

Theme 961c  
Theme 961f

Theme 8c

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

|                                   |
|-----------------------------------|
| STATE:<br><b>Washington, D.C.</b> |
| COUNTY:                           |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY                  |
| ENTRY DATE                        |

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

#### 1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Mary Church Terrell House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

#### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**326 T Street, Northwest**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Washington**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

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

#### 3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)   | OWNERSHIP  | STATUS  | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private<br><input type="checkbox"/> Both                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress                       | Yes:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Restricted<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)  |  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural<br><input type="checkbox"/> Commercial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Educational<br><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Government<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence<br><input type="checkbox"/> Religious<br><input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____<br>_____<br>_____                    |

#### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Phyllis T. Langston**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1238 "You" Street, Northwest**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Washington**

STATE: **D.C.**      CODE: **11**

#### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Recorder of Deeds**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**6th and D Streets, Northwest**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Washington**

STATE: **D.C.**      CODE: **11**

#### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**None Known**

DATE OF SURVEY:       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: **Wash., D.C.**

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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**7 DESCRIPTION**

|           |                                    |   |  |   |                                |
|-----------|------------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                        |   |  |   |                                |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated             | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins |
|           | (Check One)                        |   | (Check One)                              |   |                                |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |                                |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

**I. General Statement**

- A. Architectural character: This house, built in 1907, has a very simplified Victorian architectural style, commonly used in Washington, D.C. residential structures around 1900.
- B. Condition: Structurally sound and presently occupied.

**II. Description of Exterior:**

- A. Overall dimensions: The total lot acreage is 2,390 square feet. The house consists of three stories. It is semi-detached, the house to the right having been torn down. The main entrance is located on a side porch. The front yard is about 15 feet deep, and the back yard is approximately 20 feet by 50 feet. The third floor is set back from the rear of the house.
- B. Foundation: Apparently brick on top of a concrete basement floor.
- C. Wall Construction: Brick walls
- D. Porch: The porch is elevated above the ground floor and is located on the left side of the house. Its dimensions are approximately 30 feet by 5 feet. The access to the porch entrance is from T Street, three steps above the sidewalk and eleven steps to the entrance level. Entrance to the ground floor is inside the house.
- E. Firescape: No apparent firescape
- F. Chimney: Brick, not in working order
- G. Openings:
  - 1. Doors: A single side entrance and two screened back doors which lead to a narrow back porch, about four feet wide, with wood hand railings.
  - 2. Windows: All windows are double hung. The first and second floor each have three windows arranged in an angular bay. The third floor has two windows and the attic has one.
- H. Roof: Asphalt tile

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**4. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1863-1954 (Terrell) 1899-1913 (Terrell's occupancy of house)**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | <u>Afro-American</u>                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | <u>History</u>                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |   | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mary Church Terrell was born in Memphis, Tennessee on September 23, 1863. She received her entire education in Ohio and graduated from Oberlin College with an A.B. in June, 1884. In September, 1885 she went to Wilberforce University in Xenia, Ohio to teach and in 1887, she came to Washington to teach Latin at the M Street High School. Following the award of her M. A. from Oberlin in 1888 Mary Church went abroad to travel and to study languages. Returning home in 1890 she continued to teach at the M Street High School and in October, 1891 she married the head of the school's Latin department, Robert A. Terrell, who was also a prominent black lawyer.

After her marriage, Mrs. Terrell continued her interest in the District's colored school system although she no longer taught in it. In 1895 she succeeded in receiving one of the three appointments to the Board of Education that were designated for women and thereby became the first black woman in the U. S. to be so appointed. Her two six year terms on the board, 1895-1901 and 1906-1911, were distinguished by hard fighting for quality education, fair hiring employment practices, and more adequate appropriations for schools.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, Mary Terrell became interested in the colored women's club movement. When the Federation of Afro-American Women and the Colored Women's League combined in 1896, Mrs. Terrell was chosen President of the resulting organization, the National Association of Colored Women. Under her leadership the Association established a fund to help children, started schools of Domestic Science, discussed the labor question, the Convict Lease system, and Jim Crow car laws. As an acknowledgement of her tireless efforts in the organization, Mrs. Terrell was unanimously voted Honorary President for life.

Mary Terrell's concern for black women widened to encompass a concern for the entire women's suffrage movement. She joined the National American Suffrage Association at Susan B. Anthony's request and was friendly with some of the leading feminists of her day. In May, 1908 she was invited, in memory of Frederick Douglass, to the sixtieth anniversary of the First Women's Rights Convention in New York. In 1848 Douglass had seconded a resolution by Elizabeth Cady Stanton that demanded equal political rights for women.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Brown, Letitia W. and Lewis, Elsie M. Washington in the New Era, 1870-1970. Washington, D.C. : Publication of the Education Department of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1972.

Dannett, Sylvia. Profiles of Negro Womanhood. Vol. I. New York: Educational Heritage, Inc. 1964.

Davis, Elizabeth. Lifting as They Climb. Washington: National Association of Colored Women, 1933.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |                         |                         | O<br>R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |  |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|--|
| CORNER   | LATITUDE                | LONGITUDE               |        |   |  |
|  | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |        |   |  |
| NW   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        |   |  |
| NE   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        |   |  |
| SE   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        |   |  |
| SW   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        |   |  |

UTM:18.325160.4309140

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than one acre**

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
|        |      |        |      |
|        |      |        |      |
|        |      |        |      |
|        |      |        |      |

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Marcia M. Greenlee**

ORGANIZATION: **Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation** DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1420 N Street, Northwest**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D.C.** CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**      **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

|                  |      |
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| STATE            |      |
| Washington, D.C. |      |
| COUNTY           |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER     | DATE |
|                  |      |

(Number all entries)

**Significance #8**

Association. The Washington Chapter was forced to reaccept the black woman's application.

