

**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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic African Church

and/or common A.M.E. Church of St. Charles

2. Location

street & number 554 Madison Street _____ not for publication

city, town St. Charles _____ vicinity of congressional district #9- Hon. Harold Volkner

state Missouri code 029 county St. Charles code 183

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

4. Owner of Property

name John C. and Frances T. Cross

street & number 940 Fernwood Drive

city, town St. Charles _____ vicinity of state Missouri 63301

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Recorder of Deeds, St. Charles County Courthouse

street & number 118 North Second Street

city, town St. Charles _____ state Missouri 63301

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1. St. Charles Landmarks Preservation has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 _____ federal _____ state county _____ local

depository for survey records St. Charles Historical Society Archives, 117 Jefferson Street

city, town St. Charles _____ state Missouri 63301

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The African Church of St. Charles, Missouri, is a small, common-bond brick structure with walls eighteen inches thick, and a low-pitched gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. Facing south from a small lot in the center of the town, the primary facade displays the entrance under a flat arch of vertical stretchers. The secondary facades each carry three regularly spaced doublehung windows with arches of the same type. The facades are otherwise devoid of ornamentation.

Interior

The interior of the church has been completely remodelled to serve as a small residence. On the lower floor, the structure now contains a living room, bedroom, bath and kitchen. A stairway leads to a loft area.

Alterations

In 1947, the interior was entirely rebuilt: 1 rooms partitioned; bath and kitchen facilities added; a sunroom constructed on the north facade; and a basement dug. The original doubleleaf entrance was converted to singleleaf and the remaining space filled with a new transom and sidelights. The roof was repaired and recovered and a new concrete stoop placed in front. At an unknown time, the church was painted a light brown color.

Site

The building is situated on a tiny lot in the center of St. Charles. It is surrounded by narrow strips of grass, bordered by sidewalks.

Present Status

The African Church is well-maintained on the interior and exterior. It is now used by the owners as rental property.

FOOTNOTE

1. Edna McElhiney Olson, "Historical Scenes-Built, Owned by Slaves," St. Charles Journal, 12 July 1962, p. 16.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1855 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The African Church of St. Charles, Missouri, is significant as an example of antebellum vernacular architecture, and as a symbol of black social, religious and educational history in America. It is probably the earliest black church in St. Charles.

On June 27, 1855, Jeremiah Fletcher Riggs purchased a plot of land in St. Charles,¹ a part of which he immediately sold to seven trustees, himself among them, who were to "erect and build...thereupon a house or place of worship for the Colored members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South."² The church, with handmade bricks and hand-hewn timbers, was built before 1859³ by the slaves themselves. The first service held was a major event in the St. Charles black community. Dr. Ludwell Powell, the first mayor of St. Charles and a wealthy slaveowner, attended.⁴ A school was organized in the building during the week, with classes for children during the day and for adults in the evening.⁵

After the close of the Civil War, on September 8, 1865, ownership of the church was transferred to five black trustees for the sum of \$1.00.⁶ The congregation soon outgrew the small building, however and in 1872 a larger structure was erected nearby. The church was sold in 1874 to the Union Benevolent Society of St. Charles but services were held there until 1943⁸ when the structure fell vacant.

The church was purchased in 1947 by Alfred and Edna Olson, who made extensive interior modifications to convert the structure into a private residence.⁹ It was acquired by the present owners in 1975¹⁰ and is currently a rental property.

