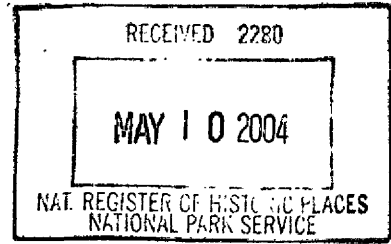NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 _____ Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church _____

other names/site number _____ Old Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church _____

2. Location

street & number ____ 369 Drayton Street _____ not for publication _____

city or town _____ McClellanville _____ vicinity _____

state ___ South Carolina ___ code SC _ county ___ Charleston ___ code _019___ zip code ___ 29458 ___

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _x_ 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 _x_meets __does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant __ nationally __statewide _x_ locally. (__ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds   _5/7/04_
Signature of certifying official   Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.
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 commenting or other official   Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper   Date of Action

_✓_entered in the National Register   _Carol W. Beall_   _6-22-04_
___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): _____

Bethel A.M.E. Church _____   Charleston County, South Carolina ____
Name of Property   County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources)

x private
public-local
_ public-State
_ public-Federal

_x building(s)
_ district
_ site
_ structure
_ object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	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)

Category: RELIGION _____
             FUNERARY _____

Subcategory: Religious Facility _____
              Cemetery _____

Current Functions
(Enter caregories from instructions)

Category: WORK IN PROGRESS
             SOCIAL _____

Subcategory: _____
              Meeting Hall _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
 Late Victorian/Gothic _____

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation   Brick _____
walls   Wood/Shingle _____

roof   Metal _____
other

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

Bethel A.M.E. Church _____   Charleston County, South Carolina ____
Name of Property   County and State

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)

x 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.

x 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.)

x a   owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

__ b   removed from its original location.

__ c   a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

 Ethnic Heritage/Black
 Architecture
_____
_____
_____

Period of Significance
____1872-1953____
_____
_____

Significant Dates
____1872____
_____

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
____N/A____

Cultural Affiliation
____N/A____

Architect/Builder
____N/A____

Narrative Statement of Significance
Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 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:

x State Historic Preservation Office

__Other State agency

__ Federal agency

__ Local government

__ University

__ Other

Name of repository:

S.C. Dept. of Archives & History

Bethel A.M.E. Church   Charleston County, South Carolina
Name of Property   County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property   Approximately 2.3 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1 17 644071 3662102	3 17 643983 3661963
2 17 644097 3662012	4 17 643948 3662035

___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 _____ Karen Nickless _____

organization _____ date ___19 October 2003 _____

street & number ___134 Tranquil Lane _____ telephone (843) 851-2845 ____

city or town _____ Ladson _____ state __SC _____ zip code __29438 _____

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____ Bethel A.M.E. Church _____

street & number___ 369 Drayton Street _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ McClellanville _____ state _SC zip code __29458 _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number __7__   Page __5__

Bethel A.M.E. Church_____
Name of Property
Charleston County, South Carolina_____
County and State

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, built ca. 1872, is located on the edge of the village of McClellanville. The church property lies partly within the town limits and partly outside the limits. The property is bounded by Dupre Road, Lincoln Street, Drayton Street, and an unnamed street that cuts from Dupre Road to Drayton Street in front of the church. The rectangular building, set upon low brick piers, is approximately 30 x 82 feet, with a pedimented gable-front roof that supports a square-based steeple.

The red V-crimp metal-clad steeple roof is steeply pitched, flared, and has narrow gabled Gothic dormers on each face. The church stands on brick piers and brick steps lead to the front entrance. The Gothic Revival style church is sided with cypress fishscale shingles with the exception of the front bays of both side elevations, which are covered with white asbestos shingles. Windows are four-over-two with a two-light transom. The transom and upper four-light sections are fixed; the lower two-light sash opens outward in an awning-like configuration. Some windows and all transoms retain the original colored panes; most of the windowpanes were replaced in 1989 after Hurricane Hugo. There are blind pointed Gothic arches with chevron wooden panels over each window. The building has a three-bay facade (southwest elevation) with two small Gothic windows flanking the central entrance, which consists of paired wooden three-panel doors under a blind Gothic arch with chevron wooden panel and V-shaped traceried overlay. There is similar Gothic detail in the pediment and steeple base directly over the front entrance. The eight-bay northwest elevation has a door near its east end, six large Gothic blind arch-headed windows and a smaller Gothic window near its front. The southeast elevation has a similar configuration, but the two rear bays have four-over-four, double-hung sash windows that retain the colored panes. The rear elevation features a large tripartite window with four-over-four, double-hung sash colored glass panes and a small Gothic window near the northeast corner of the building. The roof of the building is clad with red V-crimp tin sheeting.

