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<b>ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE</b> Nomination Form
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Ala. Historical Commission

1. Name: Gaines Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

historic: \_\_\_\_\_

and/or common \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location: \_\_\_\_\_

street: 404 A Street

city, town: Anniston vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_

state: Alabama county: Calhoun zip: 36207

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other

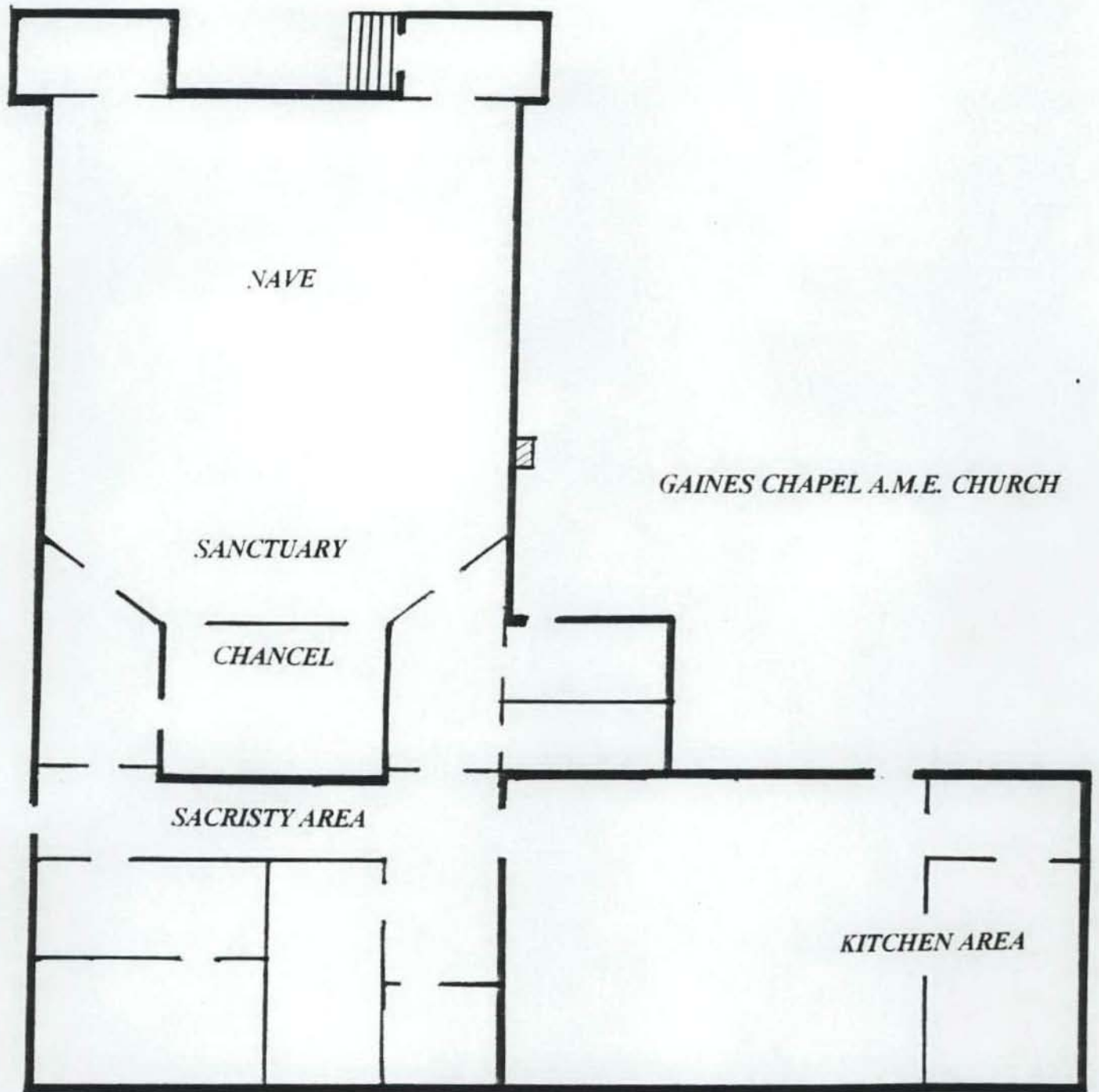
4. Owner of Property

name: Gaines Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church Phone number: 256-236-1110

street & number: 404 A Street

city, town: Anniston, Alabama ---vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ zip: 36201 ✓

