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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name First African New Church

other names People's Seventh Day Adventist Church; People's Seventh Day Baptist Independent Church

2. Location

street & number 2105-07 10<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  not for publication

city or town Washington, D.C.  vicinity

state District of Columbia code DC county \_\_\_\_\_ code 001 zip code 20009

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

DAVID MALONEY, DC SHPO DEC 4, 2008  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
- Determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 1-29-09

First African New Church  
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**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
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

**number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
  
0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
  
RELIGION/Religious Facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
  
VACANT/Not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> C. REVIVALS/Gothic Revival Style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
  
foundation    Brick  
walls         Brick  
  
roof            Slate  
other

**Narrative Description**  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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### Description Summary:

The First African New Church Building is a modest three-story brick church building designed in a transitional Romanesque Revival/Gothic Revival style by the prominent German-born architect Paul Johann Pelz and built in 1896. It occupies an urban site on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. near its intersection with V Street in the larger U Street neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The church building is a compact, yet robust structure with a rectangular-shaped footprint characterized by an imposing three-story corner tower, a gable-fronted main façade, and pointed arch windows. The building sits upon a low brick foundation and is covered with a complex roof form consisting of a front cross gable intersecting a side gable and a pyramidal roof covering the corner tower, all sheathed with slate shingles. The interior consists of an undercroft at ground level, and a double sanctuary occupying the second and third floors, with the third floor sanctuary being the larger one of the two. The church is currently vacant and deteriorating.

+

### General Description:

#### Exterior:

The principal (west) elevation facing 10th Street is divided into two parts, including the soaring three-story corner entry tower and the gable-fronted sanctuary. The entry tower is a single bay wide defined most prominently on the first story by its wide, Gothic Revival-style pointed arch entry surround facing 10<sup>th</sup> Street and its fortress like side elevation facing the alley. The entry door (now boarded up) is recessed from the façade by brick reveals and surmounted by a single-light, pointed arch transom light. A brick pointed-arch hood mould with brick label stops ornaments this arched entryway. Above the entry rises a pair of long and narrow pointed arch lancet windows. These windows, boarded up on the exterior, are missing their sash, save for a stained glass transom light in the southern-most window of the pair. At the third floor/belfry level of the tower—separated from the main body of the tower by brick stringcourses—ranges a group of three, small, round-arched windows opening directly onto the belfry. A pyramidal roof originally covered with slate shingles and now covered with protective sheathing to protect the exposed building from the elements, rises above the roofline of the main body of the church building.

The gable-fronted façade of the church features two pairs of lancet windows on the raised first story level, and a group of three lancet windows clustered together above them. This triple set of windows is tightly perched under a wide, pointed-arch brick hood mould at the upper story level. The hood mould sits upon carved brick label stops similar to those at the front entry door. The lancet windows, now boarded up, consist of rectangular windows with double-hung sash (the

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glazing is missing, but wood sash are intact) and blind pointed-arch transoms formed of recessed brick panels. A narrow embrasure rises on center above the central lancet, directly beneath the apex of the pointed-arch hood mould.

At ground level and corresponding to the undercroft level on the interior, four windows extend across the width of the façade. These windows are generally rectangular with slightly segmentally arched openings articulated by jack arched brick lintels. A molded brick beltcourse separates this ground level from the main floor of the sanctuary.

The north side elevation of the church faces a narrow alley/passageway between the church and a contemporary three-story condominium building next to it. The elevation includes the side wall of the corner tower and the end wall of the transept. The side wall of the corner tower projects a strong Medieval and fortified feeling. Small window openings, almost like embrasures, puncture the solid brick wall, while the steeply pitched roof recalls those of medieval castles. There are pairs of round arched windows at the belfry level, separated from the main body by a multi-layered brick belt course.

A tall, brick chimney stack abuts the northeast corner of the tower and separates the entry tower from the end wall of the transept arm behind it. This end wall of the transept has a large stained glass Gothic arched tracery window occupying the upper levels of the building, and pairs of rectangular window openings at the ground level.

The south side elevation of the church building consists of a wide, unadorned brick wall extending the full depth of the church building. This brick wall, laid in stretcher bond, has two single door openings—one at ground level and one at the sanctuary level—with a metal fire escape running between them. This side wall rises above the roofline, obscuring its gable roof form behind a mansard shaped roof parapet wall.

