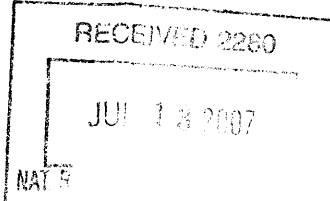


287

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name New Pilgrim Baptist Church
other names/site number New Pilgrim Baptist Day Care Center

2. Location

street & number 903 Sixth Avenue South N/A not for publication
city or town Birmingham N/A vicinity
state Alabama code AL County Jefferson code 073 Zip code 35233

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] STATE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION OFFICER 11 July 2007
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other,
(explain:)

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Daniel J. Vivian 8/24/07

New Pilgrim Baptist Church
Name of Property

Jefferson County, Alabama
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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.)

Birmingham Civil Rights Movement, 1933-1979 MPS

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: church school

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style
OTHER: Contemporary Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick; Concrete
walls Brick; Concrete; Glass

roof Asphalt Shingle
other Metal; Wood; Glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See the continuation sheet.

New Pilgrim Baptist Church

Jefferson County, Alabama

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.)

- 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.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1956-1963

Significant Date

1963

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Van Keuren, Davis and Co., architects, 1958-1959

(for the modern additions)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Birmingham Historical Society; Birmingham Public Library Archives

- # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

New Pilgrim Baptist Church
Name of Property

Jefferson County, Alabama
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately one acre

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

1	<u>16</u>	<u>517160</u>	<u>3706680</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Birmingham Historical Society, Marjorie White and Linda Nelson
organization Birmingham Historical Society Date September 2005
street & number One Sloss Quarters telephone 205-251-1880
city or town Birmingham State AL zip code 35222

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs
Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

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

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name New Pilgrim Baptist Church
street & number 708 Goldwire Place SW Telephone 205-326-0923
city Birmingham state Alabama Zip code 35211

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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

7 Page

1

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

VII. Description

The historic New Pilgrim Baptist Church is a 1946 church sanctuary with associated wings and additions, located on the Southside of Birmingham, Alabama. It faces a busy Interstate exit ramp and Sixth Avenue South on the Southside, within the area now defined as the "City Center." Sixth Avenue South is a major east-west artery linking the University of Alabama at Birmingham campus with the City of Birmingham jail and administrative offices, and with Titusville and Goldwire, the African American neighborhoods in which New Pilgrim Baptist Church has flourished. In 1946, when the congregation built its tall brick towered church with an auditorium that could seat more than 600 persons, Sixth Avenue ran through a residential district. Nearby steel fabricating plants, a regional Standard Oil facility, and Ingalls Iron offered employment. The City Jail and a "negro park" were located five blocks away. Originally of a modest Gothic Revival design with twin front towers, in 1958-1959 the church expanded its facilities, adding an International style portico across the façade; an administrative wing to provide additional sanctuary seating and offices for the pastor, his secretary, and the credit union; and a dining area, kitchen and bathrooms. The day care area was expanded in 1961. Van Keuren, Davis & Company, a prominent Birmingham architectural firm, designed the additions to the 1946 church. This complex continues to serve as the church day care center.

On the north front, a high open-gable metal canopy covers the original red brick façade, with four slender square hollow metal posts rising to support the roof that projects from the parapet line. At the sides, the twin brick towers and round window heads from the 1946 brick structure peep over the sloped canopy roof. Plywood panels, applied to the façade and painted white, create three vertical stripes down the face. Central paired doors are set within the central and widest panel. Above these doors are single-light panels in a wood frame with metal-frame painted glass windows. Within the side panels -- actually the narrower tower-front bays -- are single doors with smaller windows above them. An attenuated aluminum cross, rising to the gable peak, is attached to the façade, with the crossing placed above the upper windows. Central steps lead to the concrete porch.

The east elevation reveals the wall of the 1946 brick church. This wall of more than 100 feet in length supports a single gabled roof. Inset in the wall are rectangular metal-frame painted glass windows with lower hopper panels (1950s vintage), separated by small shouldered buttresses that define the bays. Two of these buttresses decorate, but do not define, the edges of the towers. Between these buttresses on the east side of the tower is a single 6-over-6 wood sash window; another round-headed one above is hidden by the gabled canopy roof. (An adjacent commercial business obscures a clear view of the elevation.)

The south (rear) elevation includes the back of the two-story day care addition. It has two symmetrical bays, with metal-framed six-over-six slag glass painted blue windows. Between the windows on the first and second stories is a concrete white panel, and above the second-story windows are concrete white panels topped by rectangular metal ventilation grilles. The combination of rectangular panels and rectangular windows contributes to the "modern" look of this elevation.

The west elevation is a one-story administrative structure with an asphalt flat roof -- called "the Wing" -- which is attached, from front to rear, to remaining portions of the original west wall. Metal-framed six-pane windows of slag glass painted blue are arranged as horizontal bands of glass between the brick walls and the roof eave. Metal gutters, painted white, drain the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

7

Page

2

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

flat roof and also serve as pilasters, separating the bands of windows. A metal double-door entrance is centered on the addition and linked to 9th Street by a metal covered walkway. The office wing can also be entered from the front portico.

The use of the complex as a daycare has occasioned few interior changes. Original church furnishings no longer remain in the auditorium, but the former aproned dais, choir chancel and baptistery are intact; the choir area is recessed between the anteroom sidewalls. The ceiling is crested toward the roof beam and covered with acoustical tile; light fixtures include Gothic lanterns and a Colonial Revival brass chandelier. The 1946 hardwood floor, laid on the diagonal, also remains, as does the rear balcony, its bulkhead raised to create room space. The large open space of the auditorium – the space that mass meetings filled during Movement days -- remains intact. The administrative spaces – which supported the church and the Movement -- also retain their spatial configuration, floors and walls.

The yard beside the addition to the street is now a grassed playground; the entire site is surrounded by an iron picket fence.

Archaeological Component

Although no formal archaeological survey has been conducted, the potential for subsurface materials exists.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8 Page

3

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

VIII. Statement of Significance

New Pilgrim Baptist Church is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A, based on its significant place in the annals of Birmingham's Civil Rights Movement and the indispensable activities of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Due to the importance of New Pilgrim's role as a major strategy center for the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement from 1956 to 1963, under the leadership of the Rev. Nelson H. Smith Jr., the Rev. Charles Billups Jr. and Lola Hendricks, the historic New Pilgrim Baptist Church is proposed as a nationally significant property.

