

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 an 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 Bethel Chapel A.M.E. Church

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

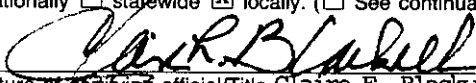
street & number 6th and Tennessee Streets not for publication

city or town Louisiana vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Pike code 163 zip code 63353

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 23 June 1995
Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell Date
Deputy SHPO

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State of 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 certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper _____	Date of Action _____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

Bethel Chapel A.M.E. Church
Name of Property

Pike, Missouri
County and State

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
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious structure

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

no style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/limestone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Wood

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 in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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)

Ethnic Heritage/Black

Period of Significance

1884 to 1944

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Wright, G.W. (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:

Bethel Chapel A.M.E. Church
Name of Property

Pike, Missouri
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5	6	6	7	7	4	0	4	3	6	8	2	6	5
Zone	Easting				Northing									

3

Zone	Easting				Northing									

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 Mark Hohnstreiter, President

organization Louisiana Historic Preservation Association date June 2, 1995 (revised)

street & number 601 N. Third Street telephone (314) 754-5997

city or town Louisiana state MO zip code 63353

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Trustees of the Bethel Chapel A.M.E. Church

street & number 6th and Tennessee Streets telephone (314) 754-4990

city or town Louisiana state MO zip code 63353

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

**Bethel A.M.E. Church
Pike County, MO**

SUMMARY

The Louisiana, Missouri Bethel Chapel A.M.E. Church is a one-story, gable roof church constructed of native hand-pressed brick and located close to Louisiana's central business district. Simple and restrained in form and detailing, it is representative of rural vernacular architecture. Construction of the church, completed in 1884, represented a significant achievement for the A.M.E. (African Methodist Episcopal) congregation. Previously, the congregation had been housed in a number of other local structures which had been subject to fire and environmental catastrophe; the present brick building at 6th and Tennessee was the congregation's first permanent place of worship. The building possesses integrity on both its exterior and interior.

DESCRIPTION

The church contains a cornerstone with the inscription "Bethel Chapel November 8, 1883, and a commemorative marker erected above the main door "Bethel Chapel Erected 1884 G.W. Wright." The building is rectangular in design, 60 feet by 37 feet; its height from ground level to apex of the gable is 35 feet. These are its current, as well as historic, dimensions; no structural additions or modifications have been made to the church's original plan. The foundation is cut limestone; the exterior walls of the church are of hand-made local brick. The oldest living member of the congregation recalls having been told that the foundation limestone was carted by horse from the Salt River area (1). A large cement porch with steps extends from the entrance of the church. Entrance to the building is at the East. The roof is a simple gable covered in asphalt shingles.

The main level of the church is punctuated by twelve arched windows, which contain single-paned, double hung sashes. These sashes are original to the building. These windows once held stained glass original to the building, which were damaged by several cycles of vandalism during the 1960s and 1970s and removed. There is an apocryphal story that one of the church's pastors sold the remaining window fragments to raise money for the church. (1) However, the church has located five full stained glass window panels in the basement of the church, and the congregation intends to restore these in the near future. Some of the stained glass fragments have already been assembled in one restored window which now hangs above the main door of the church. It contains the inscription "Bethel A.M.E. Church" as originally spelled out in leaded glass.

The church's sanctuary is a single large room of approximately 2000 square feet. It contains many of the sanctuary's original furnishings, including a short balustraded and raised altar, pulpit, a few remaining original pews, and chairs. Tongue-and-groove wooden wainscoting runs along the lower section of the sanctuary hall.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 2

**Bethel A.M.E. Church
Pike County, MO**

The sanctuary still preserves an original pressed tin ceiling, which is presently covered from view by a temporary drop ceiling. This ceiling was installed until such time as funds would be available to restore the original ceiling. A narrow staircase connects the sanctuary with the ground-floor basement, used as a fellowship hall.

