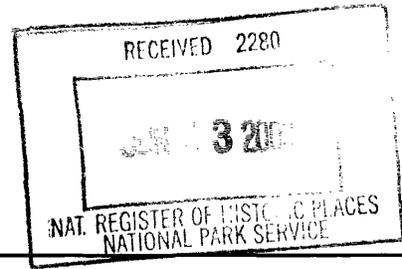


(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



735

1. NAME OF PROPERTY PHILLIPS CHAPEL CME CHURCH

HISTORIC NAME: Phillips Chapel CME Church

OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: Lincoln High School

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 638 N. Tornillo Street

CITY OR TOWN: Las Cruces

STATE: New Mexico

CODE: NM

COUNTY: Dona Ana

CODE: 013

ZIP CODE: 88001

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A

VICINITY: N/A

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 ___X___locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Katharine Slick

Signature of certifying official

17 June 2003

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

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

___ 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):

Joe
Edson R. Beall

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

8/4/03

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	1	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	0	0 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	1	0 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: RELIGION/religious facility; SOCIAL/meeting hall; EDUCATION/school

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: RELIGION/religious facility

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: OTHER: vernacular

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION CONCRETE
WALLS ADOBE
ROOF ASPHALT
OTHER WOOD

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-7).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- 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 VALUE, 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: A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK; SOCIAL HISTORY; EDUCATION

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1912 - 1952

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1912; 1924; 1934

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: African-American

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Unknown

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-8 through 8-16).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheets 9-17 through 9-19)

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- 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: Historic Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University: New Mexico State University, , Branson Library, Rio Grande Historical Collections/Hobson-Huntsinger University Archives and Special Collections.
- Other – Specify Repository: Phillips Chapel CME Church

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing
	1	13 333023E	3576559N

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-20)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-20)

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Terry Moody

ORGANIZATION: New Mexico State University

DATE: February 2003

STREET & NUMBER: 251 N. Roadrunner Pkwy, Apt. 605

TELEPHONE: (505) 521-3780

CITY OR TOWN: Las Cruces

STATE: NM

ZIP CODE: 88011

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS Las Cruces Quadrangle 7.5-minute series map (see attached)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photograph 21)

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America Clarence Fielder; Chair: Phillips Chapel Steward and Trustee Boards

STREET & NUMBER: 640 N. Almendra Street

TELEPHONE: (505) 524-7210

CITY OR TOWN: Las Cruces

STATE: NM

ZIP CODE: 88001

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

Phillips Chapel CME Church
Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, New Mexico

Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church is a one-story, adobe building with buttresses at the front elevation, and is representative of vernacular church architecture showing a modest influence of local Spanish/Hispano architectural traditions. The chapel is located on the northwest corner of N. Tornillo Street and E. Lucero Avenue in a barrio northeast of the Downtown Mall and east of the Mesquite Street Original Townsite Historic District (NRHP, 1985), in an ethnically mixed neighborhood of Hispanics and African-Americans. According to oral tradition, the neighborhood demographics were similar when the chapel was constructed.¹ The block where the chapel is located includes the Iglesia Sinai Del Concilio Latino Americano de Iglesias Cristianas church, several single-family residences, two uninhabited buildings, and two vacant lots. The surrounding architecture is a mixture of adobe buildings dating from the early 1900s, typically Spanish vernacular in appearance, with more recent construction in the Spanish Eclectic style.

Exterior Description

Phillips Chapel is of a simple, one volume rectangular plan, measuring approximately 29 feet by 38 feet, with a hexagonal apse extension at the rear measuring 8 feet long. Buttresses extending on each side of the façade are its most distinctive architectural features (see Photo 1). A pediment-shaped board-and-batten gable rises to meet the medium pitched roof (see Photo 2). The roof was re-shingled with asphalt shingles in the early 1990s. Open eaves extend slightly over the north and south exterior walls. From the curb, a concrete sidewalk leads to a plain wood two-leaf entry door (not original). Two narrow two-over-two windows set within wood frames are situated to either side of the front entrance. Similar windows situated along the side elevations (see Photo 3). Two small, two-over-two, double-hung windows set in wood frames are located on the north and south faces of the apse, which encloses the pulpit and choir loft.

In 2001, an addition measuring approximately 9 feet by 13 feet was built along the southeast corner of the building (see Photos 1 and 2). At that time, an original rear window was replaced to serve as an interior entranceway and exit. This addition provides for a handicap entrance to the church and a modern restroom facility. While the addition is obvious, it is compatible with the overall building design. A single hedgerow of free-growing shrubs lines the north side of the church's property, with an evergreen shrub located southwest of the church's entrance. Vehicles have access from E. Lucero Avenue for parking at the back of the church.

Interior Description

The modest interior measures 28 by 44 feet with a ceiling height of approximately 11 feet. The interior wall surfaces are plaster with pine wainscoting and are original to the building. Select images and text from *The*

¹ Personal conversation with Clarence Fielder, Chair of Phillips Chapel Steward and Trustee Boards and local historian of the Las Cruces African-American community.

