

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

For NPS use only

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

received APR 28 1987

date entered

MAY 29 1987

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

**1. Name**

historic Emanuel AME Church

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 656 St. Michael Street

NA not for publication

city, town Mobile

NA vicinity of

congressional district 1

state Alabama code 01

county Mobile

code 097

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Emanuel AME Church

street & number 656 St. Michael Street

city, town Mobile

NA vicinity of

state Alabama 36602

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mobile County Courthouse

street & number 109 Government Street

city, town Mobile

state Alabama

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1970-present  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery

state Alabama

---

## 7. Description

---

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

#### EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION:

Emanuel AME Church is a rectangular, one-story, brick structure located near the northeast corner of Washington and St. Michael Streets in Mobile's downtown core. This church features a three-bay Gothic Revival facade with a two-stage bell tower at the southeast corner, a seven-bay west wall, and an eight-bay east wall with a shallow projecting northeast corner. Brick common bond load-bearing walls have been stuccoed on the east, west and south (rear) sides. A gable roof with a hipped extension over the northeast projection is covered in asbestos and asphalt shingles.

An asymmetrical three-bay facade is composed of a projecting bay which serves as an entrance on the west side, a middle bay with three windows, and a projecting bell tower which serves as the main entrance on the east side.

Seven brick steps lead to an arched Gothic entrance recessed into the projecting west bay. Double leaf, four-panel doors with a stained-glass transom and paneled wood soffits forming a door surround are set behind a stepped brick architrave and a corbeled brick voussoir with a brick keystone. The voussoir rests on a corbeled brick band dividing a paneled brick pilaster on each side of the projecting bay. A corbeled brick cornice forms a gable over the projecting bay.

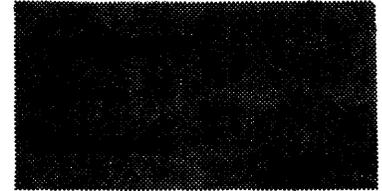
Seven brick steps lead to a second arched Gothic entrance recessed into the first stage of the projecting bell tower that forms a west bay. Entrance doors, transom window, door surround, architrave, voussoir and side pilasters are identical to those on the west bay. However, this entrance has a flat, corbeled cornice providing a base for the second stage and paneled brick pilasters at the edge of all four tower faces. A Gothic stained-glass window with a corbeled brick voussoir on the east side lights the interior vestibule inside the first stage. This window, as all the other windows, has a wood sill.

The second stage of the bell tower has two blind Gothic arches on the south and east sides. These arches are filled with louvered wood panels and are crowned by corbeled brick voussoirs matching the lower vestibule window. Circular louvered vents with brick surrounds are placed at the south, east and north sides. A corbeled brick cornice forms a gable on each tower face above the circular vents. These cornices are identical to the cornices located on the main facade and projecting west entrance bay.

The middle bay is formed by the building's south wall. Three narrow Gothic stained-glass windows separate the east and west entrances. These windows have corbeled brick hood moldings with brick keystones similar to the entrance voussoirs and rest on a corbeled brick band. A large circular louvered vent has a corbeled brick surround and brick keystones that match the lower window and entrance voussoirs. This facade terminates as a corbeled brick cornice forming a gabled parapet over the roof. The cornice is identical to those located on the projecting west bay and tower faces. Two rectangular cast-iron grills with vertical end brick lintels vent the foundation under the facade windows.

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

The brick west wall has been stuccoed and contains six double-hung, Gothic stained-glass windows. A seventh stationary window at the north end is smaller than the main windows and lights the interior of the west vestry. A plain boxed cornice runs along the eaves and rectangular cast-iron grills vent the foundation.

The brick east wall has been stuccoed and contains six double-hung, Gothic stained-glass windows identical to those in the west wall. The first bay of this wall is formed by the bell tower; the six windows form the middle bays; and the northeast corner projection forms the eighth bay. A plain boxed cornice runs along the eaves; rectangular cast-iron grills vent the foundation; and a brick pilaster separates the second and third bays.

