

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

APR 08 2016

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

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 BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

other names/site number FMSF#PU 398

2. Location

street & number 710 Reid Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Palatka N/A  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Putnam code 107 zip code 32178

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Missa Lohane Deputy SHPO 3/30/16  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation  
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 the 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  See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Jim Baller  
Signature of the Keeper

5-16-2016  
Date of Action

**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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	total

**Name of related multiple property listings**

(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: church  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: church  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls CONCRETE  
roof ASPHALT  
other GLASS  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**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 patterns of our history.
- B** Property is 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.)

**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 file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) 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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

ART

**Period of Significance**

1905-1908

**Significant Dates**

1905

1908

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Williams, Rev. E.F.

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of Repository

# \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	3	8	4	0	9	3	2	7	9	9	7	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gary McGriff/Robert O. Jones, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date March 2016

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone 850-245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Bethel AME Church; attn: Rev. James McGriff

street & number 719 Reid Street telephone 386-546-5454

city or town Palatka state Florida zip code 32178

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **BETHEL AME CHURCH, PALATKA  
PUTNAM COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**SUMMARY**

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church is located at 719 Reid Street, in Palatka, Putnam County, Florida. The two-story Romanesque Revival Style church, built in 1908, is made of hand-formed rusticated concrete block and has a complex gable roof surfaced with asphalt shingles. The north elevation has two engaged square towers, each with steep pyramidal roofs. The east tower rises two-stories, and the west tower rises four-stories. The church is built with a rectangular main block containing the nave, transepts, and chancel. A narrow one-story southerly extension is off of the chancel. Windows and doors are arched, and circular windows are present in the towers. All windows have stained glass. A rectangular non-contributing annex is to the south of the church and is built with concrete block and a gable roof.

**SETTING**

Bethel AME Church is a local landmark fronting north onto the busy State Highway 100 (Reid Street), at the southeast corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Street (Photo #1). Reid Street the city's main east and west thoroughfare, and is dominated by one and two-story commercial buildings. For blocks around the church, the city streets are laid out in an orthogonal grid, with sidewalks and scattered trees. The bridge over the St. John's River is eight blocks to the east, and the Putnam County Courthouse and large Neo-Classical Methodist Church are four blocks to the east. The Larimer Memorial Library (NR 2008) is on the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, five blocks east.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

The church is built with a rectangular nave that aligns with gable ends north-to-south. There are east and west transepts, and a chancel extension to the south. The exterior is composed of handmade concrete blocks that alternate courses between smooth block and rusticated blocks (Photo #2). The four-story tower has continuous rusticated block on the third and fourth stories. The complex cross-gable roof is covered in asphalt shingles. All windows have wood sashes, and those on the first story are topped by drip molds. All of

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the roof eaves have small dentils. The transept extensions have cornice returns and eaves with dentils. Exterior doors are contemporary metal clad with arched glass inserts near the tops.

The north façade fronts onto Reid Street, has a gable end, and centrally placed is a large window with stained glass flanked by narrow windows, all surmounted with a smaller circular window (Photo #3). The main entrance is located on the west side of the tall west tower. On the east corner is an engaged square tower that rises to two-stories in height with a steeply pointed pyramidal roof. The single wood arched door in the tower is accessed by five concrete steps and a metal handrail. The leaded glass transom contains the word "Welcome." To the right of the door is the cornerstone from the original church dated 1875 (Photo #4). At the second story level is a corniced belt course, and the upper part of the tower has a single circular window with stained glass. The tops of the wall have cornices, and the base of the roof flares. At the west corner is a larger square tower that rises four stories. Five concrete steps access a double door with a leaded glass transom that contains the words "Bethel AME Church" (Photo #5). By the door is a cornerstone for the current church dated 1908, and at the west corner of the tower is a stone with a list of the church officials (Photo #6). At the second story level is a corniced belt course and a single round window with stained glass. Above that is a belt course, and above it are two tall openings enclosed with concrete that previously had stained glass which had been blown in by a hurricane. Above is a belt course and a single round louvered vent. The four corners at the top of the tower have square pedestals, and a steeply pitched pyramidal roof rises at the top.

The west elevation displays the west transept with its gable end and cornice returns (Photo #7). Centered in it is a large window with stained glass flanked by single windows, and surmounted with a smaller circular window (Photo #8). The four-story high square tower is in the north corner with the same features as the north elevation. The tower contains the main entry consisting of double doors and an arched transom with stained glass that reads "Bethel AME Church." Portions of the main body elevation walls are visible on either side of the transept that contain single windows with stained glass. The broad side of the roof is visible. To the south is visible the one-story chancel extension with a single rectangular door near to where it joins to the main building (Photo #9).

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The south elevation reveals a gable end to the one-story chancel extension with a single door in the center (Photo #10). The eastern roof slope is longer than the west side. A small round window is in the gable end of the main building, and single arched windows are in the east and west transept walls. The south elevation of the tall western tower has a single window in the first story level, and on the upper portions is identical to the north and west elevations.

The east elevation with its transept gable extension is identical to the west elevation except that between the small tower and the transept are two single windows instead of the one as on the west (Photo #11). The elevation is close to a wall of a commercial building and photography is minimal.

**Interior**

The interior of the church has tongue and groove pine floors that slope downward from the north towards the pulpit, and the walls are surfaced with plaster. Historically entry to the church was through both towers, but is currently only through the west tower.

