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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

(Oct. 1990)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: St. James Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (St. James C.M.E. Church)
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: St. James Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 408 North Border Avenue
CITY OR TOWN: Tyler
STATE: Texas **CODE:** TX **COUNTY:** Smith **CODE:** 423 **ZIP CODE:** 75702
NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A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 (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). (__ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official — Date: 6/30/04

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission
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:

	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
✓ entered in the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	for Edson H. Beall	8/20/04
____ determined eligible for the National Register ___ See continuation sheet		
____ determined not eligible for the National Register		
____ removed from the National Register		
____ other (explain): _____		

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:

		CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING	
		2	0	BUILDINGS
		0	0	SITES
		0	0	STRUCTURES
		0	0	OBJECTS
TOTAL	2	2	0	TOTAL

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

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: Historic and Architectural Resources of Tyler, Texas: *Community Development in Tyler, Texas, 1846-1950.*

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: INSTITUTIONAL/church; DOMESTIC/single dwelling

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: INSTITUTIONAL/church hall; DOMESTIC/vacant

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: CLASSICAL REVIVAL

MATERIALS:

FOUNDATION	BRICK; WOOD; CONCRETE; STONE
WALLS	BRICK; WOOD; STONE
ROOF	COMPOSITION
OTHER	GLASS; METAL

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-8).

DESCRIPTION

Built between 1889 and 1891 and remodeled ca. 1920, St. James C.M.E. Church is a rare surviving example in Tyler of a late 19th-early 20th century vernacular African American church. Located on New City Block 93 in the City of Tyler, the church now on the site was likely built by members of the congregation. Plans are likely to have been standardized and supplied by the parent C.M.E. church. A cornerstone bearing a date of 1891 is thought to commemorate the completion of the building. By 1928 the church achieved its present exterior form and configuration (1928 Sanborn map). The two-story brick veneer church faces east onto North Border Avenue and is about ½ mile west of the courthouse square within an established African American neighborhood in central Tyler. The church incorporates a symmetrical facade with a partial width integral porch embellished with modest Classical Revival detailing. Corner towers provide access to the interior and additional decorative elements recalling the Classical Revival style. Also on the property is a Contributing 1950 one-story brick veneer parsonage. A modern church building, erected ca. 1980 occupies the northern part of the block and is outside the boundaries of this nomination. A more modest St. James Church is thought to have been built on the site of this historic church in 1888, and then replaced by or enlarged into the present church, which originally was a wood frame Gothic Revival influenced building. The 19th century church was bricked and otherwise modified into the present building ca. 1920. St. James church was likely the first substantial edifice constructed in city blocks 93 and 94, which comprise the core of a historically African American neighborhood established shortly after emancipation. The size, massing and craftsmanship of the church attest to the construction skills of its builders and the dedication and commitment of the St. James congregation to their church as a symbol of economic and educational advancement. A small fellowship hall was added to the south elevation of the church in 1950. St. James was one of several African American churches built in Tyler in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but is the only surviving church building from the pre-1940 era. The ca.1889/1891/1920 church was used for worship services until June 1982 when a new sanctuary was dedicated immediately north on church property. Since that time the older church building has been used as a fellowship hall and Sunday School. St. James C. M. E. Church retains a high degree of exterior integrity from the ca. 1920 remodeling with only small, compatible side additions, change in tower roof form from flat to slightly pitched and the painting of the exterior brick having occurred since the end of the historic period. Original interior spatial relationships remain virtually unchanged from the early 20th century, and early 20th century windows, moldings and doors are present throughout the building. St. James church represents one of several institutional property types defined in greater detail in the Historic and Architectural Resources of Tyler, Texas Multiple-Property National Register nomination. St. James church and the adjacent parsonage are preserved in fair condition, retaining their 20th century architectural and historic integrity to a high degree.

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

As the largest city (U.S. Census 2000 population 83,650) and seat of government in Smith County, Tyler is about 90 miles southeast of Dallas. The surrounding East Texas topography consists of timbered, rolling hills of gray clay and red sandy soils. Intermittent creeks water the area before draining into the Sabine and Neches rivers on the north and west of town, respectively. St. James C. M. E. Church is in the heart of an established African

American neighborhood about ½ mile west of the courthouse square **(Map 1)**. Sited in the center of Block 93 of the City of Tyler on two parcels and facing east onto North Border Avenue **(Figure 1)**, the church's intact Classical Revival influenced design is a prominent visual presence in a residential neighborhood eroded through demolition, deferred maintenance, incompatible alterations and incompatible infill construction. Directly south of the church is a one-story brick veneer cross gabled bungalow built in 1950 as a parsonage to replace an earlier parsonage. Directly north of the historic church is the new sanctuary and office building erected by St. James' congregation ca. 1980 **(Figure 2)**. Behind the church complex is an asphalt paved parking lot. One and two story single family and multiple family dwellings are directly across the street from St. James Church on the east side of North Border Avenue. Wood frame bungalows and shotgun houses and the remnants of St. Johns Episcopal Church are located along North Liberty Avenue, west of the church. A number of vacant lots also are found along North Liberty, where demolition and the off-site removal of dwellings have occurred. A little farther west is the Short-Line Residential Historic District (NR 2002), which contains 11 nearly identical bungalows built in the late 1920s as rental housing for African Americans. This group of dwellings is the most intact cluster of residential resources in the neighborhood. The remaining surrounding development reflects construction or major exterior remodeling of primary facades in the post 1954-period. St. James Church is the only known early 20th century African American church in Tyler to retain its integrity.

ST. JAMES C.M.E. CHURCH

St. James Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (now known as St. James Christian Methodist Episcopal Church) faces east onto North Border Avenue and is thought to have been built between 1889 and 1891 by members of the congregation. The historic church building **(Photo 1)** is located near the center of the lots owned by St. James Church. The flat lot slopes slightly uphill to the rear (west) of the property. A chain link fence encloses a portion of the rear of the rear parking lot, securing the church bus parked there. The historic church building was originally a wood rectangular plan church with an asymmetrical facade featuring pointed arched windows detailed with tracery and corner towers of unequal size and height **(Figure 3 and Figure 4)**. By 1928 **(Figure 5)** the church had been remodeled to its present symmetrical form. A red brick veneer was applied over the original wood exterior and the corner towers were equalized in height and size. A partial width integral loggia was created between the towers and primary access was created through new doors that open onto the loggia. Paired tapered wood columns set on brick piers flank the centrally placed stairs that descend to the street. Windows are double hung wood sash types glazed with stained glass panes. A tripartite window, possibly representative of the Trinity, pierces the center of the primary facade. Single windows of different sizes are stacked in each tower. A portion of the original wood facade is visible at the gable end above the shed roofed loggia. Corner towers have hipped roofs installed in the early 1960s to correct drainage problems created by the flat roofs built as part of the ca. 1920 remodel. A small shed roof brick addition extends from the side wall of each tower. These small additions were placed at an unknown time, but may date from the 1960s when interior repairs were undertaken. They are compatible with the overall design of the facade and are recessed behind the plane of the primary facade. The north elevation of the church **(Photo 2)** reveals the hipped roof that covers the rectangular building mass. Fenestration is symmetrical with 1/1 double hung wood sash windows containing stained glass panes piercing the wall. Windows are stacked in the same manner as those seen on the

towers: large single windows on the first floor and smaller single windows directly above. A window in the side wall of the tower is partially enclosed with a wood panel, but could be restored. At the rear of this elevation is a side entry now covered by metal roofing that follows a path to the ca. 1980 sanctuary. The west (rear) elevation **(Photo 3)** reveals the same 1/1 double hung wood sash window types and fenestration patterns and shows how the 1950 fellowship hall addition was attached to the building. The addition is a one-story hipped roof construction with windows compatible to those used in the church. Its scale is residential and it resembles a small dwelling. The east facade of the fellowship hall addition **(Photo 4)** shows how it was compatibly designed as a recessed mass subordinate to the church and attached to the south elevation. Designed by Jonas Levias Jewett, the hall addition has an asymmetrical facade with an offset hipped roof porch and 6/6 double hung wood sash windows. The original doors and screen doors remain on the addition. The church and hall building are currently used as a fellowship hall. The church's 1891 cornerstone remains in place on south wall of the south tower, while a second cornerstone, dated 1888 is mounted on an exterior wood wall recessed inside the current exterior wall of the south tower shed. The 1888 marker apparently commemorates an earlier building erected by the church on the same site or nearby. Portions of it may or may not be incorporated into the historic church now present. Inside, the historic church building **(Figure 6)** contains a sanctuary on the first floor, now used for fellowship purposes and two small rooms, originally used as parlors. A balcony with classroom space encircles the area above the sanctuary on three sides. Access to the second floor is through interior tower stairs. The 1950 addition contains a kitchen, office and restroom areas.