History of the Church and Its Place in the Civil Rights Movement

New Pilgrim Baptist Church was formed in 1900 as nearby industries on Birmingham's Southside provided jobs for increasing numbers of rural blacks, who found employment in this thriving industrial center. The historic church building dates to 1946, when veterans returned from World War II and built a twin-towered Gothic brick church in a residential neighborhood where many lived. In 1953, New Pilgrim called the Reverend Nelson H. Smith Jr. as pastor. In the late 1950s, under Smith's leadership the church added an International style wing to expand the preaching space and house church offices, as well as black Birmingham's first church-run day care, credit union, and radio broadcast.¹ In June 1956, pastor and congregation signed on with the Birmingham Movement, sponsored by the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR), providing leadership, mass meeting and administrative space as well as an event that was a spiritual highlight of the spring 1963 campaign, the May 5th walk to the Birmingham jail.²

Nelson Smith Jr. graduated from Selma University in 1952 at 22 years of age. There he had become friends with fellow student Fred L. Shuttlesworth. In 2000, Smith made the observation to Birmingham *News* religion editor Greg Garrison that he and Shuttlesworth "came to Birmingham the same year. The City was totally and absolutely segregated. You needed a Shuttlesworth for this community. You had a Bull Connor, and you needed a Fred Shuttlesworth." Reverend Smith perceived his role as that of a lieutenant, a role that Shuttlesworth, in the same *News* feature, described as "a critical role. We were sort of a glue. We stuck together through hard times."³

Reverend Smith was among those responding to Shuttlesworth's call to form the ACMHR. At the opening meeting of ACMHR at Sardis Baptist Church on June 5, 1956, after Shuttlesworth addressed the assembled crowd "until they were jumping across the aisles," his colleague Nelson Smith read the "Declaration of Principles," stating that the organization to be formed that evening would "press forward persistently for Freedom and Democracy, and the removal from our society of any forms of Second Class Citizenship." To a standing ovation, Smith concluded the statement with an invitation to meet "Monday, June 11th, 7:00 o'clock, at the New Pilgrim Baptist Church, 903 South 6th Avenue, Birmingham, Alabama."⁴

At the June 5, 1956 meeting, Reverend Shuttlesworth was elected President and Reverend Smith Secretary. Together with New Pilgrim's Assistant Pastor, the Rev. Charles Billups Jr., the three would serve on the Executive Board of the newly formed ACMHR. Smith would join Shuttlesworth and others in signing the "ACMHR Articles of Incorporation" filed August 16, 1956. For the next 14 years, he would also take the Minutes at the Monday Mass Meetings and weekly meetings of the Executive Board "in long hand" in "composition notebooks."⁵ As secretary, Smith told religious historian Wilson Fallin

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8

Page

4

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

Jr. that he cosigned with Reverend Shuttlesworth "proclamations, petitions, and demands from the ACMHR to the City to end segregation practices."⁶

Reverend Smith's activism can be traced to his definition of the role of a minister. As religious historian Andrew Manis notes, Smith "asserted that a pastor is given authority by God himself and that a church is a theocracy, not a democracy. Smith also traced this understanding through the history of African American religion, finding Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, and Richard Allen as strong pastors who took the lead in pastoral matters." As Reverend Smith explained, "I don't see my role as a Sunday role. There are people with problems 24 hours a day. I want to be giving hope to people. I just don't believe Jesus died for us so we could dress in Sunday clothes and then take off our religion and hang it in the closet for another six days."⁷ In the Movement era, New Pilgrim church bulletins included the motto, "The Church in America where people are taught that God is love, right is right, wrong is wrong, and all men are brothers," a motto the pastors and members of New Pilgrim repeatedly sought to put into action.

In offering New Pilgrim as the second site for the ACMHR to meet, Nelson ("Fireball") Smith affirmed that the doors of his church would be open to the Movement. As ACMHR grew to become the strongest anti-segregation organization in the South's most segregated city, New Pilgrim's doors were open all the way. Pastor Smith firmly reminded a 2005 interviewer, he "did not support the Movement," he was "the Movement."⁸

Odessa Woolfolk, founder and Chairman Emerita of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, noted that "Smith's church was a power house, because of Nelson himself, because he was such a fireball . . . a great orator . . . smooth . . . erudite."⁹ Cleopatra Goree, a current New Pilgrim member who taught history at nearby Ullman High School in Movement days and attended nearly every Movement meeting, noted that Reverend Smith "was a mighty force in the Movement, one of the most dynamic and thought-provoking preachers, brilliant in history and world affairs and with a touch of evangelism that could move people." Mrs. Goree liked to tell her students: "We never had a person like Martin [King] . . . in effectiveness and power on history . . . [but] Nelson was in the same class."¹⁰

While historians generally agree with the local assessment of Smith, none has produced a full-length study of Smith or his role in the Movement or in national church affairs.

Reverend Smith set the tone for the involvement of his church and his congregation in all aspects of the Birmingham Movement: serving in leadership positions within ACMHR; attending, hosting, and organizing ushers for mass meetings; registering to vote; bringing court cases; boycotting; going to jail; leading and participating in demonstrations; preparing flyers and meals for mass meeting participants and demonstrators; participating in the Movement Choir; paying the utility bills, and helping finance, through contributions at the mass meetings and speaking engagements out of the city, the work of the strongest local civil rights organization of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Willo Dean Davis, who as a recent college graduate opened the first day care at the church in 1953 and remains deeply involved in church affairs to this day stated, "Our congregation just took on the attitude of wanting to be involved . . . had a lot of young people and other people involved" in the Movement. "Lola Hendricks was secretary. She and our pastor and Mrs. Goree went to everything . . . attendance up front. . . We always knew what was going on. We had weekly announcements and it was in the bulletin."¹¹ Beginning in the late

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8 Page

5

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

1950s, Reverend Smith also had a Sunday evening radio broadcast on WJLD live from the church, the first broadcast in the African American community that was not subsidized by outside interests. New Pilgrim became an inspirational, informational, and financial lifeline of the local movement. Its auditorium and administrative spaces were often used for ACMHR meetings and administrative support.

By 1959, New Pilgrim had significantly expanded its facilities with the addition of "the Wing." The Wing, which knocked out the west wall of the 1946 church and wrapped the church with offices, first of all provided expanded seating in the auditorium as chairs could be set up here for increased attendance at church services and mass meetings. Day care and other meetings also took place in this space, which has movable partitions separating it from the sanctuary. A (still remaining) window in the northeast corner of the space opened into the former credit union office.

Administrative space provided by the 1950s extension included the pastor's office-library, secretary-bookkeeper's room, storage room, credit union room, two rest rooms, kitchen and dining room. A two-story day care addition was also added at the rear, extending rooms available for day care and for Sunday school classes. New entrances from Sixth Avenue and from 9th Street opened into this wing. Later another entrance led through a play yard to the day care space.

The pastor's office was furnished with desk, couch, bookshelf, telephone, private restroom, and closet for preaching robes. Here Reverend Smith, the senior and full-time pastor whose salary church members paid, received his church, Movement, and community visitors.

The church secretary's office had a typewriter, file cabinets behind the secretary's desk (including one for Movement business), a mimeograph machine, and a telephone. The church secretary -- actually a succession of them -- used the office and worked on church affairs. Here also ACMHR Corresponding Secretary Lola Hendricks typed notices and prepared agendas and Movement announcements that would be distributed at mass meetings and by volunteers throughout the city when an issue required community support. The youthful Mrs. Hendricks, in her early 20s when the Movement began, came whenever Pastor Smith called . . . working "until any time" in her after-work hours and on weekends. A professional business woman and graduate of the local Booker T. Washington Business College run by Mrs. A.G. Gaston, Hendricks had a day job at John Drew's insurance firm and drove her own car, a gray Buick. Her mother kept her children so she could help Reverend Smith with whatever Movement business needed assistance. She also ran the Credit Union, located adjacent to the pastor's office in its early years, and kept up with the church scheduling. Each Sunday at Sunday Services, she prepared and read the announcements, the internal church business, Movement activities and community affairs, a practice she has only recently discontinued. Church and Movement were almost seamless: "Whatever the Pastor needed," Hendricks made it happen.

