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 any 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 __ Emek Sholom Holocaust Memorial Cemetery __
   other names/site number ________________________________ DHR File No. 043-5006 __

2. Location
   street & number __ 4000 Pilots Lane __ not for publication _ N/A _
   city or town __ Richmond __ vicinity X __
   state Virginia code VA county Henrico code 087 Zip 23222 __

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally X__ statewide ___ locally. ( ___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

   Virginia Department of Historic Resources
   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 Date 12/01/98

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification
   I, hereby certify that this 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 of Keeper ________________

   Date of Action ________________
5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)
- _x_ private
- _ ___ public-local
- _ ___ public-State
- _ ___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)
- _ ___ building(s)
- _ ___ district
- _ ___ site
- _ ___ structure
- _x_ object

Number of Resources within Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>buildings</td>
<td><em>0</em></td>
<td><em>0</em> buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sites</td>
<td><em>0</em></td>
<td><em>0</em> sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structures</td>
<td><em>0</em></td>
<td><em>0</em> structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objects</td>
<td><em>1</em></td>
<td><em>0</em> objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><em>1</em></td>
<td><em>0</em> Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

_ N/A _

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: _Recreation/Culture_ Sub: _monument/marker_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: _Recreation/Culture_ Sub: _monument/marker_

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
- _Commemorative monument_
Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation __ Granite ____________
- roof ____________________________
- walls ____________________________
- other ____________________________

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

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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- 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 ______________________
- other ____________________________

Period of Significance __ 1955 __________

Significant Dates __ 1955 __________

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
EMEK SHALOM HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL  
Henrico County, Virginia

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder _n/a_

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

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

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 #

Primary Location of Additional Data
___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: Department of Historic Resources, Beth Ahabah Archives

10. Geographical Data
Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

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

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
18/264780/413020 2
3 4
___ 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.)
Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

EMEK SHALOM HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL
Henrico County, Virginia

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Margaret T. Peters

Organization: Department of Historic Resources
date September, 1998

street & number: 2801 Kensington Avenue
telephone (804)367-2323 Ext. 102

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23221

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name: Emek Shalom Holocaust Memorial Cemetery Company; Mrs. Inge W. Horowitz, President

street & number 4317 Kensington Avenue telephone (804) 358-2720

city or town Richmond State VA zip code 23221-1846

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 listings. 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 the 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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20593.
7. Description
Emek Sholom, which means Valley of Peace, Holocaust Memorial is located as Section 12 within Forest Lawn Cemetery at the intersections of Laurel Road, Crescent Lane and the end of Forest Lawn Drive in eastern Henrico County, Virginia. The area nominated includes plots 142 through 155 and encompasses the memorial monument and burial sites for family members of those commemorated on the monument itself. Forest Lawn Cemetery is a 200-acre burial ground that was established in 1922. The cemetery features individual grave sites and private family mausoleums as well as a Masonic Memorial Park that dates from 1938. The cemetery also features an Arboretum incorporating collections of shrubs and trees. Forest Lawn is a registered associate of Botanical Gardens and Arboretums of America.

The Holocaust Memorial Monument was cut by the Empire Monumental Works Inc. of Richmond, Virginia, a firm long associated with grave markers for a number of Richmond burial grounds. The memorial has 200 names inscribed on its face, according to the invoice from Empire Monumental Works dated October 22, 1955. The monument made of light gray granite measures approximately seventeen feet long. It consists of a twelve-foot slab in three panels resting on one continuous base, flanked by granite vases topped with floral sculptures. The center panel is 42" high, and each side panel is 36 inches high. The center panel has three engraved lines of Hebrew script, a Star of David, and the following inscription: TO OUR LOVED ONES WHO DIED IN EUROPE 1933-1945 AS VICTIMS OF THEIR FAITH. THEIRS (SIC) ARE NO GRAVES, THEY SHALL LIVE IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER. At the base of this panel is inscribed: DEDICATED BY THE NEW AMERICAN JEWISH CLUB NOVEMBER 1955...CHESHVAN 5716.

The side panels have two hundred names engraved, arranged in columns and generally grouped by family. In large letters across the top of these panels is the following inscription (left panel): MAY THE SACRIFICE OF OUR PEOPLE (right panel) O LORD NOT HAVE BEEN IN VAIN.

The copper and bronze floral sculptures were added in 1986. These were created by sculptress Linda Gissen. The darker, wilted flowers on the left are labeled: THE INNOCENT DIED. The brighter, erect flowers on the right are labeled: LET LIFE TRIUMPH.