Alterations made to the church exterior since the ca. 1920 redesign are limited to the compatible F.E. Williams Fellowship Hall addition in 1950, construction of the sheds adjacent to the towers, painting of the exterior brick walls after 1959, and the 1961 redesign of the tower roofs to improve drainage. Interior changes since ca. 1920 include the 1942 repair of beams supporting the balcony, installation of wood flooring and celotex under the balcony. J. Q. Johnson was the contractor on these repairs and upgrades. A ca. 1947 drawing of the St. James sanctuary interior was done by L.L. Sams & Sons Church Furniture of Waco. Apparently the drawing was made in anticipation of the congregation's purchase of chairs and other furniture for the building.

South of the historic church and hall addition is the 1950 parsonage **(Photo 5)**. This cross gabled plan bungalow features an asymmetrical facade, bay windows, attached porch and integral garage. Windows are 6/6 and 1/1 double hung wood sash types. A picture window occupies the central position of the bay window. Alterations appear to be limited to the use of iron porch posts and the removal of the original garage door. The parsonage is now vacant. **Photo 6** shows the sanctuary of the historic church building. A raised stage, which originally was used as a pulpit and by the choir, remains intact. It likely dates from the ca. 1920 remodel.

SUMMARY OF PHYSICAL CONDITION AND INTEGRITY

Built between 1889 and 1891 and extensively remodeled ca. 1920, St. James C.M.E. Church is a Classical Revival style church building now incorporating a 1950 addition. The building is no longer used for worship but is maintained as a fellowship hall. The building is in fair condition and the congregation hopes to locate funding for a rehabilitation. The adjacent 1950 parsonage also is in fair condition. Exterior alterations to the church are limited and compatible: the 1950 fellowship hall addition, construction of two sheds adjacent to the corner towers, painted

brick and the change in tower roof pitch from flat to hipped to improve drainage. Changes to the parsonage are limited and do not significantly impact integrity. Built by unknown contractors from plans obtained from an unknown source, the historic church building is the oldest surviving African American church in Tyler. The house's exterior features and the church's s exterior and interior character-defining elements—plan form, craftsmanship, detailing, window materials and fenestration patterns, and entry detailing—are maintained in fair condition and retain a high level of integrity of location, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association within the period of significance.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

_x_ **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: Community Development, Education, Ethnic Heritage/ Black

PERIOD(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: ca.1920-1954

SIGNIFICANT DATES: ca. 1889-1891, ca. 1920

SIGNIFICANT PERSON(S): N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: African American

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: **ARCHITECTS:** JEWETT, Jonas Levias,1950 addition
BUILDERS: UNKNOWN

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-9 through 8-16).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL 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
_ Other state agency
_ Federal agency
_ Local government
_ University
x Other--Specify Repository: Diane E. Williams, P. O. Box 49921, Austin, Tx 78765

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Thought to have been constructed between 1889 and 1891 as a wood frame Gothic Revival style church by its African American congregation, St. James Church was modified by 1928 into its present Classical Revival form and is a good vernacular example of the Classical Revival style, as applied to a modest church building. The church is significant for its associations with Tyler's African American community, for its reflection of segregated community development patterns in Tyler and for its role in the founding and support of Texas College, an African American college established in 1894. Located in central Tyler, the church is part of an extended, eclectic, African American neighborhood, which, by the early 1900s was part of a growing African American enclave fostered by continuing migration of African Americans to Tyler and a healthy city economy supported by county agriculture, agricultural processing and distribution, the railroad, manufacturing and petroleum exploration, extraction and production. Now eroded by demolition, alterations and late 20th century infill construction, the area immediately surrounding St. James Church was a stable African American enclave supporting three churches, a number of businesses and a mix of laborers, wage workers and professionals. Related to the historic context *Community Development in Tyler, Smith County, Texas 1846-1950*, the church is categorized as an institutional/religious resource, which is defined in more detail in section 7 of this nomination and in the Historic and Architectural Resources of Tyler, Texas Multiple Property National Register nomination. The associated Contributing parsonage is a domestic resource, also defined in the above referenced multiple property nomination. St. James C.M.E. Church and the adjacent parsonage are in fair condition, but retain a high degree of integrity. Criteria consideration A for religious properties is met because the buildings derive their primary significance from their associations with Tyler's African American community, their associations with community development patterns, and their contributions to the development of and support for higher education for African Americans. For these reasons, St. James C.M.E. Church is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of significance of community development, Ethnic Heritage (African American) and Education within a period of significance extending from ca. 1920 to 1954. Although the period covered by the historic context could not be extended beyond 1950 for financial reasons, Tyler's social, economic and development patterns continued unchanged into the 1950s. Thus the period of significance for this property is extended to the current 50 year mark, which is 1954.

The African American experience in Tyler and Smith County, as throughout the rest of the country, was characterized by limited housing, educational and economic opportunities. Until the 1964 Civil Rights Act, white and African American populations in Tyler were segregated in all aspects of life, and Tyler's development patterns reflect this through the use of restrictive covenants on subdivisions and deeds that historically confined African Americans to specific areas of central, east, northwest and southwest Tyler. The few African Americans living in other parts of the city were employed there as domestic labor. Despite Federal, state and local policies of integration since 1964, population distribution within pre-1960 neighborhoods largely continues to follow historic patterns with Hispanics replacing African American in some areas.

Many Smith County freedmen and women settled in Tyler after the Civil War seeking education for their children, local employment in domestic and other labor services, in trades catering to the African American population, and in railroad related and manufacturing jobs. As African-American-initiated schools, and later city-supported segregated schools created more educational opportunities and increased employment prospects, more African Americans moved to Tyler, following a national trend that saw many freedmen and women slowly moving beyond the agricultural boundaries that confined them during slavery. By 1882 the city had 87 African Americans listed in the city directory. Of these 15 were employed in skilled jobs such as blacksmithing and barbering, and several men worked for the railroad. By the 1890s the county had four African American physicians and 72 teachers (Smallwood 1999:428-32), and a few African Americans were involved in successful mercantile ventures in Tyler. William A. Redwine, a native of Rusk County, came to Tyler by 1890 and in addition to operating a small farm he became an undertaker for Tyler's African American community. About 1900 he wrote *Brief History of the Negro in Five Counties*, which emphasized the progress of African Americans since slavery and focused on individuals successful in teaching, the ministry and business (Williams a).

Population figures fluctuate up and down during the first two decades of the 20th century, but during this period the overall African American population was less than 3,000 individuals, or slightly less than 24 percent of the population (U.S. Census). The 1904 city directory lists 105 African Americans, including teachers, ministers, blacksmiths, school principals, bakers, barbers, painters, carpenters, a wheelwright, two physicians, a machinist, firemen, grocers, seamstresses, a loan agent, a butcher, a bookkeeper, a nurse, and a shoemaker. Most other African Americans listed were laborers or domestic servants. Many had no occupation listed, and many more were not listed in the city directories. Most lived in west central Tyler and in east Tyler near the Cotton Belt rail yards. The *Daily Democrat Reporter* for May 25 and 26, 1905 covered the meeting in Tyler of the Colored Methodist Conference, one of the few positive entries about African Americans in the local press during this period. Although economic progress was slow, with more educational opportunities for African American children, and two local colleges--the Methodist affiliated Texas College and the Baptist supported Butler College-- the children and grandchildren of slaves looked forward to a better life. In the 1920s, Tyler's African American population increased dramatically with 1,270 new residents. This increase reflects continuing migration to cities as the mechanization of farming reduced the need for agricultural labor and Tyler's growing industrial and service base offered better opportunities. As Tyler's fortunes grew in the 1930s and 1940s resulting from the oil industry, Tyler's African American population continued to increase. In 1940 African Americans represented about 26 percent of Tyler's population, decreasing to about 25 percent in 1950 (U.S. Census).

