THEME 8 - CONTEMPLATIVE SOCIETY, 8a - Literature, Drama, and Music
8c - Education
8d - Intellectual Currents

Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Alexander Crummell

AND/OR COMMON
St. Luke's Episcopal Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
15th and Church Streets, Northwest — __NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Washington — __ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
000

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
D.C.	11	D.C.	001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	X RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
St. Luke's Episcopal Church (202) 667-4394

STREET & NUMBER
15th and Church Streets, Northwest

CITY, TOWN
Washington — __ VICINITY OF

STATE
D.C.

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER
515 D Street, Northwest

CITY, TOWN
Washington,

STATE
D.C.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None Known

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
_EXCELLENT	_DETERIORATED	_UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	_RUINS	X ALTERED	_MOVED DATE_____
_FAIR	_UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church, 15th and Church Streets, Northwest, Washington, D. C. is the oldest black Episcopalian congregation in the city and is also independent of the Diocese. Previous to the founding of St. Luke's, the congregation was known as St. Mary's, diocesean, meeting in a chapel of St. John's Church. The purchase of the three lots in 1875 on 15th Street, and later an adjacent lot, provided space for the new church. An act of the 48th Congress provided tax exemption as religious property. Ground was broken in July, 1876 and the corner stone laid November 9, 1876. The first services were held Thanksgiving Day, 1879 and at these services the church was incorporated as Saint Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church.

Impetus for the building was given by the Reverend Dr. Alexander Crummell, born free in 1819 in New York, educated in the United States and at Cambridge. He was the founder of the American Negro Academy, an early association of black intellectuals, While at Cambridge, Dr. Crummell attended a small parish church and was so impressed with the design that this church became the model for St. Luke's. Calvin T. S. Brent, the first black architect of the District of Columbia prepared the drawings.

The church is in Early English Gothic style of excellent proportions, restained in design and detail, adding to the merit of the whole. The exterior is rough random ashler coursing of Chesapeake Blue Stone relieved by some tans and browns. Door and window openings are lancet with tracery in the larger windows. Door and window jambs are alternate coursing of white and red sandstone. The red sandstone also used twice to band horizontally the front facade. The tympanum of the front entrance is worth study. The roofing is verigated blue and gray smooth slate.

The church's interior is finished in dark oak. The ceiling is a barrel vault formed of single transverse ribs across nave with purlins at right angles to the ribs, forming a rectangular framing pattern. A board ceiling is seen above this. The end walls of the nave are white sand plaster above an oak wainscot extending to the height of the aisle roof. The roof is supported by cast-iron column or piers terminating in floral capitols, and a wood post, from the capitol to the ribs at the nave eaves. The wood posts are braced longitudinally by curved members. The usual clear-story windows are triangular in shape, each the length of one bay of the nave. The church furniture is of excellent design and craftmanship - all finished in medium oak. The stained glass is very good.

About 1900 a parish hall was added adjacent to the South aisle, in the same style as the church. In the early 1940s it was found the nave walls and roof were in a weakened state and at the request of the District of Columbia, the building was not used until the deteriorating portions hadbeen restored. This included underpinning masonry for the two lines of columns, transverse tie rods across the

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
_PREHISTORIC	_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	_COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	X RELIGION	
_1400-1499	_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	_CONSERVATION	_LAW	_SCIENCE	
_1500-1599	_AGRICULTURE	_ECONOMICS	X LITERATURE	_SCULPTURE	
_1600-1699	_ARCHITECTURE	X EDUCATION	_MILITARY	X SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
_1700-1799	_ART	_ENGINEERING	_MUSIC	_THEATER	
X 1800-1899	_COMMERCE	_EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	_PHILOSOPHY	_TRANSPORTATION	
_1900-	_COMMUNICATIONS	_INDUSTRY	_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	X OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		_INVENTION		Afro-American History	

