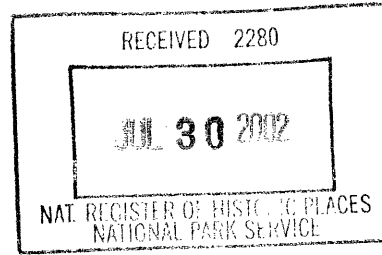


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



973

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Paul Baptist Church and Cemetery

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 4¼ mi N, 1½ mi W of Jct. US Hwy. 62 & St. Hwy. 18

not for publication N/A

city or town Meeker vicinity X

state Oklahoma code OK county Lincoln County code 081

zip code 74855

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 nationally statewide X locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official

7-25-02
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Bob Boland 9/13/02
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register _____
- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u> buildings
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 1 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 1 </u> objects
<u> 3 </u>	<u> 3 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>RELIGION</u>	Sub: <u>religious facility</u>
<u>FUNERARY</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>VACANT/NOT IN USE</u>	Sub: _____
<u>FUNERARY</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls WOOD:weatherboard

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE; BLACK

Period of Significance 1940-1952

=====
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)
=====

Significant Dates 1940

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder UNKNOWN

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreeage of Property Less than two acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	689430	3937460	3	___	_____
2	14	688310	3937430	4	___	_____

N/A See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian, for the Lincoln County
Historical Society

organization Savage Consulting date March 2002

street & number Rt. 1, Box 116 telephone 405/459-6200

city or town Pocasset state OK zip code 73079

=====
Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage
or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name St. Paul Baptist Church

street & number 701 South Steele telephone _____

city or town Chandler state OK zip code 74834

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

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				name of property
				<u>Lincoln County, Oklahoma</u>
				county and State

=====

SUMMARY

St. Paul Baptist Church and Cemetery is a rural African-American church and cemetery located north of Meeker, Oklahoma. The church is located 4¼ miles north from the intersection of United States Highway 62 and State Highway 18 in Meeker and 1½ miles west of State Highway 18. The church is situated in the extreme northwest corner of Section 32, Township 13 North, Range 4 East. The boundaries of the church are marked by a line of trees on the north, east and south sides. The west side fronts onto a dirt road with a nonhistoric gate marking the entrance to the church property. The cemetery is located about ¾ of a mile to the west of the church on a dirt road in the northwest quarter of Section 31, Township 13 North, Range 4 East. The area between the church and cemetery does not contain any historic resources of note that relate to either the church or cemetery. As such, the two resources are treated as a discontinuous district.

The St. Paul Baptist Church is a simple, vernacular, weatherboard, cross-gabled building. Exhibiting no significant stylistic features, the building is classified as No Style. The east portion of the building was moved to the site in approximately 1940 following a 1939 fire which destroyed the original church building. The west part of the building, the front section, was purchased and moved in 1942. The original, one-over-one, hung, wood windows were replaced with shorter, two-over-two, hung, metal windows in about 1980. There are two wood paneled doors, one in the facade and one on the north side of the back section, and a wood, glazed, paneled door on the southeast side of the front section. The majority of windows and other doors in the back section were boarded over with weatherboard in about 1970. Decorative details on the building are minimal with triangular knee braces, exposed rafters and an uncovered, front, partial, concrete porch.

To the southeast of the church building, along the property line, is a contributing, small, wood outhouse. The outhouse has an asphalt-covered, gabled roof with exposed rafters. To the north of the church is a noncontributing, cinder block building with an asphalt-covered, front-gabled roof. The cinder block building was constructed in the 1960s. To the northwest of the church is a small well house, constructed in the 1980s when indoor plumbing was added to the church buildings. The noncontributing well house is wood with a wood gabled roof. To the west of the church building is a metal gate across the drive to the church. The gate is held by two wood posts and there is no other connecting fence. As such, the gate is not included within the count of resources.