The main entry doors access a square narthex that directs occupants through double doors to the east and south into the sanctuary (Photo #12). The vaulted ceiling is surfaced with tongue and groove pine boards (Photo #13). The coffering in the ceiling accents the impressive wood rafter engineering used to span the broad area. There is a center isle with long pews on either side to the east and west (Photo #14), and side isles with shorter pews in the east and west transepts. Centered in both transepts and the north wall are large stained glass windows with painted figural panels in the middle (Photo #15). Twenty-seven of the thirty-three stained glass windows in the church are visible in the sanctuary (Photo #16). The former entry area within the east tower has been converted to a lavatory. At the south end of the nave is the recessed chancel with an arched opening and curved communal railing and dais (Photo #17). A wood altar is centered just behind the railing, and the historic wood pulpit is centered behind the altar. Behind the pulpit are ornate historic bishop chairs for the officiating minister and officials of the church (Photo #18). Centered against the south chancel wall is a wood enclosure for the choir, and a wood pipe organ is within the wall. An arched-top single door is in the south wall, and a single door with arched transom is in the west wall of the chancel.

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Through the door in the south chancel wall is a room that historically served as a preparation room for the minister and choir (Photo #19). A toilet is located at the east end of this room. This room can also be accessed through an exterior door in the west wall. The south wall of the room has a stained glass window and an entry to a hallway toward the south. The hall is lined with portrait images and short biographies of persons notable to the church community (Photo #20), and leads to a door that exits to the south of the extension. To the west of this hall is a meeting room, and to the east is the minister's office.

**NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING**

A church annex building, separated from the church, is located and aligned with the south boundary of the property. Built in 1950, this separate concrete block building has a rectangular footprint and a gable metal roof, and faces west onto 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Photo #21). The building was acquired to assist with group assemblies which are held in a great hall with kitchen located in the north half of the building. The south half has a garage door access and is used for storage. The 1908 church is nominated under Criteria C for its Romanesque Revival Style, and the annex building to the rear/south does not contribute to the case for this property's architectural significance with this nomination.

**ALTERATIONS**

The windows within the towers contained stained glass and were destroyed by a hurricane in the mid-twentieth century. These arched tower openings have now been filled with concrete. The entrance in the east tower was closed in the 1980s, and that entry area was converted into a bathroom. The pews were replaced in 1984. The 2010 southerly extension behind the chancel provided an office for the minister and an assembly space. These alterations do not compromise the integrity and character of the church's architecture.



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**SUMMARY**

The Bethel AME Church is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture and Art. It is an excellent example of the Romanesque Revival design applied to a church. The exterior is of rusticated concrete block, punctuated by prominent arched windows, and with its four-story tower is visually a local landmark. Over a period of approximately four years, 1905 through 1908, the church was built through the labor of the members of the congregation, and their ministers J.S. Braswell, and E. F. Williams. Williams was referred to as an architect and builder. The church is also significant for containing figural stained glass windows created in a rare and antiquated technique known as enamel painting. The stained glass windows were fabricated by Empire Glass and Decoration Company in Atlanta.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

From the close of the Civil War, 1865 until 1895, the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) was the single most influential organization on behalf of Florida's black residents. It was a powerful political force in state and for many local governments. It promoted education as a critical component for the advancement of many of the illiterate and ex-slaves. The political gains for blacks following the Civil War hardened white resentments so that by the 1880s racial divisions grew, and violence against blacks increased. By the 1890s, the passage of one law after another blunted black political options and segregation was mandated. In 1896 the Supreme Court of the United States voted on the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* case that established the "separate but equal" principle, wherein blacks were segregated but rarely equal.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Eugene Rivers, and Cantor Brown, *Laborers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2001, p.xvi.

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The AME church sent missionaries to follow the Union army during the Civil War. As the armies made inroads into the South, the missionaries would encourage newly freed black slaves to form their own congregations and churches. In Florida, the Jacksonville area was under federal control for much of the war, and an area ripe for missionary efforts as soon as the war ended. In 1865 an AME church was organized in the West Jacksonville community of Midway.

In 1867, at the South Carolina conference of the AME Church, members from Florida requested to have their own conference, and the Florida Conference was established. The AME denomination flourished in Florida. New congregations were formed, churches were built, and schools were started. During this time of expansion and growth churches were established further south into the Gainesville area, and discussions were held over the possibility of dividing the Florida Conference into East Florida and West Florida Conferences. A step toward better local church management was the formation of eight regional districts in 1876, with managing elders assigned to each. In the fall of 1876 there were state-wide public elections in Florida, and though the voting was close, the Democrats won and reversed the social opportunities available to blacks. The post-war period of "Reconstruction" was over.

**Palatka AME Church**

Dennis Wood was born in 1830, and was a slave to Henry L. Hart of Palatka. Wood was sent to Quincy during the Civil War, where he continued to practice his trade as a blacksmith. He was known as a highly skilled and reliable craftsman.<sup>2</sup> He and fellow slaves were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. By early 1865, Wood and a friend Allen Jones established a brush-arbor church that, with the end of the war and direction from Rev. Charles H. Pearce, became the Arnett AME Chapel in Quincy. Wood was present as an ordained minister at the South Carolina Conference of the AME Church in 1867, when on April 4<sup>th</sup>, the Florida Conference was formed.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.14.

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Under the guidance of Bishop Pearce the state was divided into two districts. The Tallahassee district he headed had the greatest number of members, and the second was stationed in Marianna, that covered West Florida. The Tallahassee district extended as far as Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and the city of Palatka. Bishop Pearce sent Rev. Dennis Wood to Palatka to assist a young congregation in June of 1867.<sup>3</sup> This emerging church there was known as the Palatka Mission.

