

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Chestnut Street Baptist Church/Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church (Additional Documentation)

Other names/site number: Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 912 W. Chestnut St.

City or town: Louisville State: Kentucky County: Jefferson

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

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.

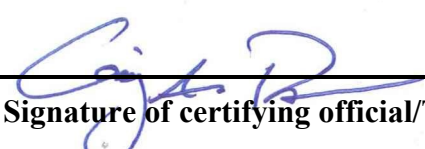
In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

X national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

	May 14, 2020
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Executive Director/SHPO Kentucky Heritage Council</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/>	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
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Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use Historic Functions

Religious

Current Functions

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Gothic Revival

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property: brick, terra cotta, stone

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church (JFWR-1751) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 3, 1980, under Criterion C (NR#80001598). This nomination expands the Criteria to Criterion A for civil rights. The church is a front-gabled brick building at 912 West Chestnut Street consisting of a front sanctuary wing dating to 1884-1886 and a south wing dating to ca. 1866-1867, with small twentieth-century additions on the south end of the building. The sanctuary is in the High Victorian Gothic style and is one story tall with dual two-story towers on the front. The south wing is an example of Ohio Valley vernacular brick construction and has one-story and two-story sections. The two additions on the south end of the building are examples of utilitarian brick and concrete block construction. The building is located on a standard urban lot on the eastern edge of the Russell neighborhood, just west of the downtown central business district of Louisville, Kentucky, in a fairly densely developed area of commercial, office, public housing, and institutional land use. The sanctuary faces West Chestnut Street, and the building has an asphalt parking lot to the east. The interior of the sanctuary is deteriorated, and the ceiling and most of the furnishings are no longer in place. However, original features such as stained glass and some wood trim remain. The south wing and additions, while also deteriorated in areas, retain many nineteenth-century features, as well as evidence of later modifications to the space in the twentieth century.

Narrative Description

The Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church is a brick building with one-story and two-story sections. The property is located in the Russell neighborhood, an urban residential and commercial area west of the downtown central business district of Louisville, Kentucky. The building faces West Chestnut Street, an arterial street connecting downtown with the city's West End area. The building has a shallow setback from the street, with a nineteenth-century iron fence on a low limestone wall in front of the building. The property includes an asphalt parking lot east of the building and very small areas of grass lawn on the south and west sides of the building (Photograph 1). Roy Wilkins Boulevard, a north-south traffic artery, sits immediately east of the Quinn Chapel parking lot and forms the eastern boundary of the property. West Chestnut Street forms the north boundary of the property, while the lot lines of the parcel form the south and west boundaries of the tract.

The church building can be divided into two major wings: the sanctuary, located on the north end of the property and built 1884-1886, and the south wing, which was built ca. 1866-1867 and used as a Sunday school space after the sanctuary wing was built (Photograph 2). These two wings compose the bulk of the building. There are also two small twentieth-century additions on the south end of the building, one of brick with three rooms and the other with concrete block walls.

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The sanctuary wing is the most visually prominent portion of the building and faces West Chestnut Street.

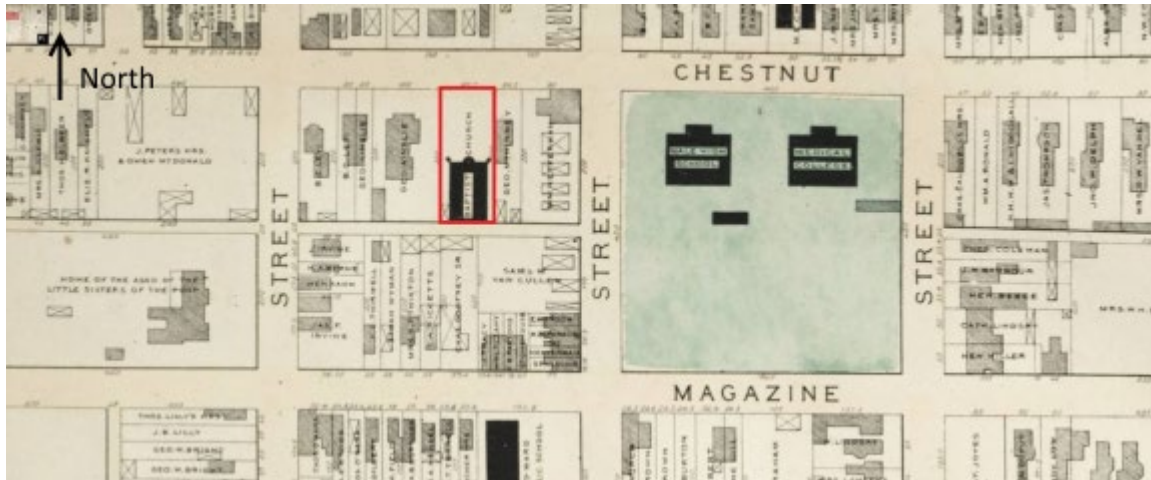


Figure 1. Chestnut Baptist in 1876 (Atlas of Louisville, 1876)

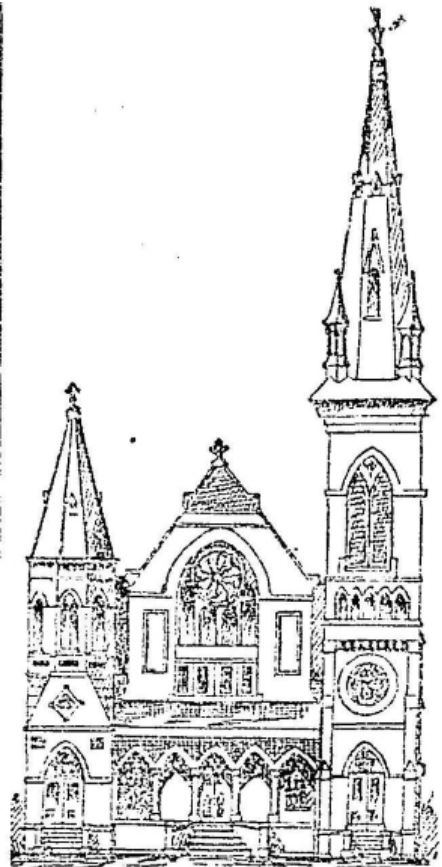


Figure 2. Chestnut Baptist from 1886 *Courier-Journal*

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The building sits on a brick foundation that has been covered over in most areas by a smooth coating of concrete or cement. The front wall is composed of very regular pressed brick in a common bond pattern, with terracotta, shaped pressed brick, and sandstone trim. The side and rear walls are composed of rougher, more irregular pink-orange colored brick that has a handmade appearance. The sanctuary is covered by a front-gabled roof covered in gray asphalt shingles.