At the age of eighty-six, Mrs. Terrell challenged the District of Columbia's failure to enforce the anti-discrimination laws of 1872 and 1873 that applied to various areas of public accommodation. She participated in the Thompson test case of 1950 that provided the Corporation Counsel with the necessary material for litigation based on the 1872 and 1873 laws. The repeated failures of the courts to uphold the laws increased her efforts to have public places of accommodation comply with the old statutes. Economic boycotts of the Hecht Company and the G. C. Murphy stores, in the downtown business district of Washington, finally resulted in the companies' agreements to comply with the old laws.

In June 1953 Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglass delivered the favorable decision of the court on the Thompson case saying, "We have said that the Acts of 1872 and 1873 survived the intervening changes in the government of the District of Columbia and are presently enforceable."

Mrs. Terrell's request to speak before a Congressional committee in April, 1950 in opposition to a bill directed at "un-American" activities symbolized her awareness of the necessity of continual and vigilant surveillance of the rights of other minority groups. The loss of the rights of one group often led to the loss of rights of others. She urged Congress to pass legislation guaranteeing application of the Constitution to protect the rights of all citizens rather than passing legislation to restrict, deny, or deprive people of their rights.

On July 24, 1954 Mary Church Terrell died in Arundel, Maryland while on a visit to the family summer home at Highland Beach. The condolences sent in memory of this remarkable woman from all over the world were a tribute to the esteem in which she was held and a testimony to her continual fight against prejudice and discrimination of all types.

Mary Terrell is of national historical significance for several reasons. She was the first black woman to serve on an American school board. She was also responsible for re-discovering the so-called "Lost Laws" of the District of Columbia which dealt with public accommodations and was successful in her subsequent Thompson restaurant suit that resulted in the 1953 Supreme Court decision ending segregated public accommodations in the nation's capital. Active in the women's suffrage movement and fearless in her expressions of black rights, Mrs. Terrell's social involvement is evidenced by her work as a civil rights activist and as president of the National Association of Colored Women. Her residence in Washington's Le Droit Park, 326 T Street, Northwest, is worthy of the commemoration of this remarkable woman because it is the house in which she lived for the greatest length of time as she involved herself in activities for the achievement of equality for American minorities.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
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|                   |      |

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Mrs. Terrell's fame achieved international proportions in June, 1903, when she gave a speech in Germany at the International Congress of Women on the "The Progress and Problems of Colored Women." The acclaim she received from this speech started her on the lecture circuit across the United States. Most of her talks concerned lynching, colored women, and the race problem in general. In the meanwhile, she developed her literary talents by writing for Washington's The Colored American under the pseudonym of Euphemia Kirk, and for a number of other newspapers and magazines. She also began compiling material for her autobiography, A Colored Woman in a White World which was published in 1940.

Mary Church Terrell carried on her campaign against injustice of any kind all her life. When three companies of black soldiers were dismissed without honor after the Brownsville Affair of 1906, Mrs. Terrell pleaded their case to Secretary Taft of the War Department, seeking a suspension of the dismissal order until an investigation of the affair could be made. A temporary suspension of thirty-six hours was granted, and although the suspension did not prevent the dismissals, it did focus national attention on the injustice. (Fort Brown in Brownsville, Texas, where the Brownsville Affair occurred, is a National Historic Landmark and as a result of research completed earlier by the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation, the National Park Service's Consulting Committee and Advisory Board have noted its important relationship to Afro-American history.)

During World War I, Mary Terrell worked in the War Camp Community Service, organizing recreational facilities for returning black war veterans. In this way she was able to provide jobs for black women, who were sorely neglected in the employment field, and a service for black military men who were still segregated from their white counterparts. Following the riots of the "Red Summer" of 1919 when widespread racial violence, usually precipitated by white attacks on blacks, swept the country, Mrs. Terrell was a part of an investigative committee of D. C. citizens who looked into charges of the maltreatment of blacks during the affair. Many of the reports by blacks of unjust treatment by white policemen during the violence in Washington, such as those filed by many of the 150-300 blacks who were arrested (as compared to only thirty whites), were substantiated by her committee. The rumored rape of a white woman by a black man that had initially instigated the violence was also proven to be unfounded.

Mary Terrell continued her fight against discrimination by challenging the District's Chapter of the American Association of University Women's policy of racial exclusion in its membership. Resigning her membership in the 1920s because of increased responsibilities, Mary Church Terrell attempted to gain readmission to the organization in October, 1946. Although the local board continually refused to seat her, the national body agreed to do so in June 1949 when the matter was favorably settled at the Seattle convention of the

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*(Continuation Sheet)*

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|---------------------------|------|
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| COUNTY                    |      |
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|                           |      |

*(Number all entries)* 9 - References

Shepperd, Glayds Byram. Mary Church Terrell: Respectable Person. Baltimore: Human Relations Person, 1959.

Terrell, Mary Church. A Colored Woman in a White World. Washington: National Association of Women's Clubs, Inc., 1968.