

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000352

Date Listed: 4/24/92

St. James A. M. E. Church
Property Name

Seminole
County

FLORIDA
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for

Patrick Andrew
Signature of the Keeper

4/24/92
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 8

This nomination is amended to add Criteria Consideration A, since the resource is a church.

This change has been confirmed by phone with the Florida SHPO (4/21/92).

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 18). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. James A.M.E. Church
other names/site number N/A, 8SE 457

2. Location

street & number 819 Cypress Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Sanford N/A vicinity
state Florida code FL county Seminole code 117 zip code 32821

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> objects
			<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Suzanne P. Walker (Deputy SHPO) 3/1/92
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historic Preservation Officer, Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Patrick Andrews 4/24/92
 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 of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Church

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Church

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival/English Gothic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Brick

roof Asphaltother Brick: Tower

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Ethnic Heritage/Black History

Period of Significance

1913

Significant Dates

1913

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Spears, Prince W.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property Less than one

UTM References

A

1	7
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4	7	4	2	6	0
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3	1	8	6	1	8	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 8, Block 10, Tier B, E.R. Trafford's Map of the Town of Sanford (Seminole County Plat Book 1, Page 56)

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The above boundary contains all historic resources that are the subject to this nomination proposal.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date _____
 street & number 500 S. Bronough Street. telephone (904) 487-2333
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

Description

Summary Paragraph

The St James A.M.E. Church is a one-story, English Gothic Revival style building located at the northeast corner of Cypress Avenue and East Ninth Street in Sanford, Florida. The building has a square ground plan, a pyramidal main roof located behind steep, sloped parapet walls and two towers, one located at the southeast corner of the building and the other at the southwest corner. The towers of the dark red brick structure are of unequal height and the church is distinguished by large Tudor arch windows containing stained glass on its south and west facades.

Supporting Narrative

The structural system of the church consists of load bearing walls of red brick laid in common bond that rest on a continuous poured concrete foundation. Wall openings comprise Tudor and segmental arched windows, the more important of which have corbeled drip molds over the arches. The smaller segmental arch windows do not have drip molds but do feature brick vousoirs. The doorways also have modified Tudor arches. All of the original windows have stained glass and wood sashes. The lights in the large Tudor arch windows are fixed, but the smaller 1/1 light windows in each elevation have a fixed upper light and a pivoting lower light. The southwest tower also features arched openings fitted with louvers on its west and south sides. Each of the ventilators in the bell tower has corbeled, Tudor arch drip mold.

The main entrance to the church is found on the west and south sides of the bell tower. A flight of masonry steps, flanked by solid masonry balustrades lead to a stoop on each side of the tower. Each stoop is sheltered by an entrance hood cantilevered from the tower wall. Each hood is constructed of wood and has an open pitched roof. The truss-work of these small structures is visible and is a decorative element of the building. A similar--but smaller--entrance hood is found over the secondary entrance south elevation of the church, just west of the southeast tower. Both towers have pedestals or dies at the corners of the parapet that frame the steep, pyramidal roof of each structure.

INTERIOR

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

Description

The principal interior space of the church consists of an octagonal nave with pews arranged in a semicircular pattern on a sloped floor. The nave is separated from the raised chancel by a curved rail. The choir is located at the east end of the building on raised platforms. The ceiling is constructed of pressed metal panels and has coved sides with a flat octagonal center. The northeast and southeast corners of the building house rest rooms and minor entrances.

ALTERATIONS

There have been few changes to the church since its construction. Wrought iron handrails were added to the main entrance steps, and the original pressed metal roof shingles were replaced with asphalt shingles in 1989. On the interior, the original pine floors of the chancel were carpeted, and the restrooms were remodeled.

NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCE

A detached, one-story, concrete block Sunday school building was erected at the eastern end of the lot in 1946.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

Photographs

List of Photographs

1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
 2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
 3. Yeilding and Provost
 4. 1991
 5. St. James A.M.E. Church
 6. West and South Facades, Looking Northeast
 7. Photo No. 1 of 12
-
1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
 2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
 3. Yeilding and Provost
 4. 1991
 5. St. James A.M.E. Church
 6. South Facade, Looking North
 7. Photo No. 2 of 12
-
1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
 2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
 3. Yeilding and Provost
 4. 1991
 5. St. James A.M.E. Church
 6. South and East Facades, Looking Northwest
 7. Photo No. 3 of 12
-
1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
 2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
 3. Yeilding and Provost
 4. 1991
 5. St. James A.M.E. Church
 6. West Entrance (Detail), Looking East
 7. Photo No. 4 of 12
-
1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
 2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
 3. Yeilding and Provost
 4. 1991
 5. St. James A.M.E. Church
 6. Entrance Foyer (Cypress Street), Looking East
 7. Photo No. 5 of 12

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

Photographs

1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
3. Yeilding and Provost
4. 1991
5. St. James A.M.E. Church
6. South Stained Glass Window, Looking North
7. Photo No. 6 of 12

1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
3. Yeilding and Provost
4. 1991
5. St. James A.M.E. Church
6. Interior View of South Stained Glass Window, Looking South
7. Photo No. 7 of 12

1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
3. Yeilding and Provost
4. 1991
5. St. James A.M.E. Church
6. Interior, Looking Southwest Toward Main Entrance
7. Photo No. 8 of 12

1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
3. Yeilding and Provost
4. 1991
5. St. James A.M.E. Church
6. Interior View, Looking Northwest
7. Photo No. 9 of 12

1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
3. Yeilding and Provost
4. 1991
5. St. James A.M.E. Church
6. Interior, Looking Northeast
7. Photo No. 10 of 12

1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
3. Yeilding and Provost
4. 1991
5. St. James A.M.E. Church
6. Interior, Looking East
7. Photo No. 11 of 12

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5

Photographs

1. St. James A.M.E. Church, 819 Cypress Ave.
2. Sanford (Seminole County), Florida
3. Yeilding and Provost
4. 1991
5. St. James A.M.E. Church
6. Interior, Looking Southeast
7. Photo No. 12 of 12

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1

Significance

Summary Paragraph

The St. James African American Episcopal Church is locally significant under criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage for its association with the development of the religious and social culture and economic life of the African American community in the city of Sanford, Florida and under criterion C in the area of Architecture as a good local example of Late English Gothic Revival style architecture and for its unusual and innovative use of interior space. The congregation of St. James A.M.E. Church was founded in 1867 and is one of the oldest African American Religious organizations in Sanford. This present church building, completed in 1913, was preceded by two earlier churches constructed in 1881 and 1891 that occupied the same site. Local oral history also maintains that the church was designed and built by Prince W. Spears, an African American builder who was a resident of Sanford.

Supporting Narrative

The African American Episcopal Church was formally organized on April 9, 1816 by a group of Northern Blacks led by the Reverend Richard Allen. In November, 1792 black members of the congregation of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia were forced out of the seats they had occupied in the church's gallery. The angry black members resigned from the congregation and spent the next twenty-four years establishing a separate religious organization for blacks founded upon the principles of the parent church. Sixteen delegates, led by Richard Allen, formally established the new denomination in Philadelphia on April 9, 1916. The A.M.E. Church appealed to the religious needs of African Americans who were often excluded from making any important decisions in religious organizations dominated by whites, and numerous congregations were established over the next few years in those state where free blacks resided.

The A.M.E. church, however, was unable to make any inroads in the slave states of the Deep South, because of laws that prevented their ministry from spreading the Gospel or establishing congregations controlled by blacks. With the defeat of the Confederacy in April, 1865, leader of the church made immediate plans for the establishment of new congregations in the Deep South. The southern wing of the church was created at the South Carolina Conference in Charleston on May 16, 1865. This first conference was composed of sixteen men, seven of whom were

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

Significance

appointed to establish congregations in North Carolina and South Carolina. An eighth conference member, the Reverend William G. Steward, was selected for Florida.