5. Floor plan & site plan. Use space below to sketch floor plan and site plan or attach additional sheet.



## GAINES CHAPEL A.M.E. CHURCH

### DESCRIPTION

The original construction is of a brick veneer, single story structure, facing north on a corner lot (100' x 200'). There is a single story addition on the east side of and to the rear of the apsidal. This structure is located in the northwest corner of the intersection of Christine Ave. And "A" Street, with a vacant lot for parking on the east side of the building, which also includes an operational fish pond.

The original portion of the building is Architecturally Romanesque and constructed in a simple Basilica style. The facade is comprised of a gable wall, a bay style entrance in the northeast corner and a square spire on a bay style bell tower in the northwest corner. Both are accented by the architectural projected stained glass windows which surrounds the original structure. Main access into the building are up concrete steps, and through double doors located on the west side of the bay entrance, opening into a vestibule and through double doors into the main body of the church.

The interior of the body features ribbed vaulting of a high ceiling with original, beaded tongue and groove paneling . The chancel is decided by a segmental arch with barrel vaulted tongue and groove paneling and a raised alter and choir area to the rear of the pulpit. There are twelve squares constructed in the ceiling, representing the twelve tribes of Judah.

The doors and windows adorn original rosette style facings. The walls include vertically beaded tongue and groove paneling and plastered wall covering, with supported and covered hardwood floors.

Architectural stained glass windows are viewed at the rear of the chancel, at the back of the gable end of the apsidal of the original structure, which are enclosed in the renovated area of an earlier addition. Through doors from either side of the sanctuary contains a lounge/classroom, a library/classroom, sacristy area classrooms, the pastor's study, office area and restrooms.

Located on the east side of the apsidal is the latest addition, constructed in the late '70's containing a kitchen and dining area, a meeting hall area and additional classroom space.



Seeing the need and desire for a comfortable structure, under the administration of the Reverend Jones, the church was remodeled with a veneer brick covering and stained glass windows, as it now stand.

1924

In 1940 under the leadership of the Reverend R.B. Barfield the grounds were beautified by the planting of shrubbery and flowers. The pot belly stove was replaced with gas space heaters. Because of his vision and the untiring labor of the congregation, the mortgage was burned.

In 1956 during Reverend T. Oliver's administration, the first annex was built onto the south end of the church. This structure included a kitchen and a multi-purpose room.

In 1962, during the leadership of the Reverend E. S. Peters a Conn Organ was purchased, the music department was restructured, the youth guild was organized and his active participation in civic affairs kept the church informed and involved. In the following years a communion rail and a lectern was added to the alter.

Through the superb leadership of the Reverend W. G. Treadwell in 1976, the second annex was added. This renovation included the educational building, a ladies lounge, renovation of windows and the first heating and cooling system.

Under the Reverend B. L. Little, the present pastor, the pews were cushioned, the sanctuary was painted and re-carpeted, the outside of the church was repainted, the roof was repaired and painted, the bathrooms were updated and a public address system was added. The old fashion Gothic lights were replaced with globe ceiling fans.

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**6. Description** (See attached instructions for specific guidelines.)

**Condition**

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered

altered

**Check one**

original site

moved

**date: 1895**

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.**

**7. Significance (see attached instructions for specific guidelines.)**

Period	Areas of Significance-Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other specify)

**Specific dates** **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph).**

Gaines Chapel African Methodist Church, located in Anniston, Alabama is eligible for listing on the Alabama Register of Historic places, because it was a place Black Americans expressed their religious freedom. Its architectural style represented early 20th Century Gothic Revival. Gaines Chapel is located in a predominately Black community.

