

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Mineral Springs Christian Methodist Episcopal ChurchOther names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 451 New Mineral Springs RdCity or town: Calhoun State: Louisiana County: OuachitaNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title: Carrie Broussard, State Historic Preservation Officer **Date**
Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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Name of Property

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐☐

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Site

Structure

☐

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

1

structures

objects

1

1

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion: Religious Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion: Religious Facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

foundation: concrete

walls: brick

roof: asphalt

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Mineral Springs Christian Methodist Episcopal Church is a one-story, gable-front, brick-veneered building set on a rural corner lot about four miles south of Calhoun, Louisiana. It was designed with a streamlined traditional aesthetic. The most distinctive stylistic feature is the stepped Romanesque arch portal. A modest steeple rises from the front of gable. It is surrounded by azaleas and has a backdrop of mature native pine and oak trees. Two small wings extend at the rear that closely match the original building in its brick, windows, and eave treatment. A 1974 addition for education and dining space extends at the rear behind the wings. It too was designed to match the brick and eave treatment of the original building although the windows are six-over-six aluminum sash. The building retains integrity from the time of its 1963 construction to its 1974 addition in all seven aspects: location, setting, workmanship, design, materials, feeling, and association.

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Narrative Description

Front (Northwest) Elevation (Photo 1)

The front elevation is composed of striated, red, running-bond brick veneer extending from the concrete foundation to the eaves. The wall projects forward around the front entrance, framing it and rising flush with the eaves. A stepped Romanesque portal with a stacked-joint blind arches surround the paired front doors (Photo 2). The doors are four-panel steel hollow core with four-pane lites across the tops. A single modern lantern lighting fixture protrudes from the blind arch to light the entrance. A low concrete ramp leads to the doors from a sidewalk between the church and the driveway and parking lot. A steel picket railing runs along one side of the ramp. The entranceway is flanked by a single, aluminum, two-over-two window with textured glass on either side. Affixed to the sides of the windows are vinyl louvered shutters. The eaves have flat raking fascia and boxed returns and are covered in vinyl siding, which is barely distinguishable from the original wood. Rising from the peak of the roof over the entrance is a modest steeple with plain sides covered in vertical vinyl ventilation siding, an asphalt shingle roof, and a metal spire terminating in a pointed rod. At the left corner of the façade is a granite cornerstone plaque identifying the rebuilt year of 1963 along with clergy, stewards, and trustees of the church (Photo 3). The front is exactly as it appeared in the 1963 dedication program (Figure 1) except for the covering of eaves and steeple with vinyl siding, the addition of shutters, and the replacement of the front doors. At the rear, the one-story rear addition extends on either side, but is barely perceivable from directly in front of the building. Each side of the addition is clad in brick closely matching the rest of the building and has a single white six-panel door.

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Figure 1: 1963 Dedication program

Southwest Side Elevation (Photo)

The southwest includes the side of the sanctuary and the side of the rear wing. The side of the sanctuary is covered in the same striated red brick running bond veneer as the front with the addition of a soldier course providing a decorative feature beneath the eave. There are five evenly spaced two-over-two aluminum windows with textured glass just like those on the front (Photo 5). All have brick sills. The side of the wing has one two-over-two aluminum window matching others in the building, which rises from knee height (Photo 6). Another small, high version of the same window type is set on the right. The side of the 1974 addition features a six-over-six aluminum sash.

Rear (Southeast) Elevation (Photo 7)

The rear addition is clad in a slightly darker brick than the rest of the church. The rear gable has a large louvered vent at the peak that is approximately a quarter of the height of the gable. A soldier course of brick runs along its bottom. Directly beneath it is a modern lantern style light fixture. The openings of the rear elevation are a six-over-six brown aluminum window, a white six-panel door, and another six-over-six window. A wide concrete ramp runs parallel to the elevation to the slab stoop. A steel railing with balusters is affixed to each side of the ramp and stoop.

Northeast Side Elevation (Photo 8)

The northeast side is almost a mirror of the southwest side, minus the small window on the side of the wing. The side of the sanctuary is covered in the same striated red brick running bond veneer as the front with the addition of a soldier course providing a decorative feature beneath the eave. There are five evenly spaced two-over-two aluminum windows with textured glass just like those on the front (Photo 9). All have brick sills. The side of the wing has one two-over-two aluminum window matching others in the building, which rises from knee height (Photo 10). The

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side of the 1974 addition features a six-over-six aluminum sash. At the lower right of the elevation is a granite table forming the other side of the corner stone. This side reads "M.W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge," documenting the affiliation with this African American fraternal organization.

Wellhouse (Non-Contributing Structure, Photo 12)

Standing just south of the church is a small well house constructed ca. 1974. This building was designed to match the church and is veneered in the same brick. It has a side gable roof with the same eave treatment of plain fascia and boxed returns. A single six-panel door provides access to the interior.

Interior (Photo 13)

Double swinging doors with diamond lites lead from a small narthex into the sanctuary (Photo 14). The interior of the sanctuary features a traditional center aisle flanked by pews leading to the chancel. The textured windows are colored red so that incoming light casts a rosy glow throughout the space. The aisle is carpeted in a deep red and the floor beneath the pews is covered in beige vinyl composite tiles. The pews are constructed of wood designed in a contemporary style with crosses carved on their ends. The seats and backs are upholstered in red fabric matching the carpet. The space is topped by a tray ceiling covered in acoustical tile with mid-century modern pendant lighting, and ceiling fans that appear to be of more recent vintage. The chancel is set apart by a wood railing. It includes a table style altar, chairs for the clergy and pews for the choir. Its side walls are angled, which draws the eyes to the cross hanging of the center of the back wall (Photo 15). Doors on either side of the chancel lead to offices and dining and educational space behind. These utilitarian spaces have VCT flooring, engineered wood paneling and gypsum board walls, and gypsum board ceilings finished with popcorn paint (Photos 16 and 17). All of the interior spaces retain integrity from their period of construction.

Integrity

Location

The location of the Mineral Springs CME Church has not changed from its period of significance; therefore, it retains integrity of location.

Design

The design of the Mineral Springs CME Church inside and out is almost identical to how it was during its period of significance, therefore it retains integrity of design.

Setting

The setting of the Mineral Springs CME Church is on a rural intersection just as during its period of significance. Therefore, it retains integrity of setting.

Materials

There have been only minor changes in materials since the period of significance, such as vinyl covering of eaves as described above. Therefore, the Mineral Springs CME Church retains integrity of materials.

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Workmanship

All of the workmanship evident inside and out during the period of significance, such as the craftsmanship of the pews and the exterior brickwork, remains. Therefore the Mineral Springs CME Church has integrity of workmanship.

Feeling

Mineral Springs CME Church continues to serve its community as it was originally designed for worship and community gathering. Through this continued use and preservation, it have retained integrity of feeling.

Association

Mineral Springs CME Church has clear and continuous association with its themes of significance, therefore, it has integrity of association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☒ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Ethnic Heritage: Black
Social History

Period of Significance

1965 - 1970

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Ivey, Felton

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Mineral Springs CME Church is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Black and Social History for its profound and enduring contributions to the Civil Rights Movement in Ouachita Parish. The defined period of significance, 1965 to 1970, marks a pivotal era during which the church emerged as a beacon of resistance, resilience, and reform. Founded in 1889 in a modest one-room building, the church quickly grew into a cornerstone of religious, educational, and social life for African Americans in the Mineral Springs community. Education was—and remains—a deeply held value among its members, many of whom were educators who played vital roles in the movement for equality.

Civil rights leader and educator Anthony G. Facen, founder of the Black Citizens' Council, often described Mineral Springs CME Church as the “incubator” for the foot soldiers of the Civil Rights Movement. Within its walls, strategies were developed, alliances were formed, and voices were emboldened to confront systemic injustice. In 1965, when Central High School—the only school for Black children in the community—was destroyed by a suspicious fire, the church once again stepped into its role as a sanctuary of hope and progress by opening its doors to displaced students. This act of solidarity reinforced the church's unwavering dedication to educational justice and civil rights advocacy. Mineral Springs CME Church is not only a house of worship—it is a living testament to a community's enduring fight for dignity, equality, and opportunity.