Shortly after the Civil War Tyler's African American citizens began organizing churches. These churches were created by their congregations in areas where African Americans lived, and in turn, the churches helped those neighborhoods grow and develop as distinct enclaves within the segregated housing patterns of the city. The first known Baptist congregation was Bethlehem First Baptist, founded after the war when African Americans who joined the white First Baptist Church during slavery were transferred to their own church. By 1882 the Tyler city directory lists a "colored" Baptist church in the southwest [now west central] portion of the city with a "...good wood church building and about 300 members." This church was undoubtedly central to the African American neighborhood that survives in west central Tyler, not far from the Williams-Anderson House (NR 2002) on West Claude Street. A

second African American Baptist church was founded in 1872 near the railroad tracks between North Bonner Avenue and Oakwood Cemetery, just outside the boundaries of the Short-Line Residential Historic District (NR 2002). This congregation became the still extant True Vine Baptist Church on West Oakwood Street. By 1882 members of the Colored (sic) Methodist Episcopal Church (C.M.E.) were meeting in their "Stringtown" location, a converted house, near the Cotton Belt tracks. This congregation moved to permanent quarters between 1889 and 1891 after purchasing land ½ block east of the Short-Line Residential Historic District and building the church now there. Known as St. James C.M.E. Church, this church, along with neighboring True Vine Baptist Church and the no longer extant St. John's Episcopal Church, formed the heart and soul of this African American neighborhood (Williams a).

By 1910 Tyler's African American population had established at least five churches surrounded by African American neighborhoods: [Bethlehem] First Baptist, west of downtown; Second Baptist [True Vine] and St. James C.M.E. Church near what would become the Short-Line Residential Historic District; Miles Chapel Methodist Church at North Palace and West Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard in Northwest Tyler; and St. Paul's Episcopal, at Oakwood and North Poplar in East Tyler. In 1934 there were 16 African American congregations, including Baptist, Methodist, Christian, Episcopal and Pentecostal faiths. All these churches served the geographically restricted population of southwest, north, west central and east Tyler (Williams a).

The African American residential neighborhood around St. James Church is one of the several African American enclaves that characterize development in Tyler. The neighborhood is part of a larger African American area that filled the area roughly located between North Bonner Avenue and Della Avenue on the east, the Cotton Belt tracks on the south, Glenwood Boulevard on the west and Selman on the north **(see Map 1).** Like most residential development in Tyler, the larger area was eclectic resulting from its fairly slow development over several decades. Dwellings were primarily one-story, wood frame, wood sided L-plans, modified L-plans, bungalows and other modest house forms built beginning about 1890 on large undeveloped tracts. A few duplexes, and three or four unit apartments also were present, along with a limited number of brick veneer dwellings. The area's clusters of shotgun houses, one of the most common types built by and for African Americans, have been demolished. As Tyler's economy grew in the early 20th century, the African American population increased, but because of segregated housing and social patterns, black residents had limited choices. The neighborhood containing St. James Church and the nearby Short-Line Residential Historic District grew westward from Bonner Avenue, eventually absorbing a small white area west of Palace Avenue and linking up with a growing African American neighborhood centered along Confederate Avenue. This larger area included railroad tracks, the city cemetery and factories and was one of the least desirable areas of central Tyler because of railroad and factory noise and its distance from the city center (five blocks to one mile). While the area around St. James Church developed between ca. 1870 and the late 1920s, the western portion of the neighborhood developed into the 1940s. Supporting the residential uses of the neighborhood were a number of churches and businesses. Within the area east of Palace were three churches--St. James C.M.E., True Vine Baptist and St. John's Episcopal. Also in the immediate area were a small grocery store at Oakwood and Border, two funeral homes serving the African American community, another grocery at Bonner and the railroad right-of-way, an area where carnivals and wrestling matches were held, African American physicians' offices, and a small cafe. While the groceries were operated by whites, all the other local businesses were African

American owned. South of the tracks, outside the African American neighborhood was a feed store, a steel company, a junk yard and another grocery. The Palace Theater was two blocks west on Palace Avenue. It served African American patrons, showing standard Hollywood movies (Madlock-Shaw interview). Farther west on west Claude Street was a dance hall. A very large number of the dwellings in area around St. James Church, as well as the larger neighborhood have been lost through demolition or major alterations. Historic neighborhood commercial buildings also have been changed though alterations or demolished. St. John's Episcopal Church has been incompatibly altered into a residence. However, St. James and True Vine churches continue as strong social and visual anchors in the area. Both congregations currently worship in post-1960 sanctuaries, but retain intact historic church related buildings now used for education and fellowship purposes. The ca. 1889/1891/1920 St. James Church building is the oldest intact example of an African American church in Tyler.

ST. JAMES C.M.E. CHURCH

St. James Church is located within the Issac Lollar Survey on property purchased from E. S. and P. W. Rowland in January 1884 (Smith County Deed Records:45/514). The neighborhood that includes St. James Church began developing shortly after emancipation and continued into the late 1920s when the bungalows in the nearby Short-Line Residential Historic District were erected on the last large parcel of vacant land in the immediate area. These bungalows are part of the larger surrounding neighborhood and represent the most intact portion of it. In the late 19th century the area directly west of the St. James Church, where the Short-Line District is now located, was vacant land containing only a grove of trees, a brush arbor, erected by the St. James C.M.E. congregation for worship services, and scattered piles of lumber. In 1904 two houses on Liberty sheltered pastors affiliated with St. James church. By 1907 J.H. Herndon, a wealthy white Tyler landowner, had built eight shotgun houses on the west side of Liberty Avenue, just behind St. James Church to the west. Residential development continued in the area throughout the early 1900s and by the late 1920s most land in the neighborhood contained homes. The social core of this neighborhood was its three churches--True Vine Baptist--on West Oakwood Street, St. James C.M.E. Church on North Border Avenue and St. John's Episcopal Church, on Liberty Avenue just west of St. James Church. These churches supported and promoted education for African Americans, provided worship and social activities and anchored the community. True Vine Baptist remains a thriving congregation, but it has a post 1960 church. St. John's has been modified into a dwelling with numerous additions and no longer retains its integrity. St. James Church, built ca.1889-1891 and remodeled into its present exterior form by 1928, continues to serve as the congregation's fellowship hall, which worships in a ca. 1980 sanctuary.

Many neighborhood residents were part of extended families who settled in the area shortly after emancipation. Among them are the Crawfords, Mitchells and Warrens, successive generations of a family headed by Nancy Bragg Crawford (ca.1836-1942). Born a slave in Alabama, she was brought to Texas prior to the Civil War. After emancipation she settled in the area around St. James C.M.E. Church. As a mid-wife she brought many children into the world, and by the early 20th century was working for a neighborhood physician--Dr. Warren--who lived and worked on North Border Street across from St. James Church. Mrs. Crawford lived at 401½ North Border for 60 years (City of Tyler c) and was an important community anchor. She died at the age of 106 in 1942. Mildred Warren Madlock-Shaw, a great-granddaughter of Nancy Bragg Crawford, and a St. James member, has lived in the

Short-Line Residential Historic District since 1942 when she moved in with an aunt while her husband served in World War II. Mrs. Madlock-Shaw was the secretary at St. James Church during World War II. One of Mrs. Madlock-Shaw's uncles, Eddie Mitchell (a son of Nancy Crawford), also lived for many years in the neighborhood on West Oakwood Street. Another long-term area family was headed by Sidney White, who worked for many years as a shoe shiner in downtown Tyler and lived on East Line Street, just west of St. James Church (City of Tyler a).

African Americans established congregations shortly after the Civil War including Baptist and Methodist congregations. By 1910 Tyler's African American population had established at least seven churches and by 1934 there were 16. Among the earliest known congregations are Bethlehem First Baptist, Second Baptist Church, now known as True Vine Baptist, and St. James C.M.E. Church. Development of church buildings by these and other African American congregations was slow, due to limited funds for both land purchase and construction. Congregations worshiped under brush arbors or rented space until they could secure their own property and build a church.

City directories show that by 1872 Second Baptist was located near the railroad tracks between North Bonner Avenue and Oakwood Cemetery. This congregation became the still extant True Vine Baptist Church on West Oakwood Street. The first pastor was a Reverend Boyd, the second the Reverend H.C. Alexander of Kilgore, who served from 1901 to 1903. The third pastor, Reverend Moses P. Timms helped the congregation acquire an organ, purchase land, add an educational building, remodel the sanctuary and begin a radio ministry (Tyler Public Library l).