The Reverend Steward left for Florida shortly thereafter, arriving in Jacksonville on June 9, 1865. The next day he met with local black religious leaders and held services in the small settlement of Midway just east of the city. The first Florida congregation of the A.M.E. church was formally established on that occasion. Word of Steward's arrival spread quickly, and he soon had requests for the creation of churches in Monticello, Tallahassee, Quincy, and Marianna, all communities in North Florida. The newly freed black residents of the many towns and settlements throughout the length of Florida eagerly sought the establishment of their own A.M.E. churches to fill the void of formal religious expression that had been denied them under slavery.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church was not the only religious denomination that attempted to appeal directly to the former slaves, but was among the most successful in its missionary efforts in the years immediately following the Civil War. The organization of St. James A.M.E. Church in Sanford (then called Melonville) dates from 1867. The original congregation conducted prayer services in an old house on Melonville Street in the Tuckertown section of the settlement. Melonville was located on the shore of Lake Monroe, the headwaters of the St. Johns River. The town was a transshipment point for goods and supplies being brought into Central Florida from Jacksonville and the loading point for agricultural products, lumber, naval stores, and livestock being sent upriver to cities outside Florida.

Many of the first free blacks residing in Melonville tended small farms nearby, worked as laborers on the steamship wharfs, or opened small businesses to serve the growing black population. The black population began to grow dramatically when Henry S. Sanford (1823-1891) purchased 12,000 acres of land in central Florida that included Melonville, whose name he changed to Sanford. With the need for workers to clear land for orange groves, construct roads and wharfs, and erect new buildings, the number of new residents both the white and black in Sanford grew dramatically. The black workers encountered opposition from local whites who resented their presence and felt that they kept wages low and took jobs away from whites. Some attempts were

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

Significance

workers to drive blacks away by threats of violence, but these proved unsuccessful.

The area of the settlement were most black residents lived was Tuckertown (name for J. Wofford Tucker, a business partner of Henry Sanford), located along the south shore of Lake Monroe east of Sanford Avenue. Tuckertown continued to grow until its name was lost in the emergence of a larger African American community today known as Georgetown. According to a letter written by Sanford to his son, Georgetown was established in response to the persecution of black workers by local whites. Georgetown originally was located south of East Ninth Street and east of Cypress Avenue.

The increasing demand for labor caused the neighborhood to expand to an area east of Sanford Avenue and west of Melonville Avenue, with East Twelfth Street (Celery Avenue) as the southern boundary. The northern boundary shifted from the edge of Lake Monroe south to East Third Street, although a few homes still remain on East Second Street. Black businesses continue in operation along Sanford Avenue, some of them formerly owned by prominent members of St. James A.M.E. Church. These businessmen were among those that provided the financial resources for the construction the present St. James A.M.E. Church which was erected in 1913.

In 1880, the members of the A.M.E. congregation in Sanford purchased the present site of St. James Church from Henry Sanford's Florida Land and Colonization Company. The first wood frame church was erected on the lot a year later. The first pastor of St. James Chapel (as it was known then) was the Reverend Samuel H. Coleman, who served the congregation until 1884. That section of the South Florida Railroad linking Sanford with the outside world was also completed in 1880. Previously all contact with other A.M.E. churches had to be made on foot or by wagon or boat. The completion of the railroad to Sanford, which became a junction point for many other rail lines, made it possible for the members of St. James Church to cooperate with other A.M.E. congregations in planning missionary and educational activities. In the same year, St. James A.M.E. Church joined the East Florida Conference.