About ¾ of a mile west of the church is St. Paul Cemetery. The cemetery

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				<u>Lincoln County, Oklahoma</u>
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measures 208 feet east to west and 211 feet north to south with a 21 foot set-back from the road. The cemetery is surrounded by a wire and metal post fence on the west, east and south sides. The north side features a chainlink fence with wood posts. The entrance to the cemetery is marked with a tall, metal fence with a metal gate painted white. Due to their linkage, the fence and the gate are counted as a single noncontributing object. The cemetery contains a variety of headstones, ranging from plain or illegible stone markers to modern granite stones. Although the cemetery is still in use, the historic connection between the church and cemetery allows it to be a contributing resource to the district.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION OF ST. PAUL BAPTIST CHURCH

St. Paul Baptist Church is a combination of two weatherboard, gabled-roofed buildings. The conjoined building, possibly two old school buildings, displays no significant stylistic characteristics and is classified as No Style. Together, the buildings form an L-shaped building with an asphalt-covered, cross-gabled roof and concrete block foundation. The long sides of both buildings feature exposed rafters. The short side of the front building has triangular knee braces, the only part of the buildings to have these.

The west elevation serves as the front of the building. This elevation is marked by an uncovered, concrete, partial porch and triangular knee braces. Centrally located on the porch is a single, wood, paneled entry. Above the door is an hand-painted wood sign which reads "Welcome to St. Paul."

The north elevation features four of the shortened, two-over-two, metal, hung windows in the front portion of the building. Located east of the four windows in the front portion of the building is a small hole cut into the wall. Situated at the same height as the top of the windows, the hole likely held an air conditioning unit for the church. East of this is the junction between the two buildings where the back portion juts out farther to the north. There is a single, wood, four-over-four, hung window which has been partially boarded located on the wall. The north wall of the back portion of the building features an off-center, single, wood, paneled door with a small set of concrete steps.

The rear of the building, the east elevation, has a single, two-over-two, hung, metal window located towards the north end of the wall. To the north of this window, an entry has been boarded over. South of the existing window are two window openings which have been infilled with weatherboard.

The front portion of the south elevation is similar to the north elevation with four, regularly spaced, two-over-two, metal, hung windows. Towards the east

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part of the front portion is a single, wood, glazed, paneled door with a wood ramp. The back portion of the building is even with the front portion. The back portion of the south elevation contains two infilled window openings flanking a central double entry which has also been infilled. This entry may have been the front door during the two-year period that the back portion of the church was the entire church building.

The noncontributing, 1960s, cinder block building is a simple, rectangular, concrete block, painted building with an asphalt-covered, front-gabled roof. The gable ends are filled with weatherboard. Other decorative details consist of exposed rafters on the long sides of the building. The east elevation, also the primary elevation, has a centrally located, single, wood, glazed, paneled door with no porch. There are no windows on this elevation. The north and south sides are identical with two evenly spaced, metal, one-over-one, hung windows with projected concrete sills. On the back of the building, there is a single, centrally located, wood, glazed, paneled door.

The contributing outhouse is set against the southeast boundary of the property. The walls of the outhouse are clad with plywood, painted white. The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles and features exposed rafters similar to the church building. The door to the outhouse is wood similar to the walls. The outhouse remains operational.

The noncontributing, 1980s, wood well house is a simple structure with a wood gable roof. The south side of the well house has a canvas covering, while tar paper covers other parts. The well house is located just off the tree line marking the north boundary of the property.

DESCRIPTION OF ST. PAUL BAPTIST CEMETERY

The cemetery is divided into two sections by a wide grassy lane. There are four rows of graves on the east side and five rows on the west. The age of the graves are mixed on either side. The earliest known grave in the cemetery is that of Laura Nelson, died 1892. Sixteen of the graves have unknown burial dates. Burials have continued to the present with Janie V. Redd occurring within the past year, died 03/24/2001. The headstones vary from simple unmarked or illegible stones to the engraved, upright, granite markers commonly in use today. Although several of the stones are decoratively treated, none stand out as especially artistically significant.

The boundaries of the cemetery are marked with a noncontributing fence and gate. Outside of the fence, the cemetery is surrounded on the east, south and west sides by pasture land. A twenty-one foot setback separates the cemetery from the dirt road marking the section line to the north. The west, south and

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east fence is typical wire with metal posts used to fence agricultural lands. The north fence is chainlink with wood posts. Although some type of fence was probably in use, none of the fence appears to be historic. In addition to trees scattered among the headstones, there are several trees along the boundary lines. The entry to the cemetery is marked with a nonhistoric gate. The gate has a tall, metal, flat, archway. Within that, the smaller, metal, swinging, white gate has a center cross extending above the top. On either side of the swinging gate are two crosses on the ornamenting the simple metal pickets of the fence. The date of the gate is unknown.