During this period of expansion and optimism, the congregation in Palatka was formed in 1867. A traveling evangelist Thomas Warren Long, and other traveling ministers visited and held religious services in Palatka. Two years later, John Jackson, Albert N. Dozle, Henry Jones, Ned Wright, and Johnson Hazzain, acting as trustees, bought a corner lot at the intersection of Emmett and Hotel Streets for \$140 from James and Caroline Adams. Conference records document that by May of 1871, a parsonage was near completion and that the congregation had 85 members. In 1875, Bethel AME Church was making plans for a church building. (Figure #1 Sanborn Map)

**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

Two design styles in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century heavily influenced the looks of Protestant churches. The Gothic Revival Style had an enduring popularity, but the Romanesque Revival, as seen in Henry Hobson Richardson's 1873-1877 Trinity Episcopal Church in Boston, marked a new vision of a sacred space. The solidity and emotion of the structure had an immediate public appeal and impact. From 1880 till 1900, the architectural forms found in Trinity Church and Richardson's Allegheny Courthouse in Pittsburgh, were widely mimicked.<sup>4</sup> The style was always carried out in masonry with most commonly the

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.45, 48.

<sup>4</sup> James F. O'Gorman, "Living Architecture: A Biography of H.H. Richardson," New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997, p.111.

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use of rustic, squared stone, but also brick with rustic elements. Designed largely by architects these substantial and rare buildings, both public and residential, have survived because of their monumentality and high level of workmanship. Characteristics of the style are arched windows and porch supports; facades are usually asymmetrical, and most had towers with conical roofs.<sup>5</sup>

**ART CONTEXT**

With the rise in the Protestant Reformation in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, there was a hostility to elaborate church ornamentation, including the use of richly colored stained glass windows. In England enthusiastic Puritans smashed stained glass across the country. Even in Catholic countries the demand for ornate churches lessened. Some churches removed stained glass in favor of windows with clear glass. By the 1530s the use of painting on clear glass began to dominate stained glass production with lesser amounts of colored glass being included.<sup>6</sup> By the last half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the decorative window trade was largely involved with painting small panels with heraldic, secular or religious scenes set in clear panels for public buildings and residences. During the Thirty Years War, 1618-1648, which raged across what is now Europe, a large concentration of the continent's glass workshops in the Loraine region of eastern France and German states, all closed. By mid-century little colored glass was available to the few workshops that wanted it.<sup>7</sup>

Glass paint for stained glass work in use throughout its history were limited to brown and black in color. The color is derived from iron and copper oxides, ground glass, gum arabic, and a medium such as wine, vinegar or (traditionally) urine. The paints are opaque. The term "stained glass" came into use around the year 1300 with the discovery that the

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<sup>5</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, "A Field Guide to American Houses," (New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 1986, p.301-2.

<sup>6</sup> Catherine Brisac, A Thousand Years of Stained Glass, Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1986, p.136.

<sup>7</sup> Stained Glass Association of America, Reference and Technical Manuel, "Stained Glass History,"

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application of silver nitrate on to glass gave a transparent yellow to orange color. Additionally it bonded more fully with the glass at lower firing temperatures, than the traditional black and browns. When fired onto blue glass, the yellow effect renders the glass green.<sup>8</sup>

These glass paints have always been used to provide detail and render imagery within traditional panels composed of numerous pieces of colored glass. As the painting on clear glass began to dominate the industry in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a more colorful range of glass paints, enamels, were introduced. They were opaque, and kiln fired at lower temperatures, so they bonded less securely into the glass. Painting on glass with these paints was initially used for small heraldic designs and other details. It became common to paint realistic scenes on square pieces of clear glass like an oil painter would on canvas. One of the most famous of these was the west-window of New College Chapel at Oxford University, England. The design was by the famous portrait painter Sir Joshua Reynolds, and executed onto glass by Thomas Jarvis in 1779-1780.<sup>9</sup> Though painted with various colors, they were largely opaque and did not project color in the way colored glass does. This was an art form far removed from earlier stained glass that relied on multiple pieces of colored glass assembled to a pattern with grooved strips of lead or “comes.”<sup>10</sup>

In the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Gothic Revival in Germany, France and England, the formulas for making richly colored glass were rediscovered. Design compositions now used numerous pieces of this glass rather than the enamel painted primary compositions as before. By mid-century the principles of traditional stained glass windows had been re-established with glass painting relegated to enhancing the basic composition. Compositions relying on enamel painting had become a thing of the past.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>9</sup> Joanna Cobb, “From Parrots to Princes: Exhibitions of Contemporary Stained Glass in Late Eighteenth-century London,” *Vidimus*, issue 53, July/August 2011.

<sup>10</sup> “Comes” a trade term for lead strips extruded and milled to form a “H” shape with two grooves, a center “heart,” and two surfaces, used to assemble multiple pieces of glass into window panels.

