

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register Listed
May 30, 2012

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Bethel A.M.E. Church
other names/site number African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church; 161-3490-00158

2. Location

street & number 401 Yuma Street not for publication
city or town Manhattan vicinity
state Kansas code KS county Riley code 161 zip code 66502

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 at the following level(s) of significance:
___ national ___ statewide X local

See File
Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

African American Resources in Manhattan, Kansas

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: religious facility/church

RELIGION: religious facility/church

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER

foundation: STONE/Limestone

walls: BRICK

WOOD/Shingle

roof: SYNTHETICS

other:

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Bethel A.M.E. Church (1927) is a one-story brick cross-plan building with cross-gable roofs and a shed-roof rear portion. Set within the northeast ell is the front entry and the one-story remains of what was formerly a square tower. The entry door is on the north side of the former tower and faces onto Yuma Street. The building sits on a high limestone foundation which has several basement level windows with stone lintels. The remaining windows are simple 1/1 double hung wood with brick sills and lintels. The building is located on the southwest corner of Yuma and 4th streets in the historic African American neighborhood in southeast Manhattan. New commercial construction is being built across the street to the east, but the majority of buildings to the west along Yuma Street are residential. The primary alteration to the historic church building is the removal of the upper portion of the tower; otherwise, the floorplan and exterior retain its integrity of design. The remainder of the building retains a very high degree of integrity in location, association, feeling, materials and workmanship. Integrity of setting to the east has been compromised by the new commercial construction, although it remains mostly intact along Yuma to the west.

Narrative Description

The Bethel A.M.E. Church property contains two buildings, but only the portion of the lot which contains the church is being nominated. The historic church is on the northern portion of the lot, located at the southwest corner of Yuma and 4th streets. The red paver sidewalks have a grass median on the north, but extend to the curb on the east boundary. The sidewalk widens on the southeast side of the building, featuring two metal benches and a sign board. A wood cross and sign with the church name, founding date, and time of services is on the east side of the building. There is a small grass strip separating the building from the east sidewalk, and a grass lawn on the south and west sides.

The church is a modified cross plan building, featuring a centered gable-front on Yuma Street, with a cross gable section running east/west, and a rear section with a shed roof. The moderately pitched gable roofs have open overhanging eaves. The entry is set within the northeast ell, which includes the one-story bay that remains from the original square tower; this extends west beyond the elevation of the main building. A shed roof extends to cover both an entry deck and the one-story tower base. The double wood slab entry doors are on the north side of the tower, and are reached by new concrete stairs with metal rails from both Yuma and 4th streets. All of the windows on the first level are 1/1 double-hung wood; all are tall, except for two small square windows centered on the rear (south).

The attic level of the building has square cut wood shingles, while the first floor is clad in red vari-colored brick walls set in stretcher bond. The high foundation is regularly coursed quarry-faced ashlar limestone, with a sill of slightly darker quarry-faced limestone. The sill is interrupted by basement windows which extend higher than the sill, but have lintels of the same quarry-faced limestone as the basement sill; the wood basement windows are either 1/1 double-hung or four-sash. The rear (south) section of the cross plan has a moderately steep shed roof. There is an interior chimney as well as entries on both the east and west elevations of this south section; another interior chimney is on the north slope of the west cross gable section. The west entry is on the first floor, and is reached by concrete stairs with wood railings, while the east wood paneled door is set at ground level on the east wall.

The entry foyer, located within the former tower base, leads into the main sanctuary located in the east/west cross gable portion of the building. A door from the foyer also leads into the gable front section, which contains overflow seating. A large rectangular opening between the main sanctuary and the overflow seating has folding wood dividers. At the south end is a raised dais or pulpit platform, with a rectangular opening leading into the wood paneled apse recessed within the south shed roof section of the building. On either side of the apse are small offices, including the pastor's study. The pastor's study has a door from the sanctuary, while the other office is reached from the apse. The sanctuary has plaster walls and ceilings, and the floors are carpeted. The basement has men's and women's restrooms with five-paneled wood doors, a kitchen with fiberboard interior walls, and seating for banquets and meetings. The basement floor is linoleum tile and walls are plaster.

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The Bethel A.M.E. Church building meets the property type description and registration requirements as defined in Section F of the related multiple property listing “African American Resources of Manhattan, Kansas” for the *African American Community Institutions* property type. The registration requirements state that examples of this property type were located in the historic south side neighborhood, in the southeast quadrant of the city. Integrity of location is critical, as all of the associated resources were located in the historic African American district. The church is located on Yuma Street, which was the main street in the historic African American neighborhood, and the location of all of the large black churches in Manhattan. As a result, this building retains integrity not only in this area, but in setting, feeling and association as well. Integrity of key character-defining features is retained in the modified cross plan, windows openings and materials, and masonry construction. Non-original doors do not detract from the historic sense of time and place. Although the loss of the upper portion of the tower impacts integrity of design, the building is being nominated for its historic associations as the oldest operating African American congregation in Manhattan rather than its architecture. The economic means of the church members impacted the ability of the congregation to raise funds to repair the tower, which reflects the limited opportunities available historically for African Americans in Manhattan.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: black

Period of Significance

1927 - 1961

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance extends from the date of the building's construction in 1927 through 1961, which is the accepted fifty-year cut-off date established by the National Park Service to provide sufficient passage of time for objective evaluation of the historic resource.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): The Bethel A.M.E. Church meets Criteria Consideration A because its primary significance is its historical importance in the area of *ethnic heritage: black* for its role in the development of the historic African American community in Manhattan.

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Statement of Significance Summary

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal A.M.E. Church building is significant under criterion A in the area of *ethnic heritage: black* for its role in the development of the African American community in Manhattan. The historic importance of churches in African American neighborhoods nationwide is well documented, and the A.M.E. Church was one of the key community organizations in Manhattan, serving not only the religious needs of its members, but also the greater community by hosting education, social and charitable activities. The original congregation was organized in 1879, the same year that a number of African American refugees arrived in Manhattan as part of the Great Exodus from former Southern slave states. As the congregation grew in size and prominence, they built a second frame church in 1916, and a decade later were able to build this substantial brick building in 1927. The church is historically significant as the oldest existing African American congregation in Manhattan, Kansas. It was one of the key anchors in Manhattan's African American community, and was a center of social, economic, welfare, and civil rights events, in addition to religious. In cooperation with Manhattan's other black churches, members of Bethel took leadership roles in civil rights activities in the community. Although membership dwindled to as low as five members in the late twentieth century, the determination of those remaining members have kept the congregation and church in operation through today.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) evolved from the Free African Society (FAS), which was organized in 1787 by Richard Allen, Absalom Jones and others who were worshipping at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. After experiencing racial discrimination in that church, they decided to transform the mutual aid society into an African religious congregation. Allen led a group that decided to remain Methodists, and in 1794, Bethel A.M.E. was dedicated. With other black Methodist congregations in the East also facing racism, Allen called a meeting in Philadelphia in 1816 for the purpose of forming an autonomous denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church.¹ It was the first African American denomination incorporated in the United States, which organized because of racial discrimination rather than theological differences. The church worships under the Methodist doctrine and worship services, but operates under an episcopal form of government with bishops serving as church leaders. There are currently forty African Methodist Episcopal congregations in Kansas.

The Bethel A.M.E. Church is often noted as the oldest African American church in Manhattan.² Although it is the oldest in existence, the first black church was the Second Methodist Episcopal Church (later the Shepard Chapel Church). This congregation grew out of the First Methodist Episcopal Church (white) and was organized in 1866 as a mission church. Later that same year, they built a frame church at the corner of Sixth and El Paso streets, and in 1918, built a new stone church on Yuma Street. In 1964, however, members of the church transferred their membership to the First United Methodist Church and the congregation closed its doors.³

The Bethel A.M.E. Church was organized in October 1879, just a few months after former slaves arrived in Manhattan. Although the town was organized in 1855 by abolitionists under the New England Emigrant Aid Company, it wasn't until the 1865 Kansas Agricultural Census that any African Americans were recorded as living in Manhattan – at that time, they comprised a little less than three percent of the population. Their numbers increased after the end of the Civil War, and grew to almost six percent of the population in 1875 with nearly one hundred living in town. That number would grow substantially in 1879, when a mass migration of African Americans from former slave states in the south, called the "Great Exodus," resulting in thousands of blacks arriving in Kansas. In late April 1879, over one hundred refugees came

¹ AMEC, "About Us - Our History," *AMEC- African Methodist Episcopal Church*, 7 June 2011, <http://www.ame-church.com/about-us/history.php>.

² "Manhattan Bethel A.M.E. Church Recognition Day," City of Manhattan, Kansas Proclamation (7 November 2006).

³ Geraldine Walton, *140 Years of Souls: A History of African-Americans in Manhattan, Kansas 1865-2005* (Manhattan, KS: KS Publishing Inc., 2008), 102-105.

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to Manhattan looking for a better life.⁴ Others continued to arrive throughout the summer, and by 1880, Manhattans African American population rose to fourteen percent. These new residents brought their own religious practices, and after only a few months in town, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in October 1879.⁵ The church charter was filed in March 22, 1880, where the “object of consideration is the support of religious worship in accordance with the custom, usage, and doctrines of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States.” The charter noted that it would exist in “perpetuary,” [*sic*] and recorded the names of the three newly-elected Trustees: Edmund Williams, George W. Wisley, and John Williams, all of Manhattan. The document was signed by the trustees, as well as George Berry (his “x”) and Nick Holbert.⁶

On April 5, 1880, the congregation purchased lot 425 at the corner of Fourth (then Third Street) and Yuma Streets from Alice M. Vattier for \$20.00. The Grantees were George W. Wesley, Edmund Williams, and John Williams, Trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Manhattan “and their successors in office.”⁷ The congregation began construction of a small frame church that same year.⁸ In December 29, 1880, a mortgage was taken out by Oscar Haskins, John Williams, Jno. Anderson, J.N. Berry, Henry McDaniel, Edward Williams, Charles Mathews (his X), and Nick Holbert for consideration of \$169.00 to N. A. Adams. This mortgage was released on March 15, 1884.⁹

William G. Cutler's *History of the State of Kansas* from 1883 lists ten churches in Manhattan; three of these were African American, representing thirty percent of the congregations in town. The black churches had fewer members, however, and the recorded value of the church properties was lower as well; this reflects the reduced economic opportunities that were available to blacks in Kansas during this period, in spite of their recent escape from post-Reconstruction oppression in the South. The A.M.E. Church had an estimated value in 1883 of \$700.00, and provided seating for 150 people. There were twenty-five members at this time, making it the smallest of the three black congregations in town.¹⁰ In April 1895, the adjoining lot on the west (Lot 426) was purchased from George S. Green for \$40.00.¹¹

Although the African American neighborhoods were not recorded in the Sanborn maps until later years, this church building is individually noted in the Sanborn map starting in 1897; it is the only African American community building recorded this early, a possible indication of the prominent role it played in the community. In May 1897, it is a one-story, simple rectangular frame building located on the north end of lot 425 at the southwest corner of Yuma and S. 3rd streets, and is labeled “Am. Episc’l Church.”¹² Lot 426, also owned by the congregation at this time, contained an ell-shaped dwelling. By 1905, a small porch had been added to the front of the “A.M.E. Church” building, and it had stove heating and electric lights. The frame church building was fourteen feet to the eaves, and addressed as 401 Yuma Street.¹³ In

⁴ Deon Wolfenbarger, “African American Resources of Manhattan, Kansas,” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2011.

⁵ Candice Lewis, “Local Church has Varied History that Dates Back 128 Years,” *Kansas State Collegian*, 16 November 2007, p. 7.

⁶ “Charter of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Manhattan,” Files of the Bethel A.M.E. Church (22 March 1880).

⁷ “Abstract of Title to Lots 425 and 426, in Ward 1, in the City of Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas.” Charlson and Wilson Bonded Abstracters. Files of the Bethel A.M.E. Church.

⁸ Walton, 98.

⁹ “Abstract of Title to Lots 425 and 426, in Ward 1, in the City of Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas.”

¹⁰ William G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago, IL: A. T. Andreas, 1883). 19 February 2011
<http://www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/riley/riley-co-p5.html>

¹¹ “General Warranty Deed from Geo. S. Green to AME Church,” Files of the Bethel A.M.E. Church, 29 April 1895.

¹² Sanborn Map Company, “Manhattan, Kansas: 1897,” Kansas Collection, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, 25 May 2011, <http://luna.ku.edu:8180/luna/servlet/detail/kuluna01kui~12~12~2261400~260536:Manhattan,-Kansas---1897?sort=Identifier%2CArea%2CCitation%2CClassification&qvq=q:manhattan;sort:Identifier%2CArea%2CCitation%2CClassification;lc:kuluna01kui~12~12&mi=6&trs=30>

¹³ Sanborn Map Company, “Manhattan, Kansas: 1905,” Kansas Collection, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, 25 May 2011, <http://luna.ku.edu:8180/luna/servlet/detail/kuluna01kui~12~12~2261554~260547:Manhattan,-Kansas---1905?sort=Identifier%2CArea%2CCitation%2CClassification&qvq=q:manhattan;sort:Identifier%2CArea%2CCitation%2CClassification;lc:kuluna01kui~12~12&mi=17&trs=30>

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1912, the church building retained the same footprint, although the Sanborn now listed the height at sixteen feet to the eaves. The dwelling on lot 426 had been replaced with a larger T-shaped building.¹⁴

In 1916, a second church building was constructed for \$4,500; this is reflected in the 1923 Sanborn map, which shows the church in the center of lot 425, with the front oriented to the east and addressed as 506 Fourth Street.¹⁵ Just south of the church, on the same lot, was a one-story frame store. The church building had a similar configuration as those represented in the earlier maps, with a rectangular footprint and a small front porch. The scant church histories do not record the construction of the second sanctuary, and in fact, generally report that the 1880 building was “improved” in 1927. However, Sanborn maps and newspapers record that a third sanctuary was built in 1927. The *Manhattan Republic* from May 12, 1927 notes:

Next Sunday May 15 has been set aside as the date for laying the cornerstone of the new A.M.E. church at Fourth and Yuma streets. Dr. J.G.N. Sloanes of Kansas City, Kansas, grand master of Bluemont Lodge No 87, A.F. and A.M., is helping to lay the corner stone. A rally will be put on in which it is hoped to raise enough money to finance the new structure. The finance committee is composed of the Rev. J.R. Ransom, pastor of St. Johns A.M.E. church, Topeka; The Rev. J.P. Jockinson, pastor of the First Congregational Church, Manhattan, and the Rev. J.D. Arnold, Pastor of the First Christian Church, Manhattan.¹⁶

The church, under Trustees B. Gilbert, R. E. Pryor, Mrs. E. Alexander, Pete May, and Wm. Kaiser, took out a mortgage of \$2500.00 from the Home Building and Loan Association on July 1, 1927, undoubtedly to pay for the construction of the new brick building.¹⁷ At the time of its construction, the building was modern in every respect, including a furnace for heating and electric lights. There was a twenty-six foot tower in the northeast ell of the cross-plan church.

Unfortunately, records of early church activities are scarce. The regular columns in the Manhattan newspapers on church news did not feature the African American churches, and Manhattan did not have a large enough population to support a black-owned newspaper. Nearby Topeka, however, had a larger African American population, and black newspapers in that town sometimes covered events in Manhattan. The *Topeka Plaindealer*, for example, often carried a column on African American happenings in nearby communities. These news items did not just cover church events, but as an indication of the importance of churches to the social fabric of the black community, most of the columns contained events and news from the various churches. These newspaper articles often recorded ecumenical activities, related to religious activities of its members or the congregation as a whole. For example, the Bethel A.M.E. church often hosted the Topeka District conference of the A.M.E. church. Bishop Handy of the Fifth Episcopal District, a noted speaker and later as the author of a history of the national A.M.E.C, came to Manhattan in May 1895 when the Topeka District Conference was held at the Bethel A.M.E. church. As an indication of his national prominence, during his visit he also preached at the First M.E. Church (white).¹⁸ Rev. W. H. Taylor started revival meetings in April 1913, and in June of that same year, Manhattan’s Bethel A.M.E. Church once again hosted the A. M. E. District Conference. The featured speaker, Rev. H. S. Henrie, was expected to make it “one of the most wide-awake assemblies ever met in Manhattan.”¹⁹ In 1917,

¹⁴ Sanborn Map Company, “Manhattan, Kansas: 1912,” Kansas Collection, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, 25 May 2011, <http://luna.ku.edu:8180/luna/servlet/detail/kuluna01kui~12~12~2261722~260559:Manhattan,-Kansas---1912?sort=Identifier%2CArea%2CCitation%2CClassification&qvq=q:manhattan;sort=Identifier%2CArea%2CCitation%2CClassification;lc:kuluna01kui~12~12&mi=29&trs=30>

¹⁵ *Manhattan Mercury*, 4 May 1916, p. 1. Sanborn Map Company, “Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970,” Kansas City Public Library, 25 May 2011, <http://sanborn.umi.com.proxy.kclibrary.org/image/view?state=ks&reelid=reel11&cid=3025&imagename=00040&mapname=Manhattan%20Mar.%201923.%20Sheet%2010&CCSI=121n>

¹⁶ *Manhattan Republic*, 12 May 1927.

¹⁷ “Abstract of Title to Lots 425 and 426, in Ward 1, in the City of Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas.” Charlson and Wilson Bonded Abstracters. Files of the Bethel A.M.E. Church.

¹⁸ *Manhattan Nationalist*, 10 May 1895.

¹⁹ “Manhattan, Kansas,” *Topeka Plaindealer*, 11 April 1913; “Manhattan, Kansas,” *Topeka Plaindealer*, 6 June 1913.

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Bethel members attended the Topeka District Conference, with Mrs. Lillian Carter and Mrs. Birtie Bush representing the Sunday school, and Mr. J. L. Campbell and Miss Clarinda Alexander representing the A. C. E. League.²⁰

There were several church-related organizations at Bethel, sponsoring activities geared towards members of all ages. Starting with Sunday School in the morning, the sermon was then followed by several meetings; it was not uncommon for events to last all through Sunday. Sometimes there were special events, such as the church-sponsored "Children's day" in the early twentieth century.²¹ However, the Bethel A.M.E. Church served as more than a religious home for its members. The building hosted other community-wide social and entertainment events, in part because other venues were not generally open to African Americans. Music recitals were common affairs. A baritone soloist and violinist from Mexico, Missouri, Mr. A. E. Bodine, traveled to Manhattan to present a concert to an audience "that was appreciative of classical music."²² The Progressive Literary Society met at the A. M. E. Church, and in 1917 held an oratorical contest with students competing from Kansas City, Missouri; Lawrence, Kansas; Middleton, Texas; as well as Mr. R. Keel of Manhattan. The newspaper noted that there it "was graced with extraordinary attendance despite door fee."²³

Besides cultural events, sometimes practical demonstrations geared towards all of the African American community were held at the church. A vegetable canning demonstration was presented at Bethel in 1917 for the "benefit of our women." It was offered by Mr. F. W. Kirk, a recent arrival to Manhattan and newly appointed community instructor in "gardening, hog raising, poultry raising, fruit growing, canning, etc."²⁴ Kirk worked with the agricultural department of the Kansas State Agricultural College (now Kansas State University) to give presentations and form clubs.²⁵

As demonstration of not only the importance of the church to the broader African American community in Manhattan, but also the prominent positions that the leaders of those organizations held in the community, on November 19, 1926, the retiring pastor of the Bethel A.M.E. Church, Rev. B. M. Hattan, was given "one of the biggest, proud parties ever given a colored minister in Manhattan." The party was attended by not only members of the Bethel A.M.E. church, but also by the congregations of Shepard's Chapel M.E. Church, Pilgrim Baptist Church, and Church of God. As a show of support and good will towards the pastor, community members donated food, household sundries, and cash. The newspaper recorded all the names of the donors and their gifts; most of the gifts were canned goods, and ranged from one jar of peaches, a pound of butter, twenty cents cash, and three cakes of soap.²⁶

Not only was the church a significant part of the daily lives of its local members, but since Manhattan was home to a transient population represented by both the university and nearby Fort Riley, it was a welcome refuge for students and military families alike. Particularly for military families that moved frequently, the church provided comfort and stability in a strange town that was not otherwise welcoming to new African American residents.²⁷ James Butler joined the congregation in 1948, when he was both a young married soldier at Fort Riley and student at K-State. He stated he found solidarity among the congregation, which helped its members work towards self-sufficiency in segregated Manhattan. Butler was able to learn from the lessons and support he received at Bethel A.M.E. Church, going on to become a member of Manhattan's Human Rights and Services Board, and then chairman of the Kansas Commission on Civil Rights.²⁸

Like Butler, other Bethel church members were community activists, working for representation on the USD 383 school board, county commission, city council, by encouraging the community to vote count in local elections. Arlene Cole, a

²⁰ "Manhattan, Kansas," *Kansas City Advocate*, 22 June 1917.

²¹ "Manhattan, Kansas," *Topeka Plaindealer*, 16 May 1902.

²² "Manhattan, Kansas," *Kansas City Advocate*, 25 May 1917, p. 2.

²³ "Manhattan, Kansas," *Kansas City Advocate*, 1 June 1917.

²⁴ Due to the extensive coverage of Mr. Kirk and his family in the *Advocate* article, it is assumed that he was African American.

²⁵ "Manhattan, Kansas," *Kansas City Advocate*, 25 May 1917, p. 2.

²⁶ "Manhattan, Kansas," *Topeka Plaindealer*, 26 November 1926.

²⁷ Shelia Ellis, "Black History in the Church: AME Church Provides Comfort to Members," *Kansas State Collegian*, 2 February 2006.

²⁸ Whitney Hodgin, "Congregation has faith that church will be added to historic register," *Manhattan Mercury*, 20 June 2010, p. C1.

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member of Bethel A.M.E. since moving to Manhattan in 1946, recalls one important event in Manhattan's civil rights era when the Bethel pastor organized a march from the Douglass Center to the train station in the early 1950s, during which the marchers sang "We Shall Overcome."²⁹ James Boyer, who came to Kansas State University in 1971 as the first black teaching professor, believes that since Manhattan's African American community was never large enough to have a truly separate black community or commercial center, such as 18th & Vine in Kansas City, Missouri, the black churches were the main institutions for community interaction. As he and other historians have noted, it was the only institution that blacks controlled; within the black church, members could say and do things without fear.³⁰ Thus due to the small number of black businesses and other community institutions, the black churches in Manhattan served an even more prominent role as the social, economic and political heart of the neighborhood. The churches were the first groups to organize local action groups in the early years of the civil rights movement, which later evolved to Social Concern Boards. Like the A.M.E.C. nationwide, Bethel was part of the fight for equal rights for African Americans in Manhattan, joining a citywide multi-church council on Human Relations.³¹ The success in gaining equal rights may have contributed a small part to an eventual decline in the neighborhood, as African Americans eventually changed the housing practices in town and were able to move into other neighborhoods. The Urban Renewal projects of the 1970s and later, however, also significantly affected the neighborhood, with extensive demolition occurring east of 4th Street and south of El Paso. Some African American congregations have disbanded, and others have moved out of the historic African American neighborhood in the southeastern. Bethel A.M.E. has survived periods in the late twentieth century when there was not enough money to pay the church's utility bills, and members dug into their own pockets to cover the operating expenses. It was a lack of funds that led the church to remove the deteriorating square tower on the northeast corner of the building.³² The deterioration may have been partly worsened by the 1951 flood that engulfed much of the low-lying African American neighborhood. As noted in the 25 July 1951 *Manhattan Mercury Chronicle*:

The Bethel A.M.E. Church at Fourth and Yuma, which became a refuge for three flood families Wednesday, June 11, was itself flooded to a depth of more than two feet in the nave before the crest was reached the following Friday, Rev. John L. Reeves, Pastor, said.

The Pastor had attempted to carry out articles stored in the basement that Wednesday through knee-deep water but the swift rise of the water interrupted him . . . The church pulpit floated from the south end of the church to the door at the north. All the benches and the furniture of the refugees was overturned and strewn about by the water.³³

The eventual removal of the deteriorating tower after 1985 was due to the lack of funds for repair and the size of the congregation. Arlene Cole does not believe that the other African American churches in Manhattan have "had the struggles we've had," but that even when the church was down to only five members, it survived because of the dedication of its members to keep it going.³⁴ Currently there are over twenty members on the role, and the church building serves as a key visual landmark on Yuma Street at the entry of the eastern edge of Manhattan's historic African American neighborhood.

²⁹ Kerry Davis, oral interview with Mrs. Arlene Cole, 1 April 2011.

³⁰ Kerry Davis, oral interview with James Boyer, 20 April 2011.

³¹ Wolfenbarger, MPDF.

³² Arlene Cole believed this occurred sometime in the 1950s, but inventory forms filed with the Kansas Historical Society show photos of the tower in 1985. Kerry Davis, oral interview with Mrs. Arlene Cole, 1 April 2011.

³³ *Manhattan Chronicle*, 5 November 1961.