At the end of Section 7, is a list of known people interred in the cemetery. The list is alphabetical and was obtained from the Cemetery Directory in the 1994 "Saint Paul Baptist Church of Meeker, A Self Portrait, A Pictorial History of the Past, Present, and the Future," prepared by church members, and the website www.rootsweb.com/~okcemete/lincoln/stpaul/stpaul.htm, prepared by Robert Farrar. The website list was last accessed on 13 March 2002. When information differed, the Cemetery Directory is cited as the more reliable source. There are about 136 graves within the cemetery. Of these, forty-seven occurred prior to 1952. In addition to the sixteen graves with unknown burial dates which likely occurred before 1952, forty-six percent of the graves fall within the period of significance. Although just less than half of the graves occurred during the district's period of significance, the cemetery is considered a contributing resource as it demonstrates the commitment of this Black community to Lincoln County. If the Black community in Lincoln County was transient, the cemetery would likely only contain a handful of graves and would have been in use for a limited time.

Like most rural cemeteries, many of the graves share a common name with families typically located in the same proximity. Nine of the graves indicated participation in military action, including World War I, World War II and Vietnam. The cemetery is significant for its overall association with the rural Black ethnic heritage in Lincoln County. None of the internees have been identified as historically significant in the other identified National Register areas of significance. As the cemetery is not associated with the productive lives of the people interred, it is unlikely additional study of the individuals would notably alter the significance of the cemetery.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

The St. Paul Baptist Church has been altered by the modification to the windows, including the boarding of many windows in the back portion in about 1970 and the change to shorter, two-over-two, metal, hung windows in 1980. Due to the minimal detail of the church, these changes have had a noted impact on the integrity of materials to the church. The addition of the cinder block

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Section 7 Page 13 St. Paul Baptist Church and Cemetery
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building to the northeast of the church in the 1960s and the well house to the northwest of the church in the 1980s also impacts the integrity of the church's setting. The well house also indicates a significant alteration to the interior of the church, indoor plumbing. However, the church maintains its integrity of overall location, design, workmanship, feeling and association sufficiently to contribute to a district significant for its association with the rural Black ethnic heritage in Lincoln County.

Modifications to the St. Paul Baptist Cemetery include the erection of nonhistoric fencing around the cemetery. This modification has had minimal impact on the cemetery, as it was likely fenced previously in a similar manner. Additionally, a new gate has been constructed; however, the gate too has minimal impact on the cemetery as it does not significantly alter the major components of the cemetery's integrity. The most adverse alteration to the cemetery has been the continued use of the site for burials. The new graves are scattered among the historic graves so the overall cemetery continues to be impacted by these burials. However, because the cemetery is considered with the church within the context of rural Black ethnic heritage in Lincoln County, it maintains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and association to be a contributing resource to this discontinuous district.

MARKED GRAVES IN THE ST. PAUL BAPTIST CEMETERY

Name	Born	Died	Military
Anderson, Jacob.	08-26-1844	12-28-1933	
Anderson, Mary J.	Unknown	12-29-1906	
Anderson, Melinda.	05-16-1865	07-1956	
Anderson, Virginia Jean.	05-04-1924	03-21-1962	
Anderson, Robert Thomas.	1903	11-21-1978	
Anderson, Ruben T.	Unknown.	Unknown.	
Anderson, William.	1855	02-28-1936	
Anderson, William I.	12-05-1890	07-20-1951	Army, WWI
Arinwine, Winifred Tyree.	07-27-1906	01-04-1932	
Armstrong, Herbert.	1902	1931	
Armstrong, Jane.	1899	1956	
Armstrong, Leslie.	1905	1977	
Armstrong, Rena.	1868	1956	
Armstrong, Sewilla.	03-02-1907	03-19-1982	
Armstrong, Theophilus D.	10-07-1907	10-31-1967	
Armstrong, Thomas B.	1858	1943	
Bass, Baby.	1918	1918	