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Viewed from 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century perspectives, this paint dominated period has been regarded as an era of great decline, a “period of ‘rest.’”<sup>11</sup> Respected glass historian E. Liddal Armitage expressed the motivations and results thus, “Succumbing to the general fashion of the day and neglectful of the true technique of glass, the stained glass painters destroyed their craft in an ape-like attempt to imitate the perfections of oil painting.”<sup>12</sup>

***Enamel Painted Windows in Florida***

Though enamel painting is no longer a primary way of producing stained glass windows, occasional enamel painted pieces are found, and in addition to the Bethel AME Church in Palatka, three others in Florida have been identified. The Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee has a large circular medallion painted in 1856 of the Florida State Seal. It was painted by J.A. Oertel for the United States Capital where in the rotunda state seals of all states were installed at the time (Figure #2). The second example is by C.E. Langley, an artist living in Jacksonville, Florida, who in 1913 painted two figural windows for St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, in Auburndale, Polk County. The third example is by Jacoby Studios in St. Louis, Missouri, who painted several large, enamel centerpieces for windows in McIlwain Presbyterian Church in Pensacola, in 1925.<sup>13</sup>

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Bethel AME Church, with its tall tower, rustic masonry exterior, and location on Palatka’s main street, has been a landmark in the city for over one-hundred years, and stands as a statement of pride of the congregation. It is the only Romanesque Revival building in Palatka, the major city in a county of rural and agricultural communities. The use of the rare Romanesque Revival Style for the church, with its arched windows and

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<sup>11</sup> Catherine Brisac, p.131.

<sup>12</sup> E. Liddal Armitage, Stained Glass: History, Technology and Practice, Newton, Massachusetts, Charles T. Branford Company, 1959. p.56.

<sup>13</sup> Florida Members of the Stained Glass Association of America, “Florida Historic Stained Glass Survey, Florida Historic Preservation Grant, June 1995.

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PUTNAM COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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doors, engaged four-story tower in an asymmetrical façade, and rusticated block exterior was applied onto a Gothic building-form with front-gabled axial nave, transepts, and extended chancel. The slanted hardwood floor, sloping from north to south, and the curved chancel dais suggest an original “auditorium” plan for the sanctuary. Auditorium seating was intended to keep the audience near the presentation, hence the curved dais, and make it easier for the audience to hear and see, hence the slanted floor. The broad ceiling spanned by a wood truss system is a major engineering accomplishment. The workmanship of the ceiling is accented by the use of thousands of tongue-and-groove boards used for the surface and coffering to define the rafter sections.

A church history relates that in 1905, a parcel of land was purchased and immediately construction began on the church. In 1906 Reverend J. S. Braswell served as minister, and construction was taken to the windows height. The church history also relates that Reverend E.F. Williams, a pastor, architect and builder, was transferred in 1907 from the AME church in St. Augustine, to Bethel AME Church in Palatka, during the time of construction. The history also relates that members of the congregation accomplished the construction. This recalls a time when pastors held full-time jobs, and congregations were composed of many skilled tradesmen. The engineering knowledge to build the tall tower, and span the broad ceiling with custom wooden rafters speaks of advanced construction training and understanding.

**ART SIGNIFICANCE**

With the Gothic Revival in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the enamel painting that had defined the stained glass trade during the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was relegated to enhancing the traditional assembly of numerous pieces of colored glass. The broad selection of colored glass paints/enamels that had been introduced in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was used by skilled painters to enrich their customary role in stained glass production, but not to dominate the design concept. The instances in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century when enamel painted subjects dominated a window are rare, and worthy of being acknowledged as an anomaly of their time, and also to gage the level of skill and integration into architectural art works based on an outdated prototype. The application of the technique by Empire Glass and Decoration in Atlanta, 1889-1935, one of the largest



**United States Department of the Interior  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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PUTNAM COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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church furniture and stained glass suppliers in the South in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, highlights one aspect of their production. Their window production was mostly of ornamental windows with opalescent colored glass, and painting was largely confined to medallions as accent elements.

The east and west transepts, and the north façade all have large stained glass windows with central figural panels. The east window is a replacement not in keeping with the other two original windows. The figural centerpieces in the west transept and north façade elevation windows were executed with opaque colored enamels and traditional brown and black paint. The painting was on clear glass the way oil painters would paint on canvas. The subject in the west transept window is an angel flying above a landscape (Photo #15). The color effect is primarily gray, and the pale colors of the paint are visible because of the reflected light within the church. Enamel colors used are pale blue, green, purple, rouge and tan. At the bottom of the west transept window is a memorial plaque that reads “Presented by the Willing Workers Club in memory of Rev. E.F. Williams” the architect and pastor during the years completing the church. The other enamel painted window in the north facade depicts the “Christ the good shepherd” theme with Jesus holding a lamb and standing within a landscape. This window has been recently restored but is in storage until it can be installed (Photo #22).

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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“Age of Decline” Holliday & Lushington – “Degenerated” Armitage

notes

(33 windows. Opalescent. 3 figural. Medallion symbols. Round windows symbolic. 3 transoms with inscriptions “Bethel AME Church.” Windows by Empire Glass and Decorating in Atlanta, 1908

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PUTNAM COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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National Park Service**

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PUTNAM COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Dicks Map of Palatka, MB2 P46, Blk 55 Lot 1 + N 45 FT of Lot 2, (Ex Reid St R/W)

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

This property is associated historically with the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

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

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PUTNAM COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST**

1. Bethel AME Church, 719 Reid Street, Palatka
2. Putnam County, Florida
3. Robert Jones
4. August 2015
5. View from Reid Street, looking east
6. Photo #1 of 22

Items 1-4 are the same for the following photographs.