The sanctuary has a raised chancel with two segmental arches of unequal dimensions supported by a square pillar. The tripartite window along the building's rear (east) wall is the focal point of the chancel's larger central arch. A small vesting room adjoins the chancel at the northeast corner of the building's interior and is accessed by a single-leaf door with simple surround. The walls and ceiling throughout are finished in beaded board. The façade was changed in 1962 by the addition of men's and women's restrooms on either side of a vestibule at the front of the building. The storm surge from Hurricane Hugo lifted the building from its brick piers and some windowpanes were lost. The church has been placed back on the original piers and the colored panes replaced by modern glass. In 1993 the roof was replaced. The interior is currently (fall-winter 2003) undergoing an extensive rehabilitation. The floor system has been removed and will be replaced with new flooring. The pews and other church furniture will not be replaced as the building is being renovated as a community center.

The church cemetery also contributes to the historic character of the property. Scattered graves dot the property. Tombstones date from the 1880s to the late twentieth century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number __8__   Page _6_   Bethel A.M.E. Church _____
                                              Name of Property
                                              Charleston County, South Carolina _____
                                              County and State

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in McClellanville, in rural Charleston County, was built ca. 1872. It is significant under Criterion C as an example of late-nineteenth century vernacular church architecture and under criterion A as an illustration of the growth of the A.M.E. Church among freedmen in Reconstruction-era South Carolina.

The church is located in the village of McClellanville, a fishing village in St. James Santee Parish. Planters built summer homes on Jeremy Creek before the Civil War, but the area remained sparsely settled. During the Civil War Union troops named the area McClellanville and after the war a primarily white village grew along the creek. African Americans were a ten-to-one majority in the parish during the Reconstruction era, but lived, for the most part, in the rural areas around the village. Organized in 1867, the congregation built its first permanent building, Bethel A.M.E., in 1872. Bethel A.M.E. was the first African American Church in McClellanville.[1]

During the Civil War the Baltimore Conference of the A.M.E. Church sent three ministers to the Beaufort-Port Royal area to work with freedmen on the Union-occupied sea islands. After the war, Daniel Payne, a native Charlestonian, returned after thirty years' absence to reestablish the church's presence in the Carolina lowcountry. He installed Richard H. Cain as the pastor of the congregations in Charleston that became Emanuel A.M.E. and Morris Brown A.M.E.[2]

Richard Cain also founded churches in the outlying areas. As one A.M.E. publication states, "Many churches sprang into existence as if by some mystical power under his command." He is known to have founded churches in Summerville, Lincolnville, Marion, Sumter, and Georgetown. Bethel A.M.E. Church members believe Cain also founded their church, and this seems likely.[3]

In the outlying areas the need for church buildings for African American congregations was great. During the antebellum period, many blacks attended the already established white churches, such as the Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches. Even those who had constructed and worshipped in their own buildings rarely retained control after the Civil War, as the buildings were owned by white trustees. For the A.M.E. church the need for buildings was particularly acute. One A.M.E. missionary wrote from Georgia in 1867, "Our greatest want at present are houses of worship. Oh, that the Lord would send us help to fill that want."[4]

---

[1] Walter Bonner, *Home in the Village: McClellanville in Old St. James Santee Parish* (Mt. Pleasant: Corinthian Books, 2002), 6-7, 15.
[2] William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South, 1865-1900* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 61, 66-7; Bernard E. Powers, *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822-1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 206.
[3] Seventh Episcopal Diocese of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, *African Methodism in South Carolina: A Bicentennial Focus* (Tappan, N.Y.: Custombook, Inc., 1987), 34; Karen Nickless, Interview with Janie Riggs, McClellanville, S.C., 8 May 2003.
[4] Daniel W. Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 91.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number ___8___   Page __7__   Bethel A.M.E. Church _____
                                               Name of Property
                                               Charleston County, South Carolina _____
                                               County and State

