

VLR: 11-16-71
NRHP: 3-16-72

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: RICHMOND (in cit.)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
LEIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

AND/OR HISTORIC:
LEIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
517 North Twenty-Fifth Street at Leigh Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Richmond (David E. Satterfield, III, Congressman, Third District)

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: (in cit.) CODE: 760

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <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 type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<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 <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Leigh Street Baptist Church

STREET AND NUMBER:
517 North Twenty-Fifth Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Richmond

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:
Broad and Tenth Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Richmond

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1957 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE: D. C. CODE: 11

STATE: VIRGINIA

CITY: RICHMOND (in cit.)

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

LEIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Though the Leigh Street Baptist Church no longer has its commanding view of Richmond, its handsome classical facade still dominates the corner of Leigh and Twenty-Fifth Streets. The Greek Revival structure, designed by Samuel Sloan of Philadelphia, has a Grecian Doric, pedimented portico with six fluted columns and a full entablature which continues around the side of the church. The porch and its approaching stairs were originally of wood. The present granite porch of the 1880's is reached by a pair of granite stairs which turn at right angles to form a central mass up to the two entrances under the portico. The intricately scrolled, cast-iron stair railing, attributed to Asa Snyder, was added at the time the stairs were changed. The three-storied, stuccoed church has six bays separated by pilasters on its Leigh Street facade, and a one-story wing towards the rear. Attached to the right side of the church is a three-story, white stucco Sunday School addition (1917). Similar to the church, it has a tall base and a three-bayed facade with pilasters, a full entablature, and a balustrade. Beyond this is a second annex (1930), a two-story, five-bay, white stucco structure with a pedimented gable end roof. The rear of the church is plain brick with a fourteen foot long addition (1911) which houses the organ.

The original interior of the church was simple almost to the point of being bare. A photograph taken in 1889 shows a central aisle with carved pews of dark-stained wood curving off to each side. The end wall has no decoration, except for a painted floral border at the top and at a level just above the backs of the pews. A small, panelled choir is formed by a square, curtained opening in the end wall. A panelled-front balcony supported by then columns extends around the church. The organ was in the balcony at the rear of the church.

In 1911, the gift of a new organ caused the interior of the church to be rearranged. The choir was widened to fourteen feet and supported by two, large, fluted columns in order to accomodate the organ. A portion of the southern wall of the church was removed in 1917 so as to connect the auditorium of the Sunday School wing to the church. In 1930, a complete remodelling of the interior concluded its evolution. Today, there is still the center aisle with the curved pews facing the organ. The side balconies have been eliminated and replaced by a single curving one in the rear of the church. Panelled wainscoting has been put around the bottom of the walls of the church and the entrance foyer while an entablature of triglyphs and dentils extends around the base of the panelled ceiling. The tall, straight windows on the northern side of the church have rectangular panes colored to imitate alabaster. Three windows in the southern wall were eliminated when the Sunday School was built and the other two have been left open. The auditorium of the wing faces the church and has a balcony at the back which houses classrooms.

Though the interior of Leigh Street Baptist is very much transformed, the exterior retains the simple directness which characterized it in the nineteenth century.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1854-57

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/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the middle of the nineteenth century, a Baptist missionary named Reuben Ford came to Church Hill to do religious work among the residents and to establish a Baptist Church if his labors seemed to justify it. His efforts proved fruitful, and on Sunday, December 25, 1853, the first service of Leigh Street Baptist Church was held in the newly completed basement of the church. On July 30, 1854, the church was officially constituted, and Reuben Ford was chosen pastor. The building, designed by Samuel Sloan of Philadelphia, was dedicated in May of 1857. From that point, the church began its series of good works in the community which earned it the name of "The Church of the Helping Hand."

Leigh Street Baptist was the fourth Baptist Church to be formed in Richmond, and under its auspices, seven others were founded, including the First African Baptist Church, started in 1858. Strategically located at the junction of Church and Union Hills and Shed Town, Leigh Street attracted a large number of people who sometimes found themselves cut off from Baptist services on the west side of town by the swollen waters of Shockoe Creek. The church has always had a strong congregation and distinguished pastors, among them, Reuben Ford, John Pollard (also a faculty member at Richmond College and father of John Garland Pollard, later Governor of Virginia), M. Ashby Jones, and J. J. Wicker.

During the 1870's, a one-story wing was added to the church on the Leigh Street side to house the primary and nursery departments of the Sunday School. Between 1880 and 1885, the wooden porch and steps on the front entrance of the church were removed and replaced by a stone porch and steps with ornamental iron-work, believed to have been the work of Asa Snyder. Dark-stained wooden pews, arranged in a semi-circular fashion, were installed about 1889. In 1911, a demand for space required the addition of a Sunday School wing on the southern exposure of the church, and a large organ was placed behind the pulpit platform. The educational capacity of the church was enlarged in 1930 by an annex to the Sunday School wing. At the same time, the outside of the church was repaired, the Sunday School was redecorated, and the interior of the main church was "made over" from floor to ceiling.