The Mineral Springs CME Church community has always had its roots in religion, education and community service. It was a three-legged stool that could not be separated and that supported the community.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Brief History of Ouachita Parish and Mineral Springs

Ouachita Parish is located at the hub of Northeast Louisiana 5 miles south of Interstate 20, about 100 miles east of Shreveport and 65 miles west of Vicksburg, Mississippi. The parish is divided by the Ouachita River. The two major cities in Ouachita Parish are Monroe and West Monroe. The towns of Richwood and Sterlington complete the incorporated areas of Ouachita Parish.¹ Ouachita Parish was established March 31, 1807.² It is one of the 19 parishes, which were created by dividing the Territory of New Orleans. The original Ouachita Parish was sub-sequently divided into the parishes of Morehouse, Union, Caldwell, Franklin, Tensas, Madison, East and West Carroll with the present Ouachita Parish remaining.³ Other census-

¹ “History of Ouachita Parish”, <https://www.oppi.org/residents/>

² Ibid

³ Ibid

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designated places in Ouachita Parish include Bawcomville, Brownsville, Calhoun, Claiborne, Lakeshore and Swartz.⁴ Calhoun, an unincorporated settlement located approximately 15 miles west of Monroe, was settled in 1882 when the railroad was first built from Monroe to Shreveport.⁵ The Mineral Springs community is located about 4 miles south of Calhoun.

Calhoun, an unincorporated community, is located in a rural area with a landscape mixture of hills and woodlands on the former transcontinental route US 80 near Interstate 20, approximately 10 miles west of West Monroe, La. It has experienced a large growth in population recently, due to many retail, restaurant, and entertainment venues nearby, as well as three local universities, but it also attracts young families raising children due to four public schools located in the community that all consistently place in the top percentile in achievement.⁶

In 1882 when the railroad was built from Monroe to Shreveport the town of Calhoun was established and named after Archie Calhoun one of its first settlers.⁷ In 1886 the first post office was built in Calhoun.⁸ Around 1882 the North Louisiana Experimental Station, an extension of Louisiana State University was built. It began introducing up-to-date methods for farming, dairy farming and poultry raising.⁹ The North Louisiana Experimental Station also hosted training sessions for African American farmers in the area.

Founded in 1886, Mineral Springs CME Church and its associated school, Mineral Springs Church School, became beacons of hope and empowerment for African Americans in the region.¹⁰ The first public building erected in the Mineral Springs community was a school that served a three-fold purpose, school-church-lodge.¹¹ The church from its inception was always the focal point of all community activities. It was the place where the community gathered to worship, educate, organize and strategize for the benefit of the community. The Mineral Springs Church School initially operated under rudimentary conditions with pine pole walls and earth floors.¹² Despite these humble beginnings, the school swiftly became a hub for educational advancement and community organization.¹³

⁴ "About Ouachita Parish", <https://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/rmiller/articles/page1512157796430>

⁵ "Colorful Calhoun History Retraced by Civics Student" by Louise Rhea Humble, The Monroe News-Star (Monroe, LA), Thursday, March 27, 1952, pg. 24

⁶ <https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/calhoun-ouachita-la/>

⁷ "History of Calhoun", Monroe New Star, Thursday, March 27, 1952, pg. 4b

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ "Central High School/Central Elementary School History", African American High School Heritage, <https://africanamericanhighschoolsinsouthernlouisianabefore1970.com/central-high-school-calhoun-la/#:~:text=The%20deed%20states%20%E2%80%9C20acres,rededicated%20on%20October%202023%2C%201966>.

¹¹ Young, Otis Ray, "History of the Mineral Springs C.M.E. Church", June 2006,

¹² "Historical Sketch: Mineral Springs Colored School and Central High School, Mineral Springs School Reunion, July 5-7, 1996, page 4.

¹³ Ibid

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In 1889 the local springs were tested and found to contain minerals, giving the community its enduring name, Mineral Springs.¹⁴ By 1908, Mineral Springs School had been elevated to high school status, making it the first high school for African Americans operated by the Ouachita Parish School Board.¹⁵ This milestone was a significant achievement, reflecting the community's dedication to education as a means of social upliftment.¹⁶

The enduring legacy of Mineral Springs CME Church and its surrounding community is rooted not only in faith, but in an unyielding belief in education as both a form of resistance and a pathway to empowerment. In an era when the systemic denial of basic rights was codified into law, the people of Mineral Springs dared to dream beyond the limitations imposed upon them. They understood that the classroom could be a battleground where literacy, critical thinking, and self-determination were revolutionary acts. By establishing schools, cultivating educators, and investing their limited resources into learning spaces, they quietly—but powerfully—challenged the social order that sought to keep them subjugated.

This commitment to education was not just about personal advancement; it was about collective liberation. Teaching a child to read was an act of rebellion. Building a school with community-raised funds and student labor was a declaration of independence. Through these efforts, the people of Mineral Springs fortified themselves with the tools needed to navigate and ultimately disrupt the structures of segregation, economic disenfranchisement, and political exclusion. Education became their weapon and their shield—a means to assert their humanity, demand dignity, and sow seeds for future generations to thrive. What follows are two powerful examples of how this enduring legacy unfolded in real time within the Mineral Springs community.

Education and the Civil Rights Movement in Mineral Springs

Booker T. Washington, founder of the National Negro Business League, believed that solutions to the problem of racial discrimination were primarily economic, and that bringing African Americans into the middle class was the key. In 1900, he established the League "to promote the commercial and financial development of the Negro," and headed it until his death.¹⁷

Booker T. Washington's campaign to fight white supremacy involved what he, and historians since, have called "uplift." If southern African Americans obtained practical educations, they could support themselves and lead sober lives marked by achievement. They would practice "uplift"—or betterment—first for themselves, then for their less fortunate black neighbors. Surely, they hoped, white southerners would recognize their contributions and capabilities.

¹⁴ Young, Otis Ray "History of Mineral Springs CME Church", June 2006.

¹⁵ "Historical Sketch: Mineral Springs Colored School and Central High School, Mineral Springs School Reunion, July 5-7, 1996, page 5.

¹⁶ "Historical Sketch: Mineral Springs Colored School and Central High School, Mineral Springs School Reunion, July 5-7", 1996, page 5.

¹⁷ "Black Economic Empowerment: The National Negro Business League", Library of Congress, 1901-1928

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Gradually robust white supremacy would wither. Washington founded the National Negro Business League to promote and publicize black commerce and self-help.¹⁸

Out of this philosophy the Negro Self-Help League of Ouachita Parish was established. Many meetings of the Negro Self-Help League of Ouachita Parish were conducted at the Mineral Springs Church led by Anthony G. Facen as documented in numerous local newspaper articles. They included Annual District meetings, Annual Achievement Day, and various training courses and demonstrations throughout the year involving farming techniques and home economics.¹⁹

The African American community of Mineral Springs which was established circa 1880, were farmers who owned their own property. This bolstered their sense of independence and ownership in a free society. There were several newspaper articles written about the "Unique Negro Community" in Ouachita Parish referring to the Mineral Springs Community. "There is a little-known community in Ouachita Parish where the people own their own homes and are not in debt; where they have been successful in putting into operation a live-at-home program, where they have learned to cooperate for the good of all the people in the community. And the community is entirely populated by negroes! It is the Mineral Springs community for negroes located in the western part of Ouachita Parish."²⁰ The first public building erected in the Mineral Springs community was a school that served a three-fold purpose, school-church-lodge.²¹ The church from its inception was always the focal point of all community activities. It was the place where the community gathered to worship, educate, organize and strategize for the benefit of the community.

Criterion A: Civil Rights Movement and Ethnic Heritage: Black

Education and the Civil Rights Movement in Louisiana

Following Reconstruction, the growth and development of black people in Louisiana depended largely on their ability to adjust to existing conditions. Many times, however, conditions were such that adjusting and adapting to maintain a level of subsistence with the dominant sector of the system was not easy. Therefore, self-help and racial solidarity became increasingly popular among black people as discrimination and the failure to obtain basic human and civil rights by protest and agitation became apparent.²² Through the pioneering efforts of J.B. LaFargue and others in 1901 assembled in Alexandria, Louisiana, the idea to initiate change was developed. They saw the wisdom of exchanging ideas and the necessity of organizing in order to deal

¹⁸Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth, "Somewhere" in the Nadir of African American History, 1890-1920", <https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/freedom/1865-1917/essays/nadir.htm>

¹⁹ "Negro League Plans Program", Monroe Morning World, Monroe, LA, Sunday, July 6, 1941, page 12.

²⁰ "Unique Negro Community Thrives in This Parish", Monroe Morning World, Sunday, May 26, 1935, pg. ??

²¹ Young, Otis Ray, "History of the Mineral Springs C.M.E. Church", June 2006,

²² History of Louisiana Education Association, by Ernest J. Middleton, National Education Association, 1984, pages 53-54.

