SG-1803

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

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Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral

other names/site number

name of related multiple property listing N/A

Location

street & number 122 West 129th Street ☐ not for publication

city or town New York ☐ vicinity

state NY code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10027

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Roger Daniel 9/21/17
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Alexis Abernathy 11/9/17
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral | New York County, NY
Name of Property | County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [X] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION / Church

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION / Church

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Brick
walls: Brick, Brownstone
roof: Asphalt
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral is located at 122 West 129th Street in Central Harlem in the New York City Borough of Manhattan. Located on the northern end of the borough, Central Harlem is roughly bounded by Fifth Avenue to the east, Central Park to the south, Morningside, St. Nicholas, and Jackie Robinson parks to the west, and the Harlem River to the north. The neighborhood is characterized by its two wide, predominantly commercial north–south boulevards and cross-streets lined by rowhouses and apartment buildings. Holy Cross is located on West 129th Street between Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard and Malcolm X Boulevard; the block includes late 19th- and early 20th-century rowhouses, apartment buildings, and a few buildings purpose-built or modified as churches, and it is lined by a wide sidewalk and mature trees.

The Pro-Cathedral occupies nearly its entire lot. A simple black iron fence marks the boundary between the sidewalk and the steps to the church's main and basement entrances. The gate to the basement entrance features decorative, spiral and curving ironwork and is capped by four white-painted fleurs-de-lis. The nomination includes the lot historically associated with the Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral.

Narrative Description

The Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral is a three-story, three-bay by five-bay, brownstone building with partial brick cladding over an exposed brick basement; a two-story, two-bay by four-bay brick addition (ca. 1895–1900) extends from the rear. Initially built ca. 1865 as a residence, the building was used as a home or apartments until 1895, when it became the new headquarters of the Lenox Republican Club. By ca. 1900, it was being used as a Jewish synagogue, and from 1916–1927 it housed the Rendall Memorial Presbyterian Church. Archbishop George McGuire purchased the building and dedicated it as the Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral in 1931. The physical fabric of the building illustrates this history of the building's evolution in use over time.

On the façade (north elevation), a thin layer of brick cladding extends up from the basement level to the top of the first floor. At the basement level, stairs extend below grade to a door and one-over-one window with a curved top in the easternmost bays; both feature end brick surrounds and simple, rectangular end-brick hoods. A wide set of stairs runs up from street level to the primary entrance on the first floor. The entrance is marked by a simple Gothic-style pointed arch, stepped end-brick surround and is filled by a set-back contemporary double door and arched transom filled with square panes and a central cross. The two bays to the east feature arched windows with stepped, end-brick surrounds; the applied brick façade steps in around the base of the windows. A sign reading "Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral, Alexander McGuire, organizer" extends across the tops of these windows. The top of the brick projection features a simple stepped brick cornice and is capped by vernacular pointed brick detailing made up of stacked end bricks and stretcher brick arches. Original brownstone Neo-Grec window surrounds remain on the second and third floors. On the second floor, the three one-over-one sash windows have pointed arch frames on the top sash. The third floor is lit by three one-over-one windows. Where the original brownstone façade ends (likely the original location of a cornice), a brick stepped parapet with a shallow, stepped gable extends upward and a

sign made up of end-brick with “Holy Cross” and a central cross is located at the center of the stepped brick parapet.

The east and west elevations abut adjacent buildings. On the south elevation, a two-story, two-bay by four-bay brick addition extends from the building. The addition, which houses the sanctuary, features an angled southeast corner with two windows. On its west elevation, it is lit by four sash windows located just under the roofline. The rest of the addition is unfenestrated. The third floor of the original building retains three one-over-one sash windows.

On the interior, the first floor is the primary worship space. It is divided into a vestibule, stairhall and the sanctuary. The small vestibule features original door surrounds and a decorative metal ceiling. The secondary doorway features a set of ca. 1930 double doors, each having two arrow-shaped panes pointing downward. These doors were installed within an original set of arched double doors; the surrounding trim and the top section of these original doors, which feature two pieces of semicircular trim and rounded triangular panes, remain. A set of wooden, double doors with elongated arched panes marks the entrance to the stairhall. A separate hallway runs to the east of the stairhall to the staircase to the basement, which also retains its original balustrade, newel, and trim. The sanctuary, to the east of the hallway, extends from the original volume of the rowhouse into the double-height rear addition; the focus of the sanctuary space is located within the addition. The doorway into the sanctuary and the windows on the façade retain their original trim. The ceiling in both parts of the space is covered in pressed metal panels. The church’s wooden pews, installed ca. 1950 and which are designed to switch directions, and original light fixtures, primarily lanterns with six-sided decorative globes, remain in use. The ceiling in the original rowhouse section slopes slightly downward toward the front of the sanctuary to provide space for an organ balcony where the addition and original building meet; extra support for the balcony is provided by a few wooden posts among the pews. The organ was installed ca. 1950. A decorative pressed metal panel featuring wreaths and urns runs along the edge of the balcony, which is visible from the chancel. The chancel is three steps higher than the rest of the sanctuary and is simply decorated. It retains original church furnishings, including a wooden altar with colonnades and columns, which was a gift from Trinity Church of Wall Street in Manhattan, baptismal font, credence table, carved altar bench, and cathedra (bishop’s chair).

The second and third floors substantially retain their original residential character and plan. While the walls of the stairhall have been covered in simple wood paneling, it retains its original staircase and trim. Pressed metal panels decorate the ceiling. The second floor is divided into the balcony overlooking the worship space, the church office, and a smaller room. The balcony, which is located directly off of the stair landing, features the organ that was installed in the church during the mid-twentieth century. The church office retains the printers’ desk which George McGuire used to create the denomination’s publication, *The Negro Churchman*. The third floor is divided into two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, and a bathroom. On both floors, original doors, trim, struck plaster moldings, flooring, and radiators have been retained throughout. A coved skylight, located over the staircase, lights the third floor hall and landing. The basement serves as a community hall and is essentially divided into a hallway, kitchen, and community hall. Nineteenth-century doors and trim remain throughout.

Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral | New York County, NY
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.
- [ ] 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.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion
Ethnic History: African American

Period of Significance

1931-1967

Significant Dates

1931

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [X] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

African American

Architect/Builder

Period of Significance (justification)
The period of significance extends from 1931, when Archbishop George McGuire purchased 122 West 129th Street and transformed it into the Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral, through 1967, as a reflection of the building's continuing significance as the center of the African Orthodox Church.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
The building is primarily significant for in the areas of religious and ethnic history as a reflection of the social and religious conflict around race relations within the Episcopal Church and movements for black nationalism that led to the development and maturation of the African Orthodox Church during the early 20th century.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral is significant under Criterion A in the areas of religion and ethnic history for its role in the birth and maturation of the African Orthodox Church, a denomination established in response to paternalism, and discrimination within the Protestant Episcopal Church. The African Orthodox Church was founded by George Alexander McGuire (1866-1934), a native of Antigua, who began working as a priest in the Episcopal Church as a young man. After moving to the United States in 1894, McGuire's skill as a speaker, religious leader and administrator was noted by the Episcopal Church, which assigned him to a series of congregations and important leadership roles. However, McGuire soon became disillusioned by the institutional racism within the Episcopal Church, which limited the roles available to black religious leaders and congregants. Early in its history, McGuire became a leader within Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) by serving as one of its earliest chaplain-generals. At the same time, he began taking steps to create a new church that would better support and provide greater opportunities for African-Americans. In 1921, George McGuire founded the African Orthodox Church and became its first bishop. While Protestant African Americans had long had the opportunity to join or establish African Methodist Episcopal or African Methodist Episcopal Zion congregations (both of which dated to the early nineteenth century), these churches primarily catered to those who embraced Protestant religious traditions. In contrast, the African Orthodox Church was the first denomination to offer an all-black religious experience for African Americans and black immigrants who worshipped in Anglican, Episcopal, or Catholic churches. The fledgling African Orthodox Church spread rapidly, urged on by McGuire's ceaseless energy, and soon had parishes throughout the United States, in Canada, the West Indies, and in Africa. To better serve the growing denomination, as well as to mark its success, the African Orthodox Church purchased the building at 122 West 129th Street and redesigned it to serve as the Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral in 1931.[1] The building, originally a residence but later used as a synagogue and by other religious congregations, received an overlay of Gothic-inspired decoration on the façade and its parlor floor was converted to serve as a sanctuary. In addition to holding services at the Pro-Cathedral, McGuire, later bishops, and other religious leaders operated the church's central spiritual, educational, and social missions from the building. While the African Orthodox Church has grown smaller over time, the Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral is significant as the denomination's first and only cathedral and as a testament to McGuire's vision.

Early History of Harlem & 122 West 129th Street

Governor Peter Stuyvesant established Harlem, named after the Dutch city of Haarlem, in 1658. The first permanent non-native settlement in the northern region of Manhattan, Harlem remained an isolated village for much of its early history. Ten miles north of New Amsterdam, the area's broad, arable land was well-suited for agriculture; much of the land was divided into farms and estates during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While the community was relatively prosperous, it remained small; only 91 families lived in Harlem during the 1820s.[2]

[1] A "Pro-Cathedral" is a temporary cathedral or co-cathedral of a diocese operated by a bishop.
[2] Jonathan Gill, *Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History from Dutch Village to Capital of Black America* (New York: Grove, 2011), 5; Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 14-16.

Harlem retained its rural character through the mid-nineteenth century. Economic declines, crop failures, and the loss of land productivity during the first quarter of the century resulted in the availability of relatively cheap land; however, without adequate transportation, the area remained too distant to be attractive to most of New York City's urban residents. The New York and Harlem Railroad completed a horse-drawn railway on Fourth Avenue in 1837, but service was poor.[3]

New York City's rapid urban expansion and new development pressures reached Harlem in the years after the Civil War. In 1867, low-density development predominated above West 110th Street from Fifth Avenue to St. Nicholas Avenue; many blocks remained completely unbuilt. Clusters of development concentrated around West 125th Street and Mount Morris Square. The building at 122 West 129th Street was built ca. 1865 as part of the northward push of residential development. The house, shown on the 1867 Dripps map, was located on a parcel that extended to 128th Street; a small outbuilding was located at the rear of the property. An obituary for Eleanor Downs in the *New York Herald*, published on March 8, 1867, described the property as the Robert A. and Eleanor Downs residence.[4]

After the completion of three lines of elevated railroads in 1881 and an electric cable car in 1885, commuters could more easily travel to Harlem. In response to these infrastructure improvements, Harlem rapidly transformed into an affluent middle- and upper-class community filled with rowhouses and dotted by new churches. From at least 1882 through 1887, 122 West 129th Street was alternately advertised as a house for rent or sale or as apartments for rent. An 1887 advertisement describes with property as a "spacious, well-built, 25-foot brownstone private dwelling… containing 14 rooms, good order."[5]

Harlem's building boom continued through 1893 and then re-emerged in 1895 after the economy recovered from a nationwide economic depression. By the mid-1890s, Harlem had become an established community. In addition to churches, middle-class residents brought more secular social and political institutions with them when they moved to Harlem. In 1895, the Lenox Republican Club purchased 122 West 129th Street as its new clubhouse. The club only owned the building for a short time. However, its ownership marks the transformation of the building from residential to institutional use. The club sold the building ca. 1897, perhaps in response to the demographic shifts within the neighborhood, as less wealthy natives, immigrants, and African-Americans began moving to Harlem at the turn of the twentieth century.[6]

By 1902, 122 West 129th Street was being used as a synagogue. While it is unclear whether it was built by the club for additional space as a social hall or by the synagogue for additional worship space, a double-height rear addition had been added to the building by this time. This addition facilitated the building's use for religious services and it hosted a series of congregations during the early twentieth century. From 1916–1927,

