

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Tennessee	
COUNTY: Shelby	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71247.0004	DATE 2/11/71

1. NAME

COMMON:
First Baptist Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
379 Beale ~~Avenue~~ Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Memphis

STATE Tennessee	CODE 047	COUNTY: Shelby	CODE 157
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" 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	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
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) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
First Baptist Church

STREET AND NUMBER:
379 Beale Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Memphis

STATE: Tennessee	CODE 047
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Shelby County Register's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
Shelby County Court House

CITY OR TOWN:
Memphis

STATE: Tennessee	CODE 047
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

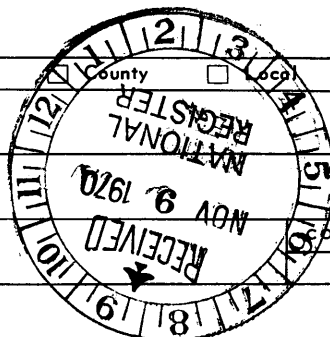
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Tennessee

COUNTY: Shelby

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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

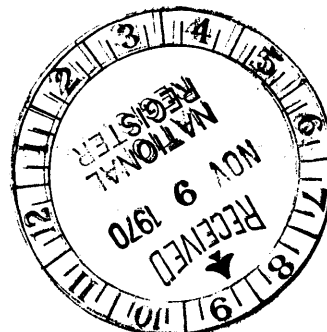
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The First Baptist Church of Beale Avenue was built in 1869. It is a large brick structure with some portions covered with stucco. The exterior is now painted white. The facade of the church is most unusual with a pediment appearance flanked at each corner by a square tower. A large circle is inset in this pediment area which contains small circular windows of stained glass. These windows provide a beautiful effect for the interior of the church. Heavy decorative masonry work adorns the front of the structure giving the feeling of the Gothic influence.

The interior of the church is little altered and still contains balconies on three sides. A delicate and graceful wood vaulting is found inside. The major alterations have been in the floors and the pulpit area. The basement area houses educational facilities and has been modernized considerably.

The Church stands immediately on the Street and has no grounds of its own. The only change in the outside appearance of the building is the loss of its John the Baptist which graced the old church steeple until 1938 when lightning struck it and it was taken down for safety. However, this statue stood for 69 years with its arm pointed toward the heavens.

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SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1869

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <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 | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.

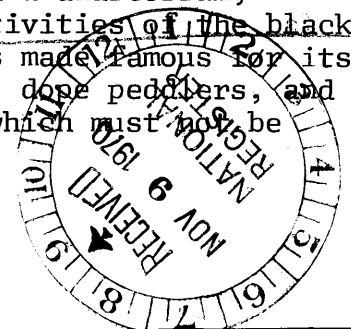
Prayer (?)

The Beale Street Baptist Church grew out of a series of praise meetings conducted by Rev. Scott Keys at his residence on Beale near Turley Street, about 1854. Rev. Lewis Gales was its first pastor. He was succeeded by a white pastor, Rev. D. Bateman, who served until 1863, when Rev. Morris Henderson, a Negro minister, took charge. During the latter's pastorate, the membership moved to Beale and Fourth Streets where it occupied the basement of a white church until the church was destroyed by fire. Later a building at Main and Beale was obtained where the Randolph building now stands and a white minister, Rev. Samuel G. Tillman, was chosen pastor. It was during his ministry that the present tract of land was donated by a New York Baptist Society and a \$100,000 brick church was built by Negroes in the South. During reconstruction days General Grant addressed the Negro populace from its pulpit.

Located immediately next to the famous church was Church Park. In 1900, Mr. R. R. Church, a prominent Memphis Negro businessman and a millionaire, bought ground and built the park and Auditorium there on Beale Street. This is a landmark and is known everywhere by the name of the man who created and developed this recreation center for Negro citizens. It was the only available place in Memphis where Negro theatrical companies could perform, and it was known all over the world by actors and show people. Thousands of graduates received their diplomas in the Church Park Auditorium and many notables such as Booker T. Washington and President Theodore Roosevelt spoke there.

Today the Auditorium has been razed but the park area remains and is being renovated and enlarged in an urban renewal project. The church was significant, as was the park and auditorium, because it was the center of the cultural activities of the black people in Memphis. Although Beale Street was made famous for its saloons, pawnshops, dance halls, prostitutes, dope peddlers, and card sharps, it did possess a cultural side which must not be neglected.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Capers, Gerald M., Jr., The Biography of a River Town (Chapel Hill, 1939).
 Hutchins, Fred L., What Happened in Memphis (Kingsport, 1965).
 Lee, George W., Beale Street Where the Blues Began (New York, 1934).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

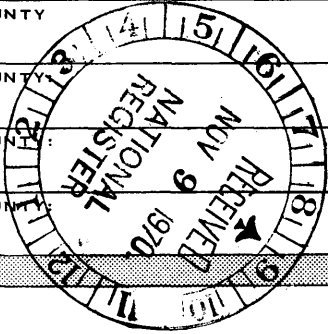
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		35° 08' 20"	90° 02' 55"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM
15/768921
389222
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
May Dean Coop

ORGANIZATION: Tennessee Historical Commission DATE: 10-30-70

STREET AND NUMBER:
403 7th Avenue, North

CITY OR TOWN: Nashville STATE: Tennessee CODE: 047

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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: Stephen S. Lawrence
 Stephen S. Lawrence
 Executive Director
 Title: Tennessee Historical Commission

Date: 10-30-70

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

Ernest A. Bunnally
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: FEB 12 1971

ATTEST:

William J. Huntley
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: FEB 4 1971