The burial ground in front of the Holocaust monument has 175 gravesites, symmetrically arranged. To date, 119 of these sites have been used. All grave markers are of bronze with granite or marble
Section 7 Page 2

bases, flush to the ground. The shape of the property approximates a semi-circle. The Holocaust monument stands at the center on the straight side of the semicircle. This arrangement is not dissimilar from U. S. National cemeteries where servicemen's grave sites are arranged around a flag pole. A Japanese holly hedge extends from either end of the monument along the full length of the straight side of the property. At either end of the hedge is a spiral Arborvitae. Three dogwood trees stand equidistant along the straight side; one stands behind the center of the monument and one stands in front of the center of each segment of the hedge. A single, old elm tree stands in front of the hedge near its right end. This tree is the only non-symmetrical feature in the otherwise symmetrical landscape.

Forest Lawn Drive, a paved road, runs around the circular border of the property, and five old maple trees stand at equi-distant intervals along this border. Two parallel concrete walkways extend from the road to the hedge. On the outside of each walkway, near the road, is a concrete bench bearing the inscription EMEK SHOLOM CEMETERY. Growing beside each of these benches is a Japanese maple tree.

A coincidental, grim and painful feature of the landscape is the crematorium of Forest Lawn Cemetery in the background to the left as one faces the memorial. An artist who executed an oil painting of the memorial in 1995 subsequently wrote: “Certainly the paramount challenge...was the disturbing presence of the...smokestacks directly behind the monument. The juxtaposition of the smokestacks and the monument passed beyond the ironic into the uncanny. Rarely is an artist presented with the opportunity to function in the realms of reality and symbolism so contiguously. While we...considered the option of 'painting out' the smokestacks, it felt wrong to do so. It somehow seemed false, an evasion or softening for comfort’s safe, not only of our present day reality, but of the echoes of history and of our responsibility towards it. The smokestacks...create an immediate tension and disturbance that make people wonder and start them thinking...”

8. Statement of Significance

The Emek Sholom Holocaust Memorial Cemetery at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Henrico County, Virginia, is significant as the earliest and sole monument of its type and size in Virginia to honor and remember the victims of the Holocaust from the years 1933-1945. Examination of records nationwide indicates that this memorial erected in 1955 by the New American Jewish Club of Richmond is among the first of its kind in the country. The simple tripartite light gray granite monument, which bears the names of victims of the Holocaust whose families fled to Virginia from Germany and Eastern Europe, is the centerpiece of a burial ground for those Jewish families who came to the central Virginia area in the period following 1933. The monument is eligible under Criterion A as an important resource associated with one of the most significant events of the 20th century. It stands as Virginia’s first and most visible tangible reminder of the Holocaust and is a testament to the families who fled Hitler’s Europe and the horrors of anti-Semitism. Although constructed less than 50 years ago, it appears to be a rare and extraordinary symbol of both a vibrant Jewish community in Richmond and the energy and devotion of Richmond’s New American Jewish Club. Emek Sholom which means “Valley of Peace,” Holocaust Memorial may be among the few such memorials erected by actual survivors of the Holocaust as early as the mid 1950s.

Criteria Considerations
Under Exception Criterion D, Cemeteries, the gravesites and bronze markers flush with the ground form an integral part of the Emek Sholom Holocaust Memorial. Arranged in a simple semicircle around the granite monument, the gravesites for the relatives of those Holocaust victims whose names are carved on the face of the monument are linked both physically and emotionally to the focal point of the memorial.

Under Exception Criterion F, Commemorative Properties, the Emek Sholom Holocaust Memorial derives its value as a significant cultural expression of the survivors of the Holocaust who settled in Richmond, Virginia following 1933. These immigrants formed the Richmond New Americans Jewish Club in 1947 and in addition to assisting the “New Americans” in their midst, joined forces to erect a memorial to their own family members who perished in the most horrifying event of the twentieth century. Since the great majority of memorials to victims of the Holocaust were not built until after 1964, this memorial is a rare example of the exemplary devotion of a Jewish
group in a city whose Jewish population was relatively small to honor their families in a simple but tangible and dignified manner.

Under Exception Criteria G, properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years, the Emek Sholom Holocaust Memorial is of exceptional importance as among the very earliest such memorials in the nation commemorating the Holocaust victims and the earliest in Virginia. It also has what is likely a unique association with a New American Club, having been erected by a group of actual survivors of the holocaust rather than by members of the Jewish community already living in this country. Sufficient historical perspective and scholarly analysis of Holocaust memorials has been developed, most particularly James E. Young’s *The Texture of Memory – Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (Yale University Press, 1993) to make a case for the uniqueness of this memorial, particularly its early date of erection as compared with most Holocaust memorials across the nation.