[3] Osofsky, *Harlem*, 73; Christopher Moore and Andrew S. Dolkart, "Abyssinian Baptist Church and Community House," New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (1993), 2.
[4] Mathew Dripps, "Plate 15," "Plate 16," and "Plate 17." Plan of New York City, (New York: Dripps, M., 1867); *New York Herald*, March 8, 1867.
[5] *New York Herald*, April 2, 1882; April 8, 1887; April 18, 1887; Moore and Dolkart, "Abyssinian Church," 2;
[6] *The Tammany Times*, May 25, 1895; Andrew Dolkart and Gretchen S. Sorin, *Touring Historic Harlem: Four Walks in Northern Manhattan* (New York: New York Landmarks Conservancy, 1997). 11-13, 34-35.

it was the home of Rendall Memorial Presbyterian Church. Union AME Church and Metropolitan Church operated from the building, each for a short time, during the late 1920s and early 1930s.[7]

George McGuire's Early Career

Archbishop George Alexander McGuire, the founder and first patriarch of the African Orthodox Church, was born in Sweets, Antigua, on March 28, 1866. He was the first son of Edward McGuire, a native of Antigua, planter, and member of the Anglican Church, and Henrietta George, a Moravian. George studied in the local grammar school and showed an early aptitude for education. After completing his elementary schooling, he attended the Mico College for Teachers in Antigua and the Niskey Theological Seminary, a Moravian institution in St. Thomas. From 1888 to 1894, he served the pastor of a Moravian church in Frederickstead, St. Croix, in the Virgin Islands. In 1892, he married Ada Roberts, a native of Antigua, whom he had met while he was studying at Mico College.[8]

McGuire moved to New York City in 1894. While he initially expressed an interest in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, he soon applied to join the Protestant Episcopal Church, which had closer liturgical and religious connections to the Anglican Church.[9] Recognizing McGuire's training and experience, church leaders in New York City sent him to the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Crucifixion in Philadelphia to study under the Reverend Henry Phillips. During his four years in Philadelphia, McGuire formalized his position within the church; he was confirmed in 1895, became a deacon in 1896, and was ordained the following year. As an Episcopal priest, McGuire served several congregations in the northeast and south, including groups in Cincinnati, Ohio; Richmond, Virginia; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Little Rock, Arkansas; and Cambridge, Massachusetts. McGuire was recognized as an excellent preacher and made an effort to be active in the church leadership. During his years in Philadelphia, McGuire also studied medicine in the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Jefferson Medical College; he graduated as a Doctor of Medicine in 1910. At the same time, his wife, Ada, was trained at the Philadelphia School of Nurses.[10]

From 1905 to 1909, he served as Archdeacon for Colored Work in the diocese of Arkansas, becoming the highest ranking African American to achieve that rank until that time. While his skills had helped him attain this position, this role brought him into the center of the "white power structure of the Episcopal Church in the South and its determination to maintain racial supremacy."[11] His tenure in Arkansas overlapped with that of

[7] David W. Dunlap, *From Abyssinian to Zion: A Guide to Manhattan's Houses of Worship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 182; New York, New York [map], 1902, "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970 – New York"; *The Negro Churchman* 9, no. 8 (1931).

[8] Warren C. Platt, "The African Orthodox Church: An Analysis of Its First Decade," *Church History* 58 (1989), 474; Richard Newman, "The Origins of the African Orthodox Church," in *The Negro Churchman: The Official Organ of the African Orthodox Church* (Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1977), iii; Rev. A.C. Terry-Thompson, D.D., *The History of the African Orthodox Church* (1959), 49.

[9] The Protestant Episcopal Church was established in 1789 by clergy formerly associated with Church of England dioceses in the American colonies. The denomination's traditions and services remained effectively the same, but clergy were no longer required to accept the supremacy of the British monarch. The denomination was formally known as "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America" until 1964, when the church voted to accept "The Episcopal Church" as a lawful, alternate name. For the sake of simplicity, this history uses "Episcopal" to refer to the church except in the case of formal titles or names.

[10] Byron Rushing, "A Note on the Origin of the African Orthodox Church," *The Journal of Negro History* 57 (1972): 28; Newman, "Origins," iii-iv; F.A. Toote, "Lady McGuire and her Work," *The Negro Churchman* 1, no. 12 (1923): 6.

[11] Newman, "Origins," iv. A suffragan bishop (black or white) is one that is subordinate to another bishop.

William Montgomery Brown, the bishop of Arkansas (1898–1911). In 1907, Brown became notorious for his Arkansas Plan for Negroes in the Episcopal Church. At the beginning of Brown's tenure, the Episcopal Church remained indecisive about how it would relate to African-American congregants; in a reflection of long-held racist and paternalistic ideas, influential leaders in the church wanted to evangelize blacks but not offer them social or institutional equality. Brown's Arkansas Plan argued for the creation of a separate, black Episcopal Church with its own bishops and clergy. The plan was unpopular in the south for putting whites and blacks on equal footing and in the north as a form of segregation. Later, McGuire was offered the position of Suffragan Bishop of Arkansas, but he declined the role; while it was effectively the highest position a black religious leader could attain in the church, a black suffragan bishop served as an assistant to a white bishop.[12]

