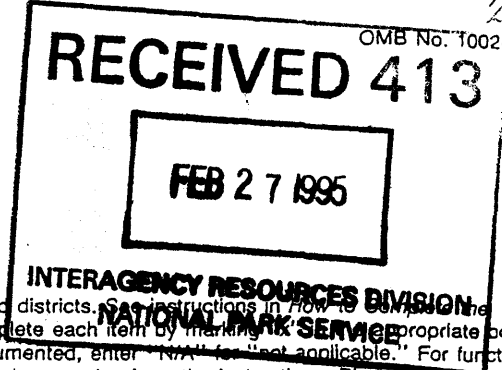


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name ALLEN CHAPEL A.M. E. CHURCH

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 224 SOUTH MANEY AVENUE Not for publication

city or town MURFREESBORO vicinity

state TENNESSEE code TN county RUTHERFORD code 149 zip code 37130

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Hays 2/18/95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. 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:)

for
Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper
Entered in the National Register Date of Action 3/31/95

Allen, Chapel- A.M.E. Church
Name of Property

Rutherford Co., TN
County and State

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
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: gable-end church with Gothic Revival influence

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK; WOOD
roof ASPHALT SHINGLE
other GLASS

Narrative Description

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

See 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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions of property significance.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A-G with checkboxes and descriptions of property characteristics.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, landmark, survey, engineering record.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE : AFRICAN-AMERICAN

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1889-1945

Significant Dates

1889

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hyde, Dave; Scruggs, John, Oliver, and Horace--builders

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

MTSU CENTER FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church
Name of Property

Rutherford Co., TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Murfreesboro 315SW

1

1	6
---	---

5	5	5	3	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	6	6	6	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone

Easting

Northing

3

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone

Easting

Northing

4

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

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 CARROLL VAN WEST

organization MTSU CENTER FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION date September 15, 1993

street & number PO Box 30, MTSU telephone 615-898-2947

city or town MURFREESBORO state TN zip code 37132

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church (William Butler, contact person)

street & number 224 South Maney Avenue telephone 615-893-2419 (Butler's #)

city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37130

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Rutherford Co., TN

VII. DESCRIPTION

The Allen Chapel A.M.E. stands immediately east of the historic City Cemetery at 224 South Maney Avenue in Murfreesboro (pop. 44,922), Rutherford County, Tennessee. The one-story brick building, constructed in 1889, has a brick foundation and a gable asphalt shingle roof. The church is vernacular in its architectural style, representing a type common in the late nineteenth century that has been described as "gable-end" by architectural historians Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings.

The east facade has a three-bay organization (window-entrance-window) common for the gable-end vernacular type. The tall narrow double hung one-over-one windows are framed by a brick segmental arch lintel. The original entrance door was replaced by double wooden paneled doors in about 1937-1940, a period when considerable architectural modernization of the church took place. Flanking the door are brick classical pilasters. At the same time, a new one-story portico and porch was added to the entrance. The pediment has a gable, asphalt shingle roof supported by single wooden classical columns. A wrought-iron stair rail was added to the porch in about 1975. A ventilation grill is located in the center of the facade, near the point of the gable roof. Two decorative brick supports for the roof are evident near the end of the roof slope on the north and south side of this facade.

The north elevation is almost unchanged since its original construction; the only alteration is the addition of an air-conditioning unit near the northeast corner of the building in about 1975. The elevation has four bays of double-hung one-over-one narrow windows, divided by five brick buttresses, creating a vernacular Gothic Revival effect. Connecting the wall to the roof are regularly spaced brick dentils.

The west elevation has an original small pastor's study, which is topped by a hipped asphalt shingle roof, centered in a solid brick wall. The study's three-sided projection has a centered double hung four-over-four window on each side. To the immediate south of the study projection is the original rear entrance to the building. The wooden door frame is original but the door itself dates to about 1940. A limestone step leads to the door.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Rutherford Co., TN

The south elevation is almost an exact match of the north elevation. The differences are that a small frame storage shed (c. 1975) has been added just under the northeast window and this elevation contains the building's only surviving chimney stack, also near the northeast corner.

The interior spaces of the church are largely intact, although materials, ceilings, and the altar and choir stand have been altered in the mid to late twentieth century. Carpet has been added over the original floors throughout most of the church.

Upon entering the church, you encounter a small vestibule. To the north are two rooms for the ladies lounge and restroom. To the south is the men's restroom, which is also partially used for the storage of church records. Both of these interior restrooms date to a renovation of the church from about 1937 to 1940.