³⁴ Lacey Storer, "Strength in community," *Kansas State Collegian*, 23 August 2004.

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<http://luna.ku.edu:8180/luna/servlet/detail/kuluna01kui~12~12~2261722~260559:Manhattan,-Kansas---1912?sort=Identifier%2CArea%2CCitation%2CClassification&qvq=q:manhattan;sort:Identifier%2CArea%2CCitation%2CClassification;lc:kuluna01kui~12~12&mi=29&trs=30>

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: Kansas Historical Society; City of Manhattan, KS, Community Development Department

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>14</u> Zone	<u>710594</u> Easting	<u>4339025</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The north seventy-five (75) feet of lot 425, Ward 1, less beg SE corner lot 425 then W15', N59', E5', N25', E10', S84' to point of beginning (Plat Book/Page A /54 Deed Book/Page 0840/8432 0840/8434).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic church building is located in the north half of lot 425, Ward 1. The south half of lot 425 (not included) contains a residential building that was moved to the location within the last twenty years, and is not historically associated with the church.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Deon Wolfenbarger, Historic Preservation Consultant
organization Three Gables Preservation date June 24, 2011
street & number 320 Pine Glade Road telephone 303-258-3136
city or town Nederland state CO zip code 80466
e-mail Deon@ThreeGables.net

Property Owner:

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

name Rev. Rachel Williams-Glenn, Pastor; Bethel AME Church
street & number 401 Yuma Street telephone 785-539-5897
city or town Manhattan state KS zip code 66502

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Bethel A.M.E. Church
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Additional Documentation: Photographs

Name of Property: Bethel A.M.E. Church
City or Vicinity: Manhattan
County / State: Riley County / Kansas
Name of Photographer: Deon Wolfenbarger
Date of Photographs: June 3, 2011 (photos 1-5); July 26, 2011 (photos 6-7); February 11, 2011 (photos 8-14).

Photo #1 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0001)
North façade (right) and east elevation (left), camera facing southwest.

Photo #2 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0002)
East elevation, camera facing west.

Photo #3 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0003)
East elevation and south elevation (left), camera facing northwest.

Photo #4 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0004)
West elevation (left) and south elevation (right), camera facing north/northeast.

Photo #5 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0005)
North façade (left) and west elevation (left), camera facing southeast.

Photo #6 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0006)
North façade (left) and west elevation (left), camera facing south/southeast.

Photo #7 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0007)
North elevation, camera facing south.

Photo #8 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0008)
Interior, view towards dais, taken from entry, camera facing southwest.

Photo #9 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0009)
Interior, view towards dais, taken from overflow seating, camera facing south.

Photo #10 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0010)
Interior, view towards pastor's office, camera facing southeast.

Photo #11 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0011)
Interior, view towards dais, camera facing southeast.

Photo #12 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0012)
Interior, view towards entry and overflow seating area, taken from dais, camera facing northeast.

Photo #13 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0013)
Interior, view into overflow seating area, taken from dais, camera facing northwest.

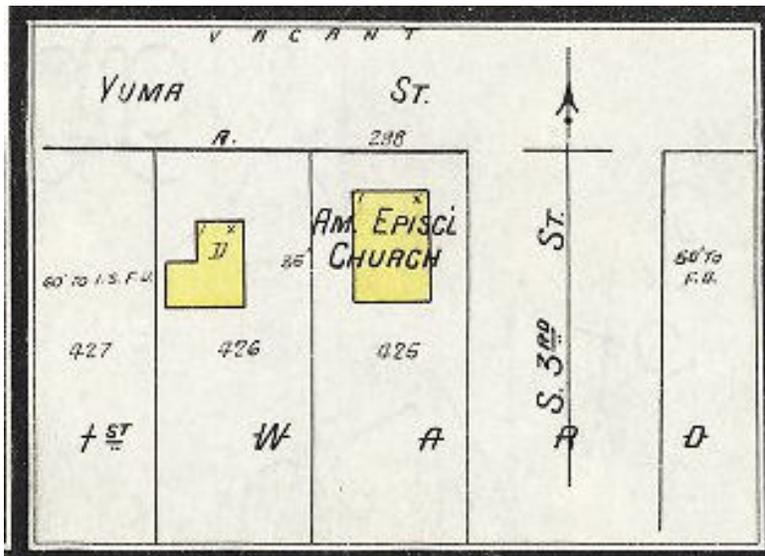
Photo #14 (KS_RileyCounty_BethelAMEChurch_0014)
Interior, basement, camera facing southwest.

