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NATIONAL REGISTER

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bethany Baptist Church  
other names/site number Cornerstone Baptist Church  
Fairmount Baptist Church

2. Location

street & number 117 West Market Street  not for publication  
city, town Newark  vicinity  
state New Jersey code 034 county Essex code 013 zip code 07103

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>NA</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

*Helen A. Senechal* 02/19/88  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 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:)

*Caree O'Shull* 5-10-89  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious structure

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious structure

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick/stone

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walls brick

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roof slate

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other stained glass

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Cornerstone Baptist Church, located at 117 West Market Street, Newark, is a two story, three bay, rectangular plan, free standing brick Romanesque Revival influenced church. Located immediately west of the Central Business District, the ecclesiastical building was originally constructed for the Fairmount Avenue Baptist Church in 1866-1868. The building is a notable example of the Romanesque Revival and possesses characteristics common to the stylistic influence such as self-contained massing, round arched door and window openings, blind arches and simple moldings.

The symmetrically composed facade is vertically articulated by brick pilasters into a central entrance bay flanked by single window bays. The central bay is further emphasized by a pair of round arched doors and surrounds with leaded fanlights on the ground floor, paired round arched windows set into a segmental blind arch on the second floor, and a large oculus window surmounted by a pedimented parapet at the attic level. The paired second floor windows are ornamented with quatrefoil panels and wooden tracery, and are surmounted by a blind oculus with flanking swag-like cut-outs. The original wooden entrance doors contained paired round arched windows; these were replaced with the present batten doors with small inset rectangular windows, circa 1950. They are approached by a wide set of open brownstone steps.

The flanking end bays are composed of a blind inset rectangular panel at the basement level, paired round arched windows set into blind segmental arches at the main and gallery level and a small oculus window at the top.

An 1869 etching shows five crocket-like pent roofed structures, one at the top of each pilaster and at the pediment apex. Each crocket has a round blind arch inset. Below the roofline is a row of brick dentils. A similar belt course appears below the continuous sill of the paired central bay window. Whether these were removed with later renovations or were never built but were pictured in the artist's rendering is not known (Levy 1898: 48).

The seven bay side elevations are articulated by a colossal order of brick piers between which are three sets of paired round arched stained glass windows, each set corresponding with a floor level: ground, below gallery and gallery level. The upper two levels of stained glass windows are encased in wooden tracery surrounds and are divided by a wooden panel ornamented with blind round arches. The ground floor windows are individually set in round arched brick surrounds. The ground floor bays closest to the front facade are exit doors.

 See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Ethnic Heritage (black)  
Religion  
Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1866-1905  
1906-1961

Significant Dates

1866  
1906  
1961

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

Hayes, William P., pastor

Architect/Builder

unknown

1932-1961

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Cornerstone Baptist Church is significant architecturally as one of the best examples of the Romanesque Revival architectural influence used on a Baptist church in Newark. The church is also significant in the areas of Religion and Black Ethnic Heritage as the former home of the oldest Negro Baptist church in Newark, Bethany Baptist Church, organized June 1871, as well as two other Baptist churches. The church is also associated with the pastorship of Reverend Dr. William P. Hayes, (1932-1961), an active Newark housing advocate and one of the few living persons ever to have a federal housing project named for him.

In both design and workmanship, the Cornerstone Baptist Church is indicative of the high quality of nineteenth century church architecture in Newark, and is characteristic of Baptist churches built at this time by the Newark Baptist City Mission. The Romanesque Revival was commonly used on Protestant churches at this time as it was considered preferable to the Gothic on religious and political grounds. "Thanks to a typical sophistry of the associative sense, Protestants regarded it as free from the taint of popery - which Gothic, in the eyes of many, never could do. The Romanesque Revival was viewed as less ostentatious, and if political character may be described to architecture, more republican" (Whiffen and Koeper 1981: 198).

The design of Fairmount Baptist Church (now Cornerstone Baptist Church) was patterned after the now demolished First Baptist Church, located at Academy and Broad Streets, but was one-fourth smaller (Newark Daily Advertiser, September 10, 1868: 2). The major characteristics of the Romanesque Revival were employed: round arches for door and window openings crowned by distinctive rounded mouldings, brick masonry laid with thin mortar joints, strong rhythms established by regular fenestration, severe symmetry and surface texture. Even the plan was typical with its self-contained massing and long narrow nave preceded by a vestibule (Rifkind 1980: 138).