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intellectually with the various problems that were stifling the educational productivity of black educators and students in Louisiana.

Together they established the Louisiana Colored Teachers' Association (LCTA) and became a chapter of the national ATA.²³ The union's membership includes K-12 classroom teachers, teaching assistants, and retired teachers. The union's self-professed "core values" include a "just society," "equal opportunity," and "Democracy."²⁴ The LCTA had no power or voice as possessed by the Civil Rights Commission or the NAACP, which helped to mold a significant body of public opinion. But it is fair to say that all who have benefited from the civil rights progress that has been made in this country owe a debt of gratitude to these teachers.

Local chapters were formed in all parishes in Louisiana including Ouachita parish. The LCTA became the Louisiana Education Association (LEA).²⁵ Unlike other state teachers' associations, the LCTA was organized on the state level primarily because many whites in the state's local communities frowned upon any kind of group dynamics among its colored citizens especially those with an education.²⁶ Therefore, after organizing a state association for "colored" teachers, the leaders set out to form local associations within every parish with public school facilities for its colored citizens²⁷

Black educators like J.B. LaFargue saw that the problem of education for Blacks in Louisiana had unique complications. There was a feeling in Louisiana and other southern states that Black success while adjusting to segregation depended on the type of education to which Blacks were exposed. With this thought in mind, leaders of the newly formed LCTA followed the lead of Booker T. Washington. They, too, became advocates of the industrial or vocational education. In organizing, the leaders were aware of Louisiana's racial climate. Therefore, they were careful not to agitate too forcefully for changes they wanted. However, as time passed, they pushed for better opportunities for both Black school children and Black teachers.²⁸

Mineral Springs Church was a hub for community activities. It hosted many meetings at the church to provide information regarding community affairs, train farmers, and distribute food. Mineral Springs Church served as a polling location for voting on a referendum for cotton marketing quotas.²⁹ In 1941, the Monroe Morning World newspaper listed the Mineral Springs Church as one of the locations in the Parish for farmers to complete their government-required

²³ Middleton, Ernest J., *History of Louisiana Education Association*, National Education Association, 1984, pages 53-54.

²⁴ "Louisiana Association of Educators" <https://www.influencewatch.org/labor-union/louisiana-association-of-educators/>

²⁵ "The Black Teacher Archive: Louisiana", <https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/black-teacher-archive/feature/louisiana>

²⁶ Middleton, Ernest J., "The Louisiana Education Association, 1901- 1970", The Journal of Negro Education, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Autumn, 1978), pp. 363-378

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "Farmers Saturday to Vote on Quotas", Monroe News-Star, Monroe, LA, December 8, 1939, page 14.

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planning sheets for crops to ensure goals for the year were met,³⁰ A clinic was held at the Mineral Springs Church to conduct dog vaccinations in 1948 at the request of the health department.³¹

The Mineral Springs High School was pioneering in offering Home Economics and Agriculture Departments, ensuring that students received a comprehensive education that equipped them with practical and vocational skills.³² This focus on vocational training was integral to the community's strategy for economic self-sufficiency and resistance against systemic oppression. The work of teachers and educators behind the scenes has shaped and influenced the Civil Rights Movement.

The school was often cited in the local newspapers for its excellence in education among the black community. A *Monroe Morning World* article titled "Unique Negro Community Thrives in This Parish" stated that the Mineral Springs community "has an ideal school, grist mill, a cooperative truck farm, a church and comfortable homes. Learning to do by doing and putting into actual practice what they have learned is bringing success and recognition to the community."³³ T.H. Harris, State Superintendent of Education, declared that he is inclined to rank it among the foremost communities of its kind in the state.³⁴

On June 11, 1936, the *Monroe News-Star* reported that a donation deed of six acres was received by the Ouachita Parish School Board from Allen and Harry Johnson to assist in carrying on of public education for colored people in the community and especially for the maintenance of 4-H Clubs.³⁵ Allen and Harry Johnson were prominent leaders and members of the Mineral Springs CME Church and the community. This donation was the foundation for the creation of the Johnson Jordan 4-H Camp for Negroes in Calhoun, Louisiana.

The Johnson Jordan 4-H Camp for Negroes and the Mineral Springs CME Church hosted many events for youth and adults including workshops, trainings and recreational activities. It was one of the first 4-H camps for Negroes in the state and the country.³⁶ On August 18-25, 1942 a state-wide program was held at the Johnson Jordan Camp to discuss the Food for Freedom Program.³⁷ The event hosted national and state agricultural leaders.³⁸ Negro ministers and other race leaders were especially invited to attend.³⁹ The first Wildlife Camp School for Negroes was held at the

³⁰ "Ask Farmers to Meet Here: Plan Sheets for Crops Will Be Submitted by Planters", *Monroe Morning World*, Tuesday, November 18, 1941, page 10.

³¹ "All Dogs Must Be Vaccinated", *Monroe Morning World*, Sunday, April 18, 1948, page 6.

³² "Historical Sketch: Mineral Springs Colored School and Central High School, Mineral Springs School Reunion, July 5-7, 1996, page 5

³³ "Unique Negro Community Thrives In The Parish", *Monroe Morning World*, Sunday, May 26, 1935, page 12.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ "Recreation Center Given By Negroes", *The Monroe News-Star*, Thursday, June 11, 1936, Page 4.

³⁶ "Negro 4-H Club Members Convene for Yearly Meet", *The News-Star*, Monroe, LA, August 3, 1938, page 10.

³⁷ "Program State Wide Is Planned: Food For Freedom for Negro Leaders Will Be Topic Discussed", *Monroe Morning World*, Sunday, August 23, 1942, page 6.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

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Johnson Jordan 4-H Camp in August 1940 that consisted of a full program of work including wildlife education as well as health and recreational activities.⁴⁰

Civil Rights Activism in Mineral Springs

In his annual message to the LCTA in 1943, President J.K. Haynes gave his most pertinent recommendation to the organization:

*"The Association should work to ease the salary deficiency due to race; ..."*⁴¹

The LTCA allied itself with other civic organizations to fight discrimination. By October 1948, the Statewide Citizens Committee on Equal Education of the LCTA had initiated eight cases for the equalization of salaries.⁴²

In 1946, Ozenia Secrease, teacher at Mineral Springs School, wife of Minerals Springs CME Church Elder and Civil Rights activist, Reverend M.J. Secrease and Howard Williams of Alexandria, Louisiana, filed lawsuits against the Ouachita Parish School Board and Rapides Parish School Boards respectively. The lawsuits alleged disparage in salaries of black and white teachers with black teachers being underpaid. These two "test" cases, the outcome of which would affect all Louisiana Negro teachers, contended that the 14th Amendment to the Constitution was violated by the practice of the school board in discriminating in their salaries because of race and color.⁴³

Mrs. Ozenia Simmons Secrease, one of LEA's most dedicated professional educators realized the importance of maintaining good teachers and the very fact that white teachers were paid one salary and blacks another which was considerably less, she sought to right this terrible wrong. As a result, she filed a lawsuit in federal court on behalf of teachers in Ouachita parish.

Attorney A. P. Tureaud of New Orleans, Louisiana, stated that as a result of these lawsuits being filed, and because of letters of inquiry being written to him, school boards had voluntarily increased the pay of Negro teachers.⁴⁴ The struggle for equalization of salaries was more or less ended by the Louisiana Legislature Act 155, House Bill 178, Section 3 of the bill which stated:

*"Beginning with the session 1948-1949, and continuing thereafter, all public elementary and high school teachers in the schools of the state of Louisiana shall receive a minimum salary on a nine-month basis in accordance with schedule hereafter..."*⁴⁵

Supported by her husband, Reverend M.J. Secrease, Mrs. Secrease was also active in the church where she served as the President of the Missionary Society of the Louisiana Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, a member of the J.S. Washington chapter of the National Association of

⁴⁰ "Negro Wildlife Camp is Now Being Held", Monroe News-Star, Monroe, LA, Friday, August 23, 1940, page 2.

⁴¹ Middleton, Ernest J., *History of Louisiana Education Association*, National Education Association, 1984, page 71.

⁴² Middleton, Ernest J., *History of Louisiana Education Association*, National Education Association, 1984, page 81.