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Section 7 Page 6

Phillips Chapel CME Church
Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, New Mexico

Black Biblical Heritage are modestly framed and displayed along the north and south walls.² The wood window frames, rectangular four-light wood sashes, and pine plank flooring are original. The lower windowpanes have been covered with an opaque, prism-like contact paper to shade out the sun.

The chapel seats approximately fifty people. The original plain wood benches, which stood on either side of the center aisle, were replaced in the 1940s with five rows of upholstered, wood-and-iron theater chairs purchased from the Del Rio Theater, Las Cruces³ (see Figure 7-1). Additional seating is provided by metal folding chairs. A raised platform to the rear of the church serves as the altar and pulpit, with a small choir loft behind. Each area is defined by two-foot wood partitions covered with liturgical cloths, the colors changing according to the church calendar. An area for kneeling is located to the front of the pulpit area and is padded with a red carpet, an extension of a center aisle runner that begins at the entrance. Just northeast of the pulpit area is a German-made piano, imported in the 1880s and donated to the church in the 1940s by Mr. and Mrs. George W. Frenger.⁴ In the late 1960s, a larger gas flame heater, situated in the southwest corner of the building, replaced a small gas heater that was centrally located in the chapel. The ceiling, now covered with white tile blocks, was lowered in the 1970s, and ceiling lights/fans were installed in 2001.

Except for modernizing updates, such as heating and electrical fixtures and the restroom addition, the chapel retains the majority of its original appearance both in its interior and exterior and, therefore, maintains its National Register integrity of location, design, workmanship, setting, and association.

² John L. Johnson. *The Black Biblical Heritage: Four Thousand Years of Black Biblical History*. Nashville, Tennessee: Winston-Derek Publishers, Inc., 1975.

³ Personal conversation with Clarence Fielder.

⁴ Debra Dominguez. "Church wrestles with wilting congregation." *Christian Index*. June 2001. pp. 26-27.

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Phillips Chapel CME Church
Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, New Mexico

Figure 7-1: Interior of Chapel, Facing West (2003)



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Section 8 Page 8

Phillips Chapel CME Church
Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, New Mexico

The Phillips Chapel CME Church, a simple one-room church located on the northeastern corner of N. Tornillo Street and E. Lucero Avenue, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A at the local level, for its significance to Ethnic Heritage/Black history, Social History, and Education. This religious institution meets eligibility under Criteria Consideration A for its historical importance as a gathering place for the African-American community since 1911. The chapel served also as a place of education for African-American children removed from Las Cruces public schools between 1924-1934 due to segregation. As such, Phillips Chapel CME Church is the only extant building that represents the institution of segregation in Las Cruces.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO

African-Americans have been significant to the history of southern New Mexico since the 1860s. The earliest African-Americans to spend more than a short period of time in the New Mexico Territory were troops of black soldiers—the famous “Buffalo soldiers”—sent by the government near the end of the Civil War.⁵ After a series of Indian raids against white settlers, the government sent four black regiments and their white commanders to protect the settlers, defeat the Indians, and then gather them onto reservations. Fort Selden, approximately 20 miles north of Las Cruces, was the station for many black infantry regiments from 1867 to 1891, when the fort was decommissioned.⁶ None of these soldiers settled in Las Cruces, but a number of soldiers stayed on and worked as cowboys on area ranches.⁷ Many soldiers, upon returning to homes in the South shared their experiences of life in the New Mexico Territory with family and friends. These stories possibly influenced some black individuals and families to migrate to the New Mexico Territory in the late 1800s. The black migration to New Mexico Territory is reflected in the population records of the United States Census. These records indicate that in 1850 only 22 blacks were living in the New Mexico Territory. These numbers grew gradually to 85 blacks in 1860, and 172 in 1870. By 1880 the number expanded dramatically to 1,015, reaching 1,956 in 1890.⁸

A number of forces caused the migration of black families to the Southwest.⁹ In 1876, federal troops were withdrawn from the South, leaving freedman to cope with the “Black Codes” enforced by many southern states. Freedman had little opportunity to make a living as laborers and tenant farmers, as wages were low and rent for housing and land high.¹⁰ Future crops often became collateral to pay for immediate subsistence needs.

⁵ Monroe Lee Billington. *New Mexico's Buffalo Soldiers, 1866-1900*. University Press of Colorado: Niwot, Colorado. 1991.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 205.

⁷ Barbara Richardson (compiled by). *Black Directory of New Mexico*. Panorama Press: Rio Rancho, New Mexico. 1976. pp. 66 - 67.

⁸ *Negro Population 1790 - 1915*. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sam L. Rogers, Director. Government Printing Office. Washington, D.C. 1918. pp. 43 - 44; Hall, Charles E (Specialist in Negro Statistics). *Negroes in the United States, 1920 - 32*. Prepared under the supervision of Z. R. Pettet, Chief Statistician for Agriculture. United States Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1935. pp 9 - 10.

⁹ Diedre Mullane. (editor). *Crossing the Danger Water: Three Hundred Years of African-American Writing*. Doubleday: New York, New York, 1993. pp. 455 - 456.

¹⁰ Steart E. Tolnay and E. M. Beck. “Rethinking the Role of Racial Violence in the Great Migration”. In *Black Exodus: The Great Migration from the American South*. Edited by Alferdteen Harrison. University Press of Mississippi: Jackson, Mississippi, 1991. pp. 20 - 21.

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Phillips Chapel CME Church
Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, New Mexico

Between 1875 and 1880, many African-Americans migrated to Kansas, as part of a movement called the "Exodusters." Other smaller groups left the South to live in Missouri, Colorado, Indian Territory (Oklahoma), Arkansas, Nebraska, Iowa, the Dakota Territory, and Mexico. African-Americans continued to leave the South to escape Jim Crow statutes and extreme racial prejudice through the 1920s, moving to areas in the North, Midwest and the Southwest, where they sought employment opportunities and the chance for a brighter future. Nonetheless, in 1900, the black population in New Mexico declined by approximately 350 individuals, with 1,610 individuals listed; this number increased slightly to 1,628 in 1910. Between 1910 and 1920, however, there was a dramatic increase in blacks migrating into New Mexico. The population more than tripled to 5,733 by the 1920 census. However, by 1930 there is a dramatic decline in the New Mexico black population to 2,850, a loss of approximately 3,000 individuals.¹¹

After the Atchison-Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was built in the 1890s, public service jobs opened up for many African-Americans in New Mexico. When the railroad extended to El Paso, African-Americans who earned their income from the rail service moved to Las Cruces, some taking positions in local hotels as chefs, waiters, and maids. Moreover, a number of African-Americans migrated with white farmers and their families as their servants. Reconstruction of the early migration of African-Americans to Las Cruces has been gleaned from early census records dating from 1900-1920, city directories, and a few church documents. Some migration stories have been passed down to family members, and have been recorded in oral histories, or shared during interviews with Las Cruces historians.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a number of African-Americans and their families migrated to Las Cruces. Many African-Americans made their home in Las Cruces as servants of migrating white families. A few black families came to farm land for white landowners or became tenant farmers. A handful established businesses.

Emory Douglas Williams is typical of this early migration pattern. In 1896, Mr. Williams, who had tuberculosis, moved from St. Louis, Missouri to Las Cruces, bringing his wife, Annie.¹² Annie nursed E.D. back to health in a tent she erected on the banks of the Rio Grande.¹³ After regaining his strength, E.D. opened

¹¹ Charles E. Hall (Specialist in Negro Statistics). *Negroes in the United States, 1920-32*. Prepared under the supervision of Z. R. Pettet, Chief Statistician for Agriculture. United States Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1935. pp. 9 - 10.

¹² Euola Cox and Barbara Richardson, Editors. *Noteworthy Black Women of New Mexico, Past and Present*. Published for International Women's Year Conference: Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1977; Mary M. Steeb, Michael Romero Taylor, Anthony C. Pennock. *The Las Cruces Historic Buildings Survey*. Dona Ana County Historical Society: Las Cruces, New Mexico, 1982. pp. 37, 118 - 121. *Buildings Survey*. Las Cruces, New Mexico. 1982: 37, 118 - 121; Barbara Richardson (compiled by). *Black Directory of New Mexico*. Panorama Press: Rio Rancho, New Mexico. 1976. pp.66 - 67.

¹³ Charlotte K. Mock. *Bridges: New Mexican Black Women, 1900-1950*. New Mexico Commission on the Status of Women: Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1985. p.11.

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Phillips Chapel CME Church

Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, New Mexico

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the Star Barbershop behind the Murillo house at 818 North Mesquite. Williams also invested in property, including a farm on Idaho Street, north of Wyatt Drive, and Annie farmed their 640 acres of highway frontage.¹⁴

Between 1900 and 1912, African-Americans continued to move into Las Cruces, where they began new lives in a variety of livelihoods. A Mr. Batties, for example, established a trash collection and janitorial service that proved to be a prosperous venture that employed many young local boys.¹⁵ With his team of horses, he also cleared the land along Alameda Boulevard where present day Alameda Junior High School is located. Daniel Hibler moved from Texas to Las Cruces to work as the chef for the Don Bernardo Hotel, on North Main Street, owned by the Freudenthal family.¹⁶ His wife, Ollie, also worked as a maid for the Don Bernardo Hotel.¹⁷ In 1909, Ollie gave birth to a baby girl, Gertrude, the first black child born in Las Cruces.¹⁸

The 1910 census lists 54 blacks living in Las Cruces, many of them newcomers.¹⁹ Doña Aña County is recorded as having a population of 65 blacks and 12,817 white.²⁰ A number of blacks had migrated from Texas, and other newcomers came from eastern and southern states. Many came to work as waiters, cooks, truck drivers, laborers, porters, and ranch hands. Typical of these newcomers were George and Louise Anderson, originally from South Carolina, moved to Las Cruces, where George worked as manager of a farm. W. D. Slater, his wife Stella, and their son came from Louisiana, to rent their own farm. Mr. A. (name not known) and Noele Toney, and their nephew, Brian, arrived from Florida. Mr. Toney worked as manager of the Park Hotel. J.B. Levy, age 74, originally from Tennessee owned Levy Barbershop. John Hughs, age 35, originally from England, came with his wife Ellen from Louisiana. Mr. Hughs owned Hughs Barbershop.²¹ In 1940, Ellen worked as a cook for Dr. McBride.²²

The Las Cruces African-American community continued to grow, with many families moving from Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. The 1920 census reports that 78 blacks, (43 males, and 35 females) were living in Doña Aña County.²³ Many of the adults served as laborers and domestic workers, as well as ranch-

¹⁴ In 1920, the Williams are listed as residing on the Old Fuller Road. In 1940 their residence is 1101. S. Alameda Street. *1920 Census Records*, Doña Aña County. Microfiche; *Las Cruces City Directory*. 1940. Branson Library, New Mexico State University.

¹⁵ Barbara Richardson (compiled by). *Black Directory of New Mexico*. Panorama Press: Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 1976. pp. 66 - 67.

¹⁶ Delia Kilcrease. "Sentiments of black history preserved." *Las Cruces Sun-News*. February 23, 1986, n. page; Personal conversation with Clarence Fielder; *1910 Census Records*, Doña Aña County, Microfiche, Branson Library, New Mexico State University.

¹⁷ Daniel returned to Texas in 1907 to marry Ollie Berry and brought his bride back to Las Cruces. Personal conversation with Clarence Fielder.

¹⁸ Personal Conversation with Clarence Fielder.

¹⁹ *1910 Census Records*, Doña Aña County. Microfiche. Branson Library, New Mexico State University.

²⁰ *Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States taken in the year 1920*. Volume III. William C. Hunt, Supervisor. Government Printing Office. Washington, D. C. 1922. "Composition and Characteristics of the Population by State". p.668.

²¹ Later, John would have his barbershop in the Old Herndon Hotel. In the 1920s they resided on 942 N. Mesquite Street. Fielder, Clarence. *Blacks In the Mesilla Valley*. Presentation to the Oral History Club, Las Cruces, New Mexico. July 6, 1995. *1920 Census Records*, Doña Aña County. Microfiche. Branson Library, New Mexico State University.

²² Personal conversation with Clarence Fielder.

²³ *1920 Census*, Fourteenth Census of the United States taken in the Year 1920. Vol. III. Population 1902, Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States. William C. Hunt, Supervisor. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1922. p.668.

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Phillips Chapel CME Church
Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, New Mexico

hands. In 1912, Pleasant H. Billingsly moved his family from Marion, Oklahoma, to escape the boll weevil infestation,²⁴ and found work as a custodian at the Post Office and the Masonic Temple.²⁵ Jerry Smith worked as a horse wrangler for a cattleman in New Mexico, and transported his chuck wagon around the state at roundup time.²⁶

Other families listed in the 1920 Census include Amos. J. Brooks, who owned a grocery store and ice cream parlor on North Church Street. His wife, Georgia, was a teacher for black children at the East Mesa School. For a while, W. T. (Bill) Anthony was the only blacksmith in Las Cruces, and he owned the Valley Welding Service, on the corner of Hadley and Church Street.²⁷ William de Groff owned a tailoring business and lived with his housekeeper, Mrs. Mary Edmond, on Water Street.²⁸

In the 1920s, the Homestead Act also brought a number of African-American to the Las Cruces area, where they established homesteads approximately six to ten miles north of Highway U.S. 70, east of Las Cruces. Homesteaders included John Henry Sweet, George Holsome, Edward Strait, Robert Anderson Pettes, Jasper Williams, E. Daily, L.E. Hibler, Marshall Edwards, and the Coleman, Hester, Hughs, Owens, Joner, Steward, and Welch families.²⁹ Jasper Williams filed for 640 acres near Las Cruces. His wife, Clarabelle, was hired to teach African-American children at Phillips Chapel and Booker T. Washington School when Las Cruces schools became segregated.³⁰ The Williams raised three sons who became physicians.³¹ When Robert and Ella Pettes moved to Las Cruces they worked as sharecroppers for a farm on El Paseo Road—now El Paseo Street—where Las Cruces High School is now located.³² Later, the Pettes family homesteaded 640 acres that proved to be a valuable source of water.³³ The Pettes also played an important role in establishing the Community Cemetery for African-Americans in the 1940s.

²⁴ In 1920, Pleasant, his wife Anna, and their children Patience, Evelena, Merdest, Mabel, Ambrose, and Smith lived on Lee Street. Later their residence is listed East May Avenue. Barbara Richardson (compiled by). *Black Directory of New Mexico*. Panorama Press: Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 1976. p. 66.; Mary M. Steeb, Michael Romero Taylor, Anthony C. Pennock. *The Las Cruces Historic Buildings Survey*. Dona Ana County Historical Society: Las Cruces, New Mexico, 1982. p. 119.; *1920 Census Records*, Doña Aña County. Microfiche, Branson Library, New Mexico State University. *Las Cruces City Directory*. 1940.

