

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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JUL 22 2016
Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Central Methodist Episcopal Church

other names/site number Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church (preferred)

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

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

2. Location

street & number 3138 North Vancouver Avenue not for publication

city or town Portland vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code O51 zip code 97227

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance: ___ national X statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: X A X B ___ C ___ D

Christine Cerman

7.15.16

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Lori Blue

8/6/16

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: religious facility; church-related
residence

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:

Late Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD: board-and-batten

BRICK; METAL

roof: ASPHALT

other: GLASS: stained glass windows

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary Paragraph

The 1909 Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church is a two-story, contemporary Gothic Revival church – one story on a raised basement – with a mezzanine overlooking the sanctuary from the west. The church consists of three primary parts. The main volume, which represents the original church and main sanctuary, is located in the northwest corner of the block. On the east side of the main volume is the 1958 addition that was constructed to accommodate the new pulpit and choir. The primary ridgeline on the original portion of the building is oriented east-west, with a north and south-facing gable on the sides of the original building and two towers, one in the northwest corner and one in the southwest corner. In the southwest corner of the church is the former parsonage, a 1907, two-story, Foursquare residence on a raised, ground level basement which once contained a two-car garage. In the southeast corner of the building is a 1973, one-story addition that houses an office and pastor’s study. The building is wood-frame with corrugated metal and aluminum siding in a clapboard pattern and brick veneer; a concrete foundation; and composition shingle roof. The church retains good integrity to the date of its primary remodel in 1958, which was undertaken to accommodate the church’s growing congregation, not long after the building was purchased. Noteworthy features include – but are not limited to – the overall form of the main church building; the overall form of the parsonage; the Povey stained glass windows; the original interior furnishings, including the pews on the mezzanine and light fixtures in the sanctuary; and circulation elements that are remaining from the original church and the 1958 renovation.

In the following description, each part of the church will be described separately for clarity, even though the sections are interrelated, with multiple access points.

Narrative Description

LOCATION, SETTING AND SITE

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church building occupies two parcels. The parcel with a property ID of R308605 is an L-shaped parcel that is 0.23 acres in size, made up of lot 7 and a portion of lots 10 and 11 of Williams Avenue Addition (see Figure 3). The parcel with a property ID of R308606 is a rectangular parcel that is 0.08 acres in size and is located within the apex of the “L”. It is made up of the remaining portion of lots 10 and 11. The parcels are located at the intersection of N. Vancouver Avenue and N. Fargo Street. The building faces west, overlooking Vancouver Avenue, with the exception of the office portion, which faces east. To the south are five residences. To the east is a paved parking area. The southeast corner of the block is occupied by a vacant, grassy area. The parking lot is accessed from curb cuts on the north side. The site immediately surrounding the church can be accessed from a curb cut on the south side of the parsonage; from a curb cut just east of the main church volume; and from a driveway between two residences south of the church. The following is a description of the church’s urban setting and site.

To the west. The area around the church is undergoing rapid change in residential, institutional, and commercial development. West of the church is the 1987 American Red Cross Oregon Chapter headquarters, a large, two-building complex with associated parking. To the southwest is a 2011, two-level parking garage associated with Legacy Emanuel Hospital and Health Center. To the northwest is a surface parking lot that occupies the entire block. Farther west is the Emanuel Hospital complex and Interstate-5.

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To the south. The block south of the church block is occupied by a 1995, four-story public housing project facing N. Morris Street; a 1979 one-story rehabilitation center facing N. Morris Street; and a 1911, two-story commercial building facing N. Williams Avenue. Beyond, to the south, is Dawson Park.

To the east. The blocks to the east are occupied primarily by large, single family residences. Two blocks to the east is the north-south NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

To the north. The two blocks to the north are being redeveloped into multi-story residential buildings. Beyond these projects is a 2013 New Seasons Market that, along with its parking lot, takes up one full block, with more new commercial development in process beyond it.

The site. The immediate site surrounding the church is complex, with public sidewalks, a foyer on the front (west) side, multiple entries, ramps and stairs. The main parking area is to the rear (east) of the lot. A six-step stair accesses the sidewalks at the rear of the building from this lot. Church-goers can also walk from the parking area to the public sidewalks on the north side of the building and then to the front of the church. The ADA elevator is accessed through a doorway in the northeast corner of the building covered by an awning that reads "Thomas Peace Memorial Elevator."

CHURCH EXTERIOR

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church is composed of a large volume with shaped gables on the front (west) and side facades, an east-west ridgeline, and a hip roof on the rear (east) addition. The front façade features two differing towers with small spires. The contemporary Gothic Revival building is clad in brick veneer and metal siding over vertical and horizontal board.

Front (west) façade. The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church offers an imposing presence at the corner of N. Vancouver and N. Fargo Streets. It rises a visible three stories above grade, although it is actually composed of a ground level basement, the main sanctuary on the second level, and a mezzanine above the sanctuary. The uppermost or attic level is not active space. The main entry occurs on the west façade, approached by tall stairs from the north and south, which accesses the landing outside a double entry door centered on this façade (see Photo 2). The concrete stair has a tubular metal rail at the lower flight and a solid rail on the upper portion. A flat roof over the landing is supported by two simple posts resting on the solid rail. This area is flanked by two tall, narrow, fixed windows. Below this formal entry, at the ground level, is a broad, solid entry door recessed and centered under the main door, which is flanked by partially enclosed windows above the blond, oversize brick facing on this wall. This door enters into the kitchen that is associated with the lower level assembly and dining hall. To the left, mounted on the face of the stair, is a box sign for the church. Above the roof over the main entry is a large, simple, white cross mounted on the building front. This extends all the way to a three-part louvered vent on the shaped parapet that finishes this gable front. The base of the cross is flanked by very narrow, tall, single-light windows abutting the interior edge of the towers.

The main entry is flanked by the church towers, which project slightly from the main body of the building. Like the entry, these towers are clad in oversized, multi-colored blond brick in a running bond pattern. Above the second story windows (and the main entry door) the cladding material changes to corrugated metal finished in an ochre color. Each tower is surmounted by a small metal spire with a green patina, the one on the south being slightly smaller than the one on the north. At the lower level are large Povey-designed lancet windows with three stained glass panes above two panes of opalescent glass.¹ Above the lancet windows, at the second level, are paired, one-over-one-light, double-hung windows of leaded, opalescent glass. At the northwest corner of the building is a marble marker inscribed as follows:

¹ The Povey Brothers owned Portland's premier stained glass studio in the day. Their work was prized throughout the region and in the Northwest. See p. 16 for more detail.

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"Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 1944, 1958, The Rev. O.B. Williams Pastor, 'Except the Lord Build the House They Labour in Vain That Build It' Psalms 127." On the north face of the building is a list of deacons and trustees (see Figure 32).

North side façade. The north side façade of the church is the second public façade of the building. Here the original church is visible, plus the addition to the east. The treatment of the church tower continues here, repeating the same motifs on the north side as occur on the west side. A second gable with a shaped parapet is centered on the original portion of this façade (see Photo 4). It displays a large, multi-light lancet window of Povey stained glass set in a wood frame, which is one of the two primary stained glass windows lighting the sanctuary from the north and south. The cladding on the face of the gable changes at the abutment of the window arch, the lower portion being clad in brick veneer and the upper portion being finished in corrugated metal. Flanking this main gable at the main level are two tall, three-part Povey stained glass windows, which depict a lancet window in the imagery. At the ground level is an entry on the west side, a row of four, two-over-two-light, double-hung windows regularly spaced at ground level, and another entry toward the east end of the main portion of the building. Fronting and parallel to the north façade is a concrete stair covered by a shed room that accesses a below-grade room.

The addition to the church, constructed in 1958 to add more space to the main worship space, has a shallow-sloped, gable-on-hip roof with narrow eaves and is lower in profile than the steeply pitched main cross gable. At the main level are three regularly spaced, tall, narrow, five-part windows with the same proportions as the two three-part windows mentioned earlier, but with opalescent glass. At the lower level are three, one-over-one-light, double-hung windows. To the far left (east) is a metal entry door, accessed via a sloped sidewalk. Visible on the end of the building is the metal enclosure for the ADA elevator, which rises nearly the full height of the building in this location.

Rear (east) façade. The rear façade is composed of the main, two-story block that represents the 1958 addition, and a small one-story projection that is covered with a hip roof that was built at the same time (see Photo 5). Both of these portions of the building are clad in the same brick that is seen on the other facades. The brick above the second floor windows that makes up the lintel is a soldier course, whereas the rest of the brick on this façade displays a running bond pattern. The gable portion of the gable-on-hip roof here has horizontal louvers in the small gable end. Visible beyond is the tall shaped parapet that is the end wall of the original portion of the church. Air conditioning equipment is mounted on this face, accessed via a steep open metal stair from the south.

The windows on this wall are relatively small and are made up of one-over-one-light, double-hung sash with wood frames, with four at the second level and three at the ground level. A solid door is located on the left (south) side of the main wall. It is accessed via a stair with ten steps, with an open rail of horizontal members. Visible on the right (north) side of this façade is the tall ADA elevator enclosure, and located at about the center of this façade is a narrow addition with a shed roof, clad in corrugated metal, that houses elevator equipment. The small projection on this façade, on the south side, displays two double-hung windows of the same design as the others at the main floor level, one at the lower level and at the main level. On the back of this small projection, facing west, is a door at the main level, directly perpendicular to the church, accessed via the ramp that is to the rear of the office addition. Below, at ground level, are two, two-over-two-light, double-hung windows. In front of these windows is a stair to the basement. Visible on the end wall here is the shaped parapet that was originally the rear face of the building, which matches the gable on the front, west façade

South side façade. The south side façade of the main church volume is only partially visible due to the 1973 addition in the southeast corner of the complex and the placement of the parsonage in the southwest corner. Much of the area between the building and building additions, however, is open, if narrow (see Photo 6).

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The south side façade of the 1958 addition, visible above the one-story projection, is a plain, stucco-finished wall with one double-hung window. Visible on the east side of the main original church volume is a tall, narrow lancet window of a similar design as those found on the north side façade. Centered under the gable-shaped parapet is another large lancet stained glass window, the 'mate' of the same window on the north side façade. To its left is another tall narrow window matching the window on the right. A small basement and first floor addition connect the parish hall to the main church. Visible on the west side of this addition is another multi-light lancet window on the main body of the church on the main level, that matches its counterpart on the front façade, below paired, double-hung windows at the second level.

Alterations to the exterior. A number of changes have taken place to the building over time. The changes made beginning in 1956, including the re-cladding and east addition, were completed in 1958 and are now more than 50 years of age. These relate to the building's significance with its current congregation, and are significant in themselves.

The main change on the front of the building is a result of changing the circulation patterns in the church, completed in 1958. Previously, churchgoers entered through double doors at the base of each of the towers and made an immediate turn to climb a long, steep run of stairs to the main front hall, meeting at the hall behind the double doors to the sanctuary. These stairs were essentially moved to the exterior of the church, and now access an exterior landing and the double doors to the hall. The original stairs are still located within the towers, but are diminished in width to accommodate the current circulation design. The ground floor entry that is centered on this façade accesses the kitchen. Prior to the remodel there were two paired, two-over-two-light windows here. The building was expanded toward the east to provide additional capacity, and the pulpit and choir reconfigured. The original beveled siding was replaced with brick veneer with vertical and horizontal board above (the corrugated metal is a later addition). The original main entry doors, windows, and tower design can be seen in Figure 9. In about 2000, the funeral procession ramp was constructed, which accesses the main church at the small southeast projection. In 2013 the ADA elevator and accompanying mechanical equipment was constructed at the northeast corner of the church.

CHURCH INTERIOR

The sanctuary, pulpit, choir, and baptismal for the church are located on the main floor, which is one floor above the surrounding grade. To the rear of the sanctuary (west side) is a mezzanine with additional seating and some additional support/ancillary spaces. The lower floor, which is at grade, contains the assembly hall, stage, kitchen, and classroom and ancillary spaces. The parsonage, which is south of the main church, is also located above grade, with a daylight basement, under two stories of living space. The office and pastor's study, which is located at the southeast corner of the complex, is slightly above grade, accessed via a ramp. The entire complex, which is interconnected on the interior, is accessed from the east via a funeral processional ramp (which doubles as an ADA ramp), stairways and ramps, and an ADA elevator in the northeast corner.

Main floor. The main floor of the church consists of the sanctuary, the pulpit, the choir, the baptismal, the mezzanine, which is original to the building, and the projection room, nursery, restrooms, and other ancillary spaces (see Figure 5; Photos 9-11). There are three rooms in the small projection in the southeast corner of the building at this level. The main floor features the tall, Povey-designed windows in the original portion of the building, described earlier. The taller opalescent glass windows occupy the newer portion of the church, where the pulpit and choir are located. Three sections of wooden pews with two wide interior aisles occupy the sanctuary. The room itself is raked, with the rear portion being higher than the front portion, and covered with carpeting (see Photo 10). Centered on the back wall are the double wood doors to the church, which have small windows at eye level in wood frames with sliding wood doors. The door to the parsonage is located in the southwest corner. The ceiling is finished in

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acoustical tile. The original light fixtures for the church, which are suspended pendant lights of warm colored glass and brass, are located at regular intervals within the sanctuary. They are augmented by fluorescent lighting within the tiled ceiling. The ceiling for the sanctuary is slightly curved on the sides, allowing additional light from the stained glass windows to be thrown into the sanctuary.

The sanctuary is exited through the double doors at the back of the sanctuary, which access the front hallway. The exterior double door that exits the main hall has a small, narrow light in each leaf. The towers, through which churchgoers historically exited, are now occupied by other uses.

Mezzanine. The mezzanine for the sanctuary is in the back, accessed via a stair from the west hallway. The mezzanine is a remaining feature from the original church (see Figure 6). It curves around the back and a portion of the side walls of the sanctuary and features rich wood paneling. It is suspended from the ceiling by metal rods. Within the mezzanine area, behind the seating, are short stairs that access the projection room and "baby room" at the back of the mezzanine. This room features a large, horizontal window centered on the interior-facing wall, flanked by two doors that access the space. These doors are in turn flanked by two doors that access rooms in the towers. Each of these small interior rooms has a short, horizontally oriented leaded and stained glass window that faces the main sanctuary. A pastor's study is located within the southerly tower at the mezzanine. The pews in the mezzanine are original to the church. They sit on a raked floor (see Photo 16).

The pulpit, choir and baptismal. The pulpit area for the sanctuary is on a curved, shallow platform (see Photo 11-12). Above this area is a large choir area, accessed via short flights of stairs on either side. In back of the choir, which consists of four rows of chairs on stepped platforms, is a curtain that covers the baptismal area. The baptismal is back stage. Doors in each corner of the front of the sanctuary access this backstage area. Stairs lead to the baptismal from each side. At the back of the baptismal is a mural, which is visible from the sanctuary when the curtains are open. Above the doors to the baptismal area are suspended screens, on which the lyrics for the hymns are projected. The ceiling in this area of the church is dropped below the level of the main sanctuary, and finished in acoustical tile with fluorescent lighting. Walls are drywall and the floor is carpeted.

Lower level. The lower level consists of a large assembly hall and dining room in the center, with numerous smaller spaces, including classrooms and restrooms, to the rear (east) (see Photo 17). The latter are organized around a U-shaped corridor. On the east side of the assembly area is a raised stage. On the west side, at the back of the assembly area, is a long, narrow, commercial-grade kitchen under what were the original public stairs to the main level. Doors are located on the east and west ends on the north side of the assembly room, which reach the sidewalk along N. Fargo Street. The ancillary spaces on the east side exit through a door on the south side of the east facade, with concrete steps to reach grade here. The kitchen on the west side of this level opens onto the Vancouver Avenue-side sidewalk through a broad door. The interior of the main assembly space is lit by regularly spaced windows along the north and south sides of the room. Restrooms occupy the ground floor of the towers in this location. The former parsonage is accessed from this location via a short hall with contemporary finishes, including wood paneling, linoleum, and a hollow core door. The ceiling in the main room at the lower level is supported by regularly spaced, large, chamfered posts with small bases. The ceiling is finished in acoustical tile and the floor is linoleum. The walls are painted drywall.

Alterations. Alterations to the church interior include changing the entries and making interior changes to accommodate the needed requirements for access; constructing the new pulpit, choir, and baptismal in the new addition; and re-organizing the existing seating to accommodate the increased capacity and associated changes. A new floor above the ground floor of the towers was inserted and the entry stairs divided to accommodate the new circulation pattern. As a result, the upper halves of the stained glass lancet windows of the towers appear at floor level. Note that the original newel post and balustrade for the stairs has been retained. At some point the acoustical ceiling in the sanctuary was added, as well as

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the additional lighting. The new access to the parsonage was added sometime after 1969, when the existing pastor no longer used this space as a study. The access to the office was added after that building was constructed in 1973. Additional minor changes in use in ancillary or support spaces, such as adding the projection area to the nursery, have occurred over time.

PARSONAGE EXTERIOR

The parsonage for the Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church was moved to its present location when the east addition to the church was constructed in 1958. At that time, the parsonage (which was historically used as a parsonage for the church as well) was moved from the east side to the south side of the church. It was previously addressed as 266 N. Fargo and later, after 1950, as 32 N. Fargo (the parsonage is now addressed as 3132 N. Vancouver Avenue). The building was moved to face N. Vancouver Avenue and a basement and first level room built that connected the parsonage with the church. What used to be a garage was enclosed for additional space. Today the building appears as follows.

The 1907 Foursquare is two stories high on a raised basement. It has a low-pitched hip roof with a front-facing hipped dormer and a dropped porch with a hip roof (see Photo 3). Boxed eaves are supported by block modillions at the porch and second floor levels. The wood-frame building is clad in aluminum siding in a clapboard pattern. The raised basement is board-formed concrete covered in T 1-11 on the front and the roof is clad in composition shingles. The entry to the building is at the main level, above the former garage.

Front (west) façade. The building is accessed via ten stamped concrete steps that lead to a small door in the 'connector' between the two buildings. At this landing an additional three steps continue to the right or south, which is the historical front porch of the building. The railing for the stair, the porch, and the porch supports are metal, in a relatively open pattern made up of diagonal crosses. The main front entry is offset to the right, with a small window to its right of lozenge-shaped leaded glass. To the left of the front door is a large, three-part window with a central fixed light topped by a smaller light of lozenge-shaped leaded glass, flanked by narrow, one-over-one-light, double-hung windows. The mullions and surrounds for this window are wide.

At the lower level, the former two-car garage is now enclosed. It originally had two overhead wood doors. A solid door that is slightly offset to the right accesses this room. To the left and right are two-part, sliding, aluminum-frame windows. The upper level displays two symmetrically placed, one-over-one-light, double-hung windows with wide surrounds. They are surmounted by a simple frieze. In the dormer are two, single-light windows. All windows have their original frames and surrounds.

South side façade. On the south side of the house is a ramp that climbs to the east, accessing a wood-frame ramp at the east edge of the house (see Photo 8). The house on this façade has just four irregularly placed, double-hung windows. Two small basement windows are located just under the siding that covers the main floor and upper floor. A five-panel wood door to the basement, raised about 18" above the driveway ramp, is slightly offset to the west on this façade.

Rear (east) façade. The ramp continues in an S-shape to the rear of the house, before accessing the door to the south projection of the church addition. The ramp has a smooth concrete finish and is enclosed by a wood rail with plain, vertical balusters. This walkway continues beyond the east side of the parsonage in a set of four steps toward the rear of the lot. The ground behind the parsonage is built up to about halfway up the basement level and retained with a concrete wall. The rear of the parsonage has one, one-over-one-light, double-hung window at the second level. At the first level is a small porch partially enclosed with lattice and two double-hung windows. On the south side, accessed via four concrete steps, is a previous entry, now enclosed.

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North side façade. The north side façade is not highly visible, as there is only about 8' between the north side of the house and the south side of the church. Further, the parsonage is connected to the south church tower at the basement and lower floor level by a connector, above which is a wood screen (see Photos 6, 19). The east end of the north façade abuts the ramp. However, the bay window in the dining room of the parsonage still exists on the north façade, allowing light into this middle room.

Only a small portion of the north side façade of the parsonage is visible, as it is attached to the church at the lower and main levels.

Alterations to the exterior. Alterations to the exterior of the parsonage include moving it to the present site about 1956 and placing it on a tall basement level which previously served as a double-car garage. This was subsequently altered again for use as interior space. The addition of the metal railing and porch supports is also likely a more recent (post-move) addition. The small, two-level addition on the north side is also a change. The main level was initially used as a study. It was subsequently modified and a stair inserted to access the main level of the church through an enclosed wood stair and hollow-core door. Changes to the south and rear facades are primarily due to inserting the ramp into the site. This obscures a portion of the basement level toward the rear of the building. It also required changes to the building's access on the east (rear) façade. The building was clad in aluminum siding at a later date.

PARSONAGE INTERIOR

The parsonage served as the official residence and office of the pastor until 1969. It retains much of the standard interior design of a residence from this era, including the configuration of rooms, circulation, materials, finishes and features. The main floor consists of an entry hall on the south side and a living room on the north side, with what was a small study beyond, constructed as an appendage to the original house. To the rear of the living room is the dining room, accessed via a six-panel pocket door between the living room (front parlor) and dining room, or from the back hall. The dining room has a bay window that faces the church to the north (see Photos 18-19). To the rear of the dining room is a room that was originally a pantry. The kitchen is located in the southeast corner of the building. A small rear porch, no longer in use, is located at the rear of the house. It originally accessed the south side yard of the building. This entry is now partially blocked by the ramp on the south side of the building.

The upper floor is accessed via a stair that starts to the right of the entry hall, and makes two turns before reaching the upper east-west hallway (see Photo 18). The stair retains its original newel posts and slender, turned balusters that also enclose the upper hall. A second stair just off the kitchen also accesses the intermediate landing. There are four bedrooms and one bath on this level. Doors have five panels and simple, wide surrounds, crown molding, and original hardware.

The main and upper floor rooms have high ceilings. Interior details include wide surrounds with crown molding; tall molded baseboards; and a picture rail at door height. Windows are wood-frame, some with leaded glass, and most interior doors are the original paneled doors.

The lower level was originally accessed via a stair in the hall that is under the stair to the upper level. Today there is also access through the ground level with a pedestrian door off the street. It can also be reached from the ground level of the church through a short hallway. Formerly a garage, this area is now used as a lounge. It features an acoustical tile ceiling and wood paneling on the walls.

Alterations to interior. Few significant changes have taken place to the interior of the former parsonage. When moved to this side of the building, small, connecting, ground level and main level rooms were constructed in the northwest corner. The main level room is now occupied by a stair that accesses the

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main level of the church. The ground level was converted sometime after the 1950s move from a garage to an interior living space by enclosing the garage doors and adding an exterior door and two windows.

OFFICE EXTERIOR

The 1973 addition to the church serves as an office and pastor's study and includes restrooms, a second office, and storage (see Photo 20). It is 29' wide and 40' deep, and is oriented toward the rear (east side) of the church grounds, toward the parking area. It abuts the projection that is part of the 1958 addition and accesses this area through two stairways, one from the office and one from the pastor's study. To the rear of the building is the long ramp that was designed for and functions as a funeral procession ramp. It accesses both the 1958 projection (the church) and this building, as described earlier. The office is a one-story building raised above grade, with a truncated hip roof with narrow eaves on which is mounted an air conditioner. The wood-frame building is clad in aluminum siding that matches that of the parsonage, and has a concrete foundation and a composition shingle roof. Six concrete steps from the parking area access the ramp to the building, which parallels the front face and is finished in stamped concrete. Both the steps and ramp are enclosed with a tubular steel railing. The front entry is on the left (south) side of the east façade. To its right are two horizontally oriented, two-light, sliding windows with anodized aluminum frames. There is one three-part window on the south side façade of the building. On the rear of the building are another entry and two large, horizontally oriented windows similar to those on the front façade.

Alterations to exterior. The office building was previously raised, with parking underneath, and the main access to the building was on the south elevation, accessed via a long stair from the east. The west elevation had a window, rather than a door, on the north side, as it does now.

OFFICE INTERIOR

The main door to the office, on the east end of the building, opens into a large open space. The pastor's study is located in the southwest corner of the building. Between the two large rooms is a hall, with an office to the south and bathrooms and storage to the north. Two stairs access the church, one from the pastor's study and one from the main office. There are few if any changes to the exterior of this building.

CONCLUSION

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church retains good integrity to the changes that were made within the Period of Significance, specifically 1956-58, to accommodate its growing congregation. Since that time, the major changes that have occurred have been the construction of the small office and study in the rear, southeast corner of the parcel in 1973 and the construction of the 2013 funeral procession ramp, which is located between the parsonage and office and not visible from any public rights-of-way. The ADA elevator is a more recent addition, and augments the other ADA accommodations that were made over the years. Metal cladding, which imitates the vertical board that covered the upper portion of the facades in the late 1950s, was added to the main body of the church above the brick veneer at a later date. This is difficult to discern from the ground level. Interior changes after the Period of Significance are relatively minor and do not reflect any major changes in use or circulation. In summary, the building as a whole retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The setting of the church has changed in recent years as major institutions in the area expand, transportation improvements are made, and more recently, as condominiums and commercial uses replace what was previously single family homes and older commercial uses.

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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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK

Period of Significance

1951-1968

Significant Dates

1951, Date congregation moved into church

1968, Date of city-wide Dr. Martin Luther

King Jr. memorial at church

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Williams, Reverend Oliver Booker

Williams, Willia Ida

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Martin, Richard H., Jr., original building (1909)

Williams, Hubert Athling, alteration (1956)

Marks, Raymond O., office (1973)

Period of Significance (justification):

The Period of Significance for the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church begins when the congregation moved into the building on Vancouver Avenue. The end date signifies the point at which the church had gained city- and state-wide significance, hosting the interracial Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary):

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church is a religious property. However, its significance is not due to its religious nature, but rather its association with a religious leader and as the site of significant events during the Civil Rights era.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church of Portland, Oregon, is a prominent ethnic landmark located at the southeast corner of Vancouver Avenue and Fargo Street. For more than 72 years, the church has endured as an important pairing of faith and community service in the Albina neighborhood of Portland. The church is one of the oldest mid-twentieth century African American congregations established in Portland, launched in 1944 in the housing projects in Vancouver, Washington. It was the fifth African American Baptist Church organized in Portland, and for many years maintained the status of having the largest membership of any African-American church founded in Portland and the Pacific Northwest. Throughout its history, the church has played an important spiritual and civic role in the urban center. It is where a grassroots movement of like-minded people from the post-war era came together in support of inclusion and community. As a local foundation, the church contributed to galvanizing social and political action by bringing people together from all walks of life, by creating social bonds when social conditions made efforts difficult and even dangerous. The church itself was all important in motivating people of color during the local Civil Rights movement by actively engaging a populous individually and collectively, by confronting the prevailing political powers within the city, the state and throughout the region. Its structure, culture and its ecumenical platform of education were all fundamental to helping a community sustain the protest actions with few resources and little permanent power. It was also a spiritual refuge for the countless men and women who devoted their lives to the cause of change. The stories of this church are of real men and women of different faiths, backgrounds and cultures reaching out to reconcile with others.

