

Theme 5d3

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Illinois
COUNTY:	Cook
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE:	

#### 1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Oscar Stanton DePriest House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

#### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**4536-4538 South Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive**

CITY OR TOWN: **Chicago** CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: **First**

STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17** COUNTY: **Cook** CODE: **031**

#### 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	<b>Apartment building</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

#### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Oscar S. DePriest, Jr. / DePriest Trust**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**4538 South King Drive**

CITY OR TOWN: **Chicago** STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17**

#### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Cook County Courthouse, Recorder of Deeds**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Washington & Clark Streets**

CITY OR TOWN: **Chicago** STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17**

#### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**None known**

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:	Illinois
COUNTY:	Cook
ENTRY NUMBER:	
DATE:	

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building where the late Oscar Stanton DePriest resided is located on the west side of Martin Luther King Drive (formerly South Parkway Blvd.) approximately 150' south of 45th Street. The building has a 55' frontage along King Drive facing east and is about 45' deep (E-W). The structure is an 8-flat apartment building, three stories high with raised basement and a flat roof. The building is of masonry construction faced with a rough textured, mottled dark brown face brick trimmed with Indiana limestone. The predominant design features are the two large square bays which run from grade up to the roofline. There are brick string courses around the basement apartment windows and above each set of three windows in the apartments above. The main entry is situated between the bays in the recessed stairwell section. This entry carries both addresses, being 4536 for the north section and 4538 for the south portion.

Architecturally the building is nondescript, being a style utilized often in apartment construction during the late teens and early 1920s.

Mr. DePriest occupied the second floor apartment (being the second above the basement apartment) in the south section of the building, utilizing the 4538 address. The apartments run the depth of the building with bedrooms along the sides and a kitchen in the rear. The front bay is utilized as a portion of the parlor in the front.

The area around the building is a mixture of similar apartment buildings and late 19th century town houses. King Drive is a main four-land thoroughfare with grassed parkways on either side and service drives along the outer edges next to the residences.

The area is in moderately good condition overall. It is an old established neighborhood among Chicago's black populace.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1871-1951 (DePriest) c. 1920(House built) 1929-1951**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

(DePriest residence in house)

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic            | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | <u>Afro-American</u>                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | <u>History</u>                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        |   |   | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Oscar Stanton DePriest was the first black Congressman to be elected from a Northern state. He was born March 9, 1871 in Florence, Alabama but while he was still quite young his family moved to Kansas where DePriest attended normal school and worked in the Kansas wheat fields. In 1899 DePriest left Kansas and went to Chicago where he established himself as a contractor and painter, eventually securing contracts on city buildings. He was an active participant in the politics of the city and in 1904 he was elected a Cook County Commissioner. DePriest served in that capacity for two, two-year terms from 1904 to 1908 using his position to educate poor blacks regarding the welfare relief resources available to them in the Chicago area. Failure to win a third term to the position of County Commissioner returned him to the business world where he continued his contracting and painting business and began a very profitable real estate business that in time created a very sizeable private fortune for him.

In 1915 DePriest was elected as an alderman to the Chicago City Council from the Second Ward, reportedly the second wealthiest ward in the nation. His election was the first in which a black was chosen to serve in Chicago's city government, and during his term he concerned himself principally with finding jobs for blacks. His illustrious career as an alderman was marred in January, 1917 when DePriest was indicted by a Special Grand Jury along with several others for conspiracy to allow the operation of gambling houses and houses of prostitution and for the bribery of the silence of policemen in connection with these establishments. Defended by the renowned attorney Clarence Darrow, DePriest was acquitted of all charges against him and in time was able to use the entire affair to his advantage. He was seen as a black man who had beaten back his racist persecutors and had emerged as the courageous victor.

DePriest was elected to the position of Third Ward Committeemen in 1924, becoming one of the five most powerful politicians in Illinois' First Congressional District. When the incumbent Congressman Martin B. Madden died in 1928, just after he had successfully won the primary, DePriest was selected by the five ward committeemen to replace Madden on the Republican ballot in the general election. He won and went on to be seated in the United States House of Representatives despite the disapproval and objections of southern Congressmen.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

