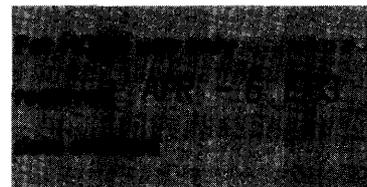


United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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 Butler Street Colored Methodist Episcopal Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 23 Butler Street, S.E. N/A not for publication

city, town Atlanta N/A vicinity of congressional district 5th- Wyche Fowler

state Georgia code 13 county Fulton code 121

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> 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:

4. Owner of Property

name Rev. Thomas L. Brown, Minister Butler Street C.M.E. Church

street & number 23 Butler Street, S.E.

city, town Atlanta N/A vicinity of state Georgia 30303

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fulton County Courthouse

street & number 260 Pryor Street, S.W.

city, town Atlanta state Georgia 30303

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NONE has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Butler Street C.M.E. Church is a vernacular Neo-Gothic Revival structure located on a small corner lot just south of Atlanta's Sweet Auburn Historic District. The church, set on a concrete foundation, is built of tan brick of variegated tones. It has a gable roof and is divided into bays by buttress-like piers. The three-bay front facade has a three-door central portal with a large pointed-arched stained glass window to each side and a smaller one above. Heavy piers accentuate the corners, and three round-arched windows above a string course highlight the gable area. The sides of the church reflect the interior division of the church into a four-bay nave and a narrow choir loft flanked by offices at the rear. The four eastern bays have large stained glass windows similar to those on the front; the two rear office bays have double-hung sash windows on two floors with an entrance on the street side. The sanctuary interior has a small one-story narthex with stairs on either side leading to a balcony above, and basement meeting rooms, kitchen, minister's study, etc. below. The nave has a pressed tin ceiling, three banks of pews, and a raised altar surrounded by a wooden altar railing detailed with a Gothic tracery motif. Behind the altar is the choir and organ loft which extends to the rear of the building. It has a pressed tin ceiling with a square inset portion, three stained glass windows, and a wooden railing with similar Gothic tracery motif. Original octagonal lantern-like fixtures still remain.

The stained glass windows are dedicated to various people involved with the founding of the church or the building of this structure. One is dedicated to Bishop L.H. Holsey who was instrumental in the church's founding in 1882. It is significant because it contains his picture within the design; the other stained glass windows do not have pictorial representations.

The church was built on the site of the previous church of the same congregation and has no grounds to speak of. There are no outbuildings on this property, although the church does own nonhistoric adjacent property. The church is surrounded by commercial property and is diagonally across an intersection from the original Grady Hospital, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local History

Specific dates 1920 **Builder/Architect** Builder: H. Whitworth

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Butler Street Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1920, is significant in terms of Georgia's architectural, religious, and local history.

Architecturally, the Butler Street C.M.E. Church is significant as an example of a vernacular Neo-Gothic style church built for and by Atlanta's black community. The church's pressed tin ceiling, stained glass windows, and altar and choir loft railings are particularly interesting architectural elements. The church was built by day laborers supervised by the builder H. Whitworth, who is said to have come from Elberton, Georgia, to direct the building of the church. In terms of religion the church is significant for its association with one of Atlanta's early black congregations, organized in 1882, and with Bishop Lucius H. Holsey, a prominent C.M.E. leader who was involved in establishing this and many other C.M.E. churches in the state. Holsey was a co-founder of Paine College in Augusta and the Holsey Normal and Industrial Academy in Cordele. He was a leader of the black separatist movement that wanted the Federal Government to establish a Negro State in this country. In terms of local history, the church is significant for its association with the Sweet Auburn area of Atlanta which flourished as a major center of black entrepreneurial and social activity from 1880 to 1930. The Butler Street C.M.E. Church is one of a number of historic black churches located on or near Auburn Avenue that serviced the large surrounding residential area. The first Butler Street C.M.E. Church was wood and was constructed about 1885 on this site, which was donated by John T. Grant, a noted Atlanta businessman, "in consideration of the good will I bear my former slaves and to the colored people generally." It was demolished to make way for the present church, built during the years of Sweet Auburn's greatest strength and prosperity. These areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register criteria A, B, and C.