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St. Paul Baptist Church and Cemetery
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Bass, Bernie.	1917	1934	
Bass, Evan.	Unknown.	1917	
Bass, Lidie.	Unknown.	1925	
Bass, Luceil-Lincin.	1924	1924	
Bass, Suewillie.	1889	1924	
Bass, Willie.	Unknown.	1910	
Born, John.	03-20-1908	1962	
Brady, Woodrow.	02-09-1954	04-19-1995	
Branham, Jacob.	12-25-1906	02-17-1969	Army, WWII
Brown, John E.		03-20-1949	
Campbell, Blanche.	1913	1914	
Campbell, Elzora.	Unknown.	11-13-1947	
Campbell, Lillie Bell Toliver.	08-09-1882	01-01-1946	
Campbell, Linda.	11-13-1938	09-18-1998	
Campbell, Maudie Preston.	04-23-1887	02-25-1980	
Campbell, Peter Solon.	03-10-1871	05-13-1960	
Campbell, Roberta.	1902	Unknown.	
Campbell, Solon L.	08-25-1904	09-19-1997	
Clark, Mary J.	09-29-1898	09-09-1970	
Clemmons, James.	11-10-1874	12-26-1923	
Clemmons, Merlin.	07-31-1911	11-05-1949	WWII
Earl, Walter.	Unknown.	1947	
Farrow, Jennie	1861	07-29-1916	
Grant, Freddie L.	02-26-1932	05-10-1971	
Grant, W.M.	06-12-1881	02-21-1944	
Hegwood, Theodosia E.	1888	1955	
Hill, Calvin R.	1873	1949	
Hill, Laura.	10-30-1876	06-23-1945	
Humphrey, Ruby Anderson.	11-28-1920	02-07-1944	
Jenkins, Martha.	1913	1993	
Johnson, Willie B.	Unknown.	1958	
Jones, James.	1872	1919	
Kirk, Lillie Mae.	10-24-1928	Unknown.	
Leach, H.M.	Unknown.	05-07-1943	
Leach, Maett.	Unknown.	08-28-1938	
Leach, R.	Unknown.	12-31-1937	
Lee, Bettie.	1872	1953	
Lee, Cleveland L.	1891	Unknown.	
Lee, Edith P.	04-04-1944	03-21-1946	
Lee, Elizabeth.	1914	2000	
Lee, Eloyd E.	02-25-1938	05-02-1969	
Lee, Gertrude M.	1912	1992	
Lee, Minnie L.	1892	1963	
Lee, Porter.	06-26-1911	06-08-1993	

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Lee, Searcy Henry.	07-07-1903	04-22-1977	
Lee, Tommie.	1871	1957	
Lee, Willie.	12-09-1894	08-06-1973	
Mathis, Elnora Campbell.	02-03-1910	01-10-1993	
May, Leslie E.	09-22-1909	12-18-1991	
May, Pearl E.	12-15-1909	Unknown.	
Morgan, Curtis.	10-13-1945	10-04-1969	
Mother, Precious Memories.	09-29-1898	09-09-1970	
Nelson, Alberta Campbell.	10-26-1902	02-07-1959	
Nelson, Laura.	Unknown.	1892	
Nelson, M.H.	Unknown.	Unknown.	
Paker, Matthew.	01-06-1921	02-24-1975	Army, WWII
Parker, Annie.	04-26-1891	11-07-1957	
Parker, Annie L.	10-30-1918	10-23-1986	
Parker, Charley.	1885	1965	
Parker, David.	03-10-1878	04-15-1921	
Parker, James Thomas.	03-12-1940	Unknown.	22 nd Mil. Police Co.
Parker, John.	05-12-1918	10-17-1953	AAF WWII
Parker, Lawson.	Unknown.	92YR-6MO-22Days	
Parker, Leora.	08-17-1931	06-01-1985	
Parker, Louise.	1888	Unknown.	
Parker, Samuel.	1926	1991	
Parker, Samuel Jr.	1954	1985	
Parker, Vernon.	09-15-1863	08-23-1982	
Powell, Laura Tubbs.	01-01-1903	08-13-1990	
Preston, Louise.	12-22-1866	08-11-1938	
Randles, Texanna.	1881	1954	
Rankins, James.	08-26-1856	04-12-1911	
Redd, Eugenia.	05-21-1927	12-17-1997	
Redd, George Sr.	12-17-1886	01-08-1937	
Redd, Janie V.	11-06-1915	03-24-2001	
Redd, Margarette E.	01-23-1896	01-29-1983	
Redd, Permilla J.	10-28-1978	1991	
Redd, Walter H. Sr.	03-10-1920	03-11-1978	
Reed, Helen P.	08-08-1929	11-09-1975	
Roberson, Alvin L.	1949	2000	
Roberson, R.D.	12-26-1919	11-14-1980	Army, WWII
Roberson, Wiley B.	02-20-1923	02-01-1987	
Robinson, Ronnie D.	01-10-1933	12-10-1987	
Scott, Eliza.	09-29-1877	06-28-1933	
Spriggs, Glasgow.	02-14-1912	04-08-1985	
Spriggs, Lula May.	05-09-1912	03-30-1981	
Thompson, George W.	Unknown.	10-20-1913	