At the southeast corner of the vestibule is a circa 1980 door that leads up an original (1889) staircase to the Sunday School classroom. This room was originally the balcony to the church, which was filled in and changed into a classroom during the 1937 to 1940 renovations. The simple wood paneling enclosing the balcony is clearly evident and could be easily removed if the congregation ever chose to restore the balcony space. Also evident in the classroom is some of the original wooden ceiling detailing that has been covered over in the main sanctuary by a drop ceiling.

The original wooden panel doors that lead into the sanctuary remain in place; carpet now covers most of the floor. The size of the sanctuary is unaltered from original construction, but a drop ceiling was added during the 1937-1940 renovation. The eight light fixtures date from that modernization of the interior. The church pews are also from the 1930s, purchased from a Murfreesboro white church and added to the building at that time. The pulpit, altar and choir stand were modernized in about 1980; faux wood paneling covers the original plaster wall and a decorative Gothic arch that framed the pulpit. As part of this 1980 renovation, a new door was added to provide access to the pastor's study. The interior of this space remains an intact arrangement of three chambers. The north chamber is the

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Allen Chapel AME Church, Rutherford Co., TN

actual study; the middle chamber is a small restroom (added during 1937-40); and the south chamber is used as storage space for the choir.

Twentieth century demands for modern comforts (electricity and air-conditioning) and new seating, consequently, have altered the original appearance of the church's interior of the late nineteenth century. The majority of changes took place in the late 1930s when the congregation decided that room for Sunday-school instruction was imperative for the future growth of the church. At the same time, the congregation has always carefully preserved the simple, yet compelling, architectural dignity of the church's exterior.

Recent developments demonstrate that this respect for the past will continue into the future. Currently, the congregation is exploring ways of expanding the church's service to the public. Concerns that these plans might further compromise the architectural integrity of the church led to a postponement of the completion of this nomination. Congregation members understand and appreciate the original beauty and historical continuity of the church and when and if the congregation expands its service to the public, it plans to do so in a way compatible and sympathetic to the original church.

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Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Rutherford Co., TN

VIII. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, at 224 South Maney Avenue, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significant local association with the religious history of the African-American community of Murfreesboro from the Reconstruction era to the mid-twentieth century.

The congregation of Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church is the oldest African-American congregation in Rutherford County. Established by newly freed men and freed women in 1866, the congregation was one of many such efforts by African-Americans throughout the South to establish their own community and cultural institutions, free of white domination and dictates, in those early promising months of Reconstruction. Historical research over the past twenty years by historians Clarence Walker, Eric Foner, and others has concluded that during the Reconstruction period, African-Americans sought to create their own communities largely through the establishment of three institutions--churches, schools, and cemeteries. "The rise of the independent black church," emphasizes Eric Foner, was "the most striking example of the thriving institutional structure blacks created in the aftermath of emancipation." (1) According to Foner's research,

Second only to the family as a focal point of black life stood the church. And, as in the case of the family, Reconstruction was a time of consolidation and transformation of black religion. With the death of slavery, urban blacks seized control of their own churches. . . . The creation of an independent black religious life proved to be a momentous and irreversible consequence of emancipation. (2)

The beginnings of the Allen Chapel A.M.E. congregation, led by trustees Peter Lytle, John Reeves, and John Claiborne, represent an important first step in the creation of Murfreesboro's post-Civil War African-American community and culture. It also represented a courageous first step for the newly freed people of color to break away from their dual, but second-class membership, in local white congregations and establish their own religious identity and practices.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Rutherford Co., TN

The congregation proved immediately popular with local blacks and in 1870, the church proudly hosted the third annual A.M.E. conference in Tennessee. The church first met in a building (no longer extant) at State and Spring streets and then moved to small frame chapel on South Academy Street across from the site where Bradley Academy (NR 6/14/90) now stands. Neither the building or even the actual town lot are extant today.

By 1889, African-Americans had established a large neighborhood south and east of the town square. During this first generation of freedom, Murfreesboro blacks had also gained the financial resources necessary to build a new church which would reflect their gains since Reconstruction as well as providing adequate worship space to meet the needs of a growing community. Trustees George Hester, Henry McMurray, Maryland Hoover, A. Pampables, and Dr. J. S. Bass purchased a town lot on South Maney Avenue immediately east of the old City Cemetery. By so doing, they connected the church to the area where Murfreesboro free blacks had once worked and lived during the antebellum era.

