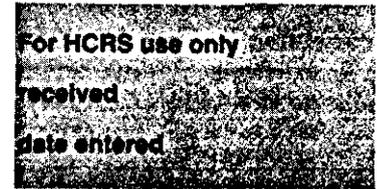


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 St. Luke Building

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 900 St. James Street n/a
not for publication

city, town Richmond n/a vicinity of Third congressional district (Thomas J. Bliley, Jr.)

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>n/a</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: office

4. Owner of Property

name James R. and Margaret A. Stallings

street & number 3007 Hawthorne Avenue

city, town Richmond n/a vicinity of state Virginia 23222

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Richmond City Hall

street & number 900 E. Broad Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

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

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<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	date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The St. Luke Building is a four-story brick office structure located at 900 St. James Street in Richmond. The well-proportioned, Edwardian-style building was erected in 1902 after the designs of John H. White and was rebuilt between 1915-20 after the plans of Charles T. Russell. It has a yellow pressed-brick facade and red brick secondary walls laid in American bond.

The St. James Street facade contains four entrances. The main entry has a glass transom and double doors with glass and wood panels. It is covered by a flat hanging canopy that identifies the opening, "St. Luke Office". The remaining entries are located to the north of the main one and have transom-light double doors, except for a middle opening which was converted into a single door for the entry to a beauty salon. A double-door entrance is also found on the south elevation. The first-story fenestration consists of wide, single-paned store windows on the facade and segmental-arched openings with 2/2 hung sash on the sides. The facade's second story has segmental-headed windows, while the third story has round-arched openings. All windows have transoms and 1/1 hung sash. The side elevations have segmental-arched openings with transoms and 2/2 hung sash. A modillion cornice with a small parapet embellishes the facade. Each story of the facade is separated by a string course. The first story features horizontal brick banding composed of highly glazed brick.

The interior of the St. Luke Building is remarkably well preserved. The basement still houses the original printing equipment that was used to print the St. Luke Herald, a weekly magazine. The press is still in operation on a much-reduced scale. The first floor houses shops, as intended in the original plan. The second and third floors, used by local churches, are divided into meeting rooms and small storage spaces. The Independent Order of St. Luke has its offices on the fourth floor. The office space remains in a fine state of preservation and is distinguished by a pressed-tin ceiling and an iron cashier's cage. The office of Maggie Walker, longtime head of the Order, is preserved as it was at the time of her death in 1934. It retains her desk, adding machine, and bookcases.

Originally the building's south elevation fronted on a landscaped garden enclosed by an iron fence. The fence and base of a fountain are all that remain.

RCC

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The St. Luke Building occupies a $\frac{1}{2}$ -acre tract (approximately) at 900 St. James Street in the City of Richmond. It is bounded on the east by St. James Street and on the south by Baker Street. Adjoining properties form its remaining boundaries. The property is listed as N 107-15 in the Tax Records of the City Assessor's Office.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1902/ 1915-20 **Builder/Architect** John H. White; Charles T. Russell

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The St. Luke Building houses the national headquarters of the Independent Order of St. Luke, a Negro benevolent society founded after the Civil War to provide guidance and financial aid to struggling freed slaves. Under the able leadership of Maggie L. Walker, the pioneering black business-woman, philanthropist, and educator, the society prospered and maintained itself when similar institutions in other cities failed. From its beginning, the organization served to bridge the gap between slavery and freedom: easing the burdens of illness and death, encouraging savings and thrift, providing an outlet for inexpensive but well-made retail goods, and promoting Mrs. Walker's ideals for her race through a news weekly. The dignified headquarters, the oldest black-affiliated office building in Richmond, was designed by John White and erected in 1903. It was remodeled and enlarged between 1915 and 1920 under the direction of Virginia Union University professor Charles T. Russell. Mrs. Walker's office in the St. Luke Building is preserved as a memorial, maintained as she left it at her death in 1934.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Independent Order of St. Luke was founded in Baltimore by an ex-slave, Mary Prout. Like similar benevolent societies, it grew out of the burying societies of the antebellum period. One of the greatest fears among the freed blacks was "death without mourners;" hence a number of charitable societies were founded to provide small sick benefits, burial money, and a sum for widows or survivors. One such society, the Independent Order of St. Luke, struggled for a number of years with minimal assets until Maggie L. Walker became its executive secretary in 1899 and the order began to flourish.

Born in 1867 to an ex-slave, Mrs. Walker taught school before becoming involved with the society and having it established in Richmond. Her systematization of the affairs of the Order increased its membership from 700 in 1899 to 20,000 in 1910. Under her auspices, the society established the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank of which she became president. This bank after several mergers became the Consolidated Bank, one of the few black banks to survive the Great Depression. Other activities of the Order were the St. Luke Emporium, a general department store, and the St. Luke Herald, a weekly magazine.

Prior to its present location, the St. Luke Hall stood at 1216 N. 26th Street in Church Hill. By 1903 the St. Luke Hall moved to 900 St. James Street. It assumed its present form between 1915-20 when it was enlarged to four stories under the direction of Professor Charles Russell of Virginia Union University. Very little is presently known about Professor Russell, who had also supervised the construction of several buildings at Virginia Union. The contractor for the additions was Henry J. Moore who lived at 312 W. Leigh Street.