SPECIFIC DATES Alexander Crummell (1819-1898) St. Luke's Church (1876-present) BUILDER/ARCHITECT Calvin T. S. Brent (architect)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Reverend Alexander Crummell was one of the most talented and articulate black scholars of the nineteenth century. Components of his thought form part of the legacy of the black man's struggle for freedom in the nineteenth century and his philosophy continued on into the twentieth century. As spokesman for black liberation during this period, he was an intellectual and a pioneer in the establishment of a black tradition of scholarship through the founding of the American Negro Academy in Washington, D. C. As an Episcopal minister, he overcame obstacles of color caste in the ministry and helped found St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Washington, D. C. This edifice was a physical creation and embodiment of Crummell's belief in the role the church has played, historically, in the lives of black Americans as an advocate for social change, education and self help.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in New York City on March 3, 1819 into a family which was committed to the anti-slavery cause and to strong religious beliefs, Crummell's values and ideas were molded by the institutions of church, school, and family. He attended the famous African Free School in New York City and was among the institution's distinguished alumni, which included James McCune Smith, Ira Aldridge, Samuel Ringold Ward, and Henry Highland Garnett. From 1831-1835 Crummell received the equivalent of a high school education in the black operated Canal Street School, also in New York. He left this school in 1835 to attend the Noyes Academy in Canaan, New Hampshire. Local racial prejudice resulted in violence and Crummell, along with several other black students, was forced to leave. Crummell continued his educational pursuits by spending the next three years at the Oneida Institute in Whitesboro, New York. At Oneida, manual training was combined with the traditional classical curriculum and formed a course of study which Crummell was later to advocate in the education of his people.

The prejudice which Crummell experienced in seeking an education was also prevalent in his attempts to enter the ministry. In 1839 he sought admission into the Episcopal Church's General Seminary in New York, however, he was rejected because of his color. Yet, Crummell was undaunted and remained determined to obtain a religious education comparable to that which was available to whites. Consequently, he studied privately with some of the leading Episcopal churchmen of Boston and Providence. By 1844, his private instructions had achieved the equivalent level of a seminary education and Crummell was admitted into the priesthood. He then applied for admission to the diocese of

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Crummell, Alexander. Africa and America. Springfield, Mass.: Willey & Co., 1891.

_____. The Future of Africa. New York: Charles Scribner, 1862.

(Continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	18	3,2,3,5,2,0	4,3,0,8,5,6,0
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

St. Luke's Episcopal Church occupies the city block of 15th Street, Northwest between O and Church Streets. It is bounded on the south by O, and the east by 15th, on the north by Church, and on the west by a parking lot.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Lynne Gomez Graves, Historical Projects Director

ORGANIZATION: Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation

DATE: 3 February 1976

STREET & NUMBER: 1420 N Street, Northwest

TELEPHONE: (202) 462-2519

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: D. C.

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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nave and aisles at each column and reinforcing roof framing members. At the same time sash and door frames were replaced. Fortunately, the rehabilitation work was so carefully done no indication is visable but the stained glass at each side of the entrance door was replaced with faceted glass and the six panel heavy molded doors were replaced with full length vee-grooved boarded doors. Neither of these are keeping with the original spirit of the church. The cost of the rehabilitation was approximately $30,000.00.

In 1961, the old parish hall was replaced by a new two story unit of modern design, using a combination of stone similar to the church, planed granite and limestone with aluminum sash and entrance doors. The cost was approximately $200,000.00, Sulton & Campbell were the Architects.

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Pennsylvania. Again, as in 1839, he was met with rejection - a rejection the bishop tempered by replying that Crummell's request might be approved if Crummell agreed to abstain from applying for a seat in the church's convention. Earlier black ministers such as Absalom Jones and Peter Williams, both self-educated men, had had to succumb to such humiliation for admission into the diocese. However, Crummell was determined to never compromise himself or his beliefs against such bigotry. He rejected the bishop's terms and returned to New York City where he attempted to establish a religious mission in the black community. Failure to raise sufficient funds to erect a church building plagued him. In 1847 Crummell was encouraged by sympathetic white clergymen to travel to England in order to solicit support for the mission.