By 1882 the Tyler city directory lists a "colored" Baptist church in the southwest portion of the city with a "...good wood church building and about 300 members." It is likely this entry describes Bethlehem First Baptist, but this is not known with certainty. In 1891 the Bethlehem Baptist membership erected a new church on West Front Street, reportedly the first brick church in Texas to be built by African Americans (City of Tyler c). In 1928 the present church site on West Lollar Street was purchased and in 1931 the congregation held its last service in the Front Street church and sold the property. A new church was built in 1933 on West Lollar and later altered; an annex was added in 1985. A Colored Methodist Church (C.M.E.) also formed in the 1870s in East Tyler, in the area just southeast of the Cotton Belt yards. The 1882 city directory describes the church as having about 300 members, a "handsome new wooden church" and a connected Sabbath School. What became of this congregation or its buildings is not known.

Probably first organized in 1870, perhaps by Bishop Bisbee, the original St. James C.M.E. congregation met in a house near the Lewis Hotel on East Erwin Street. Reverend J. Hancock was the pastor. In search of a permanent home, the church appointed some of its first trustees, Lem Blair, Ben Goss and Lewis Crawford to purchase a lot. John B. Douglas, a successful white Tyler real estate developer and merchant who was a member of Marvin Methodist Church (NR2002) sold the St. James congregation a lot along the I&GN tracks north of Ferguson Street in February 1878 for $400 (Smith County Deed Records y/117). A foundation was laid on this 150 foot x 50 foot lot, but the church was not built. In the early 1880s, the St. James membership sold the lot back to Douglas. Then the congregation attempted to build a church just east of the A.M.E. Church at Gregg and East Line, but white opposition prevented further efforts at this location.

By 1882 the St. James congregation had established itself in the neighborhood where St. James Church now

stands. A church history states that the congregation first located in a brush arbor where True Vine Baptist Church is now located. From there the congregation apparently worshiped what was probably a shotgun house north of the Cotton Belt tracks that parallel West Line Street. Because of its occupancy of a shotgun house within a string of such houses the church became known as the "Stringtown" church. The "Stringtown" church was described by local African American businessman and author Francis Redwine as a long dilapidated box house [shotgun house] with thatched windows, home made benches and a crude looking pulpit with a short backless bench for the minister to sit on. The church faced south and was braced by long poles....These poles served to prop the church in case of a windstorm. Reverend William Taylor of Starrville was pastor at that time. Following Rev. Taylor came Rev. J.B. McKneely and Rev. R. H. Hughes (Williams a).

In January 1884 St. James' congregation moved closer to having their own church when they purchased a lot from E. S. and P. W. Rowland, members of a prominent Tyler merchant family, near the intersection of North Border and West Line, not far from True Vine Baptist Church. The "Stringtown" church described by Redwine appears to refer to the building used by St. James until about 1888 when the congregation began work on a new building, portions of which may remain inside the present building, now used as the congregation's fellowship hall. A brush arbor located on land included what is now in the Short-Line Residential District also may have been used by the St. James congregation at various times in the late 1880s and early 1890s. The present building was likely constructed between 1889 and 1891 under the leadership of Reverend I. S. Persons. Originally a wood building with Gothic Revival influenced design elements, the church acquired its present form by 1928 (Sanborn maps), when exterior remodeling transformed it into the brick veneer Classical Revival style building now visible. About the same time as the 1889-1891 church was erected, a parsonage also was "prepared" and a brand new program for the church established. Reverend I. S. Persons lead St. James through the construction, transforming St. James into one of Tyler's "churches of prominence" (Williams a). One component of St. James' new program was support for African American educational opportunities, which, in 1894, resulted in the creation of Texas College on 101 acres about 2 miles northwest of St. James Church.

The 1904 Tyler City Directory lists two pastors for St. James Church, C. G. Curtis, who lived just west of the church at 504 Liberty and Andrew Griffin, who boarded at 496 W. Line. Other known early pastors included William Taylor, G. W. Benson, Mose Goodacre, J. B. McNeeley, R. N. Hughes, Rich Lee, O.T. Womack, A.L. Dodson, D. A. Amos, J. Hancock, C. B. Blackledge, Elbert Wiley, Wili Douglas and H. Lee.

In 1886 the church was classified as a mission and became a Methodist station in 1887 *(St. James Founder's Day Souvenir Annual*, 1943). St. James' membership appears well organized as early as the mid-1880s when the Women's Missionary Society met every Sunday afternoon. Among their activities were visitation and care of the sick and collecting donations for that purpose. The Reverend I.S. Persons was a popular pastor who not only was responsible for the construction of the 1889-1891 church but for reorganization of church auxiliaries, the construction of a parsonage and an emphasis on community work. Prior to the completion of the 1889-1891 church, Reverend Persons married Mattie Reece in the new church (St. James C.M.E Church Founder's Day Annual 1943). The congregation grew through the early 1900s as African Americans left rural areas for Tyler where more economic and educational opportunities were available. By 1919 the Women's Missionary Society and was keeping an official roll book and the church had Sunday School class records (St. James Church C.M.E. files). Perhaps in

response to its growing membership, St. James Church undertook the extensive ca. 1920 remodeling. A $1,500 loan acquired in 1919 from Mrs. W. H. Yarbrough (St. James C.M.E. Church files), a member of a prominent white Tyler family may have helped finance the modifications. In 1950 the F. E. Williams Fellowship Hall was added to the south elevation of the church and a new parsonage built farther south on the same property. Although a drawing of the addition was found in church files with the name Jonas Levias Jewett as the designer, nothing more is known about him. Interior repairs and remodeling occurred in the 1940s. Changes to the pitch of the church tower roofs in the early 1960s and the post-1959 painting of the brick veneer have diminished the building's integrity somewhat. However the integrity of the building remains high, as does that of the associated parsonage, which has had few changes since its 1950 construction. In 1982 St. James' congregation moved into their new, larger, modern sanctuary and office building north of the old church. At that time the 1889/1891/1920 church became the fellowship hall and Sunday School, a use it still maintains. The current church site includes the 1950 parsonage, the ca.1889/1891/1920 church and the ca. 1980 sanctuary and office building. Cornerstones bearing the dates 1891 and 1889 remain a part of the historic church building.

ST. JAMES CHURCH AND TEXAS COLLEGE

Educational opportunities for freedmen and women were a major focus of African American churches in the late 19th century. Opportunities for public education were extremely limited and teachers difficult to find. Although the Freedman's Bureau and private white institutions and white churches worked to establish educational facilities and denominational colleges for African Americans in the post 1870 period, :tate funding was absent. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) the Colored [sic] Methodist Episcopal Church (C.M.E.) and the African American Baptist Church were leaders within the black community in developing schools and colleges. "From their inception, black church bodies were deeply committed to the Christianization and education of their race. These denominations realized that if blacks were to overcome the illiteracy, poverty and degradation imposed upon them by two hundred years of servitude, a variety of educational opportunities had to be provided (Heintze:20)." According to C. D. Coleman in *The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church: The Rationale and Policies upon which support of Its Colleges is Predicated*, quoted by Heintze, the C.M. E. colleges were founded on the idea that Christianity has an obligation to the intellectual life of a humankind and that freedom, dignity and humanness are Christian ideals that must be supported by a Christian structured education (Heintze:20). The A.M.E and C.M.E. churches as well as a number of white, church affiliated groups founded a number of schools in Texas in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The first was Paul Quinn College in Austin in 1872, established by the A.M.E. Church. In 1873 Wiley College was established in Marshall by the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Tillotson College (now Huston-Tillotson) was established in 1877 in Austin under the auspices of the white American Missionary Association. Bishop College, also in Marshall, was created in 1881 by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Guadalupe College was established in 1884 by a group of black Baptists in Seguin. Mary Allen College in Crockett dates from 1886. The Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. created that college for African American women. Texas College was organized in 1894 in Tyler and received its official charter in 1907 under the auspices of the C.M.E. Church (Heintze:20-35). Texas College was the third black institution in Texas to be founded by an African American denomination. Other colleges for African Americans were founded

between 1898 and 1912, including the 1905 Butler College, a Baptist institution, also in Tyler.

An excerpt from a 1967 address to Texas College alumni by Allen C. Hancock describes the founding of the college and the role of St. James Church in it:

In the year of 1894 a mental picture which had been developing in the minds of a few clerical members for quite some time was ready to give birth to the bright and brilliant idea of housing and educating the youth of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in a Christian institution. A committee of enthusiastic ministers responded to the call for giving financial assistance and set out to find a suitable location for the institution. The final decision was centered upon 101 1/4 acres of land about two and one half miles north of the city of Tyler. Upon the set day and hour for surveying of the acreage obtained, Reverend I.S. Persons requested that a young girl be placed at the very point of the beginning of the survey holding in her hand a donation of $75 from the St. James Sunday School, St. James C.M.E. Church, Tyler, Texas. It took time to raise a sufficient amount of money to erect and equip buildings for school use (St James C.M.E. files).

