

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 7 1985

date entered MAR 7 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Bethany Congregational Church

and or common

2. Location

street & number 112 Lester Street N/A not for publication

city, town Thomasville N/A vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county Thomas code 275

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Bethany Congregational Church

street & number 112 Lester Street

city, town Thomasville N/A vicinity of state Georgia 31792

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Thomas County Courthouse

city, town Thomasville state GA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Structures Field Survey: has this property been determined eligible? yes no
Thomas County

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Section
Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta state Georgia

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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

Bethany Congregational Church is a small, vernacular wood-framed church with a Latin-cross plan and simple Gothic detailing. The original church, built in 1891, was a rectangular structure supported on brick piers with a steeply pitched roof and a small entrance portico on the front (north) facade. In 1914, approximately, the church was enlarged and altered to its present appearance. Old photographs and the location of the building's 1891 cornerstone at the present side entrance of the church suggest that the original structure consisted of what is now the cross arm of the church. The present side portico was the original main entrance to the building. What is today the main body of the church was added in 1914. This includes the tower and porch that make up the present front facade and the rear apse. The present double-hung sash windows with their pointed-arched detailing and the shiplap siding date from 1914. The concrete steps at both entrances and the small anteroom on the northeast corner of the front porch are 1970s changes.

The interior of the church consists of an open cross-shaped space and two small rooms (original), one to either side of and opening off the altar area. The original tongue-and-groove wainscoting and coved and paneled tongue-and-groove ceiling remain in place. The upper portions of the walls, originally plastered, were covered with paneling in the 1970s. Carpeting covers the floor.

The church is situated on a triangular lot between two busy streets. The level lot is grassed and shaded by several large trees, including two tall pines that flank the main entrance. Also located on the lot, to the north of the church, is an early 20th-century one-story wood-framed house moved to the site in 1981 to serve as an education building. (This is considered non-historic by virtue of its move.) The church is located in a black residential neighborhood near the edge of town that consists of both historic houses and a recent housing project.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 1891, ca. 1914 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Bethany Congregational Church is historically significant in terms of architecture, education, and religion. In terms of architecture, it is important as a good example of the type of simple vernacular church associated with small black congregations throughout Georgia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In terms of education, and religion, the church is significant for its association with the Allen Normal and Industrial School, an important school for black children, and for its role as a neighborhood church. These areas of significance support National Register eligibility under National Register criteria A and C.

Architecture

Bethany Congregational Church documents a type of church architecture typically associated with small black congregations in the state during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its wood-framed construction, central entrance, and corner tower are typical of such churches. The pattern of enlarging or embellishing an existing structure as a congregation grew and/or funds became available, such as happened with Bethany Congregational Church, is one frequently associated with historic black churches. The Gothic detailing of the windows and gable and tower vents, the Latin-cross plan, and the fine coved and paneled tongue-and-groove ceiling on the inside are details that give this church its distinguishing features and particular interest.

Education and Religion

Bethany Congregational Church was built to serve the religious needs of children attending the Allen Normal and Industrial School (1885 - 1933), an important school for black children in South Georgia. The school and the church were built by the American Missionary Association, the missionary arm of the United Church of Christ which, after the Civil War, became very involved with providing education for southern blacks. The school was established in Quitman, Georgia in 1885 following the donation of a building for that purpose by a Mrs. F. L. Allen of Connecticut. The school relocated in Thomasville the next year because of a hostile reception by the white community of Quitman and the burning of the school building only six weeks after the school opened. A three-story school building was completed in Thomasville in 1887. In 1891, it was decided to organize a church in connection with the school to serve boarding students and day students and their families. Bethany Congregational Church was completed later that year. Thus the church was intimately connected with the school, while it existed, but also served, and continues to serve, as an important neighborhood church for the surrounding community. Its educational significance is increased because it is the sole extant institutional building associated with the Allen Normal and Industrial School complex which has been replaced with a housing project.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Montgomery, Erick and Sandra Dixon. "Historic Property Information Form. Bethany Congregational Church." January, 1984. On file at Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 1.2 acres

Quadrangle name Thomasville, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	2	1	4	3	1	0	3	4	1	3	3	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property, outlined with a heavy block line on the enclosed maps, consists of the lot presently and historically associated with the church.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Brooks, National Register Researcher
Historic Preservation Section

organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources date January 21, 1985

street & number 270 Washington St., S. W. telephone 404-656-2840

city or town Atlanta, state GA 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1/24/85

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

Shelore Byer
Keeper of the National Register

date 3-7-85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

