



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Coming Street Cemetery

other names/site number Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Congregational Cemetery

2. Location

street & number 189 Coming Street, between Morris and Cannon Streets not for publication       
city or town Charleston vicinity       
state South Carolina code SC county Charleston code 019 zip code 29403

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally      statewide      locally.  
(     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds 9/20/96  
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy SHPO, S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register      See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register      See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

M. J. M. W. 11/5/96

for \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

### 5. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

#### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>    </u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
		Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

N/A

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:

FUNERARY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:

Sub:

FUNERARY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>N/A</u>
roof	<u>N/A</u>
walls	<u>N/A</u>
other	<u>    </u>
	<u>    </u>

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Religion
- Social History
- 
- 
- 
- 

**Significant Dates**

- 1762
- 1842
- 1843

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Period of Significance**

1762-1909

**Architect/Builder**

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Synagogue, Charleston, S.C.

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Approximately one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	599000	3628280	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	See continuation sheet.					

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Stephen Ziff, Chairman, Buildings and Grounds, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Synagogue  
organization Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Synagogue date 6 December 1995  
street & number 90 Hasell Street telephone (803) 723-1090  
city or town Charleston state S.C. zip code 29401

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Synagogue  
street & number 90 Hasell Street telephone (803) 723-1090  
city or town Charleston state S.C. zip code 29401

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Coming Street Cemetery  
name of property  
Charleston County, South Carolina  
county and State

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Coming Street Cemetery, established in 1762, is an approximately one-acre site at 189 Coming Street, between Morris and Cannon Streets in downtown Charleston, South Carolina.

A perimeter stuccoed brick wall, part of it original, is an important feature of the site and has been a major factor in keeping the cemetery intact for over two hundred years. The cemetery itself contains some six hundred marble and brownstone gravestones, most dating from the last half of the eighteenth century (the first burial dates from 1762) or the first half of the nineteenth century. It includes many box tombs, table-top tombs, obelisks, and columns, several of them fine examples of late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century gravestone art, and many signed by such prominent local sculptors and stonecutters as A.F. Chevreaux, M. Gannon, G. Rennie, D.A. Walker, Edward R. White, and William T. White. Many gravestones feature Hebrew inscriptions and/or Jewish religious motifs.

A few of the many significant examples of gravestone art in the Coming Street Cemetery include the graves of Joshua Lazarus (1796-1861, president of Beth Elohim 1850-1861 and president of the Charleston Gas Light Company 1848-1856), featuring a fluted column on a pulvinated pedestal, surmounted by an urn; Marx E. Cohen, Jr. (1839-1865, a Confederate soldier killed in March 1865, near the end of the Civil War), an obelisk featuring bas-relief crossed flags (the South Carolina state flag and Confederate battle flag) above the inscription and a bas-relief cannon below; Catherine Lopez (1814-1843, wife of David Lopez, who built the Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Synagogue in 1840), a box tomb in a Gothic Revival enclosure described by one authority as a "stone canopy," featuring a pointed arch with spandrel ornamented with quatrefoiled and traceried fretwork and a pointed arch iron railing; and Jacob Barrett (1848-1883), featuring a curvilinear pediment and flanking bas-relief Corinthian columns, and containing an oval tablet surmounted by a bas-relief bouquet.

The present appearance of the Coming Street Cemetery is little altered from its historic appearance, though some damage to individual gravestones and enclosures from pollution and the climate, from vandalism, or from Hurricane Hugo (1989) is more or less evident.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Coming Street Cemetery  
name of property  
Charleston County, South Carolina  
county and State

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The Coming Street Cemetery, established in 1762, is privately owned by Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim ("Holy Congregation of the House of God")--a congregation whose synagogue is itself a National Historic Landmark, designated in 1978 as "a fine Greek Revival structure erected in 1840 . . . the second oldest synagogue extant in the country and the oldest in continuous use."<sup>1</sup> This cemetery, which is located on Coming Street about ten blocks north of the Beth Elohim synagogue at 90 Hasell Street, is significant as the oldest Jewish burial ground in the South; for its association with the history of Beth Elohim, a congregation established in 1749 and the birthplace of Reform Judaism in America in 1824; as the chief cemetery for Charleston's significant Jewish community since the colonial era; and for its fine examples of late-eighteenth century and early nineteenth-century gravestone art.

Congregation Beth Elohim acquired this site in 1764 from Isaac DaCosta, a founder of the congregation who had laid out this site in 1754 as a private cemetery; the oldest extant gravestone in the Coming Street Cemetery is that of DaCosta's friend Moses Cohen (1709-1762), the first rabbi of Beth Elohim. Jewish pioneers began to settle in Charleston soon after the establishment of the Carolina colony in 1670, and many Sephardic Jews were attracted to South Carolina by its promise of religious freedom and toleration. Within the first hundred years--certainly by the time of the American Revolution--Charleston boasted a large and influential Jewish community, one which included "more Jews . . . than in any other city in North America" by 1800.<sup>2</sup>

The Coming Street Cemetery includes portions of other historic Jewish cemeteries as well, particularly private family cemeteries--such as the Lopez Family Cemetery, including the grave of Catherine Lopez, who was not permitted burial in the main cemetery because she had not converted to Judaism--laid out adjacent to the main cemetery and later incorporated into it. One section of the cemetery is at a slightly higher ground level than the rest, and was originally established as a separate cemetery in the 1840s when a dispute over the propriety of installing an organ in the synagogue split the congregation into factions. The trustees of Beth Elohim, following the strict Sephardic ritual which forbids the use of music other than vocal music, denied a petition to place an organ in the synagogue; the members, meanwhile, overruled the trustees and approved the purchase of an organ by a close vote in July 1840. Forty members of Beth

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<sup>1</sup>National Historic Landmark Nomination, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Synagogue, Charleston, S.C., 1978; on file at the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

<sup>2</sup>James William Hagy, This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1993), p. 1.