St. James became a mission church in the Enterprise District of the Conference. The church's Sunday school had 276 members, including fifteen teachers and officers and had a library 300 volumes of religious instruction books. A second A.M.E.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4

Significance

congregation was established in the nearby community of Longwood. By 1891, the churches in Longwood and Sanford were still the only A.M.E. Churches in Orange (later Seminole) County. The success of citrus growing in Central Florida brought added prosperity to the African American residents of Sanford. In 1893, the congregation of St. James A.M.E. church razed the original building and erected another wood frame structure which served the congregation until 1910, when plans for building a brick church were developed.

The planning of the new church took place under the guidance of the Reverend W.H. Brown, who died in 1912 before completion of the structure. A 1910 edition of the Sanford Herald newspaper described the plans for the new building: "The building...is to be torn down and a new one, to seat five hundred, is to be erected. It will have circular seats, raised floor, gallery and everything modern." The black population of Sanford had just come through a trying period. A hard freeze during the winter of 1894-1895 had destroyed the citrus industry that had directly and indirectly supported the African American residents of the community and the surrounding area. A revival of the economy came in the late 1890s as truck farming began to replace citrus as the primary means of producing income. Also, citrus growing itself began to rebound, as the demand for citrus products compensated for the risk of investment in the raising of oranges and grapefruit.

By the time the Reverend Brown undertook leadership of St. James in 1906, the number of regular members had dropped to just ninety-six, but by 1910 membership had grown once again to 250 and was continuing to increase, making the construction of a new church of paramount necessity. The trustees of the church reportedly hired Prince W. Spears, an African American resident of Sanford, to design and build the new building. Little is known of Spears' background. He came to Sanford about 1910 and established himself as a builder and was listed in the city directory as a brick mason. Little is known about Spears' life or educational and professional background, and he seems to have left Sanford after living and working there for the better part of two decades.

Local oral tradition states that Spears received at least some of his training as a builder at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. No formal record of Spears' attendance can be found, but it is possible that he was among the numerous young men who came to Tuskegee during the days of Booker T. Washington and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Significance

Washington Carver to acquire what skills he could and then continued on to put those skills to practical use. Spears also appears to have been associated with the construction of other buildings in the Georgetown area in the 1910s and 1920s, including churches, commercial buildings, and private residences.

Architectural Significance

St. James A.M.E. Church represents a good local example of Late English Gothic Revival style architecture. The refinement of its stylistic details and the unusual arrangement of the interior space suggests that the construction of the building followed formal plans, but none have come to light. The exterior of the church is designed in the Late English Gothic Revival style that was applied to English parish churches newly constructed in the mid-19th century when the Gothic, Queen Anne, and Tudor Revivals were finding expression in the works of the architects Charles Eastlake, Norman Shaw, and Augustus Welby Pugin. This revival movement had a strong influence on American architecture, particularly in the construction of churches, and produced a wide variety of hybrid forms.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church of Florida made no particular demands upon its member congregations as to the style or interior layout of churches, and a variety of styles, sizes, and types are found throughout the state. The interior of the St. James A.M.E. church, however, is unusual--although not unique--in abandoning the traditional longitudinal nave for a centrally planed church. This planning is only partly expressed by the exterior of the structure. The floor of the area in which the congregation sits is sloped and the pews arranged in a semicircle, so that the all of the worshipers can easily see and participate in ceremonies of the church a hear the preacher equally well. The location of the choir on a stepped platform to the rear of the chancel also provides ample space for the singers without interfering with a view of the speaker's platform. The church is, therefore, architecturally significant for its use of Late English Gothic Revival style architecture and its expressive and efficient use of interior space.