The ground-floor basement is of the same dimension as the sanctuary; at the East, it is partitioned into two washrooms and a baptismal area. At the West is a kitchen containing cupboards and a turn-of-the century gas stove. A pass-through connects the kitchen to the main fellowship area. The ground floor has a separate entrance at the South.

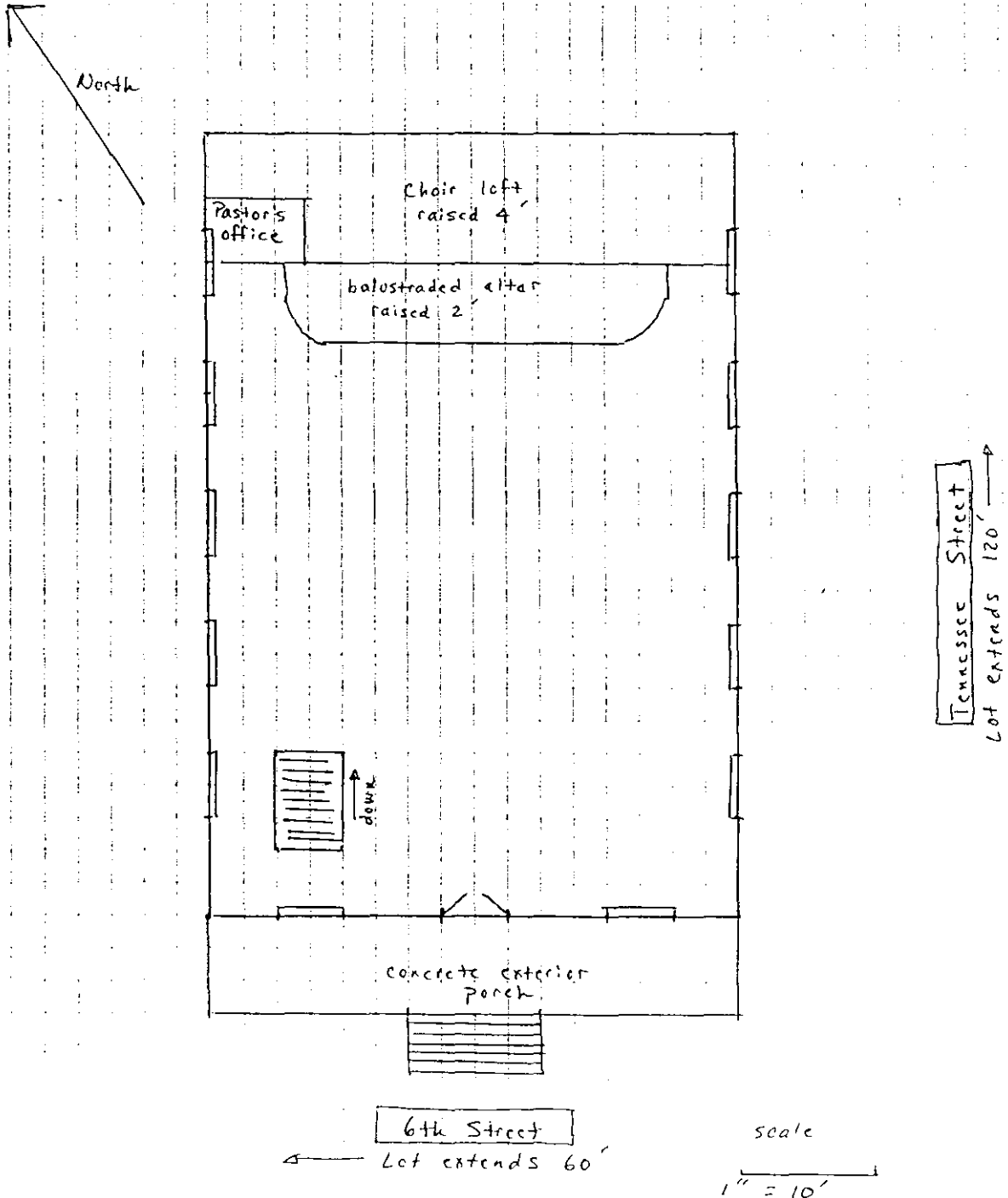
The Bethel Chapel A.M.E. Church is located at the corner of 6th and Tennessee, across the street from Louisiana's City Hall (originally a Methodist Church.) This is a neighborhood which contains a mix of commercial and residential buildings, one block from Georgia Street. The Bethel Chapel A.M.E. Church was not included in the Louisiana National Register Historic District because of several gaps between its location and the corner of Georgia Street and 7th Street, where this historic district terminates. No other outbuildings or structures were historically associated with the A.M.E. Church.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 3