### Interior:

The interior of the church consists of the ground floor undercroft level, the stair tower and two sanctuaries at the second and third floor levels. The undercroft is divided into several rooms, bathroom facilities and storage areas. The tower serves as the stairwell, leading from the main entrance on the ground floor to the second and third floor sanctuaries. The second floor houses a secondary sanctuary, entered from the stair tower by twin wood paneled doors. This sanctuary, rectangular in plan, extends from east to west, with the three-part windows of the west façade lighting the west end wall of the interior space. The remainder of the second floor is split into bathrooms, a pastor's office, a small kitchen and storage rooms.

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The third floor is completely taken over by a large sanctuary, extending north to south with a raised altar at the south end, and a stained glass window on the north end. The large, open floor plan sanctuary features a wood paneled cathedral ceiling and the stained glass tracery window. The church is currently in deteriorating condition and not accessible on the interior.

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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 pattern of our History.
- B Property 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)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

### Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1896-1898

### Significant Dates

1896; 1898

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

Paul J. Pelz

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

#### Previous documentation on files (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  
# \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

D.C. Historic Preservation Office

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## Summary Statement of Significance:

The First African New Church at 2105-07 10<sup>th</sup> Street, NW is a transitional Romanesque Revival/Gothic Revival-style brick church building constructed in 1896-1898 according to designs by the prominent German-born, Washington, D.C. architect Paul Johann Pelz. The building was built for the African American congregation of the Swedenborgian Church, or Church of the New Jerusalem in an area that was emerging as an important African American neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The building provides an excellent local example of the transitional Romanesque Revival/Gothic Revival style of architecture and is the work of notable architect Johann Paul Pelz. The building meets National Register Criterion C with Architecture as the Area of Significance. The Period of Significance for the property is 1896-1898, the beginning and end dates when the church building was constructed. The church building is no longer owned by or used for religious purposes.

## Resource History and Historic Context:

### Building History:

The present brick church building at 2105-2107 V Street, NW was constructed in 1896 by the Swedenborgian Church or Church of the New Jerusalem for an African American congregation known as the First African New Church. The church was built next to a small frame church building located at the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets. This small frame church building—the first known building on the corner site at 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets, NW—was moved to the site in 1879 by the Abyssinian Baptist church. The Abyssinian Baptist Church is first listed in the city directories at Vermont and T Streets, N.W. in 1878 under the leadership of the Reverend Henry Bailey, who lived nearby at 1818 Vermont Avenue, and later at 1814 Vermont Avenue. In March 1879, the Abyssinian Baptist Church obtained a building permit to move its frame church structure at Vermont and T Streets to the “northeast corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets, NW.”<sup>1</sup> The cost of the move was estimated at \$50.00. Early maps indicate that the re-located frame church was sited towards the front of the lots facing V Street, at the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets. The church had been founded by a group of freed slaves, free black Washington residents, and Civil War soldiers and their dependents who had been stationed at nearby Fort Campbell at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Florida Avenue.<sup>2</sup>

By 1881, the re-located church was no longer listed as the Abyssinian Baptist church in city directories, but instead as Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church and listed under the sub-heading

<sup>1</sup> Application for Permit for Repairs, Alterations, Etc. D.C. Building Permits, 3/13/1879, #1897.

<sup>2</sup> D.C. Landmark Nomination Form, “First African New Church,”

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of "Methodist Episcopal Churches--colored." Trinity M.E. Church was organized in 1880 with the Reverend Peter C. Louis listed as pastor in attendance. On March 28, 1882, the church sought a building permit to "repair building where damaged by fire." The records of the Washington, D.C. Fire Department indeed indicate that the church suffered a fire on January 30, 1882, causing an estimated \$250.00 in damage. The actual cost of repairs to the church amounted to \$132.00.

The following year in March 1883, the Trinity "Independent" Methodist Church requested repairs from city officials. According to the letter in the permit application, the church "desired to remove the flat felt roof" and "put on a comb roof...and cover it with tin." A sketch of the proposed alteration indicates that the roof was to be raised from a flat roof to a pitched gable roof. The letter also noted that the owners "further desire to build a vestibule on the outside front, ten feet across by as many feet deep as you can possible allow towards V Street and we will cover it also with tin...the frame will need to be screwed up and leveled after its brick foundation, all of which we beg you to look into careful consideration..."<sup>3</sup>

The 1887 Baist Real Estate Map for the City of Washington and the 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map clearly show the wood frame Trinity Independent Methodist Church building at the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets, NW, facing V Street. The property consisted of Lots 7 and 8 on the square and measured 25' x 95'.