²⁵ Anna took over as custodian after her husband had died. , Clarence Fielder. "Blacks In the Mesilla Valley." Presentation to the Oral History Club, Las Cruces, New Mexico. July 6, 1995.

²⁶ Jerry and Kate Smith, their children Susie, Mary, Walker, Jerry, Valley, and Lewis, lived on Hill Street. *1920 Census Records*, Doña Aña County. Microfiche; Richardson, Barbara. (compiled by). *Black Directory of New Mexico*. Panorama Press: Rio Rancho, New Mexico. 1976. pp. 66 - 67.

²⁷ He resided on Griggs Street. *1920 Census Records*, Doña Aña County. Microfiche. Branson Library, New Mexico State University.

²⁸ *1920 Census Records*, Doña Aña County. Microfiche. Branson Library, New Mexico State University.

²⁹ Barbara Richardson (compiled by). *Black Directory of New Mexico*. Panorama Press: Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 1976. pp. 66 – 67.; Mary M. Steeb, Michael Romero Taylor, Anthony C. Pennock. *The Las Cruces Historic Buildings Survey*. Dona Ana County Historical Society: Las Cruces, New Mexico, 1982. p. 119.

³⁰ *Las Cruces School Board Minutes 1925 and 1926*; O'Brien, Claire. "When schools were segregated: former students remember Booker T. Washington School." *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Feb. 17, 2001, Section C-8.

³¹ Claire O'Brien. "When schools were segregated: former students remember Booker T. Washington School." *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Feb. 17, 2001, Section C-8.; Barbara Richardson (compiled by). *Black Directory of New Mexico*. Panorama Press: Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 1976. p. 66.

³² Personal conversation with Grover Pettes, son of Robert and Ella Pettes.

³³ In the 1960s, they incorporated their family business into a water development company. Heritage Days Committee. *Las Cruces Historic Cemetery Guide*, Las Cruces, New Mexico, c. 1999.

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Phillips Chapel CME Church
Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, New Mexico

Between 1920 and 1930 the black population in Doña Aña County increased nine-fold, from 78 to 649 individuals.³⁴ This figure held fairly steady through 1970, when 700 African-Americans lived in Las Cruces.³⁵ In 1980 there was a modest increase to 810, with additional 400 arriving in 1990 with a total of 1,211 African-Americans listed.³⁶

SIGNIFICANCE UNDER CRITERION A: ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK; SOCIAL HISTORY; EDUCATION

Since its construction by African-Americans and Hispanics in 1911 the chapel has been a focal point for the African-American community as a gathering place for community events.³⁷ Named after the Right Reverend Charles H. Phillips, the first presiding bishop of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America, Phillips Chapel CME Church is the oldest African-American church in Las Cruces.³⁸

In the early 1900s, African-Americans settlers were making Las Cruces their home. Early settlers, members of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, first worshipped in the home of Daniel and Ollie Hibler. Later, LuElla and Cortez Hibler, James Dykes, A.J. Brooks, and Priscilla and John Hibler rented a small frame building at the corner of Campo Street and East Court Avenue, where the African-American community

³⁴ Charles E. Hall (Specialist in Negro Statistics). *Negroes in the United States, 1920–32*. Prepared under the supervision of Z. R. Pettet, Chief Statistician for Agriculture. United States Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1935. p. 776.

³⁵ U.S. Bureau of Census. *Census of Population: 1970. Vol. 1, Characteristics of Population*. Part 33. New Mexico. U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington, D. C., 1973. Table 35.

³⁶ U.S. Bureau of Census. *Census of Population and Housing: 1980. Census Tracts, Las Cruces, N. Mex.*, U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington, D. C., 1983. p. 6, Table P-3; U.S. Bureau of Census. *Census of Population and Housing: 1990. Population and Housing Characteristics for census Tracts and Block Numbering Areas. Las Cruces, N. Mex.*, U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D. C., 1993. p. 9, Table 3.

³⁷ Delia Kilcrease. February 23, 1986, n. page. *Proclaiming Grace and Freedom: Two Centuries of American Methodism*. American Bible Society: New York, 1966.

Charles Henry Phillips (1858 – 1951) envisioned national organization of C.M.E. churches and was influential in promoting the church beyond the south. He strove for equal status of the C.M.E. Church with other Methodist denominations. In 1925, Phillips wrote *The History of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in American: Comprising its Organization, Subsequent Development and Present Status*.