FOOTNOTES

1. Deed Record Book C², p. 471, July 7, 1855, St. Charles County Courthouse, St. Charles, Missouri.
2. Deed Record Book D², p. 124, July 14, 1855, St. Charles County Courthouse, St. Charles, Missouri.
3. Deed Record Book I², p. 140, January 12, 1859, St. Charles County Courthouse, St. Charles, Missouri. The deed recorded the presence of "the small brick church known as the African church."
4. Edna McElhiney Olson, "Historical Scenes-Built, Owned by Slaves," St. Charles Journal, July 12, 1962, p. 1.
5. Ibid, p. 16.
6. Deed Record Book V², p. 207, September 8, 1865; St. Charles County Courthouse, St. Charles, Missouri.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Cross, Frances T. Interview. June 9, 1980.
2. Deed Record Book, C², p. 471. St. Charles County Courthouse, St. Charles, Missouri.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .04 acre
 Quadrangle name "St. Charles, Mo." Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<input type="text" value="1"/> <input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="7"/> <input type="text" value="1"/> <input type="text" value="8"/> <input type="text" value="2"/> <input type="text" value="0"/> <input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/> <input type="text" value="2"/> <input type="text" value="9"/> <input type="text" value="5"/> <input type="text" value="4"/> <input type="text" value="2"/> <input type="text" value="5"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification

The following real estate situate, lying and being in the City and County of St. Charles, and State of Missouri, to-wit: being a part of Lot number five in Boon's Survey of the

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Janice R. Cameron, Research Assistant
 organization Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program date June 23, 1980
 street & number P.O. Box 176 telephone 314/751-4096
 city or town Jefferson City state Missouri 65102

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

title Director, Department of Natural Resources and
State Historic Preservation Officer date

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 date

 Register of the National Register

 date

 Register of Registration

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Continuation sheet

Item number 6

Page 1

2. Missouri State Historical Survey

1980

State

Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Program

P.O. Box 176

Jefferson City

Missouri 65102

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

7. Interview with Mrs. Frances T. Cross, June 9, 1980.
8. Deed Record Book, 19, p. 272, December 16, 1874, St. Charles County Courthouse, St. Charles, Missouri.
9. Olson, pp. 1 and 16.
10. Interview with Mrs. Frances T. Cross, June 9, 1980.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

3. Deed Record Book, D², p. 124. St. Charles County Courthouse, St. Charles, Missouri.
4. Deed Record Book, I², p. 140. St. Charles County Courthouse, St. Charles, Missouri.
5. Deed Record Book, V², p. 207. St. Charles County Courthouse, St. Charles, Missouri.
6. Deed Record Book, 19, p. 272. St. Charles County Courthouse, St. Charles, Missouri.
7. Olson, Edna McElhiney. "Historical Scenes-Built, Owned by Slaves." St. Charles Journal, July 12, 1962, pp. 1 and 16.