Despite funding limits, in January 1895 school began in a four room house with a single teacher, professor Samuel Allen Caffin, and six students. The link between St. James and Texas College remains strong and since that time St. James Church has consistently contributed to the support of Texas College (Gary interview 2003). During 2004 two buildings at Texas College, the Administration Building and the President's House, will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

JUSTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. James C.M.E. Church is an important local landmark built by its congregation as a place of worship. The church is significant for its association with Tyler's African American community, for its refection of the segregated community development patterns within Tyler and for its contributions to the founding and support of Texas College. Further, the church is significant as a symbol of the hope, labor and dedication of its congregation to supporting and enhancing the lives of African Americans through worship and education, despite the difficulties imposed by segregation and the limited economic and social opportunities inherent therein. The church retains high levels of integrity of location, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association within the period of significance and is maintained in fair condition. Although the church's setting has been affected by the change in general character and integrity of the larger neighborhood with which it is associated, such losses heighten the church's visibility and significance. For these reasons St. James C.M.E. Church is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance within a period of significance extending from ca. 1920 to 1954. Associated with the church is the 1950 brick veneer parsonage, a Contributing feature of the nominated property.

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a) Files containing deeds, church information and miscellaneous records.
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Smith County Appraisal District
a) Tax parcel map.

Smith County Clerk
a) Smith County Deed Records.
b) Smith County Mechanic's Liens Records.

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a) Sanborn Maps
b) Vertical Files
c) Chronicles of Smith County, Texas, Vol. 30 #1, Summer 1991.

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a) *Tyler*, February 1941.
b) *Tyler*, April 1940.
c) 37th *Annual Report*, 1937.

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b) *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, Commemorative Issue "Century of Our Lives," 1-1-2000.
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d) *Tyler-Courier-Times-Telegraph*, various dates.
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b) *St. James C.M.E. Church 1889-1943: Founder's Day Souvenir Annual*, 1943.

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Interviews

Madlock-Shaw, Mildred. Personal interview with Diane Williams, February 14, 2001.
Gary, Oris. Personal interview with Diane Williams, March 14, 2003.

Visual Documentation

Smith County Historical Society.
Photograph of St. James Church ca. 1900.

Williams, Diane E.
Photographs.
Maps.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 2.047 acres in the City of Tyler.

UTM References:

Zone	Easting	Northing
15	282949	3582021

Verbal Boundary Description: The southeast portion of New City Block 93 in the city of Tyler, Texas. A rectangular parcel extending 250 feet north, and 75 feet west, from the southeast corner of the block.

Boundary Justification: The nominated property includes all the historic resources associated with St. James C.M.E. Church, including the historic church and the 1950 parsonage. The c.1980 church is immediately north, outside the boundary of this nomination.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Diane Elizabeth Williams (Architectural Historian)
Organization: for St. James C. M. E. Church **Date:** February 17, 2004
Street & Number: P.O. Box 49921 **Telephone:** 512 458-2367
City or Town: Austin **State:** TX **Zip Code:** 78765

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheet Map-20).

Figures (see continuation sheet Figure-21 through Figure-26).

Photographs (see continuation sheet Photo-27).

Property Owner

Name: St. James C. M. E. Church

Street & Number: 408 North Border Avenue **Telephone:** 903 596-7729

City or Town: Tyler **State:** TX **Zip Code:** 75702

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

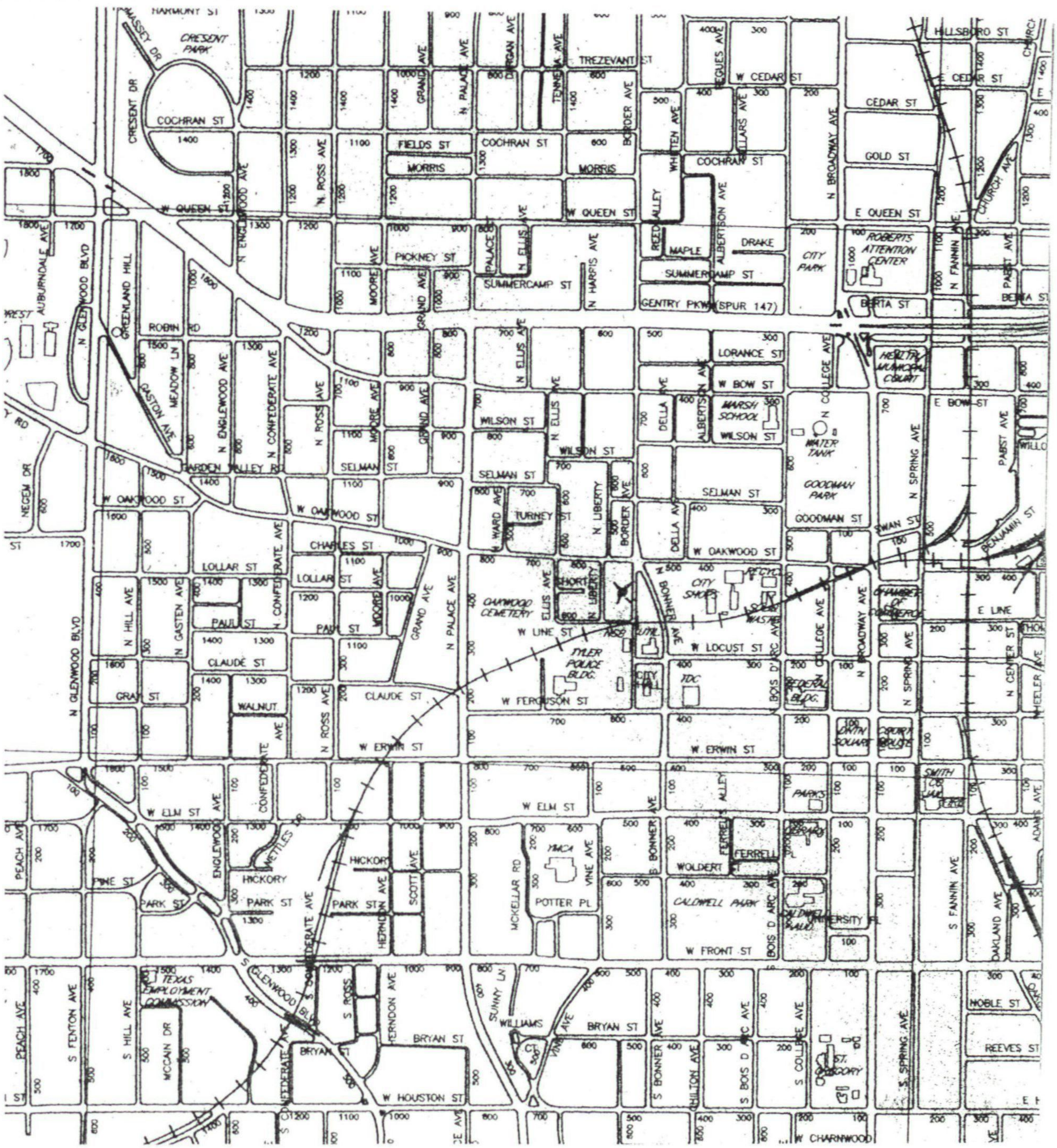
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section MAP Page 20