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Toliver, Melvina. Slavery. 105 Years
Toliver, Phoebe. Unknown. 1936
Tubbs, Arthur Sr. 1897 1954
Tubbs, Cordia. 1898 1965
Tubbs, Floyd. 10-26-1929 11-06-1966
Tubbs, Floyd. 1924 1942
Tubbs, Freddie L. 03-07-1942 07-29-1995 Navy, Vietnam
Tubbs, Jeff Jr. 04-17-1933 11-27-1994
Tubbs, Jeff. 10-25-1904 03-10-1933
Tubbs, Laura Frances. 01-24-1907 10-26-1999
Tubbs, Maurice. 05-10-1938 04-21-1966
Tubbs, Rev. A.W. Jr. 04-17-1922 10-23-1988
Tubbs, Robert. 04-10-1870 05-24-1955
Tubbs, Robert. 07-31-1920 05-08-1964 Army, WWII
Tubbs, Rosa B. 1894 Unknown.
Tubbs, Rosia. 12-15-1877 02-20-1957
Tubbs, Tom L. 01-27-1909 01-06-1982
Turner, Jessley Tyree. 03-10-1902 08-11-1928
Tyree, Ernest V. 10-24-1899 07-17-1936
Tyree, Wiley. Unknown. 1934
Watkins, Owen. 01-20-1909 Unknown.
Williams, Alice R. 01-29-1879 04-18-1961
Williams, Charlie. 04-03-1884 03-01-1970
Williams, Evan. Unknown. Unknown.
Williams, Infant. 11-16-1940 Unknown.
Williams, James E. 1908 1943
Williams, Lucy. 12-27-1886 1976
Williams, Mary. Unknown. 12-09-1918
Williams, Marty. Unknown. Unknown.
Williams, Ples. Unknown. Unknown.
Williams, William. 12-17-1852 07-01-1907
Williams, Willie Lee. 05-16-1907 08-19-1958

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				name of property
				<u> Lincoln County, Oklahoma </u>
				county and State

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SUMMARY

The St. Paul Baptist Church and Cemetery, located in the Meeker vicinity, Lincoln County, Oklahoma, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with rural Black ethnic heritage in Lincoln County. The church and cemetery, separated by $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, serve as reminders of a minority African-American community in the predominately white county. Rural resources associated with the Black community are particularly important as they commonly did not have the longevity of use or existence urban facilities enjoyed. The exact development of the church and cemetery are clouded due to the general lack of reliable historic documents available for rural and African-American resources. As with many churches, St. Paul Baptist Church marks its founding previous to the construction of an actual building with members originally meeting under a Blackjack tree. A 1939 fire destroyed many records of the church and the tangible connection to the earliest church history. The earliest grave in the related cemetery dates to 1892.

Sharing an important historic connection, the church and cemetery are nominated as a district. Separated by less than a mile, the area between the resources does not contain any properties directly associated with the church and cemetery. As such, the church and cemetery form a discontinuous district. The church is the dominant resource as it better represents the activities of the Black community during the period of significance and retains a higher degree of integrity. Because the district is nominated primarily for its association with the church, the period of significance begins in 1940, when the first half of the existing church building was moved to the site. The period of significance extends to 1952, the current National Register fifty year mark. As the property is owned by a religious organization but is significant for its association with historic events, it meets Criteria Consideration A.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

In general, churches and cemeteries are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places to avoid any appearance of tacit federal or state approval of certain religious beliefs. However, in cases where the resources are associated with events beyond religion, churches and cemeteries are eligible for the Register. Such is the case with the St. Paul Baptist Church and Cemetery in Lincoln County. Associated with a small rural Black community in Lincoln County, the church and cemetery are the most tangible resources of an enclave that frequently lived in the shadows. Although the Black population in Lincoln County was never large, the laws of the land mandated segregation of the African-American minority from the Euro-American majority of the county. Segregation in much of the Twentieth Century occurred not only with public

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services, such as transportation and education, but also in just about all aspects of daily life. With often limited political or monetary ability to counteract the unequal treatment of society-at-large, the Black community frequently turned to the one area over which they had much control, the exercise of religion. As such, the establishment of African-American churches and cemeteries are historically significant as they are often the best representations of the Black community during this period.