In his training, and particularly during his work in different congregations across the United States, McGuire became acquainted both with American culture and with the unequal social and cultural practices common even within religious organizations. He grew frustrated at the limited roles available both to black leaders and to communicants in the church and by the opposition, individual prejudice, and institutional racism he encountered from local Episcopal bishops. While his position on Brown's plan is unclear, it seems likely that this alternative led McGuire to seriously consider the potential of an autonomous, black Episcopal church that would allow black religious independence and self-determination as a viable option. Through his travels, McGuire had certainly encountered the protestant African Methodist Episcopal (AME) and African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) denominations, which emerged in the United States in 1787 and 1800, respectively, in response to racist and discriminatory practices in white churches.[13] However, while the latter denominations embraced Protestant religious traditions, no analog existed for African-Americans who worshipped in the Episcopal, Catholic, or Orthodox faiths, which placed an emphasis on liturgical traditions, elaborate ceremonies, and continuity from the ancient Western church. Blacks who valued these cultural and religious traditions and practices were faced with a difficult choice: remain and worship despite institutional racism within the church or abandon their cultural and religious traditions in favor of the greater social equality and individual opportunity offered by a black-led Protestant denomination. In response to Episcopal leaders who later claimed that the African Orthodox Church was drawing black congregants from its ranks, McGuire would argue that "by their own attitude since Emancipation, they themselves have driven thousands and thousands of the Negro membership into purely racial Protestant bodies."[14]

In recognition of his years of work in the service of African American congregations, Bishop Greer, the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York, appointed McGuire to serve as the secretary of the Commission for Work among Colored People in 1911. Established in 1886, the Church Commission for Work among Colored People was charged with establishing and assisting African American churches and religious schools and training black ministers. In this role as a field secretary, McGuire traveled throughout the Northeast, preaching and presenting about the work of the commission's Colored Missions, often to large, wealthy white churches.[15]

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[12] Newman, "Origins," iv-v; William Montgomery Brown, *The Crucial Race Question, or, Where and How Shall the Color Line be Drawn* (Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Churchman's Pub Co., 1907).

[13] Both of these denominations split from the Methodist Episcopal Church, the first Methodist denomination founded in the United States. While the denomination was founded out of the Episcopal tradition, it differentiated itself early on through its non-liturgical or less formal and elaborate religious services.

[14] Newman, "Origins," iv-vii; George McGuire, "Does the Episcopal Church Care?" *The Negro Churchman* 11, no. 1 (1929): 2.

[15] Rushing, "A Note," 28; *Encyclopedia of African American Religions,* s.v. "Episcopal Commission for Black Ministries."

After a short visit to Antigua in 1913 to care for his ailing mother, the disillusioned McGuire felt called to return to his home permanently. During his visit, he had been saddened by the poor condition of the Anglican Church of St. Paul, where he had been baptized. Upon his return, McGuire worked to renovate the building and served as a rector. He also gained acclaim for practicing medicine on the island, serving both members of his parish and of the community. When a strike of local sugarcane workers led to an uprising due to low wages, British colonial officials urged religious leaders to oppose the strikers. McGuire refused, instead urging officials and plantation owners to provide a decent living wage.[16]

Early History of the African Orthodox Church

During the late 1910s, many people of color were stirred by the movement of Marcus Garvey and his United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Garvey, a Jamaican, was influenced to take action by his own experience, prominent civil rights leaders, and his education in philosophy and law. He founded the UNIA in Jamaica in 1914, and, after corresponding with Booker T. Washington, Garvey traveled to the United States in 1916 with the goal of raising funds to found a school in Jamaica similar to the Tuskegee Institute. Garvey chose to stay in the United States, settling in New York, working as a printer, and frequently giving public lectures. According to historian Robert A. Hill, Garvey's philosophy reflected the "historic encounter between two highly developed socioeconomic and political traditions: the social consciousness and drive for self-governance of the Caribbean peasantry and the racial consciousness and search for justice of the Afro-American community."[17] In 1917, Garvey, along with a group of like-minded activists, established the first UNIA division outside of Jamaica. As the organization coalesced, it focused on advancing social, political, and economic freedom for black people. Garvey was a strong proponent of black nationalism and his philosophy, known as Garveyism, emphasized Pan-Africanism, black economic advancement, and the return of the African diaspora to the African continent.[18]

Inspired by Marcus Garvey and the goals of the UNIA, McGuire returned to the United States in 1919. After briefly assisting at the Chapel of the Crucifixion in Harlem, he decided to leave the Episcopal Church, as he remained unconvinced that there was a future of advancement or elevation for black people within it. In October 1919, McGuire joined the Reformed Episcopal Church "with the enthusiasm of a discoverer… [having found] an answer in his heart's desire."[19] An evangelical Episcopalian church founded in 1873, the Reformed Episcopal Church retained cultural and liturgical connections to Anglicanism but promoted greater cooperation with other evangelical protestant denominations. This openness appealed to McGuire – a month later, he organized the Church of the Good Shepherd as a Reformed Episcopal congregation. However, he appears to have quickly abandoned the idea of permanently identifying as a reformed congregation; by 1920, the congregation, which was identifying itself as "Independent Episcopal," was primarily West Indian, had 220 communicants, and was meeting in the Rush Memorial AME Zion Church.[20]

[16] Rushing, "A Note," 28; Terry-Thompson, *History*, 50.
[17] Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), xxxvi.
[18] Hill, ed., *Marcus Garvey*, xxxvi-xxxviii.
[19] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Council of the New York and Philadelphia Synod, Reformed Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: James M. Armstrong, 1919), 18, 25-26.
[20] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Fortieth Council of the New York and Philadelphia Synod, Reformed Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: James M. Armstrong, 1920), 17; Newman, "Origins," vii-viii; While different congregations have referred to themselves as "Independent Episcopal," this term does not refer to a specific, organized denomination with

At the same time, McGuire started to become involved in Garvey's UNIA. While details of the original relationship between the two men are unknown, it is clear that McGuire strongly identified with Garvey's vision for black self-determination and that it formed the foundation of his work as he grew his Independent Episcopal congregation. McGuire spoke to a crowd of 1,800 at UNIA's first International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World in August 1920. Later at the convention, McGuire was appointed the UNIA's chaplain-general and given the titular position of "Archbishop of Ethiopia." He took on the role with enthusiasm.[21] Historian Richard Newman commented that McGuire seemed to take the "election as bestowing upon him the status of the black world's chief ecclesiastical figure, as well as granting him a mandate to establish and preside over a worldwide black church that was coterminous with the membership of the UNIA."[22]