St. James C.M.E. Church
Tyler, Smith County, Texas

MAP 1: LOCATION MAP
Source: City of Tyler Street Map



North ▲
No Scale

FIGURE 1: ASSESSOR'S PLAT MAP
Source: Smith County Appraisal District

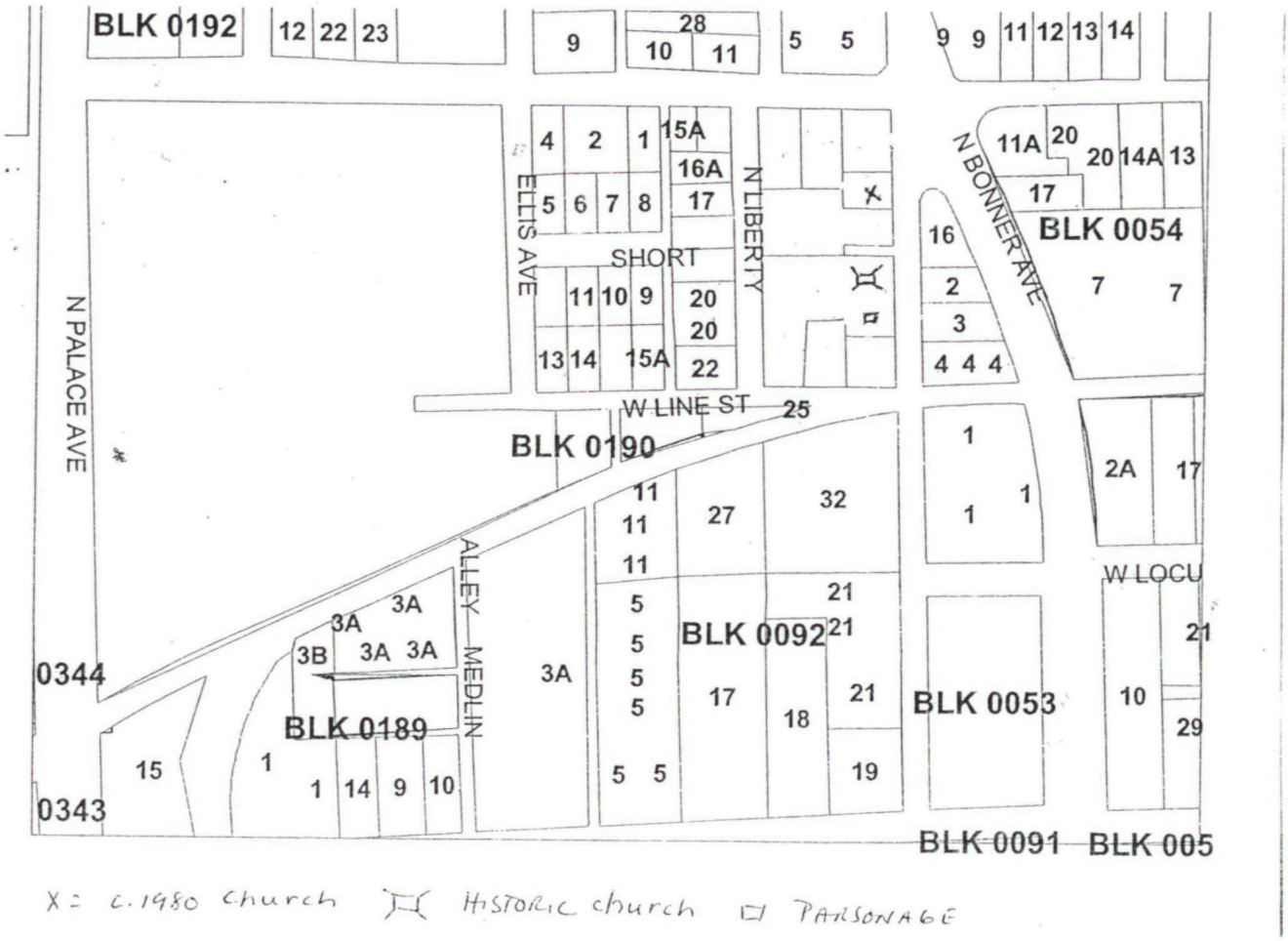


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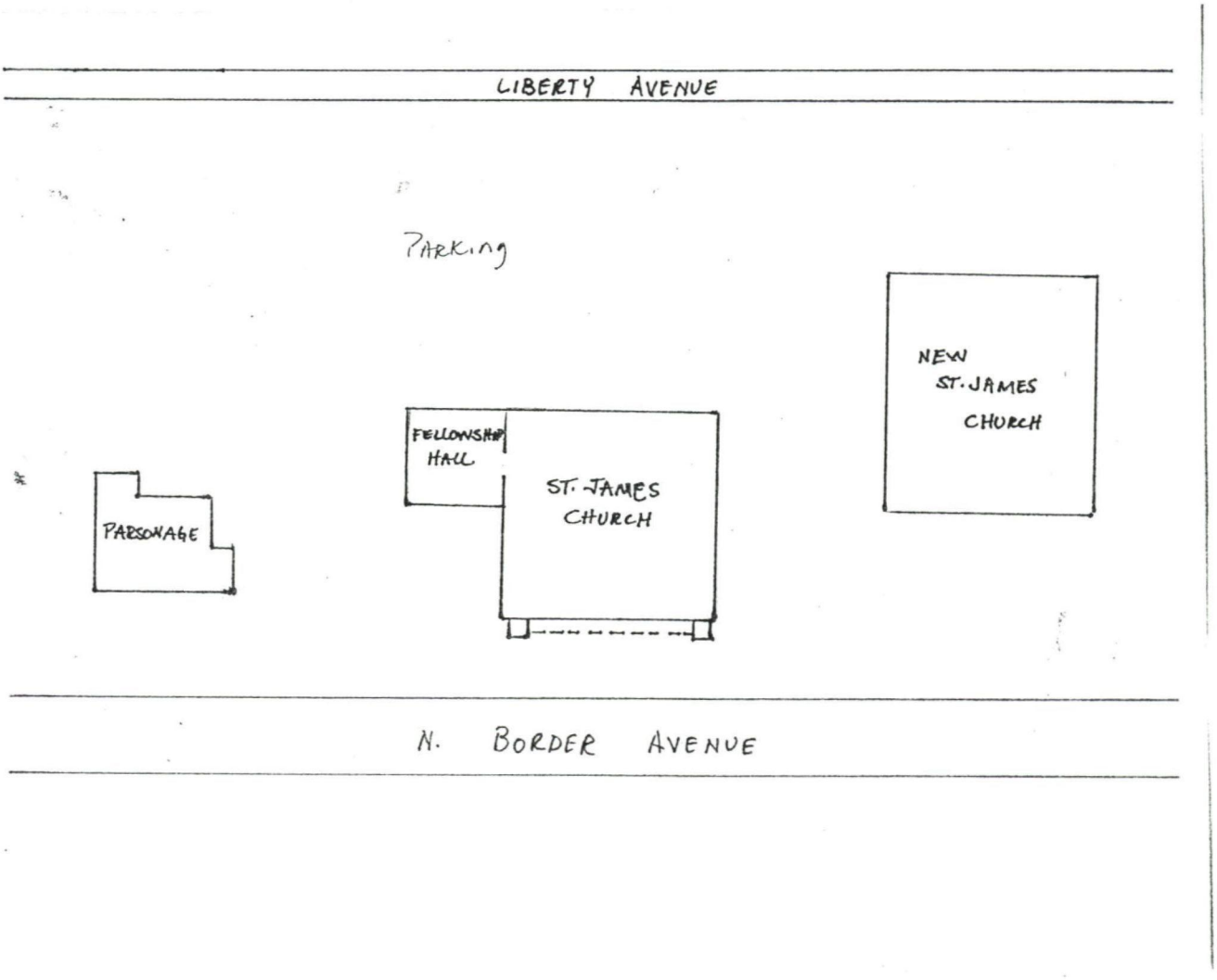
FIGURE 2: SITE PLAN
Source: Diane E. Williams