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the areas Social History and Ethnic Heritage/Black, for its role in changing the lives of its congregation through its promotion of improved social conditions in the post-war and Civil Rights eras. It is also eligible under Criterion B, in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Black, for its association with the Dr. Reverend O.B. Williams and his wife Willia Ida Williams. Reverend Williams was an early founder of the church and grew its membership and influence dramatically. Over nearly fifty years of leadership, Reverend Williams, along with his wife, made a significant difference in the lives of the congregation and ultimately in the social consciousness of the city of Portland across racial lines. The property is significant at the state level, for the church's leadership role, which played out at the city, state, and national levels.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Introduction

The following historic context outlines the history of the development of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church building, which predates the church's purchase of the property. This is followed by narratives that explain the African American experience in Oregon during World War II, and recounts the destruction of Vanport and redlining and other discriminatory housing practices that led to the Albina neighborhood being the center of the African American community after the war. The general history of discriminatory practices in Oregon contributed to the urgency of the African American community's activism in the post-war era, which parallels the Civil Rights movement nationally.² In Albina, where the black community relocated, housing shortages continued to be exacerbated by large-scale urban renewal projects that displaced hundreds and had a huge impact on local businesses and institutions, including the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal

² The central position of African American churches, particularly in the Civil Rights era, has been extensively studied and documented for its tremendously important role in galvanizing the African American community, leading to the political action that was so critical at this time. See for example, Dennis C. Dickerson's "African American religious Intellectuals and the Theological Foundations of the Civil Rights Movement, 1930-55" in *Church History*; Shayne Lee's "The Church of Faith and Freedom: African-American Baptists and Social Action," in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*; and Robert W. Gaines II's "Looking Back, Moving Forward: How the Civil Rights Era Church Can Guide the Modern Black Church in Improving Black Student Achievement" in *Journal of Negro Education*.

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(AME) Church.³ Through the outstanding leadership of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church's long-time pastor, Oliver Booker Williams, the church became central to the Civil Rights movement as it occurred in Portland. The leadership of the church in the movement is personified by and in a sense culminates when the city-wide memorial honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., after his assassination was held at the church, beginning with a procession, followed by a service attended by 1,500 participants, dignitaries, and officials from around the city and state. Correspondingly, the Period of Significance for the church is from 1951, when the congregation purchased the building, to 1968, when the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., memorial was held at the church, a high point in the congregation's history with and activism in the Civil Rights movement.

THE CENTRAL METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Williams Avenue Addition

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, built as the Central Methodist Episcopal Church, is located in the Williams Avenue Addition, once the heart of the commercial center of the former City of Albina. The Williams Avenue Addition consists of seven blocks, an L-shaped tract bound by Morris Street to the south, and Ivy Street to the north. The thoroughfares of Vancouver Avenue run parallel to the west and Williams Avenue to the east. The tract was platted in 1900. At the time, the area was billed as choice property, centrally located within the four-block business center of Albina—a possible future center in the city of Portland. The M.E. Thompson Real Estate Company, which was handling the sale of lots, is quoted as saying: "Don't buy out in the brush for a home, when it is possible just now to secure a beautiful lot right in the heart of the settled district, convenient to cars, schools, churches, and stores—with water, gas, electric lights and all the modern improvements that go to make life comfortable at your very door, at the extremely low price that these lots are now offered."⁴

The Central Methodist Episcopal Church

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church began as the home of the Central Methodist Episcopal Church.⁵ This pioneering European congregation represents the early days of the city of Albina. During the young city's rise, Albina, from Russell Street north, was a mostly white, working-class neighborhood housing immigrants from many northern European cultures. Area churches reflected this population. The Scandinavians became a large part of the diverse fabric of Albina. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Norwegians also immigrated, seeking to escape political oppression and also seeking new opportunities and the freedom to continue their way of life. Many of the Norwegians that came to the United States and Canada during this period first settled in the Midwestern regions of the country. By the latter 1880's, many had moved westward, settling in the Oregon cities of Albina and Portland.

As a Norwegian congregation, the Central Methodist Episcopal Church ministry was initially established as a mission under the parent eastside ministry of the Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church, a mission established as the First Methodist Society of Albina under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Oregon. As an organized mission, the church was formally led by the Reverend S.P. Wilson. The Methodist Church of Oregon began missionary work in the state as early as 1834. Early missions of the Methodist Church coexisted throughout the area, most notably under Reverend Jason Lee (1834-1844) and George Gary (1844-1847). In 1844, the Methodists built the first Protestant church on the Pacific Coast in Oregon City. The first Methodist Conference on the Pacific Coast was held in Salem in 1849, called the Oregon and California Mission Conference. The Oregon Annual Conference was founded in 1853. By 1858, there were 19 Methodist organizations in the state, one of the largest religious denominations in the area.

³ The Bethel AME Church, another Albina church that was very important in the community, was destroyed to make way for Memorial Stadium.

⁴ M.E. Thompson Real Estate Company Advertisement, *Oregonian*, December 15, 1901.

⁵ A basic difference between an Episcopal Church and a Baptist Church, in general, is that the interiors of an Episcopal Church tend to be more decorative and ornate in their design, whereas the interiors of a Baptist church tend to be more austere. The beautiful Povey windows that the original congregation installed in their church may be an indication of this value.

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In July of 1888, a contract was let by the Oregon and California Conference to furnish plans for erecting a church at the corner of Russell and Kerby Streets. The site was selected because it was a prime location of the growing town of Albina, within the newly platted tract of Williams Avenue Addition. Size was a priority for its growing congregation. The Methodist periodical, *Pacific Advocate*, reported; “*The site is eighty feet above the river. The tower will be eighty feet in height so that the building when complete will be one of the most conspicuous in Albina.*”⁶ Albina was annexed into Portland in 1891 and the membership of the church continued to grow. The ministry purchased a quarter block piece of property located at the corner of Vancouver and Fargo streets in December of 1908 (note that Fargo Street was previously called “Central Street”). Before the purchase, the congregation spent several years raising funds. In honor of their new location, they chose to adopt the name of the street. In January of 1909, the church added supplementary provisions to its articles of incorporation, officially becoming known as the Central Methodist Episcopal Church in Portland, Oregon.

Noted members of the church included the members of Charles H. Hill family, the first mayor of Albina, who erected the famed Hill Building at the corner of Russell and Williams Avenue. Additional noted members were Alison B. and Helen D. Manley. A.B. Manley was president of the Pacific Abstract Title Company, the title company that platted the Williams Avenue Addition and sold the quarter-block tract of land to the church. A.B. Manley was also president of the Manley Auto Company, established in 1916. Residing in Portland since 1881 Manley had extensive investments in property holdings and in the intervening years was closely affiliated not only with commercial interests, but with activities related to the municipal progress of the city and its relation to the body politic.⁷

In 1887 A.B. Manley removed to Albina and took an active part in organizing its city government. He built the first three-story brick block on Williams Avenue, known as the Manley Block, and not only took an active part in business affairs but also in many public movements of material benefit to the city. Manley was president of the Albina Volunteer fire department, which consisted of four companies, and held the office continuously until the annexation into the city of Portland. In June 1892, he was elected to represent his district in the state legislature and served during the session of 1893, at which time he secured passage of the first bill providing for free ferries. In January 1901, he organized the Pacific Abstract Title Company, of which he served as president and secretary. His wife, Helen D. Manley, was a Methodist missionary, the daughter of Oregon pioneer Hampton Kelly, and the granddaughter of Clinton Kelly, whose name honors the Clinton Kelly School in Southeast Portland. At the time of her death in 1930, the Methodist community center in Southwest Portland was renamed the Helen D. Manley Center. The Manley home was located in the same block as the Central Methodist Episcopal Church. It was a stately Victorian house facing east, overlooking Williams Avenue, between Fargo and Monroe.

The former church on Russell Street was sold to the Danish Aid Society in December of 1908. An icon of this old edifice is artistically depicted in the large Povey window at the present building. During their transition, the congregants met for several months in the Woodmen Hall located on Russell Street, until the completion of the new church in the summer of 1909. The church was formally dedicated in September of that year. The Central Methodist Church remained vibrant for several decades until aging membership decreased the congregation in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Due to their declining membership and the changing racial makeup surrounding their church, church stewards chose to sell the aging building to the emerging African American congregation of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. The Central Methodist Episcopal Church then merged its small congregation with a sister congregation known as the Patton Methodist Church, thereafter referred to as the Patton-Central Methodist Church.

The congregation commissioned architect Richard H. Martin, Jr. to design its new church in 1909. In his original interior plans, Martin chose to feature oak hand-carved pews and finishes; a laurel wreath-shaped

⁶ *Pacific Advocate*, July 1888.

⁷ Carney, Charles H., *History of Oregon Illustrated, Vol. 3.* (Chicago-Portland: The Pioneer Publishing Company, 1922). Quoted in *Online Biographies*, <http://www.onlinebiographies.info/>, accessed April 2016.

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suspended mahogany balcony with brass-colored fittings; and a series of 29 variously sized, religious-themed stained glass windows commissioned of Portland's Povey Brothers Studio. The Gothic Revival-style church resembled other churches being built in the area. These included the \$8,000 Norwegian-Danish Methodist Episcopal edifice located at the corner of Vancouver Avenue and Skidmore, constructed in 1909, and the \$7,000 German Methodist Church at the corner of Rodney and Stanton, which was completed a year later in 1910. Both were designed by the Methodist minister Reverend J.C. Larsen.

Architect Richard H. Martin, Jr.

Richard Henry Martin, Jr., was born in Penzance, Cornwall, England on July 23, 1858, and was the first of six known children born to Richard Martin, Sr., and his wife, Hannah Rogers. Richard Sr. was born August 17, 1834, in Liverpool, England, and Hannah Rogers was born in England on June 24, 1835. The couple married March 13, 1858, in Cornwall. Richard Martin, Jr., was technically Richard IV: his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all having been named Richard. His father, Richard Martin, Sr., was a builder and stonemason. On May 15, 1874, when he was 15 years of age, Richard, Jr., left Penzance with his family and immigrated to America. They set sail from Liverpool on the S.S. Baltic, arriving in Portland, Oregon on June 10, 1874, as noted in a diary he wrote about the trip. By 1880, the family was living at 425 West Park in Portland; Richard, Sr., was listed as a stonemason and his 21-year-old son Richard, Jr., as an architect. Richard Martin, Jr., was made a naturalized citizen of the United States in Portland, Oregon, on December 7, 1891. When Martin applied for a passport in March 1912, he was described as being five feet eight inches tall, with light hair and blue eyes. Richard Martin, Jr., was married in 1896 to Hattie L. Houghton, who was born in 1873. Her father was Canadian, and her mother hailed from England. The couple had a son, Richard H. Martin V, born in 1899. In 1910, they lived at 455 Hassalo St. in Portland, on the east side of the river, and had a live-in servant, a 19-year-old Swedish woman named Ellen Erickson.

Martin worked as a draftsman in the office of prominent Portland architect Warren H. Williams until Williams' death in 1888.⁸ Martin then worked in partnership with Alexander M. Milwain. In 1888, he designed the Pacific Northwest Industrial Exposition Building. This exhibition hall, the largest such structure on the West Coast when built, burned in 1910. In late 1888 or early 1889, the McCaw & Martin professional partnership was forged. Frederick Manson White joined the firm in 1889 as a draftsman.⁹ From July 1891 to June 1892, he was a full partner in McCaw, Martin & White. McCaw, Martin & White was a prominent architectural firm in Portland, responsible for some of the most substantial Romanesque-style buildings in Oregon, some of which are still extant.¹⁰ Among their early works is the University of Portland's West Hall (now Waldschmidt Hall) of 1891, which shows the influence of Henry H. Richardson; it bears a strong resemblance to Richardson's 1878 Sever Hall at Harvard University. Other distinctive works completed by McCaw, Martin & White include the 1891 First Regiment Armory Annex in Portland; today called the Gerding Theater, an award-winning model of sustainable, adaptive redesign. Completed in 1892, the Portland home of Dr. Kenneth A.J. Mackenzie - a founder and dean of the University of Oregon's Medical School (now Oregon Health Sciences University) - displays the firm's expertise in residential design. Perhaps their masterwork is the Dekum Building of 1892 (the building which later housed Martin's offices), a Portland landmark distinguished by distinctive stonework, elaborate carvings, and colorful masonry.¹¹ Martin also designed the 1902 Scottish Rite Temple in downtown Portland. The building was the first purpose-built Scottish Rite Temple in the United States and in its day was one of the largest of its kind.¹²

⁸ Author Richard Ellison Ritz notes that "Warren Haywood Williams was one of Portland's most important nineteenth century architects, although his practice in Portland spanned only 15 years." Richard Ellison Ritz, *Architects of Oregon*. (Portland, OR: Lair Hill Publishing, 2002), 430.

⁹ White was a nephew of preeminent architect Stanford White. The elder's New York firm of McKim, Mead & White was where the younger White took his early training. Ritz, *Architects of Oregon*, 418.

¹⁰ Leland Roth, "McCaw, Martin, and White Architects,": *The Oregon Encyclopedia*. Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, <http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/>. Created 2002.

¹¹ Ritz, *Architects of Oregon*, 277.

¹² Michael D. Robinson, "A Historic Portland Valley Scottish Rite Brother," *Oregon Scottish Rite, Brotherhood, Charity, Community*, <https://oregonscottishrite.wordpress.com/tag/portland-scottish-rite-building/>. Posted March 14, 2015.

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The Povey Brothers

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church has 29 Povey windows, designed for the church and installed when the church was constructed. Known as the “Tiffany of the Northwest,” the Povey Brothers Studio produced some of the most beautiful and lasting stained glass pieces in all of Oregon. For instance, David and John Povey’s artwork can be found in the First Presbyterian Church in Portland, the Atkinson Memorial Unitarian Church in Oregon City, and the Pittock Mansion of Portland, just to name a few. Their windows were known for having unequaled quality and beauty, which has allowed windows such as those in the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church to last for over 100 years. The art of stained glass was a family tradition. The Povey Brothers’ father, Joseph Povey, worked in the field on the East Coast in the early 1800s, after he immigrated to the United States. David Povey studied art in New York and then traveled to Europe for further study before coming to Portland. His education allowed him to be the artistic leader and designer of the stained glass pieces, while John focused on the actual glazing and assembling the structures. The brothers formed the studio in 1888 in a warehouse located in what is now Portland’s Chinatown. Their first commission was the First Presbyterian Church, with all of the building’s stained glass having been made by the brothers. This was an extremely successful first project and provided the press and credibility they needed to become one of the most sought-after stained glass producers of their time.

The Povey brothers were so successful and sought after by Portland’s affluent because of their daring styles, glass types, and innovative production techniques. For example, if a church requested pieces, they were designed in a classical style, with the scenes often taken from religious paintings. However, if the pieces were for homes or secular buildings, the colors were brighter, and the patterns and shapes more complex. The residential pieces often contained motifs such as grape clusters, roses, lilies, birds, and dogwood. Moreover, every piece was unique and built with the glass placement, weather exposure, and audience in mind. The brothers often used clear glass in the background of their pieces to allow light to pass through on the Northwest’s typically overcast days. This attention to detail is what has made these pieces current through changing eras and styles.

The studio was extremely active and profitable for nearly 40 years. John Povey passed in 1917 and David Povey in 1924. Between the time of John and David’s deaths, their sons became involved in the business. After David died, the company was sold to W.P. Fuller, and the Povey family parted ways with their fathers’ successful company. Povey Brothers stained glass has had a lasting impact in Portland. Their pieces are featured on over 40 buildings that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and in countless homes in many different northwest neighborhoods.¹³ The continually aesthetically pleasing pieces have stood the test of time.

WORLD WAR II, THE KAISER COMPANY, AND VANPORT

The beginnings of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church lie, in essence, in the World War II shipyards of the Kaiser Company. As it did for so much of the country, World War II changed the landscape of Portland completely. In 1940, just before the United States entered the war, industrialist Henry Kaiser struck a bargain with the British Navy to make ships to bolster Britain’s war effort. Seeking a place to build his shipyard, Kaiser set his sights on Portland, where the newly opened Bonneville Dam offered factories an abundance of cheap electricity. Kaiser opened the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation in 1941, and it quickly became known as one of the most efficient shipbuilding operations in the country, capable of producing ships 75% faster than other shipyards, while using unskilled, but still unionized, laborers.

During World War II, Kaiser’s enormously productive shipbuilding operations manufactured Liberty ships, troop transports, and tank landing ships (LSTs). Kaiser established a Vancouver, Washington, shipyard on farmland in 1942 to produce ships for the US Navy. During the war, the yard produced nearly a ship a week; the Kaiser Company also operated yards in Portland, Oregon, and Richmond, California. These three wartime shipyards produced nearly 1,500 vessels. Kaiser’s other businesses included producing cement and building

¹³ “Povey Brothers Studio,” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Povey_Brothers_Studio, accessed March 2016.

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roads, dams, and mines, and manufacturing steel, aluminum, and even cars. The vast, federally subsidized operations employed as many as 120,000 workers in peak production, with another 40,000 people in related occupations.

World War II, according to historian James Patterson, was the “*central convulsion*” of the twentieth century.¹⁴ The war signaled the end of the Great Depression, and thousands of people moved to the nation’s cities. Within the country, the most frequent movement of people was to the West, since wartime installations and industries proliferated in this region: “*It was as if someone had tilted the land,*” writes historian Richard White, and “*people, money, and soldiers all spilled west.*”¹⁵ War-related industries changed the region’s demographic profile, as more ethnically diverse people moved to Oregon and the Northwest.

When America entered the war in December of 1941, white male workers were drafted, plucked from the shipyards and sent overseas. The years between 1941 and 1945 reshaped virtually every corner of the Oregon, as thousands of men were drafted to serve in the armed forces or to work in defense industries. With America’s entrance into the war, the increased requirement for ships fell on the shoulders of those otherwise overlooked as unsuitable for the job: women and minorities. This change had a lasting impact in Portland that, in essence, continues to this day.

Most black migrants learned about Kaiser and other defense jobs through family, acquaintances, and the grapevine. Some left the South and came west as a result of the War Manpower Commission, a World War II-era Federal agency charged with planning and balancing the labor needs of agriculture, industry, and the armed forces. The commission was created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s executive order #9139 on April 18, 1942. Once the west coast plants began hiring African Americans, the black migration to the west ceased to be a natural migration and become a great migration.

The 1940 census listed fewer than 2,000 African Americans in a total population of 340,000 people in the Portland area. Although only a small number of blacks had arrived in the city by September, 1942, the *Oregonian* ran a front-page article under the headline “*New Negro Migrants Worry City.*”¹⁶ “By any measure,” writes historian Rudy Pearson, “Portland responded with prejudice and insensitivity to the wartime immigration of African Americans.” The major racial issue during this period involved the largest shipyard union, the Boilermakers, which prohibited black membership, with the complicity of shipyard management. As a consequence, black workers had the least skilled jobs in the shipyards, which made them more vulnerable than whites to layoffs and unemployment.

Portland residents greeted the new people, traveling into the metropolis during the early 1940s, with open incredulity. When the shipyards and other local defense industries began to hire black workers in 1943, the newcomers encountered a wall of racism and discrimination in housing, public transportation, union membership, and admission to recreational facilities. There were openly offensive eating establishments, including the Coon-Chicken Inn on Northeast Sandy Boulevard. Early in the war, a former Portland city commissioner urged local officials to discourage the shipyards from recruiting minority workers, and Mayor Earl Riley worried that the new groups would threaten the city’s “regular mode of life.”¹⁷

The Portland population of blacks reached a high of 22,000 by 1944. The first influx of African American families moved into cramped quarters in the Guild’s Lake District. Because of the extreme housing shortage, newly arrived black workers found temporary shelter with members of the established African American community, in local churches, at the black Elks Lodge, and in black-owned businesses.

¹⁴ James Patterson in William G. Robbins’ *Landscape of Conflict: the Oregon Story, 1940-2000* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Richard White in Robbins’ *Landscape of Conflict: the Oregon Story*.

¹⁶ “New Negro Migrants Worry City,” *Oregonian*, September 23, 1942.

¹⁷ Kimbark E. MacColl, *The Growth of City-1915-1950* (Portland, OR: The Georgian Press, 1988).

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To alleviate the housing crisis for shipyard workers, Henry Kaiser used federal loans to purchase 650 acres of land outside the city limits on the Oregon shore of the Columbia River. Kaiser's company constructed housing in the floodplain for 40,000 residents, making Vanport City the state's second largest city. With buildings supported by wooden blocks, with fiberboard walls, Vanport was the nation's largest wartime housing project. Vanport was home to a mix of people, including a sizable number of African Americans. By war's end, African Americans made up 35% of Vanport's population, a much larger percentage than anywhere else in the state. As a result, Vanport's destruction would have a disproportionate impact on the African American community. A devastating flood on the Columbia River on Memorial Day in 1948 breached a railroad dike and destroyed Vanport. Eighteen thousand people were left without homes, 25% of them African Americans.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE VANCOUVER AVENUE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Like so many before them, Oliver Booker Williams and his new bride Willia Jackson left the South after they married in 1944 and moved to the Northwest, where Williams planned to seek work in the Kaiser Shipyards. While employed in the defense industry, Williams continued his work in the ministry. The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church began as a small Sunday school for wartime children that became known as the First Baptist Church of Burton Homes, an urban African American church located in Vancouver, Washington.

The ministry had been conceived in March 1944 in the minds and hearts of transplanted African-American Baptists who felt the need to have their own church where a free expression of worship in the black idiom could flow uninhibited. The church began under the leadership of the Reverend James William Brown. Church membership in Portland and Vancouver Washington grew significantly when the southerners arrived on the scene, due in part to the fact that the church was historically the primary institution in the life experience of many African Americans. Many of the early members of the church were employees of the Kaiser Shipyard and lived in the housing projects of Burton Homes. Members struggled to have regular services but nonetheless carried on a Sunday school ministry for children. Soon after its formation, in 1945, the Reverend Oliver Booker Williams and his wife joined the ministry. Because his love for the ministry was so vivid and filled with purpose, Reverend O.B. Williams was called to pastor the church, and installed as senior pastor on the 15th of April of that year.

As the Sunday school program increased in activity, Reverend Williams solicited the active participation of more wartime workers as members. As he had done for school-age children, he started out with a service late Sunday afternoon for employees of Kaiser. Little by little, he moved the hour up to 11 a.m. People responded enthusiastically. As the newly appointed minister in the Burton Homes community, Reverend Williams encouraged marriages and offered baptisms and funerals, to which many immigrants to the region had lacked access since leaving their previous place of residence. The First Baptist Church of Burton Homes was popular because it responded to people's human needs. On December 9, 1945, Reverend Williams presided over his first matrimonial service when he united in marriage Luther Jackson and Esdella Culp in Vancouver, Washington.¹⁸

As a minister, Reverend Williams labored diligently, launching a series of internal programs to grow the church and its causes. In an effort to cover the social gospel more broadly, Williams, with his knowledge of contemporary Christian affairs, developed a series of programs that were rooted in the fertile land of the collective African American experience to free themselves and better their conditions. These programs included: personal growth workshops, home ownership, employment skills, social graces and etiquette, grooming, and how to properly navigate in an urban setting.¹⁹ Williams was a man euphemistically classified as easy on the eye with a captivating voice. He was reputed to have been a young man of vigor and animation, with a commanding presence and a manner to match. As a minister, he was lauded for his

¹⁸ Raymond Burell, *O' How I Love Jesus, History of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church*, (1993) 151.

¹⁹ Note that many members were from the rural South.

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visionary and executive abilities. It has been written, "He was truly a man called to preach. What he lacked in formal education, he made up in fervency and zeal".²⁰

When the Kaiser Company closed its Washington operations after the war, as well as the Burton Homes housing district, the church and many members relocated to another housing project known as Bagley Downs. When this housing project was closed down only a year later, the church moved again, first to Vanport City in August of 1946, holding temporary services in parishioners' homes, and then to the segregated area of Albina in Northeast Portland.

MIGRATION TO ALBINA

Albina Becomes Segregated

The Williams's and the nascent Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church were not the only new immigrants in Albina. At the conclusion of the war, many blacks left the state as shipyard jobs disappeared, but many decided to stay. The post-war black population stabilized at nearly six times the size of the pre-war population. Most lived in Vanport until that city was destroyed. Finding a place for displaced Vanport blacks to live became a racial crisis. The inner northeast area of Albina was targeted by the city's financial and political power structure for black resettlement. The area was favored because of its older, less desirable housing stock and its proximity to both Vanport and the older, established black community. Further, as more and more whites were moving to the suburbs, creating a black neighborhood in Albina did not interfere with or threaten that exodus. The conditions of these demographic changes pushed Portland in new directions in racial matters as Oregon entered the 1950s. The war against racism overseas during World War II had shed light on some unpleasant racial practices and realities in the United States. The most blatant example was the incarceration of innocent, predominantly west coast, Japanese-American citizens in concentration camps without due process (German Americans had not been subjected to such treatment). The war years had also focused attention on the long-standing issues of racism directed at black Americans.

The history of the Albina neighborhood begins with a history of African Americans in Oregon. Oregon's history of racism, which dates back to before statehood, directly influenced the social demographics of Portland's neighborhoods as the city grew.

In the 1800s, Oregon was a host to a variety of people looking for work and to settle the region. In the mid-1800s, when Oregon was still a territory, laws were enacted to exclude blacks from living in the territory. One of these laws was called the 'Lash Law' of 1844.²¹ It got its name because a whipping every six months was the consequence given to a black person if they did not leave the territory. These exclusion laws were written into the state constitution when Oregon became a state in 1859. Article I, Section 35, the exclusionary clause directed at "free Negro(s) or mulatto(s)," was not removed until 1926.

While government officials infrequently held to the exclusion laws, the migration of blacks to Oregon was slow beyond a small burst of railroad workers that came first near the turn of the century and then in the 1920s. Most of Portland's black residents who immigrated before World War II secured employment as hotel waiters and railroad porters, two of the few jobs they were legally allowed to hold. As the railroad industry boomed, they gravitated to the neighborhood around Union Station and Old Town. When their numbers grew in size and could no longer be contained in this area, blacks crossed over the Willamette River into the inner northeast area, along Broadway, Williams Avenue, and Vancouver Avenue. These areas in Albina were within walking distance of Portland's Union Station, as well as being close to the railway shops.

