United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form  

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

   historic: Little England Chapel

and/or common

2. Location

   street & number: 4100 Kecoughtan Road

   city, town: Hampton

   state: Virginia

3. Classification

   Category: District

   Ownership: Public

   Status: X occupied

   Present Use: Agriculture

4. Owner of Property

   name: Newtown Improvement and Civic Club, c/o Mrs. Osceola S. Ailor, Historian

   street & number: 125 Ivy Home Road

   city, town: Hampton

5. Location of Legal Description

   courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: Hampton City Hall

   street & number: N/A

   city, town: Hampton

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

   title: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

   has this property been determined eligible? X yes

   date: 1981

   federal: X  

   state: Virginia

   county: 

   local:

   depository for survey records: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

   city, town: Richmond

   state: Virginia

   23219
7. Description

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Description

Little England Chapel is located at 4100 Kecoughtan Road in the city of Hampton. The wood-frame, rectangular structure was erected as a missionary church ca. 1878-80 by students from Hampton Institute. Plainly executed, the one-story, wood-frame edifice stands as the only tangible remnant of the students' missionary efforts on what was once a country road in Elizabeth City County, now Hampton.

The facade faces west and fronts on Kecoughtan Road. It is distinguished by a projecting gable-roofed, enclosed wood-frame porch. The porch is covered by weatherboarding, as is the rest of the building. A plain architrave frames a double entry that has 20th-century replacement plywood doors. The porch's fenestration consists of 3-paneled casement windows on the north and south walls. The remaining fenestration consists of 6/6 hung-sash windows. The standing-seam sheet metal roof is topped by a belfry that has a pyramidal roof and louvred blinds on all elevations.

Little England's interior remains in a good state of preservation. The porch contains a toilet and small dressing room. The one-room auditorium has its 20th-century wooden pews divided by a central aisle. The walls are plastered with modern vertical board wood wainscoting. The ceiling is of wooden boards with a simple crown molding. The sanctuary retains some original 19th-century furnishings, an upright piano, and an early-20th century pulpit. The church is heated by a gas stove installed in the mid-20th century.

RCC

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property for Little England Chapel consists of approximately one-half acre. This parcel, which includes the chapel and a minimal amount of surrounding land, was once part of a thirty-five-acre tract sold in 1869 to blacks and known as "Cock's Newtown." The chapel is the only identifying landmark built for and by blacks left on the tract site. The nominated property is bounded by Kecoughtan Road to the east, Ivy Home Road to the south, a small creek to the north, and a straight boundary line to the east.
Little England Chapel is a landmark to the achievements of Hampton's first generation of freedmen. Erected between 1878 and 1880 for use as a Sunday school in the heavily populated black area known as Cock's Newtown, the modest weatherboarded structure was built by students of Hampton Institute, the famous black teacher-training college founded by Northern missionaries in 1868. The land on which the chapel was built was once part of the Herbert House tract and was donated informally to the students by Daniel F. Cock. A white missionary from New York who instructed Indians in agriculture at the Institute, Cock had purchased a portion of the Herbert tract in 1865 and later set aside thirty-five acres for sale to freedmen who had migrated to the Hampton area during the Civil War. The only known black missionary chapel in the Commonwealth, Little England Chapel is representative of the many community institutions established in Hampton by blacks in the postbellum era. It also symbolizes the important role which Hampton Institute played in that community achievement.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During the Civil War, the population of Hampton consisted for the most part of Union forces, free Negroes, and refugee slaves. The responsibility for caring for this last group first fell to the Union Army, who officially regarded them as "contraband of war." As the numbers of escaping slaves increased in the area, problems of administration became almost insurmountable. The Union Army responded by imposing procedures for handling the refugees that differed little from the methods of the slaves' former masters. One of the first refugees to escape to Fort Monroe at Hampton was William Roscoe Davis, who was taught to read and write by his master while Davis was a slave at Little England Plantation. Davis immediately sought to improve the lot of the refugee slaves. His opportunity came in September 1861 with the arrival of Lewis Lockwood, who had been sent to the area by the American Missionary Association in the hope of remedying the situation at Hampton. To raise money for the improvement of contrabands, Davis accompanied Lockwood on a speaking tour of Northern cities, where they described the terrible treatment the slaves were receiving. The efforts of Davis and Lockwood bore fruit and represented the first successful attempt at ameliorating the wartime conditions of the black community at Hampton.

The missionaries and the blacks of Hampton received Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of September 1862 as a hopeful sign. Southern blacks flocked to the area in search of freedom, arriving in such numbers that they had to be housed in old tobacco barns, sheds, and packing crates. As a solution to the Hampton problem, the Bureau of Negro Affairs (later to become the Freedmen's Bureau) was established by the War Department and given authority to parcel out abandoned farms in the area to groups of the contrabands. Members of the refugee groups eagerly accepted the land, and settlements grew throughout the Hampton area.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)
8. SIGNIFICANCE

The Freedman's Bureau, inadequately administered under President Johnson, began to wind down its activities by 1868. The American Missionary Association assumed the burden of the Bureau's responsibilities. The Association founded eight normal schools in the South, one of which was established at Hampton. In April 1868 the Hampton Agricultural and Normal Institute opened with five teachers and fifteen students. It was in this atmosphere that Daniel F. Cock set aside a tract of thirty-five acres for the freedmen's community called Cock's Newtown.

Cock was formally listed as an instructor of Indians in agriculture at Hampton Institute in 1880. It is believed that he allowed Hampton's missionary students the use of his land at an earlier date. On his parcel a school was erected ca. 1878-80 by Hampton students to serve the Newtown area. An early description of the Institute's missionary activity is found in a report of Hampton Institute in 1884:

On Sunday morning, students may be seen starting out in every direction to help in the Sunday schools of the place, and, in afternoon, wagons and boats are brought into requisition; the different squads start for the poor-house, the jail, Little England, Slabtown and the different parts of Hampton...1

In 1886 the Institute reported:

The Ocean Cottage Sunday School in Little England just across the creek from the Normal School, under the efficient care of one of our teachers, assisted by the students, has had an attendance of 70 children, has become self supporting and has engaged its children in missionary work for the community about it.2

The chapel by 1890 had become especially renowned as a sewing school, making two quilts, according to the report, "for the new hospital."3

The school was expanded in 1893 at a cost of $102.00. In 1910 the building underwent another remodeling when a porch and double doors were added to the structure. Residents of the Newtown area kept the chapel activities alive after the Hampton students ceased teaching at the Sunday school in the mid-1930s. In 1954 Frederick D. Cock, the son of Daniel F. Cock, deeded the chapel and the lot on which it stands to the Newtown Improvement Club, an unincorporated organization of black residents in the area. The building continues to be used for religious services and is presently being leased by the Church of Jesus.

VDS/RCC

1Hampton Institute, Records. 1884.
2Ibid., 1886.
3Ibid., 1890.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #1)
Elizabeth City County Deed Books 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 35, 36, 38, 48, 51, 54, 225.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property __½ acre
Quadrangle name Hampton, Va.
Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

Verbal boundary description and justification
Beginning at a point on E side of Kecoughtan Rd., about 70' N of intersection with Ivy Home Rd.; thence extending about 140' NE; thence about 125' SSE to N side of Ivy Home Rd.; thence about 140' SW along said side to E side of Kecoughtan Rd.; thence about 70' N along said side to point of origin. Hampton City DB 225, p. 196; DB 290, p. 336.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff
organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date June 1981
street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144
city or town Richmond state Virginia

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national X 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature
H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date MAY 10 1982

For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Keeper of the National Register
Attest:

Chief of Registration