Samuel Sloan (1815-1884) was a well-known Philadelphia architect whose work included such monuments as the Pennsylvania State Building for the 1876 Exposition in Philadelphia, the Masonic Temple and Tradesman National Bank in the same city, the Fulton Opera House, and the Connecticut State Hospital. He was instrumental in the formation of the Philadelphia chapter of the American Institute of Architects and was later made a Fellow of that organization. During the last ten years of his life, he practiced primarily in the South, building many hospitals, asylums, and

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Files of the Valentine Museum, Churches: Baptist
Leigh Street Baptist Church, 1854-1954, W. C. James
Old Richmond Neighborhoods, Mary Wingfield Scott

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	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
NW	° ' "	° ' "		37 °	32 ' 02 "	77 ° 25 ' 00 "
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than 10 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

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Elizabeth Cheek

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE: July 26, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 _____
James W. Moody, Jr., Director
 Title Va. Historic Landmarks Commission

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 _____

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE VIRGINIA	
COUNTY RICHMOND (in cit.)	
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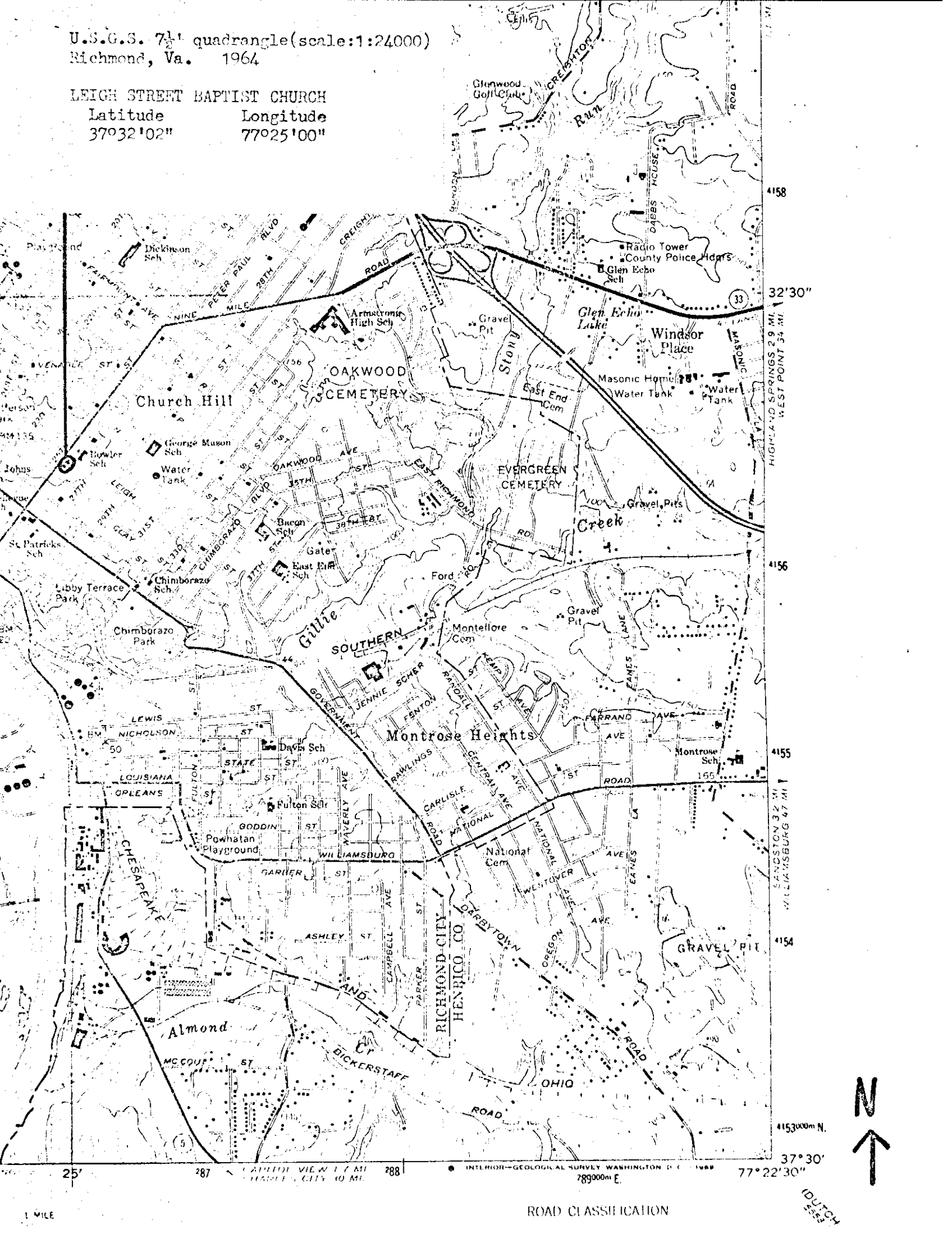
(Number all entries)

8. residences. In addition to the Leigh Street Baptist Church, Sloan designed the Governor's Mansion (1883-1891) in Raleigh, North Carolina, the city in which he settled and eventually died.

Leigh Street Baptist Church is the oldest white Baptist Church in the city to continuously occupy the same building. The church is well-known to the community as a strong and charitable organization with many members of the congregation being the descendants of its founding fathers. Though remodelled on the inside, the exterior of Sloan's building has survived in its original form to represent the spirit of architectural excellence which characterized antebellum Richmond.

U.S.G.S. 7 1/2' quadrangle (scale: 1:24000)
Richmond, Va. 1964

LEIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
Latitude 37°32'02"
Longitude 77°25'00"



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

1964