Through the UNIA, McGuire promoted his broad vision for an independent, pan-African religious movement. As described in the UNIA's publication, *The Negro World,* "He believes that the time has come for church unity among Negroes; he believes that unity does not necessarily mean uniformity in worship, and that the coming African or Ethiopian Church will be big enough for all Negroes to enter, retaining their own workshop as Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, etc."[23] McGuire quickly developed two religious documents for the UNIA: the *Universal Negro Catechism* and *Universal Negro Ritual*. The *Catechism* is divided into four sections covering religious and historical information and foundational documents of the UNIA, and the *Ritual* includes religious services and ceremonies roughly based on the *Book of Common Prayer*. During this time, McGuire also traveled within the United States and internationally, speaking about the UNIA in addition to his belief in the need for an independent, universal black church.[24] However, McGuire's enthusiasm for this idea was not shared by other members of the UNIA, many of whom were active in Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal churches. On July 16, 1921, the UNIA announced in *The Negro World* that "the UNIA is not a church and it does not intend to be one… We favor all churches but adopt none as a UNIA Church."[25]

At the same time, McGuire worked to make his vision a reality, starting with his own congregation. On January 10, 1921, McGuire's Church of the Good Shepherd formally withdrew from the Reformed Episcopal Church. McGuire envisioned the new congregation as a home for black Episcopal parishioners to have ecclesiastical independence. By 1921, Good Shepherd had become the center of a small Independent Episcopal movement of black parishes. McGuire associated this rapid success with "an awakened Negro consciousness to the humiliating racial barriers existing in white Episcopal churches."[26]

On July 16, 1921, a meeting of Independent Episcopal Church leaders at St. Saviour's Church in Brooklyn elected McGuire bishop. This election was confirmed by a more formal assembly on September 2, 1921 in New York City. In addition, the assembly formally founded African Orthodox Church and held their First

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a shared set of beliefs. Rather, it appears to have generally been adopted by individual congregations or a small group of congregations that have chosen to split from the larger Episcopal church.

[21] Newman, "Origins," vii-ix.

[22] Newman, "Origins," vii-ix.

[23] *The Negro World*, April 2, 1921, 1,5.

[24] Original copies of both of these documents are housed at the Schomburg Library; Rushing, "Note," 38.

[25] Newman, "Origins," x-xi; *The Negro World*, July 16, 1921.

[26] Newman, "Origins," viii; Terry-Thompson, *History*, 5l; Warren C. Platt, "The African Orthodox Church: An Analysis of Its First Decade," *Church History* 58 (1989): 475.

General Synod.[27] However, this alone did not offer the institutional legitimacy and ecclesiastical authority that McGuire and other religious leaders believed was necessary to formalize his status as a bishop for the new denomination. Like Catholic and Orthodox traditions, the Anglican and Moravian faiths emphasize the importance of maintaining apostolic succession, or a direct tie from Jesus's apostles in continuous succession, typically through a series of bishops; in these traditions, this formal consecration is required for a bishop to be considered valid. McGuire sought this for himself, but perhaps most critically, believed it would provide gravity and legitimacy to the African Orthodox Church. McGuire's requests to leaders in the Roman Catholic Church, American Catholic Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the Russian Orthodox Church to be consecrated as a bishop were rejected. With these traditional, conventional paths closed, McGuire reached out to Archbishop Joseph René Vilatte, exarch of the American Catholic Church, who proved receptive.[28] Vilatte, who did not represent any major branch of Christianity, is among a group of religious leaders known as *episcopi vagantes*, or "wandering bishops."[29] After undergoing a thorough process of review, the African Orthodox Church was approved and McGuire was consecrated by Archbishop Vilatte and Carl A. Nybladh in the Church of the Good Death in Chicago on September 28, 1921.[30]

After his consecration, McGuire resigned his post as chaplain-general and as a member in the UNIA. While this was related, in part, to conflicts about the nature and appropriateness of a religious component to the UNIA, it can also be directly attributed to a dispute between Garvey and McGuire. McGuire later reported that Garvey wanted him to abandon his work with the fledgling African Orthodox Church and focus solely on his role at the UNIA. However, the two men later mended their relationship; McGuire rejoined the UNIA and, in 1924, gave a speech at the annual convention recommending that black churches abandon traditional iconography showing a white Christ and Madonna.[31]

As the Church of the Good Shepherd continued to grow, the congregation was somewhat transient during its early years, worshipping in community halls and chapels. Eventually, the congregation was able to raise the money to buy a permanent home at 104 West 130th Street. As he grew the African Orthodox Church, McGuire continued to serve as rector; Ada McGuire served as its organist and choir director.[32]

McGuire developed a constitution for the African Orthodox Church, as well its Declaration of Faith and Liturgy. These documents formally established the church's doctrinal position, which was related to traditional Catholic beliefs and practices but offered a distinct contribution to Christian thought through its synthesis with racial

[27] Platt, "Analysis," 475-476; African Orthodox Church, "The African Orthodox Church, Its Declaration of Faith, Constitution and Canons, and Episcopate with a Summary of Proceedings of the First General Synod," New York (n.d.), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=emu.010002631927;view=2up;seq=1;skin=mobile>.

[28] An exarch is a specific kind of bishop who is lower in rank than a patriarch but has a greater jurisdiction than the metropolitan of a diocese.

[29] A "wandering bishop" is one that was consecrated in an unorthodox or irregular way. The idea dates to the early centuries after Christ when some believed that any bishop could consecrate any other baptized man as a bishop as long as he observes the sacramental requirements of the ceremony. Wandering bishops are generally not recognized by contemporary mainstream religions; in Catholicism they are excommunicated.

[30] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 5l-52; Warren C. Platt, "Holy Cross Pro-Cathedral of the African Orthodox Church," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 63 (1994): 279; Platt, "Analysis," 476; Newman, "Origins," x, xv, xvii; *The Negro World*, November 6, 1920, 5; J.R. Vilatte, letter to W.E.B. DuBois, November 3, 1921, W.E.B. DuBois Papers, University of Massachusetts, Amherst <http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/pageturn/mums312-b019-i114/#page/2/mode/1up>.

[31] Newman, "Origins," xii-xiii.

[32] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 61; F.A. Toote, "Lady McGuire and her Work," *The Negro Churchman* 1, no. 12 (1923): 6.

consciousness and black nationalist philosophy. In 1922, he founded the Endich Theological Seminary to train new ministers for the African Orthodox Church. Fourteen men joined the first class; all received minor orders during their training, and several left to organize mission churches in New York City, Brooklyn, and Connecticut. Later, many of these men continued to be leaders in the church, founding parishes throughout the United States, Canada, and in the Caribbean. Around the same time, McGuire also organized the Order of Deaconesses to provide a formal role for women to support the church. Ada McGuire trained the women interested in becoming deaconesses in how to best serve the needy, be benevolent towards the destitute, and support the missions and work of their individual churches and parishes.[33]

To contribute to this growth, tie the new congregations together, and serve as a forum to discuss these ideas, Archbishop McGuire started the *Negro Churchman*, a monthly periodical, in 1923. In its pages, McGuire published sermons, reports from different congregations, letters and articles from congregants and reverends in the church, and advertisements for black-owned businesses.[34] In 1924, the newly organized conclave of the African Orthodox Church unanimously elected McGuire archbishop and first patriarch of the African Orthodox Church. McGuire exulted in the denomination's rapid success:

> By our own efforts, we have won our ecclesiastical independence, and from our own pockets we shall maintain that independence. When nine years ago the founder of the African Orthodox Church left the white man's Church to organize an independent episcopal Church to be manned and controlled by Negroes from the top down his brethren and friends among the clergy and laity warned him that he was attempting something "impossible" since nothing "Episcopalian" could succeed without the funds and guidance of the white man. Negro Methodists and Baptists might organize and maintain independent Churches, but not Negro Episcopalians! Well, the "impossible" was attempted and attained. We independent Episcopalians of the African Orthodox Church have ceased being parasites and mendicants. We pay our way as we go and are subject to no dictation from white bishops and archdeacons.[35]

During its first decade, the African Orthodox Church garnered an immediate response in urban areas across the northeast and also spread quickly internationally, particularly among the West Indian community. One of the oldest institutions in the West Indies, the Church of England was first established by British settlers during the eighteen century and grew stronger during the nineteenth century through missions. West Indian immigrants found the African Orthodox Church perfectly met their needs: it had services in an Episcopal tradition, had a black-led worship experience, provided them with opportunities for individual leadership, and connected them with the black community in an area. During the 1920s, branches were established in Miami, Chicago, Boston, and New York and internationally in Canada, Barbados, Cuba, South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda. Daniel Alexander, a South African clergyman, was primarily responsible for the African Orthodox Church's spread into Africa. Along with a group of other dissident clergy, Alexander reached out to McGuire with the goal of uniting with the African Orthodox Church. The relationship was successful, and, in 1927, Alexander was named bishop of the Province of South Africa. In recognition for his work, which included

[33] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 61-62.
[34] Platt, "Analysis," 478-479; *The Negro Churchman*: *The Official Organ of the African Orthodox Church* (Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1977).
[35] "The Impossible Attained," *The Negro Churchman* 11, no.4 (1929).

founding a number of new congregations, he was later elevated to archbishop metropolitan for South Africa, Central and Southern Africa.[36]

Establishment of the Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral

In 1931, after a decade of work as the bishop and, later, archbishop of the African Orthodox Church, the editor of *The Negro Churchman*, and the rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, McGuire reflected on his hard work:

> Our first ten years have necessarily been devoted chiefly to propaganda. We have been busy expounding our principles, preaching our gospel of ecclesiastical and spiritual liberty, defending our Orders, answering our critics, fighting strongly entrenched enemies from without and withstanding defections and schisms from within. Nevertheless, we have built churches and secured other real property in Nova Scotia, Boston, New Haven, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Chicago, Miami, Liberty City, Bahamas, South and East Africa, and Cuba. For the new decade upon which we now enter let the slogan be "Arise and build." The era of church building has arrived.[37]

That year, McGuire retired from his position as rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd and assigned the Rev. F.A. Toote, his former assistant, to the role. This allowed him to devote himself solely to the growth of the African Orthodox Church.[38]

The need for a central African Orthodox Cathedral was discussed as early as 1923. In its very first issue, *The Negro Churchman* described the Church of the Good Shepherd as a "Cathedral Chapel" and specifically remarked on the need for additional space for more worshippers; when too many people arrived for the New Years' Eve vigil, the doors had to be locked from the inside before the service could begin.[39] The Third General Synod endorsed the plan for a cathedral and the fourth issue of the *Negro Churchman* contained a full-page advertisement exhorting that "WE MUST HAVE A Negro Cathedral," which would also serve as a World War I memorial, but the latter effort gradually moved to the periphery of the synod's focus.[40]

However, by the late 1920s, the need and the ability to establish a pro-cathedral were becoming increasingly aligned. Effectively a provisional measure until a more permanent or suitable church can be built, a Pro-Cathedral is a temporary cathedral or co-cathedral of a diocese operated by a bishop. With this step, the African Orthodox Church would further establish its permanence and a central home for the denomination. Members of the Church of the Good Shepherd formed a committee and began reviewing potential options in New York City.[41]

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[36] Newman, "Origins," xviii-xix; "Daniel William Alexander," African Orthodox Church Exhibit, January 2009, Pitts Theology Library, Emory University, <http://www.pitts.emory.edu/collections/digitalcollections/exhibits/africanorthodox/index.cfm>.

[37] "The Primate's Address to Synod," *The Negro Churchman* 9, no. 9 (1931): 2.

[38] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 61.

[39] "New Year's Eve," *The Negro Churchman* 1, no. 1 (1923): 3.