The north wall of the sanctuary is composed of a center gabled section and two towers. The gabled section sits on a high brick foundation covered in smooth cement and features a five-bay porch on the first floor. The porch has a railing composed of bricks and floral terracotta panels arranged in a diaper pattern and capped off at the top with limestone. Above the railing are a series of stone columns with molded bases, horizontal banding halfway up the shaft, and Gothic capitals with a foliate design. Above the columns are a series of soldier-course brick pointed arches with pressed brick moldings. Above the arches, the porch wall is clad in small terracotta squares that alternate design in a diaper pattern. A painted galvanized steel cornice caps off the porch. The porch has concrete steps; its ceiling has a wood tracery design and one remaining older lighting fixture that appears to date to the mid-twentieth century (Photograph 3)

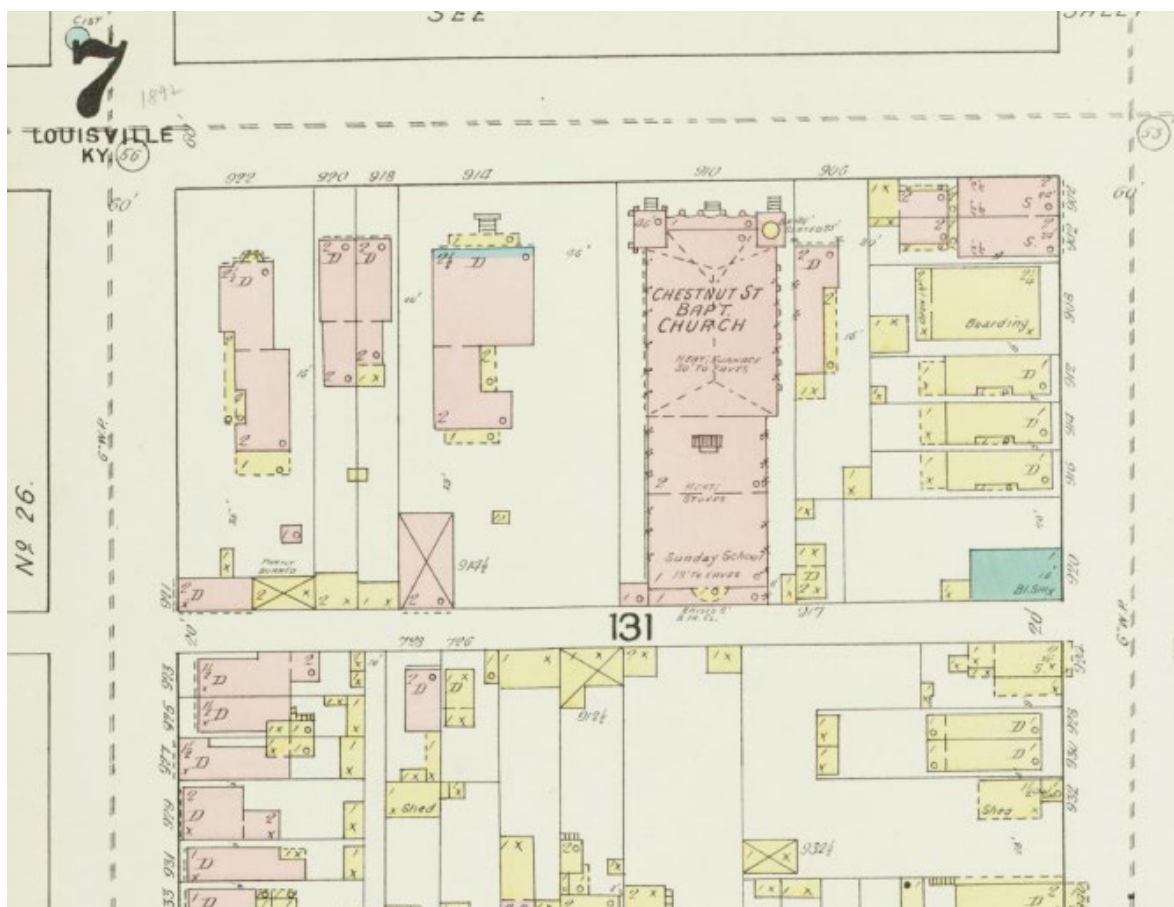


Figure 3. 1892 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing Quinn Chapel.

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Underneath the sanctuary's porch is a brick wall with a single door with a pointed stained glass arch transom. The door is original, with dark wood trim and dark wood recessed panels composed of diagonal boards. It is flanked by two pointed-arch windows with stained glass.

Above the porch is a large, pointed arch window with wood tracery. The window consists of four wood pointed arches and a rose window above. The window is currently boarded up, but the tracery and stained glass are visible from the inside of the building. On each side of the central rose window, there is a recessed blind brick panel trimmed in terracotta molding. Above the rose window is the roof gable, which is brick with an area of square terracotta decorative panels, arranged in a diaper pattern, at the top of the gable.

The north wall of the east tower has a brick foundation covered in concrete, and concrete steps leading to an original wood door with stained glass transom, similar to the sanctuary's center door. There is a decorative small square terracotta panel on each side of the door. Above the door is a painted galvanized metal cornice, and above that, the tower has stepped limestone corners that transition the tower from its square base to the octagonal belfry level. In between the limestone corners is a section of pressed brick wall with a panel of terracotta geometrical Gothic tracery in the middle. Above this is the octagonal belfry section of the tower, which has pointed arch openings and terracotta decorative panels in the middle. The belfry openings have wood tracery with wood louvers behind them.

The north wall of the west tower also has concrete steps and a concrete-covered brick foundation. As in the east tower, above the foundation level is an original paneled wood door flanked by single decorative square terracotta panels and topped with an original stained glass pointed-arch transom and a painted galvanized metal cornice. On each side of the tower, there is a pressed brick buttress. The buttresses have gabled limestone capstones on their lower sections and slanted limestone caps on the upper sections. Above the door's galvanized metal cornice is a section of pressed brick wall with a round window opening with tracery in a quatrefoil design and wood louvers behind the tracery. Above this circular window are a corbelled brick frieze, a painted galvanized metal cornice, and a frieze of brick pointed arches with decorative terracotta panels inside the openings.

The east and west walls of the sanctuary are similar, consisting of the sidewalls of the towers and the sidewalls of the nave.

The sanctuary's east side wall has a tower facade identical to the face of the tower on the north wall, except that the first floor of this side of the tower has a pointed arch window rather than a door. The remainder of the east wall of the sanctuary consists of a brick wall with a concrete covered brick foundation at the bottom with some small vent openings. A small amount of rough limestone can be seen on the foundation level just above ground level. Above this is a brick wall with a bond pattern of seven courses of stretcher bricks alternating with one header course. The wall has five brick buttresses with single slanted stone capstones on the lower sections and double slanted capstones at the top of each buttress. The buttresses merge into a projecting brick

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frieze at the top of the wall, and there is some brick corbelling at the bottom of the frieze. The wall also has five-pointed arch windows. The arches of the windows are composed of two courses of header bricks. The windows have original Gothic wood tracery with a pointed arch design. The windows are currently boarded up from the outside but the tracery is visible inside the building. Four of the windows are larger but the fifth northernmost window is narrower than the others.

The west side wall of the sanctuary is very similar to the east wall. Its northern section consists of the sidewall of the tower, which is identical to the north wall of the tower except that it has a pointed arch window on the first floor rather than a door. The west side wall's foundation, buttresses, frieze, and five-pointed arch windows with wood tracery also match those of the east side wall, with the northernmost window being narrower than the other four.

The bottom floor of the rear (south) wall of the sanctuary is obscured by the south wing of the building, which abuts it. The upper portion of the sanctuary's south wall is a blank brick wall with a bond pattern and type of brick similar to that in the side walls. On the two towers, the rear walls and the inside walls facing the nave are plainer in design than the front and sidewalls.

