

# AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC PLACES

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National Register of Historic Places

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The National Trust for Historic Preservation is the only private, nonprofit organization chartered by Congress to encourage public participation in the preservation of sites, buildings, and objects significant in American history and culture. In carrying out this mission, the National Trust fosters an appreciation of the diverse character and meaning of our American cultural heritage and preserves and revitalizes the livability of our communities by leading the nation in saving America's historic environments.

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Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, Washington, D.C. Photo courtesy of the Historic American Buildings Survey (Jack Boucher).

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Visitors from P.S. 272, Canarsie, to the Weeksville Society's African American Museum, Brooklyn, New York. Photo courtesy of the Weeksville Society (Jack Jupp).

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

**T**he buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects in this volume are among the more than 62,000 listed in the National Register of Historic Places to date. They represent only a portion of the existing properties important in African American history nationwide; there are many more that have yet to be nominated. The historic places included in this book were identified using the National Register Information System database to search for properties coded for significance in African American heritage that were listed by December 31, 1993. State historic preservation officers were consulted on the places in their states. After the summaries of historical significance were completed, index terms were ascribed to each entry using the Integrated Preservation Software (IPS). Analysis of the frequency of use and the historical patterns reflected by the indexing terms helped guide the content of the articles. The general format of the book and its indexes were generated using IPS.

### ARTICLES

The significance of any single place cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of its historical and cultural context. The authors of the first six articles use listed places to illustrate broad historical and cultural currents. The final two articles speak to the importance of historic preservation in communities. Together, they set the framework for

understanding the importance of both the everyday and the extraordinary places whose descriptions follow.

### AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC PLACES

The information on each entry is based on the National Register registration documentation. Nomination documentation is prepared by multitudes of individuals and submitted by more than 100 different state and federal preservation officers, and it reflects various approaches to and levels of information regarding the significance of historic places.

Each entry is headed by a banner containing the name of the place as it appears in the National Register, followed by the street address and town or city. For historic districts, approximate street boundaries are given under street address. The summaries are organized by county within each state and alphabetically by name within county. Some large cities, such as Richmond and St. Louis, are not considered a part of any county. These independent cities are subheaded within states the same way counties are. Alphabetical indexes by place name and by city follow to further assist readers in locating specific properties.

The text explaining the place's significance in African American history follows. At the end of each entry is a line containing several pieces of information:

**Thematic Resource (TR), Multiple Resource Area (MRA), or Multiple Property Submission (MPS),** if applicable, under which the property was nominated. 194 of the listed properties are registered as part of multiple property groups, under which places sharing common historical or architectural themes are individually listed.

**Additional Documentation (AD),** if applicable, indicates that supplemental information was added to the nomination documentation after a property's initial listing in the National Register.

**National Register Criteria for Evaluation** under which the property is listed. The National Register Criteria, indicated by the letters A,B,C, and D, are listed at the end of this section.

#### **Listing Date**

**National Park Service (NPS) and National Historic Landmarks (NHL) indicators.** Properties that are units of the National Park System are designated as such by Congress and are open to the public. National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant properties exhibiting exceptional importance that are identified and evaluated within the context of specific themes in the nation's history. They are designated by the Secretary of the Interior and simultaneously listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

#### **Identification Number**

The 8-digit number identifying the property in the National Register Information System database.

### **The National Register Criteria for Evaluation**

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location,

design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A); or
- That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past (Criterion B); or
- That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C); or
- That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory (Criterion D).

#### **Criteria Considerations**

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- A building or structure removed from its original location but that is primarily significant for architectural value or that is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- A birthplace or grave of a historical

### **Hutchinson House**

**North side of Point of Pines Road**

**Edisto Island**

The Hutchinson House is the oldest identified intact house on Edisto Island associated with the black community after the Civil War. It was the residence of Henry Hutchinson, a mulatto who, according to local tradition, built and operated the first cotton gin owned by an African American on the island from about 1900 to about 1920. The site of Hutchinson's cotton gin lies about 100 yards west of the house. Hutchinson was born a slave in 1860, the son of James Hutchinson, a mulatto who made notable attempts as both a slave and a freedman to improve conditions for black residents of Edisto Island. Henry Hutchinson is said to have built the one-and-one-half-story frame house at the time of his marriage to Rosa Swinton in 1885 and to have resided there until his death around 1940. [Edisto Island MRA, CA 5/5/87, 86003218]

### **McLeod Plantation**

325 Country Club Drive  
Charleston

The McLeod Plantation was constructed in 1858 by Edward McLeod, whose descendants still occupy it and maintain it as a functioning agricultural enterprise. The plantation retains many features associated with antebellum cotton plantations. Among these is the row of five clapboard slave quarters that line the drive to the house. The drive originally ran to a landing on Stono Creek where supplies were unloaded and produce was shipped to market. At the time of the plantation's nomination to the National Register, the small clapboard cabins with corbeled brick gable-end chimneys were maintained in excellent condition and were occupied by the

descendants of former slaves. An additional cabin containing two rooms with separate entrances stands on the property as well. A central chimney serves both rooms; one room was used as a kitchen, and the other as a bedroom. [CA 8/13/74, 74001831]

### **Moving Star Hall**

**River Road**

**St. John's Island**

The Moving Star Young Association was founded to provide the black community of St. John's Island with a place of worship; a community meeting hall; and social, fraternal, and burial services. Moving Star Hall was built by its membership in 1917. Largely supplanted by churches after emancipation, the praise house represents the survival of a plantation institution into the early 20th century.

The sickness and death benefits offered by the Moving Star Young Association mirrored those offered by mutual aid societies founded by free blacks before the Civil War. These organizations grew in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as African Americans sought to establish institutions that would provide services unavailable to them through the white community. Members served as pallbearers and grave diggers and tended the sick day and night until they got "better or worse."

The membership of the Moving Star Hall Association was interdenominational. Association members were also members in good standing with local black churches and attended regular church services on Sunday. Meetings were held at the hall from one to three times a week and began with prayer and ended with song. These services, in which each member was allowed a turn at preaching or song leading, were an alternative to the

more formal liturgy as well as an opportunity for fellowship.

Music, an integral part of the services, was a temporary reprieve from the harshness of everyday life. The musical traditions were carried on through the Civil War in private homes and Moving Star. In the 1920s, Moving Star Hall was associated with the appreciation of the music of the Islands. A group known as the Moving Star Hall Singers appeared at various local folk festivals and recordings of their songs.

At the time of its nomination to the National Register, Moving Star Hall was vacant. Fuller participation in the government and assistance by the National Park Service have made many of the hall's functions unnecessary. The loss of the community's social life in the city has greatly reduced the hall's importance. The hall remains standing as a reminder of the services provided by the Moving Star Young Association and other organizations in the black community. [CA 8/20/74, 82003843]

### **Old Bethel United Methodist Church**

222 Calhoun Street  
Charleston

Construction on Old Bethel United Methodist Church began in 1797. The church was built in the meeting house style, designed by Francis Asbury. It was located on the corner of Pitt and Calhoun Streets in Charleston. The church was a mixed black and white congregation, which was indicative of the church's philosophy of open membership. A schism developed in 1834, however, and the white members seceded to