Georgia Price, head of the ACMHR Usher Board, and also a New Pilgrim member who coordinated the scheduling of the female ushers for all Movement meetings and provided instructions on how to register to vote at nearly every meeting, commented in a 1993 interview that "the church furnished office space for the Alabama Christian Movement during the late 1950s and early 1960s."¹² After Reverend Shuttlesworth left for Cincinnati, Smith took on more ACMHR responsibilities and Lola Hendricks spent more time at New Pilgrim, her home church. Smith and Hendricks both also traveled outside the city to speak and raise funds for the Movement.¹³

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8

Page

6

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

The New Pilgrim kitchen operated to feed the day care students and also anyone in need. The church bought the food and fed people coming from work before the Movement meetings. At some churches, Movement members had to pay for such supplies, but not at New Pilgrim. "Whatever we had" was provided to the Movement. In the 1960s, Mrs. Sanders was "the first cook" at New Pilgrim. Georgia Price also noted that food was prepared for persons demonstrating during the April-May campaign.

Bus drivers picked up the children for day care each morning and were available for "whatever was needed to be done for community service." They hauled "students to meetings" and "people down there to register to vote." The church owned and operated its own vans.¹⁴

Of the 45 Birmingham-area churches active in the early years of the local Movement, the names of which were published in the 1958 ACMHR Souvenir Booklet and verified through many interviews with Movement leaders Lola Hendricks and the Rev. Ed Gardner in the 1990s, only seven churches had auditoriums large enough to hold the crowds of 600 to 900 persons who attended meetings in times of testing of segregation laws and after ACMHR's legal successes of the early 1960s gave hope to the cause.

Of the seven with large auditoriums -- New Pilgrim Baptist, New Hope Baptist, St. James Baptist, St. Luke A.M.E., Seventeenth Street A.O.H. Church of God, First Baptist Church of Ensley, and 32nd Street Baptist -- only three churches remain today at their Movement-era sites. The auditorium of the 32nd Street Baptist Church, listed on the National Register as part of the Southside National Register District, has become loft apartments. Only the auditoriums of St. Luke A.M. E. and New Pilgrim remain with their historic mass meeting spaces intact. The addition of the 1959 "overflow" or "wing" at New Pilgrim provided multi-purpose space that could be set up with chairs, thus allowing New Pilgrim to continue to host the larger Movement meetings, as well as its worship services.

In the period from January 1961 through December 1963, a period in which Birmingham police detectives attended Movement meetings and then transcribed and filed reports for their chief with police commissioner Theophilus Eugene "Bull" Connor, New Pilgrim hosted 17 ACMHR Mass Meetings. Of these, four meetings took place during the April-May 1963 ACMHR-SCLC joint campaign. Many other ACMHR mass meetings and board meetings were not documented.¹⁵

Of the 15 churches that hosted mass meetings during the period 1961 to 1963, only St. James Baptist Church hosted more meetings than New Pilgrim. The high number of mass meetings (22) at St. James was probably due to its location on Sixth Avenue North, just five blocks west of Kelly Ingram Park and nearer than New Pilgrim to City Hall and the retail district, which were targets of the 1960s boycotts and demonstrations. The number of meetings taking place at New Pilgrim was eventually reduced because the Reverend John Porter, influenced by his former associate Martin Luther King, opened the doors of the larger and more prestigious Sixth Avenue Baptist Church auditorium, then located several blocks east of New Pilgrim along Sixth Avenue South, as a meeting site during the apex of the Movement. As neither St. James nor Sixth Avenue remains at its Movement-era site, it is a fact that the historic New Pilgrim hosted more documented ACMHR mass meetings than any other standing church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8

Page

7

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

New Pilgrim members vividly recalled ACMHR gatherings at their church in interviews made for the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute Oral History project. Gwendolyn Gamble, who in her teen years lived in the Titusville neighborhood close to the church, described the sessions: "A typical mass meeting was hearing shouting, singing, having a hallelujah time. Meeting, greeting, loving, caring and sharing. You get to see people and meet people that you didn't know. You found more people more concerned about each other. You knew that you would get to hear some great speakers because the nights that Dr. King was not available, we always heard Rev. Shuttlesworth or Rev. N. H. Smith. There was always somebody to give us a message that we needed to hear and that we enjoyed listening to." Margaret Givner Brown, another New Pilgrim member and Titusville resident whose father served New Pilgrim as a deacon, also recalled attending mass meetings at the church when the Reverends Fred Shuttlesworth, Ralph Abernathy, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Smith Jr. all spoke. "I remember them being very outspoken. I remember it would be exciting. . . . When they talked, we listened. They had a way about them that could calm a crowd. And what they had to say -- even to a child -- it was interesting."¹⁶

Among other speakers recorded by the Birmingham police as speaking at ACMHR Mass Meetings at New Pilgrim were: Freedom Rider Clyde Carter from Charlotte, North Carolina; Rev. E.S. Blackstone of Philadelphia; Rev. J.W. Hayes of Montgomery; comedian Dick Gregory, and SCLC staff including the Reverends Wyatt Tee Walker, Andrew Young, James Bevel, and Bernard Lee.

Church members who regularly attended ACMHR meetings and provided leadership to Movement activities in addition to the Reverends Smith and Billups were ACMHR secretaries Lola Hendricks and Georgia Price, both of whom journalist Diane McWhorter called "the workhorses of the Movement." Lola Hendricks served as the ACMHR Corresponding Secretary from 1956 to 1961, and after a brief period off (for the birth of daughter Audrey) returned to her duties, which included coordinating arrangements for the ACMHR-SCLC joint demonstrations of spring 1963, working directly with SCLC staff Wyatt Walker, Andy Young and James Bevel.¹⁷ Hendricks also served on the Steering Committee with her pastor. To Hendricks fell the responsibility on the first day of the Birmingham campaign, April 3, 1963, to petition Bull Connor for a parade permit. Hendricks later testified that Connor responded, "You will not get a permit in Birmingham, Alabama to picket; I'll picket you over to the City jail."¹⁸ Reverend Shuttlesworth and the ACMHR filed suit against the City of Birmingham for refusing to grant the permit. In *Shuttlesworth v. Birmingham* (1969), the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that an ordinance such as Birmingham's unconstitutionally restricted freedom of speech.¹⁹ This was not the first lawsuit in which Hendricks had been involved; in the late 1950s, after Reverend Shuttlesworth mentioned the fact that "(w)e were not allowed to go into the parks and let our children play like other children in the city of Birmingham . . . I told him we would sign for that lawsuit and be the party for it, and that's what we did. And the law would later change and it was desegregated."²⁰

New Pilgrim also strongly supported the Movement Choir, organized in 1960 under the direction of 18-year old Carlton Reese and considered first-rate by historians of the Movement.²¹ The choir practiced regularly at New Pilgrim and sang regularly at meetings, heightening their intensity. Choir regulars were Andrew Bernard Sneed, New Pilgrim's gifted organist who played by ear; Mary Elsay, the New Pilgrim pianist; and vocalists Joe and Lincoln Hendricks. Lincoln Hendricks served as Choir President. The Choir's formal portrait was made on the steps of New Pilgrim Church.²² In 1964 and 1965, New Pilgrim hosted "Choir Night" to celebrate the anniversaries of the ACMHR and its victories of the April-May 1963 campaign. For the 1964 Choir night a special musical program was written and produced, and it is described in the ACMHR Annual Report:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8 Page 8

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

The Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights Choir is well acquainted with the struggles of the Negro. Thus, we present the story of oppressed people with songs. Since a Renaissance is the activity or spirit of the great revival, our presentation tells some of the tribulations of the oppressed and how their spirits were not daunted though faced with intimidations and burdens. Instead, they had renewed courage and strength from the Most High and are still marching up Freedom's Road. We believe that 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength,' and He will see us through.