African Americans in Lower Albina area gradually migrated north and east, filling voids in neighborhoods once previously occupied by European transplants; some of whom moved to wealthier neighborhoods to the north

²⁰ Bessie L. Green, *Is there Any Word from the Lord, Yes there is., Biography and Collection of Published Sermons of Dr. O.B. Williams*, 2009.

²¹ Article XVIII, Oregon State Constitution, 1857. On file, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

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and east. Housing in the Albina neighborhoods was affordable, the transit system was viable, and men could access jobs nearby. The Albina district eventually became one of the only places in the urban center where African Americans were permitted to live.

The small number of blacks that migrated to Portland faced discrimination when attempting to purchase homes. Housing discrimination, known as redlining, prohibited minorities from purchasing property in particular areas beginning in 1919, when the Realty Board of Portland approved a Code of Ethics that forbade realtors and bankers from selling or granting loans to property in white neighborhoods to minorities. The Realty Board adopted a policy restricting the sale of properties to “*Negroes and Orientals*” to Albina. Further, the Real Estate Handbook defined as unethical “... *any individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property value in that neck of the woods*.”²²

In the 1930s, the real estate industry began to define the meaning of a segregated white neighborhood as one that did not have a black-occupied residence within four blocks. By the early 1940s Albina, traditionally a white, working class neighborhood, was one of the few communities in Portland in which blacks could reside.

Redlining made Albina the black cultural center of Oregon in the late 1940s and 1950s, with North Williams and Vancouver Avenues as its beating heart. While small and geographically isolated, Albina was nonetheless a cohesive, viable entity that was entirely self-sufficient, with residential neighborhoods, churches, schools, African American businesses, and places of entertainment.

Albina’s commercial corridors were lined with small black-owned businesses: groceries, bakeries, record shops, churches, pool halls, bars, and jazz clubs. Despite the difficulty getting loans, 57% of neighborhood residents owned their homes. Redlining may have artificially drawn the boundaries of certain neighborhoods, but African Americans intentionally created the tight-knit bonds and business enterprises within them. By 1940, 1,100 of Portland’s 1,900 black residents lived in the Albina district centered on North Williams Avenue in an area just two miles long and one mile wide. The Albina neighborhood became inextricably linked with Portland’s African American community, and was a hub of activity.

After the Vanport flood, the line of racial discrimination in Portland was temporarily bridged when white families offered to take in black families displaced by the storm—but before long, the racial lines that existed before the flood hardened yet again. The total number of displaced black residents was roughly equal to the entire population of Albina, making it impossible for displaced black families to crowd into the only areas in which they were allowed to rent or buy homes. Many ended up back in temporary defense housing. It would take some families years to find permanent housing in Portland—and for those who remained, the only option was the already overcrowded Albina district. According to Karen Gibson, associate professor of urban studies and planning at Portland State University, “The flood that washed away Vanport did not solve the housing problem—it swept in the final phase of ‘ghetto building’ in the central city.”²³

The African American community’s sequestering in Albina continued until passage of the state’s first Fair Housing Act, which disallowed refusal to hire or sell to a person because of race, religious belief, color or national origin, adopted in 1957. The momentum of earlier policies, however, and subsequent events led to Albina’s central role in the Civil Rights movement and Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church’s lively place within it.

The blacks who migrated to the North and the West did not suffer the same Jim Crow repression as blacks in the South after World War II, and were not generally in as much danger. They did experience systematic prejudice, however. Employment discrimination, racial quota systems in higher education, *de facto* segregation in schools, discrimination in banking and financial services, real estate prohibitions, police

²² “Housing Discrimination far from banished,” *Portland Tribune*, April 3, 2008.

²³ Karen J. Gibson, “Bleeding Albina: A History of Community Disinvestment, 1940-2000,” *Transforming Anthropology*, vol. 15, no. 1, (April 2007) 3-25.

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brutality, and policies that forced most blacks to live in segregated circumstances were all routinely a part of black life in the West. Popular culture projected negative racial stereotypes of blacks and then used the stereotypes to justify their treatment. At the same time, racial and civic reform movements began to gather vitality and the financial backing of a rising number of whites. In Oregon, this activist element combined with persistent historical efforts by blacks to achieve a series of progressive advances and victories, eventually including a fair employment law (1949), a public accommodations law (1953), and a fair housing law (1957). Although the new legislation did not automatically change prevailing racist practices, they did present a counterpoint to Oregon's and the nation's anti-black traditions. The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church played an important role in galvanizing a community that would force these improvements.

The Church Is Established in Albina

When the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church moved to Portland, it temporarily held its services in the Prince Hall's Masonic Temple Association building located at N. Russell and Rodney Streets. The church merged with St. James Baptist Church (a ministry occupying the Masonic Temple space under the ministerial leadership of the Reverend James S. Ferguson, begun in October of 1945). Reverend Williams was voted in as the chief spiritual leader of the combined ministry of 75 members. Congregants of the church tried to make the amalgamated ministry a place where people of all ages and backgrounds would feel at home.

By the early spring of 1947 the congregation was expanding and needed new accommodations. Reverend Williams located a condemned apartment building at N. Vancouver and N. Hancock Streets in Lower Albina in Northeast Portland. With the help of the entire congregation, \$5,000 was raised towards the rehabilitation of the blighted structure into a new spiritual home.²⁴ During this transition, the church received its articles of incorporation and renamed its organization the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. On May 18, 1947, a street processional was held in a grand fashion where members of the church marched from the former location to the new one. The membership swelled to 150 by year's end.

The Vanport flood of 1948, which caused further stress on the already over-crowded area of Lower Albina, grew church membership tenfold. At this newly location, the church established more than twenty different internal organizations that ministered to not only the spiritual demands of the community, but also to the cultural, social, and economic needs of this amalgamated community of displaced flood victims, recent migrants, and native Portlanders. Both the old and new congregations thrived and grew rapidly in Albina and, as the number of congregants increased, larger sanctuaries were needed.

By 1950, the post-war migratory membership of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church reached an active enrollment of 600. With few options, the church made the bold decision to seek larger accommodations. Though their search was limited to the restricted segregated area of Albina, they were fortunate to have had the experience of relocating before, and the move was swift. In a matter of months, the church officially made arrangements to purchase the Central Methodist Episcopal Church, including both the church and parsonage, which was being abandoned by its congregation. The acquired church had historically been occupied by the white community who, by 1950, were fleeing the area in high numbers and relocating to other neighborhoods. White flight, a reaction to the growing black population of the area, resulted in this church being available for purchase. In 1951, the church offered to buy the property, which was in fair condition, for \$22,500, with a final offer of \$25,000 being accepted. The church's attorney, Woodbridge K. Geary, submitted a formal offer on the 3rd of January, to which both parties agreed.

Members of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, with meager means, had succeeded in buying the single largest property acquired by African Americans in Portland in the post-war years. The church took possession of the property in March, 1951, and on Palm Sunday, March 18th, 600 participants marched in joyous fashion, led by a police escort, from the former church to the new church. In honor of the occasion, the Vancouver Avenue thoroughfare was closed for the first time in its history. The event made headline news in

²⁴ "Services Planned in New Church," *Oregonian*, May 18, 1947.

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local newspapers. The *Oregon Journal* reported: "They entered the church to the tune of Onward Christian Soldiers, and to the accompaniment of both piano and organ."²⁵

Growth of the Church Building and Ministry

As African Americans in Albina continued to encounter job and housing discrimination, the church fostered social equality through its active role in the community and direct links with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and its abiding dignity in the face of blatant and unrelenting discrimination. Between 1951 and 1954, the membership surged to 1,200. It was now the single largest African-American congregation in the Northwest. The church thrived and began to develop new strategies to battle societal oppressions. Churchgoers made sacrifices so that their children might aspire to more. Church clubs and organizations further forged social services and educational opportunities to create community uplift, and men and women banded together politically to pass the Civil Rights legislation of 1953—all of these efforts were centered around the church and its leadership. Church membership was perhaps the most important indicator of the status of the African American community, because often it was been the only institution in which African Americans could call their own.

Due to its rapid surge in membership during this four-year period, members of the church were once again faced with issues of accommodation. Developing the property became its only solution. Despite its large membership, finances were challenged. Reverend Williams made many solicitations to local financial institutions that repeatedly turned down loan requests, arguing that the church was comprised of migratory patrons who could take flight at any time. Reflecting his faith in the church, Reverend Williams took out a personal life insurance policy of \$100,000, which served as collateral and security to complete the remodel project. The church commissioned the architect, Hubert Athling Williams in 1954 to design the alterations to the Gothic structure.

Architect Hubert Athling Williams²⁶ (no relation to Reverend Williams) was commissioned to design the Church's addition and renovations following the completion of the modern youth training center for the Foursquare Gospel Church in 1957, located at 1302 SE Ankeny. An architect in Portland for forty-five years, Williams was known for his contemporary design aesthetics. He was born in 1887, in Langdon, North Dakota, and arrived in Portland in 1904, at the age of seventeen, according to his profile in *Architects of Oregon*.²⁷ Williams took up his studies in architecture through the International Correspondence Schools while working for a construction company and studying by night. By 1913, Williams opened his first Portland office in the McKay Building, eventually opening offices at 776 SW Broadway Drive in the early fifties. During his career, Williams designed many buildings in the greater Portland area, including the Peacock Lane homes, a residential neighborhood in Southeast Portland, and the Palaske's Hillvilla Restaurant at 5700 SW Terwilliger Boulevard. He also planned and owned the Broadway Drive Apartments in Southwest Portland, and owned ABCO, a color slide distributing firm, also located in Portland. During the last eight years of his life, Hubert Williams was an active lieutenant in the Portland Police Auxiliary. In addition to these achievements, Williams was a member of the American Institute of Architects, Oregon Building Congress, and the Oregon Apartment House Association. Williams died in 1965 at the age of seventy-eight.²⁸

Hubert Williams' plans for the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church called for a new exterior, brick façade, altered entrances that included a central exterior staircase, and an annex addition that allowed for an enlarged sanctuary. The Portland Planning Commission approved the plans in October 1954. Construction commenced in early 1956 and continued until 1957. On Palm Sunday 1958, the dedication services drew over 1,000 supporters. A ceremonial cornerstone presentation marked the historic achievement, which included the church's organization, a time capsule, and the names of the board of deacons and trustees.

²⁵ *Oregon Journal*, March 19, 1951.

²⁶ Registration No. 0126.

²⁷ Richard Ellison Ritz., *Architects of Oregon* (Portland, OR: Lair Hill Publishing, 2002), 429.

²⁸ *Oregonian*, September 30, 1965.

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On-Going Significance of the Church

The church's epithet, "*Vancouver Avenue*," became an indicator of one of the city's leading African-American congregations. It was, for many, the progressive place to be on Sunday mornings. In a personal chronicle of the early years, one woman, arriving from the south in 1952, commented on the standing-only attendance of the church, when she stated; "We could not go in. We'd have to stand up. I do not care how early we'd go; we would not get in."²⁹ As the church matured, it blossomed into a dynamic social and civic center in the city, becoming a clarion voice in the community that offered many racial uplift programs to assist the disenfranchised. The uplift ideology included both democratic and elitist meanings; it spoke of a collective effort in the freedom struggle on behalf of the race as well as social differentiation within the race. Uplift, as African Americans of various social positions experienced it, embraced the ideals of self-help and community construction rooted in the teachings of W.E.B. DuBois. Within the complexity of the African American's experience in Portland, this could include elites entitled to citizenship, espousing a value system of socially conservative positions, and dominant judgmental characterization of the African American problem.

During the 1950s, because of its sheer size and impact, the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church wove a tapestry of invaluable community service. It quickly emerged as a central town hall meeting place for the black community. The church further engaged in numerous social and civic issues of the day that included regular job fairs and educational advancements for blacks, exposing blacks to fair business practices, addressing housing discriminatory practices, providing a platform for political forums that fostered voter participation, and mentoring and generally encouraging racial uplift. During the 1950s, prominent figures both locally and nationally regularly called at the church. Visitations included the NAACP National Branch deputy director, Gloster B. Current, Jr., chief lobbyist for the NAACP, who spoke on Civil Rights in 1952³⁰ and Clarence Mitchell, Jr., who visited the church and addressed a community rally in 1955.³¹ In July 1957, the first elected African American municipal judge from the state of Kansas, Judge Carl R. Johnson, visited the church, and spoke on Civil Rights to an assembly of over 700.³² Frank L. Stanley Jr., the editor of the award-winning *Louisville Defender* (and who was closely involved with the Montgomery Bus Boycott), also spoke at the church in 1956. During the 1950s and 1960s, the church helped to spearhead annual community membership drives for the local branch of the NAACP. Reverend Williams, who was an active member of the executive committee of the NAACP, drew together black community leaders to galvanize the passage of Oregon's Civil Rights bill in 1953.

Active church participation reached new levels when the Civil Rights movement hosted the first ever National Baptist Sunday School and BTU Congress, which drew some 5,000 participants to the Rose City. At the beginning of the decade, the church became a principal meeting place of the Albina Neighborhood Council, which was concerned with housing issues occurring in the community.³³ Its enormous presence, naturally and organically sanctioned them with the political power to lead the black people of Portland in the movement for Civil Rights, and continued to collaborate with local Civil Rights organizations.^{34 35} Through this collaboration, numerous conferences, both large and small, convened at the church with regularity.³⁶

In November 1961, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came to Portland for the first time and was invited by the Urban League of Portland to the Equal Opportunity Day event held at Portland State University. During his visit, King also delivered a sermon at the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, followed by a luncheon with Albina ministers planned by Reverend Williams.³⁷ Rev. Williams, who was known nationally for his Baptist Convention connections, developed relationships with both Martin Luther King, Sr., and Martin Luther King, Jr.;

²⁹ Personal Interview with Mareda Allen, March 1989.

³⁰ "NAACP to Meet," *Oregonian*, May 18, 1952.

³¹ "NAACP Official to Visit Here," *Oregonian*, 1952.

³² "Judge Sees Effort to Cut out Heart of Civil Rights Bill," July 29, 1957.

³³ "Housing Forum Set," *Oregonian*, November 29, 1961.

³⁴ "NAACP Aide Dates Meet, Field Secretary to Interpret Goal," *Oregonian*, November 6, 1959.

³⁵ "Conference Set for Saturday," *Oregonian*, March 1, 1963.

³⁶ "Women's Offer Church Lunch," *Oregonian*, May 3, 1962.

³⁷ "Martin King to Talk Here," *Oregonian*, November 5, 1961.

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affiliations that helped to promote the works of the Civil Rights movement locally.³⁸ Other activities of significance that took place at the church included a civic event in 1961 in which some 200 African American residents came to the church to hear discussions and explanations of Oregon's current housing laws.³⁹ During 1966, the church hosted the public announcement that a \$100,000 Albina community job training program was being developed by the Portland Council of Churches.⁴⁰

THE DR. REVEREND O.B. AND WILLIA WILLIAMS

The establishment and early success of the Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church can be attributed to the leadership of Dr. Reverend O.B. Williams and his wife Willia. His achievements are all the more remarkable, given his modest background. The Williams' continued leadership into the 1960s can be directly tied to successes during Civil Rights movement and accompanying reforms of this era.

Dr. Reverend Oliver Booker Williams

A transformer of social and cultural norms, the ministerial and humanitarian legacy of the Reverend Dr. O.B. Williams (1917-1993) is as a charismatic crusader among the spiritual, charitable, and social forces in the city of Portland for nearly five decades. Reverend Williams was responsible for purchasing the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, remodeling it, retiring the mortgage, organizing auxiliaries, initiating a scholarship program, and promoting activism. He was well-known throughout religious and civic circles, regarded in the city and across the nation as a post-war vanguard of humanity. He made significant and concrete steps within his community while actively involving himself and inspiring others to personally champion any noble cause of cultural goodwill, social obligation, and civic or spiritual virtue. In his generation, religion reached out and did something tangible, and his contributions as cleric were immense and wide.

As a beloved and respected servant leader, his community service, effective leadership, and personal integrity made him highly respected among his peers and his community. As an astute preacher, Williams not only involved himself in church affairs, but also in organizations such as the NAACP, both in Vancouver, Washington, and in Portland. He was also involved in the Urban League of Portland; the Albina Ministerial Alliance, an organization among the local clergy that he helped to establish in 1958; the Greater Council of Portland Churches; the Model Cities Program; and myriad other calls to community action groups. Williams' talents and skills brought him numerous invitations to serve on various civic and social boards during his illustrious career. Noteworthy distinctions came when he was appointed by the governor as the first African American to serve on the Board of Directors of the Oregon Council on Alcoholism. He was a board member of Emanuel Hospital in Portland and a member of the commission combatting the Albina War on Poverty, ultimately holding the position of Chairman of the Albina War on Poverty Commission. As he matured in his ministry, he was recognized for his local achievements. Reverend Williams held a membership seat on the National Baptist Publishing Board and was appointed Executive Secretary of the Home Mission Board of the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America.

Williams was a Delta native of Winnsboro, Louisiana, born on February 22, 1917, the son of Hardrick and Hannah Mae Williams, both descendants of former slaves. As an arduous man of meager means, Williams's father was born on Sicily Island, in Catahoula Parish in Louisiana, with only a secondary school instruction who was able to secure a property in Franklin Parish while his mother worked as a local laundress in a tightly-knit residential area. During his youth, Williams was affectionately known as "Ollie," a name chosen by his doting mother. She recognized her son's special talents in a segregated world. Baptized into the Baptist faith at the age of seven, Williams was spiritually redeemed in his trust in a small, remote church known as the True Light Baptist Church by Pastor Reverend Henry Y. Finister. During the formative years of his lifetime,

³⁸ The congregation continues its activism and connections. Fifty-four years later, Dr. King's daughter, the Reverend Bernice King, under the pastorate of the Reverend J.W. Matt Hennessee, addressed an audience during the church's annual scholarship and MLK program, "Empower the Dream" a Drum Major event held in 2015.

³⁹ "200 Attend Home Forum," *Oregonian*, December 8, 1961.

⁴⁰ "Church Council Plans Community Projects," *Oregonian*, May 11, 1966.

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Williams became a young preacher boy traveling the preaching circuit, attending and ministering within the Franklin Parish Baptist Association, a constellation of local rural churches organized within the Louisiana State Baptist Convention. This first-hand experience later assisted him in devising a similar organization in the state of Oregon. His make-up was deeply rooted in tradition; a man of his contemporaries who experienced the fascination of Louisiana preacher that blossomed into an appealing character. As a child, Ollie Williams labored in the countryside while experiencing his early training at the Franklin Parish School during the latter part of the 1920s and early 1930s, receiving only an eighth-level education in the process. He received the equivalent of a high school diploma from the Franklin Parish Training on the May 21, 1937, at age twenty.

Shortly thereafter, also in 1937, Williams furthered the training that shaped his theological work by earning an advanced degree from the Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock, Arkansas. The Arkansas Baptist College was established in 1884 by what was known as the Colored Baptist Association of Arkansas. While in school, he continued his theological studies. His doctrine reflected the prevailing conservative understanding of the Baptist churches concerning the boundaries of the church and baptism. While pursuing his studies and in the years that followed, Reverend Williams took advantage of a series of seasonal work opportunities that included a labor position in a local lumber shed and driving an 18-wheeler transfer truck during the Great Depression and in the early forties. Because of his dedication and commitment to the ministry, at the age of fifty-three, Reverend Williams received the special recognition of an Honorary Doctorate in Theology on March 8, 1970, presented by President and Dean Dr. F. Benjamin Davis from the Central Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana. According to a contemporary newspaper, Williams was cited for his community service during his 25th anniversary in the ministry. "More than 500 persons in the church saw him get his honorary degree Sunday."⁴¹ Dr. Davis, a powerhouse himself in the Northwest, was a previous President of the Seattle Chapter of the NAACP, and a former pastor of the historic Mount Zion Baptist Church of Seattle between 1942 and 1954.

Not long after his graduation, Williams returned to his home state and proposed to his longtime sweetheart, Willia Ida Jackson, who was twenty-four at the time. Following her graduation from Grambling State University, the two were joined in holy matrimony on January 23, 1944, a ceremony officiated by Reverend Henry Y. Finister at the True Light Baptist Church. Not long after their marriage, the industrious couple left their rural roots and staked their claim in the Pacific Northwest. For them, the war had the same draw that it had so many other young African Americans of their generation, attracting them to the great urban cities that provided family-wage jobs and a semblance of racial equality. When they arrived in the Northwest, the couple settled in the community of Burton Homes near the urban center of Vancouver, Washington, where Reverend Williams became employed in the sheet metal workshops of the Kaiser Shipyards.

Reverend Williams became a respected voice of the black community in both Vancouver and Portland; the church in which he pastored had established itself as a central source of news and information regarding everything from insight about local injustices to events affecting blacks as Americans in the post-war world. Bestowed with multiple talents and natural endowments, his platform for ministry and social betterment was not limited to the pulpit. As a minister, Reverend Williams acknowledged the adversities many blacks were experiencing; his commission for change became symbolic and representative of the time. As an agent of community change, his methods and ideologies facilitated and benefited blacks living in an unequal society. One trait that helped Reverend Williams in winning support within his community was his charismatic, relatable style of oratory, a compelling translation created to both convey meaning and the inspiration of involvements in the struggle for racial harmony and equality. His voice touched people, inspiring them and calling them to action. Rodney Page, executive director of the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, was quoted in the *Oregonian* newspaper as saying, "O.B. Williams was a person who was a great champion of civil rights and human rights at a harsh and tumultuous time of the city and the state."⁴² When Albina was targeted to receive War on Poverty funds in 1964, Reverend Williams was at the forefront. Members of the Portland community organized

⁴¹ "Pastor Cited For Service," *Oregonian*, March 9, 1970.

⁴² "The Rev. O.B. Williams, Human Rights Advocate Dies," *Oregonian*, May 23, 1993.

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a ten-member interim planning committee headed by Reverend Williams. As president, Williams worked as a link between residents and the Metropolitan Steering Committee. The permanent committee, made up of clergymen and community activists, was instrumental in channeling the War on Poverty funds to Albina. The Albina Citizens War on Poverty Program was the forerunner of citizen participation programs in Albina. By the mid-1960s, Albina was plagued with racial tension. On July 30, 1967, the Albina community experienced two days of racial violence when some 200 blacks, angry about their living conditions in deteriorating Albina, vandalized, looted, and firebombed several businesses located on Union Avenue between NE Fremont and NE Beech Street. Reverend Williams and Reverend Wendell Wallace (pastor of the Maranatha Church of God) were called as prominent leaders in neighborhoods and asked to go to Irving Park to calm down some 80 youth who were throwing bottles and stones at passing white motorists. They were successful in defusing the situation.

Because of his concern for his community as a whole, the epicenter of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church during the 1950s and 1960s had become a rallying spot for numerous Civil Rights activities. Churches in every African-American community across this country played a central role in sowing, nurturing, and escalating of the Civil Rights movement. Ministers like Reverend Williams became pioneers in championing local efforts for social change and genuine and equal justices for all. A casualty of cancer, Reverend O. B. Williams died at the age of 76 in May of 1993. He was laid to rest at Skyline Memorial Gardens in Southwest Portland.

Willia Ida (Jackson) Williams

Willia Ida Jackson Williams (1920-2010) was born on February 4, 1920, in the small town of Winnsboro, Louisiana, in Franklin Parish to Deacon William M. Jackson and Mother Eliza Doyle Jackson. She was the fourth child born to the family and the only girl in the household. Mrs. Williams, who was an early member of the Pleasant Star Baptist Church in Winnsboro, was educated in the public schools of Winnsboro and furthered her education at Grambling State University, receiving B.A. degree in Education.

Grambling State University opened on November 1, 1901, as the Colored Industrial and Agricultural School. The schoolhouse was established by the North Louisiana Colored Agriculture Relief Association, organized in 1896 by a group of African American farmers who wanted to organize and lead a school for African Americans in their area. In 1905, the school moved to its present location and was renamed the North Louisiana Agricultural and Industrial School. By 1928, after becoming a State Junior College and renamed the Louisiana Negro Normal and Industrial Institute, the school began to award two-year professional certificates and diplomas. In 1936, the emphasis of the curriculum shifted to rural teacher training, and students were able to receive professional teaching credentials after completing a third academic year. Willia received a two-year degree and became the first in her family to receive an advanced degree. Considered an overachiever, Willia could be characterized as a hospitable southern woman from a different time and place. She was known for her stature, elegant mannerisms, reliable protocols, belvederes, etiquettes and great blessings, as well as her politeness and self-disciplined posture.

Following the completion of her academic studies, Willia taught elementary school in Louisiana. Shortly thereafter she met her future husband, the Reverend O.B. Williams. As she assumed the role of a minister's wife, she labored alongside her husband in the ministry and community interests to support the pastor's most consequential decisions. Acting as a significant adviser to her husband, she served in the traditional role of the first lady of the church. She quickly took on the work of a full-time wife and homemaker, though she also fulfilled her career dreams as a teacher's aide at times in Portland. She taught religious education at the Highland Baptist Church in Portland for more than 30 years, receiving her teaching certification for elementary and junior high school in 1953, and served as a community counselor at the King Elementary School in Portland. Perhaps Willia Williams' most important role, however, was as the first lady and the pastor's personal protector.

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Mrs. Williams, affectionately referred to as "Madam" by her husband and members of the church, was integral to the growth and progress of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. Throughout her life, Mrs. Williams enlisted anyone she found worthy of joining in ecumenical and community causes. She believed strongly in interracial cooperation. She possessed a remarkable grasp of the problem of racism, and her dedication to racial equality was inclusive of people of color and whites. She frequently hosted dialogues with community women. When dealing with important issues, Mrs. Williams was always task-oriented and instrumental in supporting voter registration among African Americans in the Albina neighborhood and child sponsorship in foreign countries. In 1962, Mrs. Williams was appointed supervisor of voter precinct #2145 by the neighborhood association. On May 19, 1962, the *Oregonian* newspaper reported there were 262 residents eligible to vote in Albina in which she was in charge. People knew there was an iron fist in that velvet glove. In her position, she was a great supporter of young people and encouraged children to reach for their goals and be responsible citizens in the world.

She served over the years in prominent roles while also acting as the first lady of the church, including Superintendent of the Beginners Department of the Sunday school educational program and the Junior Women's Missionary Auxiliary. Mrs. Williams had a great affinity for sacred music. During her time at Grambling State her appreciation for music grew and after her arrival in the Northwest, she continued taking music lessons from Marion Lewis in Vancouver. During the 1950s, she furthered her music education by taking up choral directing and music timing at the Fine Arts School in Portland. She continued studying music at Portland State University, obtaining a degree in music theory and a teaching degree in piano from the Sherwood School of Music in Chicago, Illinois. While at the church, she was an active music director of the Senior Choir; the Junior Choir; the Youth Ensemble Choir; the Williams Choralers; and was president of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church music department for over forty years. At the Baptist State Convention, Mrs. Williams served as President of the State Mission II Department. At the National Baptist Convention, she served as Supervisor and Consultant for the National Junior Women's Auxiliary, President of the National Minister's Wives Auxiliary, and attended the International Women's Conference for six consecutive years. Mrs. Williams was the Vice President and Fitness Leader for Church Women United of Oregon for three years. She also served as a Fitness Consultant in a variety of other capacities.

