

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

## 1. Name

historic Centenary Methodist-Episcopal Church

and/or common Centenary Church (preferred); Centenary United Methodist Church (official name)

## 2. Location

street & number 411 East Grace Street

not for publication

city, town Richmond

vicinity of

Third (David E. Satterfield, III)  
congressional district

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
		<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

Board of Trustees, Centenary United Methodist Church  
name c/o Mr. David F. Jarvis, II, Pastor

street & number 411 East Grace Street

city, town Richmond

vicinity of

state Virginia 23219

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Richmond City Hall

street & number

900 East Broad Street

city, town

Richmond

state Virginia 23219

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission <sup>Survey</sup> as this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town

Richmond

state Virginia 23219

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

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

Centenary Church is located at 411-412 East Grace Street in the heart of Richmond's commercial district. Originally Greek Revival in style, the 1841-1843 rectangular brick building was extensively remodeled in the Gothic Revival between 1874-1876. The parish house dates from 1930.

The main (north) facade, as developed during the 1874-1876 remodeling, is dominated by a centrally positioned, three-stage tower. The tower's first stage incorporates the church's main entrance. It consists of a double doorway, topped by a multi-paned, stained-glass, pointed-arch transom with a hood molding. The transom and matching glass-paned doors are a mid-20th-century addition. The main entrance opens onto stairs leading up to the main floor of the church. The tower's second stage contains a large pointed-arch tracery stained-glass window.

The third stage is composed of a bell tower with louvred lancets with hood moldings. The top of the tower is crowned by battlements. The tower is flanked on the first story by side entrances. The double doors of both entrances are mid-20th-century replacements. The second story contains pointed-arch, stained-glass windows topped by hood molds. The roof line is ornamented by battlements. The east wall contains five bays, defined by pointed-arch openings with hood molds. The northeasternmost opening has been bricked up. The remaining openings contain stained-glass windows similar to those found on the north elevation. The west wall contains a two-story hyphen that connects the church to the parish house.

Executed in seven-course American bond, the hyphen contains a pointed-arch entrance on the first story and an arched stained-glass window on the second story. The hyphen is crowned with battlements. The rear (south) elevation contains a two-story projecting brick apse, in seven-course, American-bond brick.

The focal point of the interior is the choir, set apart from the nave by three tall Gothic arches, the center one taller and wider than the side ones. The arches are supported by clustered columns that sit on the choir's elevated stage. The organ show pipes and paneled canopied base provide a stunning backdrop to the carved oak Gothic Revival-style furniture and gleaming brass pulpit. An oak, Gothic-style communion table completes the arrangement. The choir is separated from the congregation by an oak communion rail of Gothic arches. Oak scroll-arm pews with Gothic panel ends and carved foliated finials provide seating for the congregation. The present organ was installed in 1905, and the pulpit in 1898. A marble baptismal font in the west corner of the church was acquired in 1892. The stained-glass windows are geometric with the exception of the figural memorial west window installed in 1902 in memory of John Morton and Elias P. Hudgins. Gothic-style lamps hang from a wooden, paneled and truss ceiling, braced on curved brackets suggesting hammer beams. The church has a center aisle. Galleries are over the side aisles and across the rear.

The parish house was constructed in seven-course American bond in 1930. Stylistically compatible with the church, the building's main entrance is on Grace Street. The double-door entrance is topped by a pointed-arch blind transom. The second story consists of multi-diamond-paned, hung-sash windows topped by stone lintel-type heads. The third story contains multi-paned, hung-sash windows topped by pointed-arch hood molds. The roof-line is ornamented with battlements. Both church and parish house are maintained in excellent condition.

## 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 checked="" 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** 1841-43; remodeled <sup>1874-6</sup> **Builder/Architect** John/Samuel Freeman; Albert L. West

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Centenary Church, long a familiar landmark in downtown Richmond, is the city's oldest Methodist Church and one of its chief examples of the Gothic Revival style. The original structure was a Greek Revival building put up in 1841-43 by the Richmond builder/architects John and Samuel Freeman with funds collected in 1839, the centennial year of Wesleyan Methodism. The simple temple-form structure was completely remodeled in the Gothic Revival style in 1874-76 by Albert L. West (1825-1892), Richmond's most prominent mid-19th-century architect, who provided designs for buildings throughout Virginia and as far away as Africa and Japan. Most of Richmond's more imposing Romantic Revival structures were designed by Northern architects such as Thomas U. Walter and Isaiah Rogers; Centenary, in its present form, thus gains interest as a local product and as one of West's few remaining works.