**Historical Background**

“The history of Jews in Virginia is as old as the history of the Commonwealth itself,” according to Melvin I. Urofsky, author of *Commonwealth and Community: The Jewish Experience in Virginia.* Therefore it seems particularly appropriate that one of the earliest memorials to the Jews who perished during the Holocaust should be memorialized in the Commonwealth’s capital city of Richmond. A measure of the significance of the Jewish community in central Virginia is the Confederate section of the Hebrew Cemetery in Richmond, the only Jewish military cemetery in the country until well after World War II. The history of Jewry in Richmond and central Virginia is entwined with the overall history of the area. Among the leading congregations of the Richmond area continues to be Beth Ahabah which traces its roots to 1839 when a group of German Jews established K'hal Kadosh Beth Ahabah “the Holy Congregation House of Love.” Beth Ahabah grew to be one of the preeminent Reform congregations in the nation under the leadership of Rabbi Edward Nathan Calisch who served the congregation from 1891 to 1945.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many Jews who fled Germany and Eastern Europe during the
1930s found a welcome home in Richmond and more particularly in the congregation of Beth Ahabah. By the close of World War II, the Jewish community in Richmond had grown to nearly 7,500, an increase of more than 40 percent over 1930. A number of Jewish organizations worked to provide services to the refugees or immigrants as some new comers preferred to be called. A leading member of Richmond’s Jewish community and a member of Beth Ahabah, William B. Thalhimer, had made arrangements for the purchase and incorporation of a farm in Nottoway County, Virginia, known as Hyde Park, for the only Judisches Auswandererlehrgut (Jewish emigration training farm) in the United States.3

Finally, in 1947, the New American Jewish Club of Richmond was formed to act as a “forum or mutual assistance consortium.” The organization also functioned as “the guardian of the memory of the six million martyred victims of the Nazi tyranny”.4 The purpose of the New American Club of Richmond, according to documents from 1947, was to support the existing national and international organizations working for the welfare of Jews in America and Europe; to foster full integration of the immigrant into the American-Jewish community and the community at large; to represent and further the particular interest of the foreign-born Jews; to assist in economic problems of the immigrants; and to provide a forum to meet with other members of the group for mutual support, exchange of ideas, and social activities. The founder and first president of the New Americans Jewish Club was Fred Windmueller. A quote from his writing demonstrates his thinking which led to the establishment of the club: “It was fear of discrimination, a sense of the immigrant’s inferiority complex, that has held me back for several years until the idea of the formation of a club for immigrants was boldly undertaken. Yet when I approached in early June, 1947, my friend Dr. Werner Wolff, for the purpose of organizing a Jewish group, we went ahead at once and called upon several immigrants and sold them the idea of the usefulness of forming a New American Jewish Club. We felt alike in timidity, a strange foreboding haunting us constantly, lest this group might become the football of a new controversy.” Although Richmond had been relatively free of serious anti-Semitism through most of its history, there had been several unfortunate occasions during the mid-1940s in which anti-Semitic sentiment had been expressed. Sixty-three families, who had emigrated from Germany and several other eastern European countries in the

1930s joined Mr. Windmueller in forming the New American Jewish Club in Richmond. Mr. Windmueller strongly objected to being called a “refuge.” He preferred “immigrant” saying that “it is necessary, even vital to, stress the fact that the victims from Nazi oppression who have settled in the U.S.A. are immigrants in the true American tradition, not refugees...looking for temporary shelter who are waiting to go “home” as soon as may seem possible.”5 The memorial, erected in 1955, was ultimately the Club’s largest undertaking. It was dedicated to 200 “New Americans family members of those” who perished during the Shoah and whose final resting place was unknown. Each of their names appears on the memorial.

According to The Holocaust: an Annotated Bibliography and Resources Guide by David M. Szonyi (1985) the earliest local memorial to the victims of the Holocaust in the United States was erected in Indianapolis in 1947.6 This memorial was a simple obelisk with no specific names on it. The Emek Sholom Memorial appears to have been the second in the country. Other holocaust memorials were erected in Dallas in 1959 and New Haven in the 1970s. According to Dr. Poplak in his dissertation “Various Ways That Jews Commemorated the Holocaust,” written in 1981, several memorial stones were placed in the New York metropolitan area in the late 1940s, but again the memorials were not dedicated to specific individuals.7 Most of the large Holocaust memorials, including the National Holocaust Memorial in Washington, were built in the 1980s and early 1990s, with one in Detroit in 1981, in Miami in 1985, and El Paso in 1992 among others.