Historical Significance

St. James A.M.E. Church reflects the social and economic conditions of the African American community in Sanford ca. 1913.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

Significance

Black residents in the Georgetown section of the city were sharing in the general prosperity experienced by the city as a whole. Sanford had become the major hub of railroad transportation in Central Florida, and considerable river traffic occupied the St. Johns River between Lake Monroe and Jacksonville. The citrus and truck farming industries were booming, and timber and cattle operations provided considerable economic support to the area because of readily available transportation. Blacks in Sanford owned and operated a variety of commercial enterprises, and there were at least some professional men among the population. This gave some of the prominent citizens in the community the financial resources to construct the new church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

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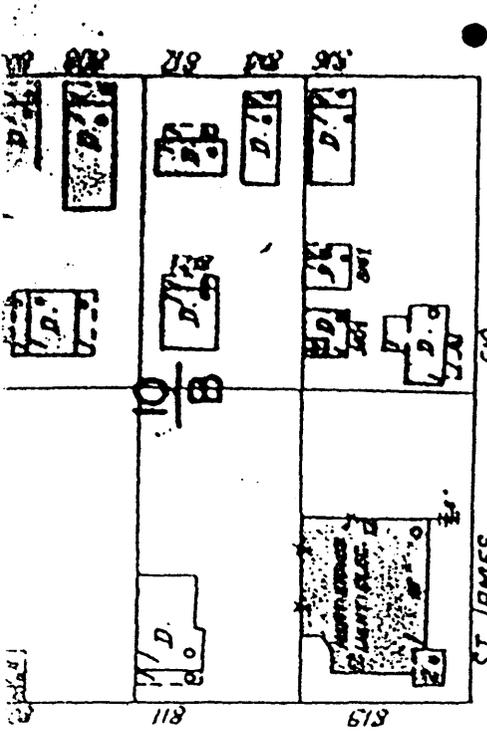
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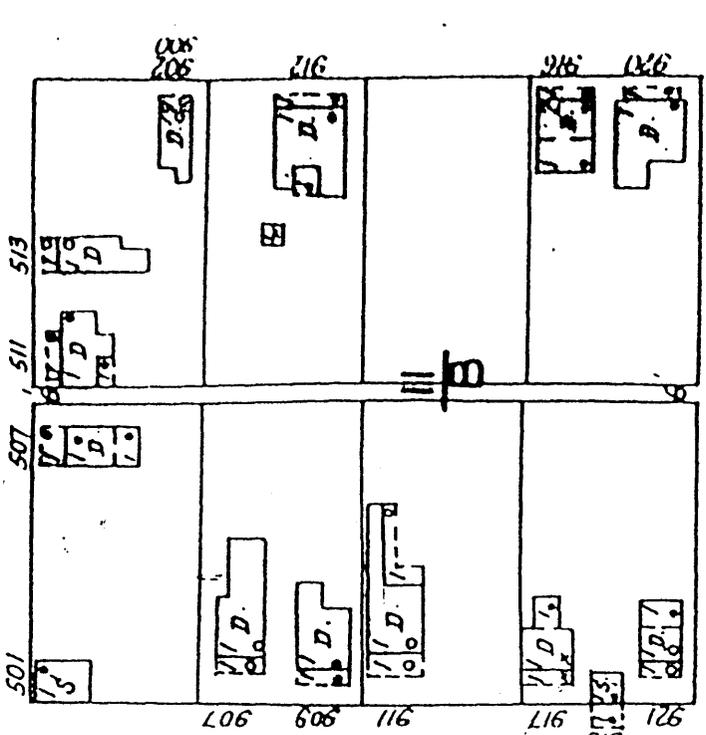
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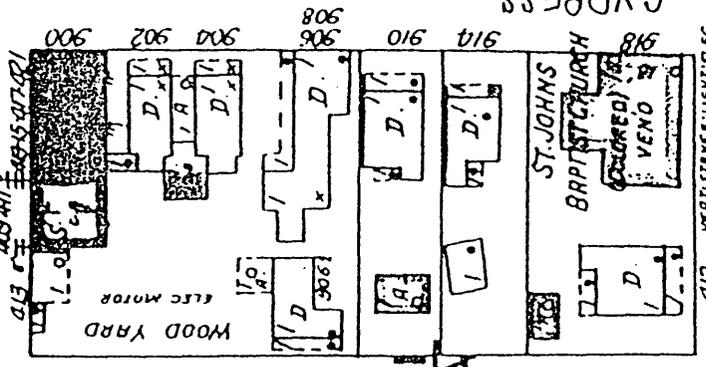
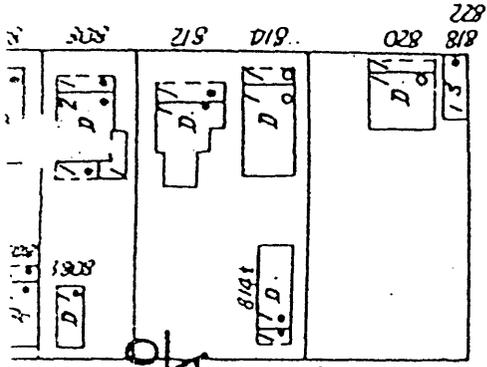