Bethel A.M.E. Church
Pike County, MO



Bethel A.M.E. Church
6th & Tennessee Streets
Louisiana, MO 63353

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 4

**Bethel A.M.E. Church
Pike County, MO**

SUMMARY

The Bethel Chapel A.M.E. Church is significant under Criteria A, ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK. Its period of significance spans from 1884, the year the building was completed, to 1944, fifty years prior to the present date. The Bethel Chapel A.M.E. Church is the Louisiana, Missouri community's last remaining active social organization of African-American heritage; and it serves as a tangible reminder of the African-American community that has made Louisiana, Missouri its home since pioneer settlement in Pike County. This community sought and found expression and self-improvement through local institutions such as established churches that offered social activities, literacy training, as well as a sound spiritual grounding. Other historic African-American institutions in Louisiana included the Lincoln Park School (razed in the 1970s) and the Maryland Street Baptist Church, which is no longer organized as a congregation. The Bethel A.M.E. Church has, historically and contemporaneously, served out a vital role in Louisiana, providing civic leadership, social assistance, and community for members and non-members alike.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Religious organization among African-Americans in the region was especially strong in Pike County, largely settled in the early 1800s by white pioneers from Southern slave states. They imported to Missouri the agricultural commercialization of cash crops such as tobacco, and, in the 1880s, Louisiana boasted 9 cigar and tobacco factories. The emancipation of slaves in Missouri in 1865 saw new African-American citizens embracing the opportunity to participate in the first public institution in America owned and controlled by African-Americans--the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, founded by Richard Allen in Philadelphia in 1816. In Missouri, no A.M.E. churches had been established west of St. Louis in 1856. The organization of the Louisiana Bethel A.M.E. Church dates to the first years following emancipation. By 1890, the A.M.E. Church in Missouri reported 128 churches and 12,579 members statewide (4), and Louisiana's Bethel A.M.E. Church had 200 members. (2)

By the mid-1870s, there were six established A.M.E. congregations in Pike county: in Paynesville, Ashley, Frankford, Louisiana, Clarksville, and Bowling Green. Throughout the early years of the 20th Century, these congregations enjoyed close fellowship and sharing of projects and purposes. (1) Louisiana's own Bethel A.M.E. Church historically enjoyed a role as "mother church" for these various congregations, and, in fact, the Bethel A.M.E. hosted four national annual conferences of bishops; the first was in 1892, with Bishop J.A. Handy presiding, and the last to be held was in October 12, 1932, Bishop J. A. Gregg presiding. (3) Today, in Pike County, only the Louisiana and Paynesville A.M.E. churches have active congregations.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 5

**Bethel A.M.E. Church
Pike County, MO**

Existing records of the Bethel Chapel A.M.E. Church date to 1869; it is likely that the congregation's organization dates to approximately 5 years earlier, given the fact that the church's trustees had by then fallen behind on mortgage payments on a site at 8th and Allen Streets. (1) This financial situation was resolved through the intercession of Mr. Ivy Zumwalt, who loaned the trustees \$198.66 to satisfy their debt. The church was located at 8th and Allen until 1877, when it moved to the present site at 6th and Tennessee. At this time, its trustees were Henry Nichols, Fielders Taylor, Sanders Smalla, and Dennis Gunn. A small frame building was constructed, which was lost to a storm just 2 months after completion; the congregation then moved its worship to a second floor room at a brick foundry located at 6th and Kentucky Streets.