Mrs. Williams was also involved in establishing a community Annual Mother's Day Tea. Her Mission Encounter Day was a means of conversing about the Bible in small groups, with the larger group coming together for feedback sessions. Mrs. Williams received a variety of awards and recognitions throughout her lifetime. She was known for her dedicated service and determination to elevate and serve her faith, her church, her family, her community, and the world. She was likewise recognized for providing first-class care for her mother, Eliza Jackson (1890-1987), until her death in 1987 in Portland, Oregon. After Reverend Williams' death, she tended to her husband's legacy in Portland, being awarded many distinguished citations. On June 3, 1993, the board of commissioners of Multnomah County honored and recognized the accomplishments of Reverend O.B. Williams in the city, county, and state: "The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners at this moment proclaims recognition of the late Dr. O.B. Williams, the visionary and community leader who wisely and faithfully led the Baptist convention for 41 years, and the church for 48 years as councilor and minister, until his passing May 18, 1993."⁴³

Before moving into the official church parsonage at 32 North Fargo Street in 1951, which would become 3132 North Vancouver Avenue after the parsonage was moved, Reverend and Mrs. O.B. Williams resided at 2821 North Vancouver Avenue. For a brief period, before moving to Portland, the Williams had lived in Vanport City. The Williams lived in the parsonage for some eighteen years before relocating to their attractive Ranch-style residence at 1023 N.E. Ainsworth in 1969, where they lived for more than thirty years. In her final years of life, Mrs. Williams suffered from the effects of Alzheimers. Willia Ida Williams lived to the age of 90; she died in 2010 and was buried at the Skyline Memorial Gardens in Southwest Portland.

⁴³ Multnomah County Proclamation, Hank Miggins, Acting Board Chairperson, June 3, 1993.

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URBAN RENEWAL, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND GENTRIFICATION

Introduction

Urban renewal became a national planning trend in the United States after enabling legislation was passed by the US Congress in the Housing Act of 1949. The purpose of the Act was to eliminate substandard housing and “blight” in an effort to improve national welfare, and to provide various funding mechanisms for achieving these goals. In the 1950s and 1960s, Portland’s city leaders, planners, and developers embraced the urban renewal planning principles that were being promoted on a national level, and began identifying inner-city communities like Albina as “blighted areas,” neighborhoods beyond salvage and thus targeted for clearance. The Portland Development Commission (PDC) was established in 1958 to carry out functions related to urban renewal, including redevelopment, property acquisition, and land clearance.

In 1961, the PDC launched the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project (ANIP), the first urban renewal project in Northeast Portland targeting neighborhood rehabilitation, rather than redevelopment. The program addressed residences in the area bounded by Fremont Street, Skidmore Street, Vancouver Avenue, and Mississippi Avenue, and excluded the Eliot neighborhood. Many Albina residents considered the ANIP to be a success and in 1967, more than 1,000 citizens petitioned the City Council to extend the project south of Fremont, within the Eliot neighborhood.

Five years earlier, in 1962, the PDC had published the Central Albina Study, a study of the area bounded by Fremont Street, Union Avenue (now Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.), Broadway, and Interstate Avenue, as a potential candidate for urban renewal. In this report, the PDC found the neighborhood to be in advanced stages of blight, beyond rehabilitation, and recommended urban renewal as the only solution, largely through the clearance of properties.

The Eliot neighborhood, which is where the Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church is located, suffered more severely from the effects of urban renewal than any other neighborhood in Albina. The 1967 request for rehabilitation from the neighborhood to the PDC was denied. The PDC, in its 1962 study, had written off future residential potential in the area south of Fremont and west of Union Avenue because the area had already been identified for the expansion of Emanuel Hospital.

In addition to the projects that are discussed in more detail below, the Eliot neighborhood has been impacted by the Emanuel Hospital Urban Renewal Project, as noted; the development of the Red Cross Headquarters across the street from the church; and the new approach ramps to the Fremont Bridge, also in proximity to the church. As a result the Eliot neighborhood lost half of its residences between 19660 and 1970, approximately 3,000 people.

Urban Renewal in Albina

The 1950s and 1960s were a time of supposed revitalization of the diverse North and Northeast neighborhoods. On the surface, this goal promised to have a positive effect. In reality, the city of Portland leveled neighborhoods in the area to allow for industrial growth, thereby adding to the housing shortage. Before the Vanport flood, the nearby neighborhood of Albina was home to a large working class white immigrant population that had organized against building public housing for black Americans in their community, ultimately driving the construction of Vanport. After the flood, thanks to increasing black-white segregation practiced by real estate brokers, white flight, and an older building stock in comparison to other neighborhoods, Albina quickly became the largest black community in the city.

Since its establishment in 1958 as the city’s urban renewal agency, the Portland Development Commission (PDC) has managed 25 urban renewal areas and/or programs, primarily locally funded programs. The four earliest federally funded urban renewal projects were the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Plan, Portland State Urban Renewal, Emanuel Hospital Urban Renewal, and the Model Cities/Neighborhood Development

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Program. Three of these projects targeted Albina. By the mid-1960s, Albina had been the victim of empty promises of prosperity in the form of an interstate highway and numerous urban renewal projects.

Memorial Coliseum. Overcrowded by the flurry of Vanport refugees and further affected by the city's neglect, the neighborhood of Albina spent decades fighting poverty, segregation, and its identity as a blighted neighborhood, situations made worse by urban renewal projects like the new Memorial Coliseum. In 1956, voters approved a bill to build Memorial Coliseum - one of Portland's first urban renewal projects - smack in the middle of Albina, in the Eliot neighborhood. Its construction, completed in 1959, caused the demolition of 476 houses, half of them home to African Americans, and a cluster of small businesses on the south side of North Broadway. The residents and businesses were forced to move north into Albina on short notice.

Interstate 5. In the 1960s, the construction of Interstate 5, funded by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, cut a swath through the Eliot, Boise, and Humboldt neighborhoods of Albina, displacing many more residents and local businesses. The first blow was the freeway that only resulted in the loss of many more homes and businesses when it cut a swath through lower Albina in the Eliot neighborhood, a neighborhood where many members of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church resided. The freeway also obliterated the western portion of the Boise neighborhood a few blocks west of N. Mississippi Avenue that caused further displacement, again including members of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. Displaced residents and businesses were forced to move into other North Portland neighborhoods. Completion of this portion of the freeway in 1967 cost Albina commerce, community, and residents. Some businesses along Broadway on the south edge of the Eliot neighborhood benefited due to an ability to locate or expand on land once occupied by residences. Most new companies, though, were light industrial operations, auto dealerships, and large hotel/motel chains that encroached into the residential areas around them.

Albina Neighborhood Improvement Plan. The first official urban renewal project that occurred within the Albina community boundaries was the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Plan, which focused on rehabilitation and conservation of the aging inner city neighborhood. The PDC organized the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Committee in late 1960 and published the survey and planning application for the Improvement Plan in July of 1961. The PDC made rehabilitation assistance available to homeowners and cleared several dozen dilapidated houses for new construction. In 1962, a more extensive study was undertaken. The Housing Authority proposed to construct a 135-unit public housing project in the vicinity of the Knott Street Community Center. This plan was ultimately scrapped after leaders from the African American community, including Reverend Williams, castigated the plan, arguing that it would emphasize the racial imbalance already present in the schools serving the area. There were two study areas for the Central Albina Plan: the entire area from Killingsworth Street to the Banfield Expressway (I-84) and between Interstate Avenue to NE 16th Avenue. The study concluded that the area was in an advanced state of urban blight and recommended clearance and redevelopment as the best solution. A 33-block area between NE Fremont Street, NE Skidmore Street, N Vancouver Avenue, and N Mississippi Avenue was identified for intensive upgrading by the PDC. The PDC made rehabilitation assistance available and cleared several dozen rundown buildings for new construction and tore out two blocks of housing in the middle of the Boise neighborhood to build Unthank Park.

Emanuel Hospital Expansion. In 1966, the city applied for federal urban renewal funds to demolish homes and businesses on 25 blocks around N. Williams and Vancouver Avenues to provide for the expansion of Legacy Emanuel Hospital. Portland planners explained that the neighborhood had "the greatest concentration of Portland's urban blight," noting that the area had "around 75 to 80% of Portland's Negro population," along with poor housing quality, high unemployment, and high crime rates. Officials from nearby Emanuel Hospital had first considered expanding in 1960. The city and private urban renewal consultants suggested creating an Albina urban renewal zone. In the mid-1960s, the hospital hired a Minnesota consultant to plan its expansion. The Hamilton Report recommended that the hospital buy 55.3 acres around its campus to expand its facilities, office space, and parking. The hospital and city spent ten years planning before they involved residents in this planning.

The expansion of Emanuel Hospital forced many more residents out of their Albina homes in the early 1970s. The city, the PDC, and the Model Cities Citizens Planning Board approved the hospital's plans without a

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hearing from residents. The council finally allowed residents to speak in a July 1970 meeting. However, it approved the plans, with only one minor modification, in the same meeting. Two months afterward, a group of residents organized as the Emanuel Displaced Persons Association. The relocation plan was not fair, they alleged. The compensation for their homes was inadequate. Moreover, the city had never explained the programs well. They called for an identified urban center to which the displaced could move with dignity and without suffering financial loss. The city did not respond. Despite objections from the neighborhood, Interstate 5 construction and the hospital's expansion resulted in a loss of nearly 1,100 dwelling units, and demolitions began to infringe upon the surrounding landscape of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. When funding fell through, expansion plans died, leaving empty lots along Williams and Vancouver Avenues as the scars of progress. By the late 1980s, Portland was in the throes of a crime wave, and Albina was one of the heaviest-hit regions in the metropolis of Portland.

On-going Significance of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church

Multiple activities and events made the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church a pivotal institution during the Civil Rights era. It served as a location for mass meetings. It also acted as a starting and ending point for the protest marches that occurred in Portland around civil rights issues. During the drive for voter registration among blacks in 1962, the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church became a central polling place for the Albina community. When the tragic bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama occurred, an event that killed four little girls, the church joined forces with the local branch of the NAACP and in September 1963 hosted the city's largest public Civil Rights mass demonstration to date.⁴⁴ Also in 1963, John Lewis (who later became a United States representative) visited the church in his capacity as chair of the national Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.⁴⁵ In 1964, during the 50th Anniversary of the Portland branch of the NAACP, the church became the epicenter of one of the largest Civil Rights meetings ever held in the city. Then-president of the national body, Roy Wilkins, visited the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, addressing an audience of over 1,000 persons that spilled out onto the streets.⁴⁶ In April 1968, the church served as the historic site of the city and state's memorial service honoring the slain Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an event attended by Senator Mark Hatfield, Governor Tom McCall, Portland mayor Terry Schrunk, a host of municipal dignitaries, and a crowd of over 1,500 persons.⁴⁷ This event clearly marked the city- and state-wide influence of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church across the boundaries of race and religion.

The church's broad reach continued as it became actively involved in the Greenfingers Project, a community garden program that brought together citizens from the community representing all races and backgrounds. This landmark program, which promoted health and healthy eating habits, commenced in 1968.^{48 49}

During the 1970s, the church became the site of the desegregation movement occurring in the Portland public school system. In 1982, the church became the first site selected for mass meetings of the Black United Front organization. This organization's local mission was to confront Portland Public school issues of racial discrimination, or the *de facto* segregation that continued to persist in the city, as well as bussing, and the need for proper educational facilities in the city for African Americans.^{50 51}

In 1975, the church hosted a series of public forums discussing transportation needs and issues among disabled citizens with respect to Trimet's proposed new role in providing public transportation services for the physically challenged. In May 1976, when California Governor Jerry Brown was running for president, he

⁴⁴ "Portlanders Join Rights March," *Oregonian*, September 23, 1963.

⁴⁵ "Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Visit Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church," *The Observer*, 1963.

⁴⁶ "Negro Leader Attack Portland Public Schools," September 26, 1964.

⁴⁷ "Black, White, walk together in Portland Tribute to King," April 8, 1968.

⁴⁸ "Harvest-Greenfinger Project," *Oregonian*, September 3, 1976.

⁴⁹ "Gardeners Share Harvest Recipes," *Oregonian*, September 14, 1977.

⁵⁰ Alan K. Ota, "NAACP backs boycott of schools by blacks," *Oregonian*, August 9, 1979.

⁵¹ The Black United Front of Portland was a branch organization of a national group founded and based in Chicago, Illinois, that pressed a civil rights agenda during the 1980s. The Black United Front took on local issues, like school desegregation and police brutality, as well as global ones like the fight against apartheid in South Africa.

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chose the church as his community stop and spoke at the church during the presidential primaries.⁵² In 1978, the Reverend Benjamin Hooks, then President of the national body of the NAACP and a prominent Civil Rights leader, addressed a captivated congregation and conventioners during the 69th Annual National Convention of the NAACP, which was held in Portland.⁵³ In 1983, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, in his first time to Portland, spoke to some 200 persons at a political campaign rally at the church.⁵⁴ Also during the 1980s, national Civil Right figure and pastor of the West Hunter Street Baptist Church in Atlanta, the Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy (who was a close friend of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Reverend Williams), addressed the congregation on July 5th, 1987.⁵⁵

In November 1982, the *Oregonian* cited the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church as one of the “city’s enduring community institutions.”⁵⁶ In 2009, the Oregon Historical Society honored the vast achievements of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church with a special exhibit entitled “A Heartfelt Welcome: The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection.” In November 2014, the Skanner Foundation held its premiere of *The Wake of Vanport* at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. The many survivors of the 1948 Vanport flood came to view the film and to share their experiences. Survivors and elders gathered together in the church basement to share their community story; this moment became historic in its own right.⁵⁷ Also in 2014, the church was featured in a local documentary, *Lift Ev’ry Voice*, during its 70th Diamond Anniversary Celebration filmed as part of Oregon Public Broadcasting’s Oregon Experience programming.

The Albina Neighborhood Today

At present, two properties in the Albina neighborhood are listed in the National Register, the Otto and Verdell Rutherford House and the Rinehart Building. Otto and Verdell Rutherford were important figures in Portland’s Civil Rights movement, and lived in the Eliot neighborhood of Albina. The Rinehart Building is significant as a former African American social club in Albina, as well as an entertainment venue. In addition to the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, one additional significant building remains in use that reflects Albina’s ethnic and social history, the Colored YMCA building, now home to the Billy Webb Elks Lodge #1050.⁵⁸

Historic African American churches that once flourished in the neighborhood have all but vanished from the lower Albina landscape. This includes the influential Bethel AME Church, which was forced to sell its historic building to make way for the construction of Memorial Coliseum in 1958. Other African American churches removed from the Albina area include the historic Mount Olivet Baptist Church, which relocated to the St. Johns district in 1993. The Morning Star Baptist Church, which started in the post-war era, lost its historic building to a massive fire in 2007 and was forced to move from the Albina community.⁵⁹ Churches that could no longer survive in ever-changing Albina eventually became defunct, due in large part to changing demographics and the corresponding lack of support. They include the St. Mark Baptist Church, Zion Hill Church of God in Christ, and the St. Paul Church of God in Christ.

Presently, gentrification has brought a steady wave of new urban development into the Albina neighborhood. The area has lost many historic African American structures and has undergone extensive redevelopment that has caused the number of African Americans living in the inner city to dwindle. Many black-owned businesses and churches that formerly thrived in Albina have been replaced by upscale restaurants and high-end, high-rise condominiums and flats. An influx of trendy businesses, like coffee shops, clothing stores, and cafes, has located on Alberta Street, an upscale redevelopment area in inner Northeast Portland that has extended into

⁵² “Youth Supporter,” *Oregonian*, May 24, 1976.

⁵³ “NAACP,” Rutherford Collection. Vertical File, Portland State University.

⁵⁴ “Jackson Event draws 200,” *Oregonian*, December 4, 1983.

⁵⁵ “Worshipful Celebration,” *Oregonian*, July 4, 1987.

⁵⁶ *Oregonian*, November 16, 1982.

⁵⁷ “The Wake of Vanport, Oral Stories,” *The Skanner*, October 27, 2014.

⁵⁸ Oregon Historic Sites Database, <http://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/>, accessed April 2016.

⁵⁹ The Trinity Lutheran Church building was purchased by the Morning Star Baptist Church in 1959. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

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Albina. As the Albina neighborhood has redeveloped, a large percentage of its long-time population has moved away, into Portland's hinterlands. While some of Portland's African American population has scattered in the residential areas of Vancouver, Beaverton, St. Johns, and Hillsboro, most have moved east of NE 82nd Avenue, to the region colloquially known as "The Numbers."⁶⁰ The black population in the Numbers alone grew 151% between 1990 and 2010, and the number of subsidized renters more than doubled in some areas. As a community church, the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church remains one of the last vestiges of the post-war community that flourished during the late 1940s and in subsequent years.

Postscript

From the 1900s until the 1990s, the majority of Portland's African American population lived in a little cluster of North and Northeast neighborhoods, once part of the separate nineteenth-century town of Albina. In this tight-knit urban pocket, businesses, restaurants, schools, social clubs, and churches thrived by serving one of the nation's smallest urban black communities. Although it had its troubles through the years, Albina was nonetheless a vibrant community with a cohesive identity. Over the past two decades, the gentrification of inner North and Northeast has displaced much of this community and has altered the recognizable elements of a once thriving ethnic community. Urban renewal policies and the trend for inner-urban living have brought new residents—mostly white and Hispanic—into Portland's historically black neighborhoods.

The PDC has played a critical role in shaping North and Northeast Portland. With more city-owned land remaining that is ear-marked for redevelopment, the agency will continue to redevelop in the area that fully encroaches on the landscape of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. The 2010 census revealed that 7,700 African Americans moved out of inner North and Northeast Portland in the preceding decade.⁶¹ While a considerable black population remains in the area - particularly in the Boise, Humboldt, and King neighborhoods where as much as 25% of the population is African American - it is rapidly fragmenting.

The church, however, continues in its core missions. In 2009, Reverend J.W. Matt Hennessee inaugurated a scholarship fund, known as the Drum Major event, which has awarded over 200 academic scholarships to deserving North Portland students. Currently, the church remains under the ministerial leadership of the Reverend Hennessee, who was installed on May 25, 2005 and has led the church into the twenty-first century with renewed purpose and prosperity. Reverend Hennessee is noted for boldly instituting changes to place Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church at the vanguard of community churches, and to position the church on firm financial footing, to increase membership, and to plan for architectural improvements.

Like his predecessors, Reverend Hennessee continues to promote Vancouver Avenue's dedication to religious, educational, and residential area development. A native of Columbus, Ohio, Reverend Hennessee furthers the church's mission towards increased programs for economic growth, sustainability, and social activism. Throughout its existence in Oregon, the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church has officiated over 2,000 weddings and 5,000 final burial rites of African Americans in Portland. In total, five ministers have served the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. It has acted as an epicenter of the community, grown social capital, and fostered pivotal political change. In other words, this site remains the heart of the black community in Portland.

Senior Pastors:

Reverend James William Brown	1944-1945
Dr. Reverend O.B. Williams	1945-1993
Reverend Amzie Bailey (Interim: 1993-1994)	1994-2001
Reverend Eddie Young (Interim: 2001-2005)	2001-2005
Pastor J.W. Matt Hennessee	2005- Present

⁶⁰ Paul Knauls, Oregon Public Broadcasting Documentary.

⁶¹ Federal Population Census Data, 2010.

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The African American Church in Portland, Oregon

African American churches in Portland continued to play a crucial role in African American life in the post-World War II era, when new churches were established to serve the expanded post-war community. Many churches, both old and new, acted as a major force in advocating for social, political, economic, and educational rights. In addition to being a spiritual center, African American churches provided religious education, social services, education on social hygiene, tuberculosis prevention programs, dramatics, entertainments, choral work, church dinners, teas, birthday parties, house parties, concerts, picnics, and hiking parties.

At mid-century, churches relocated as their members were dislocated, gradually concentrating in the Albina neighborhoods. They often relocated into church buildings constructed by earlier European immigrant congregations who later moved on from Albina. Wartime-era African Americans were initially viewed with dismay by the members of Portland's established black community. In many cases, the two groups had little in common other than their racial identity. African Americans that had made Portland their home prior to World War II were fearful that the modest gains they had long worked towards would be eliminated, and that white Oregonians would react forcefully by initiating more restrictive racist legislation. The new blacks represented a wider cross section of Americans than was previously evident in Portland. They included some well-educated blacks from the Midwest and East, as well as rural southern blacks who were unaccustomed to city ways and had never voted. Despite the mixed feelings that the black community may have had, they quickly recognized that an increase in the African American population in Portland represented potential enhancement of their political clout.

Before World War II, Portland had three primary African American religious denominations. The first on the scene was the First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, a ministry established in 1883. This church grew out of the "People's Church", a ministry planted in early Portland in 1862 as an independent organization of the African Zionist movement in the home of Mary H. Carr. The second identified ministry in Portland was the Bethel African Methodist Church, organized in 1889 by the national AME movement. The third African American ministry in the city was the Mount Olivet Baptist Church, formally revived in 1900 from an earlier African American Baptist Congregation known as the First African Baptist Church, organized in 1897 near Portland's Union Station, a church pastored by the Reverend Robert Jennison. The congregation of Mount Olivet Baptist Church consisted primarily of upper-class African Americans and, unlike many African American churches that formed during the war years and subsequently, its services were traditional, with an absence of shouting or other emotional aspects of religion.⁶²

Many adherents of these three primary churches were initially critical of the vast numbers of wartime African Americans arriving in Portland. Membership of these three main churches by the war years was predominantly older, traditional, and more established. All three primary African-American congregations held structured services and policies linked to national denomination affiliations. Each of these churches individually maintained, on average, a membership base of 165 to 225 active members, both before the war and after. Those making up this earlier religious establishment were quick to denounce the arriving immigrant young adults of the wartime era and the years that followed. New opportunities to advance were opening up for the younger generation. In the religious sphere, this meant that mainline Protestantism no longer represented all the spiritual interests of a new generation. African Americans during the wartime and the baby boom era brought new spiritual practices and new kinds of leaders and devotees in an urban context. In many respects, there was a generational divide.

⁶² A second minor African American Baptist Church, the Mount Carmel Baptist Church, existed in the early twentieth century in Portland. The Reverend Thomas F. Smith served as a pastor but did not continue for any considerable length of time. In 1915, another minor church, the Shiloh Baptist Church, was planted from a Sunday school ministry in the Montavilla farming area of Portland. In 1923, the Independent Baptist Church emerged briefly, but merged with the Mount Olivet Baptist Church when their pastor, Emanuel C. Dyer, became the leader of the church.

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Post-war churches like Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church therefore thrived in the post-war era, as they fostered a new, progressive movement toward spiritual involvement and social change. The African American church that emerged in Portland in the post-war period was one of the few establishments that had access to large numbers of younger and more progressive-minded African Americans with greater independence from white mainstream influence. Post-war churches like Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church were successful because of their larger base of younger constituents, a group willing to call for social change for themselves and their children.

The African American influx of the wartime period greatly expanded the activities of the African American Baptist faith in Portland and vicinity. Some of the black Baptist ministers who arrived in this wartime migration cooperated with the United Church Ministry Defense Communities. Among these were H.C. Chatham and Booker T. Carey in Vanport City (Carey officiated over the pastoral installation of Reverend O. B. Williams in 1945), and ministers M.C. Cheek and George W. Brown in Guild's Lakes. Post-war congregations that emerged were self-governing congregations; their pastors played a much more commanding role in directing their congregations than was true for other denominations. It was not long before African American Baptists began to form congregations among the new arrivals. In the early 1940s, the Reverend Robert H. Anderson formed the Vanport Baptist Church, which has since disbanded. In 1946, black Baptists organized another congregation in Vanport City, the Union Baptist Church, but when flood waters destroyed the city in 1948, the church moved to Portland. During the pastorate of Clem C. Thompson, the Union Baptist Church received recognition from the European organization of the Willamette Baptist Association and the Oregon Baptist State Convention and became a member of both bodies in November 1949

Until the beginning of World War II, African American Methodists led black Baptist churches in congregants, but African American Baptists became the leading denomination in Oregon in the post-war era. One reason for the spike in Baptist growth was that many of the young African American settlers were of the Baptist faith before they came to the Pacific Northwest. Likewise, blacks who came to Oregon were generally from the lower stations in life, and the Baptist churches with their comparatively uneducated ministers and more emotional preaching were better able to attract them than the Methodist churches, which had better-educated ministers and whose services were more formal in ritual. In *Baptist in Oregon*, author Albert W. Warden, Jr., recounts that the only denomination displaying signs of active development in the 1940s and 1950s in Portland was the African American Baptist movement. The baby boom (those born between 1946 and 1965) had begun, and parents of the first baby boomers moved into the inner city and filled the pews, establishing church and family as the twin pillars of security and respectability.

Religious membership, church funding, institutional building, and traditional faith and practice all increased in the 1950s. In the late 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, the black church functioned as the institutional center for black mobilization. It provided an organizational base and meeting place for African Americans to develop strategies in their on-going fight against racial segregation and oppression. The black church's social protest legacy, along with its traditional community outreach programs, was well received in post-war Portland, a position that carried over into the Civil Rights era. No longer legally required to maintain white supervision, many churches of the period split from white southern Christian denominations and established alliances with other independent black congregations.⁶³ As many as 80% of African Americans went to a church in post-war Portland, most of them identifying as a Baptist.

By 1962, Portland had fourteen active African American Baptist churches, with a total membership of 3,180. They were all located in the Albina neighborhood. The largest congregation was the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, which under the leadership of Reverend O.B. Williams had grown to 1,500 active members. Another post-war African-American congregation of significance that emerged in Vancouver, Washington in 1946, and relocated to Portland in 1957 with a sizable active membership of 250 by 1962, was the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, led by the Reverend Andrew A. Newton. The smallest of the churches were El Missionary Baptist Church with eight members and the New Light Baptist Church with seven members.

⁶³ At one time, Methodist and Baptist churches were governed by white executive boards.

