

Government Street Presbyterian Church
Mobile, Ala.

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HABS No. 18-1.

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 16.

Historic American Buildings Survey
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer
Ala. Polytechnic Inst., Auburn, Ala..

AL
Project #16-1
GOVERNMENT STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Government Street, Mobile, Alabama

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HABS 081
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49-MOBI,
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HISTORICAL DATA:

Built during "Flush Times", 1836.

Building Cost: \$60,000.

Architect: Thomas James, Mobile, Alabama.

Contractor or Builder: John K. Collins, Mobile, Ala.

Ownership: Government Street Presbyterian Church.

Congregation:

This Presbyterian Congregation was organized on March 3, 1831. The Reverend James Johnson of New York, was the first pastor.

The building used at this time, 1831, and the predecessor of the present building, was the one built by the Reverend John B. Warren of Massachusetts, mainly with his own money. This first Presbyterian church in Mobile had been erected during the years 1825 to 1829. This was the mother church for all Presbyterian churches in Alabama. Now in 1831, this building was used by the first organized Presbyterian congregation.

This first building stood about where the LaCledé Hotel now stands. During "Flush Times" in Alabama, the congregation became so large, that it was necessary to enlarge the place of worship. Thus the present lot on Government Street was purchased and a new building erected in 1836.

Pastors Serving in the Present Building:

William T. Hamilton of Newark, New Jersey, was the pastor from November 29, 1834 to the spring of 1854.

Henry Mandeville of New York, served from January 14, 1855 to the fall of 1858.

John Lord of Buffalo, New York, third pastor, from the fall of 1855 until June of 1859.

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Pastors of Present Building Continued:

William Meikle of Canada served this church from June 1859 until November 1859.

Dr. James Ralston Burgett of Mansfield, Ohio, came to Mobile as a young man in 1860. He was pastor during the War Between the States. He married Rachel Wheeler of Mobile. Dr. Burgett remained leader of this Church until 1900. The Church went forward in growth and spiritual development during his long term of service.

Dr. A. F. Carr served from 1901 to 1914.

Dr. Henry Wade DuBose, 1914 to 1919.

Dr. W. Taliaferro Thompson, 1919 to 1920.

Dr. Dunbar H. Ogden, from October 1920 until October 26, 1930.

Source of Material:

Aleathea Thompson Cobbs, "A Century of Growth of Government Street Presbyterian Church", Mobile.

N. H. Holmes of the measuring force, architect, Mobile, Alabama.

Reviewed in 1936 by H.C.F.

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ARCHITECTURAL MERIT AND DATA:

This building is one of the unique landmarks of Mobile designed by the architect-builder Thomas James. It is of exquisite proportions, its charm being mainly in its choice portico of the front facade. The stair halls, on either side of the entrance, are circular stairs of very graceful wind.

The most distinguishing feature of the interior is a deeply coffered ceiling. The balcony is also of unusual design as also is the main ceiling cornice. The design of the altar treatment is unhappily not of the same good character, as ~~is~~ the rest of the interior treatment.

Later additions to the rear of the building have been disregarded as regards the project.

Source of Material:

E. Walter Burkhardt, District Administrator, HABS,
Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Alabama.