The south wing of the building has brick walls and a front-gabled roof. Its south section has one tall story, while the northern one-fourth has two stories. The roof is lower than the sanctuary's roof and somewhat lower-pitched; it is covered in asphalt shingles. What is visible of this wing on the outside of the building is mostly the east and west walls. The north wall of the wing abuts the rear of the sanctuary and is not visible, and much of the south wall is obscured by the small additions on the building's south side.

The south wing's east wall has the same cement or concrete-clad brick foundation as the rest of the building, but may have some stone foundation masonry below grade, as the tops of some stones are barely visible at ground level. The east wall has a bond pattern of seven rows of stretcher bricks and one row of header bricks. The first floor has one flat metal single door at the south end of the building. The remainder of the first floor is punctuated by several segmental arch window openings with brick lintels. These window openings are filled with twentieth-century metal 25-light windows with operable awning panels near the bottom. The windows have rectangular panes of multi-colored glass including green, mauve, and yellow glass. The east wall terminates in a plain brick frieze at the top of the wall, but there is a more elaborate frieze of corbelled brick above the door.

The west wall of the south wing is similar to the east wall in terms of the type of brick used, bond pattern, and overall configuration. Its first floor has five twentieth-century steel 25-light windows with colored glass and operable awning panels. These windows have limestone sills and segmental brick arched lintels. Also present on the first floor is a set of steel one-light flat double doors from the mid-to-late twentieth century, positioned toward the north end of the wing. The second floor has three windows with flat lintels composed of header bricks; all of these windows are one-over-one replacement wood units that are currently boarded up. One

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window opening is larger than the other two. The second floor also has a small steel fire escape door near the north end of the wing.

A twentieth-century addition obscures most of the south wall of the south wing. The addition has two one-story brick sections to the east and west and a two-story section in the center. All have brick foundations covered over in cement or concrete. Each of the one-story sections has a shed asphalt roof; brick walls composed of seven stretcher courses alternating with one header course; and a multi-light steel window on its south wall with awning panel and colored glass similar to those found on the south wing's first floor. The east wall of the addition's east one-story section is visible on the east side of the building and has a set of flat steel twentieth-century double doors. The addition's two-story section has windowless brick walls.

A second addition on the southwest corner of the building dates to the mid-to-late twentieth century; it has a poured concrete foundation, plain concrete block walls, a plain wood cornice, and a rolled asphalt shed roof. The only opening in the walls is a set of twentieth-century double flat steel doors on the addition's north side (Photograph 4).

The interior of the building is composed of the sanctuary interior on the north, a small two-story administrative area in the south wing, a large open assembly space in the southern portion of the south wing, and small spaces in the south addition.

The sanctuary interior is largely empty due to deterioration but retains some original woodwork. It is composed mainly of a single large auditorium space. This space has wood truss ceilings due to the collapse of the original plaster ceiling. A few longer sections of plaster molding, which originally sat at the bottom of a larger cove molding, remain at the top of the east and west walls. Moldings in the center of the ceiling are almost completely gone; remains consist of very small heavily damaged fragments.

The sanctuary's auditorium has walls composed of plaster directly applied to the exterior brick walls. Floors are composed of wide wood boards in the main seating area and narrower wood tongue and groove flooring in the raised area of the chancel. The floor of the seating rises in a theater-like pattern area toward the back of the nave, which would have provided a better view of the chancel from the back of the auditorium space. The entire auditorium, including seating area and chancel, retains throughout the space its original wood beadboard wainscoting with a heavy molded wood cap. It has not been painted, in contrast to the woodwork in the south wing (Photograph 5).

The sanctuary's wainscoting and other woodwork are composed of light-colored wood with a fairly fine grain; possibly birch. Most of the woodwork is covered with an old shellac finish that has darkened with age to a very dark brown, but the original color and grain of the wood can be seen in a few areas where the darkened shellac has flaked off. Most of the remaining woodwork of the sanctuary, including interior and exterior doors, wainscoting, and the front of the chancel platform, is consistent in design, finish, and wood type; it likely dates from the original 1884-1886 construction of the sanctuary.

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The sanctuary's auditorium retains its original Gothic-style pointed-arch windows with wood tracery and stained glass. The original windows include five tall windows on each sidewall—for a total of ten—as well as two smaller windows on the front wall and a large rose window on the upper level of the front wall. The central entrance, which opens directly into the auditorium space, has a pointed-arch stained glass transom. Due to the original flat ceiling of the original interior, the upper three-quarters of the rose window would not have been visible from inside the auditorium. It is now fully visible since the ceiling is no longer in place.

The stained glass in the sanctuary windows is consistent with the High Victorian Gothic design of the sanctuary space. The glass itself is translucent rather than opalescent and uses bright Victorian-era colors including amber, mauve, light and dark blue, green, and a small amount of bright red. Most of the windows have geometrical diamond patterns, and the individual pieces of glass are also decorated with grisaille patterns executed in kiln-fired glass paint. The glass is mostly intact, with some broken or missing pieces in some areas. The lancet windows to each side of the main entrance have more elaborate patterns and smaller pieces of glass than the rest of the windows. The ten side-wall windows have small hinged panels at the bottom that could be opened for ventilation.

The sanctuary's chancel area sits on the south end of the auditorium space; it is a raised wood platform with a five-sided apse at the rear. The platform consists of areas of trim and moldings alternating with recessed panels filled with diagonal wood strips; it has four sets of wooden steps, two larger sets toward the center, and two smaller sets near the east and west walls. Each set of steps has a simple wood railing. The chancel platform wall is curved on either side of the auditorium space into the two center sets of steps. The center portion of the chancel wall has a short solid wood railing with battered wood corner posts. The floor still retains portions of the red carpet runner leading to the stairs (Photograph 6).

The sanctuary's apse sits at the back (south end) of the chancel platform and is framed by a large pointed arch lined with plaster molded trim. It has five sides, and its ceiling is composed of fairly intact plaster-covered wood vaulting with molded plaster ribs. The apse contains a rough woodwork frame that originally held the church's organ, which has been removed. Two pieces of curved paneled wood railing were originally part of a higher railing on the side portions of the chancel. These sections have fallen to the floor of the apse below the remains of the organ cabinet.

The apse and the south wall of the auditorium space contain several doorways that lead to vestry spaces in the sanctuary wing or the south wing. The apse has two door openings facing each other from opposite sides of the apse. The east opening still retains an original wood door with diagonal-board recessed panels, but the west door is missing. The east door leads to the building's south wing. The west door leads to a small vestry room with plaster walls and ceilings, wood door casings and baseboards, and 1950s-1960s-era steel kitchen cabinets with chrome-plated handles. This room contains nineteenth-century four-panel solid wood doors.

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The east portion of the sanctuary's south wall has one door opening with a pointed top. This opening leads to the staircase hall/lobby of the south wing. The west portion of the sanctuary's south wall has two door openings. The first has a pointed top and leads to the aforementioned vestry room. The second opening leads to a small space of unknown function. This space contains a nineteenth-century four-panel solid wood door that appears to have been blocked shut, possibly to accommodate electrical or mechanical equipment.

The sanctuary interior also includes two small vestibule spaces located on the first levels of the two towers. These are small rooms with the same wood wainscoting seen in the rest of the sanctuary. Each vestibule has one lancet window with stained glass and one original wood-paneled front door with diagonal wood strips in the recessed panels; each door has a pointed arch stained-glass transom above (Photograph 7). The glass is similar in design and character to the glass in the main sanctuary space.

South of the sanctuary wing is the south wing, which is composed of a two-story administrative area immediately to the south of the sanctuary and a larger assembly space farther to the south. Both of these areas sit underneath one gabled roofline that is lower than the fairly high roofline of the High Victorian Gothic sanctuary. This portion of the building may date to ca. 1866-1867 and appears to have served as the church's original sanctuary space. The southern portion was used as a Sunday school after the completion of the new sanctuary wing in 1886.

The south wing has undergone some alterations. The current floor plan appears to reflect, for the most part, the layout as it existed during the early to mid-twentieth century, with some later modifications evident in the form of newer carpeting and a few added walls and closet spaces. In 1938, a recreation space was constructed for neighborhood youth. This alteration is not described apart from its existence.¹ In 1943, the church underwent an unspecified major remodeling.² In 1953, the south wing caught fire.³ While the Louisville Courier-Journal stated the interior was gutted some original features appear to remain.

¹ "Rev. Jenkins Succeeds at Louisville" *Pittsburgh Courier*, January 1, 1938, 22.

² "Bishop Wright Will Be Honored By 13th District" *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 18, 1942, 19.

³ "Fire Damages Rear of AME Church" *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 30, 1953, 27.

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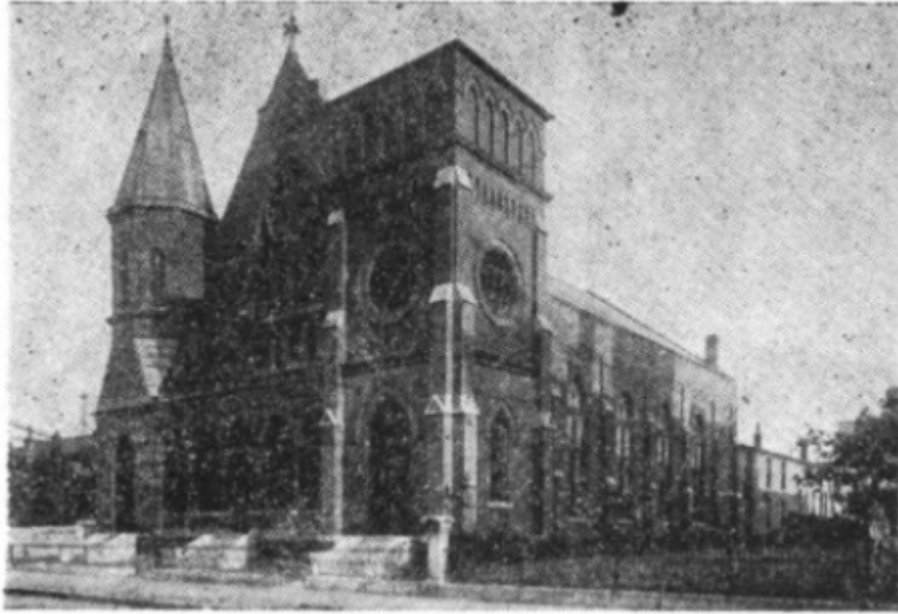


Figure 4. Quinn Chapel in an undated photograph from the 1947 Encyclopedia of African Methodist Episcopal Churches



Figure 5. Quinn Chapel in 1956 (Martin Schmidt Collection, University of Louisville)

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The two-story portion of the south wing can be accessed from doorways in the chancel and vestry portions of the sanctuary or from a set of twentieth-century steel double doors on the west wall of the south wing. The first floor of the two-story area is composed of an entrance hallway with stairs, and a hallway that leads to two rooms that may have been used as classrooms or smaller meeting spaces.

The south wing contains nineteenth- and early twentieth-century woodwork. The hallway/lobby portion has carpeted floors and a mixture of plaster and drywall walls and ceilings. This area contains some older painted woodwork, including fairly heavy baseboards and heavy door casings with moldings at the top. Remaining solid wood doors in this area are typically four-panel. The staircase railing has turned balusters supporting a heavy wood molded railing; it ends in an elaborate newel post with carved and turned details. The sides of the staircase risers have scroll-saw-cut wood decorations. The railing and stairs appear to date from the late nineteenth century based on the design of the woodwork. The species of wood used is not evident as all the woodwork has multiple coats of paint (Photograph 8).

The south wing's lobby-stair hall area leads into a central hallway that eventually opens into the large assembly space on the south end of the wing (Photograph 9). This central hallway is flanked by two fairly large rooms accessed via twentieth-century four-light wood doors with wood transoms above. Each room has a south wall composed of wood paneling and a bank of large wood windows. The room west of the hallway is open, with large baseboards, older door casings with molded tops, and a west wall with two 25-light steel windows with colored glass. The floor is covered in twentieth-century carpet. There is a wood support post in the center of the room that appears to be part of the original nineteenth-century construction of the building. The post has angled corners and is consistent with support posts in the south wing's assembly space.

The room on the east side of the hallway has plaster ceilings and a mixture of plaster and plywood-clad walls. It has a small closet on its northeast corner with louvered wood doors that date to ca. 1980. The room also retains one metal ceiling light fixture from the mid-twentieth century with a white glass shade. The southeast corner of the room was subdivided to create a second space. The division was done with wood stud walls clad in wood grain plywood with vertical lines; it appears to have taken place in the late 1960s or 1970s. The smaller space has plaster and plywood-clad walls and plaster ceilings with ca. 1950s-1960s fluorescent lighting fixtures.

The south wing's second floor is reached via the staircase. At the top of the staircase is a hallway/atrium space with plaster walls, plaster and drywall ceilings, and a twentieth-century plain glass skylight. The decorative staircase railing with turned balusters found on the first floor extends up to the second-floor hallway. In the staircase and some of the hallway, a brown plastic paneling was applied over the lower portions of the plaster walls and then subsequently painted over. Space retains heavily painted wood baseboards; the numerous door casings are nineteenth- or early-twentieth-century wood with molding at the top.

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A series of rooms open off of the wing's second-floor hallway. One is a restroom, and the others appear to have been offices or a small meeting or administrative space. The restroom sits on the east end of the hallway. It has plaster walls and ceilings, mid-twentieth century composition tile floors, and steel bathroom stalls. Most of the bathroom fixtures are missing. The meeting room also has a one-over-one wood replacement window dating to the mid-to-late twentieth century. This meeting room opens into an office space via a set of nineteenth-century solid wood five-panel double doors.

A large meeting room sits on the south side of the south wing's second-floor hallway, entered via a set of wood four-light twentieth-century double doors. It has carpeted floors, heavily painted wood baseboards, and nineteenth- or early-twentieth-century door casings with molded tops. A set of nineteenth-century four-panel wood double doors on the west side of the room leads to an office space. One of the double doors is still in place; the other is lying on the floor in the meeting room. Flanking the opening for the four-panel doors are twentieth-century plywood storage closets.

The south wing's second-floor office space is positioned east of the large meeting room on the east side of the building, south of the restroom. The office has plaster ceilings and walls, carpeted floors, a wood column with diagonal corners, a wood ceiling beam, and wood window and door casings with molded tops. The column and beam both date to the nineteenth century, while the casings date to the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. The space also has a twentieth-century one-over-one replacement double-hung window and a small flat steel 20th-century fire escape door.

A door on the west end of the south wing's second-floor hallway leads to a small room with plaster walls and ceilings, nineteenth- or early-twentieth-century woodwork, and carpeted floors. A utility closet has been added to the southwest corner of this room. On the south wall of the room is a door opening leading to a small kitchenette that was renovated in the 1990s or around the year 2000 with 1990s-era wood floors, a drywall ceiling with recessed can lighting, and newer kitchen cabinets. These features are late enough that they are non-contributing to the building.

To the south of the south wing's two-story space is the open assembly space, which appears to have served as the church's original ca. 1866-1867 sanctuary space, converted to a Sunday school area after the 1886 completion of the sanctuary wing (Photograph 11). This space is open with pitched drywall ceilings and walls composed of plaster directly applied to brick masonry. The flooring is made of wood tongue-and-groove strips and may be composed of maple, as the wood is fairly fine-grained. The west and east walls have 25-light steel twentieth-century windows with colored glass and operable 8-light awning panels for ventilation: two on the east wall and three on the west wall. The east wall also has a flat steel twentieth-century door.

The lower portion of the north wall of the open assembly space is composed of painted wood paneling and wood windows that look into the two first-floor rooms in the two-story section of the building (Photograph 12). The upper portion of the north wall is plaster-clad and has a wood

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decorative frieze that follows the pitched angle of the ceiling. The frieze consists of molded wood trim applied to the wall; its design alternates rectangular patterns and circular medallions. The south wall has two door openings, plaster wall covering applied directly to brick masonry, and the same frieze consisting of wood panel and medallion decoration seen on the north wall of the space. There is also a shallow arched recessed blind panel on the lower two-thirds of the wall.

The open assembly space interior is marked by two rows of square wood posts with the corners cut off at a diagonal angle. There are six posts, three on each side of the space. The posts have simple molded wood capitals and several layers of paint. The original wood finish and wood species are not readily visible, but the posts appear to date to the original mid-nineteenth century construction of this portion of the building. They support wood beams that hold up the center portions of the roof trusses. The beams are reinforced by iron rods that run east-west across the center of the room. Late twentieth-century ceiling fans hang from the pitched ceiling.

The open assembly room's south wall opens into the south addition through two doorways. The east door opening is missing doors and door casings, while the west door opening retains the bottom half of a twentieth-century flat wood door. The east door opening leads to a small room on the east side of the south addition. This room has steel double doors on its east side and a steel window with colored glass on its south wall. The walls and ceilings in this space are drywall and plaster; the west wall contains a folding late-twentieth-century closet door and a door opening into the addition's middle room.

The middle and west rooms of the south addition have a mix of plaster, drywall, and late twentieth century Masonite paneling for their walls and ceilings. The middle room has a doorway that opens into the south wing assembly space.

The west side of the south wing connects to the aforementioned mid-to-late twentieth-century addition, a small shed-roof concrete block building on the southwest corner of the wing.

In approximately 2002 when the Quinn congregation moved to their new location, they moved some items to the new location including the lectern, chairs and other altar parts to the new church. In 2010, the YMCA of Greater Louisville invested \$400,000 fixing the support beams and replacing the roof. Brickwork in the east wall was also repaired.⁴

The building is in the original **location**. Since significant events took place inside and outside the building both **settings** are important. The **setting** remains the same. The Quinn Chapel conveys the original **workmanship** and **materials** on the exterior and interior. The Quinn Chapel conveys the **feeling** and **association** associated with the significant events. While some elements are missing the auditorium maintains the historic mass, space, and circulation patterns. It was not subdivided in the past.

⁴ Sheryl Edelen, "Former Church Getting New Life" *Louisville Courier-Journal*, December 8, 2010, K4

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The Quinn Chapel continues to convey the aspects of integrity that marked over 100 years of civil rights actions and events on a local and national stage.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic 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

- ☐ 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

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The Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church is significant for its role in civil rights activism. The church served as a mass meeting place in 1914 and 1915 for a national civil rights organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as they pursued legal action against a Louisville segregation ordinance to the United States Supreme Court. The mass meetings enabled the NAACP to build community support and funding for the court case and catapulted the NAACP to national recognition. The meetings in June and July of 1914 energized the Louisville community and African Americans across the country. The July 1915 meeting presented an opportunity for the community to vote affirmatively to pursue the case and raise more funds to take the case to the Supreme Court after it had lost on appeal.

The use of mass meetings to fundraise and connect community members to a national cause marked a new chapter in civil rights activism that would successfully continue through the twentieth century. When Southern churches used mass meetings during the Classic Civil Rights Era to promote local and national civil rights causes, they were mirroring the practice initiated at Quinn Chapel almost 50 years earlier.

Quinn Chapel was instrumental in integrating public accommodations and housing in Louisville from 1961–1963 when civil rights icons such as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Muhammad Ali spoke at Quinn Chapel, once again galvanizing crowds and prompting action. Quinn Chapel was also central to the struggle for open housing in Louisville in 1967.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Role of Quinn Chapel in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and the 1866 Civil Rights Act.

From its beginning, the history of the Quinn Chapel congregation has been entwined with that of Louisville itself.

Louisville was founded in 1778. Free African Americans congregated there, drawn by work opportunities and available living space in urban areas. Employment opportunities for free blacks included laborers, teamsters, laundresses, and the skilled trades.⁵

The first Baptist church was founded in Louisville in 1784. In 1807, churches in the region voted to allow enslaved African Americans to attend services with whites. The First African Baptist Church, located near Eighth and Market, was the first black congregation; it moved in 1834 to York and Fifth Streets.

⁵ J. Hudson Blaine, *The Free African American Community of Antebellum Louisville, Kentucky.* *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 109 (Summer/Autumn 2011): 305.

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Louisville and its black population grew together as Ohio River trade made Louisville into the nation's tenth largest city by 1850.⁶ By the 1850s, a small but stable African American middle class had emerged, composed primarily of color line barbers and real estate speculators who had purchased land on the outskirts of downtown. As the city expanded, their holdings appreciated.

In 1838 a group of African American Methodists started to meet at a livery stable near Second and Main Streets. That congregation became the Bethel A.M.E. Church. In 1840, Bethel A.M.E. moved and split, with a splinter congregation becoming Asbury Chapel.⁷ In 1848, the Quinn congregation used a team of eight oxen to move its framed church building to Ninth and Walnut. In 1850, Rev. Bird Parker and leading free blacks established a Prince Hall Mason's Lodge in New Albany, Indiana, to avoid "black laws" that forbid assembly.⁸ The lodge was moved to Louisville in 1857. In 1854, Bishop Paul Quinn dedicated the church and became its namesake.

The Quinn Chapel church attracted free blacks, and the tone of its services earned it a reputation as an "abolitionist church."⁹ Their pastor, Rev. Willis R. Revels, had traveled through the North seeking donations for the 1854 church.

By the beginning of the Civil War, Quinn Chapel had established a school, as had many other African American churches. Providing schooling only added to Quinn Chapel's abolitionist reputation, and many slaveholders would not allow their slaves to attend.¹⁰ Despite the cool reception from whites, these schools educated the next generation of Kentucky's African American leaders.¹¹

All Kentucky schools, including Quinn Chapel, closed during the Civil War. Quinn's school reopened in April 1865, with funding from the Freedman's Bureau.¹² It was taught by Oberlin graduate J. H. Cook. In early 1866, Kentucky African American educator William Gibson Sr. resumed teaching at Quinn Chapel.¹³

⁶ Hudson, 311.