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The Baptist church, especially within the urban context, tended to be the dominant forum for religious and social expression. The church became the one constant in the transition from the rural South to the urban northwest. The church of the post-war period in Portland observed and preserved the customs and the traditions of the homeland. It provided a network that enabled a younger and more vibrant community base to access educational, economic, and political opportunities. The black church in Portland was the primary forum for the dissemination of information to the community and it shaped public opinion. Black people in Portland also supported the autonomy of their congregations to make decisions independent of a larger church body. Today, the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, as an independent church body, remains the oldest, post-war African-American congregation still extant in the Albina neighborhood. Its church building is the last of the early twentieth century churches that was taken over by African Americans as Albina transitioned to a black community and the earlier European-immigrant-based population moved on. Its presence, still very much evident, is a reminder of this important era in the social and ethnic history of Portland, and is a testament to its founder and long-time leader, Reverend O.B. Williams.

CONCLUSION

Criterion A

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage/Black in Portland. It was and is integral with the history of African Americans in post-war Portland, beginning with the wartime migration of African American workers to the Kaiser Shipyards. African American migrant experiences in Oregon mirrored those of other west coast cities, which also attracted black workers from around the country, particularly from the South. An exception here was that African American Oregonians suffered the devastating results of the Vanport flood, which disproportionately affected them.

The new African Americans were also disproportionately affected by Portland's growing ability to sequester its African American population in the Albina neighborhood, an area of aging housing stock and an inadequate number of units to house the population, particularly after public housing in Vanport, Guild's Lake, Burton Homes, and Bagley Downs was no longer available. Discriminatory policies in Oregon were well established, beginning 100 years earlier with Oregon's exclusion laws and continuing into the twentieth century with official redlining policies. As a result, the social support and political activism fostered by the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church became particularly important.

African American communities in other cities throughout the United States, particularly west coast cities, also experienced the impacts of urban renewal and the design of the interstate highway system in the 1950s and 1960s. Portland's Albina neighborhood, however, appeared to suffer even more than other major cities, with the construction of Memorial Coliseum and the expansion of Emanuel Hospital (which is in the church's "front yard"), orchestrated by the PDC; and construction of Interstate 5, which displaced yet again more residents and businesses.

Impacts to the community continue as gentrification further fragments the neighborhood. Today the church is no longer local, but rather has a regional presence due to the scattering of its congregation and the larger reputation of the church itself. The church, which garnered state-wide recognition of its influence with the memorial service for the fallen Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., continues its mission today. The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church is an excellent and rare reflection of Portland's African American history in post-war Portland.

Criterion B

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church is significant under Criterion B for its association with Dr. Reverend Oliver Booker Williams and his wife Willia. The significance of Reverend O.B. Williams is well established. It was his vision and leadership that established the church – both the congregation and the enlarged building – and molded the church into an outstanding institution that closely aligned its interests with those of its constituency. Further, the Williams's extensive social, religious, and political network was critical in

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attracting local and national attention to the Oregon's African American community, which spent many years fighting for the legislation necessary to guarantee equality.

The church is the building most closely associated with Williams' career. Additionally, the Williams lived in the parsonage, which is connected to the church, throughout the Period of Significance for the church nomination, until they moved away in 1969. Before moving into the official church parsonage at 32 North Fargo Street in 1951 (which would become 3132 North Vancouver Avenue when the parsonage was moved), Reverend and Mrs. O.B. Williams resided at 2821 North Vancouver Avenue. The Williams's lived in the parsonage for some eighteen years. The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church and integrated parsonage remains the building most closely associated with Reverend Williams' influential career.

State-wide Significance

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church is significant at the state level for its importance as a locus for the Civil Rights movement in Oregon. The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church was a center of activism in this era. It was where dignitaries from around the state and the country came to attend or participate in landmark events, to speak to the broadest possible audience, to celebrate victories, and to regroup after setbacks. The era in which the church achieved its larger prominence began in spring of 1952, when Leslie B. Granger, president of the national Urban League organization, and Gloster B. Current, director of the NAACP Branches, spoke at the church, the latter on Civil Rights and the presidential election. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, national, regional and local visitors to the church spoke on civil rights, integration, race relations and youth, and urban renewal. Organizations that were represented include the national and Washington DC branch of the NAACP, the national Urban League organization, members of the national Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, presidential candidates, state senators, local elected officials, and the Albina Neighborhood Council. High points in church history include participation in a NAACP public rally in 1957 by Senators Mark Hatfield and Monroe Sweetland; a sermon delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1961, in his only visit to Portland; and Roy Wilkins, national president of the NAACP, speaking on civil rights in 1964. This period of intense political activism culminated with the memorial service for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which was attended by Oregon Governor Tom McCall, Senator Mark O. Hatfield, and Portland Mayor Terry D. Schrunk, among others. The on-going importance of the church is demonstrated by visits by California Governor Jerry Brown, when he was running for president in 1976; Reverend Jessie Jackson, when he was running for president in 1986; Dr. Reverend Ralph Abernathy, in 1986; and Reverend Bernice King, in 2015.

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- *Pacific Advocate*
- *Portland Tribune*
- *The Skanner*

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>45.5456490</u>	<u>-122.6677530</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary encompasses Lot 7, Block 2 of the Williams Avenue Addition, plus the north 60' of Lots 10 and 11, addressed as 3138 N. Vancouver Avenue. It is adjacent to and joined with the related residence at 3132 N. Vancouver Avenue, which is located at Block 2 of the Williams Avenue Addition, plus the south 40' of Lots 10 and 11.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary, which comprises two urban lots, are the lots occupied by the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church and additions to the building, which are joined with the main church through multiple interior and exterior access points.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Raymond Burell III date 2/4/2016
organization Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church telephone 503-593-5285
street & number 3138 North Vancouver Avenue email raymondburell@hotmail.com
city or town Portland state OR zip code 97227

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Regional Location Map**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Tax Lot Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

Property name
County: OR

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church
City or Vicinity: Portland
County: Multnomah **State:** Oregon
Photographer: Diana J. Painter
Date Photographed: March 10, 2016; April 6, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0001
North side and west (front) and north facades, looking southeast
- Photo 2 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0002
West (front) façade, looking east
- Photo 3 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0003
West (front) façade of parsonage, looking east
- Photo 4 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0004
North side façade, looking southwest, ADA elevator on left
- Photo 5 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0005
East (rear) façade, looking west
- Photo 6 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0006
Space between parsonage and church, looking west
- Photo 7 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0007
Funeral procession ramp, looking east at back of office
- Photo 8 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0008
Funeral procession ramp, looking west; south wall of parsonage to right
- Photo 9 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0009
View of sanctuary from mezzanine, looking east at pulpit
- Photo 10 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0010
View of sanctuary and mezzanine, looking northwest
- Photo 11 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0011
View of pulpit, looking northeast
- Photo 12 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0012
View of choir and curtain over baptismal, looking north
- Photo 13 of 21:** OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0013

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View of original stair from main entry hall to pastor's study

Photo 14 of 21: OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0014
Povey window on south side of sanctuary

Photo 15 of 21: OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0015
Detail of Povey window showing original church

Photo 16 of 21: OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0016
Original carved pew, on mezzanine

Photo 17 of 21: OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0017
View of assembly hall and dining room, looking west

Photo 18 of 21: OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0018
Main entry stair and hall in parsonage

Photo 19 of 21: OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0019
Bay window in dining room of parsonage, looking north at church

Photo 20 of 21: OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0020
Pastor's study in 1973 addition, looking south

Photo 21 of 21: OR_MultnomahCo_VancouverAveFirstBaptistChurch_0021
Typical redevelopment occurring in neighborhood, church on left, looking north

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church
Name of Property
Multnomah, OR
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 1

List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.)

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Figure 2: Local location map

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Figure 44: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speaks at Church, 1961

Figure 45: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Reverend O. B. Williams at Vancouver Avenue

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

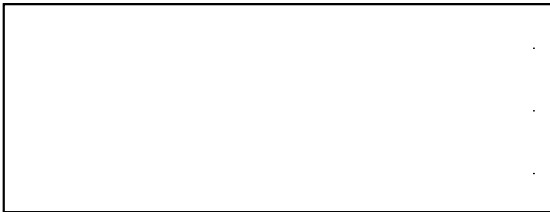
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Figure 72: Bernice King addresses Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 2015

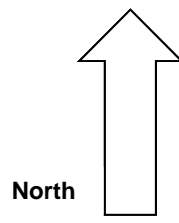
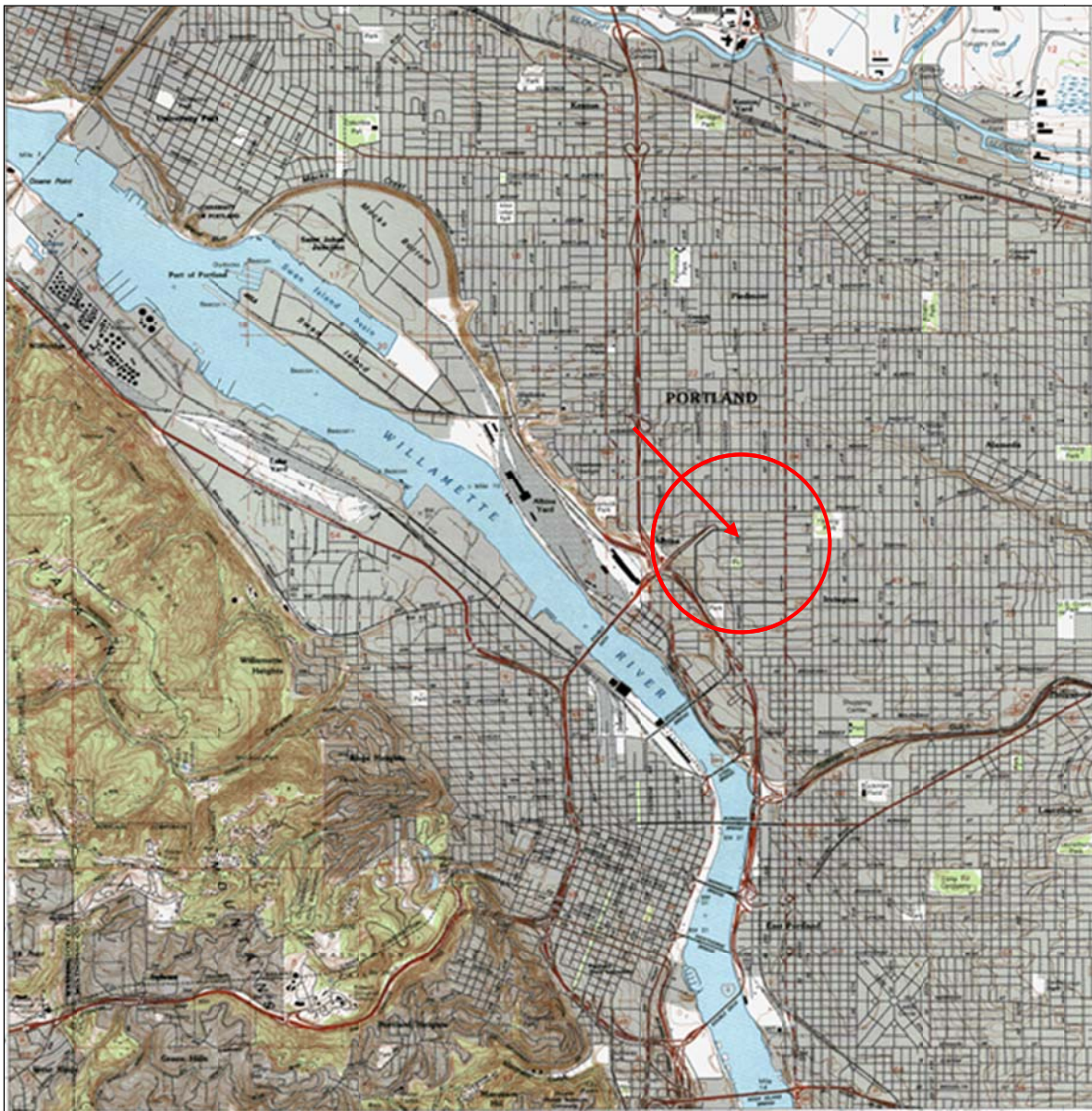
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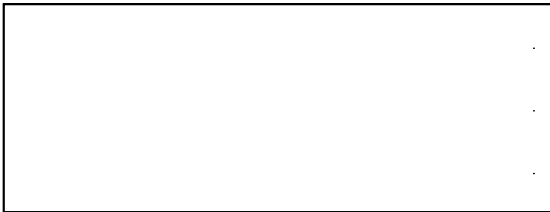
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Figure 1: Regional location map



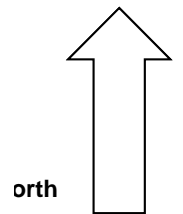
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Figure 2: Local location map

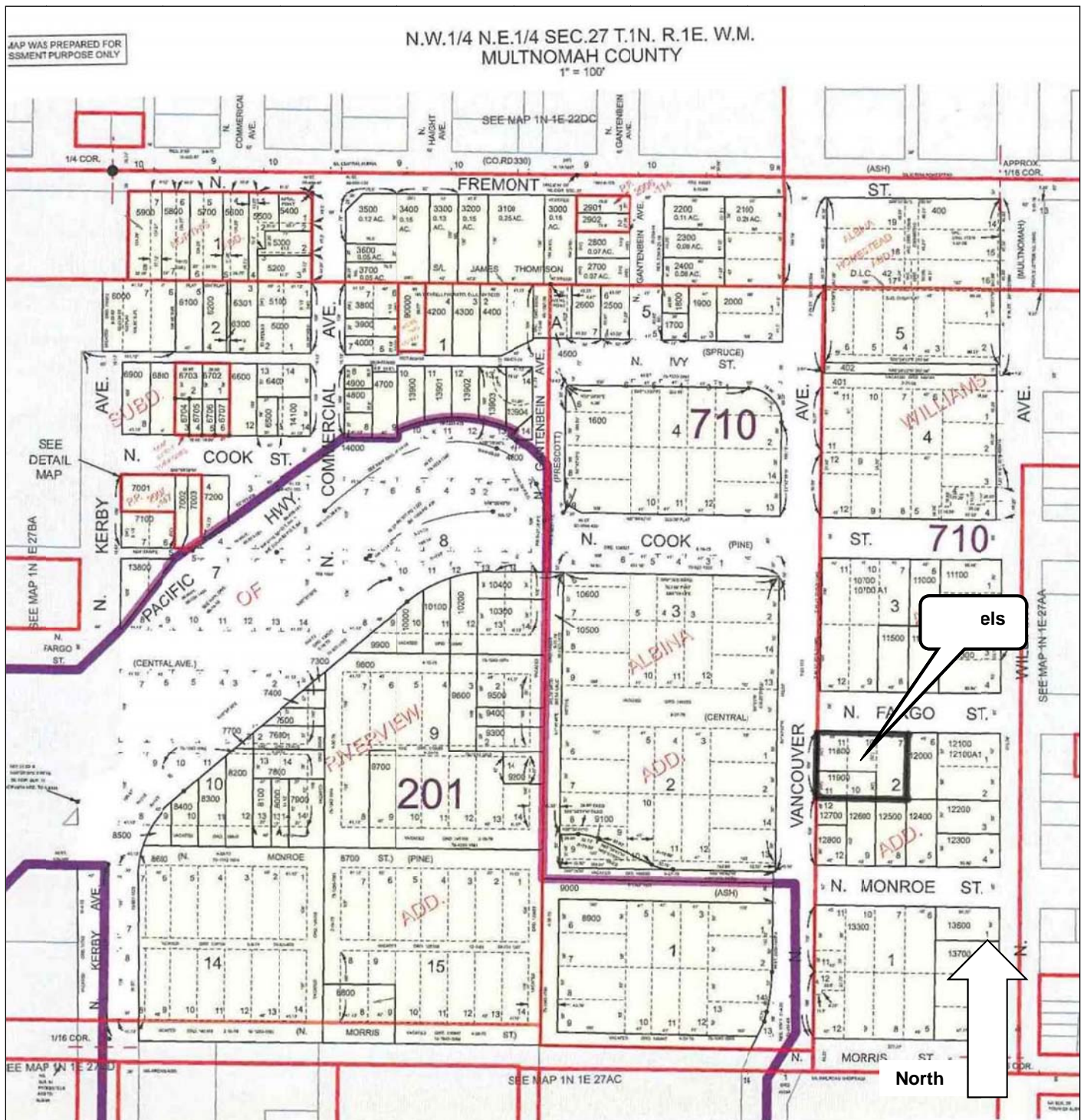


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Figure 3: Tax lot map



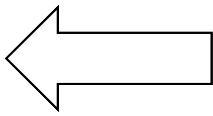
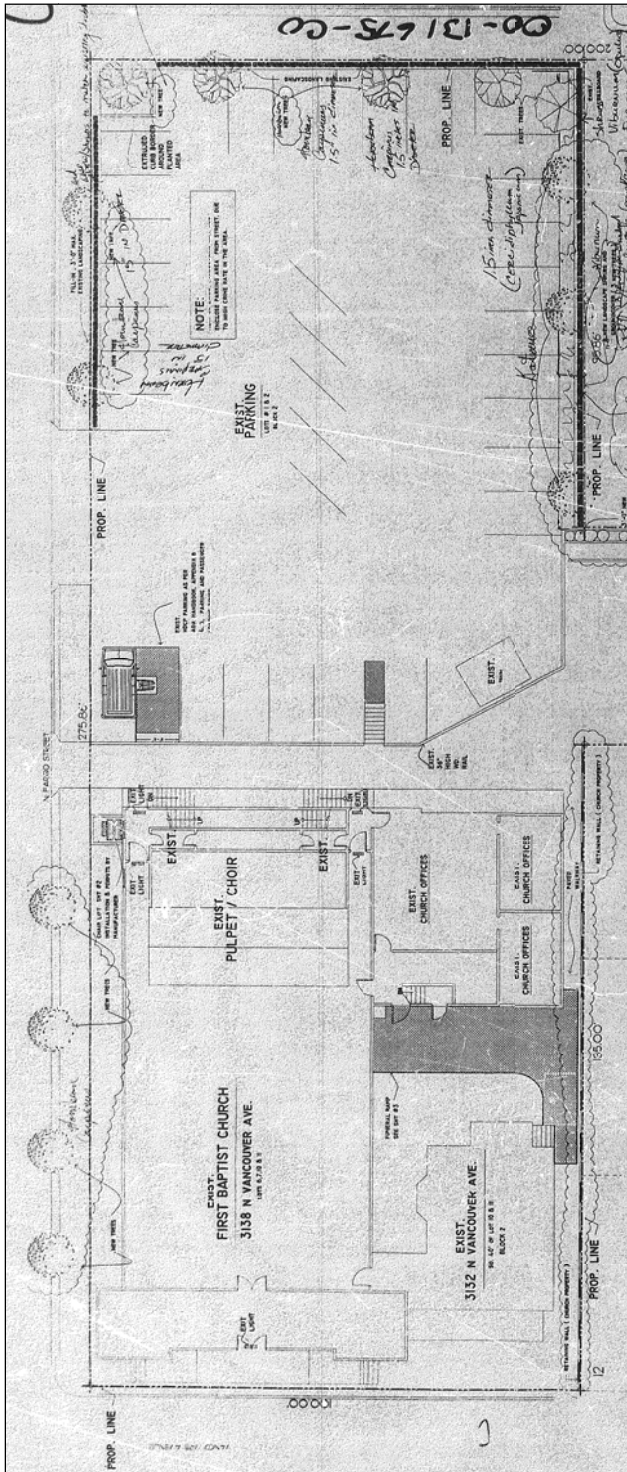
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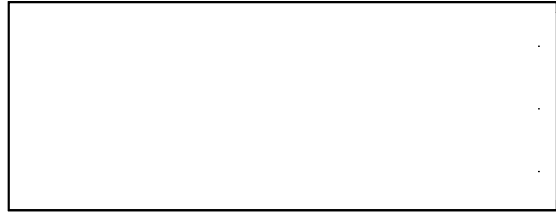
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Figure 4: Site plan, 1973



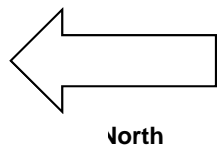
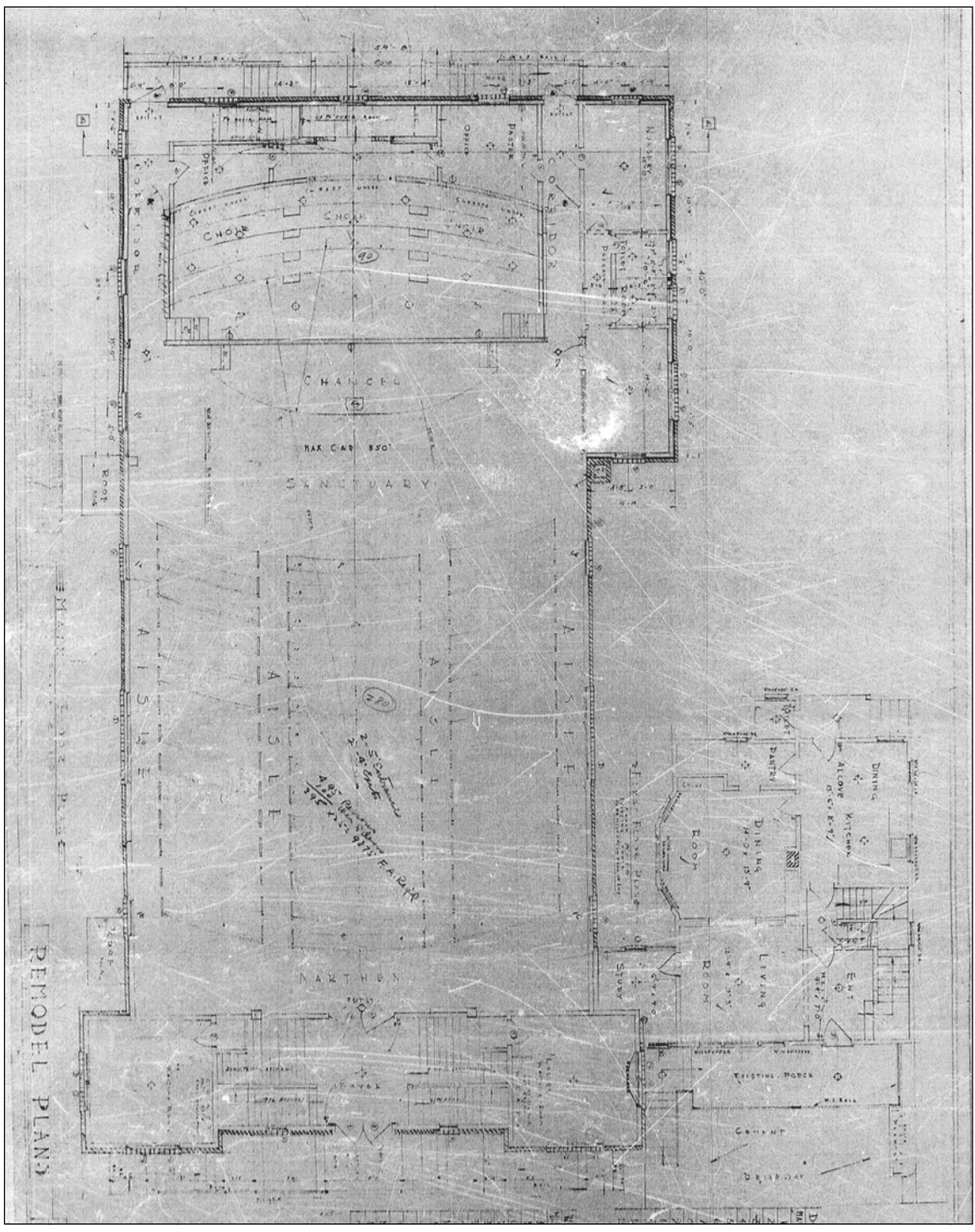
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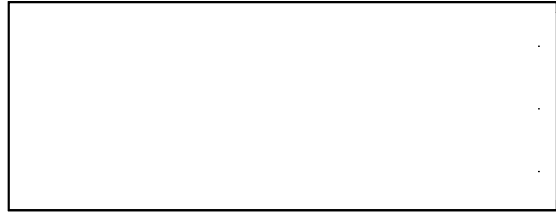
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Figure 5: Main floor plan, church and parsonage, 1954



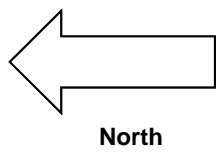
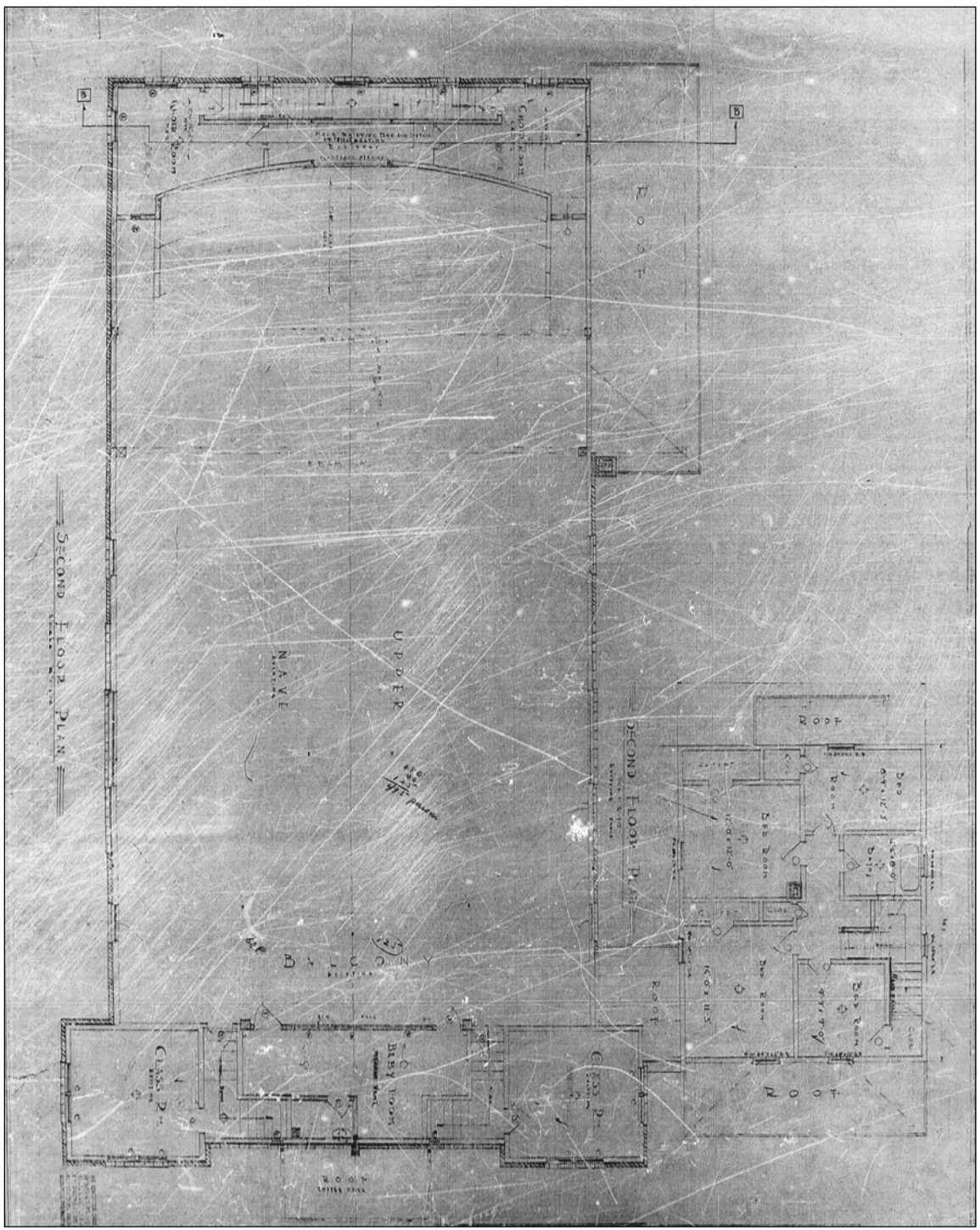
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Figure 6: Mezzanine level plan, church; second floor, parsonage, 1954



