

2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For NPS use only
received AUG 14 1984
date entered SEP 13 1984

1. Name

historic Southern Methodist Publishing House

and/or common 810 Broadway Building

2. Location

street & number 810 Broadway

N/A not for publication

city, town Nashville

N/A vicinity of

~~Congressional district~~

state Tennessee

code 047

county Davidson

code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Park Place Ltd.

street & number 2700 12th Ave. South

city, town Nashville

N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee 37204

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Davidson County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Nashville

state Tennessee 37201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Davidson County Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978

federal state county local

depository for survey records Metropolitan Nashville Historical Commission

city, town Nashville

state Tennessee 37203

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

The Southern Methodist Publishing House is a five-story steel and concrete structure located at 810 Broadway in Nashville, Tennessee. The building was constructed in 1906 in the Commercial style. Built as the headquarters for the Southern Methodist Publishing House, the building displays a limestone and brick exterior with Neo-Classic detailing. The building has not been significantly altered and retains its original architectural design.

Located at the corner of Broadway and Ninth Avenue, the building occupies a large urban lot measuring 72' X 243'. It is bounded by Broadway and Ninth Avenue on the south and west and by alleys on the north and east. The main building of five stories occupies the majority of the lot with a two-story extension located at the rear of the structure.

The publishing house was built in 1906 utilizing a steel frame, concrete floors and masonry curtain wall. The building was one of the first constructed in Nashville using steel frame construction and it was designed in this manner to house the heavy printing equipment required by the publishing house. The building rests on a cut limestone foundation and contains a full basement. The first floor is sheathed with limestone while the upper facade displays both brick and limestone facing. Windows throughout the upper facade are paired one-over-one sash which are separated by wooden Doric motif columns. The overall design of the structure reflects the Commercial style with added Neo-Classic detailing.

The Broadway facade is three bays wide with a large central doorway flanked by plate glass display windows on the storefront level. The main entrance is recessed within an original frame and glass vestibule. This entrance features paired glass and frame rectangular doors separated by a fixed glass and frame panel. The remaining walls of the vestibule are also composed of large fixed glass and frame panels. A transom bar and multi-light transom extends across all three sides of the vestibule which terminates into a coffered wooden ceiling.

The main entrance features an elaborate limestone surround on the Broadway facade. Above the doorway is a broken segmented pediment with a second pediment enclosed within

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Southern Methodist
Publishing House

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

For NPS use only

received

Date entered

its arch. The pediment is supported by extended brackets with a corbelled base featuring female figure sculpture. Below the cornice of the pediment is limestone decoration executed in an open book design representing the publishing house. Fluted limestone piers also frame the entrance.

The Ninth Avenue facade is twelve bays in width and is also sheathed in limestone on the storefront. Windows on the first floor are paired one-over-one sash with transoms. The second through fourth floors on the building feature paired one-over-one sash windows separated by wooden Doric motif columns. Beneath the windows are decorative spandrels with cross inset designs. The paired windows on each floor are separated by brick piers with corbelled rectangular panels and limestone banding. Between the fourth and fifth floors is a limestone belt course and sheet metal cornice. The fifth floor displays an elaborate stone and brick facing which divides each bay into rectangular panels with Greek cross insets signifying the religious utilization of the building. At the roofline is a small stone cornice with modillion block decoration.

The interior of the building consists largely of open floor space on all five floors. The first floor displays a ceiling consisting of shallow barrel vaults supported by rectangular concrete piers with inset cross decoration. The barrel vaulting is also found on the second floor ceiling while the remainder of the building has flat concrete ceilings. On the second floor there are three small rooms facing Broadway which were used as the offices for the publishing house. These rooms have oak paneling and elaborate plaster ceilings displaying classical ornamentation. Throughout the building are wooden floors laid on a concrete base. During the early 1960s partition walls on the first two floors were added but these have been removed by the present owner. The majority of details are in good condition and few significant changes have occurred to the interior.

The three-story commercial building at 808 Broadway was built in 1914 as an annex to the Southern Methodist Publishing House and is not included in this nomination.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1906 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Southern Methodist Publishing House located at 810 Broadway in Nashville, Tennessee is an architecturally and historically significant structure of the early 20th century. The building has been nominated under criteria B and C because of its architectural design and prominent role in religious history. It was built in the Commercial style with Neo-Classic detailing and retains its original architectural character. For fifty years it served as the headquarters for the Southern Methodist Publishing House which has been one of the most prominent publishers of religious materials in the country.

During the early 19th century the headquarters for the Methodist Publishing House was located in Philadelphia. The publishing house distributed religious materials throughout the country and served congregations of both the northern and southern branches of the Methodist Church. At a general conference held on May 18, 1854 the Methodists decided to move the headquarters of the publishing house to Nashville due to its central location and the large number of congregations in the Southeast.

The first building occupied by the publishing house in Nashville was located on the east side of the public square. The publishing house was opened with fanfare because of the prestige and new jobs it brought to the city. The publishing house operated successfully for several years until it was forced to cease operation during the Civil War. Union troops occupied the building damaging the presses and the building itself. The publishing house was later reimbursed by the federal government in the amount of \$288,000 as compensation for damages.

In 1872 the building occupied by the publishing house burned and a new and larger headquarters was constructed on the square. This building served the publishing house until the end of the 19th century. During these years the publishing activities of the Methodists continued to expand until they were one of the largest publishers of religious materials in the country second only to the Southern Baptists. This

9. Major Bibliographical References

"The Christian Advocate." January 25, 1907. The Methodist Publishing House: Nashville, Tennessee, 1907.
Vernon, Walter. The Methodist Publishing House - A History. Private manuscript on file at the library of the Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tennessee.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .35 acres

Quadrangle name Nashville West

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UMT References

A

1	6	5	1	9	4	0	0	4	0	0	1	5	4	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

See continuation sheet

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Philip Thomason

organization Thomason and Associates

date April, 1984

street & number 1700 Hayes Street, Suite 202

telephone (615) 320-5732

city or town Nashville

state Tennessee, 37203

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.

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Herbert L. Hayden

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 8/8/84

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

9-13-84

John A. Brown
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

Date entered

Continuation sheet Southern Methodist
Publishing House

Item number 8

Page 2

growth resulted in the need for a new building to meet the rising demands of the publishing house.

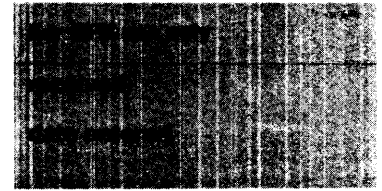
In 1900 the Methodist Church purchased a large lot at the corner of Ninth Avenue and Broadway for \$22,800 and in 1904 construction began on a new building to house the publishing operation. The building was constructed of steel and concrete to support the heavy machinery used in the printing process. The building was erected on a cut limestone foundation with a full basement. Two passenger and one freight elevators were installed to move materials throughout the building. The majority of the building was composed of open floor space with only a few permanent offices added on the second floor for officials.

The design of the building was reflective of the Commercial Style with rectangular sash windows and a prominent sheet metal cornice. Neo-Classic decoration is found at the main entrance in the elaborate pediment and in the limestone and masonry exterior detailing. The religious nature of the building is signified by the use of inset Greek crosses at the roofline and the stone open book design over the entrance. The result is a functional and utilitarian building with attractive and restrained ornamentation. The architectural firm responsible for the design has not been identified.

The building officially opened in December of 1906 and was completed at a cost of \$124,000. The basement level held the main presses with thirteen flat bed presses employed by the publishing house. On the first floor was the book department with the front half of the floor devoted to retail book and stationary sales. On the second floor were forty-nine binding machines and the offices of the mailing department. The third floor contained typesetting machines while the fourth and fifth floors contained offices of the editors and other departments. At the rear of the building was a two story addition which held the steam powered electrical engines which provided power for the machinery. Altogether the building housed one hundred thirty one employees in the various departments.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Southern Methodist
Publishing House

Item number 8

Page 3

When the building was completed Methodist officials boasted that the building would be sufficient for their needs for one hundred years. However, soon after the building's completion it was apparent that further space was needed and a three-story annex was constructed adjacent to the building facing Broadway in 1914. The volume of business conducted at the publishing house continued to grow and during the period between 1915 and 1920 one half of all mail distributed in the city came in and out of the publishing house. This necessitated further expansion and in 1922 a large building was erected at the corner of Eighth Avenue and Demonbreun Street to provide additional printing space.

The Broadway building continued to be the main offices for the publishing house during most of the early 20th century. It continued to be used by the Methodists until 1957 when the printing operation consolidated into the Eighth Avenue building and new modern structures. In 1957 the building became occupied by the University of Tennessee as an annex for their downtown campus. During the occupation of the school the interior was altered with new dropped ceilings and partition walls. The university moved out of the building in recent years and the present owners intend to rehabilitate the property into new office space.

