

PH 05 04 181

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY **DATA SHEET**  
 RECEIVED **SEP 20 1977**  
 DATE ENTERED **APR 6 1978**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Bethel Baptist Institutional Church

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1058 Hogan Street

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Jacksonville

\_\_ VICINITY OF

4th

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Florida

CODE

12

COUNTY

Duval

CODE

031

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

1058 Hogan Street

CITY, TOWN

Jacksonville

\_\_ VICINITY OF

Florida

STATE

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Duval County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Jacksonville,

Florida

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Florida Master Site File

DATE

1976

\_\_FEDERAL     STATE    \_\_COUNTY    \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Archives, History, & Records Management

CITY, TOWN

Tallahassee,

STATE

Florida

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bethel Baptist Institutional Church occupies the northwest corner of the intersection of Hogan and Caroline Streets between downtown Jacksonville and the residential community of Springfield. The church congregation traces its origins back to the initial Baptist congregation in Jacksonville, and this structure has served as its permanent house of worship since 1904, replacing the church complex destroyed by the Great Fire of 1901.

M.H. Hubbard of Utica, New York, was commissioned by the congregation to design a church complex after the fire, and William Stenson, a local Jacksonville contractor, supervised the construction of this building in 1904. The building is of buff grey concrete block and white wood trim. Stylistically, the building reflects the influence of Greek Revival and Romanesque church architecture, but it is more correctly classified as eclectic--showing several influences but with no one style dominating. The exterior appearance of the structure reveals a series of projecting eaves all around the building. There are several different roof types incorporated into the design of the church. Projecting ridges at right angles meet in combination with two central domes supported by decorative engaged pilasters and with two projecting wings that have hip roofs topped by finials. The domes connect to support a cupola that is partially hidden by the large bell tower when viewed from the main facade. Subsidiary entrances are located in the two wide projections that have hip roofs. Each alternate roof type marks a different wing on the main facade of the church. The surfacing of the roof consists of metal sheathing, with slate shingles on the roof of the bell tower.

There is a large bell tower centrally located on the main facade which dominates the exterior appearance of the church. The main entrance to the church sanctuary, situated at the base of the tower, consists of two wooden doors painted white with an arched lintel and stain glass lunette. An inscription was placed above the entrance in stone that reads: BETHEL BAPTIST INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH 1868-1904. The middle section of the tower is elaborately decorated with carved wood and the arched opening is protected by a small wooden balustrade. A dentilled cornice surrounds the edge of the tower roof which rises to a peak that is topped by a finial.

All windows are either of the fixed or casement variety. Windows on the main block of the church and which illuminate the sanctuary are fixed with stained glass insets depicting religious figures and scenes. The southwest portion of the building is used for church administrative purposes and contains several offices and meeting rooms. This wing has its own subsidiary entrance set off from the sanctuary but connected by a side hallway. The sanctuary consists of a large open room with fixed wood pews surrounding the pulpit and a choir loft to the rear and above. The walls of the sanctuary are of smooth plaster and do not leave the impression of projecting wings that one receives from an exterior view. There is an additional small entry stoop set off in the

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southwest corner of the sanctuary.

The Bethel Baptist Institutional Church complex remains today substantially the way it appeared at the time of its completion in 1904. The most significant alteration has been the change of the roof surfacing from a dark shingle to a silver shingle and metal sheathing to reflect the sun and add to the color and glimmer of the exterior. Its location provides a clear view of the structure from several blocks in either direction, and it stands as an architectural monument to the rebuilding of Jacksonville after the Great Fire of 1901. Its blend of Greek Revival and Romanesque influences coupled with the several projecting wings and the unusual roof placement, single the church out as one of the more significant pieces of church architecture in Jacksonville and one of the most original "post-fire" creations.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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-HISTORIC	<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 type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      +1904      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      William Stenson/M.H. Hubbard

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE      Utica, N.Y.

Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, Jacksonville, Florida, holds a position of distinction in the history of Jacksonville. It has served as a focal point for the religious and community fulfillment of Jacksonville's black population. Throughout its lengthy history it has been intimately connected with the spiritual and cultural life of the entire Jacksonville community.

In July, 1838, the Reverend James McDonald of Georgia came to Jacksonville, then a young but growing settlement in northeast Florida on the St. Johns River, and established the first Baptist congregation in the city (Davis p. 401). The congregation was officially incorporated by the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida in February, 1841, under the name of Bethel Baptist Church.

At the time of the church's incorporation, Reverend McDonald served a mixed congregation of blacks and whites, slaves and slave owners. The mixed congregation continued to grow and changed location several times prior to the Civil War. They finally settled on a site on the north side of Church Street between Julia and Hogan Streets in 1861 and erected a new house of worship that year.

During the course of the Civil War, the city of Jacksonville was occupied four separate times by Federal troops. Various churches in town were used as hospitals and schools by the Union Forces. The day of the Battle of Olustee (February 20, 1864) Federal troops took possession of Bethel Baptist Church and converted it into a hospital for their wounded. By the time of the removal of the occupying army that spring, the church was badly damaged and in need of extensive repairs. The congregation was not to reach settlement with the United States government for reparation of damages until 1912.