The years Crummell spent in England were a period he often referred to as one "'of grand opportunities, of the richest privileges, of cherished remembrances and of golden light.'"[1] For three years he lectured and preached throughout the British Isles in order to raise money for his church and to gain support for the broader cause of freedom for blacks in America. In 1851 under the patronage of a British churchman, Crummell began studies at Queen's College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1853. When Crummell left England in that year, he had received more formal education (with the possible exception of W. E. B. Du Bois) than any other American black man in the nineteenth century. He had obtained a thorough background in philosophy, theology, history, and the social sciences. His experiences in England left him a believer in the efficacy of British institutions which he thought should be used as a model for his concept of scholarship in educating blacks in America.

When Crummell left England he travelled to Africa. Two years earlier in 1851, before a London gathering, Crummell fondly reflected on the continent of his forefathers. "(T)here is no spot of all this wide world to which my heart travels with more ardent affection than Africa. It is the land of my fathers."[2] A major formulator and articulator of Pan-Negro thought, Crummell believed that black America's relations with Africa were inextricably tied with black people all over the world. Kinship and social experience bound them together transcending class and geographical boundaries. For Crummell, the destiny of blacks everywhere was tied to their fate anywhere.

Never the strong opponent of black emigration like Frederick Douglass, Crummell travelled to Liberia in 1853 as a missionary-educator under the auspices of the Episcopal Church's Domestic and Foreign Mission Society. He became a citizen of Liberia which had achieved its independence in 1847. On public occasions, he often spoke of the need to develop a "black civilization" in Africa. His belief in such a civilization stemmed from his concepts of

the brotherhood of all blacks. This postulate was part of his larger belief in Christian love of man and man's love of God. Crummell felt that man should pattern his life after that of a redeeming Christ, for in doing Godly acts, man became more Christ-like. Crummell believed that service to ones fellow man was the best expression of the love of God. In the pursuit of love of mankind, each individual's first duties were to family and race for "race feeling, like family feeling, is of divine origin . . . . Indeed, a race is a family."[3]

Crummell believed that Liberia would be the starting point in the creation of a civilization whose leadership would be under the guidance of educated black Americans. However, when the educated elite did not respond to his call from Liberia, Crummell made several unsuccessful trips to his homeland, during the Civil War, to recruit leaders under the auspices of the American Colonization Society. Meanwhile, he continued to work hard as a high school teacher and professor of Moral Philosophy at Liberia College. Crummell hoped to train a cadre of educated intellectuals and leaders among the Liberians. Inability to receive sufficient support along with overt opposition from white American missionaries resulted in the failure of Crummell's plans. Sick and disillusioned, he left his adopted homeland in 1872. Yet, until his death in 1898, Crummell continued to fervently advocate the "'christianization and civilization'" of Africa by her talented sons and daughters everywhere.

When Crummell left Africa in 1872, he returned to the United States and maintained permanent residence in Washington, D. C. In 1873, he became rector-elect of St. Mary's Church, an Episcopal mission among Washington's black community. He was also selected as head of the church's black Sunday School program throughout the area. From St. Mary's mission emerged the black Episcopal church of St. Luke's with Crummell as its founding minister. The need to attract financial support for the struggling church necessitated Crummell's absence. Crummell was not a novice in this type of endeavor. He had attempted to establish churches several times before on both sides of the Atlantic. His decades of experience in fund raising for schools and churches was crucial to the eventual success of the St. Luke's undertaking. The church and congregation were the crowning point of his ministerial career.

Crummell viewed the church as the only social and educational institution controlled by blacks. He viewed it as the prime mechanism for the installation of character and culture within the black community. The discipline, authority, and well-educated ministry which the Episcopal Church offered was urgently needed by black people during a period he called the passage from the "Discipline of Slavery and Caste" to the "noble Discipline of Freedom."

Crummell also believed, as he stated in 1887, that churches such as St. Luke's should be agencies for the preparation of young ministers. Crummell, therefore, expended a considerable amount of his time training young black aspirants for the ministry. George F. Bragg, later rector of St. James Episcopal Church in Baltimore and author of the first general history of blacks in the Episcopal Church, was one of Crummell's students.