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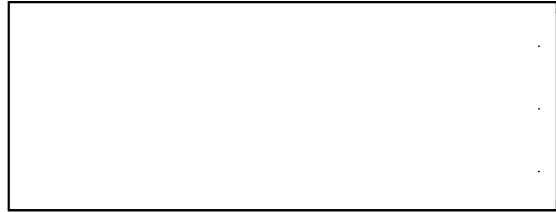
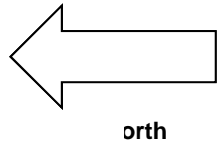
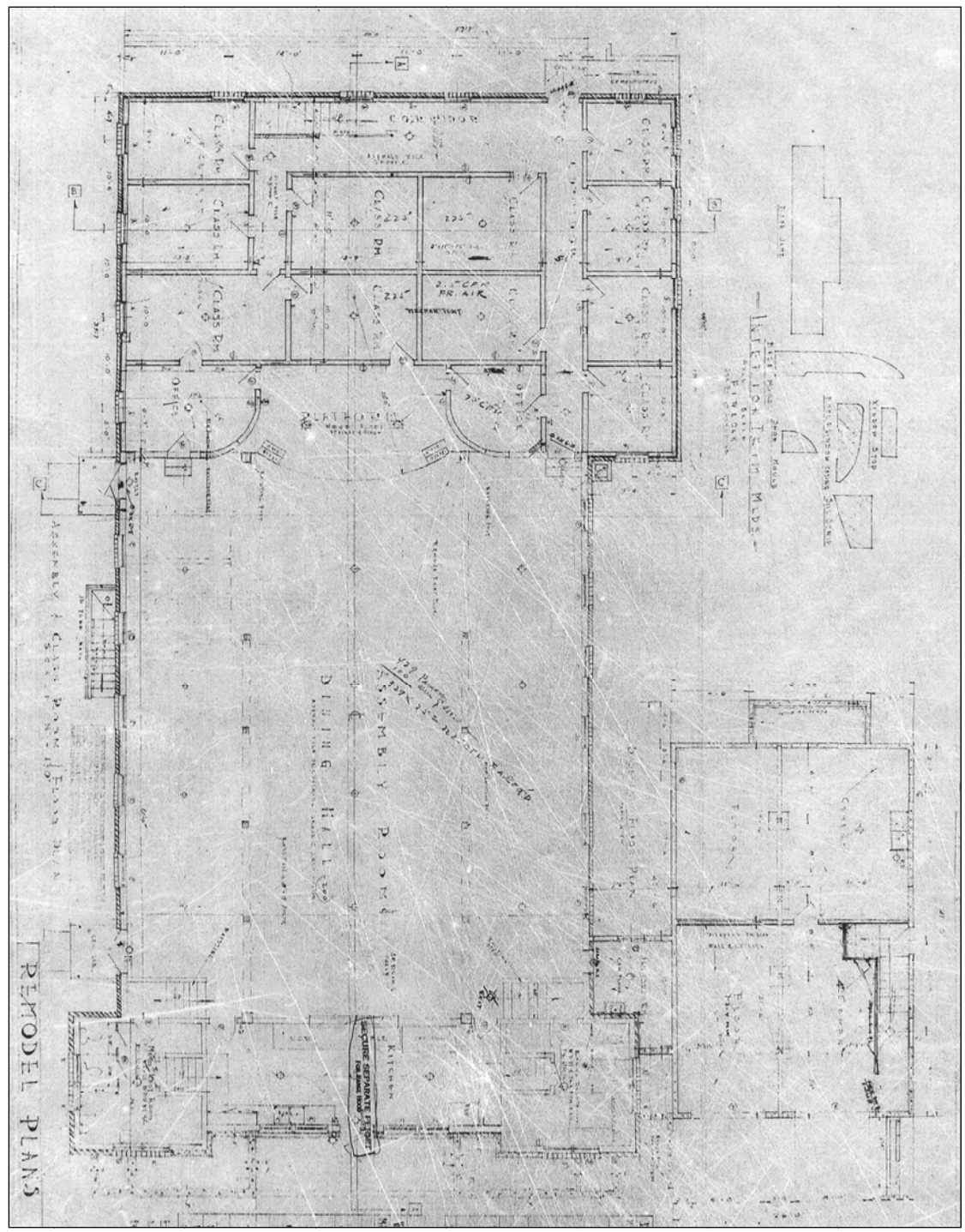


Figure 7: Basement plan, church, 1954

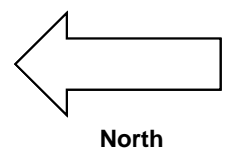
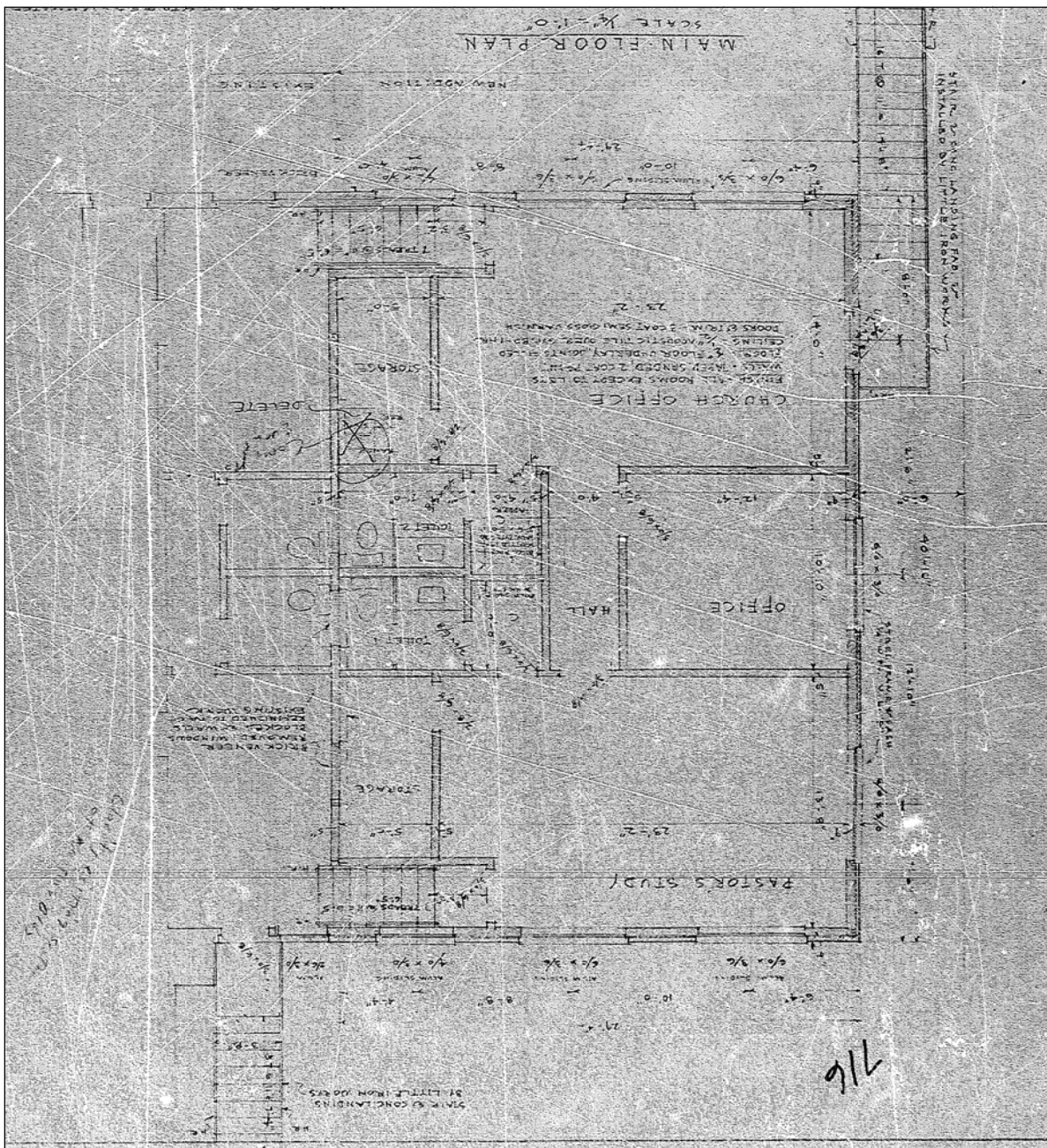


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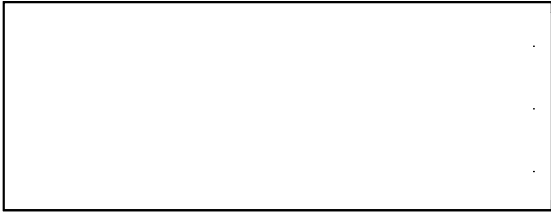
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Figure 8: Main floor plan, office, 1954



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Figure 9: Photograph of Church, 1909

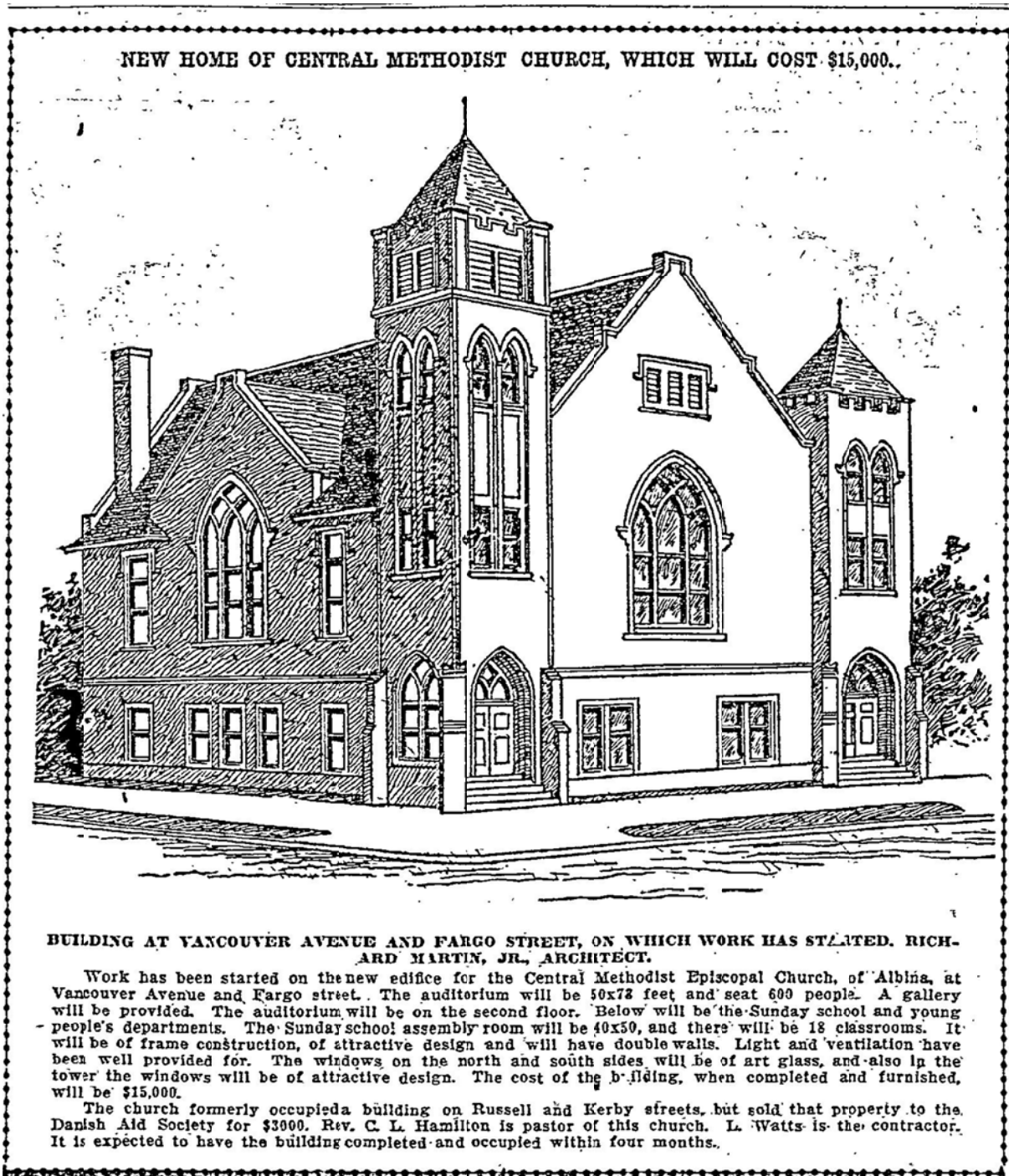


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Figure 10: Oregonian Citation of Construction of Central Methodist Church, 1909



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Figure 11: Architect Richard H. Martin Jr.



Source: Oregon Historical Society

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Figure 12: Construction of Church, 1909



Source: March 1909, Pacific Advocate Methodist Newspaper

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Figure 13: Central Methodist Episcopal Church, 1935



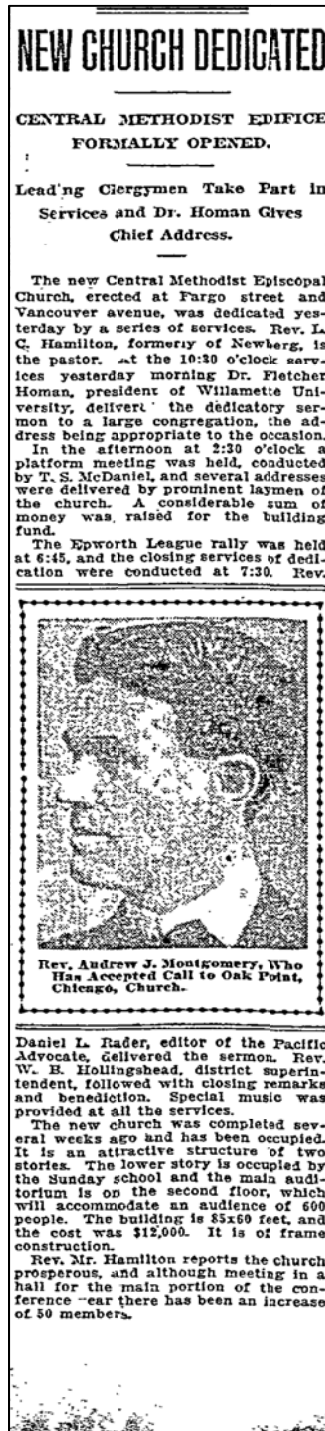
Source: Oregon Methodist Conference Newsletter

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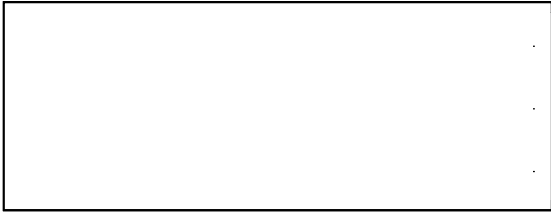
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Figure 14: Newspaper Citation of Central Methodist Church's Formal Opening



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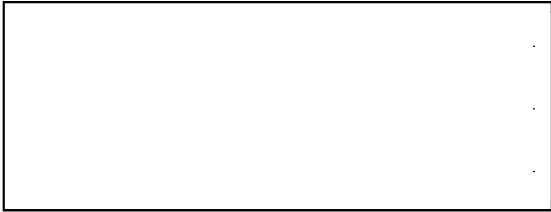
**Figure 15: Photograph of the First Baptist Church of Burton Homes, Vancouver, Washington
Sunday School, November 1944**



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Private Collection

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Figure 16: Photograph of Burton Homes Housing Project, Vancouver, Washington, 1944



Source: Vancouver, Washington Housing Authority

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Figure 17: Newspaper Citation, New Congregation Incorporates as Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 1946

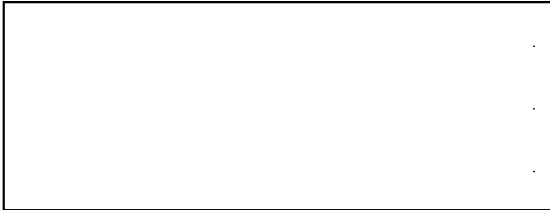
New Church Plan Of Congregation

A new congregation, incorporated as the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist church, has bought a building at Vancouver avenue and Hancock street, and will remodel it into a church home as soon as money and materials permit.

The project was reported by Rev. O. B. Williams, former minister in the Bagley Downs housing project at Vancouver, Wash. The new congregation is currently meeting twice each Sunday in the Masonic lodge rooms at 116 N. E. Russell street, and last Sunday raised \$450 toward its projected remodeling job.

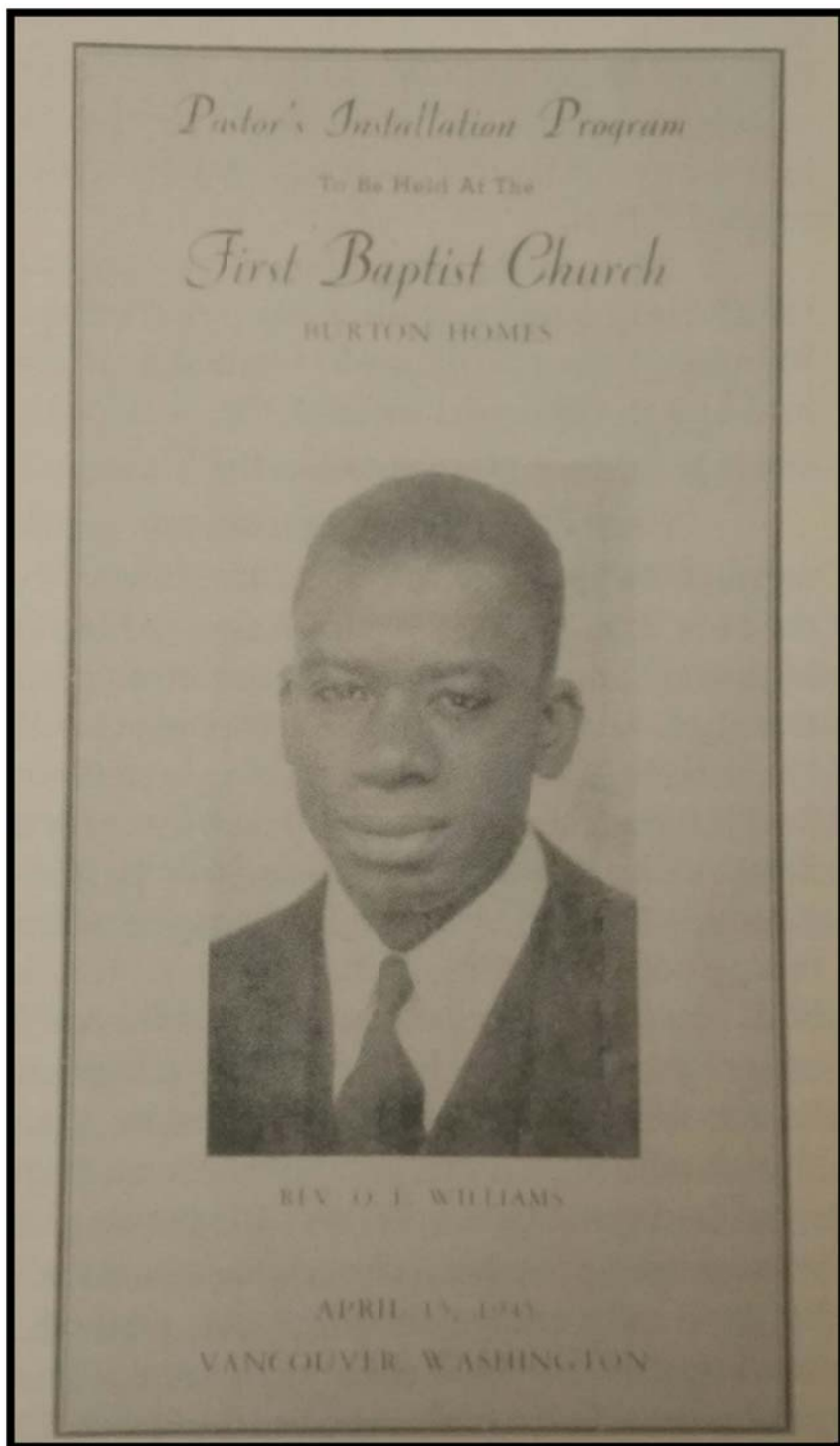
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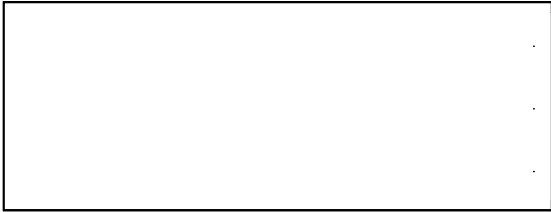
Figure 18: Reverend O.B. Williams Installation Program, Burton Homes, April 15, 1945



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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**Figure 19: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Photograph, 1947
1914 North Vancouver Avenue and Hancock Street Location**



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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Figure 20: Newspaper Citation of relocation to 1914 North Vancouver Avenue and Hancock Street

Services Planned In New Church

Congregation of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist church will hold first services in its new building at N. Vancouver avenue and Hancock street Sunday at 11 A. M., Rev. O. B. Williams, pastor, has announced.

Opening services will be preceded by a march from the former meeting place at Masonic hall, 116 N. E. Russell street. There will also be worship at 7:30 P. M.

The Vancouver avenue church was organized by Rev. Mr. Williams in August, 1946, from his former church in Vancouver, Wash. Membership since that time has grown from 75 to 200 and \$5000 has been raised with which residence property was remodeled into the present church building.

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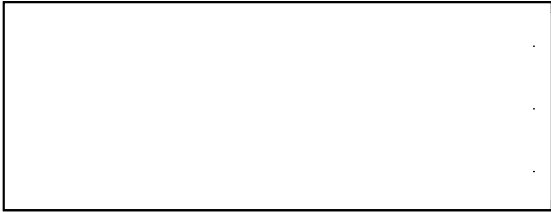
Figure 21: Photograph of Reverend O.B. Williams behind pulpit , 1948



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

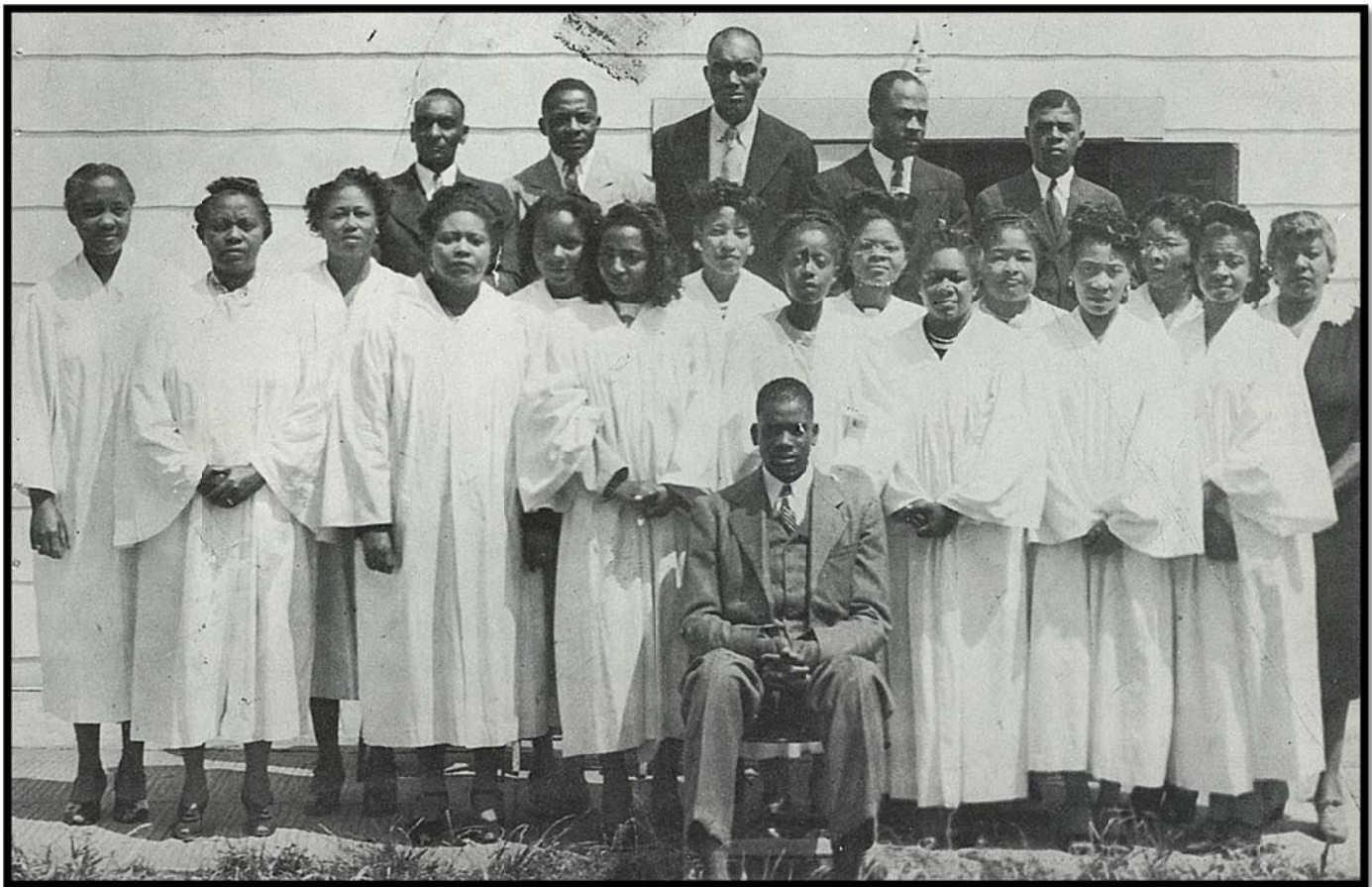
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Figure 22: Photograph of Senior Choir of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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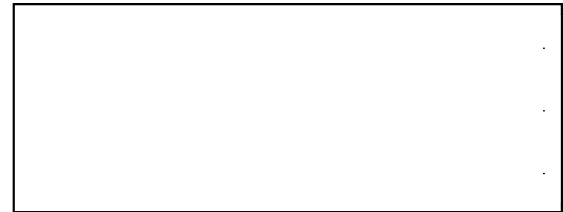
Figure 23: Photograph of Usher Board of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 1948



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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Figure 24: 1950 Photograph of Reverend and Mrs. O.B. Williams



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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Figure 25: Newspaper Citation of Relocation of Church

Palm Sunday Processional Moves Into New Church

At the conclusion of a Palm Sunday processional up N. Vancouver avenue from their old church, members of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist church are shown ready to march into their newly-purchased edifice (shown at far right).

