

YLR: 12-9-86  
NRHP: 4-16-87

127-401

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Trinity Methodist Church

DHL File No. 127-401

and/or common Trinity United Methodist Church/New Light Baptist Church

**2. Location**

street & number 2000 East Broad Street

N/Anot for publication

city, town Richmond

N/Avicinity of

state Virginia

code 51

county (In City)

code 760

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

**4. Owner of Property**

name New Light Baptist Church, Michael B. Kelsey, Sr., Pastor

street & number 2000 East Broad Street

city, town Richmond

N/Avicinity of

state Virginia zip code 23223

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Richmond City Hall

street & number 900 East Broad Street

city, town Richmond

state Virginia zip code 23219

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Division of Historic Landmarks Survey (File No. 127-401) has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date November 1986  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Division of Historic Landmarks, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond

state Virginia zip code 23219

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moveddate N/A

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Trinity Methodist Church is a substantial Italianate brick building conspicuously located on the west slope of Church Hill on Richmond's Broad Street. The building was constructed between 1859 and 1875. Although the building has suffered the loss of its distinctive, very tall spire, and has undergone various minor alterations, it maintains its integrity as an architectural landmark. The nomination consists of one contributing building.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1859-1875 **Builder/Architect** Albert L. West, Architect

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Trinity Methodist Church, for many years home to the city's oldest Methodist congregation, is an architecturally important structure, a bold and elegant Italianate edifice designed by prominent architect Albert L. West. The church is critical to the historic definition of eastern Richmond. The building, through its heroic siting and composition, has been a city landmark since its construction between 1859 and 1875.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References ( See Continuation Sheet #9 )

Church Archives. New Light Baptist Church, 2000 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia.

City Directories: 1852, 1859, 1860, 1866. Richmond, Virginia.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Richmond, Va

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>265800</u>	<u>4156700</u>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries have been drawn to include only the church building, its historic fence, and the yards immediately around it. This is the property historically associated with this building. (See Continuation Sheet #9)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Division of Historic Landmarks Staff

organization Division of Historic Landmarks date 1986

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone 804-786-3143

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell, Director

title Division of Historic Landmarks

date March 11, 1987

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

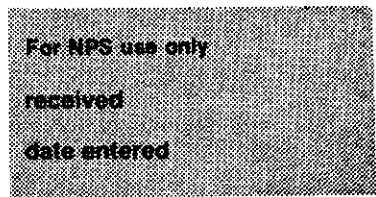
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH, Richmond (city), VA

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7

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7. DESCRIPTION - - Architectural Analysis

Architectural Analysis

Exterior: Trinity Methodist Church is a rectangular brick building with an entrance tower on its longitudinal axis. The walls are of painted brick except for the facade (south elevation) which is stuccoed. The corners are accented with simulated quoining. The brickwork is American with Flemish bond. The ground floor is delineated by a water table, and a corbeled belt course separates the two tiers of windows at the sanctuary level. A bold Italianate cornice surrounds the building. The cornice is constructed of wood and features heavy brackets with an ogee curve. These brackets are carried up in the raking cornice at the south elevation. The low-pitched gable roof is sheathed in slate.

The facade is characterized by its three-stage central tower. The first stage of the tower features a wide arched doorway approached by a flight of splayed stairs. The original doors have been replaced, but the frame and the semicircular transom are intact. The second stage of the tower, which is separated from the first by a small cornice, features two arched reveals flanking a central arched window in its front. Similar arched reveals are on the lateral faces of this stage. A second small cornice crowns this stage. The third stage, which rises above the ridge of the gable roof, is octagonal in plan. Pilasters define each corner, and within the four main facets are Palladian-window motifs with their central

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7. DESCRIPTION - - Architectural Analysis

arched elements fitted with louvers. A fourth stage and a spire, part of the original design, have been removed. The fourth stage was an open octagonal belfry, with arched sides and a small bracketed cornice. The 225-foot spire was damaged by Hurricane Hazel in 1954, and the remaining fragments were dismantled in 1955. Photographs show the spire as of octagonal plan, rising to a point, without external elaboration.