Beginning in 1892, city directories no longer list the church at 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets as Trinity M.E. Church, but as Zion Church. Reverend Peter C. Louis, the pastor of Trinity Church, organized Zion Church in 1883. Reverend Louis lived close by at 2100 Vermont Avenue. The church remained classified as "Methodist Episcopal-Colored" until 1894 when it became the "First Colored Society of New Jerusalem." In November of 1894, the First Colored Society of New Jerusalem applied for a building permit to repair the frame church building. The permit called the replacement of portions of the weatherboard siding on the sides and rear of the building and the repair of the front steps.

In 1896, two years after moving into and repairing the frame church at the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets, the First African New Church Society (an African American congregation of the Church of the New Jerusalem, also known as the Swedenborgian Church), applied for a permit to build the present Gothic Revival-style brick church building on the site.<sup>4</sup> The D.C. Permit to Build indicates that the church hired architect Paul Pelz to design the building (listed as a Sunday School building) and builder C.B. Braxton to execute construction. The building opened for services two years later in 1898.

<sup>3</sup> D.C. Application for Permit for Repairs, Alterations, Etc., 3/9/1883 #952.

<sup>4</sup> D.C. Permit to Build, 1/15/1896, #994.



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## Church of the New Jerusalem

The Swedenborgian Church, or the Church of the New Jerusalem, was organized in England in 1787, fifteen years after the death of Swedish theologian Emanuel Swedenborg. Emanuel Swedenborg, (1688-1762), a scientist, philosopher, politician and theologian devoted his life to writing books on religion. His books, written in Latin, were printed in London and distributed to libraries and individual scholars. In 1778, a group of followers of Swedenborg's works formally established the Church of the New Jerusalem--based on the teachings of Swendborg--as an independent religious body. The Swedenborgian movement immediately made its way to America. The first new church house of worship in America was built and dedicated in Baltimore in January 1800. In December 1802, President Thomas Jefferson invited Reverend John Hargrove of the Baltimore church to preach before the Congress at the new Capitol building on the leading doctrines of the New Jerusalem Church. Reverend Hargrove preached there again on Christmas Day, 1804. Both sermons were published and distributed.

The spread of Swedenborgian beliefs in America was furthered through missionaries who traveled to remote pioneer settlements to preach the tenets of the Swedenborgian movement. The most well-known Swedenborg missionary, John Chapman (the legendary Johnny Appleseed) is well known in American folklore for sowing seeds in the Midwestern wilderness, preceding the pioneering settlements. John Chapman allegedly brought with him Swedenborgian publications and distributed them as opportunity arose.

By 1846, a Swedenborgian congregation, "The Washington Society of the New Jerusalem" was fully established in Washington, and in 1858 the Society erected a church on North Capitol Street between B and C Streets. After a fire destroyed this church building in 1889, it was decided that a new National Church should be built in its place. That church, the Church of the Holy City funded in part by the National Convention of the Church of the New Jerusalem and in part by the Washington Society, was built in 1894 on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW and opened for service in 1895. The Church of the Holy City is regarded as a national memorial of the Swedenborgian Church of America.<sup>5</sup> Architect H. Langford Warren, a Swedenborgian and later dean of the School of Architecture at Harvard, offered his design services and is credited with the design of the Gothic Revival-style building. However, locally prominent architect Paul Johann Pelz was the associate architect and is listed on the D.C. Permit to Build.

At the same time that the Washington Society of the New Jerusalem was rebuilding itself as a national church, the First Colored Society of New Jerusalem emerged<sup>6</sup>, purchasing the frame

<sup>5</sup> "The New Jerusalem Church Dedication," *Evening Star*, 5/2/1896, p.10.

<sup>6</sup> City directory listings of the church indicate that the "Colored" Swedenborgian Church was organized in 1892.

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church at 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets in 1894 and making repairs to it. Two years later, in 1896, this African American congregation of the Swedenborgian Church built the present two-story brick building on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, behind the frame church on the corner. The First African New Church hired Paul Johann Pelz, the associate architect of the national Swedenborgian church on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and one of the city's most prominent architects to design the church building. This brick building is far more modest than the larger national church building, but shares certain design elements, namely picturesque massing, corner tower, and Gothic Revival-style detailing.