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Coming Street Cemetery  
name of property  
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county and State

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Elohim who had opposed the purchase and use of an organ in the synagogue withdrew from the congregation and established a new congregation which they named Shearith Israel ("the Remnant of Israel"); they also established a separate cemetery adjacent to the Coming Street Cemetery and built a wall dividing the two. Soon after the end of the Civil War, however, the two congregations--known as the "Organ Congregation" and the "Remnants," respectively--were reunited in the Beth Elohim congregation, the wall was torn down, and the newer cemetery was incorporated into the older main cemetery. Remains of the dividing wall are still extant.

By 1887, after over a hundred years of burials in the Coming Street Cemetery, Beth Elohim established a new cemetery on Huguenin Avenue, on Charleston Neck between the city and North Charleston. Burials in the Coming Street Cemetery are now restricted to those few vacancies in historic family plots.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Barnett A. Elzas, The Old Jewish Cemeteries at Charleston, S.C. A Transcript of the Inscriptions on Their Tombstones. 1762-1903. With an Introduction and Full Index by Dr. Barnett A. Elzas, Rabbi of K.K. Beth Elohim, Charleston, South Carolina, 1903. (Charleston: The Daggett Printing Company, 1903); Barnett A. Elzas, The Jews of South Carolina From the Earliest Times to the Present Day (Philadelphia: Press of J.B. Lippincott Company, 1905), pp. 35, 120, 192, 194, 209-19, 226, 260; Charles Reznikoff and Uriah Z. Engelman, The Jews of Charleston: A History of an American Jewish Community (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1950), 138-148, 151-53, 158-59, 162-65; Thomas J. Tobias, "Tombstones That Tell A Story: Charleston's Historic Coming Street Cemetery," The Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society 2 (November 1958), 2-8; Hagy, pp. 63-67, 238-44, 253-69, 286, 300, 343, 356-57.

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Coming Street Cemetery  
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county and State

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Breibart, Solomon. "The Jewish Cemeteries of Charleston." Carologue: A Publication of the South Carolina Historical Society 9:2 (Summer 1993).
- Elzas, Barnett A. The Jews of South Carolina From the Earliest Times to the Present Day. Philadelphia: Press of J.B. Lippincott Company, 1905.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Old Jewish Cemeteries at Charleston, S.C. A Transcript of the Inscriptions on Their Tombstones. 1762-1903. With an Introduction and Full Index by Dr. Barnett A. Elzas, Rabbi of K.K. Beth Elohim, Charleston, South Carolina, 1903. Charleston: The Daggett Printing Company, 1903.
- Hagy, James William. This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston. Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1993.
- Reznikoff, Charles, and Uriah Z. Engelman. The Jews of Charleston: A History of an American Jewish Community. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1950.
- Tobias, Thomas J. "This Cemetery We Dedicate." American Jewish Historical Quarterly 53 (June 1964).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Tombstones That Tell A Story: Charleston's Historic Coming Street Cemetery." The Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society 2 (November 1958).



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Coming Street Cemetery  
name of property  
Charleston County, South Carolina  
county and State

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the northeast corner of the site, proceed 172' along Coming Street, then proceed 199' west along the brick to the southwest corner, then 134' north to the northwest corner, then 92' east, then 93' north, 20' east, 60' south, and then 90' east to the point of origin.

**Verbal Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the nominated property is the boundary of the historic cemetery, which includes approximately one acre purchased by Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Congregation in 1764.

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Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 10 Coming Street Cemetery  
name of property  
Charleston County, South Carolina  
county and State

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The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property:	Coming Street Cemetery
Location of Property:	189 Coming Street, Charleston Charleston County, South Carolina
Name of Photographer:	Joseph D. Schmidt
Date of Photographs:	April 1995
Location of Original Negatives:	S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia

1. Exterior Wall
2. Overview of Cemetery from Southwest Corner
3. Table-Top Tombs
4. Gravestones of Philip Wineman and Jacob Barrett
5. Gravestone of Jacob Barrett
6. Detail of Ornamental Ironwork Gate from West
7. Gravestone of Joshua Lazarus
8. Tomb of Catherine Lopez
9. Detail of Nineteenth-Century Weeping Willow Motif
10. Detail of Jewish Religious Motif
11. Portion of 1840 Dividing Wall

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 96001223      **Date Listed:** 11/5/96

Coming Street Cemetery	Charleston	SOUTH CAROLINA
<b>Property Name</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>State</b>

N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
**Multiple Name**

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*M. J. M. 10/1*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

*11/5/96*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

Section No. 8

This nomination is amended to add Art as an area of significance under Criterion C, reflecting the importance of the gravestone art.

This information was provided by the South Carolina SHPO.

**DISTRIBUTION:**  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)