5. Concrete blocks, exterior detail, looking northeast
6. Photo #2 of 22

5. North façade, looking south
6. Photo #3 of 22

5. Original church cornerstone, looking south
6. Photo #4 of 22

5. Interior, transom stained glass, looking north
6. Photo #5 of 22

5. Cornerstone with names of church officials, looking east
6. Photo #6 of 22

5. West elevation by 8<sup>th</sup> Street, looking east
6. Photo #7 of 22

5. West transept, looking east
6. Photo #8 of 22

5. Southerly extension, looking east
6. Photo #9 of 22

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number      Photos      Page      1      **BETHEL AME CHURCH, PALATKA,  
PUTNAM COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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- 5. South and west elevations, looking northeast
- 6. Photo #10 of 22
  
- 5. West elevation, space between church and commercial building, looking south
- 6. Photo #11 of 22
  
- 5. Narthex/foyer, looking west
- 6. Photo #12 of 22
  
- 5. Ceiling, looking south
- 6. Photo #13 of 22
  
- 5. Sanctuary, looking south
- 6. Photo #14 of 22
  
- 5. Large stained glass window in west transept, looking west
- 6. Photo #15 of 22
  
- 5. Sanctuary window, looking west
- 6. Photo #16 of 22
  
- 5. Chancel, looking south
- 6. Photo #17 of 22
  
- 5. Bishop chairs, looking southeast
- 6. Photo #18 of 22
  
- 5. Room south of chancel, looking southeast
- 6. Photo #19 of 22
  
- 5. South hall, "Hall of Fame," looking south
- 6. Photo #20 of 22
  
- 5. Annex building, looking east
- 6. Photo #21 of 22

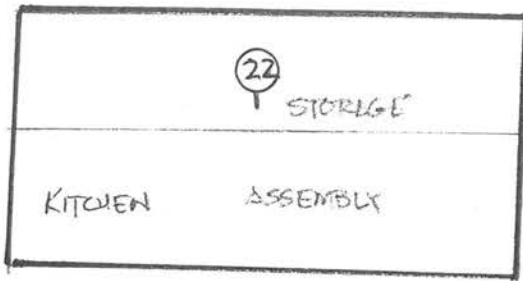
**United States Department of the Interior  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number      Photos      Page      1      **BETHEL AME CHURCH, PALATKA,  
PUTNAM COUNTY, FLORIDA**

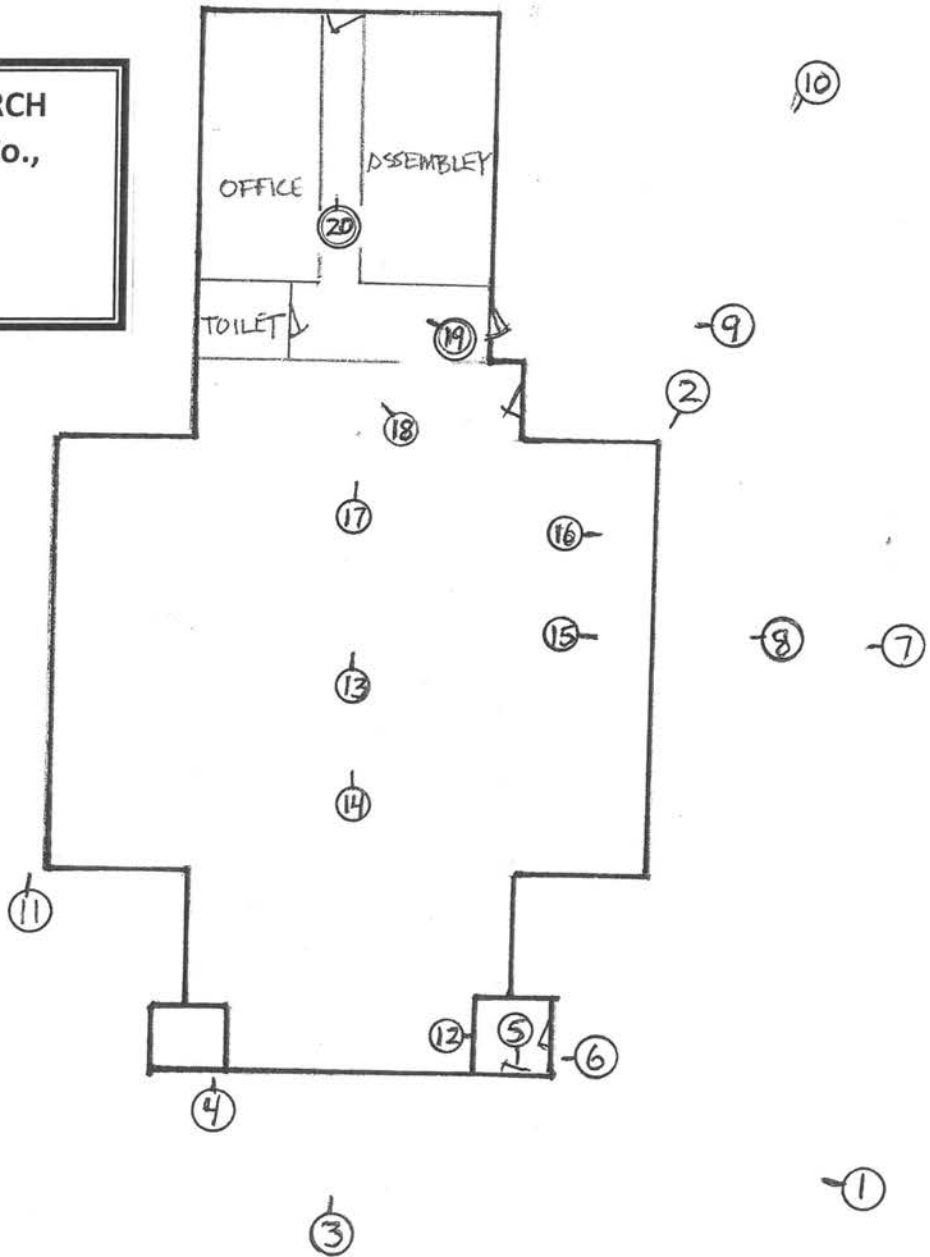
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5. Stained glass window in storage, looking north
6. Photo #22 of 22