While a loud speaker played "I Shall Be Free Some Day," more than 600 members of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist church moved in a slow Palm Sunday processional up N. Vancouver avenue Sunday from their old church to a newly purchased edifice.

The former church at 1914 N. Vancouver avenue seated about 250 persons, while the new church at N. Fargo street and Vancouver avenue, purchased from Central Methodist church, seats about 600.

The church members grouped themselves by church organizations for the processional, including the deacon board, trustee board, Sunday school, five choirs and other groups.

On arriving at the new church the marching members filed into the church to the music of "Onward Christian Soldiers" for first services and sermon by the pastor, Rev. O. B. Williams. Music was provided by the five choirs—senior, gospel, youth, junior and men's. The services were begun by the congregation singing "Holy, Holy, Holy."

At later services Sunday the history of the church was read by Roosevelt Rogers, trustee. A guest speaker, Portland Commissioner Fred L. Peterson, was introduced by Edwin C. Berry, executive secretary of the Urban league.

A united service and music festival was then presented with members of African Methodist

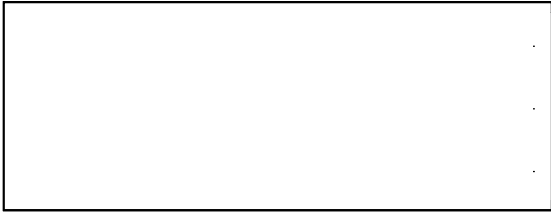
Episcopal Zion, Bethel Methodist Episcopal, Hughes Memorial Methodist, Mount Olivet Baptist, Allen Temple Colored Methodist Episcopal and the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist. Choirs of the congregations presented two songs each.

Vancouver Avenue First Baptist church was organized five years ago. It has more than 600 members.

The pastor, Rev. O. B. Williams, gives first sermon in the new church. Members of five choirs provided service music.

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Figure 26: Photograph of Palm Sunday Procession up Vancouver Avenue, 1951



Source: Oregonian Newspaper Collection

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Figure 27: Newspaper Citation of Relocation, 1951



Processional Marks Move

March Scheduled To New Church

Members of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist church will march in processional Sunday morning from their old church, 1914 N. Vancouver avenue, to the newly purchased building at N. Vancouver and Fargo street. They will start their march at 10:30 a. m.

The sermon will be by the pastor, Rev. O. B. Williams, with music by the five choirs.

At 3:30 p. m. R. Rogers will give the history of the church, and Commissioner Fred L. Peterson will speak, following an introduction by Edwin C. Berry, executive secretary of the Urban league.

The 8 p. m. service will be a united one, with the congregations of A. M. E. Zion, Mt. Olivet Baptist, Bethel A. M. E. and other churches participating, and music by the various choirs.

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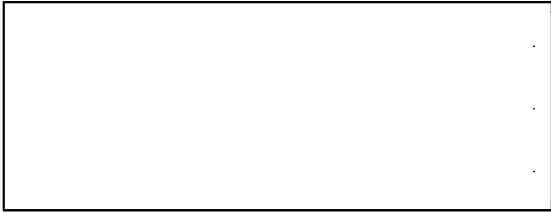
Figure 28: Photograph of Church Service, 1951



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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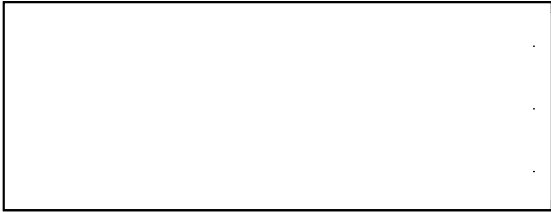
Figure 29: Photograph of Church Service, 1953



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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Figure 30: Newspaper Citation of renovated Church and Cornerstone Ceremony, 1958



Source: Oregonian Newspaper, March 1958

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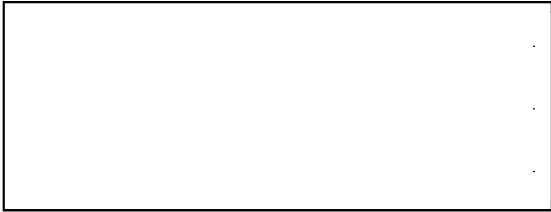
Figure 31: Newspaper Citation of Cornerstone Ceremony, 1958



Clarence Ivey, representing Most Worshipful Grand Master of California, officiated at cornerstone laying. From left is Ivey, the Rev O. B. Williams, pastor of church, and Dr. B. O. Byrd, speaker from Los Angeles. Church was organized in Burton Homes, Wash., in 1944.

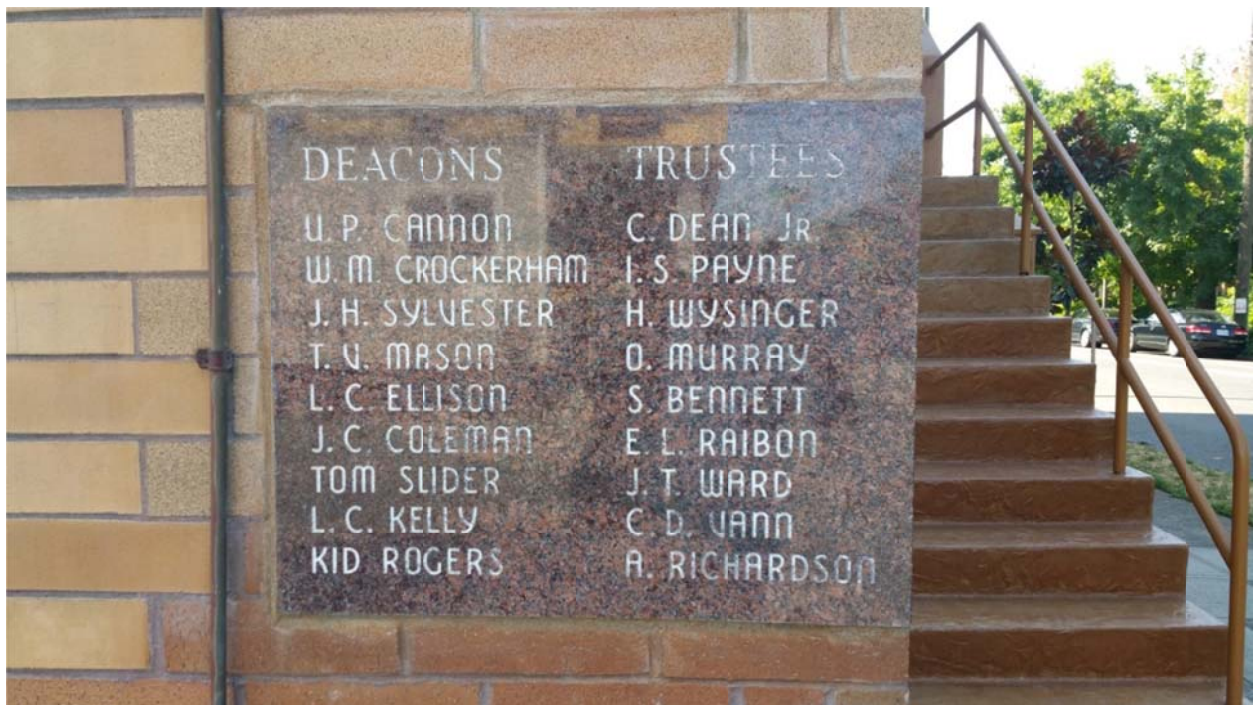
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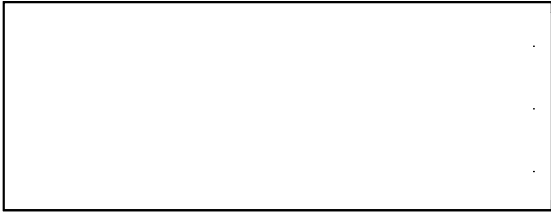
Figure 32: Photograph of Cornerstone of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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Figure 33: Photograph of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 1958



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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Figure 34: Photograph of Church Service, 1959



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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Figure 35: Newspaper citation of Negro Editor who spoke at Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church, 1956

Negro Editor Supports Early Start on Integration

BY FRED G. TAYLOR
Staff Writer, The Oregonian

"The only way to integrate is to integrate. The longer you stretch it out, the more ammunition you give the opposition. Everywhere the process has been started it has been accelerated and the people have taken pride in it."

This is the creed of Frank L. Stanley, editor of the trophy winning Negro weekly, the Louisville, Ky., Defender, and national president of Alpha Phi Alpha, the first college fraternity open to the Negro. This fraternity, founded at Cornell in 1906, has been one of the leaders in the battle for the rights of the Negro in the South.

Stanley is in Portland to attend a regional conference of the fraternity at Multnomah hotel over the week end. He worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott and has taken part in various court battles to get universities opened to Negro students.

Top Awards Won

His newspaper has won three top merit awards in publishers' contests and captured the John B. Russwurm trophy, named in honor of the first Negro journalist and founder of the Freedom Journal in New York in 1827. And to cap it off, he has a son, Frank L. Jr., who is a junior journalism major at the University of Illinois.

Stanley said he subscribed to the idea that "we have got to



FRANK L. STANLEY
Urges integration action

white women, during the bus boycott, drove to the homes of their domestics to take them to work. A large percentage of the white women are working women and there is a high percentage of Negro women employed as domestics in these homes, he said.

Stanley spoke Friday night at a public meeting at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist church on "Democracy Demanded." Previously he had been in a television panel with educators on the issue of desegregation in the schools.

Source: Oregonian Newspaper, July 7, 1956

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Figure 36: Newspaper Citation of Civil Rights Event held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church

Judge Sees Effort to Cut Out Heart Of Civil Rights Bill Via Amendment

Efforts to amend the civil rights legislation now pending in congress are designed to "defeat the very heart" of the proposals, according to Judge Carl R. Johnson, Kansas City, Mo. He was the principal speaker Sunday during a civil rights rally sponsored by the Portland branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Johnson is the first Negro elected to public office in Missouri. He spoke at a rally of about 700 persons who packed the Vancouver Avenue Baptist church to hear arguments in support of the civil rights legis-

lation now the object of much heated debate in the United States senate.

Judge Johnson was introduced at the rally by Mark O. Hatfield, Oregon secretary of state. Master of ceremonies was State Senator Monroe Sweetland.

Sweetland read telegrams of support for the rally from Oregon senators and congressmen, including Senator Wayne Morse, who voted not to send the civil rights proposals directly to the floor of congress.

Amendments Confer Power

Said Morse in his telegram, "The debate has proven that those who tried to short cut the judiciary committee made a great mistake." Representing Morse, Charles Brooks, his Oregon office manager, said Morse's position had been misunderstood "because of reporting in Oregon newspapers."

"We ought not to allow the reputation of our country to be dragged down at home and abroad because of a failure to protect the rights of all of our citizens," Judge Johnson said.

He said opponents of the legislation have declared that the attorney general "has no right" to enforce such proposals. Declared the judge, "If it is not the right of the government of the United States to guarantee our freedom, whose responsibility is it?"

He pointed out that the 14th and 15th amendments to the constitution said congress should have the power to implement them with appropriate legislation, but "nothing has been done to implement them."

only argument the right to vote. "There is nothing said about violations of other human rights."

One of the arguments of southern senators against the law has been a proposal that violations should be subject to jury trials. Declared Johnson, "They must be assuming that you and others have no knowledge of what happens when the rights of Negroes are submitted to the average jury in the South."

At the close of the rally a resolution was unanimously approved commending the Oregon congressional delegation for support of civil rights legislation and urging them "to stand firm in their determination to lend support to and vote for the passage of this civil rights bill."

Plunging Car Injures Trio

Three elderly men were injured Sunday at 4:45 p. m. when their car went out of control and plunged down a 40-foot embankment off Banfield freeway near N. E. 221st avenue, sheriff's deputies reported.

William Karras, 75, and George Madres, 70, both of 5636 S. E. Morrison street, were taken to Providence hospital for X rays. The driver, Chris N. Pappas, 617 N. W. 17th avenue, was treated for minor injuries and released.

Deputies Fred Roadnight and Steve Sauer said Pappas' west-bound auto went out of control, hit the center divider, swerved back onto the highway narrowly missing another car and plunged down the embankment. They

\$7280 Given 2 Eye Clinics

The Oregon State Elks association last week began the ninth year of its program for visually handicapped children by contributing \$7280 to two activities.

The children's eye clinic at the University of Oregon medical school received \$4259. The state school for the blind at Salem, which operates the Elks pre-school program for blind children received \$3024.

The Elks association has donated \$140,764 to the eye clinic and the blind school to help the children of needy parents. This does not include gifts from Elks

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Figure 37: Newspaper Citation Judge Carl Johnson speaks at Vancouver Avenue Church, 1957

Strong Civil Rights Bill Unlikely, Judge Believes

When the Georgia-born Negro, Carl Roman Johnson, was elected to the municipal court bench in Kansas City, Mo., some of the white people who knew him feared all the white folks would be in the penitentiary. Some of the Negroes felt they wouldn't ever.

"They were all disappointed," said the judge with a good-natured grin Saturday night as he recalled his election.

He was speaking on his arrival at the Portland International airport in answer to questions on race relations.

Enforcement Lack Noted

The judge, son of a Baptist preacher and 32 years a lawyer, said he felt "The laws protect the Negro as much as they protect the white man, but it is the administration of the laws that protect the white man and do not protect the Negro."

Judge Johnson said he felt America is at a crucial point in bettering race relations and referred to the civil rights bills before the senate.

"Prospects are not very good for a strong civil rights bill," he added. "But we will get some progressive legislation, but it will probably be ineffective legislation."

On the Powell amendment to the federal aid for education bill the judge said he felt it

was justified. "It is not right for the government to talk one thing out of one side of its mouth and talk something out of the other," he said. He said he felt the amendment was justified, in that what it stood for was right.

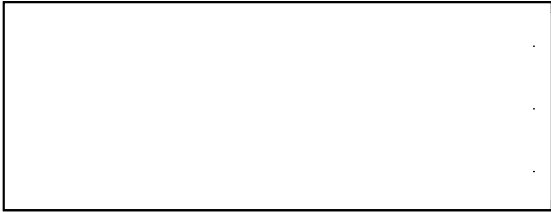
Judge Johnson will speak Sunday at 8 p. m. before a meeting of the Portland NAACP at the Vancouver Avenue Baptist church.



JUDGE CARL JOHNSON
Speaks of civil rights bill

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Figure 38: Photograph of Church Service, 1960



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

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Figure 39: Newspaper Citation on Race Relations, 1958



Source: Oregonian Newspaper, August 10, 1958, Oregonian

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Figure 40: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church

Antipoverty Reports Due

Final Meeting Set Wednesday

The final general meeting on the Antipoverty program and its relevancy to the greater Albina area will be at 8 p.m. Wednesday at Highland School, 4906 NE 6th Ave.

Reporting on a series of meetings here last week on specific areas of the program will be: Rev. O. B. Williams, pastor of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church; Mrs. Ellen Law, counselor at Jefferson High School; Mary Kay Rowland, director of Stella Maris House; Rev. Paul Schulze, director of Church Community Action in the Albina district; and John Holley, director of community services for the Urban League.

They will discuss sections of the Antipoverty program pertaining to day care and pre-schools, housing, employment and neighborhood service centers.

Holley, acting as a spokesman for the planning committee responsible for the meeting, said he hoped for results from the discussions in the form of "definite recommendations which will go to the metropolitan steering committee of the Economic Opportunity Act . . . and a permanent leadership committee for Albina on the poverty program."

Rally Scheduled On Civil Rights

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will sponsor a civil rights rally Sunday at 8 p. m. at Vancouver Avenue Baptist church, 3138 N. Vancouver avenue.

Carl R. Johnson, a judge in Kansas City, Mo., and member of the NAACP board of directors, will be the principal speaker.

He will be introduced by Mark O. Hatfield, Oregon secretary of state. State Senator Monroe Sweetland will be master of ceremonies.

The Sunday meeting will be for the purpose of "showing support of civil rights legislation pending in the United States senate," according to Phil Reynolds, president of the Portland branch of the NAACP.

Johnson is the first Negro elected to a public office in Missouri. He was elected to his judicial seat in 1955.

Negro Chief Plans Visit

Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP, will make three scheduled public appearances during his visit to Portland Friday, Sept. 25.

Wilkins' main purpose in coming to Portland is to address a public meeting at the Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church, 3138 N. Vancouver Ave.

The rally will honor the 50th anniversary of the Portland branch of the NAACP. This is the oldest continuously chartered branch of the organization west of the Mississippi River, according to a chapter spokesman.

The Negro leader's Portland day will begin at 9:15 a.m. when he addresses a freshman convocation at Lewis & Clark College. He will appear next at the City Club luncheon in the Mayfair Room of the Benson Hotel.

The last appearance will be at the public rally at 8 p.m. at the Baptist church.

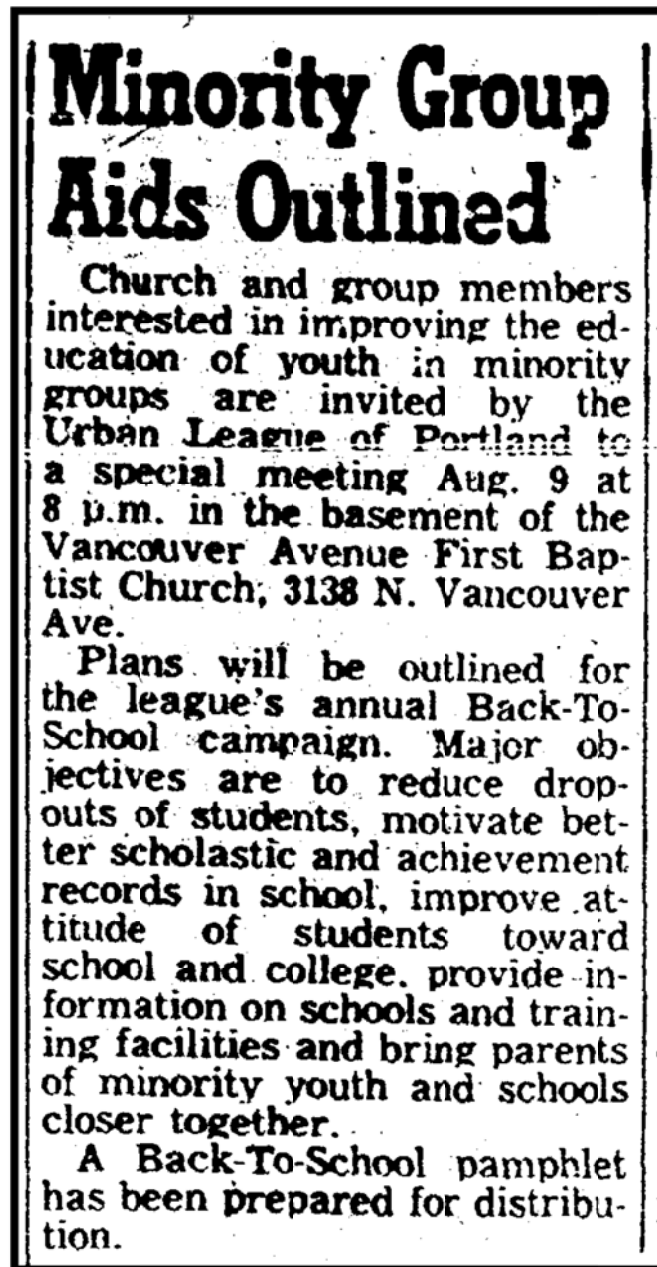
A spokesman for the NAACP said Wilkins had been given carte blanche in choosing topics for his appearances. Beside his public appearances Wilkins is set to meet with the executive committee of the Portland branch of the NAACP at 5:30 p.m. Friday.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Figure 41: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 1960



Source: Oregonian Newspaper, April 4, 1960

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Documentation Page 44

Figure 42: Newspaper citation of Community Housing Forum held at Vancouver Avenue Church, 1961



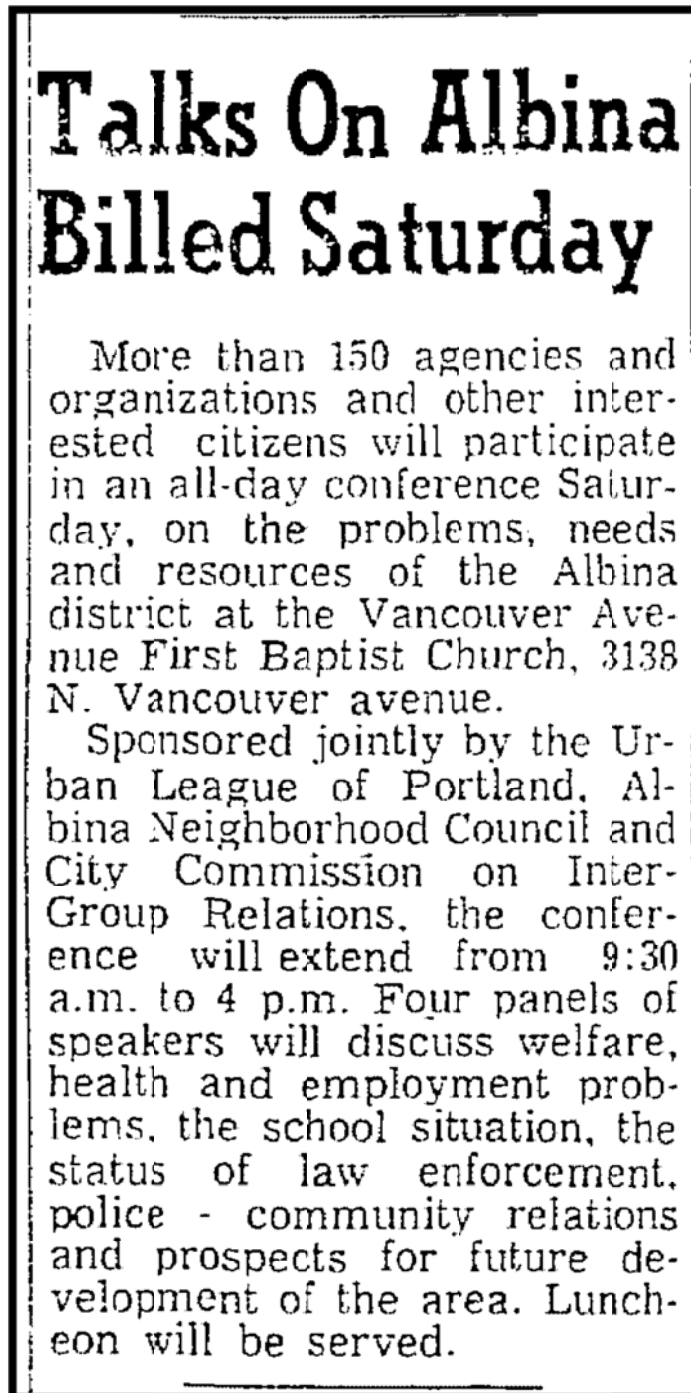
Source: Oregonian Newspaper, December 8, 1961

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Figure 42: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 1960



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Figure 43: Newspaper Citation of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Church, 1961



Martin King To Talk Here

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Baptist minister and a leader in the Negro's boycott of buses in Montgomery, Ala., will speak Wednesday at 8 p.m. in the Public Auditorium.

His appearance in Portland will be sponsored by the Urban League of Portland and Portland State College. He will speak on "Facing the Challenge of a New Age."

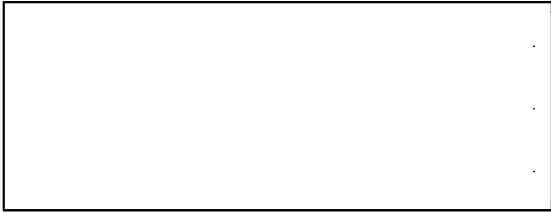
The Rev. Mr. King will be the principal speaker at the Urban League's Equal Opportunity Day Program at the auditorium. Mayor Terry D. Schrunk and Gov. Mark O. Hatfield will bring greetings. The Jefferson High School Choir will sing.

The Rev. Mr. King also will speak at 10:45 a.m. Wednesday at Portland State College. He will speak on "The Future of Integration" at 3 p.m. at Lewis and Clark College.

Prior to his address at the auditorium, the non-violent leader of racial integration programs will meet with members of the board of the Urban League. He will meet with the Albina Ministerial Alliance at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church after his address.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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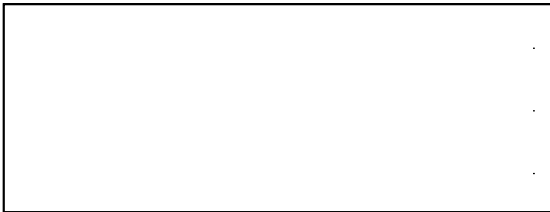
Figure 45: Photograph of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Reverend O.B. Williams at Vancouver Avenue



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



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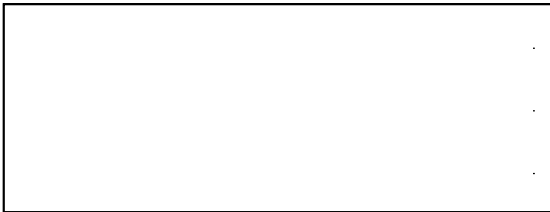
Figure 46: Photograph of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Reverend O.B. Williams at Vancouver Avenue



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Church Collection, Oregon Historical Society

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 47: Newspaper Citations of Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, 1963

Officers Meet with National Chairman



Left to right — Marcy Ann Wright, secretary, Carol Sweeney, vice-chairman, John Lewis, Jere Perry, chairman, Ralph Moore, treasurer. John Lewis, national chairman of the S.N.C.C. (Student Non-

Photo By Jimmy "Bang-Bang" Walker
violent Coordinating Committee) addressed the Portland friends of S.N.C.C. at Vancouver Ave. Baptist Church Saturday.

