

VLR-3/20/96 NRHP-8/21/97

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Norfolk (in cit.)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Freemason Street Baptist Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Freemason Street Baptist Church

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
NE corner of Freemason St. and Bank St.

CITY OR TOWN:
Norfolk

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: (in cit.) CODE: 710

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
congregation

STREET AND NUMBER:
Freemason Street Baptist Church

CITY OR TOWN:
Norfolk

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
City Hall.

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Norfolk

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1958 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE: D. C. CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia

COUNTY: Norfolk (in cit.)

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION.	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(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

Freemason Street Baptist Church is a one story brick block covered with stucco and capped by a gable roof and spire. The main entrance on the gable end is at the base of the projecting belfry and tower which incorporates many of the details seen on the rest of the structure. The square tower which rises in two stages to the belfry with its narrow openings is topped by an eight sided spire whose base is flanked by eight small spires. These spires and those that top the buttraces along the side walls have small pediments at their bases and are surmounted with crockets and finials. Along the eaves line between the buttraces, and following the rake of the gable end as well, are embattlements with narrow embrasures. The windows between the buttraces have lancet arches with hood moulds; the narrow window framing consists of a horizontal and vertical mullion creating four tall lights, the upper two ending in a trefoil arch; the remaining space at the top is taken by a quatrefoil light. The interior seating consists of low pews whose ends along the center aisles and the two side aisles are capped by a scroll top. The room features a U-shaped gallery which rests on slender iron columns except at either side of the pulpit where supporting walls enclose small rooms. The gallery railing is paneled and carries out the window design in the form of trefoil arch panels. This pattern is repeated elsewhere in the door motif and the church furniture surrounding the pulpit. The flat ceiling has cross ribs with supporting cantilever brackets along the walls between the windows.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input 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)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input 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

The author of Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Norfolk described the Freemason Street Baptist Church as being "one of the handsomest, (and) unquestionably the most ornamental building in the city." The congregation, formerly members of the Cumberland Street (or First) Baptist Church, dedicated the new church on May 30, 1850. They called the accomplished author and preacher, Tiberius Gracchus Jones, to be their first pastor.

The church was designed by the noted architect, Thomas U. Walter, in "Perpendicular Gothic" and its handling of that style is representative of the Early Victorian period whose various styles and revivals depended chiefly on applied decoration rather than on structural form. The original design and decoration were adhered to during the renovations of 1941 and 1970. The Rev. Sparks D. Melton, pastor from 1908 to 1952, is memorialized in the education wing added to the church in 1958. The Melton Hall wing is one of two material alterations to the original structure.

The original steeple was blown down during a severe storm in the summer of 1879. The replacement was less lofty. The church measures 65' by 105' and was the tallest building in Norfolk from 1850-1879. Original furnishings included the organ by George Jardine of New York.

Freemason Street Baptist owes its importance as much to its survival on the fast-changing plain of this port city as to its being a most uplifting piece of urban decoration.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Burton, H. W., The History of Norfolk, Virginia. Norfolk: Norfolk Virginian Job Print, 1877.
 Newspaper files, Sargeant Memorial Room, Kirn Memorial Library, Norfolk, Virginia.
 Stewart, William H., History of Norfolk County, Virginia, and Representative Citizens. Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1902.
 Thomas, Ella Marshall, History of the Freemason Street Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia. Norfolk: Hampton Roads Paper Company, Inc., 1917...

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "	36°	51'	01"	76° 17' 14"
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **2 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Staff, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, James W. Moody, Jr., Director**
 ORGANIZATION: **Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission** DATE: **April 1, 1971**
 STREET AND NUMBER: **Room 1116, Ninth Street Office Building**
 CITY OR TOWN: **Richmond** STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51**

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: Edw. P. Alexander, Jr.

Title: Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Date: 4/6/71

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: _____



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (Scale:1:24000)
 Norfolk South, Va. 1955

Freemason Street Baptist Church
 Latitude Longitude
 36° 51' 01" 76° 17' 14"