Freed slaves, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, looking to free themselves from a church associated with former masters and the institution of slavery, petitioned to form a separate an independent church patterned after their own ideas and notions. In 1870 the Colored Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church was established. These ideas and notions valued piety, integrity, and truth and the education of the race and the salvation of precious souls. In 1954, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, no longer wishing to be identified in a racial context, changed its name to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Shortly after the Church was formed the C.M.E. Publishing House was established, and The Christian Index, a C.M.E. periodical, is still circulated today. The Church was instrumental in founding schools to train ministers and laity and four-year Liberal Arts Colleges (Lane College, Paine College, Texas College, Miles College), of these eleven institutions are currently operating. Currently the CME has “800,000 members, 3,000 churches, and 3,200 preachers” serving ten Episcopal Districts in the United States, with missions in Africa, Haiti, and Jamaica. (I use the name Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in this nomination because that was its name during the historic period.)

³⁸ Delia Kilcrease. “Sentiments of black history preserved.” *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Las Cruces, New Mexico. February 23, 1986, n. page.; Barbara Richardson. (compiled by). *Black Directory of New Mexico*. Panorama Press: Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 1976., pp. 66 – 67; Debra Dominguez. “Church wrestles with wilting congregation.” *Christian Index*. June 2001. pp. 26-27.

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worshipped. Services were held there until the present chapel was built.³⁹ The church's first minister, Rev. T.C. Cook, came Denton, Texas.⁴⁰ As the African-American population of Las Cruces continued to grow, a permanent place of worship was needed. Daniel Hibler purchased the land on which Phillips Chapel CME Church was built for \$45.00 and had it deeded to the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America on May 1, 1911.⁴¹

Brief profiles of the founders (A. J. Brooks, Daniel and Ollie Hibler, LuElla and Cortez Hibler) of Phillips Chapel have been included above under the historical context of the African-American community.⁴² LuEllen and Cortez were homesteaders. The family of Daniel and Ollie Hibler had the most consistent history with Phillips Chapel.⁴³ Ollie and Daniel were active in the CME Church and often hosted the CME District Conferences at their home.⁴⁴

A Social and Civic Center

Phillips Chapel served the Las Cruces African-American community as a civic and social center throughout its history. The church held Easter programs, provided Christmas treats, and sponsored Children's Day.⁴⁵ Clarence Fielder remembers attending various social activities held at Phillips Chapel when he was a child, and speaks fondly of "youth groups, ice cream socials, and hobo parties where we'd go house to house dressed as hobos and come back to have picnics with the food and goods we collected".⁴⁶ Many African-American couples were married in the chapel, and their children "sprinkled" (christened) there.⁴⁷ Other activities, such as plays, dramas and Song Fests were held. In recent years, Phillips Chapel has hosted the

³⁹ Debra Dominguez. "Church wrestles with wilting congregation." *Christian Index*. June 2001. pp. 26-27.

⁴⁰ A number of ministers have served Phillips Chapel over the past ninety years. Church records are scarce, but from personal notes written by Ollie Hibler entered in a ledger book, a list of ministers were found. Ms. Hibler lists, Rev. T. C. Cook from Denton, Texas as the congregation's first minister. F. W. Sweet from 1928 – 29, follows him. Reverends L. Bryant, White, W. M. Clayton, O. A. Spence served in the intervening years. Rev. J. W. Dunn served in 1939 – 1940. Rev. H. H. Collins served until 1941, with assistance from Reverend R. W. Green, V. Hancock. W. P. Hughes served from 1941 – 1945. Reverends S. J. Polk, C. Thompson, C. A. Reed, H. Gilliard also served the community until Rev. Bishop arrived in the early 1950s. His daughter Mary Bishop continues to worship at Phillips Chapel CME Church.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; Warranty Deed No. 1337.

⁴² There is no information available on James Dykes. Priscilla and John Hibler returned to Texas. Clarence Fielder, personal conversation.

⁴³ Daniel and Ollie had four children, their son Alfred died as a child, but Gertrude, Irene, and Roselee grew up in Las Cruces, and attended Phillips Chapel all of their early lives. Irene and Roselee were students at Phillips Chapel when Las Cruces Public Schools were segregated. Both girls graduated from Phillips Chapel when it served as Lincoln High School. Gertrude married Henry Fielder and worshipped at Phillips Chapel until their deaths. Their children attended Phillips Chapel until they moved from Las Cruces. Their son, Clarence is Steward of Phillips Chapel and the church's historian.

⁴⁴ Ollie was a member of the New Mexico chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star and the Court of Calanthe. Daniel served as an officer of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge. Charlotte K. Mock. *Bridges: New Mexican Black Women, 1900-1950*. New Mexico Commission on the Status of Women: Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1985. p. 2.

⁴⁵ Phillips Chapel CME Church Sunday School Record Book, 1953 – 1955.

⁴⁶ Debra Dominguez. "Church wrestles with wilting congregation." *Christian Index*. June 2001. pp. 26-27.

⁴⁷ Personal conversation with Clarence Fielder.