⁴³ "Negro Teacher Suit Is Filed", Monroe New Star, April 23, 1947

⁴⁴ Middleton, Ernest J., *History of Louisiana Education Association*, National Education Association, 1984, page 81

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

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College Women, the Louisiana Education Association and the National Retired Teachers Association.⁴⁶

A.G. Facen was an educator and a prolific civil rights activist who fought for desegregation in the courts and whose education career started at Mineral Springs School. At age 75 Facen was able to achieve many civil rights for blacks through his almost single-handed fights with local governments through the courts.⁴⁷ In 1924 Anthony G. (A.G.) Facen was the principal of the Mineral Springs Church School.

In an article in the Monroe Morning World newspaper, Facen recalls one of his encounters with the Ouachita Parish School Board regarding a request for funding for building the Mineral Springs Church School.

Facen said he was a teacher in Mineral Springs near Calhoun, and he met with the school board in 1924 to ask them to build a school there. He asked them to build one of the Rosenwald schools where they would have to put up half the money. Julius Rosenwald, a philanthropist, has set up a fund to help with the building of rural schools in the South. He said the parish school board told him that they did not have the money, but it would be referred to the finance committee for them to consider next year. In 1925, Facen again went to the school board, asking for a school building.

‘We stood for two hours and watched them meet about Ouachita Parish High School’ he said. “They were just completing it, and the board was getting ready to accept it. I told them I met them a year ago and asked about a school at Mineral Springs. The late T.O. Brown, then Superintendent said ‘You heard us accept the new parish school building, and the money was appropriated. We do not have a nickel left. Come back next year.’

Facen said he told the board that the residents had purchased 20 acres and had raised \$250 to help with the building of the school. Also, the students would build the school if the board supplied the materials. The School Board agreed to supply the lumber and the community would have to deed the 20 acres to the parish. Facen said the students built the three-room wood school in Mineral Springs in 1925 after which four other Rosenwald Schools were built in Sterlington, Chambers, and West Monroe.⁴⁸

Facen continued his fight for the Mineral Springs School. In 1936, the *Monroe News Star* reported that the Mineral Springs School was awarded a certificate for improvements and beautification.⁴⁹ According to the article, the school with more than 100 students was conducting studies that included high school grades and was awarded a “B” rating according to Gertrude

⁴⁶ The Louisiana Education Association Journal, March 1971, page 35.

⁴⁷ “*History of Blacks in Ouachita Parish*”, Free Press, February 14, 1975.

⁴⁸ “*Old School Evokes No Fondness From Facen*”, by Denise Stockstill, *Morning World*, Monroe, La, November 11, 1979, pages 21 and 25.

⁴⁹ “Negro School Wins Rosenwald Contest”, *Monroe New Star*, Monroe, La., July 27, 1936, page 3.

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Ammon, Supervisor for Negro Schools for Ouachita Parish. It was rated the most attractive, best arranged and most suitably equipped of schools of its kind in the parish.⁵⁰

In his bid for mayor of West Monroe, Louisiana, in 1970, Facen told the Monroe News Star:

*"I began my teaching career at Mineral Springs, four miles south of Calhoun. There were only two teachers including myself and approximately 55 students with five grades and no school building. Classes were held in a run-down church that needed repair. To me the greatest people in the world lived in this community. They were willing and ready to make any sacrifice for good education."*⁵¹

A.G. Facen continued his fight for Civil Rights until his death in 1991.

By 1950, the Mineral Springs Church School was now solely owned and operated by the Ouachita Parish School Board. It was relocated and a new building was built to educate Negroes in grades 1-12 in the Mineral Springs community in 1952. In 1951 the new school was renamed Central High School.⁵²

Facen's relentless determination and advocacy efforts not only led to the establishment of the Mineral Springs Church School but also set a precedent for educational equality in the region. His work, along with the contributions of many other educators, laid the foundation for significant civil rights advancements in the realm of education. Through sheer resilience, Facen and his contemporaries managed to build several more schools, thus fostering a robust learning environment for African-American students in Ouachita Parish.

The legacy of these educators is immortalized in the stories of the schools they built and the lives they changed. By 1963, their efforts had not only resulted in physical structures but also in the creation of safe, nurturing spaces that encouraged the growth of future civil rights leaders.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE (1963 – 1970)

A New Era Begins (1963) Civil Rights Activism at Mineral Springs CME Church

In 1963, the Mineral Springs CME Church was rebuilt as a sturdy brick structure—marking not only a physical renewal but also the beginning of a new chapter in the struggle for civil rights in Calhoun, Ouachita Parish. Erected to replace an aging building in dire need of rehabilitation, the new church quickly emerged as a vital community hub. Beyond its role as a place of worship, the church became a safe space and a meeting ground where local African American leaders, educators, and activists could gather to discuss strategies for combating segregation and

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ "Facen Candidate for Mayor Here", *Monroe New Star*, February 12, 1970, page 14.

⁵² "Lega Notice", *Monroe News Star*, April 16, 1951, page 2.

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discrimination.⁵³ Its very walls echoed the determination of a community committed to advancing equality.

Throughout the heady and trying days of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, African American educators worked in both segregated and integrated schools. Each presented challenges, according to Curry School of Education professor Derrick Alridge.⁵⁴ In segregated schools, they often found themselves with fewer resources than teachers in all-white schools. In integrated schools, they found themselves working in white neighborhoods, with largely white colleagues and student bodies. In both settings, however, African American educators promoted ideas of freedom, equality and democracy through their pedagogy. “Educators of the civil rights era exercised immense courage, inside and outside classrooms,” Alridge said, “by taking leadership roles in civil rights organizations, reforming curricula, organizing communities and mentoring young civil rights activists.” Individually and collectively, these contributions advanced civil rights in ways that were critically important on the local level, but rarely documented or fully appreciated.⁵⁵

The church was not just a place of worship but also a social incubator where leaders and community members gathered to strategize and support the civil rights movement. The church's members were actively involved in various legal battles aimed at dismantling segregation and achieving equality. Community leaders like Mr. Anthony G. Facen. Facen used the church as a base to file and support numerous lawsuits challenging discriminatory practices in public schools and other areas of public life as evidenced by Ozenia Secrease’s lawsuit for equal pay for teachers and Jeremiah Taylor’s lawsuit for school desegregation.

For several years after the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), school districts in Louisiana made little progress towards desegregation. But by the late 1960s, aggressive efforts were underway in federal courts in the state to challenge segregated public school systems. There was little uniformity in outcomes or remedies, but plaintiffs remained dissatisfied with the slow pace of progress.⁵⁶

According to Reverend Roosevelt Wright, Jr., publisher of the *Monroe Free Press* and friend of Anthony G. Facen:

The Civil Rights Movement in Monroe in the 1960s were many organizations. Many organizations were testing the new laws that had been passed. The *Brown v. School Board* law was passed in 1954, but it was never implemented in Ouachita Parish. The 1964 Civil Rights Act passed, and it had never been

⁵³ Interview with Reverend Roosevelt Wright, Jr., February 2, 2022.

⁵⁴ Breen, Audrey, "Oral History Project Finding 'Unique Vantage Point' of Civil Rights Era Teachers." UVA Today, University of Virginia, 4 May 2015, <https://news.virginia.edu/content/oral-history-project-finding-unique-vantage-point-civil-rights-era-teachers>.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ “Case: Related School Desegregation Cases in the Western District of Louisiana”, Case: Related School Desegregation Cases in the Western District of Louisiana

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implemented in Ouachita Parish. And the 1965 Voting Rights Act had been passed by Congress, but had not been implemented here. So what happened in the 60s was many organizations started pushing to test these laws. The integration of Ouachita Parish schools, Monroe City Schools, were all based on the Supreme Court decision in 1954.⁵⁷

In many instances, multiple organizations were comprised of the same members including the church. Members of the LEA were also members of the NAACP, the Black Citizen's Council led by A.G. Facen and other social and civic organizations such as black sororities and fraternities. These organizations worked together in the fight for civil rights and human rights.⁵⁸ The members of these organizations were also members of the Mineral Springs CME Church. It was the place where civil rights leaders met to educate the community about the movement for equality in education.

Meetings at the church were rarely documented or recorded. Reverend Roosevelt Wright, Jr. stated:

You didn't see no television broadcasting things from Mineral Springs Church. These people socially, when they went out, they didn't say that the Mineral Springs Church is doing this, or the Mineral Springs Church is doing that. But when you track them back, where they were worshipping at on Sunday, they were all then in the, in that portion of the parish. They were all, some of the prominent leaders were from Mineral Springs and the Calvary Baptist church in West Monroe.⁵⁹

Community Action Amid Crisis (1965)

Educators at Mineral Springs CME Church understood that teaching was not a neutral act but a profoundly political one. Bell Hooks reminds us, "To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn."⁶⁰ The educators at Mineral Springs enacted this ethos by fostering critical awareness and inspiring transformative action.