Predominately rural, Lincoln County had a population of only 29,529 by 1940. Of this number, 2,617 were African-American, representing just under 9% of the total county population. By 1950, the total population in Lincoln County was down to 22,102 with barely over 8% of these being African-American. Unfortunately, the 1950 census did not break down the population for minor civil divisions by counties, instead concentrating on the growing chasm between rural and urban dwellers.¹

Divided into minor civil divisions, Lincoln County in 1940 contained three cities, nine towns and twenty-five townships. In 1940, the largest concentration of African-American population in Lincoln County was in the city of Chandler, the county seat. At that time, over four hundred residents were Black. The other cities and towns in the county counted a total of 237 Black residents. Combined, twenty-five percent of the African-American population in Lincoln County in 1940 lived in town. Outside of town, the only three townships in Lincoln County with an African-American population over two hundred were the South Fox with 219, South Keokuk with 265 and Tohee with 235. Together, these three townships contained twenty-seven percent of the Black population in the county. Only two townships did not have any Black residents, Bryan and Osage. The Black population in each of the remaining twenty townships numbered less than two hundred, including the North Choctaw Township where the church and cemetery are located. In all, seventy-five percent of Lincoln County's African-American population in 1940 lived in rural areas.²

The 1940 census records seventy-seven African-Americans within the North Choctaw Township of Lincoln County. Notably, in June 1941 the St. Paul Baptist

¹16th Census of United States: 1940, (Volume II. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943) 894. See also A Report of the 17th Decemial Census of United States: 1950, (Volume II, Part 36. Washington D,C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1952).

²Ibid.

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Church marked attendance at Sunday School of thirty-seven and fifty-seven for church services. Although African-Americans from outside the North Choctaw Township may have attended St. Paul Baptist Church, the fifty-seven attendees represent just under seventy-five percent of the township population.³

According to church history, in 1939 a fire destroyed the St. Paul Baptist Church. Following the fire, "...church assembly was held in `School District 107' house until a building could be bought." The history further states that "The front portion of the old church building is the original Saint Paul." The church history indicates "The back portion was Galilee Baptist Church."⁴ More recent information furnished by the church clerk, however, reveals the entire church burned in 1939. According to information supplied by the clerk to the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, the Galilee Baptist Church was moved to the site in 1940, comprising the back portion of the existing building. The clerk indicates that the Galilee Baptist Church dissolved its membership around 1938. Two years later, the front portion of the building "...was purchased in Meeker."⁵ The conjoined building continued to serve the needs of the surrounding Black community until 1993 when the congregation moved to the Douglas Gymnasium in Chandler.

Research in The Black Dispatch, the African-American newspaper in Oklahoma City, during the early 1940s provides evidence that the Galilee Baptist Church in Lincoln County continued in existence through 1944. However, the newspaper does not contain references to either St. Paul or Galilee in 1939 and 1940. As such, it is possible that the Galilee Baptist Church sold its building to St. Paul and moved its congregation to either a new church building or possibly began using other available buildings. Although containing numerous references to the churches beginning in 1941, none included information of St. Paul expanding their facilities. Most citations dealt with the Sunday service and

³Ibid. See also The Black Dispatch, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), 19 April 1941.

⁴Mary Brown et al., ed. "Saint Paul Baptist Church of Meeker, A Self Portrait, A Pictorial History of the Past, Present and the Future," (On file in the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, October 1994), 9.

⁵Veloria Harris, Church Clerk, in letter to Cynthia Smelker, Architectural Historian, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, dated 29 August 1996, (On file in the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma).