ST. JAMES
A.M.E. CHURCH

1929 SANBORN MAP
OF SANFORD

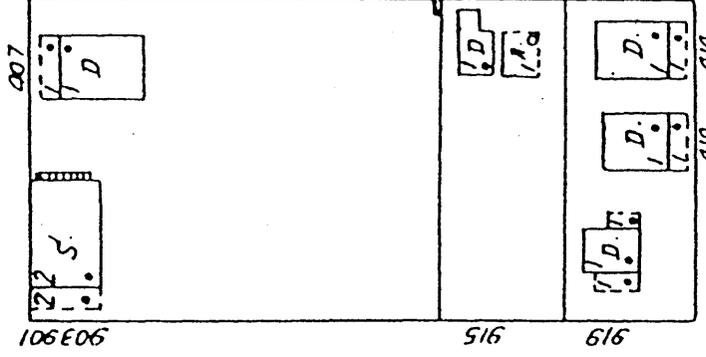
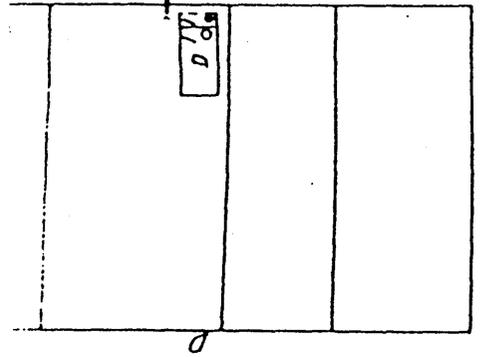


6" W PIPE

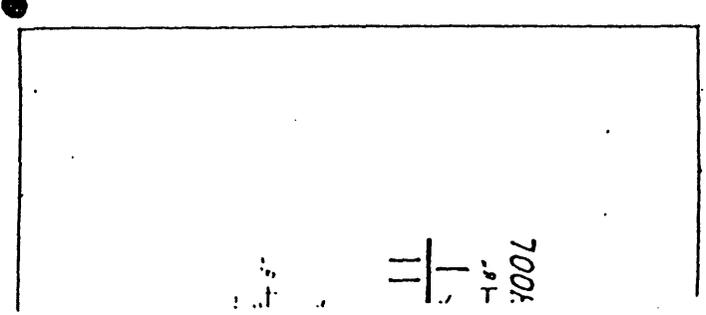
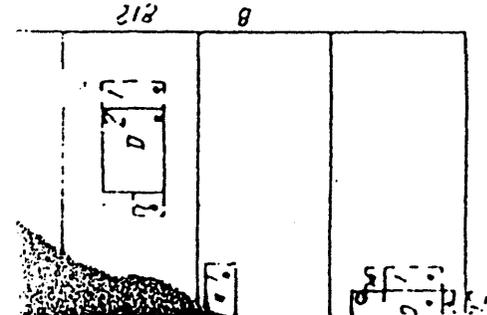