The vocational and practical education provided by the Mineral Springs School was a testament to the church's commitment to empowering its community. By offering courses in Home Economics and Agriculture, the school not only prepared students for economic independence but also equipped them with the tools to resist systemic oppression. This approach reflects

⁵⁷ "Rosevelt Wright, Jr. Interview", February 8, 2022

⁵⁸ Middleton, Ernest, *History of the Louisiana Education Association*, National Education Association, Washington D.C., page 90.

⁵⁹ "Reverend Roosevelt Wright, Jr. Interview", February 2, 2022.

⁶⁰ Hooks, Bell, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Routledge, 1994.

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critical pedagogy's emphasis on education as a means of fostering both individual and collective empowerment.

White Americans implemented a strategy of "massive resistance" to desegregation by deploying a range of tactics and weapons against the growing movement for civil rights. Some of these tools, such as bombing, burnings, and murdering civil rights activists, continued the tradition of maintaining white supremacy through lethal violence.⁶¹

The year 1965 proved to be a pivotal moment in the community's fight for justice. On September 30, a devastating fire destroyed the Central High School for Negroes—a school central to the education and empowerment of local youth. With the brick-veneer building reduced to ashes, the church's recent construction in 1963 was put to an urgent test. Mineral Springs CME Church, along with two other congregations, opened its doors to temporarily house displaced students, ensuring that their education continued unabated. This selfless act not only underscored the church's commitment to community welfare but also highlighted its indispensable role in the broader civil rights struggle, as it provided a sanctuary during an era of intense racial strife.⁶²

The fire in the brick-veneer building about three miles south of Calhoun was noticed about 4:30 p.m. by the janitor. The building was still in flames by 8 p.m. The Ouachita Parish fire truck and a unit of the West Monroe Fire Department answered the alarm but were unable to save the building.⁶³ The cause that started the blaze was not determined. Officials of the Ouachita Parish School Board and the state Fire Marshal's Office began an investigation of the fire immediately after on October 1, 1965.⁶⁴

Of immediate concern following the fire was where the students would be housed to continue their education until a new facility was erected. Two alternatives were under consideration to relocate the students. Ouachita Parish School Superintendent, Milton C. Hall in a meeting of school officials said students could be absorbed into the enrollments at Boley and Richardson schools in nearby West Monroe. The other plan involved the use of three nearby churches. The latter was preferred tentatively.⁶⁵

Once again, the Mineral Springs CME Church and two other church congregations sprang into action. In 1963 a new church building had been erected at Mineral Springs and was well equipped to provide the space needed for the students. The congregation was eager to open its doors once again to support the education of students in the community. Mr. Hall, the Ouachita Parish Superintendent announced that classes would resume on Wednesday, October 7, 1965 at the new locations.⁶⁶

⁶¹ "Massive Resistance", <https://segregationinamerica.eji.org/report/massive-resistance.html>

⁶² "Class Site Studied After School Blaze", Morning World, Monroe, LA, October 2, 1965, page 3.

⁶³ "Central School for Negroes at Calhoun Burns", Monroe Morning World, October 1, 1965, page 1.

⁶⁴ "Probe of School Fire is Started", The News Star, October 1, 1965, page 8.

⁶⁵ "Class Site Studied After School Blaze", the News Star, October 1, 1965, page 8.

⁶⁶ "Class Site Studied After School Blaze", the News Star, October 1, 1965, page 8.

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On Tuesday, October 5, 1965 it was reported that a 15-year-old Negro student admitted setting fires that did \$275,000 worth of damage to Central Elementary and High School at Calhoun because he said he didn't like his teachers and wanted to go to school in Ruston, Bailey Grant, Ouachita Parish sheriff said.⁶⁷ Grant said the youth set four fires one each in the gym, second grade classroom, boys' restroom, and the school's sick room. The investigation showed the boy missed his school bus and stayed to help the janitor clean the school. He then hid in the woods until everyone left, broke in and started the fires.⁶⁸

In an interview with Mr. Lindsay Moorehead, a teacher at Central High School at the time, he stated that a meeting was called by then principal, Eugene T. Martin with the entire staff. According to Lindsay Moorehead, Eugene T. Martin instituted a 'code of silence' regarding the incident.⁶⁹

There is still some debate in the community about who started the fires. The young man accused of setting the fires has recanted his confession and claims his innocence.

Students in grades 5 and 6 continued their education at the Mineral Springs CME Church to complete the school year. The graduation ceremony for the graduating class of May, 1966 was held at the Mineral Springs CME Church. On Sunday, October 23, 1966, the new Central High School building dedication services were held at the new Central High School building.⁷⁰

Similar fire setting occurrences were reported across Ouachita Parish and other school districts in the area and across the state. The results were always similar in that the fires were reportedly set by a student with limited investigation.

Legal Activism and the Drive for Desegregation (1966–1970)

Year	Event
1964	Implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
1965	Implementation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and desegregation of schools.
1966	Jeremiah Taylor filed a lawsuit against Ouachita Parish for segregated schools in Ouachita Parish
1966	Court adopted 'freedom of choice' desegregation plan allowing school transfers.
1970	Trial court issued a desegregation decree banning school assignments based on race.
1970	Appeals court allowed for minority to majority transfers.
1970	A.G. Facen threatened by KKK; continued legal fights for civil rights.
1971	Court implemented a bi-racial committee (including A.G. Facen) to oversee school desegregation.
2009	Court revisited desegregation cases to assess unitary status of districts.
2013	Ouachita Parish School Board filed motion for declaration of unitary status and case dismissal. It stands uncontested.

⁶⁷ "Boy Admits Fire; Wanted Ruston Class", Monroe Morning World, October 5, 1965, page 1.

⁶⁸ "Boy Admits Fire; Wanted Ruston Class", Monroe Morning World, October 5, 1965, page 1.

⁶⁹ Interview with Lindsay Moorehead, August 21, 2022.

⁷⁰ "African American High School Heritage", <https://africanamericanhighschoolsinsouthernlouisianabefore1970.com/>

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Mineral Springs CME Church's influence extended beyond education into broader political activism. The church and its members were instrumental in organizing and participating in efforts to enforce the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the desegregation of schools which faced significant resistance in Ouachita Parish. Leaders from the church, such as Mr. A.G. Facen and Mr. Jeremiah Taylor, played crucial roles in testing and implementing these laws locally, often facing significant personal risk and opposition.

In 1966, Jeremiah Taylor, a leader and landowner in the Mineral Springs community, filed a lawsuit against Ouachita Parish on behalf of parents of black students who were still attending segregated schools with unequal resources.⁷¹ The lawsuit sought to permanently and preliminarily enjoin the School Board from racially discriminatory practices in its public schools. On January 30, 1970, the trial court issued a desegregation decree that permanently prohibited the School Board from:

Assigning students to schools based on race or color

Continuing to refuse to admit minor plaintiffs to schools

Continuing to operate a compulsory bi-racial school system

On August 5, 1966, the Court adopted a so-called freedom of choice desegregation plan, which did not change student assignments, but allowed parents to apply for transfer or reassignment to a school of their choice.⁷²

On January 30, 1970, the Court issued a new Decree, implementing the desegregation plan approved by the Office of Education. On appeal, on April 13, 1970, the Fifth Circuit made slight modifications to the plan, including a provision for minority to majority transfers.⁷³

In 1971, the Court required that a twelve-member bi-racial committee, of which A.G. Facen was a member, be implemented to examine the schools in the District. At the recommendation of the committee, the Court slightly modified the desegregation plan.⁷⁴

The Bi-Racial Committee of Ouachita Parish worked relentlessly with the Ouachita Parish School Board throughout the 1960s and 1970s to dismantle segregation of the schools and staff as evidenced by the numerous newspaper articles documenting its activities. The committee members often used the threat of additional lawsuits to force the school board to implement desegregation laws.