Other New Pilgrim members active in ACMHR included barber James Armstrong, who brought and won the suit to have his sons Dwight and Floyd admitted to the all-white Graymont Elementary School, which they successfully desegregated on September 4, 1963, the first and only students admitted that day. The Armstrongs, father and sons, were jailed on many occasions for participating in ACMHR demonstrations earlier that year. James Armstrong also served as ACMHR treasurer and carried a flag at the head of the procession during the Selma to Montgomery march. The Sanders sisters were also active ACMHR members. They later went to demonstrate in St. Augustine, Florida where Glenn Sanders was photographed for *Life* magazine. Among children who demonstrated were Carolyn Givner, age 10; Audrey Hendricks, the 9 year-old daughter of Lola and Joe Hendricks; Charlotte Billups, Reverend Billups' teenaged daughter; Reverend Beasley's daughter; Jerome Tiller and Annie Buckley. Roberta Brinson, an elderly lady, also demonstrated. James Lay, a postal worker who lived right across the street from the church, was captain of the security forces that patrolled neighborhoods.²³

As Reverend Shuttlesworth noted in a 1998 interview, "To be a meeting church was to invite terror from the police and the Klan." In a 2005 interview, Reverend Smith stated that he received threatening calls from unknown individuals, "You would get calls. They knew the number of children you had."²⁴ New Pilgrim's associate pastor, the Reverend Charles Billups Jr., who worked at Hayes Aircraft where well-known Klansmen also worked, survived a Klan beating late one night after getting off from work. One night "evil men" abducted and tortured Reverend Billups, beating him "with chains until blood ran down," he told the CBS reporter while filming the 60-minute documentary "Who Speaks for Birmingham?", which aired in May 1961.²⁵

The New Pilgrim church, however, was not bombed. "A Deacon slept down there in the balcony and he took care of that church," Pastor Smith reported. But he also suggested another reason that the church may have escaped dynamiting: "If you bombed the church and sparks got to flying – and Standard Oil in the next block . . . a whole lot of gasoline." The presence of the oil company's regional headquarters just west of New Pilgrim on Sixth Avenue South may have been the reason the church stood unscathed throughout Movement days. (Today the University of Alabama at Birmingham Facilities Planning office fills the two-story red brick headquarters, and UAB faculty park their automobiles in the adjoining block along Sixth. To the rear of New Pilgrim, a filling station serves local and interstate traffic.)

The only documented conflict at New Pilgrim occurred on the steps of New Pilgrim on the afternoon of May 5, 1963 when Birmingham police arrested Guy and Candie Carawan, white folklorists in town to record the Movement Choir. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8 Page 9

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

Carawans had escorted folk singer Joan Baez, in town for a benefit performance, to morning services at New Pilgrim, but during the afternoon ACMHR mass meeting, police had orders to keep all white persons, not including the police recorders R. S. Whitehouse and R. A. Watkins, away from the church and from the demonstration that followed the service.²⁶

Ironically, the spontaneous "walk to the jail" that interrupted the Sunday afternoon mass meeting on May 5th is one of a few instances where a major ACMHR demonstration ended without conflict and without the use of police dogs and clubs or firemen's hoses. The demonstration involved an estimated two thousand adults and children, dressed in their Sunday best, and scores of Birmingham police and firemen who guarded the jail, where hundreds of children and other demonstrators were being held, having been arrested following three days of massive freedom marches.

The May 5th "walk to the jail" was unplanned, there being a moratorium on marches that day due to the violence between spectators and the police that had curtailed the previous afternoon's marches. The Reverends King, Abernathy, and Shuttlesworth were preaching at their home churches in Atlanta and Cincinnati that Sunday and were scheduled to return for negotiations with the merchants in the evening. The final children's march was set for the next day. Reverend Smith, pastor at New Pilgrim, was preaching in Bessemer that afternoon. Hence, no preacher had been tapped to lead a march, as was standard ACMHR-SCLC procedure.

That afternoon of May 5, 1963, police reporters noted that the New Pilgrim church was "filled to capacity" and 500 persons stood for the ACMHR meeting; others gathered outside the church. An agitated SCLC staffer Andy Young reported to the crowd the arrest of the white folk singers, who had written the music for "We Shall Overcome." In the middle of the collection, at the suggestion of SCLC staffers James Bevel and Bernard Lee that those assembled "get up and walk to City Jail," the "congregation got up and walked out in mass." Wyatt Tee Walker, the SCLC coordinator, appointed from among the preacher volunteers the Rev. Charles Billups Jr., associate pastor at New Pilgrim, to lead the march. Reverend Billups had to run to catch up to lead the crowd headed down Sixth Avenue to the steps of the jail.²⁷

Given that Bull Connor had forbidden white people to get close to the scene, press reporting on the event proved challenging. But indeed reports and photographs did emerge and presented differing views of what happened when Reverend Billups and the crowd emerged from under the railroad viaduct to confront firemen with monitor hoses (multiple hoses rigged to a single nozzle resembling a machine gun), helmeted police units and paddy wagons, and Commissioner Connor himself, all hastily assembled between the crowd and the Birmingham jail.

Those accounts sympathetic to the Movement report that a miracle took place as Reverend Billups stood up to the assembled forces. Taylor Branch writes:

Drawing close, Billups knelt on the pavement, and many of the two thousand behind followed his lead, like a line of falling dominoes stretching all the way back to New Pilgrim. After a brief prayer, Billups stood up and shouted loudly enough for the distant reporters to hear: "Turn on your water? Turn loose your dogs! We will stand here until we die!" Many of the Negroes within range trembled, and a woman keeled over in a faint, but after a few seconds some noticed that the fireman remained paralyzed at his tripod,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8 Page 10

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

unable to blast the preacher at point-blank range. To save face, Connor repeated his order to fire in a hushed, angry growl. Some heard him say, "Dammit! Turn on the hoses" before the silence swallowed him up too.

SCLC coordinator Wyatt Walker approached two police captains and suggested the crowd be allowed to gather for a prayer service in the Negro-only park across the street from the jail.

"Let us proceed," intoned Billups, who walked forward as though in a trance. Watching from afar, the puzzled reporters felt the tension evaporate, and then they saw Bull Connor wading toward them. He explained breezily that he had granted a routine request to let the marchers pray in a segregated park, but to the marchers themselves it was nothing short of a miracle. Billups led the column past the water pumpers and the dreaded monitor guns, stepping over the hoses. As disbelief turned to joy behind him, shouts of "Hallelujah!" raced back along the line. Nonviolence had touched the fireman's heart, they said, and had tamed Bull Connor's hatred as surely as Moses had parted the Red Sea."

The prayer Service in Memorial Park lasted for 40 minutes and then participants returned to the church.²⁸

The *Birmingham News* of May 6, 1963 reported that Commissioner Connor's strategy of keeping whites away from the demonstrators and reinforcing the police lines "to halt any attempts to break through to the jail grounds" diminished the opportunity for violence.

