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JEFFERSON COUNTY'S BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH ADDED TO ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS & HERITAGE

The Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) recently added the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Overton to the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage.

The Alabama Register is a prestigious listing of historic, architectural, and archaeological landmarks. The AHC considers the notable historic properties in this register to be particularly worthy of preservation and appreciation, and therefore deserving of this special recognition.

Bethel A.M.E. Church is listed in the Alabama Register for its educational, social, and religious history and for its associations with African-American heritage. "It is a good example of an early 20th century community building that was the center of African-American life in the mining community of Overton," said Lee Anne Wofford, Alabama Register Coordinator for the Alabama Historical Commission.

The property was donated to the black mining camp in the Overton community over 100 years ago. The current building was constructed in 1907 and served as a church, community meeting place, elementary school, and Masonic lodge. It is presently used for church services and other activities. A historic cemetery is also on the property.

Jesse M. Overton, a Nashville capitalist formed the Alabama Fuel and Steel (later Iron) company and purchased 60,000 acres of mineral lands in the Cahaba coal fields of St. Clair, Shelby and Jefferson County. Before his death in 1910, Mr. Overton established 3 mining communities: Overton, south of present day Mountain Brook; Margaret between Leeds and Trussville, and Acmar, in St. Clair County. Acton, between Oxmoor and Helena in Shelby County were established at a later date.

The Alabama Historical Commission administers the Alabama Register program, which gives the public a simple way to bring recognition to historic properties.

The Alabama Register officially recognizes and honors buildings, sites, structures, objects, and historic districts that are at least 40 years old.

The Alabama Register designation is honorary and carries no restrictions on property and offers no financial incentives.

*To protect, preserve, and interpret Alabama's historic places is the mission of the **Alabama Historical Commission**, the **State Historic Preservation Office**.*