In McClellanville that want was filled in 1872 with the construction of Bethel A.M.E. The builder has been identified variously as John Drayton (a founding member of the church), Paul Drayton (known to have been a carpenter on a nearby church), Samuel Drayton (a carpenter and former slave) and Julius Brown (a carpenter, barber, and homebuilder). Most members of the congregation of Bethel A.M.E. believe the builder to have been Samuel Drayton, although one former member, Esther Martineaux, believes her grandfather, Julius Brown, built Bethel.[5]

In McClellanville the need for church buildings extended to white congregations as well, since the town was not established as a permanent place of residence until after the Civil War. Two white churches built in the same time period, the Episcopal St. James Santee Chapel of Ease (1890) and the New Wappetaw Presbyterian Church (1875) show similarities to Bethel A.M.E. St. James has similar ornamentation—fishscale shingles and Gothic windows. New Wappetaw Presbyterian Church has a similar steeple, which contains a vestibule and a portico that has not been enclosed. Its front façade is similar to Bethel A.M.E.'s before the addition of restrooms in 1962. Architectural historians have speculated that St. James Episcopal and Bethel A.M.E. shared a builder, and it is likely that many of the same workman worked on all three churches. A.H. Lucas designed St. James, while Samuel Drayton executed Lucas's designs with the assistance of Moses Stewart, Charlie Williamson, James Bennet and Julius Brown.[6]

Bethel A.M.E. has stood the test of time, but it has been tested. In 1916 a storm rendered the building unusable and the congregation worked on Saturdays and worshiped on Sundays "under the old oak tree at the rear of the church" until repairs were completed. A plaque in the sanctuary documents a 1944 "renovation." Until 1962 the church had two outhouses in the back near a large oak tree. In 1962 the building's portico was enclosed for bathrooms.[7]

By the mid-1960s the congregation began discussion of building a new church and this culminated with the construction of Bethel A.M.E., after which the historic structure came to be known as Old Bethel A.M.E. The congregation held their last service at Bethel in the early morning of September 17, 1979. The congregation sang, "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder" as they walked from the church.[8]

The church sustained damage from Hurricane Hugo on September 21, 1989. The exterior has since been repaired but current (winter 2003-04) interior work includes replacing floors and paneling damaged by the storm. Plans call for the building to become a community center.

---

[5] Arlie Porter, "Townspeople join to help restore Church," *The Post and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), 21 March 1993, 1-B.
[6] Porter, "Townspeople"; Bennett Baxley, ed., *St. James-Santee Parish Historical Sketches* (McClellanville: St. James-Santee Parish Historical Society, 2000), 26-27.
[7] Interview with Janie Riggs.
[8] Interview with Janie Riggs.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number ___9___   Page __8__   Bethel A.M.E. Church_____
Name of Property
Charleston County, South Carolina_____
County and State

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baxley, Bennett, ed. *St. James-Santee Parish Historical Sketches*. McClellanville: St. James-Santee Parish
Historical Society, 2000.

Bonner, Walter. *Home in the Village: McClellanville in Old St. James Santee Parish*. Mt. Pleasant:
Corinthian Books, 2002.

Montgomery, William E. *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South,
1865-1900*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1993.

Nickless, Karen. Interview with Janie Riggs, McClellanville, S.C., 8 May 2003.

Seventh Episcopal Diocese of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. *African Methodism in South
Carolina: A Bicentennial Focus*. Tappan, N.Y.: Custombook, Inc., 1987.

Stowell, Daniel W. *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877*. New York and
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Porter, Arlie. "Townspeople join to help restore church." *The Post and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), 21
March 1993.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number __10__   Page __9__   Bethel A.M.E. Church _____
                                              Name of Property
                                              Charleston County, South Carolina _____
                                              County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is bounded by Dupre Road, Lincoln Street, Drayton Street, and an unnamed street that cuts from Dupre to Drayton in the front of the church, as shown on the accompanying Charleston County Plat, recorded on 31 July 1996 in Plat Book DA, page 889, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance, Charleston, South Carolina.