Source: Observer Newspaper, 1963

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Figure 47: Civil Rights Portland Protest that begins at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 1963

Today's Chuckle
Americans used to shout: "Give me liberty!" Now they just leave off the last word.

The Oregonian

VOL. CII — 38,188 Second Class Postage Paid At Portland, Oregon ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1963 44 I

Portlanders Join Rights March




SEVERAL HUNDRED demonstrators gathered in front of the Federal Courthouse Sunday afternoon at the end of a memorial march from Dawson Park. The program, marking the murder of six children on the day of the Birmingham church bombing, included several speeches and songs and chants such as "We Shall Overcome" and "Freedom Now." Unidentified woman at left was typical of the marchers. The group included a high percentage of students, both Negro and Caucasian.

An orderly, singing, chanting army of more than 600 persons massed for Portland's largest civil rights demonstration Sunday.

The memorial program honored the six Negro children who died in the Birmingham, Ala., church bombing and subsequent shootings.

After attending a service of singing and speeches at the Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church at noon, the marchers assembled at Dawson Park a few blocks away, then moved across the Broadway Bridge

Dr. Wright noted, "One of these words is justice. The time for justice is now. We must devote our lives to the bringing of justice now." At one point in the Court-

house rally, the crowd—completely filling the street and sidewalk at the front of the building—roared a loud, emphatic approval for President Kennedy's decision not to visit Portland.

Kennedy Lauds 'United' Appeal

NEWPORT, R.I. (AP) — President Kennedy Sunday night appealed to the American people to contribute to the united community campaigns of America for their individual satisfaction and to make their communities and the United States as a whole

Ledge Traps Boy Climber

AUGUSTA, Mont. (AP) — Rescuers set up an all-night vigil Sunday night below a 10-year-old boy stranded on a rocky cliff after day-long attempts to reach him had

Daring Tale Told

West German refugee officials relayed this account: The Helms family started out from Wismar in the kayak, which was equipped with an outboard motor. Around 5 p.m. they spotted the Fredenhagen steaming their way and an East German police boat churning up in pursuit of them in a shipping channel which straddles the boundary line separating East and West Germany.

The skipper of the Fredenhagen, Capt. Siegfried Horn, was quoted as saying he knew his vessel could not possibly reach the Helms before

Trio Flees To West In Kayak

LUEBECK, Germany (AP)—An East German family of three headed for West Germany Saturday aboard a kayak and finally made it aboard a West German freighter, with the help of two ferry boats which blocked off East German machine gunners.

Hundreds of passengers aboard the two ferry boats sent up cheers as the three were snatched from the grasp of Communist police.

Martin Helms, a 30-year-old athletic instructor from Wismar, his wife Bettina, 29, and their 5-year-old daughter Kirsten, registered with West German refugee officials Sunday, the initial step prior to beginning life anew in the West.

The exhausted and frightened trio arrived here Saturday night aboard the West German freighter Fredenhagen which hauled them on board minutes before a pursuing East German police boat was about to blast their fragile kayak, the Zephyr, out of choppy Baltic waters with machine guns.

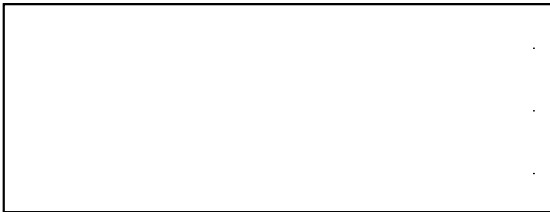
Family Eludes East Germans With Boats' Aid

DOVER, under way in Military Air Coast Guard Ten cre turboprop C base at 1:35 Air Station A Coast G said 12 search Coast Guard. Force were c criss-cross op miles east of in a corridor A distress clared at 5:4 big plane fail position report The last rd from the pla a.m., when southwest of It should Lajes at 9:35 enough fuel borne until 1 A Coast G in New York was being co area from Ca 330 miles at Twelve Air Coast Guard in the Atlanti Three Coas also joined in Mackinac lef land, N.Y., th Bermuda an from Norfolk. 100 Ships Ak The Coast ed approxi within 30 mi scheduled r lookout. All 10 men were memb Air Transp Dover. The United negotiating v continued u Force facilit

Source: Oregonian Newspaper, September 23, 1963

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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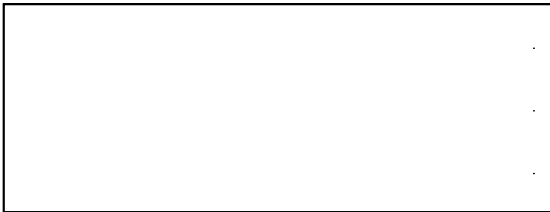
Figure 48: Photograph of Urban League of Portland Meeting at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



Source: the University of Oregon, Urban League of Portland Archives

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



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Figure 50: Photograph of Urban League of Portland Meeting at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



Source: the University of Oregon, Urban League of Portland Archives

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
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Figure 51: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church

HOUSING FORUM SET

New provisions of the Federal Housing Act of 1961 will be outlined at a Forum on Vital Housing Facts, sponsored by the Portland Urban League, Thursday, Dec. 7, 7:30 p.m. at the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. Subjects to be covered will include, "Getting Your Money's Worth in a House," "Financing the Mortgage," "How to Proceed in Making Home Improvements," and "How to Find Rental Housing and What to do about Discrimination."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Figure 52: Newspaper Citation of Albina Community Meeting naming Rev. O.B. Williams, chairperson

THE OREGONIAN, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1964 **6M** **11**

Albina Group To Fight Poverty

A 15 - member committee, which will be the "voice" of Portland's Albina area in planning "war on poverty" programs, was named Tuesday night.

The committee was named at a mass meeting of Albina area residents at Highland School.

Rev. O. B. Williams was selected chairman. Committee members include Rufus Butler, Hugh Cummins, Andrew B. Haynes Jr., Mrs. Brozie Lathan, Bishop W. L. McKinney, Mrs. Virginia Roberts, Mary Kay Rowland, Mrs. Vern Thompson, Tom Wilson, E. H. Thiel, Rev. George E. Carter, Mrs. Vivian Barnett and Walter Morris.

The group's first official action will be to meet with the Mayor's Steering Committee on Economic Opportunity Act programming to present a plan for the Albina area.

The plan arrived at following various citizen's com-

mittee sessions held this month, cites jobs, job training and advancement as one of the greatest needs EOA programming can help fill.

A neighborhood service center, housing, child care, and youth and recreation proposals also are carefully outlined in the plan.

Congresswoman Edith

Vandals Wreck School Rooms

Vandals early Monday did about \$1,000 damage to the interior of Gilbert School, 12500 SE Ramona St.

John Hudson, head custodian, said the main damage was to chalk boards which were burned with a propane burner taken from a science laboratory.

Also damaged were some furniture and Christmas decorations.

Green was present at the session and spoke on the EOA telling of the latest action resulting from the act.

About 200 persons attended the meeting, during which some citizens urged that the Mayor's Steering Committee be "broadened" to include representatives from the Albina area.

Stomach Gas?

GET IT UP AND OUT!

Feel like a balloon that's about to burst? Have that raw, acid-y burn in your stomach? Get that gas up and out—with wonderful Pfunder's Tablets. Pfunder's Tablets' "foaming" action clears stomach of present gas—coats lining of stomach for continuing relief. Get Pfunder's Tablets today. At druggists.

Source: Oregonian Newspaper, December 30, 1964

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Figure 52: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church

**Priest Slates
Race Meetings**

Father John LaBauve, a Catholic priest - lecturer on race relations, will speak at 8 p.m. Friday at the Immaculate Heart parish hall, N. Williams Ave. and Stanton St.

He will discuss the first National Home Visit Day scheduled for Sunday, when white and Negro families will meet in one another's homes.

About 35 white and 35 Negro families have signed up to take part, Father Mell Stead of Immaculate Heart Roman Catholic Church, said. He is coordinating the Portland participation in the nationwide program.

Working with Father Stead are two Negro ministers, Rev. O. B. Williams, pastor of the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, and Rev. T. X. Graham, pastor of the AME Zion Church.

United States Department of the Interior
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Figure 53: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church

SOUTHERNER TO SPEAK

Carole Merritt, a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Mississippi, will speak at a civil rights rally Thursday at 7:45 p.m. in the Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church. She will speak about the racial unrest and civil rights movement in the South.

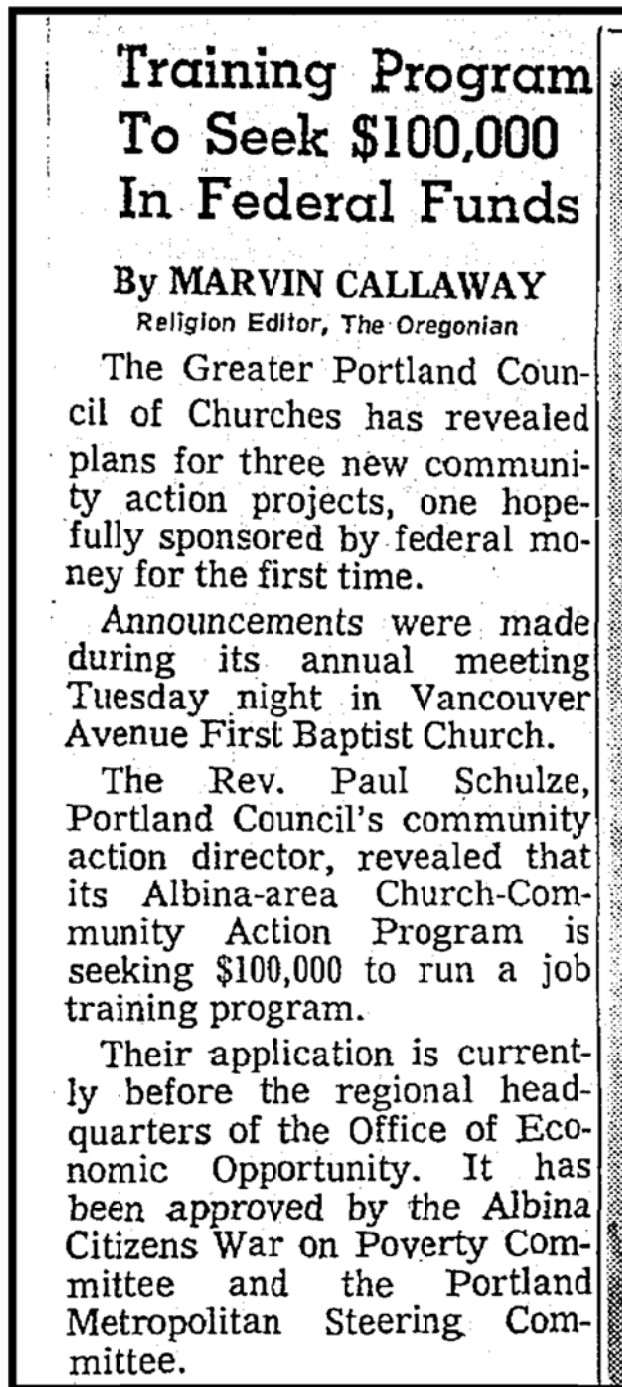
Source: Oregonian Newspaper, April 23, 1964

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 55: Newspaper citation announcing a community project at Vancouver Avenue Church



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Figure 56: Photograph of National NAACP President, Roy Wilkins speaking at Vancouver Avenue Church, 1964



Source: University of Oregon, NAACP Collection

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet**

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Figure 57: Newspaper citation of Roy Wilkins visits to Portland, speaking at Vancouver Avenue Church

Roy Wilkins, urbane and soft-spoken civil rights leader, assailed the Portland school system's "nearly 100 per cent de facto segregation" in an address Friday night and called upon the whites "to get rid of ghetto schools."

The tall, graying executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was in Portland to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the local chapter, the oldest chartered branch west of he Mississippi.

A standing-room-only crowd of more than 1,000 persons was gathered at the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church where a basement auditorium and downstairs loudspeaker were pressed into service to take care of the overflow attendance.

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National Park Service

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Figure 58: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church

SPEAKER BILLED

John Kenward, executive director of the Portland Development Commission, will address a public meeting sponsored by the Citizens Improvement Association of Albina Thursday, July 28, at 8 p.m. at the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church.

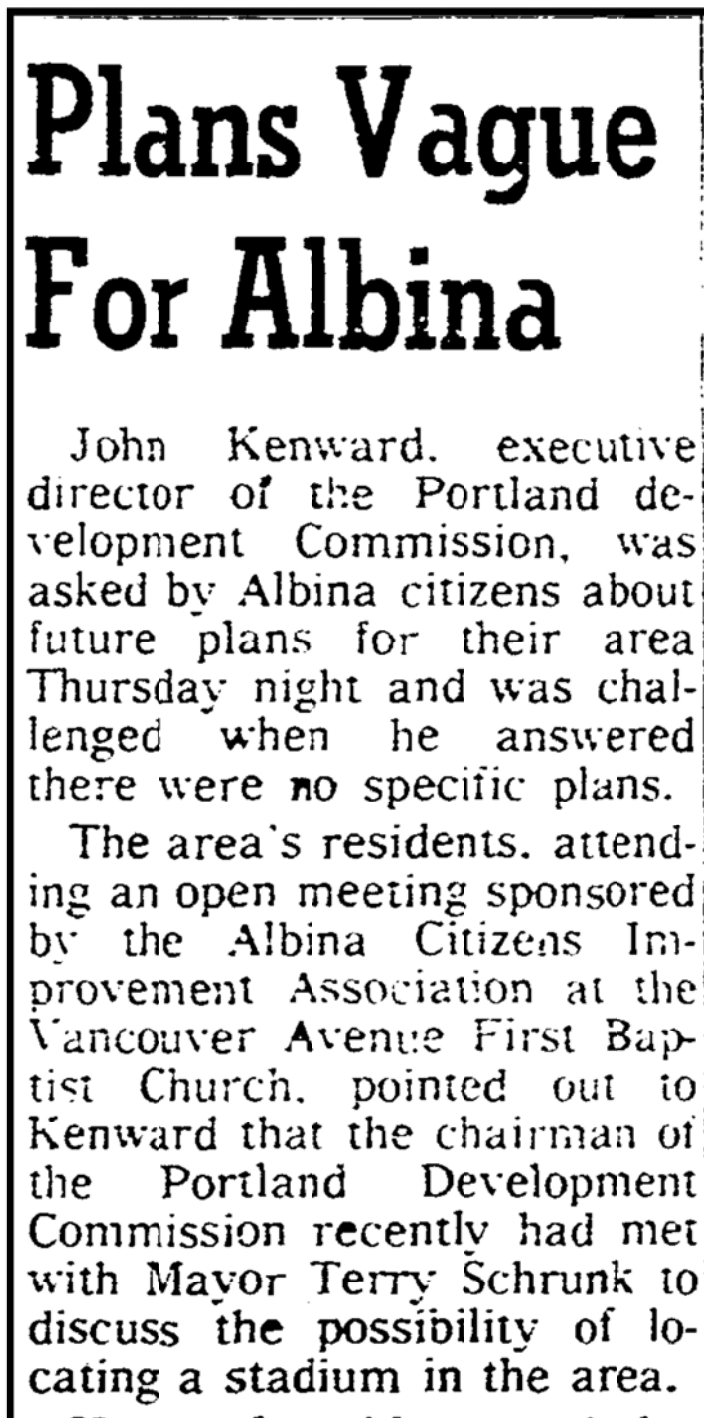
Source: Oregonian Newspaper, July 21, 1966

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 59: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



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Figure 60: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church

MORSE TO SPEAK

Sen. Wayne L. Morse will speak about the federal poverty program at the annual meeting of the Aibina Citizens War on Poverty Committee at 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 27, in the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church at 3138 N. Vancouver Ave.

Source: Oregonian Newspaper, March 24, 1967

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

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Figure 61: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



**NAACP Plans
Marshall Honor**

The monthly meeting of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will be at 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 15, in the Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church.

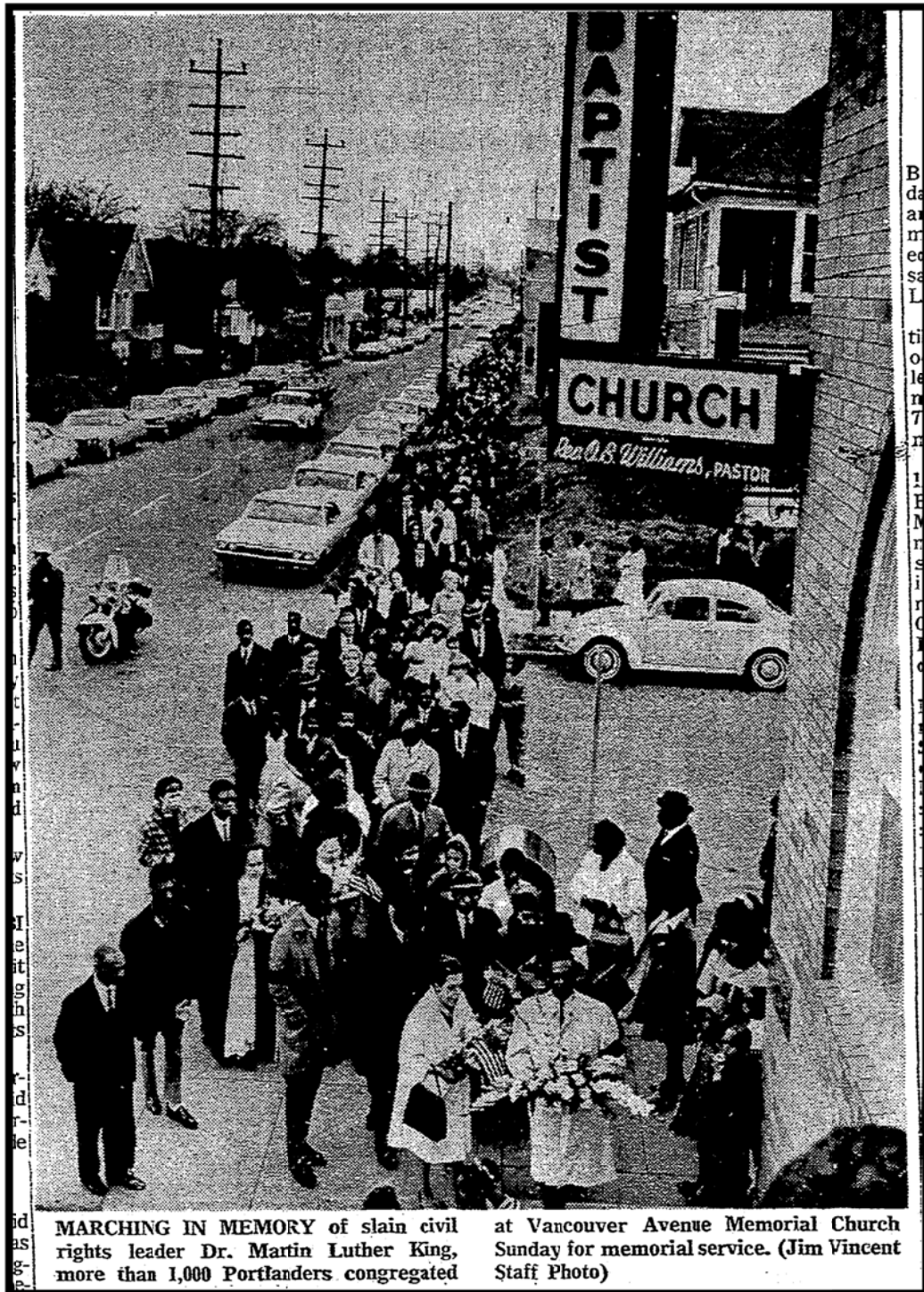
Included in the program will be a tribute to Thurgood Marshall recently appointed U.S. Supreme Court Justice. A guest speaker and music selections also are planned for the program, according to Thomas R. Vickers, NAACP Portland branch president.

United States Department of the Interior
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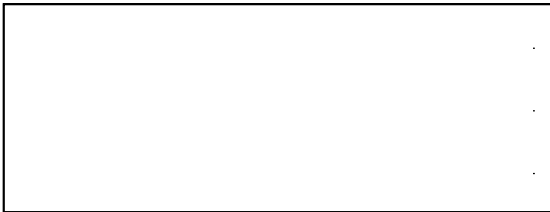
Figure 62: Newspaper Citation of Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Memorial Service, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 1968



MARCHING IN MEMORY of slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, more than 1,000 Portlanders congregated at Vancouver Avenue Memorial Church Sunday for memorial service. (Jim Vincent Staff Photo)

United States Department of the Interior
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Figure 63: Newspaper citation of King Memorial Service at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, 1968



Source: Oregonian Newspaper, April 8, 1968

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet**

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Figure 64: Newspaper Citations of Events held at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



NAACP Official To Visit Here

Clarence Mitchell head of the Washington, D.C., bureau of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, will make three Portland appearances Saturday.

He will be honored at a noon luncheon at the Airtel and at a reception at the Albina Art Center from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

He will speak at 8 p.m. at Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church, 3138 N. Vancouver Ave. The event is open to the public at no charge.

In recognition of civil rights legislation he has helped accomplish, Mitchell was awarded the Springarn Medal at this year's national convention of the NAACP.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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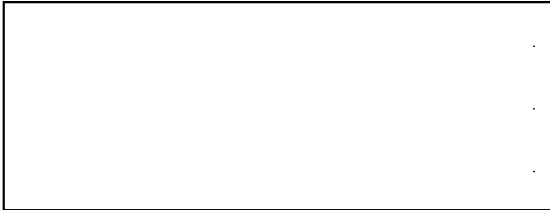
Figure 65: Legacy Emanuel Hospital Public Monument Display

Civil Rights

Founded in 1945, and currently headquartered in the Eliot Neighborhood, the Urban League of Portland, along with the local NAACP branch, fought housing and employment discrimination facing Portland's black residents. The Albina Ministerial Alliance formed in 1958 to fund programs that encouraged community, education and economic development. Community leaders like Otto Rutherford, Dr. DeNorval Unthank and Rev. O. B. Williams fought for civil rights for Portland's black community, which by 1957 was heavily concentrated in the Albina District.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 66: Newspaper citation of Governor Jerry Brown visit to Vancouver Avenue Church



Source: Oregonian Newspaper, May 24, 1976

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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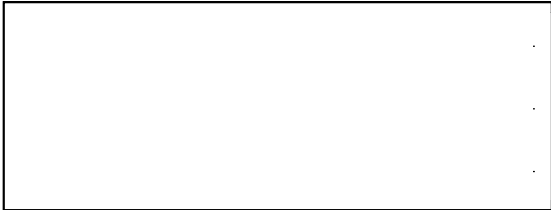
Figure 67: 1987 Newspaper citation Dr. Ralph D. Abernathy visits to Vancouver Avenue Church



Source: The Portland Observer Newspaper, 1987

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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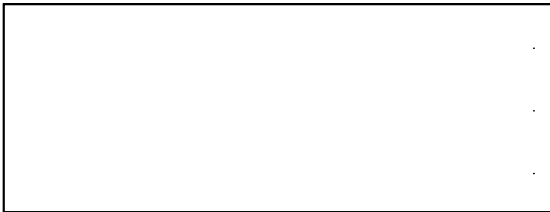
Figure 68: Newspaper Citations of Events Reverend O.B. Williams and Willia Williams



Source: Oregonian Newspaper 1987

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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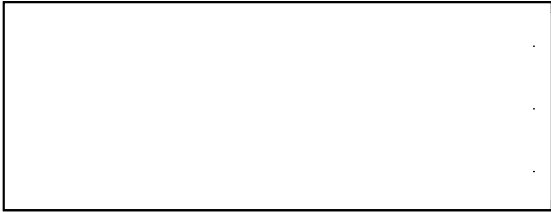
Figure 69: 1987 Photograph of Reverend O.B. Williams and Portland Mayor Bud Clark



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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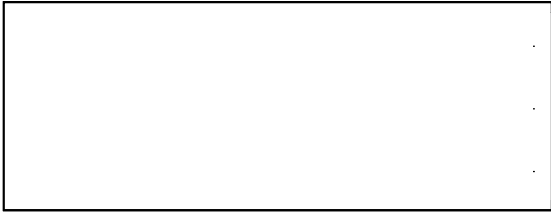
Figure 70: 2014 Photograph of Vanport Community Event at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



Source: The Skanner Newspaper

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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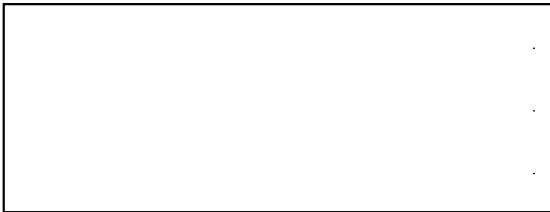
Figure 71: 2014 Photograph of Vanport Community Event at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



Source: The Skanner Newspaper

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 72: 2015 Photograph of Bernice King addresses Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



Source: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church



FELLOWSHIP HALL

Services for the Parish Church



Mission Avenue
First Baptist Church

ONE WAY
RIGHT
TURN
ONLY





THOMAS PEACE MEMORIAL ELEVATOR

GMC

5521670



OFFICE

RESERVED
PARKING
ONLY

RESERVED
PARKING
ONLY

Vancouver Ave. First Baptist Church

Vancouver Ave. First Baptist Church

































Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church
Pastor J.W. Matt Hennessee, Senior Servant

Vancouver Ave First Baptist Church

Pastor J.W. Matt Hennessee, Senior Servant

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OREGON, Multnomah

DATE RECEIVED: 7/22/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/10/16
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/25/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/06/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000604

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9/6/16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*social history
ethnic heritage: black
1951-1968
state level -*

RECOM./CRITERIA A+B.

REVIEWER [Signature]

DISCIPLINE [Signature]

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 9/6/16

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Parks and Recreation Department

State Historic Preservation Office

725 Summer St NE Ste C

Salem, OR 97301-1266

Phone (503) 986-0690

Fax (503) 986-0793

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Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service



July 15, 2016

Mr. J. Paul Loether
National Register of Historic Places
USDOI National Park Service - Cultural Resources
1201 Eye Street NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Mr. Loether: *Paul*

At the recommendation of the Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, I hereby nominate the following historic property to the National Register of Historic Places:

VANCOUVER AVENUE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
3138 N VANCOUVER AVE
PORTLAND, MULTNOMAH COUNTY

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination listed above to the National Register of Historic Places.

We appreciate your consideration of this nomination. If questions arise, please contact Diana Painter, National Register Coordinator, at (503) 986-0668.

Sincerely,

Christine

Christine Curran
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Encl.

