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DATA SHEET

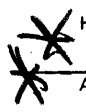
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED SEP 15 1976
DATE ENTERED AUG 24 1977

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME



HISTORIC
Arkansas Valley Lodge # 21, Prince Hall Masons
 AND/OR COMMON
Black Masonic Lodge

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
615 North Main
CITY, TOWN
Wichita
STATE
Kansas
VICINITY OF

COUNTY
Sedgwick
CODE
20
CODE
173
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
No. 4, Garner Shriver
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Storage

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Urban Renewal Agency
STREET & NUMBER
104 South Broadway
CITY, TOWN
Wichita
STATE
Kansas
VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Register of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER
Sedgwick County Courthouse
CITY, TOWN
Wichita
STATE
Kansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historic Wichita Board
DATE
1975
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Historic Wichita Board
CITY, TOWN
Wichita
STATE
Kansas
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Arkansas Valley Lodge was originally part of a row of business buildings which faced east on the 600 block of North Main street. The building now stands alone surrounded by a parking lot on the north, south and west sides. A newspaper article describes the lodge hall at the time of the dedicatory service as a brick and mortar structure with three full floors, tin ceilings and a skylight. At that time the first floor, which was one large room, was to be rented out, the second floor was to be used by the community for recreation, and the third floor was the lodge's meeting room. A small photograph of the building was published in the Wichita Searchlight on November 25, 1911. It shows a three story structure with large store front windows on the first story and four windows across on both the second and third stories. The building to the south appears to be one story, while the lot to the north was vacant.

The roof was repaired in 1913 and in 1915 signs were painted on the exterior for additional income. A steel beam was installed in 1919 below the second story windows to help support the weight of the building. In 1920 a fire escape was built and the skylight remodeled to prevent leaks. Wind storms in the 1930's and 1940's inflicted a good deal of damage to the structure and the third floor was damaged so badly that it had to be removed late in 1948.

It is believed that the building presently appears much as it did after the renovation in 1948. It is now a two story structure with large store front windows and a recessed entrance on the south side of the east facade. Board and batten has been applied over the wall surface below the store front windows and in the space separating the two stories directly above the windows. The exterior walls have been painted a deep red on the first floor up to the sills on the second story windows. There are four windows on the second story. The outer two windows are rectangular with stone lintels and sills, the inner two windows though rectangular have brick arches with a stone key. There is an iron fire escape outside the outer window on the north side of the facade. Centered above the inner two windows is a stone plaque with masonic symbols carved in relief. This insignia was originally set near the cornice line of the third story, but was relaid after the upper floor was removed. There are brick piers on either end of the facade. The building's cornice has been simply treated with a row of brick corbelling. There is a parapet that extends around three facades varying from two and one-half to four feet in height. The upper courses of the parapet are of a lighter color brick on the east facade. The north, south and west facades have been used as party walls and have notches where floor joists have tied into the wall.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Ethnic History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1910

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The old Masonic Hall at 615 North Main is the last surviving commercial building of the Black business community which was located on Wichita's North Main street for many years.

In the 1880's and 1890's rival developers were seeking to promote Douglas avenue and Main street as the city's principal commercial district. Eventually the Douglas avenue promoters triumphed, and the white merchants and professional men who had been on North Main street moved out. Black businessmen and professional men moved into some of the vacated buildings and soon there was a thriving Black business district.

The Arkansas Valley Lodge # 21, Prince Hall Masons, was chartered in July, 1885. The lodge met in rented facilities for many years, but in the early 1900's the members began thinking of building their own hall. On November 10, 1905, the lodge purchased a lot at 615 North Main from a Black grocer named G.W. Young. In 1909 a building committee recommended construction of a two story building with the option of adding a third story later.

The building may have been designed by a Black architect, Josiah Walker, who had designed other buildings in the Black community. Walker was present at the cornerstone laying ceremonies, but so far no specific evidence has been found that he designed it. A man named Isenhart was the general contractor and evidently some of the lodge brothers held subcontracts. The cost of the building was estimated at \$6,000. The lodge held various money-raising activities but had to borrow a substantial portion of the funds needed. Construction was underway in the spring of 1910. There was much other construction taking place in Wichita at the same time as 1910 brought a building boom to the city.

A cornerstone laying ceremony was held Sunday, April 3, 1910. In attendance and participating in the ceremonies were various dignitaries of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge, including the Grand Master C.H. Milton Collins from Kansas City. Also speaking to the crowd were two city officials, Mayor Charles L. Davidson and Postmaster W.C. Edwards.

Construction continued through the summer, and the three-story brick structure was completed by September. (No explanation has been found for the change from a two-story to a three-story building.) The hall was publicly opened by a gala banquet on September 7, 1910. The building was described by the local Black newspaper as one of the finest owned by a Black lodge.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"A Gala Day for the Masons," Wichita Searchlight, April 9, 1910.

"Grand! Superb!! Was Masonic Banquet," Wichita Searchlight, September 10, 1910.

"Masons Will Lay Cornerstone," Wichita Searchlight, April 2, 1910.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____
 UTM REFERENCES

A

1	4	6	4	6	5	3	0	4	1	7	3	1	4	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING							

C

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING							

D

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING							

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Richard Pankratz, Director, Historic Sites Survey
 Cornelia Wyma, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Kansas State Historical Society

DATE August 6, 1976

STREET & NUMBER 120 West 10th Street

TELEPHONE 913-296-3251

CITY OR TOWN Topeka

STATE Kansas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Nyle H. Miller*

TITLE Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society DATE September 8, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE 8/24/77
ATTEST <i>Charles [Signature]</i>	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE 8/24/77

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Kansas	
COUNTY	Sedgwick	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		AUG 24 1977

(Number all entries)

(8.)

The building quickly became a social center of the Black community. Other organizations, such as the Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, and Knights of Tabor, rented the hall for their meetings. Many groups used the facilities for their banquets, dances, bazaars, plays, musical shows and other recreational activities. From 1911 to 1915 the first floor was used by the Black Y.M.C.A. At times the first floor as well as the second floor office space was rented to Black businessmen.

In many respects the Arkansas Valley Lodge # 21 was a rallying force in the Black community. Its members were the spokesmen for the community early in the 20th century, before the civil rights movements. They served their community, assisting those who needed help, and provided a common meeting ground for Black men, whatever their role in society, whether professional, businessman or laborer.

The nondescript brick building stands today as the lone survivor of a once flourishing Black business district. (The rest has been cleared by Urban Renewal, and the lodge hall also faces the threat of demolition.) It has taken on a symbolic importance in addition to its historic value for the role it had in serving the social needs of the Black community.

(9.)

Rutledge, Carol, "History of Ark Valley Lodge # 21, Prince Hall Masons" (unpublished manuscript, 1975).

"To Open Their New Lodge Hall," Wichita Searchlight, September 3, 1910.

Wichita Searchlight, July 10, 1909; September 24, 1910; November 25, 1911.