To either side of the tower, tall, arched windows light the twin stairs leading to the balcony. Double doorways with arched fanlights provide access to the ground floor.

The east and west elevations are defined by five regular bays with two tiers of windows lighting the sanctuary and a smaller tier lighting the basement. The windows have semicircular heads with corbeled hood molds. Window sash is four-over-four with the upper sash arched. The rear (north elevation) is marked by a projecting three-sided bay reflecting the chancel apse. The elevation is not pierced except for a circular attic vent.

A one-story classroom wing is located on the northwest corner of the building. This brick wing has a cornice similar to the cornice of the main building. The wing does not appear in an 1899 photograph of the church.

The churchyard is defined by a stone wall and by a simple metal fence which replaces an original ornate cast-iron fence. No gravesites are marked within the yard.

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TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH, Richmond (city), VA

Continuation sheet #3

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7. DESCRIPTION - - Architectural Analysis

Interior: The primary entrance at Trinity leads to a vestibule with a steep stair rising from the front door to the sanctuary level. The capacious sanctuary is relatively spartan with a U-shaped balcony and a hemispherical chancel apse being the most significant features.

The balcony is reached by two winding stairways which flank the entrance. It is supported on a series of triangular wooden brackets with ornamental sawn fleur-de-lis motifs. An elegant balcony rail, comprised of cast-iron posts and balusters carrying a molded rail, encloses the balcony. An organ built by Henry Erban of Philadelphia boasting 1,300 pipes was originally located in the rear of the balcony.

The chancel is set off from the sanctuary by a low semielliptical balustrade on a dais. A hemispherical apse framed by wooden pilasters and a semielliptical arch with a keystone surmounts the chancel. The interior of the apse is painted white; it may have been intended for mural decoration similar to the apse in the found floor auditorium. Except for the balustrade, the chancel furnishings are modern. Old photographs show a polygonal pulpit centered on the apse.

Wooden pews which appear to be original are arranged in an arcing pattern around three aisles facing the chancel. The walls of the sanctuary are plastered and painted white. An early description of the building noted that the walls were "kalsomined" (finished with calcimine paint). The flat ceiling is of pressed metal panels. Six octagonal electrified

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7. DESCRIPTION - - Architectural Analysis

lanterns are suspended from the ceiling. The windows have simple interior casings. Folding louvered shutters are fixed on the sanctuary windows.

The ground floor was designed as a secondary auditorium (called the school auditorium); church services were held in the ground floor while the main sanctuary was under construction. This auditorium originally had a chancel with a hemispherical apse similar to that of the sanctuary. Photographs of the auditorium show a mural painting of a mother and child in the apse. The ground floor has been remodeled with new partitions and finishes, and the space is now used for classrooms and church offices. A stairway at the northeast corner of the ground floor provides access to the sanctuary.

The building is in fair condition. Plans are underway for a renovation of the building, including reconstruction of the spire.

JW



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TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH, Richmond (city), VA

Continuation sheet #5

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8. SIGNIFICANCE - - Historical Background

Historic Context

Architecture: Trinity Methodist Church is a significant building designed by a major architect as an urban landmark. Recognizing the value of the Christian spire in defining neighborhoods and vistas, architect West designed the building so that the spire would dominate Broad Street on the east-west axis; it is also directly on axis with Hull Street across the James River. The composition of the building was derived through Georgian prototypes, ultimately from Wren's London city churches. The tall spire and staged tower, and the landmark siting, owe something to John Nash's 1822-1824 All Souls' Church, Langham Place, London. The details of the building, including the simulated quoins, the heavy bracketed cornice, and the semicircular windows and fanlights, reflect the prevalent Italianate taste of the 1850s.

The Broad Street Methodist Church, also designed by West, was of comparable quality with a similar composition and detailing. For many years the spires of the Broad Street and Trinity churches dominated Broad Street from opposite hillsides above Shockoe Valley. The destruction of the Broad Street Methodist Church renders Trinity Methodist Church all the more important.