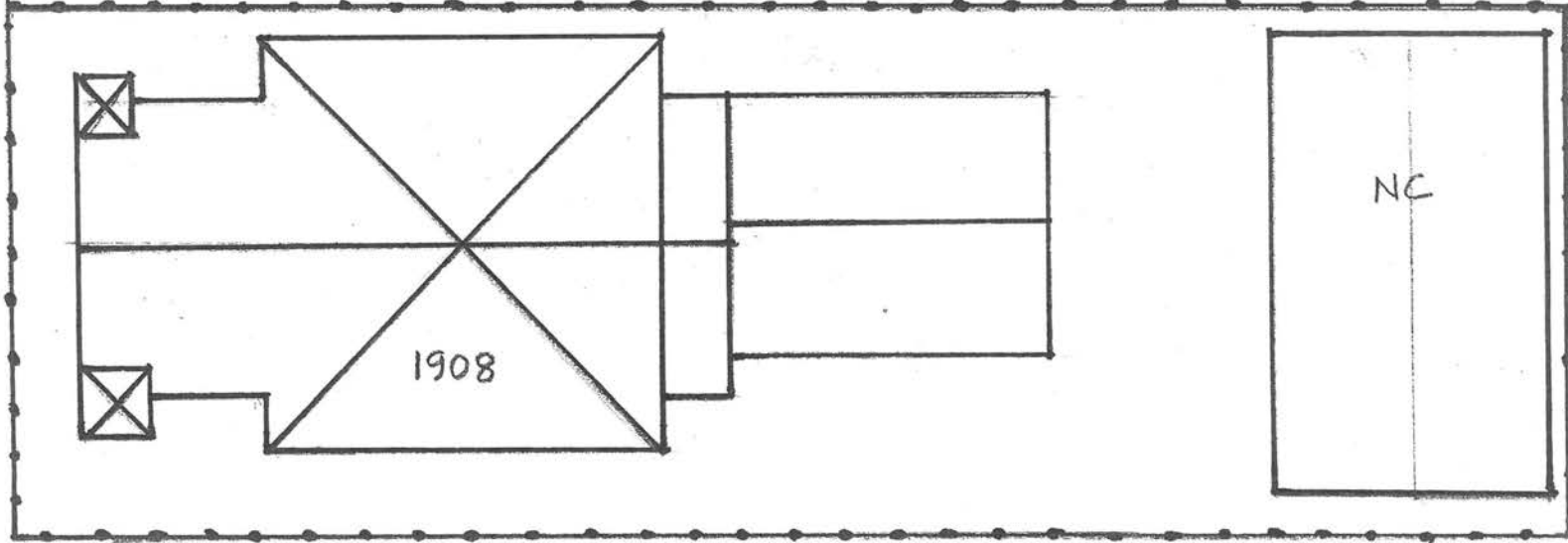
BETHEL AME CHURCH  
 Palatka, Putnam Co.,  
 Florida

Photo Diagram





REID ST / HWY 17



8TH STREET

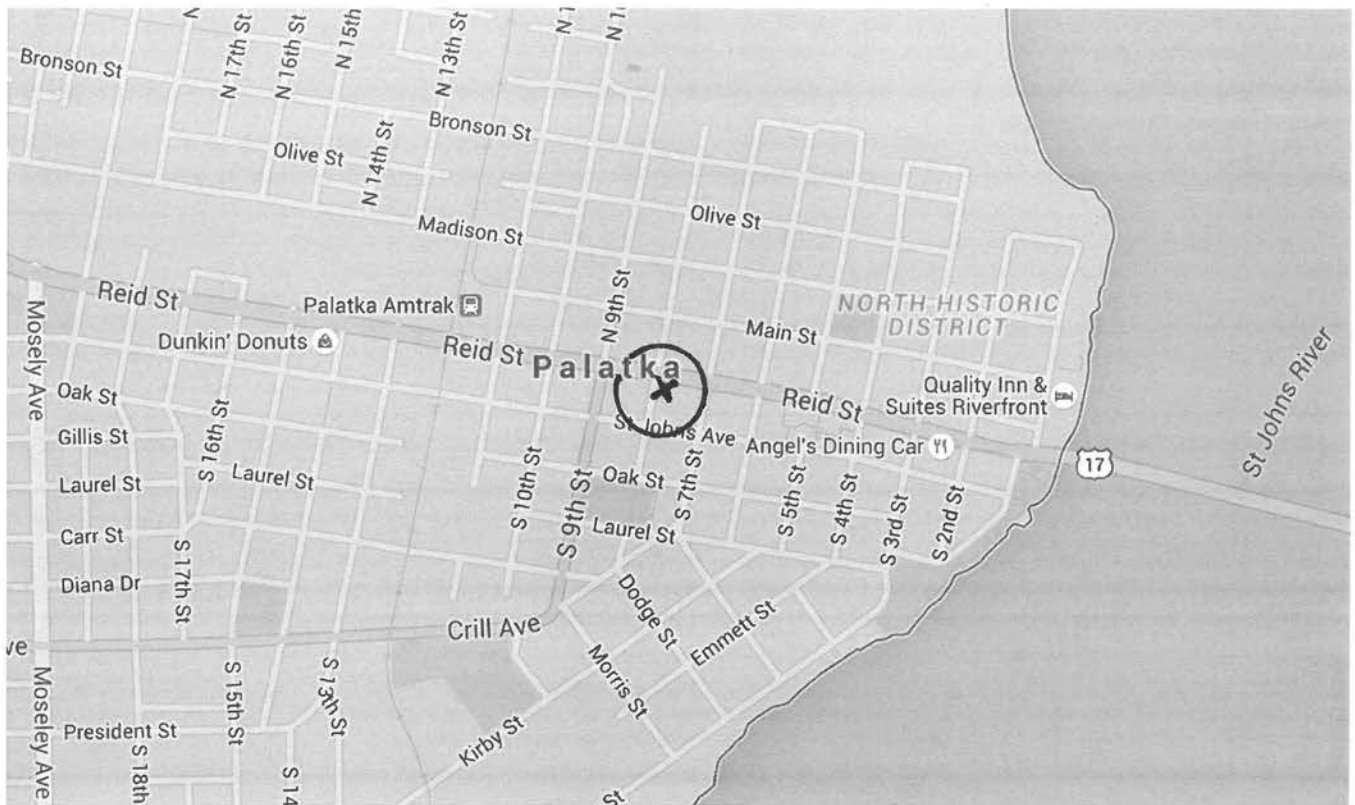
BETHEL AME CHURCH  
Palatka, Putnam County, Florida  
NATIONAL REGISTER SITE PLAN &  
BOUNDARY