CYPRESS
4" W PIPE

6" W PIPE



6" W PIPE

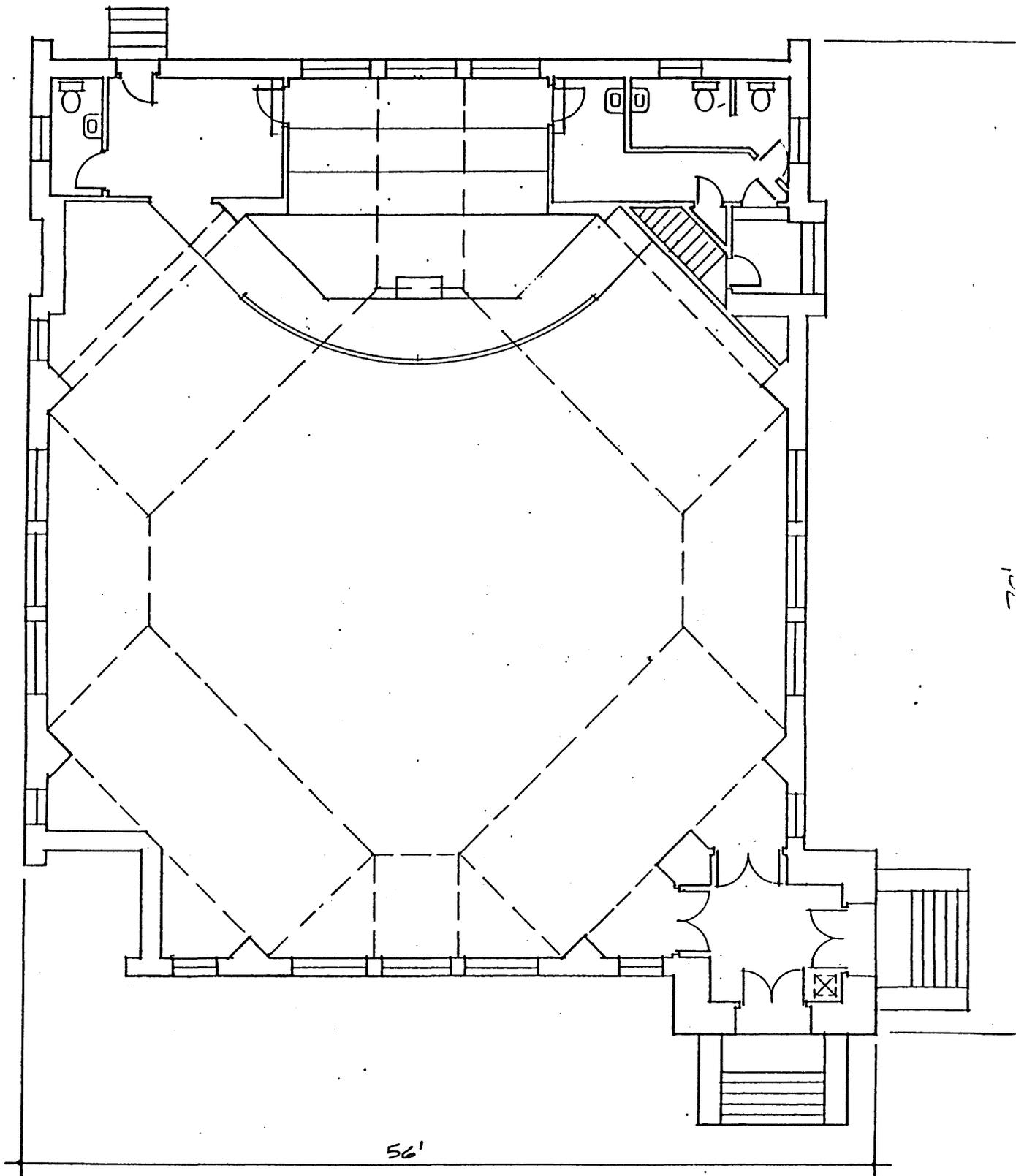


6" W PIPE

9TH ST.

10TH ST.

DH



FLOOR PLAN

ST. JAMES AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Seminole County; 819 Cypress Ave., Sanford, Florida