Historical Narrative

The Butler Street C.M.E. Church, founded in 1882, is one of Atlanta's oldest Black congregations, the third oldest Black methodist congregation in the area. Big Bethel A.M.E. on Auburn Avenue was founded in 1865, First Congregational in 1867, Wheat Street Baptist Church in 1881, and Ebenezer Baptist Church in 1886.

(Continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Northwest Atlanta, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	1 6	7 4 2 6 2 0	3 7 3 7 7 4 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property conforms to the legal description of the property and coincides with the historic lot associated with the church. It is marked with a heavy black line on the enclosed tax map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian

organization Historic Preservation Section Department of Natural Resources date March 14, 1983

street & number 270 Washington Str. telephone 404/656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia 30334

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Elizabeth A. Lyon

Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 3/22/83

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 5/9/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 2

The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was formed in 1870 from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Church rules limited the membership to Blacks. In 1954 the name of the faith was changed to Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, but this did not alter the designation of the faith as "C.M.E."

Organized by the Rev. S.E. Poe in 1882, the Butler Street C.M.E. Church evolved from a Sunday School that met nearby on Gilmer Street. Pioneer Atlanta developer John T. Grant (1821-1887) donated the land on which the church is presently located. According to the deed dated September 1, 1884, the land was specifically for use as a church for this congregation, and Grant and his heirs retained a "reversionary Interest" which stated that, should the land cease to be used for the church, the property would revert to the Grant estate. The deed, recorded in Fulton County Courthouse, sets forth Grant's reason for making the gift, and marks the beginning of a lasting spirit of cooperation between Atlanta's Black and White communities in support of the Butler Street C.M.E. church. The deed states: "Now therefore, in consideration of the good will I bear my former slaves and to the colored people generally, members of said church, and in consideration of an earnest desire to elevate the religious and moral sentiment and life of this large body of recently enfranchised people in our midst, I will ask no further consideration to me in hand paid."

Bishop Lucius H. Holsey (1842-1920) signed the deed on behalf of the Butler Street congregation. Son of an ex-slave, Holsey was an ordained minister who co-founded Paine College in Augusta, Ga., and Holsey School in Cordele, Ga. It is unclear whether Holsey's father and other members of the congregation were, in fact, John T. Grant's former slaves, or whether the gift was made on behalf of former slaves in general. The congregation built a modest frame church on the land. It was demolished in 1920 to make way for the present church building. Bishop Holsey left the congregation in 1901 to found the Holsey Temple C.M.E. Church on Boulevard in Atlanta. However, he maintained a close relationship with the Butler Street church, and his countenance, reproduced in stained glass, looks down upon the congregation from the center of the Butler Street facade. He died August 3, 1920 and the soon to be completed church became a memorial to him.

The Bulter Street C.M.E. Church has received gifts and bequests from many prominent Atlantans. In 1923, "Tiger" Flowers (1895-1927), the first Black man to win the world middleweight boxing championship and a long-time steward in the church, bought the seats of the Lyric Theatre which was being demolished "so the congregation could sit comfortable while listening to the good word." Philanthropist Robert Woodruff, retired chairman of Coca-Cola, first contributed to the church in 1945 as a tribute to his chauffeur, Lawrence Calhoun, a member of the congregation. Woodruff has continued his gifts through the years, in memory of Calhoun. One of the church's stained glass windows is dedicated to Woodruff.

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Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 8

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In 1969, the congregation purchased the land on which the church stands from the Grant heirs for a nominal sum. Hollis Grant provided in his estate an annual cash gift to the church.

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National Park Service**

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Continuation sheet Bibliography Item number 9 Page 2

Jay, Rev. L.W. 1882-1977 Our Official Souvenir Anniversary Edition (Atlanta, 1977)

Mitchell, Margaret "Peggy", "Tiger Flowers Quotes Psalms on Fighting", March 14, 1926, Atlanta Journal magazine, copy located at the Atlanta Historical Society.