A third Romanesque Revival influenced Baptist church, North Baptist Church, also built by the Newark Baptist City Mission, was constructed at the corner of High and Orange Streets in 1864 (Levy 1869: 43). The church disbanded in 1916 and the building was torn down, leaving the present Cornerstone Baptist Church as the only Romanesque Revival Baptist church left in downtown Newark.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA  
 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: NA  
 State historic preservation office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 0.2348 acre

UTM References

A 

1	1	8
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5	6	1	8	9	4	1	0
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4	5	1	1	0	0	4	1	0
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Zone Easting Northing  
C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing  
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The site on which the church is located is on the northerly side of West Market Street (formerly 267 Bank Street), opposite Wickliffe Street, Block 405, Lot 24. The building dimensions are 87.0' x 57.0'. The property dimensions are 75.0' wide x 102.0' deep. The total area is 0.2348 acre.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the lot that has been historically associated with the church.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Ulana D. Zakalak/Zakalak Associates (historic preservation consultant)  
organization Newark Preservation & Landmark Committee date May 8, 1987  
street & number P.O. Box 1066 telephone (201) 622-4910  
city or town Newark state New Jersey zip code 07101

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The plain brick rear facade contains a single round arched window in the gable apex, and several exit doors on the ground floor level. The slate covered gabled roof is pierced by two ventilators. A single chimney extends from behind the front parapet.

Interior

The ground floor vestibule, which is entered through the paired double entrance doors of the main facade, contains a staircase on either end leading to the main audience room on the second floor. Directly ahead is a round arched door with a semi-circular leaded fanlight. This is the entrance to the large assembly room, which occupies most of the space on the ground floor. This room has been partitioned off on the east side to accommodate office space and a small lecture/prayer room. At the rear of the assembly room is an open platform stage ornamented with a Doric column at each end, behind which are the rest rooms, closets and kitchen. The assembly room ceiling is supported by fluted cast iron columns with stylized capitals. The finishes include a pressed tin ceiling, oak strip floor, plaster walls, and tongue and groove wainscot painted dark brown. Underneath the eastern stairs leading to the audience room is a closet and staircase leading to a small, rough cut, stone-walled cellar where the mechanical systems for the building are located. All of the paired 6/6 round arched ground floor windows have been boarded up to prevent vandalism and burglaries.

The assembly room was originally used for Sunday School, assembly, church parlor and infant classrooms (Newark Daily Advertiser, September 10, 1868: 2).

At the top of the stair landing, a rectangular vestibule leads into the central audience (auditorium) room through three sets of paired doors with inset round arched acid etched windows. The interior plan of the audience room is divided by three aisles: a center aisle leads to the pulpit stage and two side aisles span the underneath of the side galleries. The gallery is built across the rear of the room and extends over both side aisles the full length of the church turning to and ending at the pulpit. The front pulpit area is a raised stage. The audience room covers an area of 54.0' x 67.0'.

Although fluted and stylized cast iron columns support the side galleries, the pressed tin ceiling with its elaborate medallions and lighting fixtures is suspended from an attic framework allowing for a clear span across the church. Above the pulpit platform, supported by columns, is a massive collection of polychromed organ pipes. The organ is situated immediately below the pipes in its own gallery. Although not in use today, the organ pipes create a strong focal point at the front of the audience room.

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The leaded glass windows, set in round arched surrounds, contain panels of stylized floral motifs, diamond shaped patterns and crosses set in ovals, executed in muted tones of stained glass. Other ornamentation consists of open round arched balustrades at the base of the upper stained glass windows. The railfronts of the galleries and pulpit are carved wood with inset round arched and tri-lobed blind panels.

In 1906, the new occupant, Bethany Baptist Church, renovated the building (Bethany purchased the building from Fairmount Baptist Church on November 10, 1905, Essex County Deed Book L 39, p. 130). It is not known to what extent the building was altered, however, church records show that the following items were installed: new carpet in main auditorium, new linoleum for lecture room, metal ceiling, Florentine window light in the vestry. In 1931, the church was again renovated with a new oil burner, metal ceiling in the Lecture Room, interior and exterior painting and decorating, a new pipe organ, and steel girder reinforcement of the Church. The kitchen and rest rooms were also refurbished and modernized (Bethany Baptist Church: A Century of Service to God and Man, 1871-1971).