( See Continuation Sheet #6 )

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Continuation sheet #6

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C. SIGNIFICANCE - - Historical Background

Architect Albert Lawrence West (1825-1892), F.A.I.A., a native Virginian, was a highly regarded architect and a devout Methodist who read the Bible cover-to-cover at least eight times. He was described, shortly after his death:

He was especially a master of ecclesiastical architecture, a branch of the business admitted by the profession as, next to the construction of a fine theater, one requiring more thorough understanding of architecture, practical and artistic, than any other.<sup>1</sup>

West's church designs included, in addition to Trinity and Broad Street Methodist, the Grace Street Baptist Church in Richmond, and a new facade for the Centenary United Methodist Church. He was architect for church edifices at Charlotte, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem, North Carolina; at Lagos, Western Africa; and at Yokohama, Japan. West was chairman of the Virginia Sunday-School Convention just before his death, and in 1890 he was a delegate to the International Sunday-School Convention in Pittsburgh.

History: Richmond's "First Church" Methodist congregation was organized in 1799. The congregation adopted the name Trinity by 1812. In 1827-1828 Trinity congregation constructed a church building on Franklin Street next to the Exchange Hotel. This building was destroyed by fire in 1836 and quickly rebuilt on the same location.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE - - Historical background

In 1859 it was determined to sell the old church building, and to relocate the congregation in a new building near the Church Hill residential neighborhood. A substantial segment of the congregation, however, separated from Trinity and planned another church building at Broad and Tenth streets. Architect Albert L. West, a member of Trinity, prepared plans for both new churches. The dissenting congregation built the Broad Street Methodist Church in 1859-1861.

Construction of the new Trinity Church at 20th and Broad streets began in 1859. On 3 February, 1860 the building's ground floor "school auditorium" was dedicated. The congregation met in this auditorium pending the completion of the remainder of the church. Completion was delayed by war, and the main auditorium was not finished until November, 1866. The cost of the construction was estimated at \$35,000. The spire was not erected until 1874-1875.

Trinity congregation relocated to a new building in the west end of Richmond, at Forest Avenue and Stuart Hall Road, in 1945. The old church was sold in 1947 to the New Light Baptist congregation, which has occupied it since that time. Plans are under way to restore the building to its historic appearance, including reconstruction of the spire.

Although Trinity Methodist Church is owned by a religious institution, its primary significance lies in its architectural distinction and it

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6. SIGNIFICANCE - - Historical Background

should therefore be considered eligible for listing under exception A of the National Register criteria.

JW

END NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Andrew Morrison, ed., The City on the James. Richmond, Virginia.  
(Richmond: George W. Englehardt, 1893), p. 58.

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TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH, Richmond (city), VA  
Continuation sheet #9 Item number 9, 10

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9. Bibliographic References (cont.)

"City's 'Old Trinity' Church." Richmond Times-Dispatch, 22 May 1955.

Morrison, Andrew, ed. The City on the James. Richmond, Virginia.  
Richmond: George W. Englehardt, 1893.

"Old Trinity Mother Church of Richmond Methodism." Richmond Times-Dispatch,  
13 April 1941.

Pell, Edward Leigh, ed. A Hundred Years of Richmond Methodism.  
Richmond: The Idea Publishing Company, 1899.

Richmond News Leader. Richmond, Virginia, 22 May 1947.

The Roanoke Times. Roanoke, Virginia, 16 October, 1954, p. 2.

Sweet, William Warren. Virginia Methodism: A History. Richmond: Whittet &  
Shepperson, 1945.

Winthrop, Robert P. Architecture in Downtown Richmond. Richmond: Historic  
Richmond Foundation, 1982.