For many years, this case proceeded with little activity other than an occasional motion for slight modification of the Decree or for approval of a construction project. However, in late 2009 and early 2010, the Court began meeting with representatives of the remaining open desegregation

⁷¹ "Taylor Vs. Ouachita Parish School Board", by Robert G. James, <https://www.casemine.com/judgement/us/5914fc07add7b049349b1110>

⁷² Taylor v. Ouachita Parish Sch. Bd., Casetext, <https://casetext.com/case/taylor-v-ouachita-parish-sch-bd-1>

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

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cases in the Monroe Division to determine if any of the districts had achieved unitary status or, if not, what steps the districts needed to take to achieve unitary status.⁷⁵ The Ouachita Parish School Board operated with modifications and amendments under this decree for the next 40 years.⁷⁶

On July 9, 2013, the School Board filed the instant Motion for Declaration of Unitary Status and for Dismissal. Although notice was provided to Plaintiffs' former counsel and at the most recent personal addresses available, none of the private Plaintiffs have filed an objection to a finding of unitary status. No governmental entity has sought to intervene in this lawsuit, so the motion stands uncontested.⁷⁷

A.G. Facen continued his fight for civil rights in the courts through the Black Citizen's Council that he led. He was supported by a host of educators at Mineral Springs CME Church and many others who were the "foot soldiers" behind the movement.⁷⁸ Mineral Springs CME Church's support of the movement included collecting donations to fund the legal efforts, reporting activities and actions they witnessed, attending critical Ouachita Parish School Board meetings, registering voters and voting.⁷⁹ In 1970 Facen was threatened by the Klu Klux Klan. He was known for his famous statement "I will fight you in the courts until hell freezes over!"⁸⁰

Behind every landmark civil rights victory in Ouachita Parish stood a quiet army of foot soldiers—many of them members of Mineral Springs CME Church—who courageously placed themselves on the front lines of legal resistance. These were landowners, educators, church stewards, and everyday citizens whose personal integrity and financial independence allowed them to risk retaliation by attaching their names to lawsuits that challenged segregation and inequality. While the church as an institution may not have been the public face of these movements, it served as a vital social incubator where strategy was cultivated, courage was affirmed, and community support was galvanized. Members like Jeremiah Taylor and Ozenia Secrease, often at great personal risk, acted as plaintiffs in critical suits against the Ouachita Parish School Board, helping to enforce long-ignored rulings from the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and subsequent federal civil rights legislation. As Roosevelt Wright Jr. noted, these individuals were not just participants—they were the movement's moral and strategic backbone, generating the legal and intellectual force that would desegregate schools, equalize teacher salaries, and reshape public policy.⁸¹ Their quiet, persistent defiance—rooted in faith, fortified by community, and executed through the courts—became the catalyst for systemic change in northeast Louisiana.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ "Taylor Vs. Ouachita Parish School Board", by Robert G. James, <https://www.casemine.com/judgement/us/5914fc07add7b049349b1110>

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ "Reverend Roosevelt Wright, Jr. Interview", February 2, 2022

⁷⁹ "Charlie Cole Moss Interview", August 10, 2022.

⁸⁰ "Reverend Roosevelt Wright, Jr. Interview", February 2, 2022

⁸¹ Ibid.

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The fight for desegregation and equality continued at Mineral Springs throughout the 1970s.

There were many prominent and influential educators that were members of Mineral Springs CME Church. Among these is Mrs. Trudy Bell Jackson. Mrs. Jackson and her husband, Mr. Jenny Jackson were prominent members of the Mineral Springs CME Church where she served for many years as Church Secretary and Mr. Jackson served as President of the Trustee Board and Stewards Board.

Education was always important to Trudie. She graduated from Chatham Negro High School as Valedictorian. While in high school, she discovered her passion for teaching when she served as a substitute teacher for the school. Upon graduating from high school, she began her career as an elementary school teacher in the Jackson Parish School System while also attending Grambling State University. After earning her bachelor's degree from Grambling, she attended Northeast Louisiana University (now University of Louisiana at Monroe), earning a Master's Degree in Education. She has the distinction of being the first African American to receive a master's degree from Northeast. She has also studied at Louisiana Tech University and the University of Maryland.

Her career in education spanned over 41 years. She was employed in several roles, including teacher, reading and math coordinator, and principal. She retired from the Ouachita Parish School System as principal of Central Elementary School (formerly Mineral Springs Church School) and served as President of the Ouachita Education Association.⁸²

The many other pioneering educators of Mineral Springs CME Church include Mrs. Francis Jackson (retired teacher, Ouachita Parish), Mrs. Betty Moss (retired teacher, first teacher to integrate the teaching staff at Kiroli Elementary School in West Monroe, La), Mr. Samuel Johnson (retired minister, educator, and U.S. Army veteran), Mrs. Juanita Green (retired teacher, Ouachita Parish), Mrs. Elnora Johnson Cole (retired teacher), Mrs. Elsie Johnson Cyrus (retired Louisiana Cooperative Extension Specialist), Mrs. Carrie Johnson Taylor (retired educator of Ouachita Parish for 40 years), Annie B. Young (retired teacher), Otis Ray Young (retired teacher), and the list goes on and on.

Many educators involved in the Civil Rights Movement are advanced in age while others have sadly passed on. Their stories must be captured, collected, archived and persevered for future generations. It is critical that these stories be collected as soon as possible. Today, the church stands as a symbol of resilience and progress, embodying the spirit of a community that refused to accept second-class citizenship. Its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places is a recognition of its pivotal role in the history of civil rights and education in the African American community.

⁸² "Trudy Jackson Obituary", <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/trudie-jackson-obituary?id=54218158>

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Conclusion

During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, Black communities across the South—particularly in rural areas like Ouachita Parish—faced severe disparities in access to public resources, funding, and infrastructure. Segregated systems relegated African American schools, neighborhoods, and institutions to the margins, often leaving them underfunded, overcrowded, and poorly maintained. Public facilities, if available at all, were typically decades behind those provided to white communities. In response to this systemic neglect, Black churches stepped into the breach, becoming multi-functional spaces that served as classrooms, meeting halls, training centers, and sanctuaries for civic organization. With little outside support, these communities relied on grassroots fundraising, volunteer labor, and deeply rooted networks of mutual aid to meet their needs. Mineral Springs CME Church exemplifies this spirit of resourcefulness and resilience—transforming scarcity into strength and turning faith into action in the face of ongoing social and economic injustice.

At Mineral Springs, it was by design that meetings were not documented for fear of retaliation especially for educators who feared losing their jobs. While there is little documentation of specific meetings or oral histories due to the passing of many members of these Civil Rights activities, the history and significance of the Churches contributions to these efforts is known by all community members. Throughout history African American churches have often served as the sole meeting place for Civil Rights activities as they were considered safe houses for free speech and free thinking. Mineral Springs CME Church is no except and served the African American community as its only meeting place.

It is widely acknowledged that churches have played a strong central role in the black community. Following the Civil War, churches were among the first buildings African Americans had constructed through their own resources. These buildings sheltered not just religious activities but also provided the only classroom space available for schools and hosted community gatherings of all kinds. According to the National Register Criterion A, “properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes” are not considered eligible for the National Register unless they derive their “primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.” Because of the exceptionally important role of the church as an institution in the black community, an argument can be made for the eligibility of most historic black churches for historical importance as long as they maintain a fair level of integrity and their historic role can be documented, discussed, and explained in terms of the specific church candidate.⁸³

The legacy of Mineral Springs CME Church and its associated educational, civil rights and social institutions is profound. They laid the groundwork for future generations to continue the fight for equality and justice. The church's emphasis on education as a tool for empowerment and

⁸³ Blokker, Laura, *The African American Experience in Louisiana*, May 15, 2012, page 70.

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its active involvement in civil rights litigation helped dismantle many of the institutional barriers that African Americans faced.

In conclusion, Mineral Springs CME Church's contributions to education and civil rights make it a deserving candidate for National Register listing. Its history is a powerful reminder of the impact that a dedicated community can have in the fight against injustice and the pursuit of equality.

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

The fight for civil rights in Ouachita Parish was not only waged in courtrooms, churches, and classrooms but also played out in everyday interactions, revealing deep-seated tensions and resistance to social change. An article published in the *Monroe News-Star* on February 12, 1971, titled "**Calhoun Officer Victim of Incident**," offers a stark illustration of the lingering effects of segregationist ideology in the region. The article recounts how Army Capt. Jerry L. Finley, a white officer from Calhoun, Louisiana, refused to shake hands with a Black officer, Capt. Ronald Branch, while stationed in Okinawa. Finley's refusal, framed as an exercise of his First Amendment right, led to his removal from duty and a pending recommendation for elimination from the Army. His defense, echoing the segregationist rhetoric of the time, was supported by Louisiana Congressman John Rarick, a known opponent of civil rights legislation. This incident, though occurring overseas, reflects the persistent racial attitudes harbored by some in Calhoun and the broader South, reinforcing the significance of institutions like Mineral Springs CME Church in fostering education, equality, and racial progress within the community. By examining such events alongside the church's contributions, we gain a fuller understanding of the cultural landscape in which the church operated and the ongoing struggles for justice its members faced.