Palatka, FL  
Palatka, FL

Bob

Google



**BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH**  
**Palatka, Putnam Co., Florida**

**LOCATOR MAP**

**Zone 17**

**Easting 438409**

**Northing 3279970**

Admission to the site is  
free. In the summer of  
1944, the area was  
designated as a national  
monument by the  
Legislature.



This glass and steel  
structure was built  
in 1944 and is  
dedicated to the  
memory of the  
Hawaii National  
Monument.

SANBORN MAP ORIGINAL CHURCH EMMITT & HOTEL  
JUNE 1903 FIGURE #1

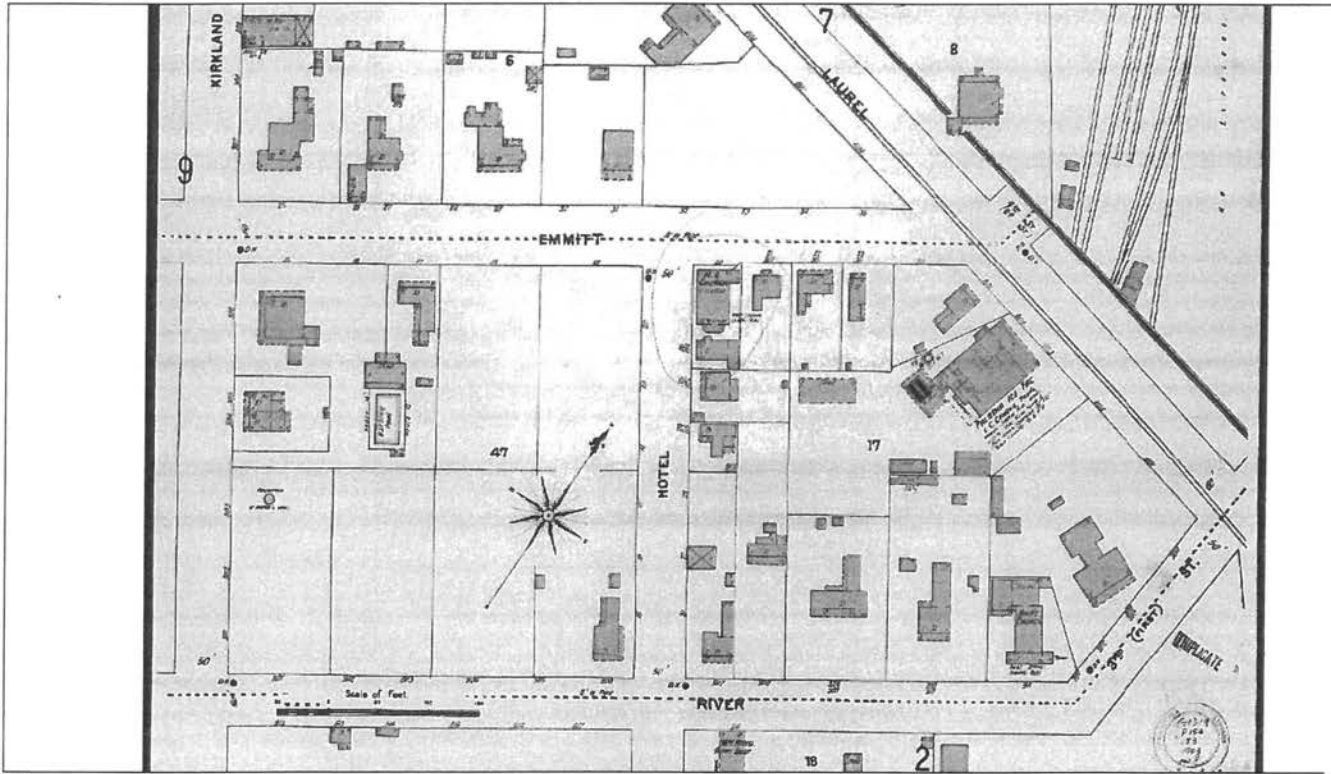
FIRST

PREVIOUS

Go To: Sheet 8

NEXT

LAST



DOLLAR  
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0435

FREE  
W/REP  
& LOCATION  
502-274





719



BETHEL  
A. M. E. CHURCH.  
A. D. 1875.