The history of Gaines Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church represents the struggle through a period of one-hundred-ten years and many trials, observations and developments. The compulsion of the Christians to follow the African Methodist Episcopal faith organized Gaines Chapel A.M.E. church, and named the church after the late Bishop Wesley J. Gaines. This organization was formed in a shed at Oxanna, Alabama (between Oxford and Anniston, Alabama).

In 1889, it was moved to Grant Avenue between, "B" and "C" Streets, and remained in this location for eight years. The time moved on, this event was only a moment of history, and effective enough to be remembered by men yet living. For under the leadership of the great Christian Crusaders, the founders, using the motto, "upon this rock I build my church," the conquest for Christ continued. The ministers leading this event were the Reverends Richardson, N.L. Edmondson, Hamilton, Stanley, Denson and Brown.

Over shadowed by an unfortunate event in 1895, the Church was burned. This did not wilter the Christian spirit or discouraged their determination. The congregation moved in a hall on "A" Street and Leighton Avenue where they remained for eight months. Desiring an edifice of their own, the Crusaders which included: Brother and Sister Garrett, Sister Jane Mitchell, Sister Maddox, Sister McIntire, Sister Clark, Brother and Sister Ferguson, under the able leadership of the Reverend S. E. Edwards moved to the present site, 404 A Street, Anniston, Alabama. A frame structure was built complete with bell tower and the twelve (12) tribes of Israel squares in the ceiling. The membership had increased to one-hundred thirty members.



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**8. Major Bibliographical Reference**

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- A.M.E. Discipline
- Programs

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**9. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of nominated property 100' x 200'  
Quadrangle name African Methodist Episcopal

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Enclose map showing location of property. (city or county map, state highway department map, or USGS map.)

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**10. Form Prepared By** Restoration Committee

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*Julia M. Welby* *Mama Woods*  
name/title *Richard J. Logan* *Rev. Sandra Aldrige*

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organization Gaines Chapel A.M.E. Church date 9-8-98  
street & number 404 A Street telephone (256) 236-1110  
city or town Anniston state AL zip 36201

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**11. Please submit color slides of the property with this form.**

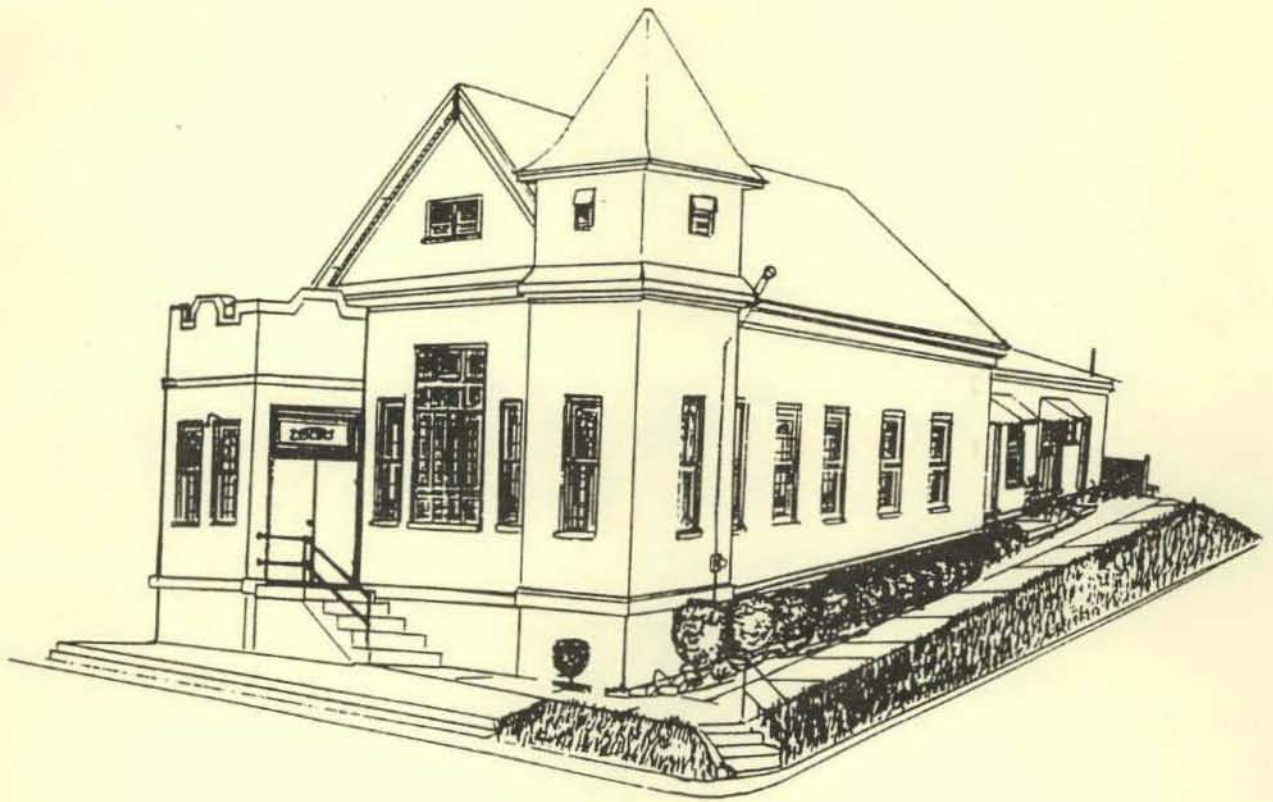
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**12. Please return ALABAMA REGISTER form and documentation to:**