By 1883, the Bethel A.M.E. congregation had grown to 200 members and had acquired a dynamic new pastor, the Rev. G.W. Wright, who organized the construction of the present church. (2) Its cornerstone was laid on November 4, 1883, and a plaque above the main door indicates the church was completed and dedicated in 1884. Pastors like G.W. Wright were assigned by the A.M.E. Church in St. Louis to rural circuits throughout the state; their terms were one year, which could be renewed. Local congregations provided food and lodging for their pastor.

The Bethel A.M.E. Church served a vital social function for members of its congregation, remaining the spiritual, social, and visual focal point of Louisiana's African-American community. The church purposefully planned nightly activities and committees so that members were "kept busy at church so as to keep them away from sin." (1). The church's basement fellowship hall served as a meeting place which became a "center of life for the [African-American] community." (1) The week's events included: two services on Sunday; a Monday board meeting; women's meeting on Tuesday; Wednesday prayer and devotional meetings; Thursday, missionary tasks, including scholarships and assistance to community members in need; Friday, choir practice; and Saturday, social events, such as chicken or fish fry, ice cream socials, and coon dinners. These latter events were often used as church fund-raisers. It is recounted that older members of the congregation would provide literacy training to younger members during the evenings; while Louisiana did have an African-American School, the Lincoln Park School, these private sessions at the Church helped to stress the importance of reading and writing, as well as assist those adults who had not developed literacy skills. (1) The Bethel A.M.E. congregation still maintains a policy of providing assistance to all those who ask, to both members and non-members alike. Over the years, the congregation's assistance has taken the form of food, money, burial expenses, utility bills, and educational scholarships.

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Section 8 Page 6

**Bethel A.M.E. Church
Pike County, MO**

Louisiana was well represented by a number of notable African-American civic leaders and business owners. The City had, at one time, four black tavern owners on Georgia Street, two black barbers, and three black churches, including the Bethel A.M.E. The Bethel A.M.E. Church served a civic purpose of helping to bring together these individuals and instill a sense of togetherness within the context of Louisiana's larger community. There were, in fact, several notable examples of integration among civic groups; Mrs. Lucy Coleman Smith, the Bethel A.M.E. Church's oldest living member, was at one time president of the American Legion; her grandfather was a member of Louisiana's Masonic Lodge. The Bethel A.M.E. Church, too, offered its fellowship hall for use by Louisiana's civic groups, including the Rotary and Lion's Club, until these organizations found independent space in the 1980s.

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**Bethel A.M.E. Church
Pike County, MO**