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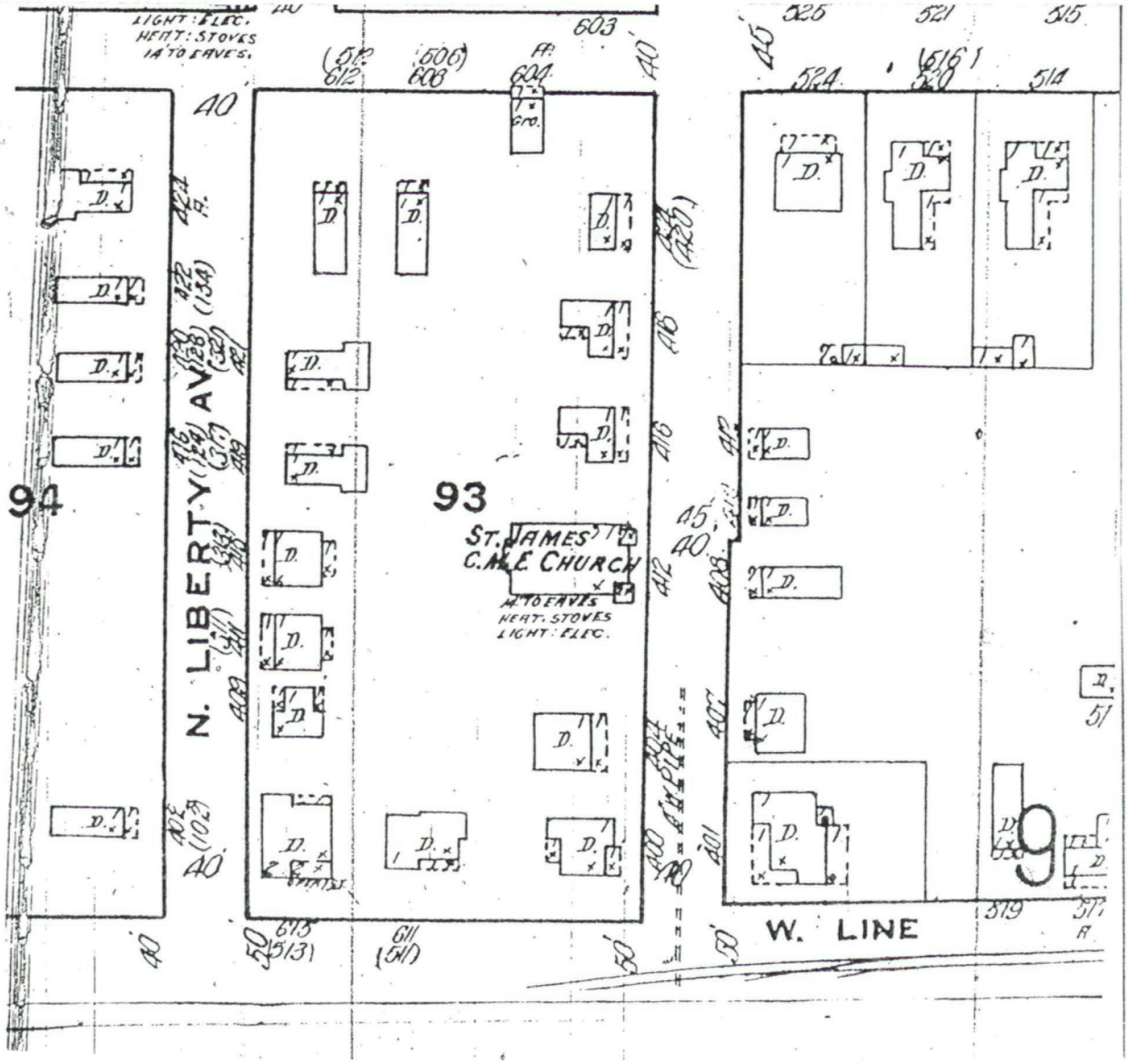
No Scale

FIGURE 3: FOOTPRINT OF ST. JAMES C.M.E. CHURCH, 1919
Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Co./UT Austin CAH a



North ▲
No Scale

FIGURE 4: HISTORIC PHOTO OF ST. JAMES C.M.E. CHURCH, CA. 1900
Source: Smith County Historical Society

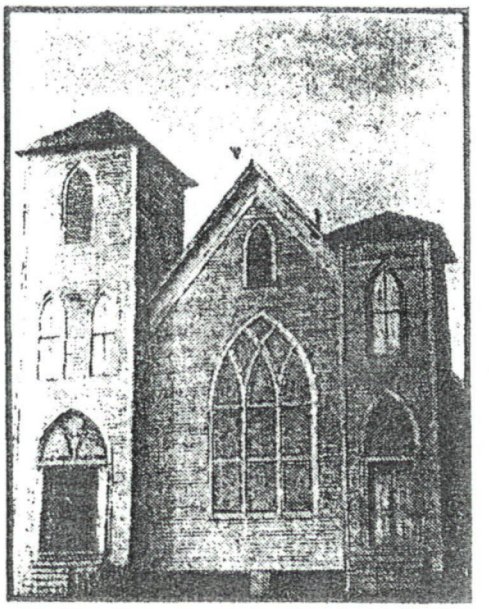
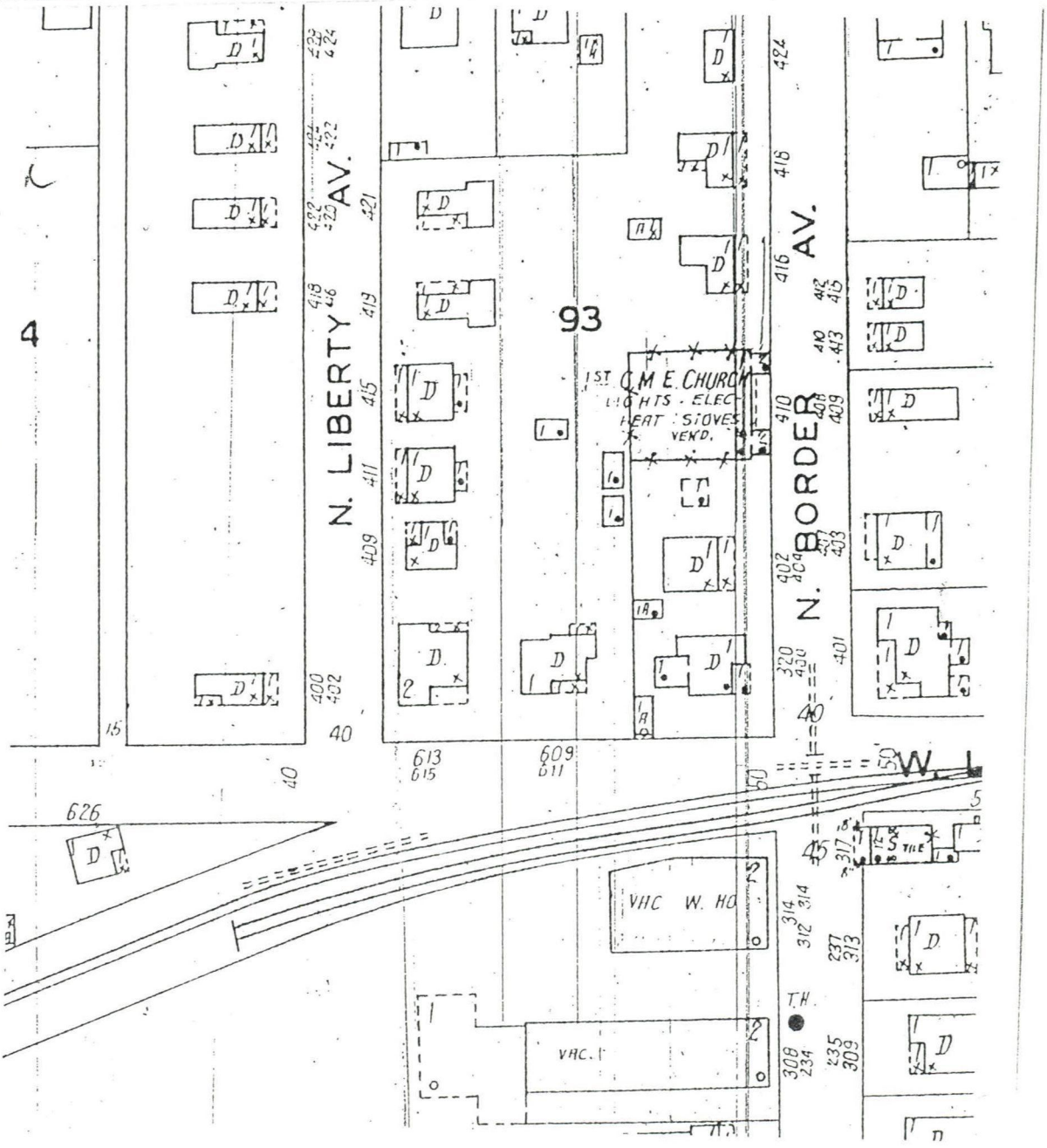
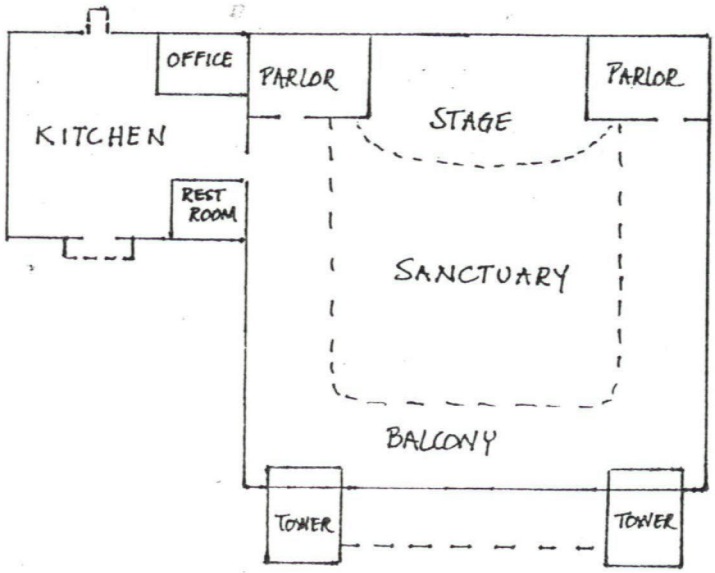


