

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUL 27
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Second Congregational Church

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 764 Walker Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Memphis N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Tennessee code 47 county Shelby code 157

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Second Congregational Church

street & number 764 Walker Avenue

city, town Memphis N/A vicinity of state Tennessee

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Shelby County Register, County Clerk

street & number 160 N Main Street

city, town Memphis state Tennessee

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Second Congregational Church faces south on a relatively flat grassy site containing a few foundation and border plantings. The brick building is vernacular in style with square twin towers on the main (south) facade and an arched entrance. The interior is relatively simple with a flat ceiling, small brass chandeliers, three rows of wooden pews, and a raised, balustraded pulpit and choir section. All of the windows contain their original stained glass. Except for interior repainting and a new roof, the building is almost completely unaltered and retains its architectural integrity to a high degree.

The church is located on the northwest corner of McDowell Street and Walker Avenue immediately to the northwest of the LeMoyne-Owen College campus. There is a wide concrete walk leading from Walker Avenue to the front of the church and bordered on both sides by a low hedge.

The one-story brick church is on a high raised basement with a flight of steps to the front (south) entrance and steps to a side (east) entrance. The flanking, two-story towers are square with a single glazed window on each facade of the first story and paired, arched openings on the second story. The building's pitched roof has a prominent front gable with a circular window. The towers and the entrance arcade between them have crenellated parapets.

The front (south) entrances to the sanctuary are through the corner towers. The wooden pews are arranged in three rows facing a raised and balustraded platform for the pulpit and tiered choir behind. In addition to the stained glass windows, other decorative elements on the interior are a double pipe organ and a recent religious painting behind the choir. The ceiling is flat with narrow plaster cornices and the original brass chandeliers.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History

Specific dates 1928

Builder/Architect Frank Nesbit/Harold E. Smith

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This building is being nominated under Criteria A and C.

Founded in 1868, Second Congregational Church has been the chapel for LeMoyne-Owen College (est. 1871) since the late nineteenth century when both institutions were located on Orleans Street before moving to their current sites on Walker Avenue. Although the current church building was constructed in 1928, it is the oldest unaltered church in Memphis designed and built by black artisans for a predominantly black congregation. The few earlier extant black churches, such as Beale Street Baptist Church, were either designed by white architects or have been significantly altered. In addition to having provided religious services for thousands of LeMoyne-Owen students, the church, since its founding, has been a religious leader in improving race relations in Memphis through its integrated membership.

Both Second Congregational Church and LeMoyne-Owen College were outgrowths of the missionary work of the Congregational Church after the Civil War through its American Missionary Association. When LeMoyne College, later LeMoyne-Owen College, moved in 1914 to its present site, Second Congregational Church naturally moved also. For a time, the church members met in Steele Hall (NR 3-23-79) on the campus and then moved into the house at 762 Walker, which later became the church office and Sunday school building, but which has since been radically altered. In addition to regular Sunday services for members, students, and faculty, the church building, since it opened in 1928, has been the location of the college's weekly chapel programs and periodic special events.

Of the five black churches in Memphis which were founded before Second Congregational, only two, Collins Chapel (est. 1859) and Beale Street Baptist (est. 1854) are still located in buildings that are over fifty years old. However, Collins Chapel's building has been severely altered over the years, and Beale Street Baptist Church was designed by the prominent white Memphis architects, E.C. Jones and M.H. Baldwin. Unlike these and other early black churches in Memphis, Second Congregational was designed as well as built by members of the black community. The building is a significant vernacular church in its simplicity of design and fine craftsmanship.

Having had both black and white pastors, Second Congregational Church has historically been active in promoting better race relations in Memphis by being one of the city's few integrated churches until recent times. Although many of the white and black members of the church have been drawn from the faculty of LeMoyne-Owen College, the membership has always included many of the city's leading black citizens such as Dr. Hollis Price and Judge Benjamin Hooks.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Southwest Memphis, TN - AR

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	5	7	7	0	1	0	0	3	8	9	0	1	1	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The church is located at the northwest corner of McDowell Street and Walker Avenue. The boundaries include only the land on which the building is located and the small plot directly in front of the church. See site map.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lloyd Ostby, Preservation Planner

organization Memphis Landmarks Commission date May 7, 1982

street & number 22 N Front Street telephone (901) 528-2834

city or town Memphis state Tennessee

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Styer

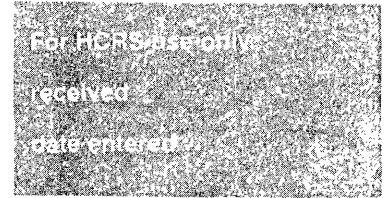
title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 7/23/82

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register Entered in the National Register
Melous Byers date 8/26/82
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Chief of Registration date

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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Continuation sheet Second Congregational Church Item number 9