⁷ Hudson, 312.

⁸ The Kentucky African American Encyclopedia,

⁹ Hudson, 312.

¹⁰ Lucas, Marion Brunson, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky: From Slavery to Segregation, 1760-1891*, Lexington: Kentucky Historical Society, 2003 128.

¹¹ Hudson, 315.

¹² Gibson, William H. *History of the United Brothers of Friendship and the Sisters of the Mysterious Ten*, Louisville: Bradley and Gilbert, 1897, 53.

¹³ Lucas, 237.

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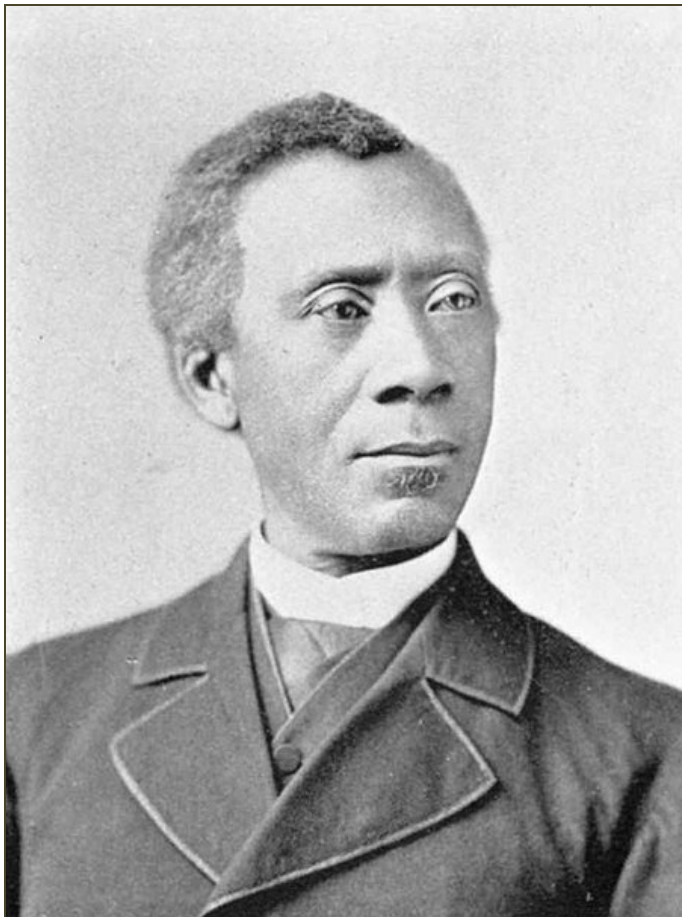


Figure 6. William H. Gibson taught school at Quinn Chapel during and after the Civil War.

Quinn Chapel A.M.E. grew rapidly after the Civil War, capitalizing on their previous reputation as an antebellum abolitionist church that focused on social justice issues and allowed congregants to converse freely about such matters.¹⁴

The end of the Civil War also largely ended Unionist sympathies in Kentucky, and the Confederate Democrats assumed power.¹⁵ The state government opposed the 1866 Civil Rights Act and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. However, in 1870, Louisville's school board voted to fund separate schools for African Americans. In addition, Henry Watterson, the white editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, advocated for a more charitable attitude towards African American rights.¹⁶

¹⁴ Hudson,

¹⁵ Norris, Marjorie M. "An Early Instance of Nonviolence: The Louisville Demonstrations of 1870-1871, *Journal of Southern History*, 32:4, 1966, 487.

¹⁶ Norris, 490.

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Bound together by a network of churches, Louisville's African American community made tentative steps towards greater autonomy. One man attended a Louisville City Council meeting, successfully integrating that portion of the political sphere, and on October 30, 1870, plans were put into action to integrate Louisville's mule-drawn streetcars. A crowd of 300 black churchgoers gathered in front of Quinn Chapel's church at Eighth and Walnut Street. At 3:00 in the afternoon, three protesters paid and sat down in a car on the Central Passenger line at Tenth and Walnut. A white passenger complained, and drivers from other cars helped eject the three African American passengers, who promptly got back on the streetcar and were arrested. The former pastor of Bethel Colored Chapel, Rev. H.J. Young, posted bond. A reporter overheard the crowd talking about raising money for a court case.¹⁷ One of the riders, Robert Fox, did sue the company, and in May 1871, the verdict came back in his favor: the African American community had won. Black residents began a series of ride-ins to test the decision, and whites responded with violence, including the disbandment of a crowd in front of Quinn Chapel on May 12, 1871, in which the mayor, John George Baxter Jr. intervened.¹⁸ Streetcar operators eventually acquiesced to desegregation, thankful to be able to blame the federal government for the continued turmoil and financial loss.¹⁹

In the late 19th century, the accommodating attitudes of leaders like Booker T. Washington were widely popular in African American communities. Washington felt that blacks would be welcomed as equals when they had proven themselves in business. Consequently, he promoted vocational education and a continued subservient attitude towards whites until blacks became fully accepted in society. Both national trends and events in Louisville, however, pointed in other directions. In 1903, the Afro-American Council (AAC) held its national convention in Louisville. Established in 1898 in Rochester, New York, the organization was the first national African American civil rights group. In addition, Louisville's black leadership at the turn of the century included black professionals such as Dr. John A. C. Lattimore, who moved to Louisville in 1901 after graduating from Meharry Medical College. A new generation of leaders such as Lattimore marked a change in attitude.

In 1902, Washington's candidate became president of the AAC, displacing a more radical contingent that included firebrand William Monroe Trotter and W. E. B. Du Bois. The organization languished and disbanded in 1907. However, a number of its leaders were A.M.E. bishops. Even as the national organization fizzled, A.M.E. bishops and their congregations continued to press for equal treatment under the law.

Unlike other southern cities where social control was maintained through overt violence, whites controlled Louisville through the largely Irish police force. Police brutality was common and increased through the 1890s. It was especially common during elections, when police suppressed the black vote. In response, black leaders, including Lattimore, formed the Negro Outlook

¹⁷ Norris, 493.

¹⁸ Norris, 501.

¹⁹ Norris, 502.

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Committee in 1902.²⁰ The Committee lodged complaints and met with elected officials over police treatment.

The Outlook Committee continued its work through the teens. Although fundraising issues dogged the organization, by 1912 it had established an office at 1006 West Chestnut. The office was associated with Lee L. Brown, who owned Brown's Leather Shop. He was also a correspondent for Dobson News Service and an editor for the Louisville News. The Outlook Committee, in addition to fighting police brutality, fought for better city services, including playgrounds. It also established a committee of twenty-five community and organization representatives, becoming in effect an organization of organizations.²¹

On January 29, 1914, the Outlook Committee succeeded in fully integrating Louisville's National Theater. Four months before, the committee had announced a boycott unless African American theatergoers could use the street entrance and sit in the first balcony, which both had been previously forbidden. The National Theater's management, meeting with Outlook Committee members Lattimore and William Warley, announced that the demands would be met.²²

While segregation subsequently increased in Louisville with Jim Crow laws up through the early twentieth century, African Americans' opposition methods had been set. Nonviolent direct action, lawsuits, and mass meetings coordinated by the Outlook Committee, the NAACP, the Urban League, and black churches—including Quinn Chapel—led to concrete changes in segregation's restrictions.