The interior layout of the church, with its stacked sanctuaries, reflects specific New Church doctrine, with a lower sanctuary for baptism and instruction and an upper sanctuary for worship. This relationship is also present at the national church on 16<sup>th</sup> Street and is directly inspired by Frank Sewall, the minister of the Washington Society of the Swedenborgian Church at the time that the national church was being proposed for this city who took a great interest in the design of the church, and, in particular, sought to develop a singular style of architecture for the New Church in America. In correspondence with another member of the Washington Society, Sewall noted that the New Church in America had not adopted any distinctive style of building, but that in seeking such a style, the Church should be guided by both use and doctrine:

For this distinct character we must look to the worship of the church, and as all worship is from and according to the Doctrines we may hope to find in the Doctrines the marks which shall peculiarly distinguish a new Church house of worship...These I have found particularly given in the doctrine regarding the sacraments and especially in...the Doctrines of Baptism and the Holy Supper...here the uses of the two sacraments are themselves illustrated by a twofold temple, a lower one devoted to Baptism and instruction from which there is an ascent to an upper one where the Holy Supper is celebrated: like the two sacraments the two parts are devoted respectively to the uses of instruction and to the uses of worship...<sup>7</sup>

Based upon city directories, it appears that the First African New Church held services in the frame church until the new brick church opened for services in 1898. At the time of its opening, the church was without a permanent pastor. By 1902, however, Reverend James E. Thomas had assumed the role as pastor, a position he retained until the church changed ownership in 1905-06. Sometime between 1898 and 1903, the pre-1879 frame church building at the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets, NW was demolished.

In spite of having invested in the property and having constructed the building following New Church doctrine with stacked sanctuaries, the First African New Church only occupied the building for seven years. In May 1905, the People's Seventh Day Adventist Church purchased

<sup>7</sup> As quoted in Sue Kohler, "Church of the Holy City, Swedenborgian, 1611 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., *16<sup>th</sup> Street Architecture*, p. 197.

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the church. Organized in 1903 by Reverend Lewis C. Sheafe, the People’s Seventh Day Adventist Church initially met at the United Order of the True Reformers building at 1200 U Street. After moving to the 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets location, Reverend Sheafe held services on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., with prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings. The People’s Seventh Day Adventist Church, listed in city directories under the sub-heading “Seventh Day—Colored,” remained at the property until the late 1920s. In 1921, the People’s Seventh Day Adventist Church erected a one-story 40’ x 60’ open pavilion for religious services at the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and V Streets, NW, as shown on the 1927-28 Sanborn Map.

Beginning in the early 1930s, the church was renamed “People’s Seventh Day Baptist Church” and by 1937 was denoted as “People’s Seventh Day Baptist Independent Church.” The People’s Seventh Day Baptist Independent Church was active at the site for several decades. In 1964, the church became the Morning Bright Baptist Church, but after the 1969 racial riots that devastated the neighborhood, the church building was abandoned. Before re-opening for religious services in 1982, the building was used as a clothing distribution center for the homeless. Today, the building is vacant, but under renovation for future residential use.

### Neighborhood Context

The First African New Church building is located at the edge of the National Register-listed Greater U Street Historic District and within a larger neighborhood historically described as a “city within a city” for its early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century days as Washington’s preeminent African-American community. The growth of this neighborhood traces its roots to post- Civil War Washington when the Territorial government for the District of Columbia established a Board of Public Works to undertake a massive program to modernize the city. The program called for comprehensive city-wide improvements in infrastructure that included the laying and paving of streets, the laying of gas and water mains, and the development of a sewage system. The larger U Street area benefited directly from these developments, as well as from the privately financed streetcar system, which together produced a major speculative building boom that accounts for much of the area’s present building stock.

With the streetcars running up and down 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets, newly paved city streets, and new housing stock available for purchase or rent, newcomers flocked to the area. Because of its distance from the center city, the emerging neighborhood appealed primarily to working and middle-class, racially mixed residents. However, beginning in the 1890s, as Washington experienced increased racial segregation, the city’s African Americans coalesced into those areas of the city open to them, including the greater U Street area. Between 1900 and 1920, as the influx of blacks into the area hastened the exodus of whites, the racially mixed neighborhood progressively changed to a more homogenous African American one. During this period, the

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primarily residential neighborhood was enhanced by the rise of an important African American commercial, institutional and entertainment center that began to emerge along U Street.

Churches, hotels, restaurants, banks, fraternal organizations and self-help groups, theaters jazz clubs and other entertainment and commercial facilities that catered to the African American community joined existing commercial enterprises. New businesses such as printers, druggists, undertakers emerged, fulfilled the community's needs for services. As the variety of businesses increased around U Street, African Americans became less dependent upon white establishments for services, thus becoming increasingly self-sufficient. In addition, African Americans broke away from traditional employment roles and moved into fields that required higher levels of education, thereby gaining affluence and prestige.