Construction by congregation members began at an unknown time in 1889. Dave Hyde, Sr., dug the foundation and basement while John Scruggs and his sons Oliver and Horace made the bricks and supposedly raised the building. Rev. T.W. Thorne was reverend at the time of construction; his role in the construction and design of the building is unknown.

The new brick church building, in a vernacular "gable-front" style, was finished in the fall of 1889. At its completion, it was one of the finest and most architecturally compelling of A.M.E. churches in all of rural Tennessee. In October 1889, the state convention of A.M.E. churches returned to Murfreesboro for the first time since 1870 and Bishop A. W. Wayman dedicated the splendid new building on October 23, 1889. The new church proved more than capable of serving the annual meeting and the conference returned to the church for annual state meetings in 1902, 1914, 1924, and 1973. As one of the most gracious buildings in the neighborhood, the church served a multi-purpose role as a community center for lectures and other social events as well as its very prominent role as a local, regional, and statewide meeting place for A.M.E. ministers.

A church history by Rev. Robert E. Keesee concluded that with the new building, "the congregation continued to grow and became the

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Section number 8 Page 6

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Rutherford Co., TN

most influential and affluent church in Rutherford County and one of the major pastoral appointments" (2). This conclusion was shared by early Rutherford County historian Carlton Sims, who observed in 1947 that "the most outstanding church of this denomination [A.M.E.] is Allen's [sic] Chapel in Murfreesboro" (189). These observations reflect the church's prominence among whites and blacks alike as the first African-American congregation in Murfreesboro along with the prominent role its church building had played as an architectural and community landmark in the historic African-American neighborhood of Murfreesboro. It also reflects that role that the congregation has played in the A.M.E. ministry in Tennessee. Twelve A.M.E. ministers--Gratz Hodge, Perkins Childress, Eugene Childress, Ervin Childress, Will Alexander, Jesse C. Alexander, I.S.G. Brown, Erie James, Steven Miller, Johnny Newsom, and Robert Snails--have emerged from the congregation's ranks. Moreover, the pastors of the church have included such influential A.M.E. ministers as T. W. Thorne, E. R. Reid, and Beecher Calendar Frierson. The research of Clarence Walker shows that one reason the A.M.E. gained ascendancy in southern black communities over their white-controlled Methodist counterparts (Methodist Episcopal South and Methodist Episcopal North) during the late nineteenth century was that the A.M.E. churches only used black ministers and that they trained and produced black ministers for other congregations.

The interior of the church was modernized, primarily in the 1930s as a way of adding classroom space for Sunday school education. This historic alteration was not changed during the 1980 changes to the pulpit and choir areas of the church. The exterior of Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church is an excellent vernacular statement of the "gable-front" church type of the late nineteenth century. Home to the oldest African-American congregation in Rutherford County, the building is a cultural landmark in Murfreesboro's African-American community and represents the continuity of black ethnic heritage in Murfreesboro from the generation of Reconstruction to the present.

Endnotes:

1. Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877 (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 95.
2. Ibid., 88.

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Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Rutherford Co., TN

IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Spence, John C. Annals of Rutherford County. Vol. II: 1829-1870. Murfreesboro: Rutherford County Historical Society, 1991.

Walker, Clarence G. A Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982.

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Section number 10 Page 8

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Rutherford Co., TN

X. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is at 224 South Maney Avenue and occupies lot 9 in city block "P" as designated in the attached excerpt from Rutherford County Tax Map 13-091-MP.

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundary contains the historic city lot associated with the Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Rutherford Co., TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church
224 South Maney Avenue, Murfreesboro, Rutherford Co., TN
Photos by: Carroll Van West
 MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
Date: July 1993
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
 Nashville, TN

East facade, facing northwest
1 of 17

East facade, facing west
2 of 17

Entrance detail, east facade, facing west
3 of 17

East facade and north elevation, facing southwest
4 of 17

North elevation, facing southwest
5 of 17

West and south elevations, facing northeast
6 of 17

West elevation, facing northeast
7 of 17

South elevation, facing northeast
8 of 17

Ladies lounge, facing northeast
9 of 17

Ladies lounge into restroom, facing northwest
10 of 17

Men's restroom, staircase door, facing southeast
11 of 17

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Section number PHOTOS Page 10