[40] *The Negro Churchman* 1, no. 4 (1923); *The Negro Churchman* 1, no. 9-10 (1923): 7. The assertion that the Cathedral would also serve as a WWI Memorial only appears during this early period, and was likely an attempt to gain a broader range of donors to the cause. This idea was abandoned as this early effort to build a Cathedral waned.

[41] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 61.

From September 2–7, 1931, the 11th General Synod of the African Orthodox Church met at the Metropolitan Church at 122 West 129th Street. Church leaders were familiar with the building and had previously rented it from the Union AME Church for other functions in New York City. In addition to celebrating the African Orthodox Church's tenth anniversary, the synod considered purchasing Coachman's Hall, a public hall on West 138th Street which they had been renting for day services, as additional, and much needed, space. Ultimately, however, they rejected the proposal. The following day, the dismayed McGuire "sat in his office deploring the circumstances [when] a telephone voice asked him to call next day at 3 P.M. to look at a church. He went to a real estate office and was carried to the Church at 122 West 129th Street." The building was in foreclosure, and McGuire took this as a sign of divine intervention; two years prior, the recently deceased Rev. Fr. Joseph Alexander Ford, an African Orthodox priest and founder of St. Mark's Church in New York City, had remarked "I feel that the African Orthodox Church will own this edifice some day."[42]

McGuire toured the building, a residence which had been previously converted for religious use, with the owner and an architect and drew up plans for necessary renovation work. To help finance the purchase, necessary alterations and contract deposit on the building, Bishop McGuire mortgaged his personal residence (246 West 139th Street, extant) for $5,000. The African Orthodox Church formally acquired the building on September 10, 1931, only three days after the close of the synod, and began six weeks of renovations. Ada McGuire, with the support of other women of the church, worked tirelessly to raise money and obtain appropriate church furniture and decorations. The Usher's Club donated a mitre-engraved chair, the Rev. Dingall of New Haven donated 40 copies of the Divine Liturgy, and Trinity Church in New York City donated an altar.[43] The Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral was dedicated on November 8, 1931. The church was filled to capacity with congregants, religious leaders, and representatives of local organizations. Special celebrations, speeches, and services were held for an entire week in honor of the new building.[44] In 1933, Ebenezer Ray, a reporter for *The New York Age* meditated on the building and its meaning:

> What a beautiful edifice Holy Cross Pro-Cathedral is. When I beheld its lighted auditorium, beautiful in its simplicity on Maundy Thursday evening I couldn't help but thinking that Archbishop McGuire had at least realized an atom of his life's dream… that he hoped the day would come when the African Orthodox Church would take its place in the world even as the other established churches of today.[45]

As a former rowhouse converted into a church, 122 West 129th Street worked well both as the African Orthodox Church's Pro-Cathedral and as a multi-use building that could effectively house many functions. In addition to serving as a worship space; the building had room for less formal gathering space in the basement and apartments for Archbishop McGuire in the upper stories. The Endich Theological Seminary and publication of *The Negro Churchman* were moved to the new building as well as the organizational activities supported by the Order of Deaconesses. The African Orthodox Church held its annual multi-day Synod at the Pro-Cathedral. The new space also allowed for the creation of a community center, which housed a milk

[42] *The Negro Churchman* 9, no. 8 (1931); "A Prediction Fulfilled!" *The Negro Churchman* 9, no. 9 (1931): 7; "Broadway Corner on Heights Sold," *New York Evening Post*, February 26, 1932. This article describes the purchase of Holy Cross African Orthodox Church from George McGuire, and offers the only mention that this was a foreclosure sale. ".. the latter taking back a purchase money mortgage for $5,000, due in 1935, at 5 per cent. Mr. McGuire purchased the premises at foreclosure last October."

[43] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 61; "A Prediction Fulfilled!" *The Negro Churchman* 9, no. 9 (1931): 7.

[44] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 108-111; The Negro Churchman 9, no.10 (1931): 1-2.

[45] Ebenezer Ray, "Xcuse Me," *The New York Age*, April 29, 1933.

distribution mission, Boy and Girl Scout organizations, sewing classes, and a number of other missions, as well as a large Sunday School program connected with six other African Orthodox Churches in New York.[46]

Holy Cross Pro-Cathedral after McGuire

After a period of illness, Archbishop George Alexander McGuire died in residence at his beloved Holy Cross Church on November 10, 1934. Archbishop McGuire had dedicated his finances, his energy, and his life to building up the African Orthodox Church and remained a pillar of the denomination. On November 14, Archbishop William Ernest James Robinson of the Southern Jurisdiction of the African Orthodox Church led the funeral services, eulogizing McGuire as a "man of high educational attainments and possessed of great ability, a man of extensive knowledge and the owner of a generous heart."[47] The following day, a Solemn Mass of Requiem was held at the pro-cathedral to mourn his loss and honor him. Mourners filled the pro-cathedral, and many more gathered on the street, unable to get in. McGuire was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx.[48]

Archbishop W.E.J. Robinson took over the leadership of the church after McGuire's death. In addition to providing guidance to the many African Orthodox parishes, Robinson focused on securing the financial future of the church. Despite McGuire's efforts, the mortgages and debts incurred to open the pro-cathedral as well as the difficulties presented by the Great Depression threatened the building at the heart of the African Orthodox Church with foreclosure. With the assistance of its parishes as well as the local congregation, the debts were finally paid in 1946. The clergy and congregation celebrated with a "Burning of the Mortgages" ceremony on February 10, 1946. Continued fundraising efforts on the part of the leadership, and of the pro-cathedral's organist and choir director, William Selkridge, resulted in the installation of a new heating system, pipe organ, and pews during the mid-twentieth century.[49]