Many of the commercial and institutional buildings that helped U Street achieve its success were designed, constructed and financed by African Americans. In particular, John Whitelaw Lewis, an African American entrepreneur and financial pioneer devoted to the growth of an independent black Washington, constructed two major institutions in the area—the Industrial Savings Bank at 11<sup>th</sup> and U Streets, and the Whitelaw Hotel at 13<sup>th</sup> and T Streets. A former hod carrier, Lewis saw the need to provide financial opportunities to his own people, and formed the Laborers Building and Loan Association, an association that assisted the working class in purchasing their own homes. A myriad of other black institutions followed those established by Lewis, including the True Reformer Building, the Prince Hall Masonic Temple, the 12<sup>th</sup> Street YMCA, and the Southern Aid Society building, to name a few.

The development of these institutions, along with the growth of African American businesses along U Street, provided the community the economic stability that ultimately inspired the corridor's growth as an unrivaled entertainment center. By 1930, U Street had become the community's main boulevard, known nationally as "Black Broadway." Several first-run movie theaters, a multitude of nightclubs and ballrooms, pool halls and stores operated alongside the offices of African American doctors, dentists and lawyers. U Street is legendary for having attracted entertainers such as Nat King Cole, Pearl Bailey, "Jelly Roll" Morton, Ray Charles, and local stars, Madame Evanti and "Duke" Ellington.

The U Street corridor continued to thrive as an African American neighborhood until the urban riots of the 1960s caused many of the wealthier residents to move to the suburbs. In April 1968, major race riots tore through the neighborhood, ravaging buildings along U Street and at the intersections of 14<sup>th</sup> and U Streets and 7<sup>th</sup> and U Streets. During the 1980s, the area fell into further decline during construction of the METRO, but since the early 1990s, has experienced a dramatic revitalization.

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The First African New Church, constructed in 1896 for the African American congregation of the Swedenborgian Church is an early and prime example of the types of buildings that were constructed in the neighborhood for the area's growing African American community. Despite a change in ownership, the church retained an African American congregation throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like many of the buildings in the U Street area, the First African New Church building suffered from the race riots in the 1960s, eventually falling vacant in 1969. Today, the building remains vacant and though the owner of more than five years has expressed plans to renovate it, no move has been made to do so to date.

### Architect Paul Johann Pelz:

Paul Johann Pelz (1841-1918), the son of Eduard Ludwig and Henrietta (Helfensrieder) Pelz, was born in Germany. His father went to New York in 1851 while Paul remained in Germany with his mother until he completed his schooling. After joining his father in Hoboken, N.J. in 1858, Pelz was apprenticed to a New York architect, Detlef Lienau. By 1864, Pelz had become the chief draftsman for the firm. Two years later, he left Lienau's office and came to Washington, D.C. where he eventually became the chief draftsman of the U.S. Lighthouse Board.

In 1873, Pelz and John L. Smithmeyer, a Washington architect, won a competition for the design of the Library of Congress. Thirteen years later, Congress authorized construction of the building according to the winning competition entry. Although Smithmeyer was appointed architect of the project, he was eventually removed from this position for a disagreement over building materials. Pelz was retained by General Thomas L. Casey, Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, to carry out the original design. The 1880 census reveals that Pelz lived with his wife Louise and their two children in Georgetown.

The firm of Smithmeyer and Pelz designed several other significant buildings including the Academic building at Georgetown University; the U.S. Army and Naval Hospital, Hot Springs, Ark.; Canegie Library and Music Hall, Allegheny, Pa.; Administration Building at the Clinic Hospital, University of Virginia; and the Chamberlain Hotel, Fort Monroe, Va.

As a sole practitioner, Pelz is responsible for the design of many residential, commercial and institutional buildings in Washington, D.C.

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### Major Bibliographical References:

#### Books, Newspaper Articles, and other Published Sources:

“Annual Meeting of Church of New Jerusalem,” *Evening Star*, February 22, 1889, p.2.

Barnard, Job, “History of the Church of the New Jerusalem in the City of Washington,” Records of the Columbia Historical Society, vol. 24, p. 23-43.

“First African New Church,” Application for Historic Landmark, D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board, March 2003.

Kohler, Sue and Jeffrey R. Carson, “Church of the Holy City National Swedenborgian Church, 1611 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, Vol. 1, Commission of Fine Arts, 1988, p. 195-226.

“New Church Convention,” *Evening Star*, May 20, 1889.

“The New Jerusalem,” 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the General Convention, Church Dedication, *Evening Star*, May 2, 1896, 10-1.

“The Swedenborgian Church: Beginnings and Becomings, Swedenborgian Church History,” [www.swedenborg.org](http://www.swedenborg.org), 7/5/2005.