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visitors to the community.⁶

Due to the similarity to school buildings, it is also possible the St. Paul congregation acquired the two buildings from the sale of old schoolhouses. In March 1939, The Lincoln County Republican reported that four rural schools were sold with the purchaser being responsible for removing the old buildings. The surplus buildings were replaced with new Works Progress Administration schoolhouses or were considered "...superfluous due to consolidation of district."⁷

In the first half of the twentieth century, churches and schools were typically critical institutions within rural communities. These two public entities often shared facilities and congregations. For the African-American community, the church in general has further been suggested to possibly be "...the strongest source of community cohesion and was the one social institution in which Blacks had total control."⁸ According to a recent study of rural African-American churches in Tennessee,

"Historic rural African-American churches are, above all, historical artifacts of the creation, development, persistence, and continuity of three vital and interrelated components of African-American ethnic heritage: ethnic identity, religion and education. After Emancipation, the actual places or locations of historic rural African-American churches signified the establishment of a sacred place where community institutions would be nurtured, cemeteries would be established, and rituals of culture and identity perpetuated and protected. Rural African-American churches also were closely associated with the development of social institutions that were designed to promote the welfare of African-American society and with the creation and enhancement of African-American drama, dance, and

⁶The Black Dispatch, January 1939 - December 1944.

⁷The Lincoln County Republican, (Chandler, Oklahoma), 8 March 1939.

⁸Susan Allen, National Register Nomination for "Bethel Missionary Baptist Church," Carter County, Oklahoma, (On file in the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: September 1994), 12.

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music."⁹

Despite the uncertain history of the buildings which formed St. Paul Baptist Church, the church doubtlessly nurtured the Black community in Lincoln County during the period of significance. As a critical element of the ethnic identity of the Black community, the church merits recognition of its historic significance.

As a contributing resource, the historic St. Paul Baptist Cemetery is an important extension of the church's significance. A resolution was made by the Board of County Commissioners that stated that as the one acre of land had been used as a cemetery for the past 30 years, it was ordered that this acre should be recognized as a public cemetery as of 6/5/1922.¹⁰ The earliest known burial date in the cemetery is 1892.

Although not located immediately adjacent to the church building, the cemetery provides tangible evidence that the Black community in Lincoln County predates Oklahoma's statehood. Because of the continued use of the cemetery, which diminishes the overall integrity of the resource, and that the church is the more notable resource as representation of a thriving Black community, the period of significance for the district begins with the creation of the existing church building.

At this time, the only historic rural African-American church and cemetery which have been identified in Lincoln County by the State Historic Preservation Office is St. Paul Baptist Church and Cemetery. The county-wide history and genealogy published in 1988 did not identify any rural Black churches, including St. Paul. Although the history briefly discusses the St. Paul Baptist Cemetery, it does not identify it as an African-American cemetery. As such, it is unknown if any of the other cemeteries noted in the book are African-American. The county history does note that there were approximately twenty separate African-American schools in the county, although it does not specify a time frame for these schools.¹¹

⁹Powerful Artifacts: A Guide to Surveying and Documenting Rural African-American Churches, (Murfreesboro, Tennessee: Center for Historic Preservation, Middle Tennessee State University, 2000), 27.

¹⁰Lincoln County, Oklahoma History, (Claremore, Oklahoma: Country Lane Press, 1988),

¹¹Ibid., 302.

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As the only identified rural African-American church and cemetery in Lincoln County, the St. Paul Baptist Church and Cemetery are eligible for the National Register. The church and cemetery are the best known tangible resources associated with the rural Black ethnic heritage in the county.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

St. Paul Baptist Church - A rectangular parcel of land located 1.3 miles west of State Highway 18 in the Northwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, Section 32, Township 13 N, Range 4 East. Beginning on the southwest corner of the nominated property, proceed 106 feet north along the section road, then 206 feet east along the tree line marking the north boundary of the property, then 106 feet south along the tree line marking the east boundary of the property, then 206 west along the tree line marking the south boundary of the property to point of beginning.

St. Paul Baptist Cemetery - Almost a square parcel of land located 1.9 miles west of State Highway 18 in the Northeast 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, Section 31, Township 13 North, Range 4 East. Beginning on the northeast corner of the nominated property, proceed 232 feet south along the gate, then 208 feet along the back gate, then 232 feet along the gate, then 208 feet along the section road to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the two parcels of land containing the church and related outbuildings and the cemetery. Both parcels encompass only the area directly associated with the historic resources. As the parcels are separated by .7 miles with the intervening area not directly associated with or containing any related resources, boundaries for each property are separately established, creating a discontinuous district.