STEWARDS

GEO. BARNES  
R. D. ALEXANDER  
F. SUMMERS  
W. GRICE  
LEVY BROWN  
J. H. MORRISON  
J. S. JOHNSON  
G. HOLMES  
L. W. PITMAN  
R. B. WILLIAMS  
REV. A. SCOTT D.D.

TRUSTEES

T. N. WILSON  
A. B. OSGOOD  
E. F. WASHINGTON  
C. HUNTER  
P. H. LEWIS  
BEN MILLS  
I. GRICE  
REV. COOK











AFRICAN MET

LOOKI











**CHURCH SCHOOL CREED**  
 OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL MUST GROW AND  
 GLOW AND I MUST HELP TO MAKE IT SO.  
 EVERY MEMBER A CHRISTIAN



**CHURCH SCHOOL BENEDICTION**  
 WE HAVE COME, WE HAVE STOOD UP  
 AND WE HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING  
 THAT WE CAN TAKE HOME TOGETHER TO



Presented by  
 Willing Workers Club  
 in Memory of  
 Mrs. F. Williams



Presented by  
The [illegible] Society







EXIT

Orpheus A.M.C. Family & Grand Lodge

Orpheus A.M.C. Hall of Fame "Inductees" at Putnam School





CHURCH  
BUS

THE  
MELVIN

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Bethel African American Episcopal Church

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Putnam

DATE RECEIVED: 4/08/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/29/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/16/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/24/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000270

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: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 5-16-2016 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Eligible under C. while the Art embodied in the stained glass is not particularly noteworthy (it is fairly standard, representational ecclesiastical art) it appears to be a significant example of a type & method

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C

REVIEWER J. Gabbert 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.

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-12-18

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PALATKA, FLORIDA,  
SUPPORTING AND ENDORSING THE BETHEL AFRICAN  
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF PALATKA'S  
APPLICATION FOR NOMINATION FOR LISTING IN THE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

WHEREAS, the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, located at 719 Reid Street on the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> & Reid Streets in Palatka, has been proposed for nomination for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, the Bethel AME Church, which was built through the labor of its congregation between 1905 and 1908 under the direction of ministers J.S. Braswell and E. F. Williams, who was an architect and a builder, is a two-story Romanesque Revival Style Church with enamel-painted stained glass windows, interior tongue and groove pine floors, and a wood-pipe organ which was built within the wall centered behind the choir enclosure; and

WHEREAS, following the Civil War and until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the AME Church was the single most influential organization on behalf of Florida's black residents and was a powerful political force in the State and for many local governments. The Church promoted education as a critical component for the advancement of many former slaves; and

WHEREAS, the Bethel AME Church has been a landmark in the City of Palatka for over 100 years and stands as a statement of pride of the congregation, and is the only Romanesque Revival Style building in Palatka. Its enamel-painted stained glass windows are one of only four such pieces found to still exist in the State of Florida.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF PALATKA, FLORIDA:

Section 1: That the Palatka City Commission hereby fully supports and endorses the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church of Palatka's application for nomination for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, to be reviewed by the Florida National Register Review Board on March 26, 2016, and prays the Review Board will submit a formal nomination to the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, DC, where the final decision will be made; and

Section 2: That a copy of this Resolution shall be provided to the Florida National Review Board, Florida Department of State, Bureau of Historic Preservation, R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee FL 32399-0250.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, this 25<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2016.

CITY OF PALATKA, FLORIDA

By: 

Its Mayor

ATTEST:

  
CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

  
CITY ATTORNEY





**Building & Zoning Department**  
201 N 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Palatka, FL 32177  
(386) 329-0103 phone  
(386) 329-0172 fax

March 28, 2016

Historic Sites Specialist, Florida Division of Historical Resources  
Robert Jones  
500 S Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32177

Re: Local and National Historic Designation for Bethel AME Church (719 Reid St).

Dear Mr. Jones:

The Historic Preservation Board met on Wednesday, March 16, 2016 to discuss this request and voted to recommend approval of the HD (Historic District) overlay zoning to the property, and also recommended to list this property on the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact this office at 329-0103.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thad Crowe", written in a cursive style.

Thad Crowe, AICP  
Planning Director

TC/kw



RECEIVED 2280

APR 08 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RICK SCOTT  
Governor

KEN DETZNER  
Secretary of State

March 30, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
Department of the Interior  
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Bethel AME Church (FMSF #8PU398), in Putnam County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact Bob Jones at [Robert.Jones@DOS.myflorida.com](mailto:Robert.Jones@DOS.myflorida.com) or (850) 245.6333, if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alissa Slade Lotane".

Alissa Slade Lotane  
Chief, Bureau of Historic Preservation  
& Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

R. A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250  
Telephone: 850.245.6300 • Facsimile: 850.245.6436 • [www.flheritage.com](http://www.flheritage.com)  
*Commemorating 500 years of Florida history* [www.vivaflorida.org](http://www.vivaflorida.org)

