

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Hickory Springs Methodist Episcopal Church (c.1900) is a single story plain frame structure located in a very remote wooded setting just inside the eastern boundary of Jackson Parish. Alterations have been minimal.

The church is a four bay, gable fronted, unpainted board and batten building. It is entered through a central double door, with a single leaf door on the rear elevation. The pediment-shaped gables front and rear are sheathed in clapboards and feature gable end returns. These returns as well as the pediment-like proportions mark Hickory Springs as a remote descendant of Greek Revival temple form churches.

The walls and ceiling of the interior are sheathed in narrow gauge unpainted beaded boards. There is a simple lectern, made of the same boards, resting on a platform. The wooden flooring is original and remains uncovered. The original pews had rotted beyond repair, but the present primitive ones are an appropriate replacement.

Alterations

- (1) Three of the six over six windows are replacements. Because they are too tall for the openings, the sashes overlap. The window surrounds are original.
- (2) The roof originally was wooden shingles, and now is tin.
- (3) The original wooden piers were replaced with concrete piers.
- (4) The present concrete steps front and rear replace the original wooden ones.

Assessment of Integrity

When one considers how much of the original church survives on both the exterior and interior, the above alterations are, on balance, minor. Hickory Springs easily conveys its turn-of-the-century primitive rural church character and hence its significance as a rare survivor of a North Louisiana vernacular archetype.

Adjacent to the church is a cemetery with the earliest marked grave dated 1857, although most of the monuments are modern. It is listed as a non-contributing element.

Significant dates	c.1900
Architect/Builder	unknown
Criterion C	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Hickory Springs 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

Hickory Springs was established in 1841 as a Methodist Episcopal church. The original log structure served as both a church and school. The current church was built c.1900. Regular services have been discontinued, but a homecoming service is held once a year.

Major Bibliographical References

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

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