

PH0664375

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY **DATA SHEET**
 RECEIVED **MAR 8 1978**
 DATE ENTERED **SEP 6 1978**

**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 *** A.M.E.*
 ~~State Street African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church~~
 AND/OR COMMON
 Same

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
 502 State Street
 CITY, TOWN
 Mobile
 STATE
 Alabama

--- VICINITY OF
 CODE
 01

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
 1

COUNTY
 Mobile

CODE
 097 ✓

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 type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
 State Street African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

STREET & NUMBER
 502 State Street

CITY, TOWN
 Mobile

STATE
 Alabama

--- VICINITY OF

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
 Mobile County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
 101 Government Street

CITY, TOWN
 Mobile

STATE
 Alabama 36602

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

--- FEDERAL --- STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
 SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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 State Street African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is an unusual example of church architecture erected for a black congregation during the antebellum period. It is a two-story brick structure, faced with stucco, and built on a traditional longitudinal plan. Slight Romanesque Revival influence appears in the round arches of the windows and doors. Though renovations in 1890-95 and 1920 resulted in several interior alterations, the exterior has been changed very little since its construction in 1854.

The structure faces south on State Street, and its facade is divided into three bays, with the center tower-bay projecting forward slightly. Entrance is through three round-arched doorways on the ground level, featuring a six-panelled double-leaf door in the center and two smaller double-panelled double-leaf doors on either side. The round-arched stained glass windows on the second floor correspond with the three doors and are dominated by the large center window. Mullions divide the windows into smaller arched sections. Framing the side and tower bays are stepped buttresses which are panelled above the first level. The tower itself features a circular window at the third level with a corbelled string course and four quatrefoils embellishing each face of the cornice. Small gables appear at the base of each side of the pyramidal spire. Records giving the height of the building indicate a difference in ten feet between 1885 and 1891, so apparently the spire was added during the 1890-95 restoration program.

The side elevations of the building are three-story, with window levels for the basement, the main floor of the sanctuary, and the balcony. A low-pitched shed roof covers the balcony and the side bays of the facade. Covering the sanctuary, a gabled roof rises above a clerestory whose small rectangular windows admit light into the nave of the church.

Entrance to the church is at the ground level, with the stairway leading up through the tower into the sanctuary. Additional dog-leg stairs were added in each side bay because the steepness of the center stair proved to be hazardous. The interior consists of two main stories, the basement and church auditorium which has a three-story elevation, the side aisles, triforium gallery, and clerestory. At the north end, a rectangular apse is created by the walls of the study and rear stair well. Center and side aisles lead from the tower to the altar. A balustraded balcony extends around three sides of the gallery level and is supported by two rows of five square columns each. The shafts of the columns are chamfered and their capitals and bases are simple rectangular blocks.

The interior elements, most notably the ceiling trusses, depict influences of the Gothic Style which was so popular in the late-19th century, and thereby are presumed to be the result of renovations made between 1890-95. The ceiling of the side aisles is supported by a triangular truss with a cusped arc featuring a pendant hanging from the arc and a cusped circle in the spandrel. The arced truss that spans the nave has a draped cusp moulding with the pendant hanging from the crown of the arc and the polyfoil circles in the spandrels. The windows of the side aisles are square-headed, with the panes of glass being colored and arranged in a pattern of vertical and diamond-shaped designs with a circle above. The gallery windows have segmentally curved heads set within a square frame.

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The chancel end, also a result of the 1890-95 renovations, includes a balustraded semi-circular dias extending into the nave area. The pulpit and clergy chairs are raised on a platform. Behind the rail which divides the dias from the apse is the area for the choir. Three round-arched windows light the apse, with the large center one depicting the scene of the Good Shepherd in the lower rectangular portion and featuring a wheel window in the arch.

The basement is the area least altered from the original structure. Beyond the entrance foyer, it consists of a large open space with three rows of cast-iron posts dividing the length into five bays. The posts have simple curved capitals with a shallow-cast egg-dart motif. The poured concrete floor is probably from the 1920 renovations. The main decoration in the basement level is confined to the four sets of twinned windows that contain colored glass set in diamond-shaped panes.

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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1854, the State Street African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is one of the most imposing structures to be built for a black congregation in Alabama during the antebellum period. It is the oldest Methodist Church building in the city of Mobile and is one of only two black Methodist churches established in the city prior to the Civil War.

Founded in 1829 for the predominantly black congregation of the African Church of the City of Mobile, the State Street Church was erected after their original structure burned. Until after the Civil War it functioned as a mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, later the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and with 500 full and 50 probationary members by 1855, it was one of Alabama's most successful black churches of this time.

When the congregation voted in 1865 to join the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, claimed ownership of the State Street building and challenged the right of the congregation to occupy it after changing their affiliation. The Reverend Wilbur G. Strong, a pioneer in establishing the A.M.E. Zion Church in the Gulf States, became the second of many distinguished black pastors of the State Street A.M.E. Zion Church, and during his tenure the congregation acquired legal ownership of the property in 1872.

Many outstanding ministers who succeeded Strong as pastor of the State Street Church were noted for their services to the A.M.E. Zion Church on the national level, including three who were elevated to the bishopric.

Today the exterior of the church building very nearly retains its original appearance, though the interior has been slightly altered. The most notable interior features are the trusses that support the side aisle ceiling and nave roof, believed to be a result of the 1890-95 renovation. Though the congregation has dwindled in recent years, it has continued its interest in maintaining the condition of the church. An 1890's parsonage, located on the lot adjacent to the church on the east, has lost its Victorian character due to recent alterations which included removing the Victorian trim and covering the exterior wall surface with stucco; consequently it has not been included in the nominated acreage.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Griffith, Lucille. Alabama: A Documentary History to 1900. University: University of Alabama Press, 1972.

Personal inspection. Elizabeth Gould, architectural historian, Mobile Historic Development Commission, Oct., 1977.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 1/7 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Mobile Quad., 7.5 min. series

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 11 6 | 3 0 9 4 4 10 | 3 3 0 5 0 4 10

B | |

C | |

D | |

E | |

F | |

G | |

H | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See addendum sheet.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

W. Warner Floyd, Executive Director and Sally Moore

ORGANIZATION

Alabama Historical Commission

DATE

February 24, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

725 Monroe Street

TELEPHONE

(205) 832-6621

CITY OR TOWN

Montgomery

STATE

Alabama 36130

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Neil B. Howard Jr.

TITLE SHPO Alabama

DATE March 3, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE <u>9/6/78</u>
ATTEST: <i>Chuck Adams</i>	DATE <u>9-5-78</u>
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION	

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Walls, W. J. Reality in the Black Church. Charlotte, North Carolina: A.M.E. Zion Publishing House, 1974.

Wormley, Marshall. Conversations and correspondence, Otc. 1977-Feb., 1978.

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Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of State and Lawrence streets, and going westwardly along the north side of State Street for 58 feet to a true point of beginning; thence turning northwardly for 110 feet; thence westwardly for 58 feet; thence southerly for 110 feet; thence eastwardly for 58 feet to the true point of beginning.