#### Secondary Sources:

City Directories, City of Washington

D.C. Building Permits

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

Baist Real Estate Atlas

+



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

First African New Church

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

## Verbal Boundary Description:

The First African New Church, located at 2105-07 10<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. occupies Lot 802 on Square 358 in Washington, D.C. +

## Boundary Justification:

The church has occupied that lot and square since construction of the present brick church building on the site in 1896. +



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

First African New Church

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

## PHOTOGRAPHS

*The following information is common to all photographs:*

First African New Church  
2105-2107 10<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, D.C.  
Kim Williams, photographer  
October 2008  
DC Historic Preservation Office (DC HPO)

- 1) View looking southeast  
1 of 7
- 2) View looking east  
2 of 7
- 3) View looking northeast  
3 of 7
- 4) View looking east showing north side elevation  
4 of 7
- 5) View looking northeast showing south and west elevations  
5 of 7
- 6) General view looking northeast  
6 of 7
- 7) View looking west from alley showing rear of church  
7 of 7
- 8) Interior, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor showing "Gold Coast Bar"  
8 of 8

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

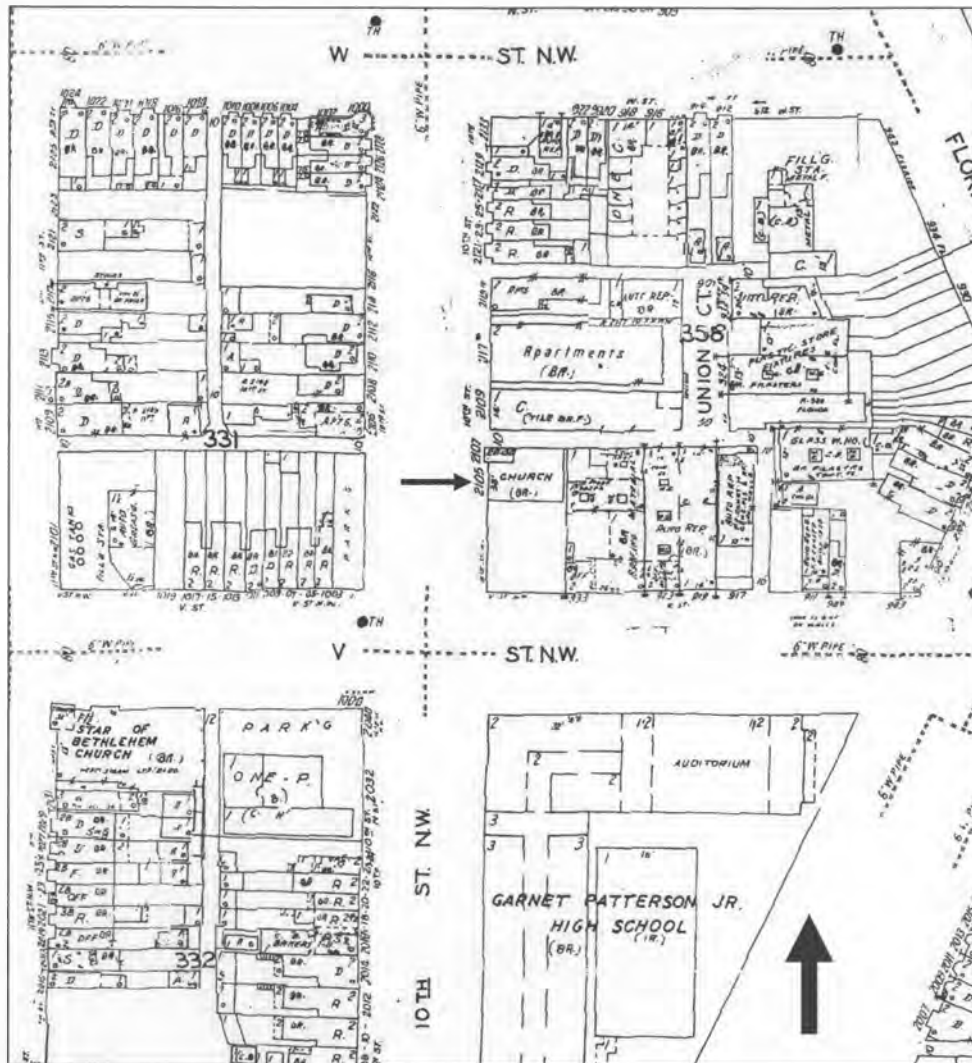
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

First African New Church  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

## SITE MAP



From Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, 1991

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY First African New Church  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 12/19/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/05/09  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/20/09 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/01/09  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08001375