Bethel A.M.E. Church
Name of Property

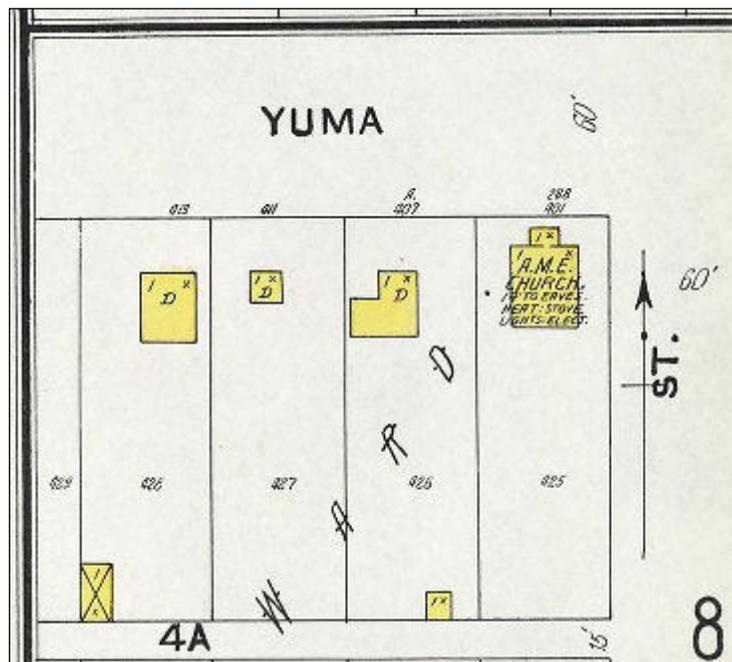
Riley County, Kansas
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Additional Documentation: Appendices

Appendix A: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps



1897 Sanborn [note: 4th Street is called 3rd Street at this time]

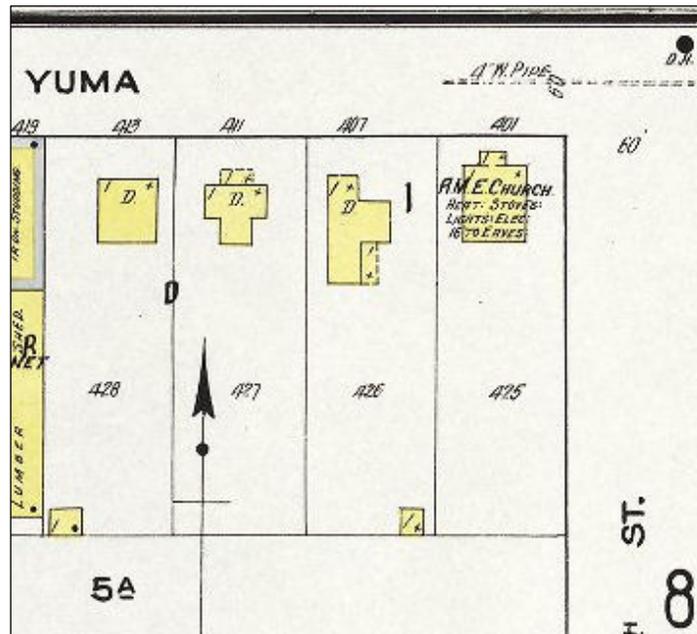


1905 Sanborn [note: an entry porch added to the original frame building]

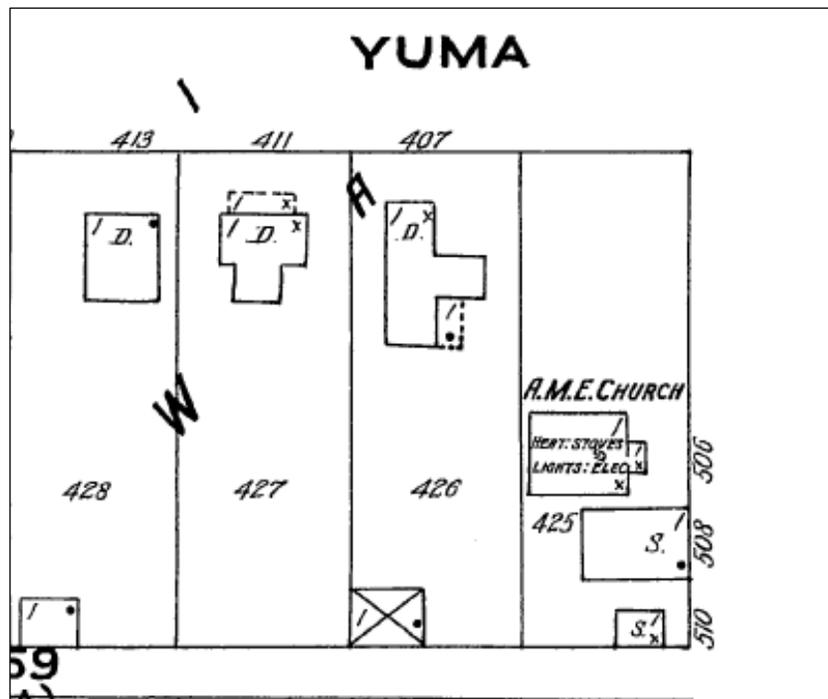
Bethel A.M.E. Church
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Appendix A (continued)