FIGURE 5: FOOTPRINT OF ST. JAMES C. M. E. CHURCH, 1928
Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Co./UT Austin CAH a



North ▲
No Scale

FIGURE 6: FLOOR PLAN, ST. JAMES C. M. E. CHURCH, 2003
Source: Diane E. Williams



North →
No Scale

PHOTO INVENTORY

ST. JAMES C.M.E. CHURCH
408 NORTH BORDER AVENUE
TYLER, SMITH COUNTY, TEXAS
DIANE ELIZABETH WILLIAMS, PHOTOGRAPHER
SEPTEMBER, 2003
ORIGINAL NEGATIVES ON FILE WITH THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

PHOTO 1- VIEW EAST FACADE, camera facing west

PHOTO 2- VIEW OF NORTH FACADE, camera facing southwest

PHOTO 3- VIEW OF WEST FACADE, camera facing northeast

PHOTO 4- VIEW OF EAST FACADE OF FELLOWSHIP HALL ADDITION, camera facing west

PHOTO 5- OBLIQUE OF EAST FACADE OF ADJACENT PARSONAGE, camera facing southwest

PHOTO 6- VIEW OF INTERIOR OF FORMER SANCTUARY, camera facing northwest

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: St. James Colored Methodist Episcopal Church

MULTIPLE NAME: Tyler, Texas MPS

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Smith

DATE RECEIVED: 7/08/04 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/27/04
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/11/04 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/21/04
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 04000887

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	N	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ ACCEPT ___ RETURN ___ REJECT 8/20/04 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA_____

REVIEWER_____ DISCIPLINE_____

TELEPHONE_____ DATE_____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

CME

St James CME Church
408 N. Border Ave
Tyler, Tx (Smith Co)
1 of 6

NO
PARKING
ANY
TIME

St James CME Church
408 N. Border Ave
Tyler, Tx (Smith Co.)
2 of 6

ST. JAMES C.M.E. CHURCH

St James CME Church
408 N Border Ave
Tyler, Smith Co, Tx
3 of 6

FELLOWSHIP HALL

St James CME Church
408 N. Border Ave
Tyler, Smith Co, Tx
496

St James CME Church
408 N. Border Ave
Tyler, Smith Co, Tx
5 of 6

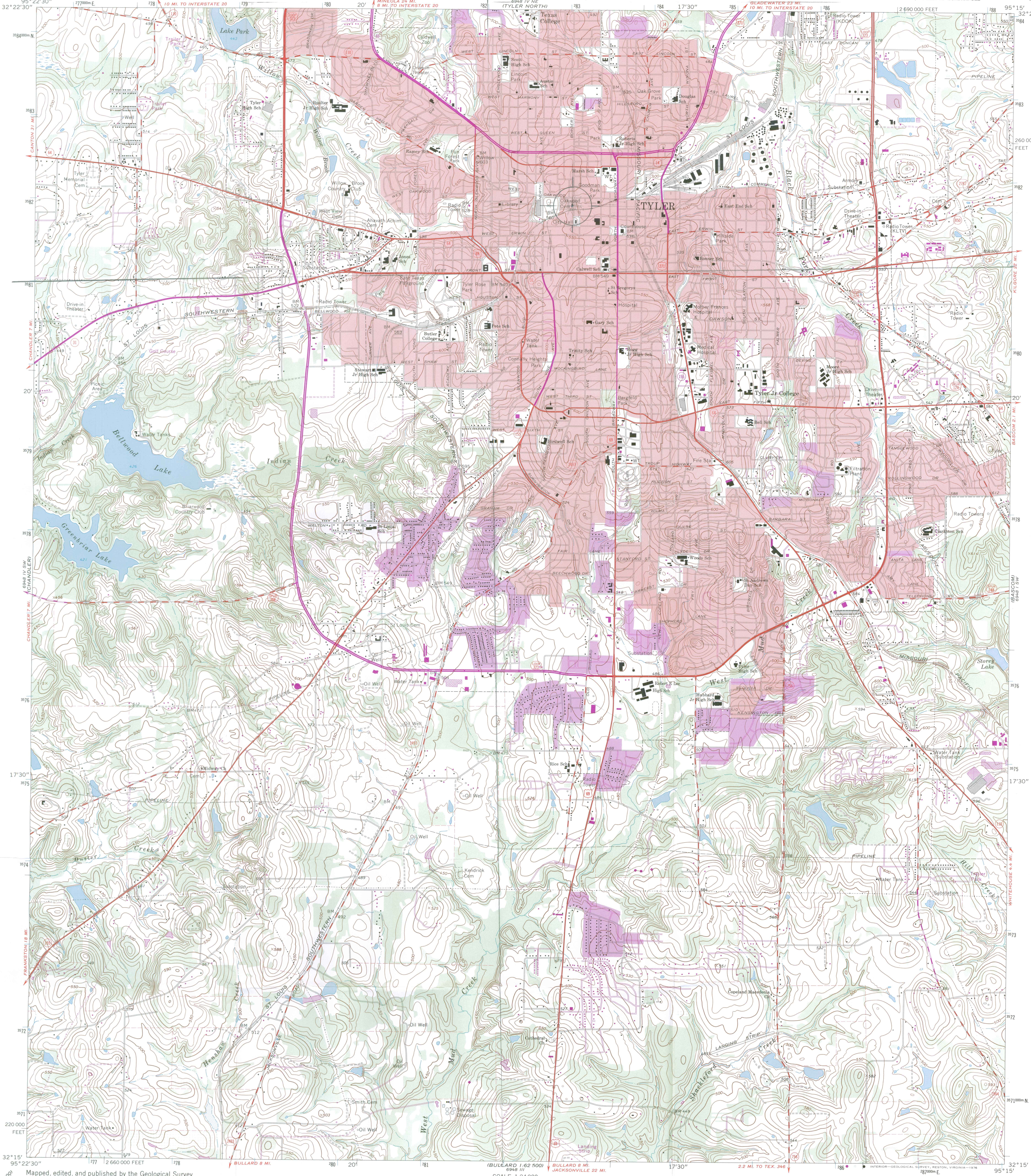
UNITED HEATHEN
PEACE ON EARTH
PEACE ON EARTH
ST. JAMES C.M.E.
CHURCH

St James CME Church
408 N. Border Ave
Tyler, Smith Co, Tx
6 of 6

ST. JAMES COLORED EPISCOPAL CHURCH (ST. JAMES C.M.E. CHURCH
408 NORTH BORDER AVENUE
TYLER, SMITH CO., TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 15/282980/3581800

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

TYLER SOUTH QUADRANGLE
TEXAS—SMITH CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SE/4 TYLER 15' QUADRANGLE



(BULLARD 1:62 500)
6948 III

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1965. Field checked 1966

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system, north central zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1973. This information not field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

GN MN
1°14' 22 MILS
7½° 133 MILS
UTM GRID AND 1973 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000
1 ½ 0 1 MILE
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 .5 0 1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

TEXAS
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty
Light-duty
Medium-duty
Unimproved dirt
U. S. Route
State Route

(TROUP 1:62 500)
6948 II

MILLER BLUEPRINT CO.
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FAX #512-474-7099

TYLER SOUTH, TEX.
SE/4 TYLER 15' QUADRANGLE
N3215—W9515/7.5

1966
PHOTOREVISED 1973
AMS 6948 IV SE—SERIES V882

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Rick Perry • *Governor*
John L. Nau, III • *Chairman*
F. Lawerence Oaks • *Executive Director*

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

RECEIVED 2280
JUL - 8 2004
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

TO: Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Hannah Vaughan, Historian
Texas Historical Commission

RE: St. James Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, Tyler, Smith Co., Texas

DATE: July 1, 2004

The following materials are submitted regarding: St. James Colored Methodist Episcopal Church

X	Original National Register of Historic Places form
	___ Resubmitted nomination
__	Multiple Property nomination form
X	Photographs
X	USGS map
__	Correspondence
	Other:

COMMENTS:

_____ SHPO requests substantive review

_____ The enclosed owner objections (do__) (do not__) constitute a majority of property owners

_____ Other _____