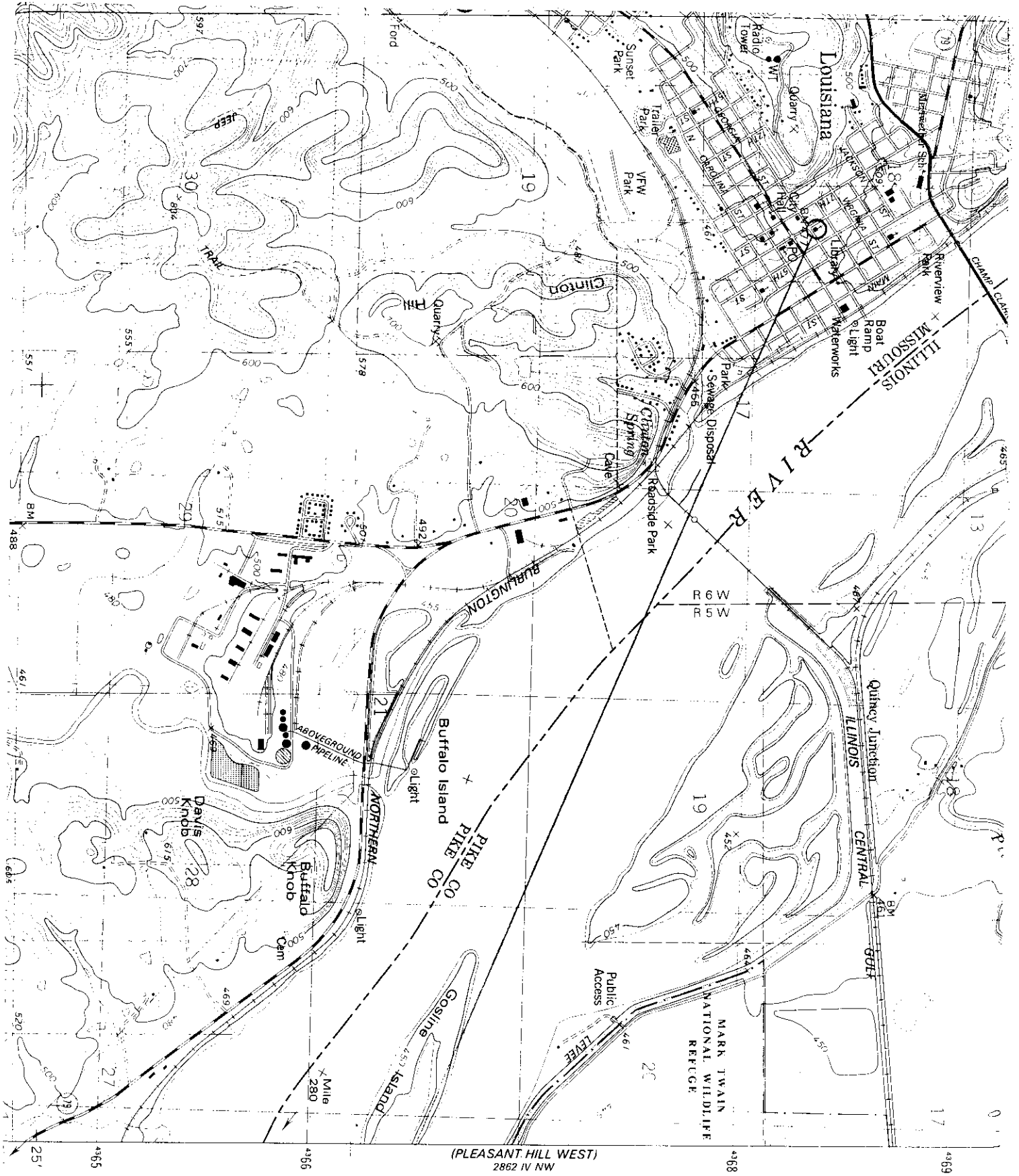
1. Interview with Lucy Coleman Smith, oldest living member of the Bethel A.M.E. Church congregation, December 10, 1994, by Mark Hohnstreiter.
2. "The Struggle of the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Louisiana, MO for Survival", Mayme Hightower Mabon, February 7, 1975. Records of the A.M.E. Church, Louisiana, MO.
3. "Sesquicentennial Louisiana, Missouri" Published by the Sesquicentennial Historical Program Committee: Louisiana, MO, 1968.
4. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, The Black Church in the African American Experience, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990.)

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 41, Lot 303, Original Town of Louisiana, Pike County, MO.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property includes the entire city lot historically associated with the church building.



BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH
 PIKE COUNTY, MO
 15 / 67740 / 4369



(PLEASANT HILL WEST)
 2862 IV NW





SMITH STREET
PROVIDENCE
R.I.

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF
PROVIDENCE, R.I.

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF
PROVIDENCE, R.I.

A.M.E. CHURCH