Page 1

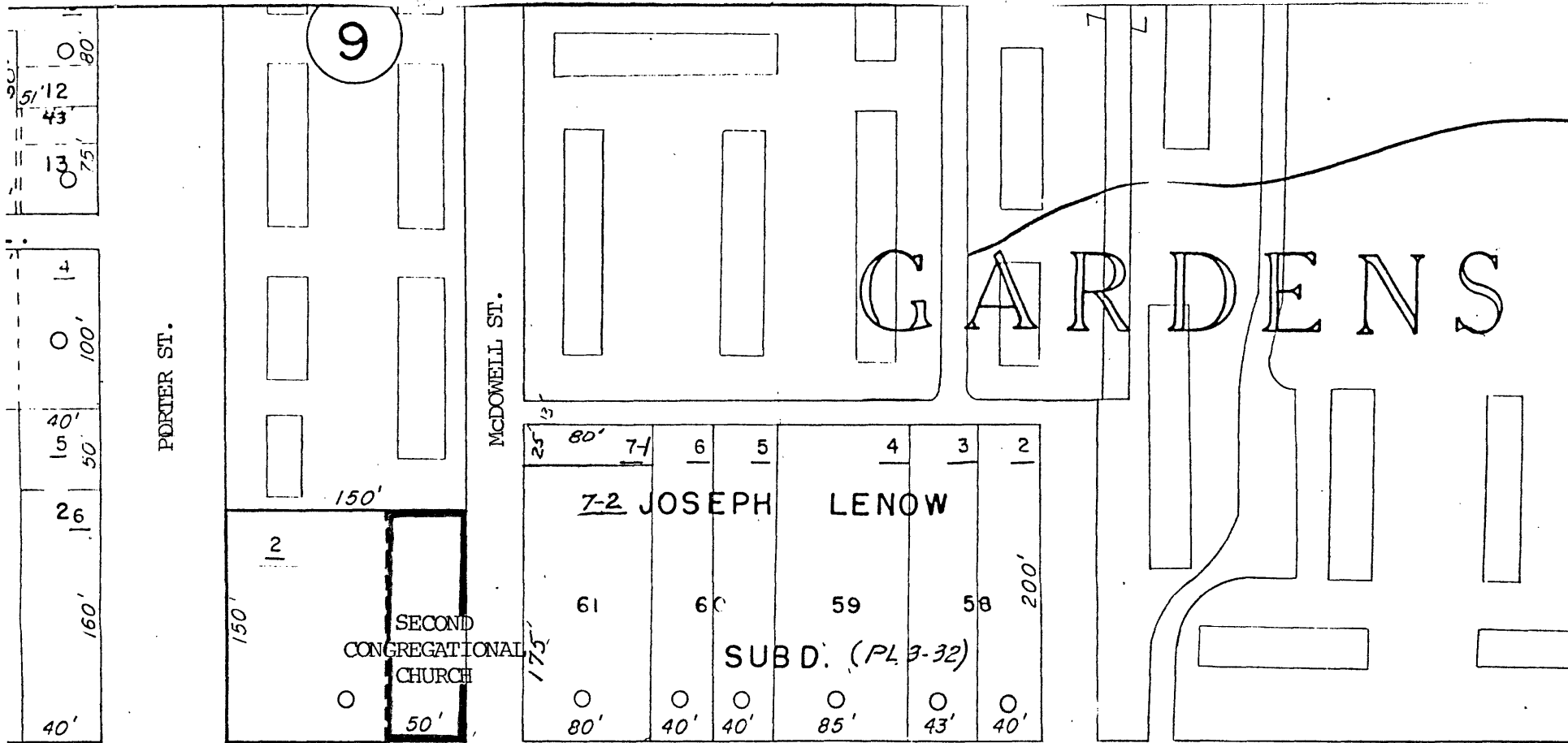
9. Major Bibliographical References

Fuller, Thomas Oscar. The Story of the Church Life Among Negroes in Memphis... 1900-1938. Memphis: T.O. Fuller, 1938.

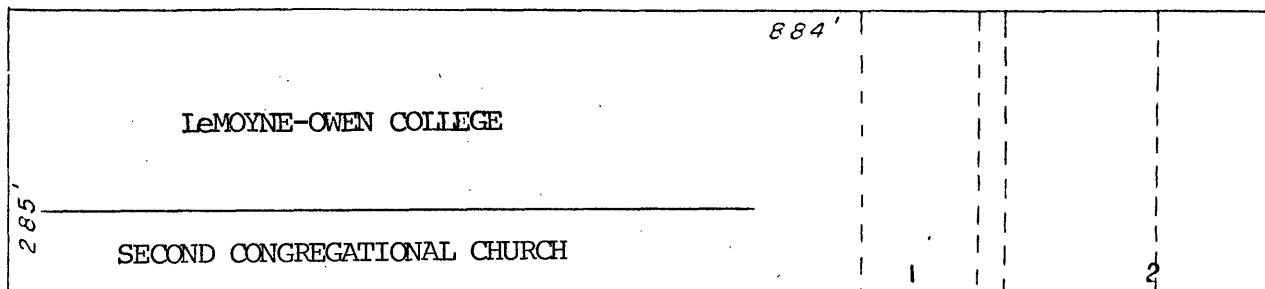
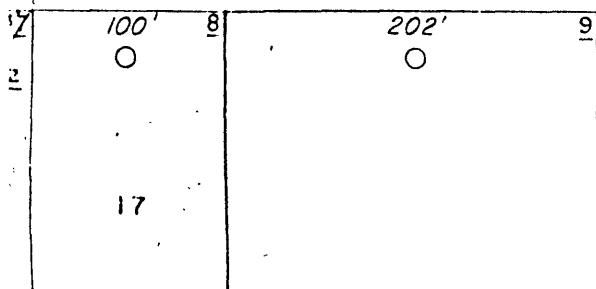
Hamilton, Green Polonius. The Bright Side of Memphis. Memphis: G.P. Hamilton, 1908.

Interview with Rev. John Charles Mickle, Pastor of Second Congregational Church.
March, 1982.

Tucker, David M. Black Pastors and Leaders: Memphis 1819 - 1972. Memphis:
Memphis State University Press, 1975.



WAGNER AVE.



Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee

Parcel ID 014-009-002

Scale 1"=100'