Louisville gradually integrated through the 1950s and 1960s. In 1954, the *Louisville Defender*, an African American weekly paper, was one of the first advocates for a broad public accommodations law. Civil rights leaders pressed for a law in 1957, but legislation stalled in the city law department, which suggested such a law should come from the state.²³ The state assembly was no more responsive, and direct action seemed to be the only viable method to advance desegregation.

The process was slow and painful, although not always advertised as such. The establishment in Louisville, in contrast to more Southern cities, had a vested interest in portraying the process as convivial. In 1953, Louisville integrated bus terminals, followed in 1954 by pools and golf courses. However, many public accommodations, such as restaurants, theaters, and stores, failed to serve African Americans in the same way they served whites. Restaurants would only serve black customers food for carryout or would refuse to allow blacks to sit where they wished. Theaters relegated blacks to balconies or special sections. Stores would not allow African American patrons to try on clothes before buying them.

²⁰ Wright, *Life Behind a Veil*, 74.

²¹ "Pat Week at Louisville" *Indianapolis Freeman*, March 30, 1912, 1.

²² Lester A. Walton "An Object Lesson" *New York Age*, January 29, 1914, 6.

²³ Tracy E. K'Meyer, *Civil Rights in the Gateway to the South, Louisville, Kentucky 1945-1980*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2010

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A 1959 attempt to integrate the Brown Theater accelerated the overall movement when the NAACP Youth Council attempted to see *Porgy and Bess*. The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, the brainchild of Louisville Defender Frank Stanley Sr. initiated in 1960 by Governor Bert Combs, documented instances of discrimination. Later protests would act upon these recorded instances.

Much like the North, Louisville's race-related laws and customs remained mercurial and sporadically enforced in the early 1960s. Civil rights activists embraced both Northern and Southern techniques, including working through legislative channels and direct action.²⁴ In 1960, a Congress for Racial Equality chapter was formed in Louisville, following on the NAACP Youth Council's various attempts at integrating stores and restaurants in the late 1950s. This led to the "Buy Nothing for Easter" campaign in 1961 and public accommodations protests in 1963. Louisville's public accommodation law was finally passed on May 14, 1963. Kentucky passed a more robust law in 1966.

Open housing came to the forefront in 1967. In April 1967, the Louisville board of aldermen refused to pass an open housing ordinance, prompting demonstrations and threats to shut down the Kentucky Derby. Demonstrations continued through the summer but waned as fall approached. Celebrity activists such as Dick Gregory and local ministers such as Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s brother, Rev. A.D. King, attempted to rally protesters. An open housing ordinance was passed in December 1967.

History of 912 Chestnut Street before Quinn Chapel A.M.E.

The first church building at 912 Chestnut was erected in 1857. This building was radically altered in 1866 when it became Chestnut Street Baptist Church. The rear portion of the building was rebuilt; its side walls were removed, the building was widened, and three towers were added to the front façade.

In 1884, a Gothic Revival church designed by Henry Wolters was built in front of the existing church. The old church in the rear was converted into a Sunday school hall, pastor's study, young men's room, ladies' parlor, culinary department, and seven other apartments.

While Chestnut Street Baptist had always served a white congregation, the neighborhood demographics changed around 1900. Prominent African American families such as that of William Spradling, "one of Louisville's wealthiest African Americans," lived at 911 West Chestnut, and all his neighbors in the 900 block were black.²⁵ By 1910, Chestnut Street was the home to Louisville's black professional class.²⁶ African American churches (such as Quinn Chapel), the Pythian Lodge, and the Colored Y.M.C.A. would come to the neighborhood.

to the South, Louisville, Kentucky 1945-1980, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2010

²⁵ Wright, *Life Behind the Veil*, 106.

²⁶ Wright, *Life Behind the Veil*, 111.

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The Quinn Chapel congregation purchased the Chestnut Street Baptist Church in 1911; this was the Quinn congregation's fifth location.

Quinn Chapel A.M.E. and *Buchanan v. Warley*, 245 U.S. 60 (1916)

Quinn Chapel also played a major role in countering residential segregation. Beginning in 1910, southern and border-state cities enacted legislation that delineated neighborhoods by race. Although Baltimore city and North Carolina state courts ruled against segregation ordinances, cities continued to pass them through 1913, including Madisonville, Kentucky; Birmingham, Alabama; Atlanta, Georgia; Richmond, Norfolk, and Roanoke, Virginia; and Asheville, North Carolina.²⁷

On January 5, 1914, NAACP national organizer Dr. M.C.B. Mason gave a speech at Quinn Chapel about segregation. On that same evening, a residential segregation ordinance was introduced at City Council. According to historian George Wright, leading black citizens immediately formed a temporary NAACP branch. The Outlook Committee sent a delegation to meet Mason "with a view towards affiliating the local body with the National Association." Mason "was very favorably impressed with the work the local committee was doing towards fighting the segregation movement and promised his hearty support in meeting the requirements of the National Body. The chances for affiliation are bright."²⁸ It appears that Louisville's Outlook Committee, or at least many of its members, in effect became the local NAACP branch. Reverend Charles Parrish of Calvary Baptist A. M. E. was the first branch president. This move reflects an NAACP internal debate at the time. Some leaders such as May Nerny wanted the organization to tackle economic opportunities. Others such as Dr. Joel Spingarn wanted to focus solely on civil rights.²⁹ The Outlook Committee's focus on civil rights worked to the benefit of both organizations. The Outlook Committee received national resources and attention to local issues, while the NAACP gained a branch that was already well-organized around a civil rights goal.

Louisville News editor William H. Steward was dispatched to dissuade the mayor from enacting the ordinance, but in May 1914, Louisville's segregation ordinance was instituted. While the African American community had mounted vigorous opposition to the law, it passed unanimously.

However, the law's passage didn't slow the resistance to it. The national NAACP had closely followed the progress of Louisville's ordinance. In 1913, NAACP leadership had decided to pursue cases that tested broad legal principles, including voting rights and residential

²⁷ Wright, George "The NAACP and Residential Segregation in Louisville, Kentucky, 1914-1917" *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, 78:1, 1980, 54.

²⁸ "Y.M.C.A. Work" *The Washington Bee*, January 17, 1914, 8.

²⁹ Charles Flint Kellogg. *NAACP: A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Vol. 1, 1900-1920*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1967, 131-132.

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segregation, rather than small-scale individual cases.³⁰ Louisville's residential segregation ordinance was the first where the NAACP legal support was provided under this strategy. (While the NAACP did get involved in the 1915 *Guinn v. Alabama* voting rights case, they did not take the lead.) Louisville's thoroughly researched and well-written ordinance had been drafted after ordinances in Baltimore and other cities were ruled unconstitutional—so the NAACP thought that defeating Louisville's ordinance would invalidate others across the country as well.

The NAACP formulated a test case against Louisville's ordinance. William Warley entered into a contract for a vacant lot at 37th and Pflanz in a white-designated neighborhood with his race seemingly unknown to the property's white real estate agent, Charles Buchanan. The contract stipulated that payment would only be made if Warley could live on the property. Since Louisville's ordinance clearly stated that Warley could not live on the property, he refused to pay, and Buchanan sued him for breach of contract.