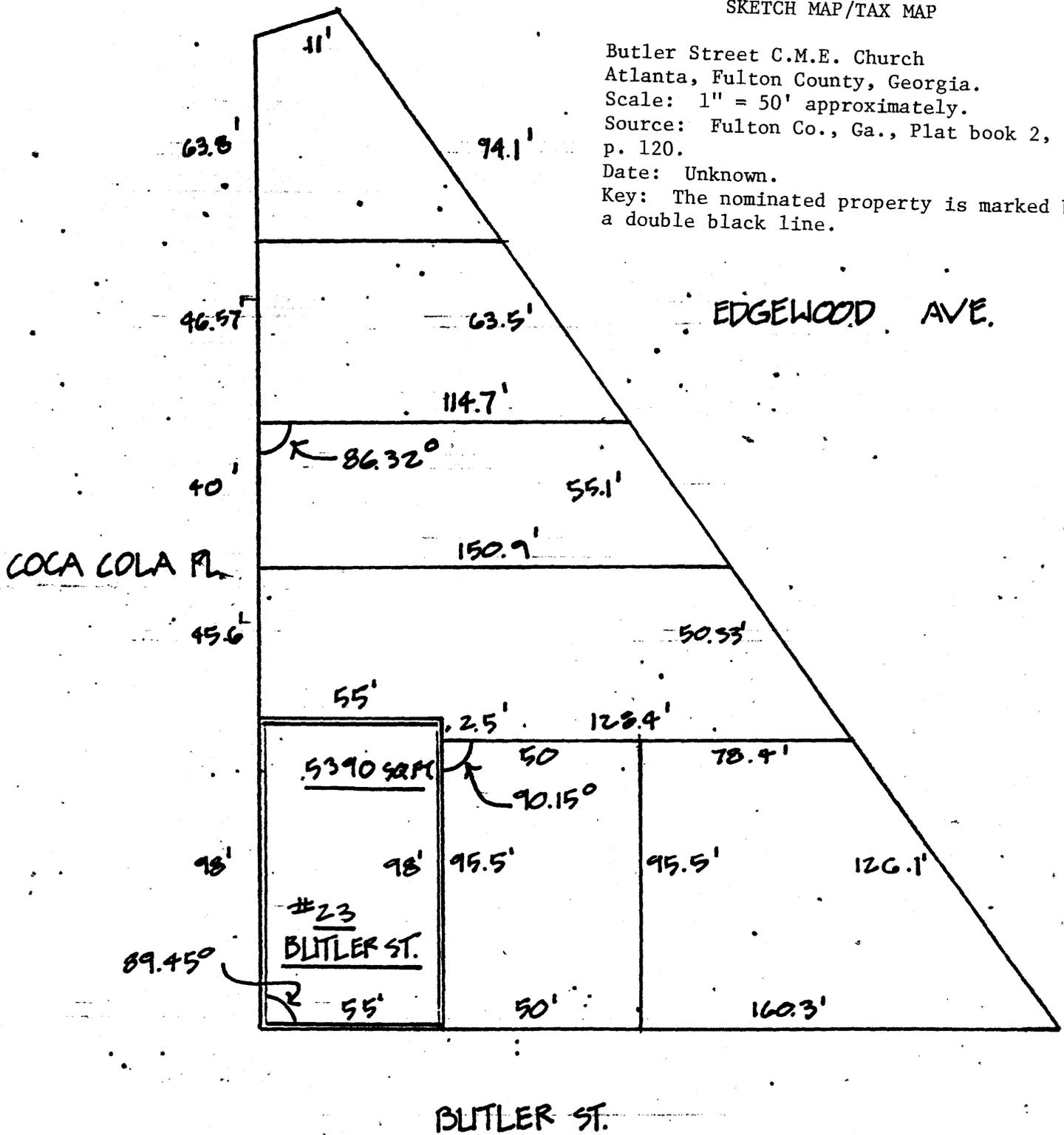
Draft National Register nominations prepared by Spencer Tunnell and Marion Rich, 1980, for the Atlanta Urban Design Commission and class presentation by David Thomson, student at Georgia Institute of Technology, 1982.

Interviews with the Rev. L.W. Jay, pastor.

Additional research by National Park Service staff members, 1982.

SKETCH MAP/TAX MAP

Butler Street C.M.E. Church
 Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia.
 Scale: 1" = 50' approximately.
 Source: Fulton Co., Ga., Plat book 2,
 p. 120.
 Date: Unknown.
 Key: The nominated property is marked by
 a double black line.



PLAT BOOK #2 P 120

NTS.