A shallow projection located at the northeast corner forms part of the east vestry in the north end of the building. This projection has a small, stationary Gothic window on the east wall identical to the window at the north end of the west wall, and a Gothic entrance with a single leaf, four-panel door and stained-glass transom.

The brick north (rear) wall has been stuccoed. Two Gothic windows once lighting the east and west vestries have been filled. This wall is approximately three feet from the side wall of a commercial building immediately behind the church.

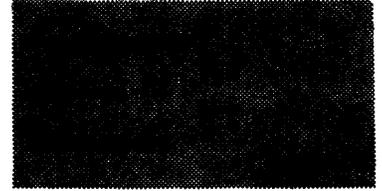
**INTERIOR DESCRIPTION:**

Occupying the southeast corner of the nave, a small vestibule (base of bell tower) is located behind the east entrance. A Gothic doorway in the north vestibule wall leads to an aisle running along the east wall of the nave. This doorway has a single leaf, paneled door with a lattice infill in the arch (may be a circa 1920s alteration). A larger Gothic doorway in the west vestibule wall leads to the rear of the nave. This doorway has double leaf, paneled doors with a lattice infill in the arch (may be a circa 1920s alteration). A Gothic stained-glass window lights the vestibule from the east wall. This window has molded surrounds. Currently, a seven-foot wood partition (recent alteration) runs from the northwest vestibule corner to the west wall and forms a pseudo-narthex across the south wall. The nave is a single rectangular room with a shallow chancel flanked by two small vestries at the north end, behind a raised sanctuary. Floor, pews, wainscoting and all woodwork inside the church are painted a dark brown.

The hardwood floor is composed of three aisles. Two aisles run along the east and west walls and a single aisle runs down the center of the nave. Pew areas are raised approximately 3" above aisle level. The original pews, divided by a center panel, have molded end panels capped by a curved scroll with a bull's eye. Two sections of pews face the raised sanctuary from the front while two sections of pews flank and face the raised sanctuary from the side.

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

A raised sanctuary projects from the chancel arch in the north wall. Heavy turned spindles and a heavy balustrade surround the pulpit.

An acoustic tile ceiling has replaced the original pressed metal ceiling. Centered in the ceiling is an original gas chandelier (now electrified) with a molded brass surround. Four circa 1920s hanging light fixtures flank the chandelier. Four modern hanging light fixtures are located in the northeast and northwest corners.

Extending around all four walls from floor to window sills, is a beaded board wainscoting with a molded cap. Painted plaster walls extend from the wainscoting to the ceiling and are topped with a cornice molding. East and west walls are six bay with Gothic stained-glass windows having molded surrounds.

Three narrow Gothic stained-glass windows in the south wall are flanked by the Gothic entrances on the east and west. These entrances are composed of double leaf, four panel doors with a stained-glass transom window. Doors and windows have molded surrounds.

The north wall is composed of a chancel arch leading to a shallow chancel containing the organ, organ pipes and choir. Two Gothic doorways leading into small vestries are located on each side of the chancel. These doorways are composed of single leaf, four-panel doors, stained-glass transom windows and molded surrounds. The chancel contains the original organ pipes with paneled woodwork.

# 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 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** circa 1881/1891      **Builder/Architect** James F. Hutchisson-architect-1891

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Criterion C - Architecture

Emanuel AME Church is significant as representative of local religious architecture influenced by mid-19th-century philosophy which utilized medieval building traditions as appropriate models for ecclesiastical works. Irregular, picturesque massing was accomplished by the Gothic Revival style and executed in brick by the building's architect. Key elements of the style including a rectangular nave, vestibule, vestries, bell tower, lanceted fenestration and recessed entrances with heavy doors are quite evident in this structure. Emanuel AME Church is an excellent example of James F. Hutchisson's work which skillfully employs brick corbeling to tie three asymmetrical facade bays together forming a unified whole on a simple, but well designed Gothic Revival church. Unaltered since constructed in 1890, this building is Mobile's only example of a Gothic Revival church constructed for a black congregation.