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annual Martin Luther King service in January, sponsored by the Southwest Ministerial Alliance and a Black History Month service in February.⁴⁸

A School for Black Children

In the 1920s, as the result of a political climate influenced by newly arrived, landholders from states where “Jim Crow” laws had been the norm, some small communities of the Southwest established segregation laws and removed African-American children from the public schools.⁴⁹ Clarence Fielder, historian for the Las Cruces African-American community and grandson of Ollie and Daniel Hibler, have pointed out that not all school districts in New Mexico became segregated. Only schools in the southern part of the state, east of Deming, became segregated during the 1920s, including those in Las Cruces, Hobbs, and Alamogordo.⁵⁰ In 1925, the state of New Mexico passed legislation regarding segregation of schooling.⁵¹ Section 1201 of the legislation states:

That where, in the opinion of the County School Board or Municipal School Board and on the approval of said opinion by the State Board of Education, it is for the best advantage and interest of the school that separate rooms be provided for the teaching of pupils of African descent, and said rooms are so provided, such pupils may not be admitted to school rooms occupied by pupils of Caucasian or other descent. *Provided further*, that such rooms set aside for the teaching of such pupils of African descent shall be as good and as well kept as those used by pupils of Caucasian or other descent, and teaching therein shall be as efficient. *Provided further*, that pupils of Caucasian or other descent may not be admitted to the school rooms so provided for those of African descent.” [Emphasis in original.]

Las Cruces School District proceeded to segregate in 1924, when thirty to thirty-five children were removed from the Central Elementary School to receive educational instruction in Phillips Chapel CME Church.⁵² Gertrude Hibler Fielder, daughter of Ollie and Daniel Hibler, recalled being moved from Central Elementary School to attend “classes with other black children at the little Methodist church her father had built”.⁵³ The only former notation that Phillips Chapel was serving as a school for “colored children” is found in school board minutes of August 24, 1924. In reference to the hiring of janitors, the minutes state that “no arrangements [have been] made for care of the colored church.” The next reference made in regards to a separate school for African-American children is found in the school board minutes dated June 1, 1925. The board “moved that Mrs. Williams at a salary of nine hundred dollars be elected to fill position as negro teacher.”

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Debra Dominguez. “Church wrestles with wilting congregation.” *Christian Index*. June 2001, pp. 26-27.; Claire O’Brien. “When schools were segregated: former students remember Booker T. Washington School.” *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Feb. 17, 2001, Section C-8.

⁵⁰ Ikeva Berry. *Segregated Schools in Alamogordo, New Mexico*. New Mexico, n.p., 1991.; *Las Cruces School Board Minutes 1925 and 1926*; Barbara Richardson. (compiled by). *Black Directory of New Mexico*. Panorama Press: Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 1976. pp. 66 – 67.

⁵¹ Soledad C Chacon, Secretary of State (prepared by). *Laws of the State of New Mexico*. Valliant Printing Co.: Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1925. p. 109.

⁵² Claire O’Brien. “When schools were segregated: former students remember Booker T. Washington School.” *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Feb. 17, 2001, Section C-8.

⁵³ Delia Kilcrease. “Sentiments of black history preserved.” *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Las Cruces, New Mexico. February 23, 1986, n. page.

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After Phillips Chapel began serving double-duty as a school and church, two small rooms—mere “tar paper shacks”—were moved to the intersection of N. Tornillo Street (two blocks to the north) and Pinon Avenue.⁵⁴ Minutes of a special board meeting held on August 21, 1925, discuss “locating a site for the colored school.” In the September 7, 1925, regular board meeting minutes discussion was held concerning the economic feasibility of moving two buildings from Southward School to the new site for colored schools, stating that the proposed cost might exceed the bid. The board agreed to move the buildings “at the least possible expense”.⁵⁵ The small structures at N. Tornillo Street and Pinon Avenue represent the first construction of Booker T. Washington School and are no longer in existence.⁵⁶

Phillips Chapel CME Church, under the title of Lincoln High School, continued to serve in the education of young African-American adults until 1934.⁵⁷ Board minutes of May 10, 1926, list the hiring of teachers and salaries. It may be inferred that Mrs. Gertrude Terrell (col) [sic] to be paid \$990 and Mrs. C. B. Williams (col) [sic], at \$945, served as instructors at the newly moved colored schools and the chapel school. Gertrude Hibler Fielder recalled Mrs. Terrell as one of her teachers when she was a student at Phillips Chapel.⁵⁸ Thirty students graduated from Lincoln High School (Phillips Chapel), and their teachers were Ms. Treveland, Ms. Gertrude Terrell, and Ms. Willie Moses.⁵⁹

In 1934, the new Booker T. Washington School was built on Solano Street. The new school consisting of four adobe rooms served both the elementary and secondary educational needs for African-American children until integration occurred in 1954 following the Supreme Court ruling of Brown v. Topeka Board of Education.⁶⁰ Phillips Chapel continued to serve as a place where baccalaureate services were held when African-American students graduated from the segregated Booker T. Washington School.⁶¹ The original structure of Booker T. Washington has since been replaced by a modern structure.⁶² Phillips Chapel CME Church is therefore the only extant building associated with the history of segregation of African-American school children in Las Cruces.