Site

The site on which the church is located is on the northerly side of West Market Street (formerly 267 Bank Street) opposite Wickliffe Street, Block 405, Lot 24. The building dimensions are 87.0' x 57.0'. The property dimensions are 75.0' wide x 102.00' deep. The total area is .2348 acre.

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The Cornerstone Baptist Church is also significant in the areas of Religion and Black Ethnic heritage as the original home of Fairmount Baptist Church and, as the long-term home of the oldest Negro Baptist church in Newark, Bethany Baptist Church.

The Cornerstone Baptist Church was originally built as the Fairmount Avenue Baptist Church, a mission church of the Newark Baptist City Mission. The City Mission, established in 1851, was formed to encourage the organization of Sunday schools, and to provide a preached gospel for the destitute in the growing sections of the city (Levy 1868: 15).

In the spring of 1859, the Board of the City Mission decided to establish a mission in the rapidly growing neighborhood around Bank Street and Wickliffe Street in Newark. At the intersection of these two streets, a vacant building known as Fairmount Chapel became available to the Board. For the first few months, the pastors of several Baptist churches preached alternately each Sabbath afternoon until a permanent pastor and Sunday School were established in the late summer. In 1864, the Board purchased a plot of ground for the construction of a new church. The Honorable Thomas B. Peddie, of the First Baptist Church and Mayor of the City, laid the cornerstone on September 12, 1866 (Levy 1868: 49). The completed church was dedicated on September 9, 1868 (Shaw 1884: 489).

The establishment of this church followed the general religious trend prevalent in Newark at this time. Churches sprang up on an average of one for each new 1,000 residents until the eve of the Civil War. Churches followed the spreading populace into the "Down Neck" area, westward to the hill country, and northward to the Mount Pleasant area. Established churches first sent out missions or encouraged local congregations to meet anywhere. Nearly all of the denominations present in Newark were involved and most followed the same pattern of building a frame mission house before building a church of stone or brick (Cunningham 1966: 132).

The congregation of Fairmount Avenue remained in the area until 1905 when they sold their church building to Bethany Baptist Church. (The congregation then moved to 141 Fairmount Avenue, between 13th Avenue and Bank Street).

The former Bethany Baptist Church, now housing Cornerstone Baptist Church, but still locally known as "Old Bethany" is significant primarily for its role in local (Newark) black history. The home of Bethany Baptist Church for 71 years, the oldest and largest black congregation in Newark (New Jersey Black Historic Places Survey 1984: 5), the structure is a symbol of racial progress in one of Newark's bleakest areas, the Third Ward. From the late nineteenth century until the Great Depression of the 1930s, the black church dominated the cultural

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and social life of black communities. Within the church, blacks found the comradeship and mutual respect white society denied them, and the church helped them to cope with racial hostility. The early 20th century purchase of existing religious edifices by established black congregations epitomized the struggle of blacks to better themselves and to distinguish themselves from white religious organizations which often treated them as second class citizens.

Bethany Baptist Church is considered one of the most important black religious institutions in Newark. Boasting both lower and middle class parishioners, Bethany Baptist provided an articulate ministerial leadership in Newark's beleaguered Third Ward. Established in 1871, Bethany Baptist is the oldest black Baptist church in Newark and one of the oldest in the state of New Jersey (New Jersey Black Historic Places Survey 1984: 5). For 71 years, the church at 117 W. Market Street was the home of this powerful institution, serving as the mother church to other black Baptist congregations in the city (Greater News, July 19, 1986: n.p.) and providing a vital force for racial justice and self help. The church was also significant in providing the community with many of the early twentieth century black leaders in education, social service, business and civil rights (Price 1980: fig. 34).

In 1871, Bethany Baptist Church was part of a widespread movement of blacks leaving uncomfortable worship meetings in white churches and striking out on their own (Afro American, March 13, 1982: 13). After meeting in private homes and later in various civic and religious institutions, in 1905, the Bethany congregation was able to purchase a religious edifice, the former Fairmount Baptist Church at 117 W. Market Street. The fact that in 1905 the parishioners were able to purchase the church for \$16,000 and had money left over to refurbish it, is indicative of the strength and power of this early congregation.