Many years later marchers recalled the spiritual power that not only motivated the demonstrators that day, but also appeared to soften Birmingham officials. Mamie Brown Mason, a current New Pilgrim member and a lead singer for the ACMHR Movement Choir, in a 1996 interview recalled Reverend Billups' determination as he led the march. She also witnessed the reaction from one of the firemen gathered near the jail. "There was this tank that Bull Conner was in and he tried to get the firemen to turn the hose on us. This fireman refused to turn the hose on us and he told Bull, 'You turn it on yourself,' he said. 'I am not going to do that . . . All these good people want to do is to march and pray.' He said, 'Let the good Reverend pray.'" ²⁹

It was hardly a quirk of fate that Reverend Smith's congregation would swell the ranks of the largest march of the April-May 1963 campaign in which adults participated. They and their pastor had been involved since the earliest days in Movement activism. Together with Reverend Shuttlesworth, Smith went to a T.V. station on Red Mountain in December of 1956 to issue the first challenge to Birmingham segregation, demanding in a written statement that the Birmingham buses be desegregated.³⁰ In response, the Klan bombed Reverend Shuttlesworth's house on Christmas night. All of Shuttlesworth's belongings were destroyed. The next day when he appeared before the press in front of the bombed down parsonage he

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8 Page 11

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

was dressed in a most proper preaching suit, the gift of Nelson Smith's family to Smith that Christmas, a gift he gave to his friend.³¹ Later that day, despite the bombing, more than 200 ACMHR members rode the Birmingham buses, taking the issue to the courts.

Reverend Smith was a dedicated activist, but he also maintained his ties with earlier generations of civil rights activists including the Reverend J. L. Ware, a mentor whom the ACMHR faithful found much too conservative. Smith also reached out to involve college students in the local movement. In late 1961, following Shuttlesworth's move to Cincinnati, Smith successfully encouraged student leaders Frank Dukes and Charles Davis, and other students at Miles College, to get active. His overtures to the students came as Miles welcomed a new president and civil rights activist, Lucius Pitts, "a man of the masses who could speak to the classes."³² Smith also strongly supported efforts to improve the quality of education at Miles.

During the joint ACMHR-SCLC campaign of April-May 1963, Nelson Smith served on the ACMHR-SCLC Central Committee and led two marches, with his good friends the Rev. John Porter of the nearby Southside congregation at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church and the Rev. Alfred Daniel Williams (A.D.) King, Martin Luther King Jr.'s younger brother and pastor of the ACMHR stronghold First Baptist Church of Ensley. Both King and Porter had recently moved to Birmingham and were novices to "the Movement." Both of the marches the trio led were on Sundays when the SCLC staff, which consisted of preachers, liked to return to their home pulpits to preach and take in the collections. On Sunday, April 7, 1963, Reverend Shuttlesworth was in jail, having led the first march to City Hall the day before and taken with him Reverend Billups and other willing preachers. Though SCLC chief Wyatt Walker's strategic plan called for Reverend M.L. King to go to jail early in the campaign, King "decided to shore up the internal strength of the movement" and defer a jail term. In a private strategy session, subsequently related to Taylor Branch by ACMHR leader the Rev. Ed Gardner, King and Walker had some difficulty in finding preachers of stature to follow Shuttlesworth into jail that next day. King's own staff was reluctant to go (pleading preaching engagements) and, according to Gardner, King turned to Smith, saying, "Smith, I want you to go to jail." Smith reluctantly agreed. King then asked his brother A.D., and then recruited his former associate John Porter. To ACMHR members gathered at the Mass Meeting that Saturday eve before Palm Sunday, "The Reverend Smith confessed, "he had been in the movement for seven years and hadn't been in jail yet but he was going tomorrow. . . . There's no better time than Easter for us to go to jail for freedom."³³

On Palm Sunday, April 7, 1963, several hundred people attended the afternoon ACMHR Mass Meeting at St. Paul Methodist Church and more gathered on the sidewalks along Sixth Avenue North outside the church. In their flowing black ministerial robes, the Reverends Smith, Porter and A. D. King led assembled marchers along Sixth past the 16th Street Baptist Church and Kelly Ingram Park in the direction of City Hall. After the procession crossed 17th Street, policemen halted the ministers, arresting them and 20 others for parading without a permit, but not before they knelt in prayer -- a moment now symbolized by a monument at the Park. Black spectators, not pleased with the halting of the march, engaged in conflict with the police. Bull Connor called out the dogs to disperse the crowd, and news reports were filled with photographs of incidents of police brutality and with what appeared to be widespread support for civil rights reform.

The Palm Sunday march is "famous" as the first march of the Birmingham campaign to draw police violence -- which action demonstrated to the world though the coverage the national press gave it -- the brutality of segregation in Birmingham. It

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8 Page 12

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

is also noteworthy because the trio of preachers in their long black robes was photographed by the press and commemorated by the sculptor designing monuments for the refurbishment of Kelly Ingram Park in the 1990s. A controversy arose when the sculptor depicted the specific visages of Smith, King and Porter; the final representation became a generic representation of pastors as Movement leaders. The sculptor also designed monuments featuring dogs lunging at human beings, icons of the brutal treatment of demonstrators. These also greet visitors to today's Kelly Ingram Park.

Smith, Porter and King were quickly bailed out of jail and attended a mid-week mass meeting, the first held at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church.³⁴ The next Sunday, Easter Sunday, April 14, 1963 with the "Big Three" SCLC leaders, M.L. King, Shuttlesworth and Abernathy, in jail, the local preacher trio together with student leader Frank Dukes led another march. It began after a Mass Meeting at Thirgood CME Church, then located at Sixth Avenue North in the Northside residential neighborhood. The small group of marchers headed south on 11th Street through the neighborhood (since demolished for urban renewal and the construction of I-65) toward the City Jail on Southside to pray for their leaders and others held there. Onlookers numbering between 1,500 and 2,000 persons, disappointed that the fifty some police halted the marchers, hurled rocks and tussled with the police who arrested 26 persons and, using night sticks, broke up the gathering.³⁵

A few weeks later, in late May, 1963, Reverend Smith carried out one of many fund-raising and public relations trip to northern churches, where he preached to raise money for the ACMHR and bring the plight of civil rights activists to a national audience. While speaking at the Amity Baptist Church in Jamaica, New York, Reverend Smith was interviewed for the *Pittsburgh Courier* and asked about his Palm Sunday arrest: "They told us that we were in contempt of court. But we do not feel that there is a law in all the world that would prohibit walking and praying." As the newspaper further reported, Smith told his northern audiences that the conflict in Birmingham was not merely a black problem or an Alabama problem. "It is America's problem and greater progress will be made when all America, from the New England farmhand to our highest elected officials, realize this and accept their individual responsibility of doing something about it."³⁶

In mid-September 1963, New Pilgrim Baptist Church was the site of the funeral of 16-year-old Johnnie Robinson, whom police shot in the back as he rode his bicycle on the morning of the bombing of 16th Street Baptist Church, which killed four young girls. Police brutality was a constant theme of the ACMHR meetings held at the church; now it had claimed a New Pilgrim youth. Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph Abernathy attended; Reverend Smith spoke, as did Reverend Abraham Woods.³⁷