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Alabama Register Coordinator  
Alabama Historical Commission  
468 South Perry Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900





SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION TO INCLUDE ON THE  
ALABAMA REGISTER FORM - - - CHURCHES

- What was the original denomination:

**African Methodist Episcopal**

- What information do you have on the early development of the denomination?

The African Methodist Episcopal Church was started in 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by a group of disinherited Americans whose forefathers came from Africa. The leader of this group was a 27-year-old "African," Richard Allen. At that time the word "African" was used to designate those persons whom we now call American Negroes or colored people.

The movement to organize a church separated from the white peoples' church was started in response to the "Africans" need for opportunities for self-expression and fuller involvement in the service of the worship of God, and in society as a whole. It was the answer to a cry for social recognition as human beings, and the means through which a group of people started on a program which gave them a growing sense of dignity and self-respect. The

To foster this program Richard Allen considered it important to conduct night school classes in which his people could learn how to help themselves. Out of these night school classes has come the church's philosophy of education with its strong emphasis upon self-help. The general emphasis has not been significantly changed until this day. In addition to the educational program of the local church, the A.M.E. Church operates eleven institutions of higher education.

Most religious groups had their origin in some theological, doctrinal, or ideological dispute or concern. But the A.M.E. Church originated as a protest against the inhuman treatment which the helpless people of African descent were forced to accept from the white people belonging to the St. George M.E. Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This fact says to us that the organization of the A.M.E. Church was the result of racial discrimination rather than of any theological or doctrinal concern.

The A.M.E. Church is a member of the family of Methodist Churches. Its founder and first active bishop, Richard Allen, felt that no religious sect or denomination would suit the capacity of his people as well as did Methodism with its emphasis upon the plain and simple gospel which the unlearned could understand, and its orderly system of rules and regulations which the underdeveloped needed. He felt that Methodism had what the "African" needed to encourage him to make progress, to worship God freely, and to fill every office for which he had the capability.

The "Africans" who started the A.M.E. Church were very poor and most of them could not read nor write. Yet, under the leadership of Richard Allen, they managed to buy an old blacksmith shop, and to move it to a lot at the corner of Sixth and Lombard Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where they organized Bethel A.M.E. Church which stands today as one of the historic shrines of Philadelphia.

In time, other "African" churches were started in Baltimore, Maryland; Salem, New Jersey; Attlesboro, Pennsylvania; Wilmington, Delaware and other places in the United States. In the year 1816 these church came together and formed the A.M.E. Church. Richard Allen was elected to serve as the first active bishop.