1912 Sanborn [no changes to the building]

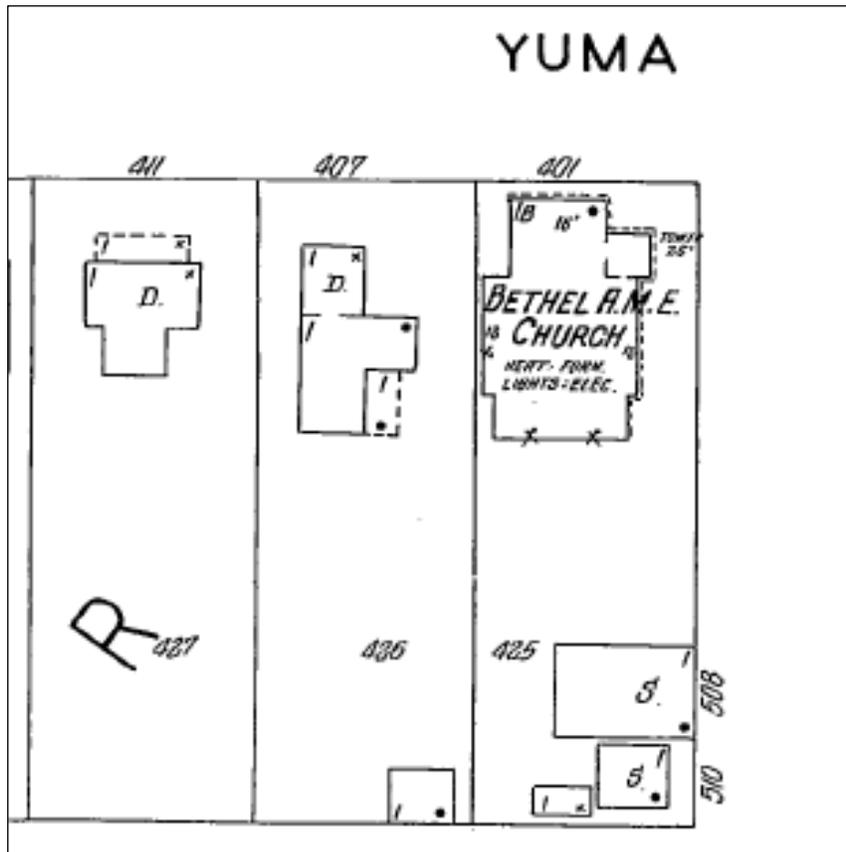


1923 Sanborn [second frame building, in a different location on the same lot]

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Appendix A (continued)



1930 Sanborn [the present building]

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Appendix B: Historic Photographs
From Kansas Historic Resources Inventory Form 161-3490-00158



Looking southwest, date unknown.

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Appendix B (continued)



Looking southwest, 1985.

Bethel A.M.E. Church
Name of Property

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Appendix B (continued)



Looking southeast, 1985.

Bethel A.M.E. Church
Name of Property

Riley County, Kansas
County and State

Appendix B (continued)



Looking north/northwest, 1985.

Bethel A.M.E. Church
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Appendix C: Charter of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1880
From the files of the Bethel A.M.E. Church, Manhattan, Kansas

Charter of the African Methodist Episcopal Church
of Manhattan, Kansas.
First. The name of the corporation is, The African
Methodist Episcopal Church of Manhattan, Kansas.
Second. The object of corporation is the support of relig-
ious worship in accordance with the custom, usages,
and doctrine of the African Methodist Episcopal Church
of the United States.
Third. Its place of business is at Manhattan Riley
County State of Kansas.
Fourth. It is to exist perpetually.
Fifth. The number of its Trustees is three, to be elected
the first year are,
Edmund Williams of Manhattan Kansas
George H. Wesley of Manhattan Kansas,
John Williams of Manhattan Kansas.
Sixth. The corporate holding for religious purposes,
no capital stock.
Seventh. Its officers when of the following persons, mem-
bers of said corporation have been and subscribed their
names this twentieth day of March, A.D. 1880.
Edmund Williams of Manhattan, Kansas
G. H. Wesley of Manhattan, Kansas.
John Williams of Manhattan, Kansas.
George H. Wesley of Manhattan, Kansas.
Nick Holbert of Manhattan, Kansas.
State of Kansas,
Riley County, ss.
On this 22^d day of March A.D. 1880 before
me clerk of the District Court, in and for said County

Bethel A.M.E. Church
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Appendix C (continued)

and State personally appeared Edmund Williams,
 1 D.W. Ashley, John Williams, George Berry, and Nick Hobbs,
 2 to me known to be the same persons who signed the
 3 foregoing instrument of writing and they duly
 4 acknowledged the execution of the same.

Witness my hand and Seal of said Court
 5 office this date last above written.

6  R. J. Harper
 7 _____
 8 _____
 9 _____
 10 _____
 11 _____
 12 _____
 13 _____
 14 _____
 15 _____
 16 _____
 17 _____
 18 _____
 19 _____
 20 _____
 21 _____
 22 _____
 23 _____
 24 _____
 25 _____

State of Kansas,
 Office of Secretary of State } ss. _____
 I, James Smith Secretary of State of the
 State of Kansas, do hereby certify that the foregoing is
 a true and correct copy of the Charter of the African
 Methodist Episcopal Church, of "Maubattan," and that
 the same was filed for Record, on the 22^d day of
 March, 1880

In testimony whereof I have hereunto
 subscribed my name and affixed
 my official Seal, done at Topeka
 this 23^d day of March, A.D. 1880 -
 James Smith
 Secretary of State
 By Geo. Gilmore