In November 1968, officials and staff workers of the ACMHR and the SCLC came again to Birmingham to participate in another funeral service at New Pilgrim, this time for the Rev. Charles Billups Jr..³⁸ The 5' 11" highly decorated veteran of both World War II and the Korean War, who could always be counted on to come through in times of crisis, had been a church pastor and active ACMHR leader. With Reverend Shuttlesworth he led the first march of the Birmingham campaign and was jailed along with Shuttlesworth and 20 others. His greatest act of courage was his leadership of "Miracle Sunday," the May 5, 1963 walk to the Birmingham jail: while thousands joined in, coming from the ACMHR meeting and the surrounding neighborhood, Billups alone faced the monitor hoses and the police, refusing to halt and proceeding to lead a prayer service in the park across from the jail. In 1966, Billups, his wife and three daughters had moved to Chicago to join an SCLC project to eliminate slums. Two years later, at age 41, he was employed by the National Tea Company as director of human relations.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8

Page 13

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

He was mysteriously murdered in Chicago, just following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.³⁹

For many New Pilgrim members, life in Birmingham improved thanks to their Movement efforts and the efforts of their pastor, who in 2005 noted, "We were active in everything for betterment for 52 years." Significant numbers of church members, including George Wheeler, Wilbur Miller, Lola Hendricks and Willo Dean Davis, applied for and received government jobs. Information on the availability of these jobs was gathered, applications picked up and meetings called to inform people of the job opportunities.⁴⁰ Smith continued as secretary of ACMHR until 1970 and also started the city's SCLC chapter. He gave leadership to national and international Baptist church affairs, serving as president of the Progressive National Convention from 1974 to 1976.⁴¹ He traveled widely, preaching on every continent of the globe. His church published a collection of his sermons in 2001. In "Ambiguities in American Life", Smith reflected upon the significant gains made by the Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, but also noted that "the trumpet calls us to hear the unfinished symphony in the musical score of brotherhood, economic equity, political participation, [and] social acceptance."⁴²

As the New Pilgrim congregation grew and urban renewal efforts to create an urban university and interstate system cleared the residential neighborhood surrounding the historic church, Smith found a site for a new church campus in the Goldwire neighborhood. In January of 1979, New Pilgrim moved to this campus, which includes an auditorium seating 1,500 persons, an educational building and parking. The church day care expanded to fill the historic New Pilgrim complex. Today, the children and grandchildren of former day care students continue to learn their ABCs here.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8

Page 14

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

Text Notes in Statement of Significance

¹ The New Pilgrim Baptist Church has no published history. Records of the church are published in the annual anniversary programs and maintained in files in possession of the Reverend Nelson Smith Jr., pastor of the church for 52 years. The church has published selected Annual Messages and sermons by Smith as *Why is there a Crack in the Liberty Bell?—Fermentations from the Pulpit* and *Pastor to People: Special Messages of Meaning and Mystery* (both New Pilgrim Baptist Church, 2001). There is no full length biography on the Reverend. Greg Garrison, religion editor of the *Birmingham News* and the Rev. Wilson Fallin Jr., President of the Birmingham Baptist Bible College and author of *A Shelter in the Storm: The African-American Church in Birmingham, Alabama, 1815-1963* (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1997), have conducted and published interviews with Smith. Smith has been critically ill during 2004 and 2005.

² In Birmingham, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights has been and still is (along with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s) referred to as "the Movement."

³ Greg Garrison, "Social Activist, Pastor Smith Reflects on 50 Years at New Pilgrim," *Birmingham News*, December 8, 2000.

⁴ *Birmingham News*, June 6, 1956; "ACMHR Declaration of Principles" printed in its entirety in *A Walk to Freedom* (Birmingham Historical Society, 1998), p. 4; Glenn Eskew, *But for Birmingham* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 1998), 126. Lola Hendricks relates that she attended the second meeting of the ACMHR at her church and that, "The second meeting was very impressive, because it was at a time when I think that all of us who attended that mass meeting were aware that things were bad in Birmingham and it was not getting any better and that it was time for us to do something about trying to make things better for Blacks in Birmingham." Lola Hendricks, interview with Horace Huntley, January 19, 1995 at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

⁵ Unfortunately, these minutes of ACMHR meetings faithfully taken by Smith have not made their way to a public archive.

⁶ Nelson Smith Jr., interview with Dr. Wilson Fallin Jr., July 31, 1993, quoted in Fallin, *A Shelter in the Storm*, 254 (see Note 1).

⁷ Andrew Manis, *A Fire You Can't Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham's Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 72.

⁸ Nelson Smith Jr., telephone interview, July 27, 2005, with Marjorie White, Birmingham Historical Society.

⁹ Odessa Woolfolk, telephone interview with Marjorie White, July 26, 2005, Birmingham Historical Society. Deacon Richmond Davis, who also had a weekly radio program at St. Peter Primitive Baptist Church in Bessemer in the 1950s, gave Smith the nickname of "Fireball" for his oratorical skill. Reverend Smith accepted, but never liked, the moniker: "I figured there was much more to my preaching than being emotionally charged." Greg Garrison, "Social Activist, Pastor Smith Reflects on 50 Years at New Pilgrim," *Birmingham News*, December 8, 2000.

¹⁰ Cleopatra Goree, telephone interview with Marjorie White, July 26, 2005, Birmingham Historical Society.

¹¹ Willo Dean Davis, telephone interview, July 26, 2005, with Marjorie White, Birmingham Historical Society

¹² Fallin, *A Shelter in the Storm*, 260. Fallin's comments are based on his interviews with Daisy Jeffries, September 14, 1994 and Lola Hendricks, September 15, 1994.

¹³ Georgia Price, telephone interview with Brenda Howell, July 1, 1993, Birmingham Historical Society.

¹⁴ The administrative use of the historic New Pilgrim Church has been confirmed by a series of individual interviews with New Pilgrim Members active in the church and the Movement. On August 10, 2005, Lola Hendricks, former ACMHR Corresponding Secretary; Willo Dean Davis, head of the New Pilgrim Day Care from 1953-1968 and currently the church clerk; New Pilgrim member, Cleopatra Goree, who taught history at Ullman High School in Movement days and frequently attended mass meetings at the church; Miss Lottie Thomas, current Director of the New Pilgrim Day Care; and Stone Johnson, longtime ACMHR member, "usher" (i.e. security guard), driver for Reverend Shuttlesworth, and fourth Treasurer of the Movement; met with Marjorie White of Birmingham Historical Society at the historic church and "wing" and talked through what happened where and when. Georgia Price in her 1993 interview and Pastor Smith in his 2005 interview also confirmed the administrative use of New Pilgrim facilities. Individual interviews providing information on the administrative use of the New Pilgrim Church include: Willo Dean Davis, telephone interview with Marjorie White, July 26, 2005, Birmingham Historical Society; Cleopatra Goree, telephone interview with Marjorie White, July 26, 2005, Birmingham Historical Society; Nelson Smith Jr., telephone interview with Marjorie White, July 27, 2005, Birmingham Historical Society; Audrey Hendricks, telephone interview with Marjorie White, August 3, 2005, Birmingham Historical Society.

¹⁵ The Birmingham police reports now comprise portions of the Bull Connor Papers at the Birmingham Public Library Archives. Copies for the period January 1961 to December 1963 are also located at the Birmingham Historical Society.

¹⁶ Gwendolyn Gamble, interview, January 24, 1996, with Horace Huntley at Miles College. Archive Division, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. Margaret Givner Brown, interview, June 13, 1996 with Binnie Myles at Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. Archive Division, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

¹⁷ Lola Hendricks, interview with Horace Huntley, January 19, 1995 at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

¹⁸ *Birmingham News*, April 23, 1963.

¹⁹ Eskew, *But for Birmingham*, 384.