The Southern Methodist Publishing House has been one of the major distributors of religious materials in the country since the mid-19th century. The 810 Broadway Building is the oldest structure associated with the publishing house in existence. It was designed specifically to serve as one of the South's premier publishing houses and it operated in this building for fifty years. The building has retained its original character and is an important architectural and historical resource of Nashville.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

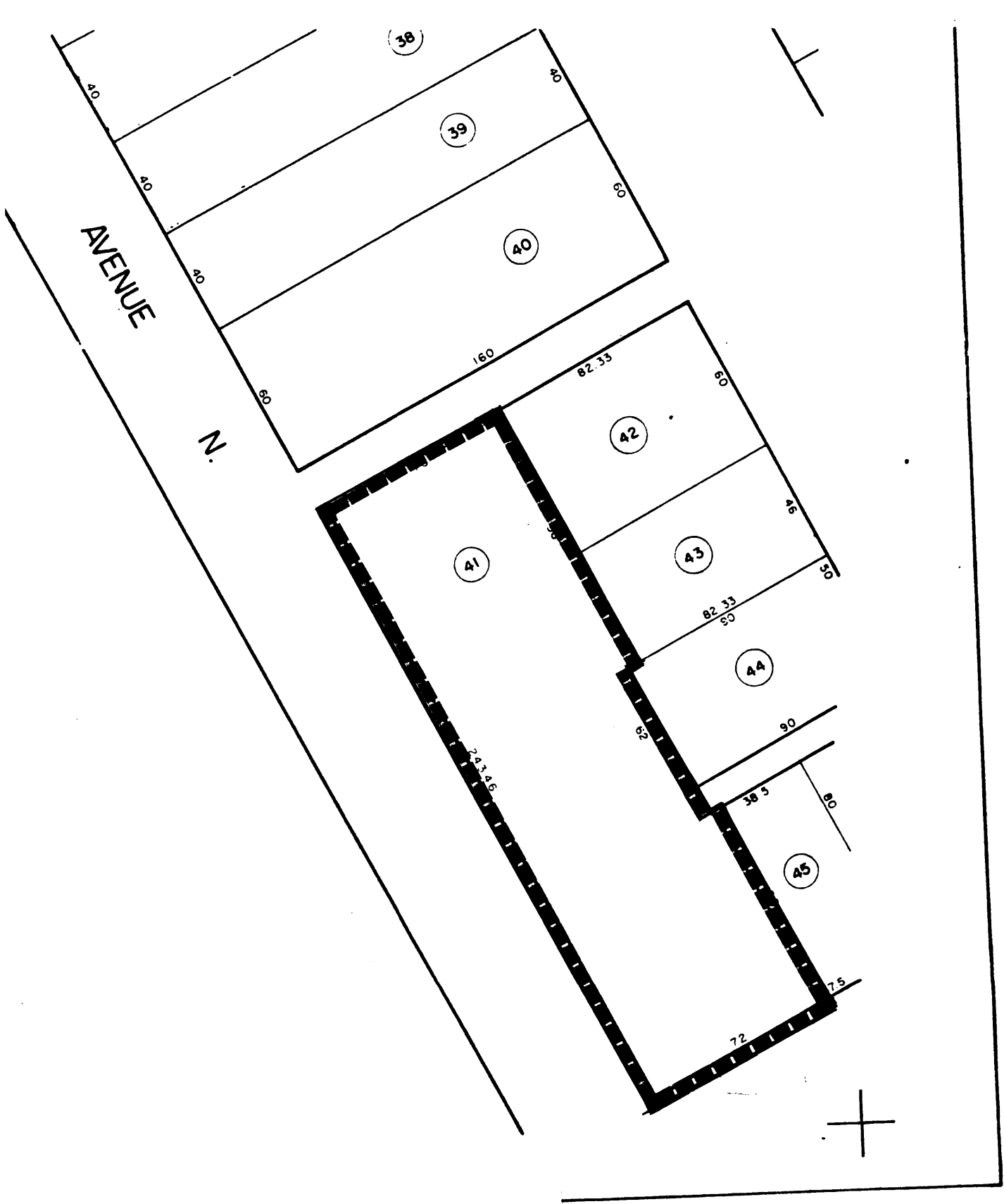
date entered

Continuation sheet Southern Methodist
Publishing House

Item number 10

Page 2

The nominated property includes the land upon which the building sits and is bounded on the north by an alley, one the west by Nineth Avenue, North, on the south by Broadway and on the east by adjoining property lines. This is all the property historically associated with the 1906 Southern Methodist Publishing House building.



Southern Methodist Publishing House
 810 Broadway
 Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee

Tax Map

SHEET 93-5-4