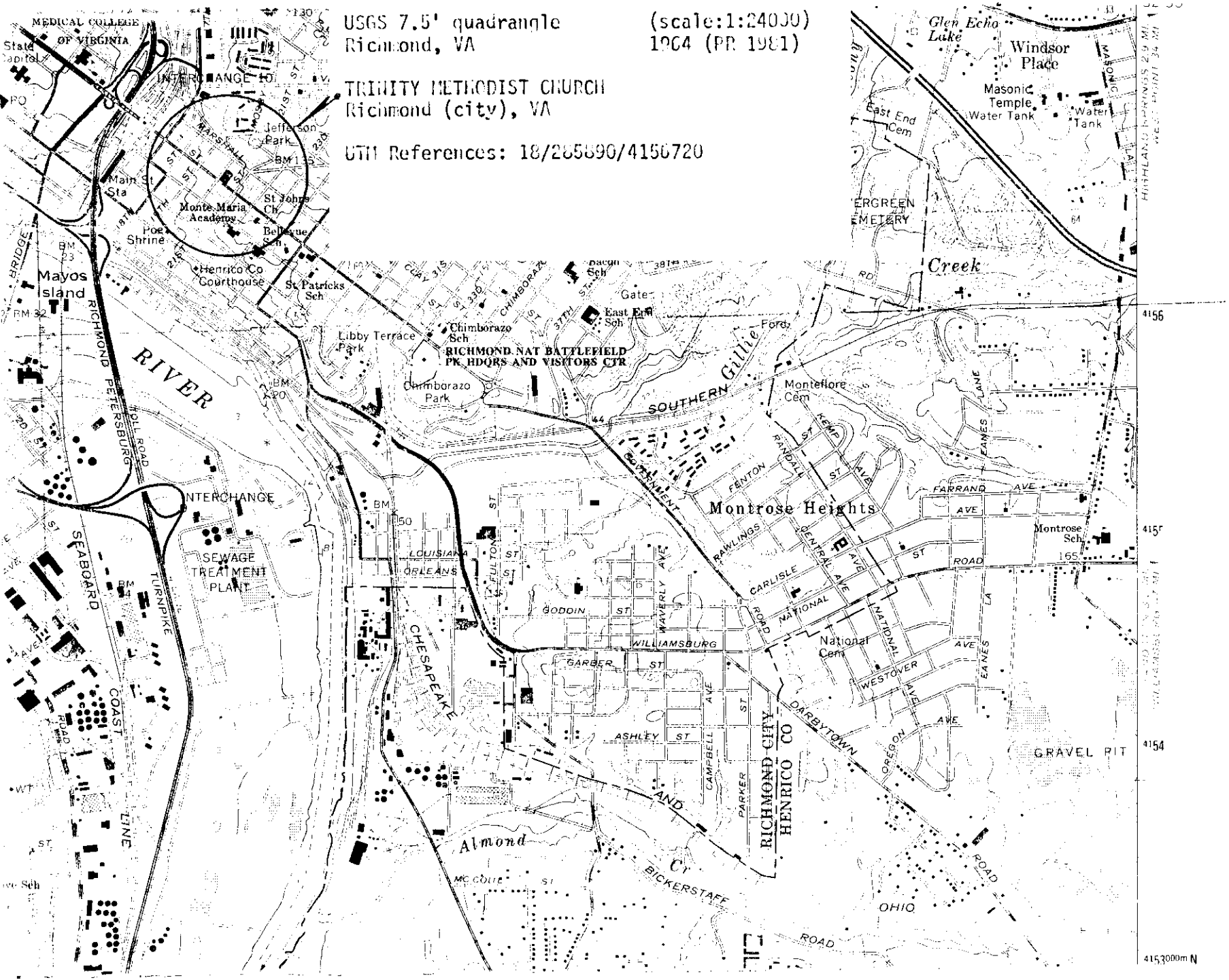
10. Geographical Data - - Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the N side of E. Broad St. at the  
NE corner of the intersection of E. Broad St. and 20th St.;  
thence extending approx. 100' SE along the N side of E. Broad St.;  
thence approx. 175' NE; thence approx. 100' NW to a point on  
the E side of 20th St.; thence approx. 175' SW following E  
side of 20th St. to the point of origin.

USGS 7.5' quadrangle  
Richmond, VA (scale:1:24000)  
1964 (PR 1981)

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH  
Richmond (city), VA

UTM References: 18/285890/4156720



HIGHLAND SPRINGS 2.9 MI  
WEST POINT 3.4 MI  
4156  
4155  
4154  
4153000m N