²⁰ Lola Hendricks, interview with Horace Huntley, January 19, 1995 at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, 17.

²¹ Indeed, New Pilgrim's ties to the Movement Choir remain to this day. Witness a recent campaign by the church to raise funds for a scholarship to honor the memory of Carlton Reese, Movement Choir Director.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

8 Page 15

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

²² Lola Hendricks provided the photograph that was published in *A Walk to Freedom*, p. 16.

²³ Pastor Smith, Willo Dean Davis, Cleopatra Goree, Audrey Hendricks and Stone Johnson provided the names of New Pilgrim members actively involved in the Movement in their interviews with Marjorie White of Birmingham Historical Society, during July and August 2005.

²⁴ Smith, interview, July 27, 2005 with Marjorie White. Birmingham Historical Society

²⁵ Hayes Aircraft, now Pemco and still located at the Birmingham airport, is a facility that repairs aircraft. In the 1950s and 1960s, Hayes had major contracts with the federal government which required promotion of black employees. According to ACMHR member Stone Johnson (interview, August 10, 2005 with Marjorie White), "The Klan had a special hate for Billups . . . He integrated Hayes. They had to upgrade someone. . . They wrote from Washington." Diane McWhorter relates in *Carry Me Home* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001, pp. 154, 182-187) an account of the *Who Speaks for Birmingham?* interviews with producer David Lowe, which includes Billups' testimonial at a March 14, 1961 mass meeting and his reaction to one of his attackers who "came to his house later and offered to turn himself in to the police, Billups had suggested that they pray together instead."

²⁶ Birmingham Police Report of ACMHR Mass Meeting, May 5, 1963; Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: American in the King Years 1954-68* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 765-66.

²⁷ Birmingham Police Report of ACMHR Mass Meeting, May 5, 1963; Nelson Smith Jr., telephone interview, July 27, 2005; Wyatt T. Walker selecting Reverend Billups to lead the march is reported by Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 767. Diane McWhorter in her account of "Miracle Sunday" (*Carry Me Home*, 386-88) notes, "The humble Billups, the pride of the masses, was about to preside over the campaign's spiritual climax." See also Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 765-768. Branch's summary of the march (pp. 765-68) is based on the *New York Times* coverage printed May 6, 1963 and the *Birmingham World* report of May 8, 1963. *The World* used a UPI source and photographs for its march report, as its staff was covering the Baez concert that evening at Miles College; she was the first white performer to appear at a local black college event. Reverend Smith was also focused on the Miles fundraiser and, as the police had forbidden door-to-door fundraising, Smith gave over his radio broadcast to the Miles President that Sunday evening (Nelson Smith, telephone interview, July 27, 2005, with Marjorie White). Branch's account of the Carawans' and Baez's activities is based on Carawan's autobiographical summary, 1965, and Baez' writings and book, *And A Voice*. The arrest of the Carawans is reported in the police notes on the mass meeting of May 5, 1963. That the folklorists did get out of jail by Monday evening (May 6) is attested by the fact that on this evening they recorded the Movement choir; the recording can be heard on the Smithsonian Folkways CD SF 40032, *Sing for Freedom-The Story of the Civil Rights Movement through its Songs*.

²⁸ Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 767-68.

²⁹ Mamie Mason Brown, interview, June 2, 1995, with Horace Huntley at Miles College, Archive Division, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

³⁰ McWhorter, *Carry me Home*, 113.

³¹ Stone Johnson, interview, August 10, 2005, with Marjorie White, Birmingham Historical Society.

³² McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*, 245-246.

³³ The source of the quote by Smith is the April 6, 1963 Birmingham Police Report from the ACMHR Mass Meeting at St. James Church, attended by some 200 persons. According to Glenn Eskew (*But for Birmingham*, 225-226) the Reverends Smith, Porter and A.D. King had been pegged by King at an earlier strategy session, so statements at the meeting reflected their willingness to lead the march on the next day. The march is "famous" as the first of the Birmingham campaign to draw police violence – which action demonstrated to the world though the coverage the national press gave it – the brutality of segregation in Birmingham.

³⁴ Birmingham Police Report of the ACMHR Mass Meeting on April 11, 1963 at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, the first ACMHR meeting at that church.

³⁵ Eskew, *But for Birmingham*, 246.

³⁶ Thomas A. Johnson, "Birmingham Minister: 'Come Down, Help Us'" *New Pittsburgh Courier*, May 25, 1963.

³⁷ McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*, 539.

³⁸ ACMHR Press Release located in the Birmingham Police Surveillance files, November 11, 1968.

³⁹ Billups' death was reported in the *Birmingham News*, November 13, 1968 and *Birmingham Post Herald* of November 9, 1968. He was survived by his widow Almarie Billups and three daughters, Charlotte, Renee and Lisa.

⁴⁰ Willo Dean Davis and Cleopatra Goree, Interviews, August 10, 2005.

⁴¹ McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*, 245.

⁴² Nelson Smith Jr., *Why is there a CRACK in the LIBERTY BELL?* (See Note 1), 34-41.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

9

Page

16

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

9

Page

17

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

10

Page

18

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

X. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The nominated boundaries of the historic New Pilgrim Baptist Church at 903 Sixth Avenue South are represented by Parcel 2, Block 11, Birmingham, as marked on the attached Jefferson County Tax Map 01-29-02-1, Sections NE ¼ 02, Township 18 South, Range 3 West. The boundaries contain all of the historic property significantly associated with the New Pilgrim Baptist Church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, Jefferson County, AL

New Pilgrim Baptist Church, City of Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama
Photograph 1 by Marjorie L. White, Birmingham Historical Society, October 2006
Photographs 2-16 by Carroll Van West, Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation, July 2003
Negatives: Alabama Historical Commission, 468 South Perry Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104

North facade, facing southeast across Sixth Avenue South and the I-65 Exit ramp
1 of 16