Throughout, the Holy Cross Pro-Cathedral remained a center of activity for the African Orthodox Church as a whole and for its local congregations. After a lapse following McGuire's death, Bishop Edmond R. Bennett reopened and became dean of the Endich Theological Seminary during the mid-1930s. The school has continued to operate from the building, often as a correspondence school to better serve the widespread parishes.[50] In addition, the Synod also continued to meet at the Pro-Cathedral through at least the late 1960s.[51] In 1934, Holy Cross's master organist, William Selkridge, started the Crusader's League, a group which ventured out into the community to serve the people's needs and to raise money for the church. It remained active until the early 1960s.[52] Women also remained active as Deaconesses and in the Ladies Auxiliary. One of the senior mothers of Holy Cross, Mrs. Mable Richardson, passed on in 2005 at the age of

[46] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 63.
[47] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 64.
[48] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 64.
[49] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 68.
[50] *Encyclopedia of African American Religions,* s.v. "Endich Theological Seminary."
[51] James Hogans, "African Orthodox Church Ends Its Most Successful Synod," *New York Age*, September 13, 1958; "African Orthodox Church," Archival collection notes, Pitts Theology Library, Emory University, <http://pitts.emory.edu/archives/text/rg005.html>/.
[52] Terry-Thompson, *History*, 116-117.

103 years. She was active in the church and its missions until her death, holding "back to school" drives for the neighborhood children.[53]

In the years after McGuire's death, the African Orthodox Church remained vibrant. However, it reached somewhat of a plateau during the last half of the twentieth century after its years of explosive growth, as the denomination primarily appealed to African-Americans or black migrants from the West Indies who had been brought up in Anglican, Episcopalian, or Catholic churches.[54] The African Orthodox Church has grown smaller in the United States over the course of the twentieth century. In addition to the Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral and St. Michaels African Orthodox Church, both in New York City, at least seven other churches exist in the United States; they are located in Chicago, Miami, Maryland, Massachusetts, and California. The church has maintained a stronger international presence; churches exist in Canada, the West Indies, and the denomination is particularly strong in Africa.[55] Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral remains the American headquarters of the church and the denomination's physical and spiritual center. Its local congregation, while small, remains strong. Members are currently working to honor the church's history and repair and renovate the building.

[53] Friends, members of Holy Cross church, her family, and Councilman Robert Jackson donated books to the Hamilton Grange Public Library in her honor.
[54] Newman, "Origins," xviii; Platt, "Holy Cross," 284-285.
[55] Newman, "Origins," xxi-xxii; "African Orthodox Church Inc.," Net Ministries network, < http://netministries.org/see/churches.exe/ch26904>.

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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 # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .06 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	589002	4518261	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was drawn to include the parcel historically associated with the Holy Cross African Pro-Cathedral.

Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral
Harlem, New York Co., NY

122 West 129th Street
New York, NY 10027

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 330 660 1,320 Feet

Holy Cross

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral | New York County, NY
Name of Property | County and State

Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral
Harlem, New York Co., NY

122 West 129th Street
New York, NY 10027

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer Betsworth (NY SHPO), based on research provided by Denise Fowler

organization _____ date July 2017

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

e-mail _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral

City or Vicinity: New York

County: New York State: NY

Photographer: Denise Fowler and Jennifer Betsworth

Date Photographed: May 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

NY_New York Co_Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral_0001
Façade, facing south

NY_New York Co_Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral_0002
Façade, west elevation, and 129th Street, facing east

NY_New York Co_Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral_0003
Sanctuary, facing north

NY_New York Co_Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral_0004
Sanctuary, facing north

NY_New York Co_Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral_0005
Sanctuary, facing south

NY_New York Co_Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral_0006
Entrance door, facing northwest

NY_New York Co_Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral_0007
Stairhall to second floor, facing north

NY_New York Co_Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral_0008
Stair to third floor, facing southeast

NY_New York Co_Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral_0009
Third floor skylight, facing southeast

NY_New York Co_Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral_0010
Basement hallway, facing north

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

HOLY CROSS

HOLY CROSS AFRICAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
122
PRO-CATHEDRAL


IHS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	NEW YORK, New York

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
9/25/2017	10/26/2017	11/13/2017	11/9/2017	11/9/2017

Reference number:	SG100001803
Nominator:	State

Reason For Review:

X Accept _____ Return _____ Reject **11/9/2017** Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	
Recommendation/ Criteria	Criterion A, Religion and Ethnic heritage Black

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

NYC
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Meenakshi Srinivasan
Chair

Sarah Carroll
Executive Director
SCarroll@lpc.nyc.gov

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212 669 7902 tel
212 669 7797 fax

RECEIVED
SEP 11 2017
DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

August 22, 2017

Mr. Michael F. Lynch, P.E., AIA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Director, Division for Historic Preservation
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Re: *Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral*
122 West 129th Street, Manhattan

Dear Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Lynch:

I am writing on behalf of Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral, located at 122 West 129th Street in Manhattan, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission's Director of Research Kate Lemos McHale has reviewed the materials you submitted and has determined that the Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore based on this review, the Commission supports the nomination of the Holy Cross African Orthodox Church Pro-Cathedral. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sarah Carroll

cc: Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Kate Lemos McHale, Director of Research

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY.
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

RECEIVED 2280
SEP 25 2017
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

22 September 2017

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following twelve nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Holy Cross African Orthodox Pro-Cathedral, New York County
Bethel Christian Avenue Historic District, Suffolk County
Old Bethel Cemetery, Suffolk County
Spear and Company Factory, Queens County
Saugerties and New York Steamboat Company Warehouses, Ulster County
Lefferts Manor Historic District (Boundary Increase), Kings County
Ellis Squires Jr, House, Suffolk County
William A. Farnum Boathouse, Suffolk County
Warren-Benham House, Ontario County
Oswego & Syracuse Railroad Freight House, Oswego County
Forest Hill Cemetery, Oneida County
Caffe Cino, New York County

Please note that the last nomination, Caffe Cino, is the fourth of five nominations submitted under our Underrepresented Communities grant for LGBT sites in New York City. The fifth is scheduled for review at our next board meeting in December.

In addition, I am also enclosing a CD with better photos of the Charles and Anna Bates House, Suffolk County, as requested. Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office