Dr. James Young in The Texture of Memory explains that American memorials to the Holocaust victims differ from the European ones is that they “call attention to the great distance between themselves and the destruction.”8 He points out that American memorials are rooted in ideals rather than in history. Often memorials were built to remember lost brethren as was the case with

5 Unpublished notes and personal papers, Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.
Emek Sholom. Young says that such memorials were "for all of the generations to come who by distance from the actual events and people, will depend on it to activate [memory]." The very earliest memorials were not monuments or stones but rather in ritual form, such as a special religious observance, a public work stoppage, as in New York in 1942, or leaving an empty place setting at the dinner table. An eternal flame memorial was planned by New York City in 1946 and in the next year ground was broken for monument to the Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto battle. Neither memorial was ever built. In 1967 Louis Kahn prepared a model for a memorial in New York to stand in Battery Park, but again it was never built. Other memorials were planned around the country, but often failure to reach consensus on design delayed or precluded construction. Some memorials such as the Babi Yar Memorial Park in Denver remain largely unvisited because the building process was so contentious that many in the Denver community were alienated from the site. It appears that memorials in Jewish communities in large cities like Los Angeles, New York and Chicago were often delayed or never built because of strong feelings in many quarters about design and purpose of the memorials. The memorial in Richmond pre-dated or avoided a large part of this contentious atmosphere and appears to have been built with no dissent from any part of the community. It may be that the simplicity of the design and plan and the direct involvement of survivors of the Holocaust may have helped avert some of the dissention experienced elsewhere.

The term "New Americans" was a very specific nomenclature that mirrored the "United Service for New Americans," a postwar immigrant organization carefully named to "avoid any reference to the fact it was Jewish and worked with Jewish newcomers." Immigrant laws in the United States prohibited preference being accorded to any specific religious groups and thus the name "New Americans" was deemed more generic and all-embracing. Although Virginia was among the 36 states that established their own Displaced Persons Commissions, it was generally acknowledged that the more effective DP Commissions were not located in the South. This made the role of the New American Jewish Club in Richmond all the more important.

9 Ibid, 286.
10 Ibid, 296.
12 Ibid, 213.
According to Dr. Young, it is rare to find a New Americans Club raising funds and building a memorial. Unfortunately there are no written records about planning for the Emek Sholom Memorial. It is likely that the dearth of funds mandated the simple monument with little decoration. The simple dignity of the design may have been dictated by the Empire Monumental Works, Inc. which was well-versed in cutting and carving plain grave markers. On the other hand it may have been the modest nature of the undertaking than helped avoid serious dissention about the nature of the memorial.

The granite memorial was unveiled on Sunday, November 7, 1955 in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Richmond's suburbs. Rabbi Ariel L. Goldburg of Congregation Beth Ahabah said, “These are not mere names carved in stone; they are part of us. We will remember them, not in a spirit of vengeance, but in a spirit of resolution—[with] determination that we will fight and struggle for a brave new future.” The president of the Richmond New Americans Jewish Club, Ernst M. Gunzburg, noted “There is nothing greater our club could have done than honor our heroes and martyrs.” The ceremony was attended by Congressional Representative J. Vaughan Gary and Richmond Vice-Mayor Phil J. Bagley. Two years later, the New American Jewish Club applied to United Help, Inc. for $3,000 to help purchase burial plots at the memorial for indigent immigrants who fled from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia who were entitled to be buried there. This money was never received.

Today the memorial continues to recall the loss of loved ones in one of the twentieth century's greatest tragedies. Each year on the Sunday closest to November 9 a commemorative event or concert is scheduled to mark Kristallnacht. The simple setting, amidst mature trees and plantings, echoes the meaning of "Emek Sholom," the Valley of Peace, a fitting memorial to the innocent victims of the Holocaust.

---

13 Conversation of author with Dr. Young, November, 1997.
9. Bibliography


Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives, Richmond, Va. Assorted unpublished notes, club minutes, and writings of Fred Windmueller, various dates.


Holocaust Memorial Museum, Research Department, Washington, D. C.


10. Geographical Data

**Boundary Description:** The nominated area includes lots 142 through 155, in Section 12 of Forest Lawn Cemetery, Henrico County, Virginia, as shown on the attached site plan.

**Boundary Justification:** The boundaries have been drawn to include the granite memorial and the grave sites of the Holocaust victims' relatives. The area is that for which the Emek Sholom Holocaust Memorial Cemetery Corporation has burial rights.

**Additional Documentation:**

1. Plan showing Section 12 and surrounding sections of Forest Lawn Cemetery