As the black population of Newark exploded during the great migration of blacks from the rural South between the wars, Bethany Baptist became essential to the survival and integrity of the community, providing services, aid and comfort to the newly arrived migrants (Price 1980: 195). Many community and civic groups thus had their origin within the walls of the church. These include the local branch of the NAACP, the Essex County Urban League, a branch of the YM-YWCA for Colored People (no longer in existence) and a resident home for elderly blacks in Montclair (Newark Evening News, November 2, 1966: 61).

Among congregations which former Bethany members helped to establish are the Pilgrim Church at 34 Hudson Street, First Mount Zion Church at 186 Thomas Street and Mount Zion Church at 208 Broadway (Newark Evening News, May 20, 1962: 6).



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In the area of Politics/Government, the church building is significant for its association with Reverend Dr. William Preston Hayes, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church from 1932 to 1961, and Pastor Emeritus from 1961 until his death in 1963. Reverend Dr. Hayes was called to serve Bethany Church after serving as pastor of Mt. Oliver Baptist Church in New York City for 21 years. Dr. Hayes was a member of the Newark Housing Authority from 1942 to 1953, serving as chairman for two years; president of the Newark Ministerial Association in 1944; vice-chairman Newark Citizens Committee on Municipal Government in 1958; president of the Newark branch of the NAACP; president of the New England Missionary Baptist Conference from 1939 to 1944. In 1948, Dr. Hayes was elected to the hall of famous religious figures in the headquarters of the Fraternal Council of Churches, Washington, D.C. (Newark Evening News, April 27, 1963: n.p.). In 1954, a singular honor was accorded Dr. Hayes when the Public Housing Administration of Washington, D.C., permitted for the first time, a housing project, known as the Hayes Homes in Newark, to be named for a living person (Bethany Baptist Church: A Century of Service to God and Man, 1871-1971). Dr. Hayes is remembered as an ardent advocate of public housing and an outstanding preacher.

The church building was sold to the Newark Housing Authority in 1971 as part of their redevelopment plans for the University Heights area. The present congregation, Cornerstone Baptist Church, occupied the building in 1976, and has remained there since as a tenant. The congregation was founded by Reverend John W. Woods on March 7, 1954. Cornerstone Baptist is a member of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A.

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Substantive Review Addendum to the Bethany Baptist Church  
National Register Nomination

Newark, Essex County, New Jersey

The Reverend William Preston Hayes was born in Bullocks, North Carolina, in 1881. He attended the Granville County public schools and Bennett College in Greensboro. Upon graduation in 1900, he was appointed principal of an elementary school in Leaksville, North Carolina.

In 1901, Reverend Hayes taught at Boydton Institute, Virginia, where he received the call to preach and was ordained in 1902. His first ministry was with the Shiloh Baptist Church of Mecklenburg County, Virginia, followed by Mt. Zion Baptist in Clarksville, Virginia, and Shiloh in Charlotte County, Virginia. He also taught at the Keysville Institute High School department for one year. Dr. Hayes received the B.D. degree from Virginia Union University, Virginia in 1907 and, several years later, a Doctorate in Divinity. He taught there until 1911, concurrently serving two churches as pastor, Antioch and Mt. Zion Baptist Churches in Middlesex County, Virginia. In 1911, he accepted the pastorate of Mount Olivet Baptist Church in New York, where he ministered for 21 years. As pastor of Mount Olivet, Dr. Hayes witnessed the first northward migration of Negroes and the opening of Harlem to Negro residency during World War I. As a result of this migration, in 1924, Dr. Hayes and the Mt. Olivet Church moved from its location in 53rd Street to a new site at 120th Street and Lenox Avenue in Harlem (Newark News, April 29, 1963: 28).

In 1932, Reverend Hayes was called to Bethany Baptist Church in Newark. He assumed the Bethany pulpit the first Sunday in June, 1932. He retired as pastor on June 30, 1961, after 29 years of service, and died on April 26, 1963 at the age of 82.