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Rutherford Co., TN

Staircase, from classroom, facing north
12 of 17

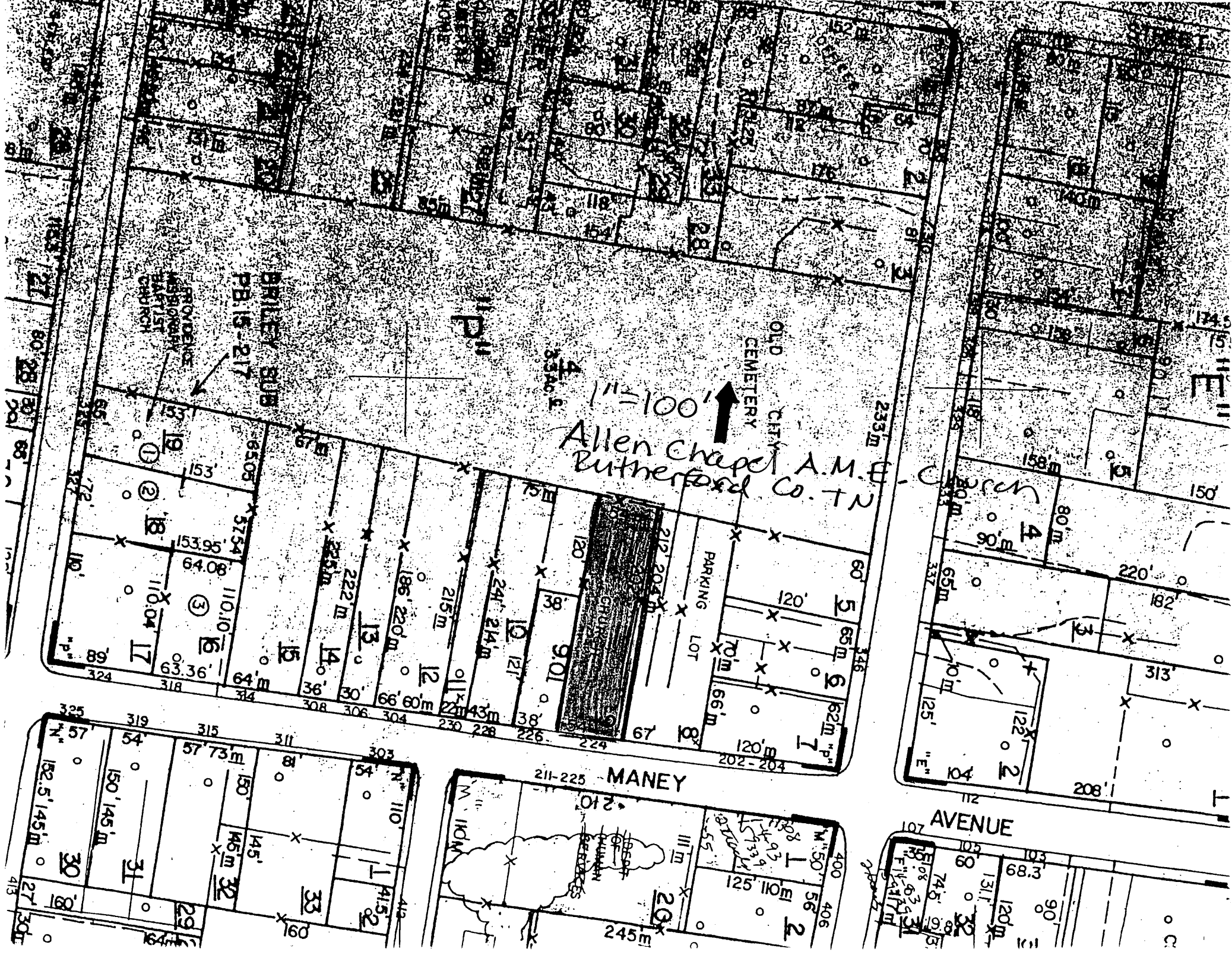
Classroom, facing north
13 of 17

Sanctuary, facing southwest
14 of 17

Sanctuary, facing northwest
15 of 17

Sanctuary, facing east
16 of 17

Sanctuary, facing west
17 of 17



1"=100'
Allen Chapel A.M.
Butnerford Co. TN

BRILEY SUB
PB. 15-217
EVIDENCE
LABORATORY
BAPTIST
CHURCH

OLD CHURCH
CEMETERY

CHURCH

PARKING
LOT

211-225 - MANEY

AVENUE