At the close of the Civil War an attempt was made to separate the white and black members of the Bethel Baptist congregation. Reflecting on this general trend in the postwar South, Edward Joiner has written:

After the Civil War a desire for separate churches grew among the Florida Negro Baptists until it came to be expressed in the formation of their own separate churches. . . Thus, as the first opportunity, many Negro Baptists moved to establish their

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>17</u>	<u>436710</u>	<u>3356000</u>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dennis B. Downey and Diane D. Greer/Historic Sites Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Division of Archives, History, & Records Management

DATE

June, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Department of State, The Capitol

TELEPHONE

(904) 487-2333

CITY OR TOWN

Tallahassee,

STATE

Florida

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

L. Ross Morrell

TITLE

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

9-13-77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

William Cole

DATE

4/6/78

DATE

4 4 78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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separate churches (Joiner p. 50-51).

Such was the case in Jacksonville, where a dispute arose over the possession of church property, and a legal battle was carried on for several years. Finally a court settlement in 1868 resolved the conflict, awarding the Church Street property to the white members of the Bethel Baptist congregation and granting the black members financial compensation and retention of the church name. There is some dispute over the exact amount of money awarded to the black members; some sources quote the figure as \$800 and others as \$400. The whites took a new name, Tabernacle Baptist Church, which was later changed to First Baptist Church of Jacksonville.

The black congregation moved to a newly purchased piece of property on Pine Street (now Main) at the intersection of Union Street in downtown Jacksonville. A small wood frame chapel was built here, and the Reverend Cataline Simmons was called as their first pastor. Reverend Simmons served as the pastor of the Bethel congregation from 1868 to 1880.

In 1880 the American Baptist Home Mission Society founded the Live Oak Institute in Live Oak, Florida, for the purpose of educating black youths in the vicinity. The new school received continuous harrassment from local white citizens, and the American Baptist Home Mission Society withdrew its support from the Institute. A group of local black citizens attempted to keep the school in operation but eventually decided to form a new school in Jacksonville which was considered to be a more hospitable location. By October 5, 1892, the new school, known as the Florida Baptist Academy, was a reality. It was located temporarily at Bethel Baptist Church (Joiner p. 227-278). The Academy was eventually moved to St. Augustine and renamed the Florida Normal and Industrial Institute.

In 1894 the Bethel Baptist Church was rechartered by the State Legislature. Feeling the pressures of a growing congregation, the Bethel Baptist Church, under the leadership of Reverend Jerome Milton Waldron, erected a large red brick structure in 1895. Replacing the smaller wood frame building that had served the congregation since its separation in 1868, this new house of worship was constructed at a cost of \$26,000. The church was destroyed by the great conflagration that engulfed almost the entire downtown section of Jacksonville on the afternoon of May 3, 1901

After the fire of 1901, all of the churches in the downtown area of Jacksonville were forced to rebuild and rechart their future development. Reverend Waldron and his congregation purchased the entire block on the

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northwest corner of the intersection of Hogan and Caroline Streets and made plans for the construction of a new church complex. After a fund raising campaign which took the pastor throughout the Northeast was successfully completed, M.H. Hubbard of Utica, New York, was commissioned to design a new church complex for the Bethel congregation. William Stenson, a local Jacksonville contractor, supervised the actual construction of what is today the present Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. After construction was completed in 1904, a local newspaper gave the following description of the New church: "This church is a monument to industry, Morality, and Religious Enterprise of Jacksonville's Colored Citizens" (Florida Daily Sun, December 24, 1904).

In 1901, at the suggestion of Reverend Waldron, the Afro-American Life Insurance Company was organized. It began as a small church society for the benefit of the Bethel congregation; but when the society continued to grow far beyond the original expectations, an independent corporation was formed. Today it has blossomed into one of the largest life insurance agencies in the city.

The church congregation was again chartered by the State of Florida in 1921 when its name was changed to the Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. Since its separation from the white members of the old Bethel Baptist Church in 1868, the Bethel Baptist Institutional Church has served as the "Mother Church" for the following Jacksonville congregations: Central Baptist Church, Greenland Baptist Church, Second Baptist Church, Day Springs Baptist Church, Saint Lukes Baptist Church, Bethel Baptist Church (South Jacksonville) and Panama Park Baptist Church. In addition, a congregation that had its origins in the Bethel Baptist Institutional Church of Jacksonville was formed in Chaseville, Florida.

The history of the Bethel Baptist Institutional Church of Jacksonville, Florida, has been intimately connected with the development of one of Florida's principle settlements and later metropolitan areas. After the separation of the congregation in 1868, the Bethel Baptist Institutional Church continued to be the principle influence on the spiritual life of Jacksonville's black community. In addition to ministering to the city's black population, the church has played an important role in the twentieth century growth of Jacksonville. It remains today a landmark to the early settlement of Jacksonville and to its continued growth and development.

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