The article reads as follows:

'Calhoun Officer Victim Of Incident' WASHINGTON (AP) - Army | Capt. Jerry L. Finley of Calhoun, La., says he was relieved of his duties as a military lawyer on Okinawa last month for refusing to shake hands with a Negro officer. They spoke at a news conference called here Thursday by Rep. John Rarick, D-La., a vigorous segregationist.

Finley was transferred to Washington after the incident involving the black officer and told that a recommendation was pending that he be eliminated from the Army. He added that if his case was investigated "I believe it would be determined that I am not the first officer in the United States Army who has been humiliated, degraded and embarrassed by some colored officer." Except from his formal statement, which he read to newsmen, Finley would not comment. He said the incident occurred February 10, two days after he arrived on assignment as a defense lawyer on the staff of the judge advocate at Ryukyus Islands in Okinawa. He was approached at the lunch table by Capt. Ronald Branch, the black officer.

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A third officer introduced Branch and Finley. Finley said he made a "courteous oral; greeting" and went on "Then the captain reached across the seated officer's plate and stuck out his hand. I went on eating my lunch and noticed the colored officer coming toward me," Finley said. "He arrived at my place and again stuck out his hand, saying, 'Shake.' I continued to eat. He then said, 'You don't shake?' I replied, 'No.' There was no ensuing word nor was there any commotion whatsoever. Shortly thereafter, Capt. Branch left." Finley said he was summoned before the staff judge advocate the next day and advised that a complaint had been filed against him.

Finley said he had replied that in his section of the country it was not customary nor considered in good taste for a white person to shake hands with colored people with whom they were not acquainted. "If this is considered an 'incident,' I must admit I was not the aggressor but the innocent nonassertive victim," he said. "In not shaking hands with a person, one is exercising his First Amendment right of freedom of association." Finley said he had not been formally charged.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ 'Calhoun Officer Victim Of Incident', Monroe News Star

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Books:

Blokker, Laura E. *"The African American Experience in Louisiana."* Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation. May 15, 2012.

Hooks, Bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.* New York: Routledge, 1994.

Harvey, Gordon E., *Historic Ouachita Parish: An Illustrated History*, Historical Publishing Network. San Antonio, Texas. 2007

Government and Institutional Reports:

Louisiana Office of Cultural Development. *National Register of Historic Places Registration*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2025.

Newspaper Articles:

Monroe Morning World. "Unique Negro Community Thrives in This Parish." Monroe, LA, 1936.

Monroe News-Star. "Mineral Springs School Earns High Rating in Ouachita Parish." Monroe, LA, 1936.

Monroe News-Star. "A.G. Facen: The Educator Who Wouldn't Back Down." Monroe, LA, 1970.

Archival Materials:

Mineral Springs CME Church Archives. *Historical Photographs and Documents Related to the Church and Civil Rights Advocacy*. Calhoun, LA.

Personal Correspondence & Interviews:

Branch, Deborah Taylor. Personal correspondence regarding the history of Mineral Springs CME Church. March 13, 2025.

Wright, Roosevelt Jr. Phone interview by author, March 2022.

Moss, Charlie Cole Phone interview by author, August 2022

Cesar, Arnold B. Zoom interview by author, June 2022.

Moorehead, Lindsay Phone interview by author, September 2022

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Ivey, Felton Jr. Phone interview by author, December 2024.
Moss, Betty. Phone interview by author, May 2023.
Johnson, Mary Corprue. Phone interview by author, February 2023
Jones, Patrick. Phone interview by author July 2022.
Wills, Don. Phone interview by author, September 2022.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 32.458450

Longitude: -92.359008

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The building sits at the Southeast corner on a diagonal facing Northwest of the intersection of Old Mineral Springs Road and New Mineral Springs Road. It is bounded by New Mineral Springs Road to the North, Old Mineral Springs Road to the West, and on the South and East by densely wooded areas with Clark Creek running just to the East of the property.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The chosen boundary reflects the historic footprint of the building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Deborah Taylor Branch
organization: N/A
street & number: 7610 Mauna Kai Dr.
city or town: Houston state: TX zip code: 71225
e-mail: deborah.branch@att.net
telephone: (832) 567-3639
date: May 25, 2025

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Mineral Springs CME Church

City or Vicinity: Calhoun

County: Ouachita

State: LA

Photographer: Brian Davis except photo 7, taken by Deborah Branch

Date of Photographs: April 22, 2021 except photo 7, taken on Feb. 24, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1 of 17: | Front of church. Camera facing southeast. |
| 2 of 17: | Closeup of entrance portal. Camera facing east. |
| 3 of 17: | Cornerstone front. Camera facing southeast. |
| 4 of 17: | Front and southwest side. Camer facing east. |
| 5 of 17: | Closeup of window. Camera facing northeast. |
| 6 of 17: | South wing. Camera facing northeast. |
| 7 of 17: | Rear elevation. Camera facing northwest. |
| 8 of 17: | Front and northeast side. Camera facing southeast. |
| 9 of 17: | Northeast side. Camera facing southwest. |
| 10 of 17: | Side of north wing. Camera facing south. |
| 11 of 17: | Cornerstone side. Camera facing south. |
| 12 of 17: | Well house. Camera facing southwest. |
| 13 of 17: | Sanctuary. Camera facing southeast. |
| 14 of 17: | Sanctuary. Camera facing west. |
| 15 of 17: | Chancel. Camera facing southeast. |
| 16 of 17: | Fellowship hall. Camera facing southeast. |
| 17 of 17: | Hallway in addition. Camera facing northeast. |

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Figures



Figure 1. Mineral Springs CME Church Building located in Calhoun, LA. This building held some of the discrimination strategy meetings led by A.G. Facen. Image courtesy of the author.

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Figure 2. Felton Ivey, Contractor, standing in front of the new Mineral Springs CME Church in 1963. Felton Ivey was self-taught in the construction business. He took correspondence courses and performed odd jobs to perfect his craft. Felton Ivey was a member of Mineral Springs CME Church and served as a member of the Trustee Board. Image courtesy of Mineral Springs CME Church archives.



Figure 3. Ozenia Secrease, Ouachita Parish Educator at Mineral Springs Church School, member of the Louisiana Colored Teacher's Association and local Civil Rights activist. Image courtesy of the author.

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Figure 4. A.G. Facen, Ouachita Parish Educator, Civil Rights Leader, Principal of Mineral Springs Church School. A.G. Facen was one of the most prolific Civil Rights Leaders in Ouachita Parish fighting discrimination in education through the courts. He was known by his quote, "I will fight you in the courts until hell freezes over!" Facen was active in his fight for civil rights until his death in 1991. Image courtesy of the author.



Figure 5. Neomia Ivey, Trudy Jackson and Juanita Green, members of Mineral Springs CME Church. Trudy Jackson and Juanita Green were educators in Ouachita Parish. Trudy Jackson was a pioneer in education and was Principal at Central Elementary School, formerly the Mineral Springs Church School. Image courtesy of Mineral Springs CME Church archives.

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STEWARD AND TRUSTEE BOARD MEMBERS



L to R - Brothers - Jeney Jackson, Jr., President of Steward Board, Felton Ivey, Willie D. Ivey, Ben Crawford, Napoleon Green, President of the Trustee Board, Marcus Young and Calvin King

Figure 6. Members of Mineral Springs CME Church Steward Board and Trustee Board responsible for the building of the new Mineral Springs CME Church building in 1963. Image courtesy of the Mineral Springs CME Church archives.