During his tenure at Bethany Baptist, Dr. Hayes became the first black member of the Newark Housing Authority, named in 1942 by Vincent Murphy. He became the chairman of the Newark Housing Authority in 1947 and remained so until his retirement in 1953. Dr. Hayes was the first Negro in the United States to head a housing authority (Newark News, n.d., 1961: n.p.). Hayes' main achievement was to convince the Newark Housing Authority in 1950 to announce that henceforth, "dwelling accommodations shall be allocated on basis of need without regard to race, religious principles, color, national origin or ancestry of applicant" (Newark Star Ledger, September 15, 1950: n.p.). Until then, there had been a policy of segregation within the city projects: four of the projects were

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all white, four were mixed with the Negro families in separate buildings (Newark Star Ledger, September 15, 1950: n.p.). Dr. Hayes, explaining the background of his resolution, said fighting of Negro GIs in Korea had again focused the attention on the unfairness of segregation. "We can't ask men to risk their lives in Korea while denying them a place to live here," he said (Newark Star Ledger, September 15, 1950: n.p.). Unfortunately, the situation did not change much afterwards, as the 1962 Hearings of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission in Newark smoked out (correspondence with Dr. Stanley Winters, 27 June 1988, to Doug Eldridge of the Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee).

In 1954, by a special ruling of the Public Housing Administration, a federal housing project on Belmont Avenue, was named for Reverend Hayes. This incident marked the first time that a housing project in Newark, and possibly in the entire country, had been named after a living person. Hayes himself laid the cornerstone for Hayes Home. The public low-rent project, carved out of one of the city's worst slums, was built at a cost of \$20,000,000 and provided homes for 1,485 families (Newark News, June 25, 1954: n.p.).

Throughout his years in Newark, Reverend Hayes was extremely active in both civic and religious affairs. In 1944, he was elected president of the Newark Ministerial Association. Four years later he was elected to the hall of famous religious figures in the headquarters of the Fraternal Council of Churches, Washington, D.C. Hayes served as President of the New England Missionary Baptist Convention from 1944 to 1959. He was the vice-chairman for the Newark Citizens Committee on Municipal Government in 1958. He also served for 2 years as president of the Newark branch of the NAACP. Dr. Hayes was also a trustee of the Virginia Union University.

## Additional bibliography:

Newspapers:

Altschuler, Harry. "Housing Authority Stops Segregation in All City Projects." Newark Star Ledger, September 15, 1950.

"Dr. Hayes Gives Last Sermon." Newark Evening News, June 25, 1961: n.p.

"Dr. Hayes Honored." Newark Evening News, April 16, 1953: n.p.

"For Housing Integration: Authority Ends 10-Year Policy of Partial Segregation." Newark Evening News, September 15, 1950: n.p.

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"Hayes Homes Dedicated." Newark Evening News, June 25, 1954.

"2,000 Pay Respects to Reverend Dr. Hayes." Newark Evening News, May 2, 1963:  
n.d.

"Will Honor Pastor on 80th Birthday." Newark Evening News, n.d., 1961: n.p.

### Miscellaneous Documents:

Correspondence between Dr. Stanley B. Winters and Douglas Eldridge of the Newark  
Preservation and Landmarks Committee, 27 June 1988.

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### Pamphlets

- Bethany Baptist Church. A Century of Service to God and Man, 1871-1971. Newark: The Centennial Book Committee, 1971.

### Newspapers

- "Bethany Church Set to Mark 90th Year." Newark Evening News, 20 May 1962, p.g. 6.
- Boykin, Eugene M. "Big Week for Bethany: Negro Baptist Church Sets 95th Anniversary Events." Newark Evening News, November 2, 1966.

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"Dedication of Fairmount Baptist Church." Newark Daily Advertiser, 10 September 1868, p. 2.

Maske, Monica. "110 Years at Bethany Baptist." The Star Ledger, 5 October 1981, p. N2.

Queen, Robert. "Bethany Baptist, part of black religious independence in 1871." New Jersey Afro-American, March 13, 1982.

"Reverend Dr. W.P. Hayes Community Leader is Dead at 82." Newark Evening News, 27 April, 1963: n.p.

Miscellaneous Documents:

"Bethany Baptist Church" miscellaneous leaflets, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark.

"Newark Churches" clippings file, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark.

Newark City Directories, 1868-1940.