Verbal Property Justification

The nominated property includes the historic sanctuary and cemetery and is the entire parcel historically identified with Bethel A.M.E. Church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number __Photographs__   Page __10__   Bethel A.M.E. Church _____
                                                  Name of Property
                                                  Charleston County, South Carolina _____
                                                  County and State

_____

The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Bethel A.M.E. Church
Location of Property: 369 Drayton Street, McClellanville
Name of Photographer: Karen Nickless
Date of Photographs: August 2003
Location of Original
  Negatives: S.C. Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

1. Principal (southwest) facade
2. Northwest elevation
3. Rear (southwest) elevation
4. Southeast elevation
5. Front entrance detail
6. Window detail
7. Interior

3K X124PG383

NOTES

1. PROPERTY LINES WERE ESTABLISHED BY LINES OF OCCUPATION AND THE REFERENCES SHOWN HEREON THIS PLAT DELINEATES A SURVEY OF AN EXISTING LOT, TMS 764-16-0-1

2. BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH — OWNER

Charleston South Carolina
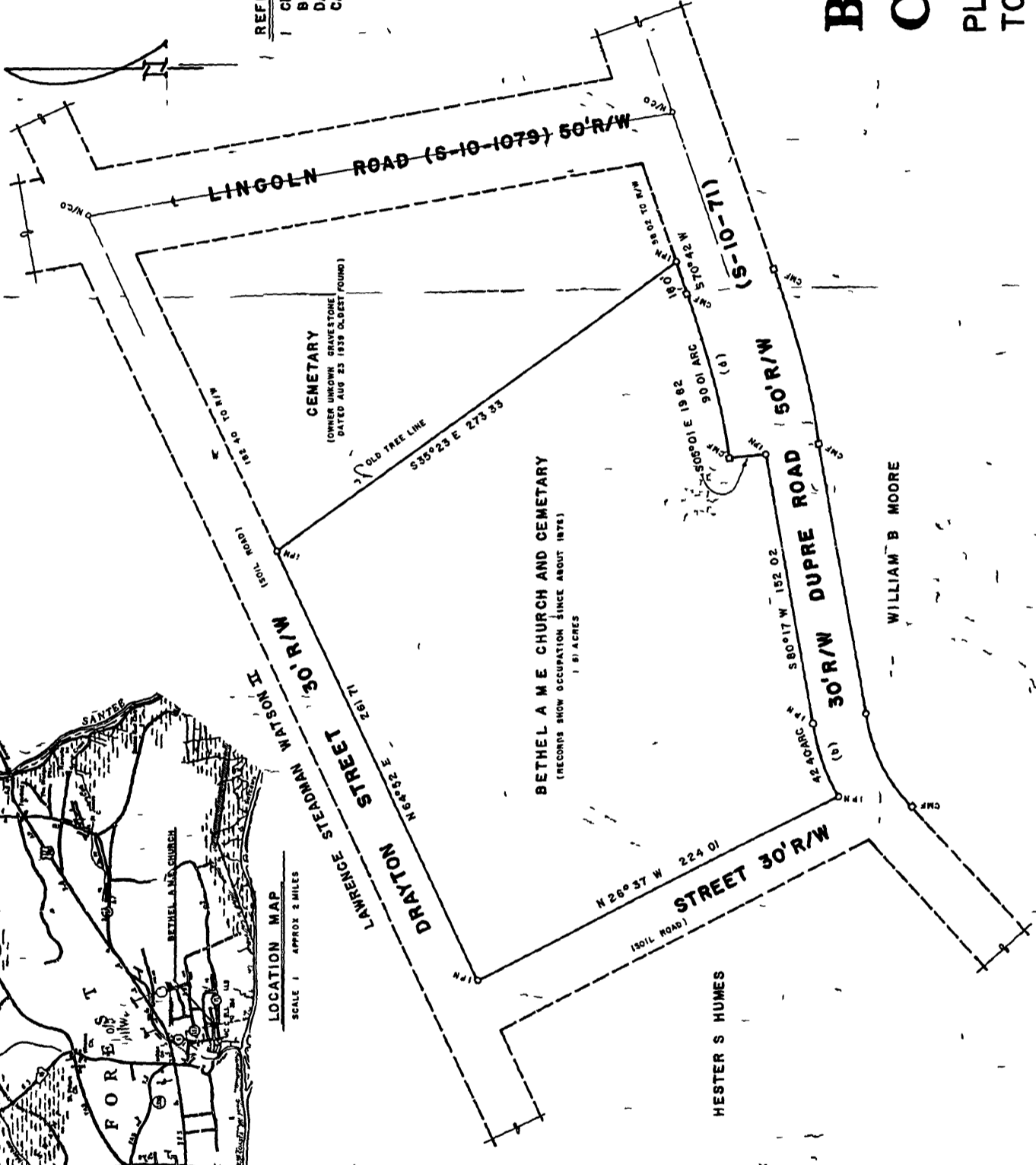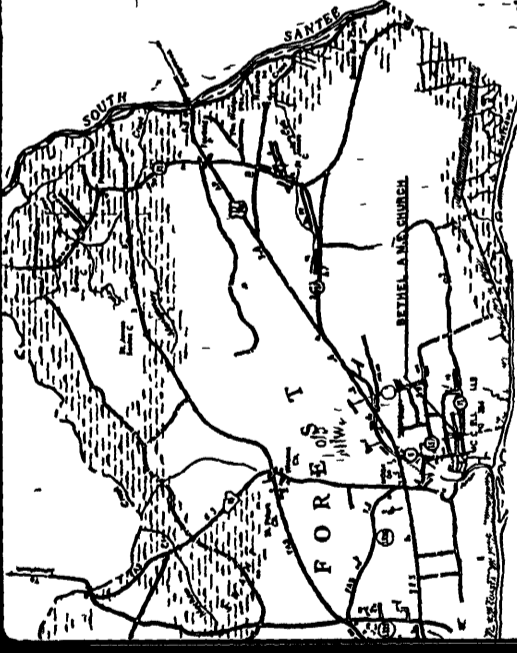Office of Register Mesne Conveyance