ITEM NUMBER 10

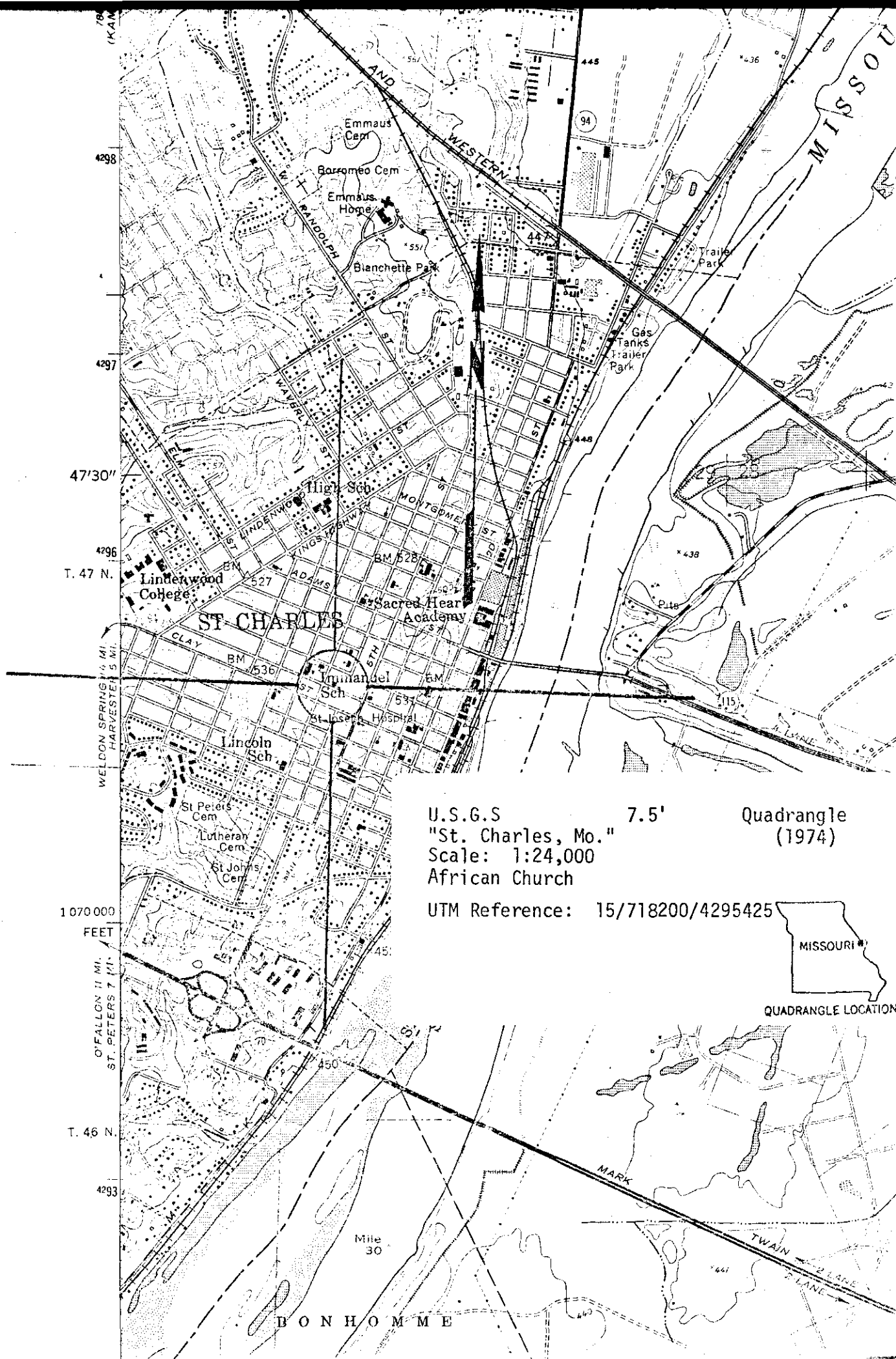
PAGE 1

St. Charles Commons, fronting on Madison Street of said City, thirty feet and running back the same width northwardly sixty feet, bounded north and west by a part of said Lot number five, East by a lot in said Lot number five and South by said Madison Street.

ITEM NUMBER 11

PAGE 1

2. Mrs. Frances T. Cross
940 Fernwood Drive
St. Charles
March 10, 1980
Missouri 63301
3. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey
and State Contact Person
Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City
June 23, 1980
314/751-4096
Missouri 65102



U.S.G.S 7.5' Quadrangle
 "St. Charles, Mo."
 Scale: 1:24,000
 African Church
 UTM Reference: 15/718200/4295425