The Chicago Defender. Article, March 9, 1928.  
 The Chicago Defender. Article, April 13, 1929.  
 The Chicago Defender. Article, April 20, 1929.  
 The Congressional Record. Document 5048. 73rd Congress 2nd Session, March 21, 1934.  
 The Congressional Record. Document 7360. 73rd Congress 2nd Session, April 25, 1934.  
 Gosnell, Harold F. Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago. Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1966.  
 Mann, Kenneth E. "Oscar Stanton DePriest: Persuasive Agent For the Black Masses." Negro History Bulletin, XXXV (October, 1972).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			<b>O R</b>	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE				
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	UTM: 16.448670.4628840			ds
NW	° ' "	° ' "				
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Marcia M. Greenlee, Historical Projects Director**

ORGANIZATION: **Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation**      DATE: **December 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1420 N Street, Northwest**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington**      STATE: **D. C.**      CODE: **11**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Illinois	
COUNTY	
Cook	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries) #8 Significance - page 2

As the only black representative in Congress, DePriest assumed the role of a national spokesman for his race and he worked hard to have an impact on issues that were important to blacks. He urged that more equal distribution of government appropriations for education so that black children would get a more equitable share of the education opportunities in this country. He also worked hard to secure a greater share of the federal budget for the federally funded Howard University. As a man who built his political effectiveness on his ability to bargain and to get things accomplished, DePriest was less bound by tradition and party loyalties than were most politicians, and he urged other blacks to be less concerned with party loyalty and more concerned about choosing the best man for the job whomever he was. The important thing, he often said, was the election of good men to powerful, public offices. Voting was an essential tool in getting things done and in seeing that one's interests were looked after. Along this line DePriest also proposed the formation of a lobby in the black community to keep watch over Congressional legislation that was relevant to black Americans.

In January, 1934, near the end of his sixth year in the Congress, DePriest attempted to desegregate a Capitol Hill dining room that was supposedly restricted only to Congressmen and their guests. Although members of the white public had been welcomed and served there, when DePriest's son Oscar, Jr. and his confidential secretary Morris Lewis attempted to gain access to the facility they were prohibited. It was soon disclosed that Congressman Lindsay Warren, chairman of the House Accounts committee, under whose authority the operation of the restaurant fell, had authorized the practice. Since the white public had never been prohibited from the restaurant, DePriest wanted the same privilege accorded to the black public. Therefore he presented a resolution to the House Rules Committee seeking an end to the discriminatory restaurant practice. Most Congressmen thought that it would die in committee but after thirty legislative days, DePriest presented a petition to the entire body to have the resolution placed on the House floor for discussion and voting. By the middle of April there were enough signatures on the petition to instigate such an action and on April 25th the restaurant issue was discussed in Congress. It was agreed that a five man special committee would investigate the matter-- three would be Democrats chosen by the Speaker and two would be Republicans chosen by DePriest. The findings of the committee's investigation, completed in May, were revealed in two separately filed reports that were split along party lines. The majority report of the three Democrats stated that the House restaurant was not for the public and since all members of the House had been served, Congressman Warren should continue to operate the restaurant facility for members and their guests. This report evaded DePriest's claim that all black citizens had been excluded from the restaurant while all whites were admitted. The minority report of the two Republicans recommended the recession of Congressman Warren's order, as there was indeed discrimination against blacks in the restaurant's serving practices. The report went on to state that not only had the chairman exceeded his authority in handing down such an order, but that he had violated the Fourteenth Amendment rights of blacks in denying them equal access to the facility. Nevertheless the ma-

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Illinois	
COUNTY	
Cook	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

#8 Significance - page 3

majority report was accepted and the restaurant continued its practice of discrimination.

DePriest attempted to regain his Congressional seat for the fourth time in 1934 but lost it to another black, Arthur Mitchell, the first black Democrat elected to the U. S. Congress. Although he had lost his Congressional bid, DePriest remained active in politics in Chicago. From 1943 to 1947 he served as an alderman of the city's Third Ward. However after a sharp dispute with the members of his party he withdrew from politics. DePriest returned to his real estate business and died in May 1951 in Chicago's Provident Hospital.

Oscar S. DePriest is of national historical significance because he was the first black person elected to the United States Congress from a northern state, serving from 1928 to 1935. In 1915 he was elected a city alderman of Chicago's Second Ward, becoming the first black person in Illinois' history to be elected to Chicago's city government. In 1943 until 1947 he again served as an alderman this time representing the Third Ward. DePriest was the first black person elected to Congress following George H. White's term which ended in 1901 and he symbolized the re-entry of black people into the national scene. He also served as a national spokesman for the black people of his day.

The building at 4536-4538 South Martin Luther King Drive in Chicago contains the apartment that Mr. DePriest resided in from the time of his purchase of the building in 1929 until his death in May 1951.