Plat recorded this 18 day of March 19.81
3.00 o'clock in Plat Book 75 Page __ Lot and tracing plat
copy filed in File 2 Drawer 3 blue print __ Drawing
No. _____ Original plat (a __ print) delivered
to James R. Bagley

Robert M King
Register Mesne Conveyance

REFERENCES

1. CHARLESTON COUNTY TAX EXEMPT
   BOARD FILE # 2 3 (123170)
   DATED 21 JUNE 1971
   CASE # 1342 — BETHEL AME CHURCH

2. PLAN BY E M SEABROOK, JR, INC
   DATED OCTOBER 18, 1977
   RECORDED PLAT BOOK AK PAGE 26
   R M C., CHARLESTON COUNTY, S C

BETHEL A. M. E. CHURCH, DUPRE RD.

PLAT OF CHURCH AND CEMETARY LOT
TOWN OF MCCLELLANVILLE
ST. JAMES - SANTEE PARISH
CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA
MARCH, 1981
SCALE 1" = 50'

CURVE DATA PROPERTY LINE

CURVE	DELTA	RADIUS	ARC	CHORD	TANGENT	CHORD BRG
a	09°14.56	576.19	93.01	92.91	46.61	S75°19 35 W
b	18°28.83	131.44	42.49	42.21	21.38	S71°02 43 W

X124 PG383

LINCOLN ROAD (S-10-1079) 50' R/W

CEMETARY
(OWNER UNKOW GRAVESTONE
DATED AUG 23 1839 OLDEST FOUND)

OLD TREE LINE

S 35°23 E 273 33

LAWRENCE STEADMAN WATSON II

STREET 50' R/W

DRAYTON

N 64°52 E 261 71

(SOIL ROAD)

152 40 TO R/W

BETHEL A M E CHURCH AND CEMETARY
(RECORDS SHOW OCCUPATION SINCE ABOUT 1878)
1 81 ACRES

S 70°42 W

180

S 00°01 E 1982

90 01 ARC (a)

500°01 W

DUPRE ROAD 50' R/W

30' R/W

S80°17 W 182 02

WILLIAM B MOORE

42 40 ARC W (b)

N 28°37 W 224 01

STREET 30' R/W

(SOIL ROAD)

HESTER S HUMES

(S-10-71)

LOCATION MAP
SCALE 1 APPROX 2 MILES

FOREST

SANTEE

SOUTH

BETHEL AME CHURCH

I, A REGISTERED SURVEYOR OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE SURVEYED THE PROPERTY
SHOWN HEREON THAT THIS PLAT SHOWS THE TRUE DIMENSIONS
OF THE PROPERTY AND THAT ALL NECESSARY MARKERS HAVE
BEEN INSTALLED AND THE PRECISION IS ONE/10 000

James R Bagley JR R L 4 S C Reg 2993
McCLELLANVILLE S C

SOUTH CAROLINA
REGISTERED

SCALE 50 0 50 100
FEET