Methodism was first preached to Virginians in 1772, and by 1785, having made inroads in Tidewater and Southside, it had more adherents in the state than anywhere else in the country. Richmond was another story however, reporting such a small society of Methodists that in 1799 the first American Methodist Bishop, Francis Asbury, sent "the gifted young Thomas Lyell to take charge of the feeble society in Richmond..."<sup>1</sup> By the end of the year a new church was built with a congregation of twenty-eight white and twenty-two black members. A more formal meeting house was erected on Shockoe Hill in 1811. The congregation continued to grow, and the size of the meeting house was soon found inadequate. A report of the trustees in June 1843 records the following:

The trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Shockoe Hill, having for some time entertained the wish to erect a new house of worship, had upon all former occasions found themselves unable to do so, and when the Centenary subscriptions were being made in October 1839, they seized that opportunity as a favorable one to make another effort to obtain their wish. They succeeded in obtaining a subscription list...which they deemed sufficient to justify them in commencing their operations...<sup>2</sup>

On March 15, 1841, the present lot on Grace Street between 4th and 5th was purchased for \$3,926.50. According to the history of the church: "The foundation...was laid in the summer...but circumstances beyond the control of the committee retarded very much the completion of the building. The most prominent cause was the failure of a large number of the subscribers to comply with their engagements..."<sup>3</sup> The church was formally dedicated in June of 1843. The trustees reported a total cost of \$20,001.43. A contemporary description of the church was included in the account of the dedication ceremonies in the Richmond Compiler, June 6, 1843:

The Church is situated on a very pretty lot in a most agreeable part of Shockoe Hill. The outside wall of the building measures 75 x 60 feet. The front of the church has a recess portico graced by two large fluted doric columns. The outside is plain brick, well finished, and looks well. The interior of the Church is of Grecian doric order, and has a very pleasant and handsome appearance. It is 55 x 64 feet--too square for architectural propriety, but it brings the audience nearer to the pulpit...<sup>4</sup>

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Bennett, Floyd S. Descriptive Inventory of Archives. Centenary Methodist Church, Richmond, Va., 1962.  
Methodist Church on Shockoe Hill. Richmond, Va., 1962.  
 Pell, Edward Leigh. A Hundred Years of Richmond Methodism. Richmond: The Idea Publishing Co., 1899.  
 (See Continuation Sheet #1)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Richmond

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1 1 8	2 8 1 4	5 0 0	4 1 1	5 1 7	6 1 1 0
	Zone	Easting		Northing		
C						
E						
G						

B						
	Zone	Easting		Northing		
D						
F						
H						

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Located on Block #24 W, Lot 4 (Richmond City Assessor Office records), which measures 162.08'x121.67'. The lot occupies 411-413 East Grace Street. The register bounds coincide with the limits of said lot.

The church has occupied its present site at 411-413 East Grace Street since it was built

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries (See Continuation Sheet #1)

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date August 1979

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Tucker Hill*  
Tucker Hill, Executive Director

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date OCT 16 1979

For HCRS 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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Centenary Church, Richmond, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 8, 10, 9 PAGE 1

8. SIGNIFICANCE

In March 1859 the trustees named a committee to consider extending and beautifying the church by enlarging it, refinishing the interior, and improving the front. The war intervened, and not until August 1874 were the plans approved. In July 1875 the trustees approved the major contractor's bill of \$17,073 and the bill of the architect, Albert L. West. In November 1876 the trustees reported that, "the church is in good condition having been within the past months remodeled and refurnished at a cost of about \$25,000..."<sup>5</sup>

Richmond's most popular antebellum style was the Greek Revival, popularized on residential and public edifices. A break in this tradition came in 1847 when the Second Presbyterian Church erected a Gothic Revival-style edifice designed by Minard Lefever. The renovation of the Centenary Methodist Church in 1874-76 is thus a continuation of the city's Gothic Revival, a style which remained popular for churches through the later decades of the 19th century.

Subsequent improvements were made to the church, the most ambitious in 1930 with the addition of the parish house in a Gothic style compatible with the church. Although completely surrounded by commercial buildings, Centenary Church continues as an active downtown house of worship, offering a quiet and architecturally inspiring sanctuary from the bustle of Richmond's shopping district.