Today the A.M.E. Church has 18 active bishops and more than a million members scattered throughout the 50 States in the U.S.A., the dominion of Canada, South America, West Africa, South Africa, and the West Indies.

- What other denominations have used the building?

**No other denomination has used the building**

- Are there any other similar churches in the area?

**No**

- What impact did the church have on the community?

**Gaines Chapel A.M.E. Church provided a place as well as an opportunity for families in the neighborhood and other adjacent communities to participate in wholesome Christian activities; served as base for sharing community information; was a serve guidepost for the community; to supplement needy families; and served as a cultural/religious gathering place.**

- Is there a cemetery adjacent to the building?

**No**

- What changes have been made to the building (both interior and exterior and when were they made?)

**See history and slides**

If possible, please submit a sketch of the floor plan of the building which includes overall dimensions.

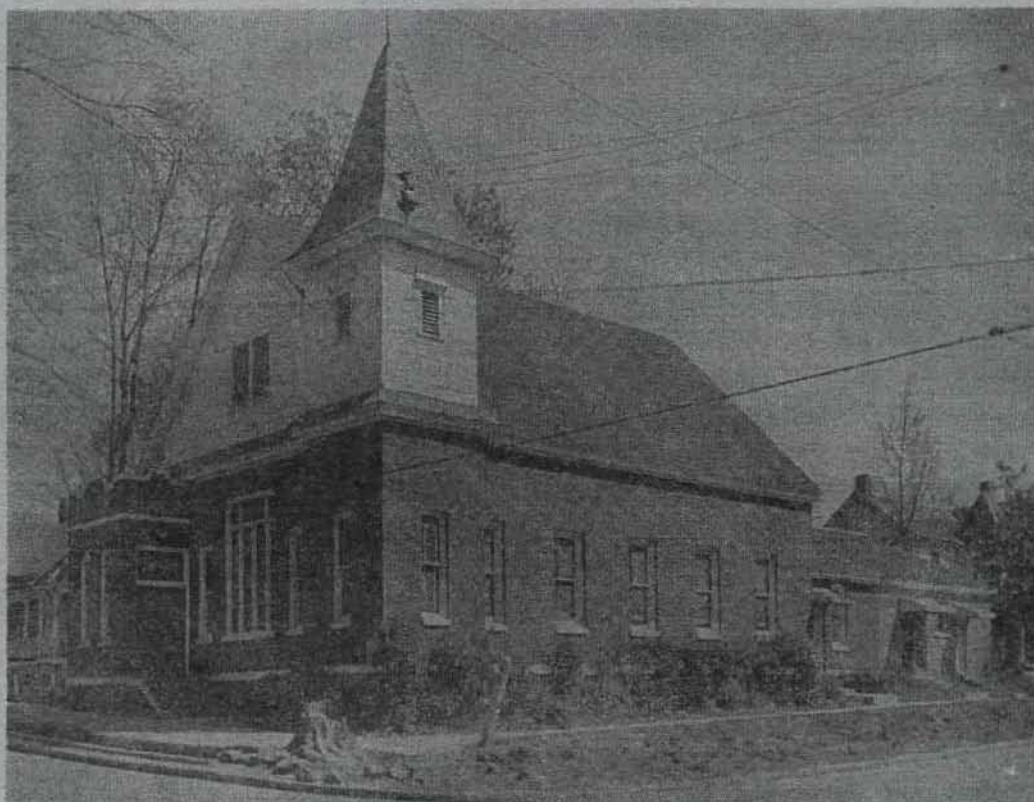


1888

1959

71st Anniversary

Historic Booklet



Gaines Chapel

African Methodist Episcopal Church

ANNISTON, ALABAMA

The Right Reverend Cary A. Gibbs, Presiding Bishop

The Reverend Hall, Presiding Elder

E. Simpson James, D.D., Pastor

APRIL 19, 1959

"FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS"—Psalms 103:2