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 1.29.09 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



First African New Church

10<sup>th</sup> & V Streets, NW

Washington, DC

October 2008

Kim Williams

DC HPO

View looking southeast

11



First African New Church

10<sup>th</sup> + V Street, NW

Washington, DC

Kim Williams

October 2008

DC HPO

View looking east

2/





First African New Church

10<sup>th</sup> & V Streets, NW

Washington, DC

Kirin Williams

October 2008

DC HPO

View looking northeast

31



First African New Church  
10<sup>th</sup> & V Streets, NW  
Washington, DC

Kim Williams

October 2008

DC HPO

View looking east showing north  
elevation

4/



First African New Church

10<sup>th</sup> & V Streets, NW

Washington, DC

Kim Williams

October 2008

DC HPO

View looking northeast showing south and west  
elevations

51



First African New Church

10th & V Streets, NW

Washington, DC

Kris Williams

October 2008

DC HPO

General view looking northeast

6/





First African New Church

10<sup>th</sup> + V Streets, NW

Washington, DC

Kim Williams

October 2008

DC HPO

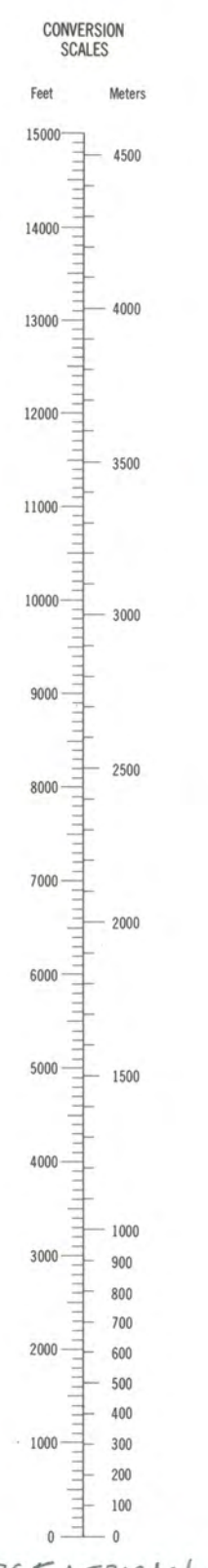
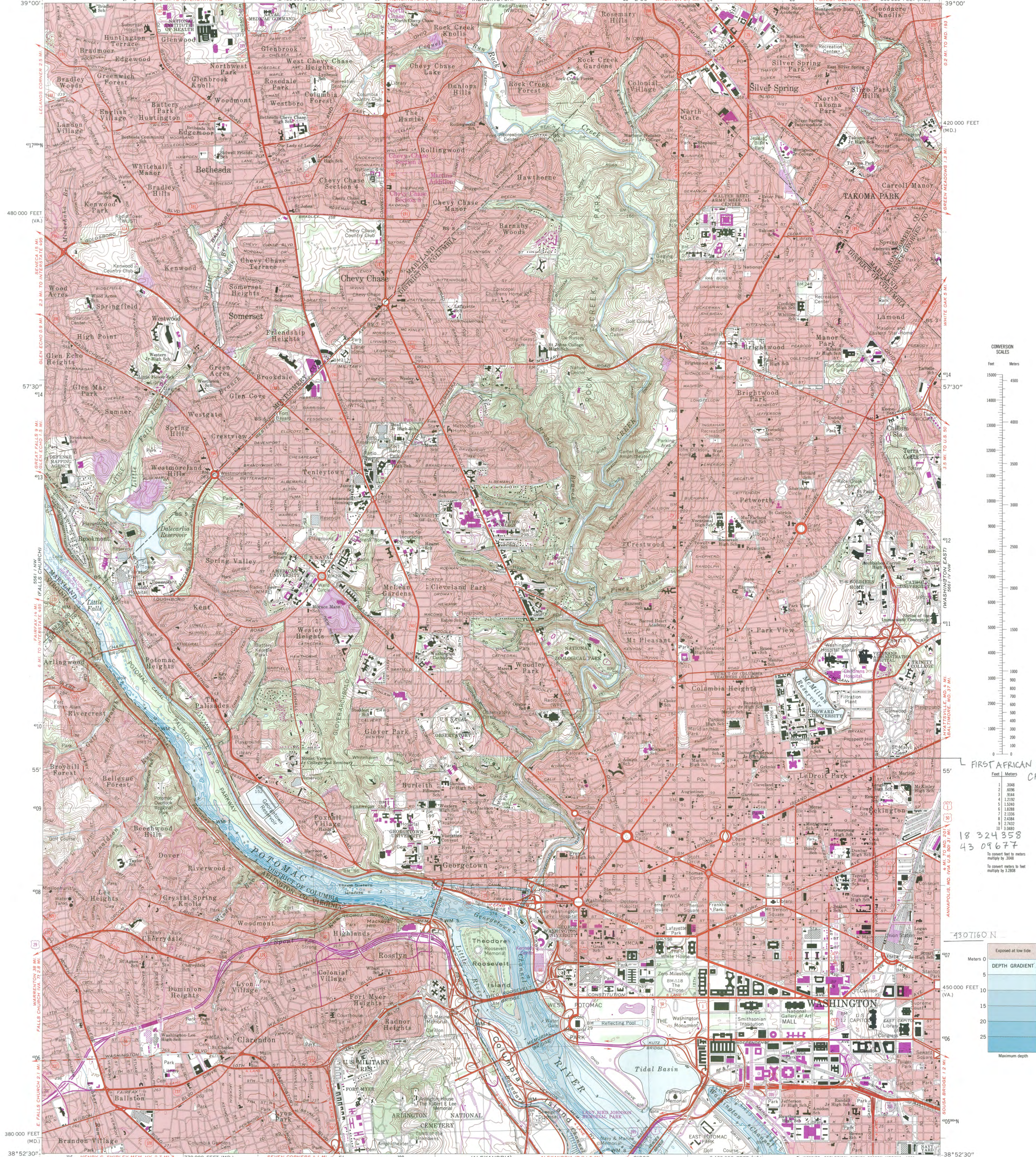
View looking west from alley showing  
rear of church

