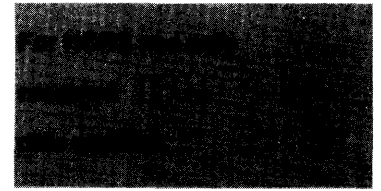


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



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

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

**1. Name**

historic St. Francis Street Methodist Church

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 15 N. Joachim Street (251 St. Francis Street) N/A not for publication

city, town Mobile N/A vicinity of congressional district 01

state Alabama code 01 county Mobile code 097

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Board of Trustees, St. Francis Street Methodist Church

street & number 15 N. Joachim Street

city, town Mobile N/A vicinity of state Alabama 36602

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mobile County Court House, Probate Division

street & number 109 Government Street

city, town Mobile state Alabama 36601

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Nineteenth Century Mobile Architecture,  
title an Inventory of Existing Buildings has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1974  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Mobile City Planning Commission

city, town Mobile state Alabama 36633

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The large, rectangular two story building occupies the entire lot. It faces onto Joachim Street with a shallow mid-bay pavilion on both the St. Francis Street side and the rear elevation (west). A square four story corner tower occupies the northeast angle of the building and is covered by a truncated pyramidal spire. The dark red hard pressed brick contrasts sharply with the white of the stone trim. The surfaces are broken into layers or zones by white belt courses accenting the story levels, the window positions, the cornices and the raking lines of the gables. In Victorian fashion the white stone forms hood moldings over the semi-circular headed windows and doors, full half-circles in the second story and segmental in the first. The long auditorium windows are filled with stained glass and the memorial windows of the north and south pavilions are double in width. A rose window is centered in the front east end of the building (a similar though smaller rose window occurs at the alter end of the church and is not visible from the outside ground level). The bell tower carries out the medieval theme in the corbel table that outlines the cornice of the fourth level, resembling a stylized machicolation. Other Victorian elements are present in the eclectic use of details borrowed from many historic styles.

The interior of the church has maintained a great deal of the original integrity. Upon entering through central double doors a massive panelled wood staircase leads to the second floor which is where the main chapel is located. The chapel has a central aisle. Huge brackets with pierced stylized quatrefoil motifs run along the sides of the chapel (three on each side) and at each corner a bracket projects onto the ceiling from the end walls. Two 20'-high stained glass windows depicting Jesus blessing the children and the Ascension of Jesus occur in the chapel (one on each side). Smaller, more geometric stained glass windows flank these larger windows. The choir area is set off from the rest of the chapel by a lower, arched area. In the end wall there is a large intricately designed round stained glass window divided into four sections. The alter appears to be panelled oak. The first floor beneath the chapel has always been devoted to class rooms. It has over the years been divided up into smaller rooms. Still visible, however, are the original cast iron columns that support the chapel above. The order of these columns is pseudo Ionic. The original hardware - door hinges, door plates & knobs, window pulls, etc. - are still intact.

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

**Specific dates** 1895

**Builder/Architect** G. Watkins, Watkins & Johnson

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### Architecture:

The St. Francis Street Methodist Church is the only surviving example of a High Victorian religious structure left in the city and as such represents an important period in the overall development of architectural history in Mobile. The Victorian design is well expressed in the strong contrast of dark red pressed brick and white trim that accents the windows and breaks the surfaces into many divisions.

#### Integrity:

The Victorian massing, the complexity of detail and variety of motifs remain unchanged from the time of its construction in 1896. The only alteration to the church was caused by the hurricane of 1916 which destroyed the upper half of the spire, leaving the truncated lower half seen today.

\* \* \* \* \*

The history of this congregation is important to the development of church architecture in Mobile. The Franklin Street Methodist Church, located at the corner of St. Michael and Franklin Streets (now demolished), was the Beehive Church or nucleus from which several other congregations developed. The Franklin Street congregation was founded in 1824. By the 1840s the city had grown quite large and Pastor Alexander J. Hamilton realized the need to expand the church. No volunteers chose to leave the mother church, so the pastor selected 39 people to split off and found a new congregation. The Methodist Society Second Charge was responsible for the construction of a two-story frame lecture hall at the corner of St. Francis and Joachim Streets. In the 1890s this building was damaged by fire, and since the congregation had outgrown the facility, it was decided to construct a new church. George Watkins of the Nashville firm of Watkins & Johnson was commissioned to do the design and the present church was erected at a cost of \$35,000.

At the same time that this group separated from the Franklin Street Methodist Church, another group, serving as trustees, formed a mission church for blacks on St. Francis Street called the AME Zion Church. In 1860 the church moved to Bayou Street and in 1868 the white trustees deeded the property to the black congregation. The present AME Zion Church, constructed in 1896, stands on the same site.

It is interesting to note that the "Beehive Church" was rebuilt several times on its original site--in 1848 and 1870. In 1890 the congregation relocated to Government and Broad Streets and is now known as the Government Street Methodist Church.

Several pastors of the St. Francis Street Methodist Church have gained prominence. Robert Hargrove became the first native Alabamian to ever be elected a Bishop while another pastor, Holland N. McTyeire, went on to become a bishop and editor of the Christian Advocate.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Nineteenth Century Mobile Architecture, an Inventory of Existing Buildings, 1974  
Historic Memories of the St. Francis Street Methodist Church, 1960; A.C. Sherman  
Historic Churches of Mobile, 1971; Mobile Writer's Workshop  
Trade Edition of the Daily Register, September 1, 1895

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property (.41 ac.) less than one

Quadrangle name Mobile

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

1	6	3	9	9	6	0	3	3	9	5	7	1	0
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** Lot is on the southwest corner of St. Francis and Joachim Streets with a front of 145 feet on Joachim by a depth of 122 feet on St. Francis Street.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth B. Gould, Architectural Historian/ Anne S. Bantens, Arch. Hist.

organization Mobile Historic Development Commission date May 31, 1983

street & number P.O. Box 1827 telephone (205) 438-7133

city or town Mobile state Alabama 36633

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 11/29/83

### For HCRS use only

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

  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 1/5/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration