

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 4

Black Protestant Churches of Muskogee

2. Ward Chapel African ^{A.M.E.} Methodist Episcopal Church (No. 2 on Sketch Map and Photo Nos. 7-11)

Location: 319 ~~North~~ Ninth Street
 Muskogee, OK 74401

Owner of Property: Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church
 319 North Ninth Street
 Muskogee, OK 74401

Location of Legal Description: Office of the County Clerk
 Muskogee County Courthouse
 Muskogee, OK 74401

Description: The Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church is a 1½ story, 90' x 44' detached, religious building located in its own grounds in the City of Muskogee, Oklahoma. Erected in 1904, the building is constructed of red brick painted yellow laid in the running bond. The east side of the building has a gable roof with an intersecting gable. The west end of the building has a flat roof with a surrounding brick parapet.

Two 1½ story square towers, either side of the cross gable, dominate the east end of the building. The tower at the northeast corner has a tent roof topped with a finial-type weather vane. Below the tower roof line is a layer of decorative moulding. The second story of the tower has a single arched opening in each side, which has louvered windows. The windows have coursed ashlar sills and a decorative raised brick arch above. The first story has a paired metal framed entrance door with a double transom light above. The door has a square roofed porchway over it supported by a single wooden column. A metal framed window with six lights is also situated under the porchway. The southeast tower has a flat roof and is lower in height than the other tower. This tower also has a square covered porchway with a paired entrance door and window similar to those on the northeast corner of the building. The porchway has a supporting wooden column with a course ashlar base and metal railings alongside the four steps leading up to it. The second story of the tower has two, single light, fixed windows with arched wooden frames. The cross gable section of the building has two narrow arched openings on the second story with louvered windows. The first story has three wooden framed, arched windows with six lights in each. A decorative band of header bricks forms raised arches of these windows, all of which have coarse ashlar sills.

The south side of the building has four wooden framed, arched windows with six lights on the first story at the east end. The windows have brick arch decoration and ashlar sills. There are two smaller arched, louvered windows in the upper part of the gable. At the flat roof end of the south side are two wooden framed entrance doors with wooden panels. The doors are reached by a shared staircase with metal railings. There are three wooden framed, double-hung, 1/1, sash-type windows with brick sills at this end, also a Gothic, pointed arched window with eight lights.

The rear, or west end, of the building has four paired, wooden framed, 1/1 double-hung sash-type windows. Each window has a header laid brick sill.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 5

Black Protestant Churches of Muskogee

The north side of the building has five Gothic-type, pointed arch windows with wooden frames and eight lights in the single story section. There is also a wooden framed entrance door with a square canopy supported by metal posts on the north side. In the gable section, there are four wooden framed arched windows with six lights on the 1st story and two smaller wooden, louvered windows at the top of the gable. These windows have coursed ashlar sills and brick arches above.

A one-story, 40' x 44' addition was completed to the rear of the building in 1948. Similar wall finish, fenestration, and design were employed, therefore, it does not detract from the architectural integrity of the property.

Statement of Significance: The Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church is historically significant because: (1) it is the oldest African Methodist Episcopal Church and the second oldest black Protestant church in Muskogee and (2) it is one of the oldest remaining social institutions in the black community of Muskogee.

Built in 1904, three years before Oklahoma statehood, Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church reflects the early missionary activity among Oklahoma blacks by the African Methodist Episcopal denomination and the fact that it was the second leading denomination among Oklahoma blacks following Baptists.

The Ward Chapel congregation is the second oldest in the black community of Muskogee having been organized in 1883, more than 100 years ago. The nominated property was built in 1904 to accommodate the growing congregation and to serve the spiritual and social needs of Muskogee's black community which numbered over 7,000 at the time of construction.

The Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church has played a vital role in the religious and ethnic history of Muskogee for 80 years.

Major Bibliographical References:

Reverend W. R. Norful, Sr., July, 1983.

Quadrangle Name: Northwest Muskogee, OK.

Scale: 7.5 minutes

UTM: 15/284980/3959120

Verbal Boundary Description: Lot 4, Block 208, Original Townsite of Muskogee, OK.

3. Central Baptist Church (No. 3 on Sketch Map and Photo Nos. 12-15)

Location: 515 North Fourth St.,
Muskogee, OK 74401

Owner of Property: Central Baptist Church
515 North Fourth
Muskogee, OK 74401