be considered a significant impact on architectural integrity. Neither will changes in roof materials be considered a significant impact on integrity unless its application alters the pitch or shape of the roofline.

When applied at the time of construction or during a historic renovation of the property, decorative elements must be retained to a large extent for the church to be considered architecturally significant. Decorative elements vary and often depend on the financial prosperity of the congregants and/or the period of construction. Some examples have Late Victorian ornamentation including decorative towers and belfries. When present historically, the retention of towers and belfries are also essential, though some changes to the belfry may be acceptable if significant decorative features remain. Applied decoration is not a characteristic feature of many "other" types, however. For example, the three pyramidal roof churches in the survey sampling (c. 1917 to c. 1941) were very plain, though Craftsman affinities were attributed to one example with exposed rafter tails.

Preferably, architecturally significant church buildings will retain their original foundations. Most of the "other" church types identified in the sampling date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to their relatively late date of construction, some examples were built with basements for social and other functions. However, many examples were originally constructed on piers or masonry foundations that later needed to be significantly reinforced or repaired. Additionally, in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, many congregations solved the need for additional space by raising the church building and constructing a basement and new foundation. These alterations do not necessarily preclude listing in

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. F Page 34

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

the National Register if it is demonstrated that the building otherwise retains integrity and is shown to be an uncommon type locally.

In addition to basements, many churches constructed additions to accommodate growing congregations or the need for kitchens, restrooms, and classroom/meeting spaces. Unlike basement additions, which do not alter the basic form and footprint of the building, rear additions and side ells may have a significant impact on architectural integrity. Additions may be acceptable if they are set back from the church façade, are located on a side or rear elevation, and do not obscure a significant building feature (such as an apse). Additions should also be smaller in scale than the original church building.

The function of a historic church building was as a gathering place for communal activity. As such, a large open interior space is a significant characteristic of rural church design. In general, to qualify for National Register listing, all churches should retain adequate integrity of original interior design components (plan and finishes) that reflect the use of the church during its period of significance. The retention of the open sanctuary space is of utmost importance.

For the purposes of this document "local" is defined as the county in which the church is located. A county-wide reconnaissance level survey of churches may be necessary to evaluate the architectural significance of a church building. To be eligible under architecture, a property must meet the registration requirements outlined in this document *and* be a significant representation of the type in the county in which it is located. As relatively rare church types, some buildings may be of statewide significance. As with local significance, additional survey and evaluation may be necessary to assess level of significance beyond local.

Though this document focuses on architecture, integrity of location remains an important consideration when evaluating the significance a rural church building. Churches were historically associated with small rural communities and were often shared by multiple religious denominations, so they are tied to place. Additionally, rural churches often had associated historic resources such as cemeteries and privies. As extant privies and cemeteries are closely related to rural churches and are almost characteristic of the type, they should in most cases be considered contributing to nominated rural church properties.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. G Page 1

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

## G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The overall geographical boundaries encompass the entire state of Missouri. However, this document focuses on rural and small town churches. Rural is difficult to define and the definitions used by the U.S. Census and others have changed over time. Many churches that were constructed in rural areas have now been encompassed by growing towns or metropolitan areas. In other cases, once thriving towns have become depopulated. For the purposes of this document a “rural church” is one that:

- Is currently located outside the political boundaries of a town or city.
- Was located outside the political boundaries of a town or city *at the time of construction.*
- Is currently located in a community of less than 2000 population.
- Was located in a community of less than 2000 population *at the time of construction.*

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. H Page 1

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

### H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

The identification and evaluation of property types was based on existing data from four primary sources: architectural and historic survey of Missouri's towns and counties, Missouri National Register eligibility assessment files, National Register nominations for church buildings, and Historic American Building Survey (HABS) photographs of Missouri churches. The architectural and historic survey files, eligibility assessment files, and copies of National Register nominations are maintained by the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City, Missouri. The HABS photos were reviewed online as part of the American Memory collection at the Library of Congress.

Only four of Missouri's architectural/historic surveys specifically focus on church architecture. Mimi Stiritz's survey of churches in St. Louis City was not consulted because of the urban location of the buildings. However, Roger Maserang's "Churches of the Show-Me Region" (1994), Arnold Park's survey of African American Churches in the Missouri Bootheel (2001), and Tiffany Patterson's survey of rural churches in Callaway County (2010) serve as the basis for the evaluation. This research was greatly augmented by a review of county-wide architectural surveys conducted in Missouri between c. 1970 and the present.

In all, survey forms for approximately 560 rural and small town churches were reviewed. Basic information about the churches including name, location, date of construction, materials and significant building feature (general type classification), were entered into a table and sorted so that commonalities and significant architectural features used to classify churches could be identified. The table and review of survey forms was also used to identify common alterations and to evaluate integrity for the purposes of developing registration requirements.

It should be noted that though a significant number of rural churches were included in the sampling, survey data is not available for most of the state. Missouri has 114 counties, yet only 59 of these counties are represented in the survey sampling. This is due to lack of rural architectural survey in the state. Some areas of the state, such as the northwesternmost tier of counties and almost all of the counties bordering the Missouri River are well represented in the survey sampling. The greatest lack is seen in the southern and southwestern portion of the state. Based on general characteristics of the population, dates of settlement and other factors, it can be surmised that rural churches in these areas would be similar in type to those identified in other counties. As additional survey is completed, however, this document should be reevaluated and the property type descriptions amended to expand on existing types or add additional property types.

The historic context was developed to provide a general overview of the growth and spread of religious bodies in the State of Missouri. The context, however, is not meant to provide a

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. H Page 2

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

means of evaluating the social or religious significance of churches in the state. Churches can be significant for multiple reasons and examples listed for their association with significant events abound. It is extremely difficult to evaluate the significance of individual churches under Criterion A in the Multiple Property Documentation Form format. So, the research and evaluation of significance for this document is based on architectural features and characteristics that can be applied to rural churches across the state.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. I Page 1

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

## I. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

### Published Sources:

- Bruher, Edmund deSchweinitz. *The New Country Church Building*. New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1917.
- Burroughs, P.E. *A Complete Guide to Church Building*. Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1923.
- Department of Interior, Census Office. *Report of Statistics of Churches in the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894. Published online at: [http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1890a\\_v9-01.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1890a_v9-01.pdf). Accessed 10/27/2010.
- Foley, William E. *A History of Missouri, Vol 1: 1673 to 1820*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000.
- Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings in *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1988.
- History of Callaway County, Missouri*. St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1884. Published online by Missouri Digital Heritage at: <http://cdm.sos.mo.gov>, accessed October 29, 2010.
- Houck, Louis. *History of Missouri, Vol. 2.: From the Earliest Explorations and Settlements until the Admission of the State into the Union*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1908. Published online at: <http://digital.library.umsystem.edu/>. Accessed 10/28/2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *History of Missouri, Vol. 3: From the Earliest Explorations and Settlements until the Admission of the State into the Union*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1908. Published online at: <http://digital.library.umsystem.edu/>, accessed 10/28/2010.
- Houck, Louis, ed. *The Spanish Regime in Missouri, Vol. 1*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 1909.
- Primm, James Neal. *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764-1980*. Third Edition. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998.
- United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Religious Bodies: 1926, Vol. 1*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1930.
- United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Religious Bodies: 1936, Volume 1, Summary and Detailed Tables. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1941.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 1 Page 2

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

Williams, Walter, ed. *The State of Missouri: An Autobiography*. Columbia, MO: E.W. Stephens Press, 1904.

### Unpublished Sources:

Carneal, Thomas. "A Historic Inventory of Andrew County, Missouri," 1978. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Historic Inventory of Buchanan County, Missouri," 1981. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Historic Inventory of Daviess County, Missouri," 1979. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Historic Inventory of Gentry County, Missouri," 1980 . Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Historic Inventory of Harrison County, Missouri," 1980 . Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Historic Inventory of Holt County, Missouri," 1980 . Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Historic Inventory of the Tri-County Historical District," 1979. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Center for Archaeological Research. "Historic Sites of Christian County," 1978-1979. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Center for Ozark Studies, Southeast Missouri State University. "An Historic and Architectural Resources Survey of Iron County, Missouri," 1979-80. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Denny, James. "Bergt, Christian A., Farm (Saxon Lutheran Memorial), Perry County." National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1980.

Edens, Charri. "United Methodist Church, Newtonia, MO." Eligibility Assessment Submission on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office, 2010.

Harper, Linda Donovan. "Historic Building Survey of Schuyler County," 1980-1981. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Higbee, Harper and Shields. "Rural Cooper County Survey," 1981. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 1 Page 3

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

Jenkins, Seth. "St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and Parochial School, Holt County, Missouri." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2008.

Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Jay. "Evans Chapel/Stoutland Methodist Church, Stoutland, MO" Eligibility Assessment Submission on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office, 2010.

Kalen & Marrow. "Survey of Carroll County," 1986. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Survey of Chariton County," 1987. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Keller, Margaret L. and Linda Harper. "Final Report for the Historic Building Survey of Clark County," 1982-84. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Kremer, Gary. "Osage County Survey." Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Maserang, Roger. "Churches of the Show-Me Region," July 1994. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Meramec Regional Planning Commission. "Historic Inventory of Crawford County," 1982-1984. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Historic Inventory of Dent and Maries County," 1981. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Historic Inventory of Gasconade County," 1986. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Historic Inventory of Phelps County," 1984. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "History of Southern Gasconade County," 1986. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Mueller, Marybelle and Jim Denny. "McKendree Chapel, Cape Girardeau County, Missouri." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1987.

Myers-Phinney, Linda and David Quick. "A Survey of Northern Stone County," 1994. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

\_\_\_\_\_. "An Overview and Survey of Southern Stone County," 1995. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 1 Page 4

Rural Church Architecture of Missouri, c. 1819 to c. 1945  
State of Missouri

---

Northeast Missouri Regional Planning Commission. "Architectural and Historical Survey of Scotland County," 1987. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Patterson, Tiffany. "Rural Churches of Callaway County, Missouri," 2010. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Rauh, Carlene. "St. Mary's of the Barrens Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1995.

Ray County Historical Society. "Architectural Survey of Ray County," 1979. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Sandehn, Nancy. "Cultural Resources of Andrew County, Missouri." Mo-Kan Regional Council, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Survey of Rural Clinton County," 1984. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Stepenoff, Bonnie. "Butler County, Missouri Historical and Architectural Survey." Prepared for Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission, August 1993. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Towey, Martin G., "Historic Architecture of Gasconade County, Missouri," 1981. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Ward, Dennis. "Marquand Historical Survey." Madison Tri-Development, 2000. Survey on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.