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Figure 7. Carrie Johnson Taylor, a dedicated educator in Ouachita Parish and lifelong member of Mineral Springs CME Church. Carrie J. Taylor devoted over 40 years to education in Ouachita Parish and remained an active member of Mineral Springs CME Church until her passing October 2, 2019. She was the youngest child of Allen Johnson, who generously donated land for the Johnson Jordan Colored 4-H Camp in the Mineral Springs community. This nomination is lovingly dedicated to her memory by her daughter, Deborah Taylor Branch, the author of this submission. Image courtesy of the author.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

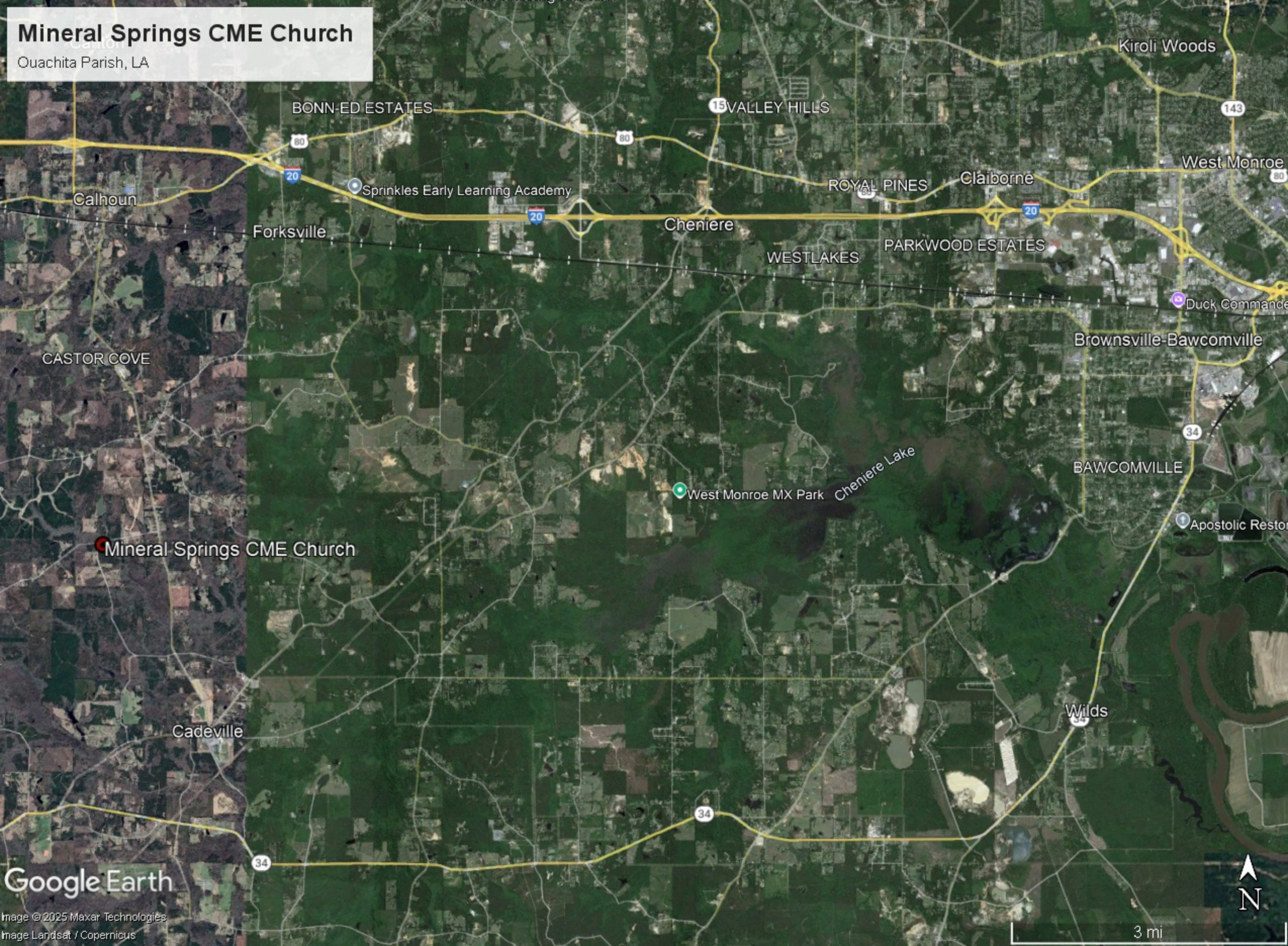
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Google Earth

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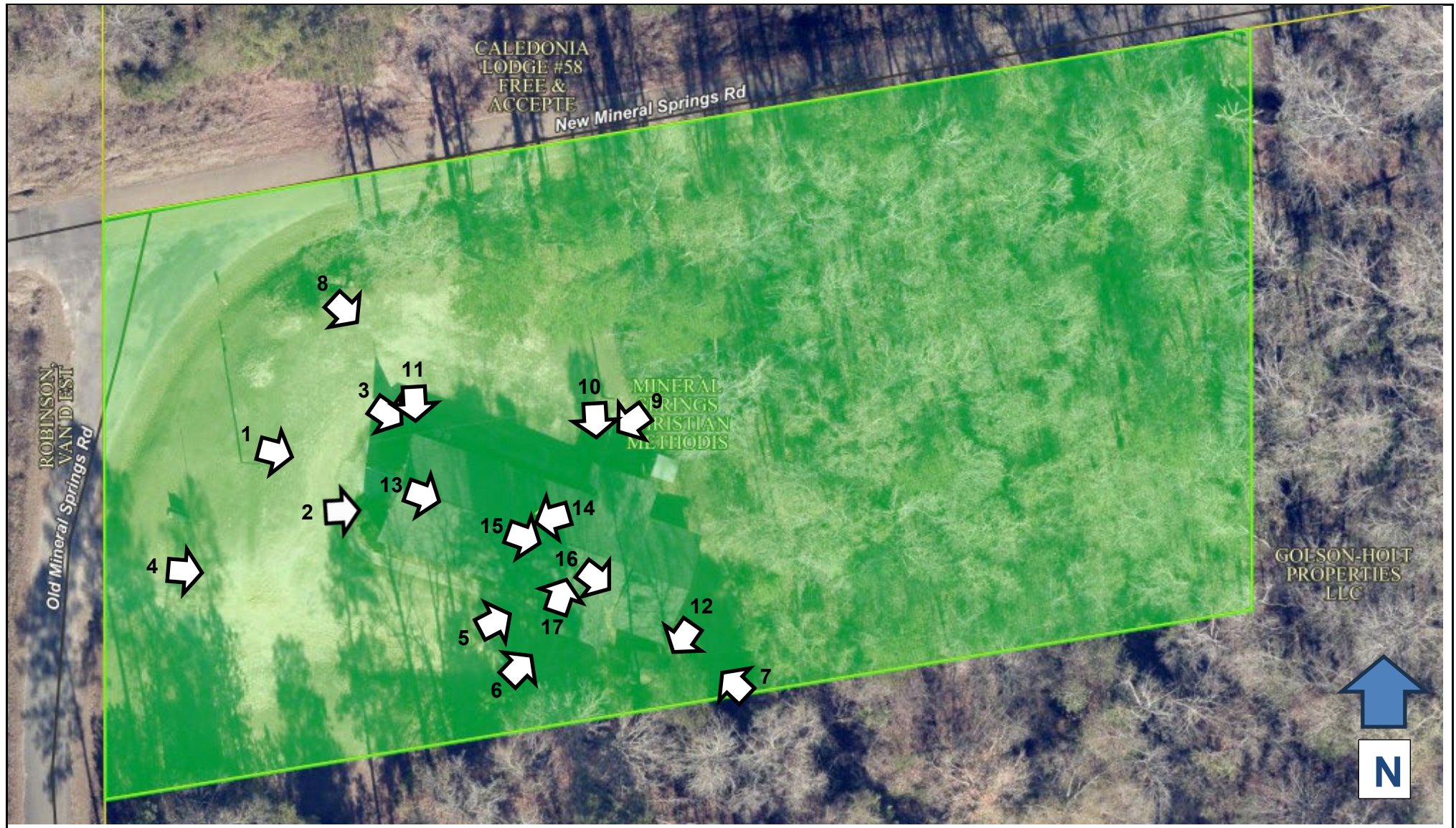
3 mi

Mineral Springs CME Church

Ouachita Parish, LA



LA, Ouachita Parish, Mineral Springs CME Church



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MINERAL SPRINGS C. M. E. CHURCH

REBUILT—1963

REV. H. D. WILLIS, PASTOR

BISHOP N. S. CURRY

ELDER M. J. SECREASE

STEWARDS AND TRUSTEES

J. J. JACKSON, CH.	N. G. GREEN, CH.
A. J. JOHNSON	F. L. IVEY
Q. A. JOHNSON	W. D. IVEY
M. G. YOUNG	C. L. KING
B. CRAWFORD	

MINERAL SPRINGS HALL GRAND LODGE



JOHN C. LEWIS, JR., M. W.

GRAND MASTER

REBUILT 1963















M. W. PRINCE HALL GRAND LODGE

F. & A. M.



OF LOUISIANA

JOHN G. LEWIS, JR., M. W.

GRAND MASTER

A. L. 5963

A. D. 1963









THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME

TITHES



