

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Brooklyn Church (1902) is a single story plain frame structure located in a wooded hilltop setting 5.3 miles southeast of the small town of Chatham. The church has been little altered since construction.

The Brooklyn Church has a simple pitched roof form, four bays deep. The church is entered through a central transomed double door on the gable end. The rear gable end features two windows and a second door. Windows are six over six and the doors are of the six panel "Cross and Bible" type. Detailing is simple with narrow gauge clapboards and plain door and window frames with molded tops. The attic vents are original.

The plain flushboard interior culminates in a slightly raised balustraded platform with a three-part pulpit-lectern. The floorboards are original.

INTEGRITY:

Since construction a new roof covering has been installed along with new front and rear steps and two exterior lights. In our opinion, these changes should be regarded as minor.

Adjacent to the church is a sizable historically associated cemetery (see Item 8 historical note). It is listed as a contributing element.

Specific dates 1902
Builder/Architect Builder: Brooklyn Church

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The Brooklyn Church is locally significant in the area of architecture as an almost perfectly preserved example of an austere turn-of-the-century country frame church. It represents a local North Louisiana unpretentious building tradition. Architecturally speaking, churches of this ilk should be regarded as remote descendants of provincial Greek Revival temple form churches. They are generally associated with the Methodist and Baptist sects and represent a building type which is a vital part of the material culture of the Upland South.

But it is an archetype which is rapidly disappearing. Because these churches are in rural locations, many are no longer actively used and hence face an uncertain future. Many are already gone. Although there is no exact count or survey to indicate how many churches of this type there once were across northern Louisiana, it is reasonable to assume that many rural communities had them. But today, for example, there are probably fewer than ten remaining examples in the nine parishes in the eastern half of North Louisiana. *

*This figure covers the following parishes: Madison, East & West Carroll, Ouachita, Jackson, Richland, Union, Lincoln and Morehouse. It is based upon a windshield survey of East Carroll and Madison Parishes, comprehensive surveys of Union and Lincoln Parishes, and general knowledge of the remaining areas on the part of the staff of the State Historic Preservation Office.

HISTORICAL NOTE:

Brooklyn Church traces its beginnings to 1857 when a wagon train of settlers from Georgia camped at the church site and decided to settle in the area. According to church history, there was already a small log church at the site, but the settlers erected a new building soon after their arrival. Neither of these earlier structures is extant; the present building dates from 1902. Regular services at Brooklyn were discontinued in 1939, but homecoming services are held yearly. Upkeep is now the responsibility of the newly formed Brooklyn Church Preservation Society, Inc.

The present cemetery has been in use at least since the arrival of the settlers in 1857. Almost all of the tombstones date from c. 1860 through the early twentieth century.

NB: The State Review Committee asked that an expanded historical sketch be submitted with the nomination, It is enclosed (as prepared by the applicant).

Major Bibliographical References

Louisiana Historic Standing Structures Survey Files, LA State Historic Preservation Office.

Historical information supplied by applicant, copy in Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.