

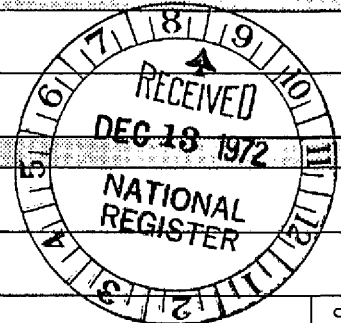
Hon. Peter N. Kyros

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine  
 COUNTY: Cumberland  
 FOR NPS USE ONLY  
 ENTRY NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 JAN 17 1975

MS  
 2010  
 N 483560  
 304200



**1. NAME**  
 COMMON: Green Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church  
 AND/OR HISTORIC: Abyssinian Congregational Church and Society

**2. LOCATION**  
 STREET AND NUMBER: 46 Sheridan Street  
 CITY OR TOWN: Portland  
 STATE: Maine CODE: 23 COUNTY: Cumberland CODE: 005

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**  
 OWNER'S NAME: Local and National Church Organization  
 STREET AND NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY OR TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**  
 COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Cumberland County Courthouse  
 STREET AND NUMBER: 142 Federal Street  
 CITY OR TOWN: Portland STATE: Maine CODE: 23

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**  
 TITLE OF SURVEY: Not so represented  
 DATE OF SURVEY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Federal  State  County  Local  
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 STREET AND NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY OR TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

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**7 DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The first meeting house of the Abyssinian Society, incorporated in 1828 and merged with the Fourth Congregational Church in 1842, was a structure on Newbury Street in Portland. It is said to have been built of brick and stone.

The present church of the descendant organization is the Green Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, built in 1914. This church is located on the northwest corner of Sheridan and Monument Streets in Portland. It is two and a half stories high, built on concrete block which has a rough surface texture. The corners of the building are quoined with concrete block which has a stony pattern. The roof is shingled in asphalt. The windows of the first floor are rectangular with concrete sills and lintels. They are for light. The tall arched windows of the second floor are made of yellow, red and blue stained glass set in a diamond pattern. At either end of the building, a <sup>square</sup> window is located above and between the arched windows.

The entrance to the church is on the southeast corner facing Sheridan Street. A short tower, covered with asphalt shingles, pierces the roof over the entrance.

The building next to the church on Sheridan Street serves as a rectory. It is two stories high with a low gable roof. It is shingled, set on a foundation of concrete block like that of which the church is built. It is painted white with red trim.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

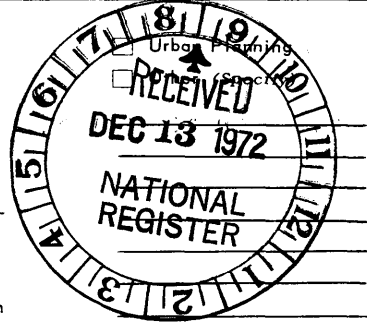
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1828, 1835, organization; 1914 present building

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation		



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Abyssinian Society was incorporated in 1828. Its first meeting house was on Sumner (now Newbury Street in the section of the city where the greatest part of the Black population lived. In 1835, the Fourth Congregational Church was formed as a separate church by Blacks who had been parishioners of the Second Parish Church. Asa Cummings, then editor of the Congregational newspaper, The Christian Mirror; John W. Chickering, pastor of the High Street Church; Joseph Vail, pastor of the Second Parish Church; and John J. Carruthers, working for the Maine Missionary Society as a general Missionary, were present.

In 1842, the Fourth (or Abyssinian) Congregational Church merged with the Abyssinian Society to form the Abyssinian Congregational Church and Society. In 1891, the church was reorganized and located on Mountfort Street. The present concrete church was dedicated on Sheridan Street in 1914. When it was built, it was considered "one of the most pretentious churches for a Black congregation in New England". In 1943, it was named for Moses Green who was born a slave and worked for fifty-two years at Union Station in Portland.

The Green Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church is the oldest established Black congregation in Maine. The development of the State's historic inventory to date would indicate that this church was the only all Black congregation in Maine History and the only site where physical evidence remains to interpret the life of Black Americans in this state.

Although the present site of the A.M.E. Zion Church is not the original, it is the most interpretive. The present site is the locus of a cultural symbol and one that has great meaning to a proud and resourceful people who have survived for 150 years in an indifferent and sometimes hostile environment. Lacking architectural significance and completely out of context with its surroundings, the church has not been the shelter of great historic events. Instead, the A.M.E. Zion Church on Sheridan Street is a site marker more interpretive and meaningful than the most expensive bronze plaque or marble statuary could ever be.

(See Continuation Sheet)

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Articles of Faith, Covenant, and Regulations of the Fourth Congregational Church in Portland. Portland: 1841.

Clark, Calvin Montague: History of the Congregational Churches in Maine, Vol. I, History of the Maine Missionary Society 1807-1925. Portland: 1926.

Green Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. 1971.

(See Continuation Sheet)

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 , "	0 , "		43 0 39 . 50.5N	70 14 . 58.0W	
NE	0 , "	0 , "				
SE	0 , "	0 , "				
SW	0 , "	0 , "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 1 acre **0+**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**James H. Mundy, State Liaison Officer**

ORGANIZATION: **Maine Historic Preservation Commission.** DATE: **August, 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**31 Western Avenue**

CITY OR TOWN: **Augusta** STATE: **Maine** CODE: **23**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name James H. Mundy  
 Title State Liaison Officer  
 Date December 8, 1972

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

Robert W. Utley  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 1/17/73

ATTEST: Wm Mundy  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 1.15.73

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

What could be more symbolic of the Black Community in Maine who through most of their history have been viewed as out of context with the community that surrounds them and treated with the same second class citizen attitude that was applied to Indians, Irish, and Franco-Americans at different periods.

To apply rigidly the criteria designed to recognize the historic resources of mainstream America to all minority cultures would be an injustice. A small group of minority Americans forced into a social and economic role that did not allow for fine architecture of permanency of residence should not be further penalized for the past mistakes of society as a whole.



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(Number all entries)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hull, John T. ed. 1786-1886 Centennial Celebration, An Account of the Municipal Celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town of Portland July 4, 5 and 6, 1886. Portland: 1886, pp. 84-85.

Portland Directory. Portland, Maine: 1834, 1837, 1841, 1844.

Portland Scrapbook, Vol. 17. "Buildings Once Well Known Which Have Disappeared from City". Collection of the Maine Historical Society. Portland: p. 25.

Willis, William: Journals of the Rev. Thomas Smith and the Rev. Samuel Deane. Portland: 1849, p. 452.