North facade, facing east
2 of 16

Sanctuary, facing southeast
3 of 16

Sanctuary, facing south
4 of 16

Sanctuary, facing southwest
5 of 16

Classroom hallways, facing west
6 of 16

Classrooms, facing west
7 of 16

North facade, facing southeast
8 of 16

Dedication marker, facing southeast
9 of 16

Dedication marker, facing southeast
10 of 16

Dedication marker, facing southeast
11 of 16

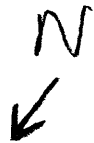
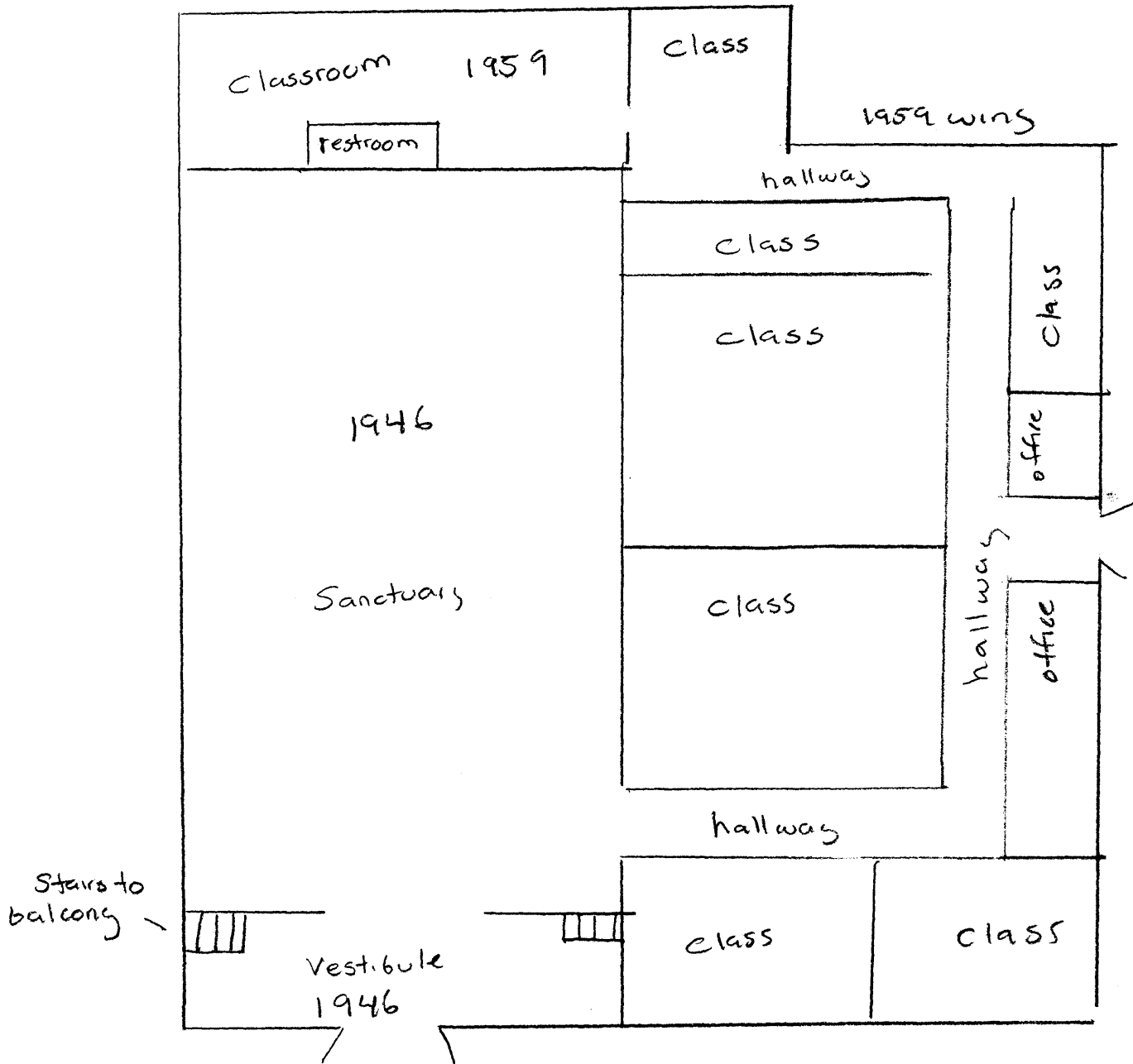
East elevation, facing south
12 of 16

East elevation and north facade, facing southwest
13 of 16

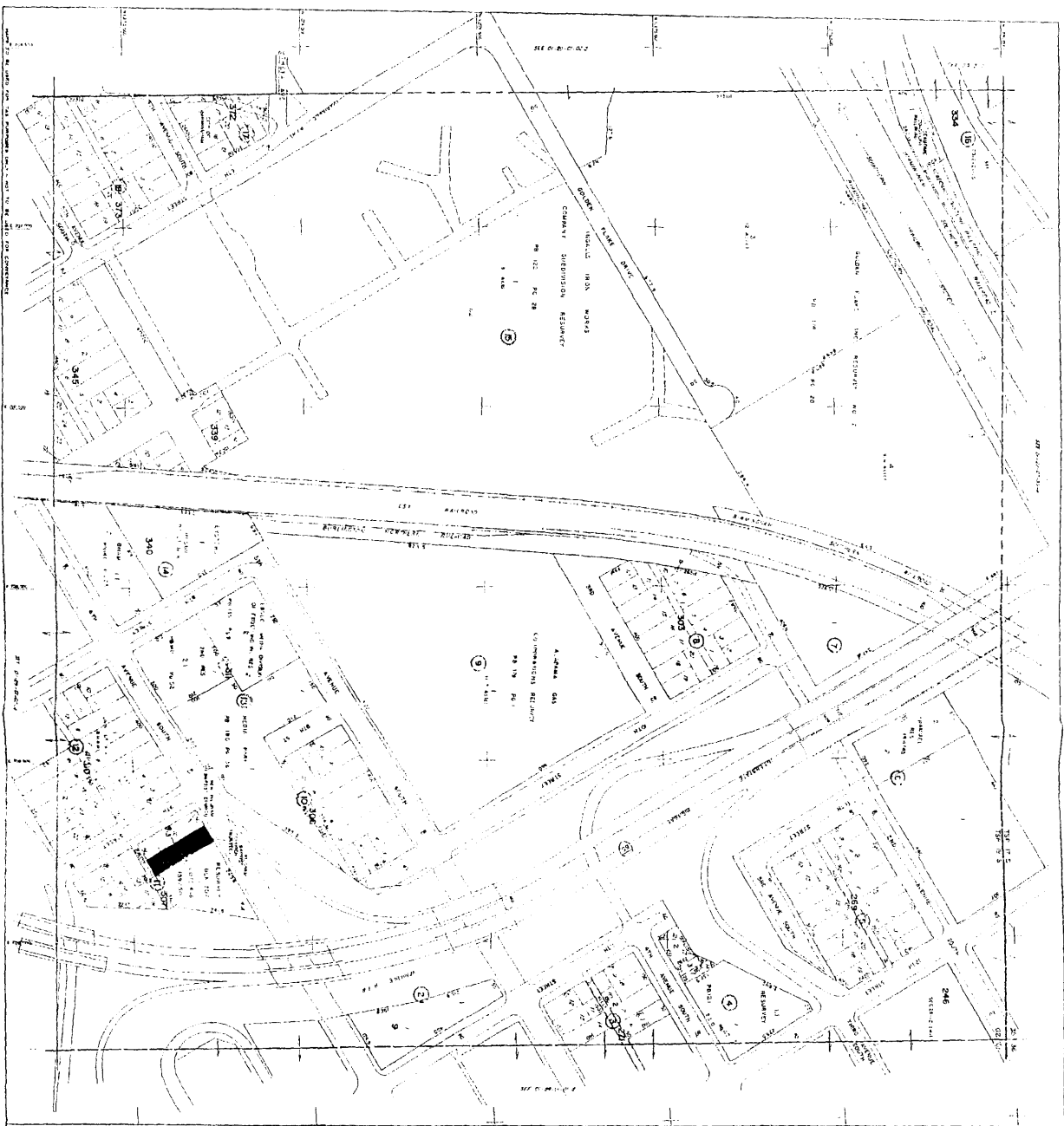
Window from 1946 church, interior view of tower
14 of 16

West elevation, facing east
15 of 16

South elevation and west elevation, facing northeast
16 of 16



New Pilgrim Baptist Church
 Birmingham, AL
 NTS: 2003



OWNERSHIP MAP
JEFFERSON
 STATE OF ALABAMA
 DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
 AD VALOREM TAX DIVISION

SOLE JURY TABLE OF
 ALABAMA
 1901



COMMISSIONER'S LOCATION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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SUB-SHEET INDEX

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LEGEND

AD VALOREM TAX MAPS

SECTION 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200

SECTION 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200

New Pilgrim Baptist Church
 903 6th Avenue South