

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Tulip Methodist Church (1872) is a five bay frame building with simple Greek Revival details. It is located in a rural hilltop setting near the tiny community of Tulip. The church is very well preserved on both the interior and exterior, and the few alterations that have occurred are minor.

The Tulip Methodist Church is styled to resemble a simplified Greek temple. It features a pedimented front, a full entablature, and paneled corner pilasters. The rear is not styled. The two front doors lead to a pair of interior aisles which in turn lead to a pair of rear doors. Between the rear doors is a raised pulpit area with three lecterns. The pews are all original, with the center group featuring a central divider which at one time separated men and women. The interior is starkly plain with six inch tongue and groove boards covering the walls and ceiling. Other features include the four panel doors, the nine over nine windows, and the stone piers which form the foundation. The church was originally lit by kerosene lanterns, and electricity has never been installed.

Alterations:

Since construction four of the stone piers in the rear have been replaced, aluminum awnings have been installed over the doors, the steps have been replaced, and a clear varnish has been applied to the interior. These changes, of course, are minor when one considers how unaltered the church is on the whole. It is indeed particularly rare to find a church with this degree of integrity on both the exterior and interior. Admittedly, the awnings are unfortunate, but they are easily reversible and do not obscure any significant architectural features.

Specific dates 1872
Builder/Architect Builder: Tulip Methodist Church

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The Tulip Methodist Church is locally significant in the area of architecture as a superior example among a limited number of surviving rural Greek Revival churches in northern Louisiana. The context for significance encompasses the state's fifteen northernmost parishes.

Boxy, temple-shaped, sparingly detailed churches of this type are firmly within the provincial Greek Revival tradition. Although they are related to country Greek Revival churches found in the East and Midwest, Louisiana examples are starker and often post-Civil War. Extant examples are concentrated in northern Louisiana, largely because it is a church type associated with the Baptist and Methodist denominations that predominated in the region. It is impossible to ascertain how many of these churches once existed in northern Louisiana, although it is reasonable to assume that many rural communities had them. But today there are only about a dozen remaining examples in the fifteen-parish region, and some of these have been adversely altered. Also, it is an archetype with an uncertain future because most examples are in remote locations, and many are no longer being used on a regular basis.

In addition to the issue of rarity, Tulip Methodist Church is superior to most other examples. The typical rural Greek Revival influenced church in the region has plain gables with simple corner boards and gable end returns. By contrast, the Tulip Methodist Church is a much stronger stylistic statement, featuring a fully articulated (and correctly proportioned) pediment, a full entablature, and paneled pilasters. Also, whereas Tulip Methodist is almost completely intact, some of the other examples have received major interior renovations and/or front porch additions.

Historical Note:

Tulip Methodist Church traces its direct origins to a division in the membership of the Pisgah Methodist Church in 1872. With part of the membership going to Homer, there was need for a new location and house of worship nearer the remaining membership. Thus the move of about two miles south to the village of Tulip. The church was erected during the summer of 1872, given the name Tulip Methodist Church, and the approximate cost of fifteen hundred dollar, was paid by the subscribers. Regular services are no longer held at Tulip Methodist Church, with its only use being occasional revival meetings and the annual Tulip Memorial Day.

Major Bibliographical References

Daily ledger of William A. Watson, Secretary of Pisgah Society and Tulip Methodist Church, 1871-75.

Claiborne Parish Conveyance Records.

Harris, D. W. and Hulse, B. M. The History of Claiborne Parish, Louisiana. 1886.

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwest Louisiana. Southern Publishing Co., 1890.