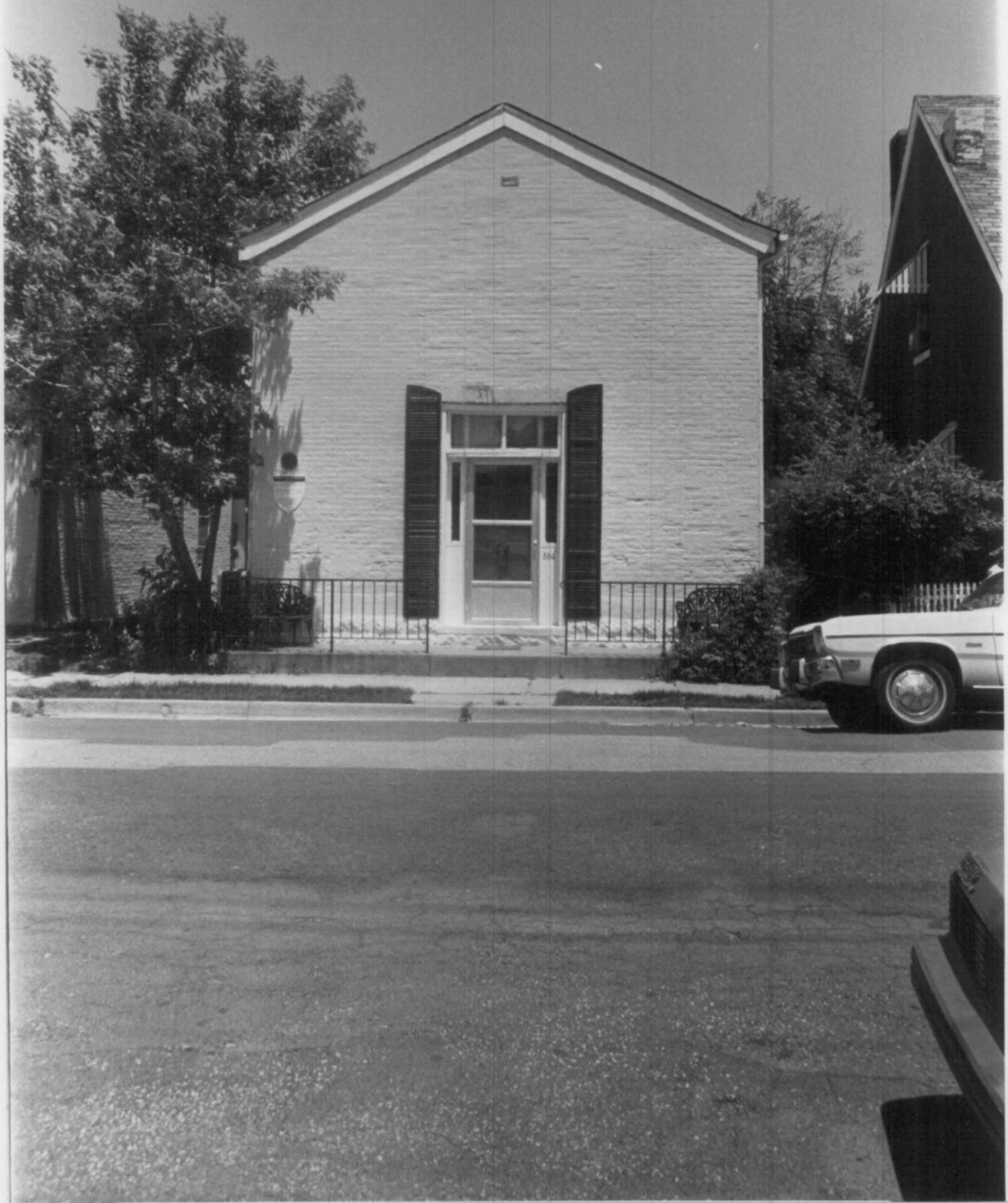


78
 (KAN)
 4298
 4297
 47'30"
 4296
 T. 47 N.
 WELDON SPRING 1/4 MI.
 HARVESTER 1/2 MI.
 1 070 000
 FEET
 O'FALLON 1/2 MI.
 ST. PETERS 7 MI.
 T. 46 N.
 4293

BONHOMME

AFRICAN CHURCH #1 of 5
St. Charles, Missouri
Photographer: Janice R. Cameron
June 9, 1980
Neg. Loc.: Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City MO 65102