⁵⁴ Claire O’Brien. “When schools were segregated: former students remember Booker T. Washington School.” *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Feb. 17, 2001, Section C-8; *Las Cruces School Board Minutes* 1925.

⁵⁵ In December 1925, the board presented a bill for payment from H & K Truck Lines for \$500 to cover the cost of moving the buildings for the “colored school.” In April 1926, the Board moved to pay \$1.00 to Francisco Trejo for labor to repair the colored school buildings. In July 1926, the board voted to pay the balance of \$200 to H & K Truck Lines for moving the buildings. *Las Cruces School Board Minutes*, 1925 and 1926.

⁵⁶ Personal conversation with Clarence Fielder.

⁵⁷ Debra Dominguez. “Church wrestles with wilting congregation.” *Christian Index*. June 2001, pp. 26-27.

⁵⁸ Delia Kilcrease. “Sentiments of black history preserved.” *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Las Cruces, New Mexico. February 23, 1986, n. page.

⁵⁹ Evelena Ambrose, Mabel, Merdest, and Smith Billingsley; Almadell and Cedric Bradford; Alberta, Vessie, and Will Tom Blackmon; Clem and Edson Fielder; Cecil and Cleon Grimes; Laurabeth Henderson; Irene and Roselee Hibler; Bessie and Ludie Jarrett; Bertha, Charley, Clara, and Tina Pettes; Idella Summers; Daniel, Louise, Patricia and Romeo Terrell; David Earl, and Fannie Watson. Irene Hibler, as per Clarence Fielder.

⁶⁰ Claire O’Brien. “When schools were segregated: former students remember Booker T. Washington School.” *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Feb. 17, 2001, Section C-8.

⁶¹ Personal conversation with Clarence Fielder.

⁶² *Ibid*.

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While the Las Cruces Public Schools were once segregated, the African-American population was not forced to live in segregated neighborhoods.⁶³ The African-American community always lived in a mixed African-American and Hispanic neighborhood close to downtown Las Cruces throughout the historic period. Some members of the community farmed homestead acreage in the East Mesa area.

Membership at Phillips Chapel stands less than ten now, most elderly.⁶⁴ Their attendance at weekly services expresses the strong bond they feel with the church and one another. Mary Bishop, age 81, came to Las Cruces when her father accepted the position of the minister for Phillips Chapel in 1952. She continues to worship there and reminisces about the Sundays when every seat in the church was filled. In the 1950s, the Sunday School Record Book listed twenty families as members of Phillips Chapel, plus visitors.⁶⁵ The congregation has dwindled over the years; many of the early parishioners have died, and others have moved away.⁶⁶ Other African-American churches in Las Cruces serve the community now, as well. In 1913, the Bethel Second Baptist Church was built at 405 E. Hadley Avenue; the original building was replaced in the 1970s.⁶⁷ In the 1970s, Mount Carmel Baptist Church was formed at 955 S. Bellamah Loop. The Philathia Seventh-Day Adventist, 1351 N. Tornillo Street, the Church of Christ, and the Greater St. John Church of God in Christ, 1615 N. Mesquite Street, also serve the Las Cruces African-American community.⁶⁸ Phillips Chapel CME Church is the oldest serving needs of the African-American Community.

Phillips Chapel CME Church has served its African-American community in diverse ways over its history, and for many has represented a safe haven in which to escape a sometimes hostile and alienated daily existence, and still functions as a place of community, where friends discuss their families and their lives, and meet in worship.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Debra Dominguez. "Church wrestles with wilting congregation." *Christian Index*. June 2001, pp. 26-27..

⁶⁵ Phillips Chapel CME Church Sunday School Record Book, 1953 – 1955. Account Book 1962 – 1972.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Delia Kilcrease. "Sentiments of black history preserved." *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Las Cruces, New Mexico. February 23, 1986, n. page.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

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PERSONAL CONVERSATIONS

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point where E. Lucero Avenue intersects with N. Tornillo Street, proceed east along the south curblineline of E. Lucero Avenue one hundred and fifty feet (150') to a point where it intersects the east property line of the nominated resource. Then proceed south seventy-five feet (75') along east property line to a point where it intersects an east-west alley forming the south property line of the nominated resource. Then proceed west one hundred and fifty feet (150') along south property line to a point where it intersects N. Tornillo Street. At N. Tornillo Street, proceed north seventy-five feet (75') along east curblineline of N. Tornillo Street to point of beginning

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This description represents both the boundaries of the original property purchased in 1911 and its current dimensions, and includes the entire nominated resource.

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Phillips Chapel CME Church
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PHOTO LOG

The following information pertains to all photographs unless otherwise noted:

Phillips Chapel CME Church
638 N. Tornillo Street
Las Cruces, Don Ana County, New Mexico
Photographer: Terry Moody
April 2001
Location of Negatives: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, Santa Fe

Photo 1 of 3
Front Façade/West Elevation
Facing East

Photo 2 of 3
Rear or East Elevation
Facing West

Photo 3 of 3
North and West Elevations
Facing Southeast