\*                    \*                    \*                    \*                    \*                    \*                    \*

Historical Summary

Like Mobile's other major black congregations of the 19th century, Emanuel AME Church evolved from a desire on the part of black congregations to continue religious services as their white parent churches strove to disassociate themselves from the black memberships. These churches are medieval revivals which serve to illustrate the congregation's desire to imitate white urban churches of the period. Emanuel AME raised enough money to hire a prominent white architect, James F. Hutchisson, for the design of the facade. As a result, the architecture is on par with contemporary white churches and is superior to both black and white rural churches of the period.

James F. Hutchisson (1856-1926) represents the fourth of five generations of builder/architects to influence Mobile's architectural development between 1795 and 1970. Working in Mobile from 1869 to 1902, James F. designed many buildings (112 documented-17 extant) diverse in function and style. The Hutchisson family was also noted for their tradition of fine brickwork as illustrated by several existing structures: State Street AME Zion, 1884, James H. Hutchisson (father of James F.), NR 1978; Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 1890/1895, James H. and James F. Hutchisson, NR 1978; St. Louis Street Baptist Church, 1908, Clarence L. Hutchisson, Sr. (brother of James F.), NR 1976.

Trustees for Emanuel AME Church purchased a vacant lot for their church in 1869. As evidenced by the 1878 City Atlas, a frame building had been constructed on the site by that year. One of two things happened to that frame building: 1) it was demolished and a new brick building constructed on the site c. 1880 with the church ex-

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Mobile County Courthouse--deed records	1885, 1891, 1904, 1925 Sanborn maps of Mobile
Mobile City Directories	1878 Mobile City Atlas
Emanuel AME Church "Memoir Tractory" (no date)	The Dailey Register---28 Mar 1890 p. 4
1873 * 1891 Bird's Eye Maps of Mobile	01 Sep 1891 p. 9

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .14 acre (6000 SF)

Quadrangle name Mobile

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>399290</u>	<u>3395500</u>	B	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	D	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
E	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	F	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
G	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	H	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Current (original) property line--Beginning on the north side of St. Michael Street approximately 50' east of the east line of Washington Street--E 50' - N 120' - W 50' - S 120'.

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

state	NA	code	county	code
-------	----	------	--------	------

state		code	county	code
-------	--	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shirley Qualls, Cultural Resources Coordinator, AHC (editor/reviewer)  
Kevin A. Hunter, Architectural Historian, Mobile Historic Development Commission

organization Mobile Historic Development Commission date 2/6/87

street & number P. O. Box 1827 telephone 205 438-7281

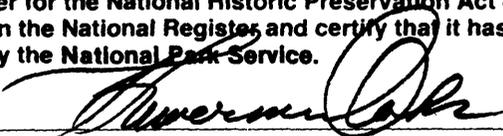
city or town Mobile state Alabama 36633

## 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

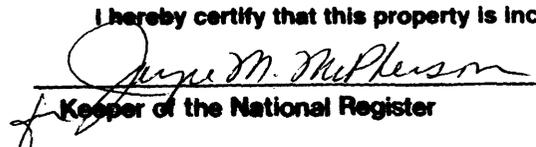
title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4/22/87

### For NPS use only

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

date 5-29-87

for  Keeper of the National Register

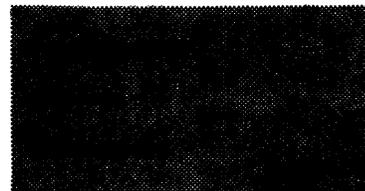
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

tended along the front and a new facade altered (1891 by architect James F. Hutchisson); or 2) the original frame building was bricked c. 1880 and the building lengthened and a new facade added in the process by 1891. According to the A.M.E. Church's "Memoir Tractory," the church was a pay-as-you-go project with members purchasing bricks individually. Church tradition dates the completion of the brick church in 1881 and the Mobile Register describes the church's plans for a new facade in 1890 and the completion of Hutchisson's design for that facade in 1891. It would seem likely that in an effort to make their frame church building a more permanent structure, the congregation raised the money over many years to improve the building, thus lending credence to the latter possibility.