VDS/RCC

<sup>1</sup>Bennett, P. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Bennett, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Richmond Compiler, June 6, 1843.

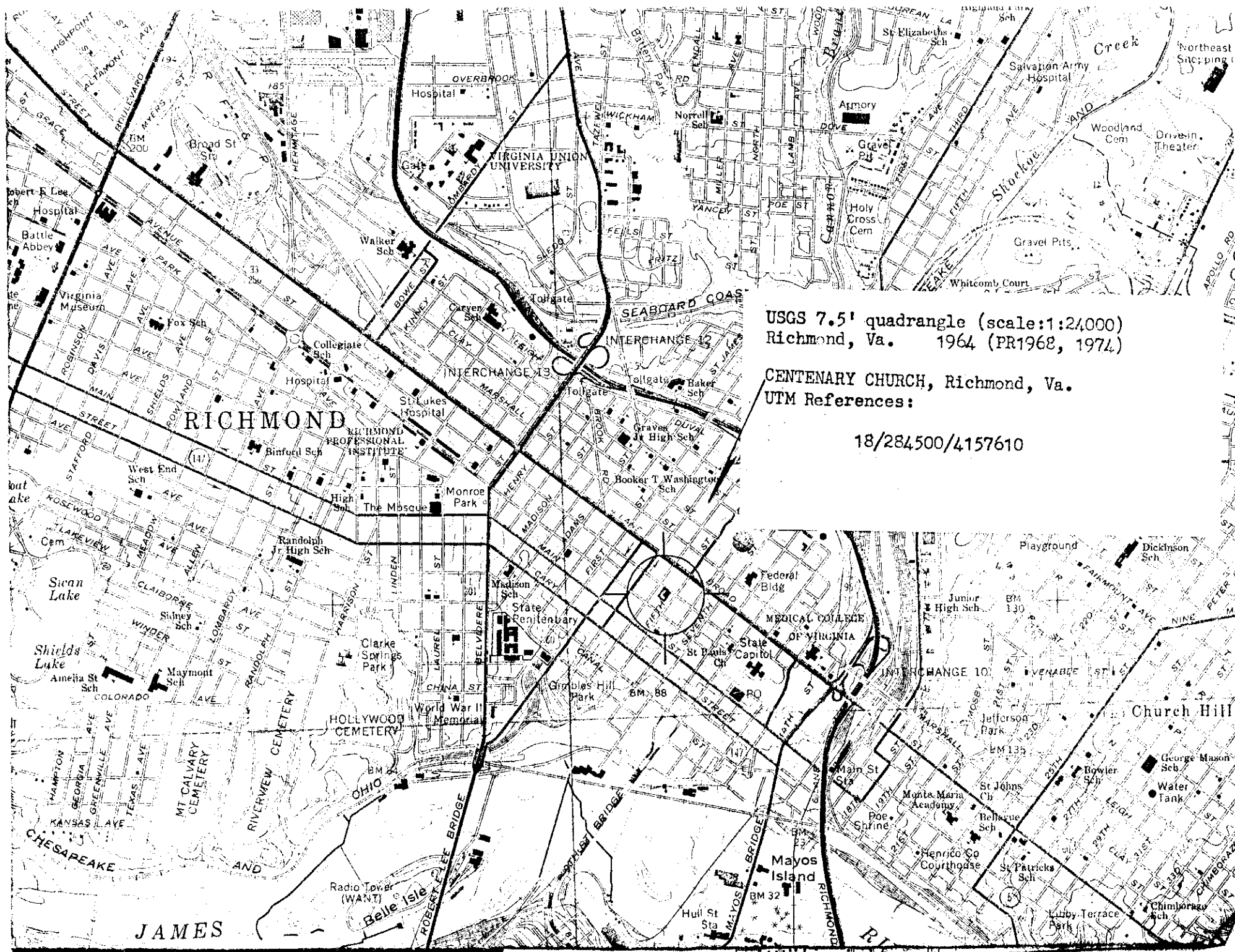
<sup>5</sup>Bennett, p. 70.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA - Verbal boundary description and justification

in 1841-43. The parish house is built on property acquired with the original church lot.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

United States Census, 1820-50.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)  
 Richmond, Va. 1964 (PR1968, 1974)

CENTENARY CHURCH, Richmond, Va.  
 UTM References:

18/284500/4157610