7/

FIRST AFRICAN NEW CHURCH

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WASHINGTON WEST, D.C.—MD.—VA. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA—MARYLAND—VIRGINIA 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC—BATHYMETRIC)



Handwritten notes: 'FIRST AFRICAN NEW CHURCH', '18 324 358', '43 09677', and '4307160 N'.



Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and the National Ocean Service. Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, NCPS, and WSSC. Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955. Field checked 1956. Revised 1965. Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Service from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is not intended for navigational purposes. Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (heavy solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial photographs. Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation) shown by light solid line. Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Maryland coordinate system, and Virginia coordinate system, north zone. 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18. 1927 North American Datum. To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 8 meters south and 26 meters west as shown by dashed center ticks. Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown. There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map. Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1981 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map scaled 1983. Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas.

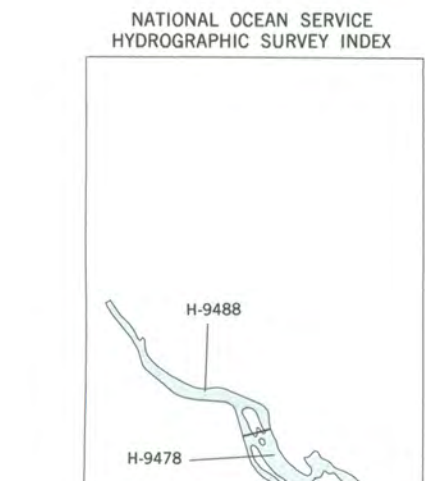
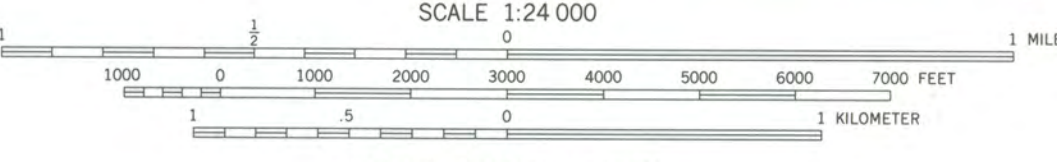


Table with 4 columns: Survey Number, Survey Date, Survey Scale, Survey Date. Rows include H-9478 (1977, 1:5,000) and H-9488 (1976, 1:5,000).



SCALE 1:24 000. CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET. NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929. BATHYMETRIC CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER WITH SUPPLEMENTARY 0.5 METER CONTOURS—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE. THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 0.4 METER.

BASE MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS. BATHYMETRIC SURVEY DATA COMPLIES WITH INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION (IHO) SPECIAL PUBLICATION 44 ACCURACY STANDARDS AND/OR STANDARDS USED AT THE DATE OF THE SURVEY. FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092. NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852. AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTEVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903. A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.



WASHINGTON WEST, D.C.—MD.—VA. 38077-11-TB-024. 1965. PHOTOREVISED 1983. BATHYMETRY ADDED 1982. DMA 5561-1 NE—SERIES V833.