Thus, the founding and construction of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Washington, D. C. was the physical embodiment of Crummell's belief in the role the church had traditionally played and would continue to play in the black community. The Gothic architectural style planned by Crummell himself was reminiscent of the great churches of England which Crummell had seen. On Thanksgiving Day, 1879, the first service was held with Crummell in the pulpit of the unfinished edifice. Actively involved in the solicitation of money for the struggling church, Crummell led it to a comfortable financial position so that in 1894 when he retired, St. Luke's had passed through a period of financial crisis to become a religious center for black Episcopalians and to become a source of cultural activity for Washington's black community.

Between his travels to solicit funds for the church and his clerical duties there, Crummell continued to lecture before black audiences, especially those on the campuses of black colleges. During the era of Jim Crow and disenfranchisement, his message remained the same: the black community needed an educated and talented cadre to lead in the survival and uplift of the race. After his retirement in 1894, Crummell spent most of his time in the development of this leadership. His solution was the founding of the American Negro Academy in 1897. Crummell viewed this academy as the means for the development of a superior black culture and civilization through "the encouragement of the genius and talent of our race."[4] The initial membership of the Academy was limited to forty and represented such notables as W. E. B. Du Bois, Archibald and Francis Grimke', Kelly Miller, and Paul Laurence Dunbar. It was Crummell's hope that the Academy would develop and foster self-respect among blacks and would help dispel the notion of black inferiority. The Academy would promote intellectual pursuits offering young scholars the opportunity to present papers and engage in discussions. Crummell was a pioneer in the establishment of a black tradition of scholarship which was carried further by Carter G. Woodson through the establishment of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915.

While this leadership cadre of intellectuals and scholars or "scholar-philanthropists" as Crummell termed them, were to be instrumental in the conception and creation of a black nation and culture, Crummell believed that the masses of black people should acquire trade skills. Manual training would lead not only to material reward but would also lead to moral discipline. He ardently supported liberal arts education, especially for the "scholar phi-

lanthropists" but felt that such an education should be tempered with manual training. Crummell, therefore, anticipated and espoused the views of two well-known black leaders. He verbalized Booker T. Washington's emphasis on manual training, and W.E. B. Du Bois' belief in academic education and the "talented tenth." The dicotomy of the Washington-Du Bois philosophies was synthesized by Crummell.

Alexander Crummell died in September, 1898. His ideas were essentially those of "mental and moral improvement" for his race. An Episcopal minister primarily, Crummell helped found one of the most important black Episcopal churches in the nation, St. Luke's Episcopal in Washington, D. C. As a pioneer in the establishment of a black tradition of scholarship, Crummell began the synthesis of ideas concerning black people and their history. Five years later in his Souls of Black Folk , W. E. B. Du Bois referred to Crummell as a prophet who could be likened to the savants of some distant golden age.

Alexander Crummell not only laid a solid foundation for his intellectual predecessors such as Carter G. Woodson in the formation of the ASNLH and Du Bois with the NAACP but also kept the seeds of Pan Africanism alive from the nineteenth century to the twentieth. Both Du Bois and Marcus Garvey uttered words reminiscent of Crummell in their belief in the universal kinship of blacks. Alexander Crummell's life exemplifies a tradition inherent in the development of Afro-American history and culture in which his philosophies were carried further by those men who were to emerge after him.

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2. The Anti-Slavery Reporter, June 2, 1851, p. 88.

3. Alexander Crummell, "The Social Principle," The Greatness of Christ, (New York, 1882), p. 309.

4. Alexander Crummell, "The Attitude of the American Mind Toward the Negro Intellect," American Negro Academy, Occasional Paper No. 3, (Washington, D. C., 1898).

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_____. "1844-1894. The Shades & the Lights of a Fifty Years' Ministry Jubilate." Washington, D. C.: R. L. Pendleton, 1895.

Du Bois, W. E. B. The Souls of Black Folk. New York: The Blue Heron Press, 1953, Chapter XII.

Scruggs, Otey M. "We the Children of Africa in this Land: Alexander Crummell." Howard University, Department of History. The Second Series of Historical Publications, 1972.

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