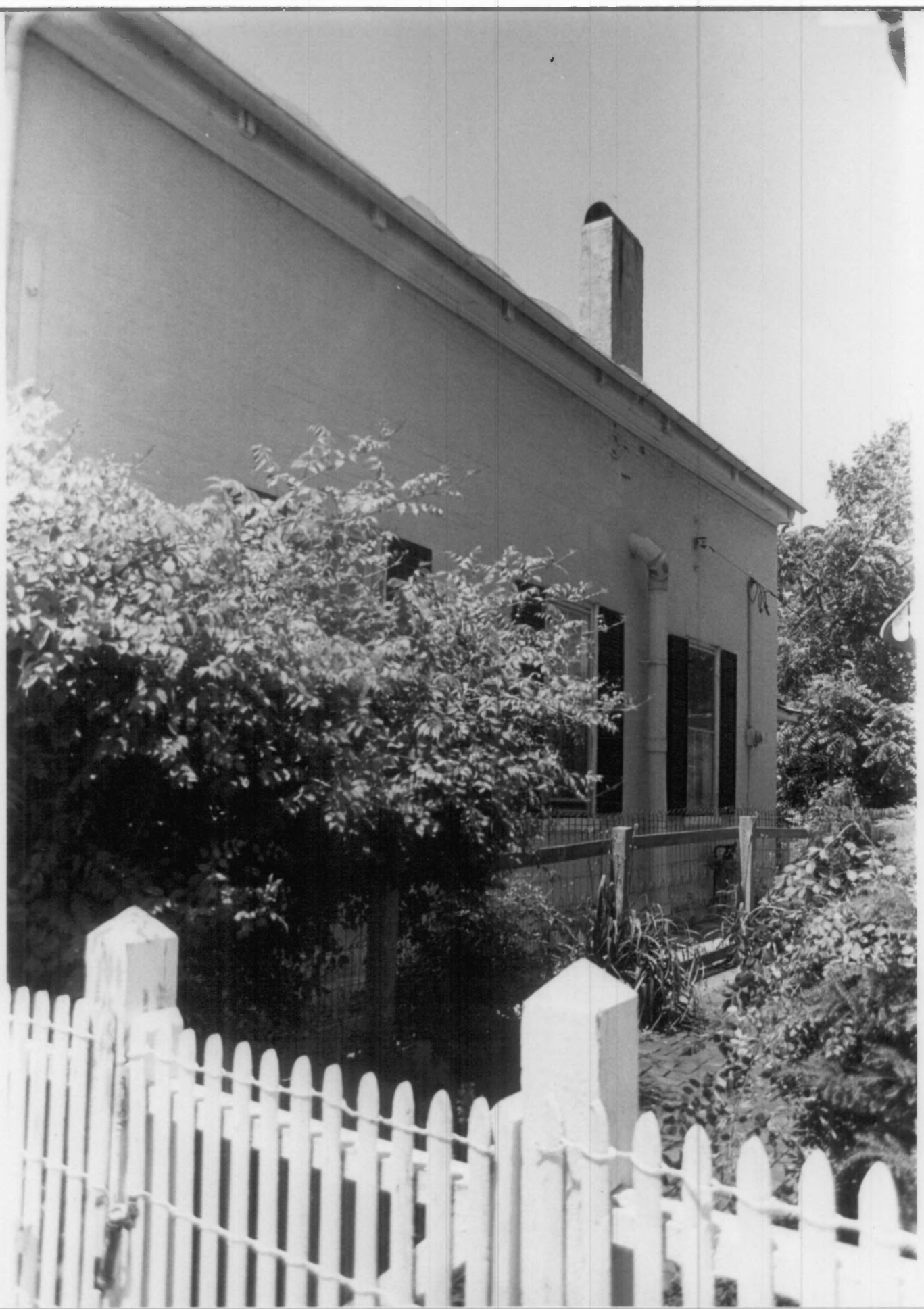
General view of primary facade from the
south.



AFRICAN CHURCH #2 of 5
St. Charles, Missouri
Photographer: Janice R. Cameron
June 9, 1980
Neg.. Loc.: Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102
General view from the west.



AFRICAN CHURCH #3 of 5
St. Charles, Missouri
Photographer: Janice R. Cameron
June 9, 1980
Neg. Loc.: Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City MO 65102
General view from the east.



AFRICAN CHURCH #4 of 5
St. Charles, Missouri
Photographer: Janice R. Cameron
June 9, 1980
Neg. Loc.: Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102
General view from the north.



AFRICAN CHURCH #5 of 5
St. Charles, Missouri
Photographer: Janice R. Cameron
June 9, 1980
Neg. Loc.: Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City MO 65102
Exterior detail of fenestration, west facade.



EXTRA
PHOTOS