Originally located on the northern edge of Jackson Ward, the nation's largest black historic district, and now separated from it by an expressway, the St. Luke Building today stands

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Dabney, Wendell P. Maggie L. Walker-Her Life and Deeds. Cincinnati: Dabney Publishing Co., 1927.
- Hill Directory of Richmond and Manchester. Richmond 1903, 1920.
- Lindsay, Arnett G. "The Negro in Banking." Journal of Negro History, Vol. 14, 1929, pp. 156-201. (See Continuation Sheet #1)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Richmond, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8	2	8	4	6	8	0	4	1	5	8	5	9	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification Occupying a city lot at the NW corner of St. James and Baker streets, measuring 80' x 97', with 97' fronting on St. James. Richmond City Assessor's Map Reference N000-0107/015. See Item 7 for Justification.

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 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date April 1981

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

H. Bryan Mitchell

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date MAY 10 1982

For HCERS 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

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

St. Luke Building, Richmond, Virginia

Continuation sheet

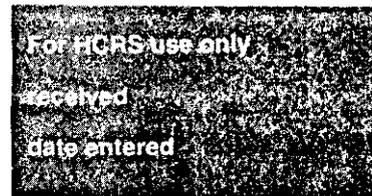
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Item number

8,9

Page

1



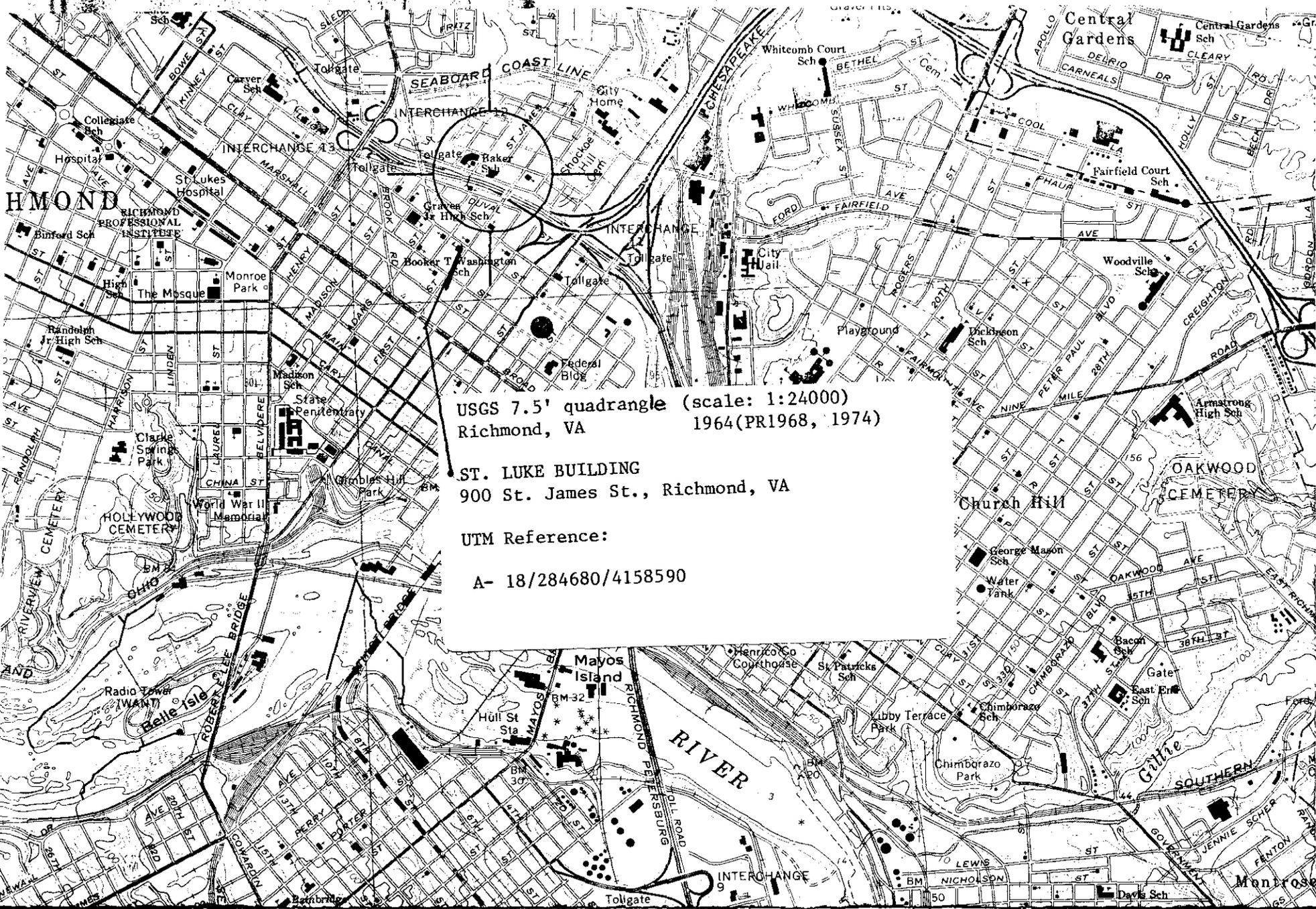
8. SIGNIFICANCE

as a distinguished landmark to Maggie Walker and to the Order she did so much to foster. The Independent Order of St. Luke continues to be a going concern, serving its members throughout the nation.

MTP/RCC

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Writers Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia. The Negro in Virginia. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale: 1:24000)
Richmond, VA
1964(PR1968, 1974)

ST. LUKE BUILDING
900 St. James St., Richmond, VA

UTM Reference:
A- 18/284680/4158590