Quinn Chapel was not unknown to the national NAACP leadership—W.E.B. Du Bois had lectured there in 1904, and as previously mentioned, national NAACP organizer Dr. Mason had held a meeting at Quinn Chapel on January 5, 1914, to promote the NAACP and discuss segregation. To fight the segregation law, the NAACP dispatched attorney J. Chapin Brinsmade to a mass meeting at Quinn Chapel on June 30, 1914, to raise money to hire a local attorney for the case.³¹ On July 5, 1914, NAACP national leaders Prof. William Pickens and Dr. Joel E. Spingarn attended another mass meeting at Quinn Chapel. The NAACP national leadership group noted with excitement that the people of Louisville were thoroughly behind their case.³² In August 1914 the national office officially recognized the Louisville branch and designated August 9, 1914, as "Segregation Sunday." All churches in Louisville's Interdenominational Union were encouraged to give a sermon on the topic.³³

³⁰ V. P. Franklin, "Documenting the NAACP's First Century - From Combatting Racial Injustices to Challenging Racial Inequities" *The Journal of African American History* 94:4, 454.

³¹ "Trying to Kill Segregation Once and For All" *Afro-American Ledger*, July 4, 1914, 1. The *Afro-American* previously reported the meeting at Quinn would take place on June 23rd for fundraising. *Afro-American Ledger*, June 13, 1914, 1.

³² Wright, *Residential Segregation*, 46.

³³ "Segregation" *The Crisis*, September 1914, 236.

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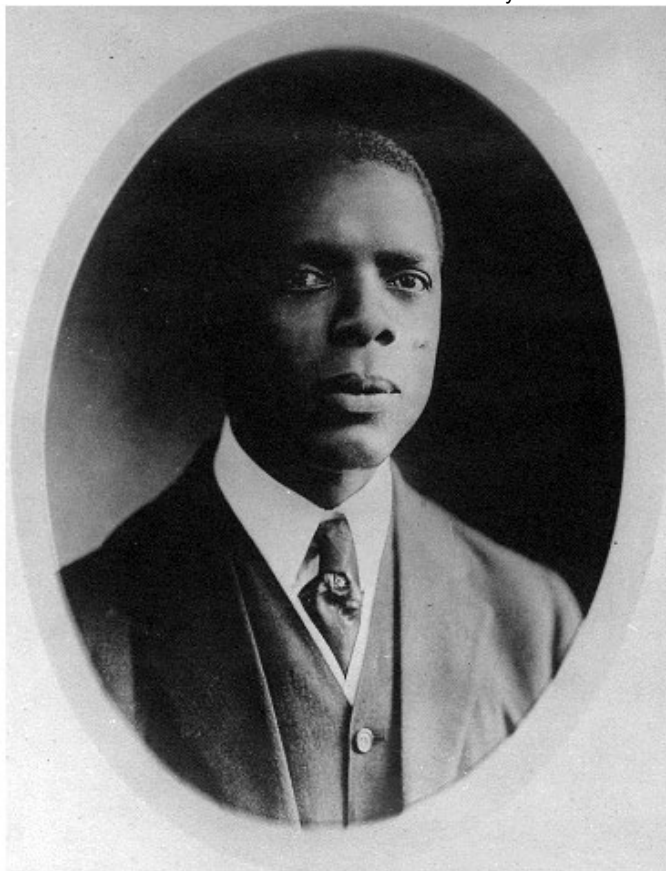


Figure 7. Dr. Joel Spingarn and Prof. William Pickens. (left to right, Library of Congress Collection)

The Quinn Chapel was a gathering place for civil rights activism.³⁴ The A.M.E. bishops had promoted civil rights vigorously since at least the turn of the century when they led the Afro-American Council. The Chestnut Street Y.M.C.A was next door and it, too, was active in civil rights, especially education, a shared passion with the Quinn leadership. The Quinn Chapel was also active in the Prince Hall Mason community; services were sometimes tailored to their joint membership. Quinn Chapel's pastors were themselves ardent civil rights supporters. Reverend J.C. Anderson and Reverend J.C. Harvey hosted mass meetings at the church to fight residential segregation.

The Quinn Chapel mass meetings are significant because the changes and innovations in tactics put into action in the meetings at Quinn Chapel mark the beginning of a new phase of civil rights activism. These tactics motivated Louisville's black community to get behind a local goal that would achieve national results. While mass meetings were not uncommon, the Quinn mass meetings were among the first by a national civil rights organization for a national goal. The July 5 meeting received widespread coverage throughout July 1914, with the *Indianapolis Recorder*,

³⁴ K'Meyer, 9. Wright, *Life Behind the Veil*, 129.

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Baltimore Afro-American Ledger, *Cleveland Gazette*, and *Denver Star* covering the story closely. The *Indianapolis Recorder* placed Spingarn's Quinn Chapel speech on its front page.³⁵

In June 1915, the NAACP national leadership returned to Louisville. Field Secretary May Nerny found the initial community spirit and support had dissipated. She reported the Louisville NAACP branch was riven by factionalism, and the formerly supportive churches were antagonistic. On July 18, 1915, a verdict was rendered in the Kentucky appeals court that upheld a lower court's validation of the segregation ordinance. Nerny reorganized the Louisville NAACP branch and held another mass meeting was held at Quinn Chapel, at which a vote was taken to pursue the case to the United States Supreme Court.³⁶

The *Cleveland Gazette* noted it was the NAACP's plan "to carry a succession of cases to the Supreme Court of the United States until it has succeeded in placing the court on record on the race question before the country."³⁷ Louisville's black leaders and the ministerial association formed a "Committee of One Hundred and More" to raise funds for the case. Members included Doctors McIntyre, Whedbee, Scott, and Lattimore. Principal and civil rights leader Albert Meyzeek participated, as did *Louisville News* editor William H. Steward and Rev. Charles Parrish. Louisville's leading African American women were members as well, including Bertha P. Whedbee, who would become Louisville's first black policewoman in 1922, Edwinia K. Thomas, Mamie Steward, and Nola C. King.³⁸ Quinn Chapel's own Rev. J. C. Harvey was a member. The committee spoke at churches, lodges, and parlors before canvassing house to house. In three weeks they raised approximately \$500.³⁹ The NAACP national office hired the Louisville law firm Blakely, Quin and Lewis, but then had second thoughts and requested that the national NAACP president, Moorfield Story, be attached to the case, too.⁴⁰ Story had previously filed an amicus brief and argued before the United States Supreme Court for the NAACP in the *Guinn v. United States* case against grandfather clauses in voter registration laws. The Court outlawed the practice in June 1915—and Story's performance and the case itself renewed the NAACP cause for national cases.

³⁵ "Perils of Segregation," *Indianapolis Recorder*, July 18, 1914, 1.

³⁶ "The Fight on Segregation," *Indianapolis Recorder*, July 17, 1915, 4.

³⁷ "The Fight on Segregation," *Cleveland Gazette*, August 21, 1915, 1.

³⁸ "Segregation" *The Crisis*, September 1914, 236

³⁹ Wright, Residential Segregation, 48.

⁴⁰ Rice, Roger L. "Residential Segregation by Law, 1910-1917" *The Journal of Southern History*, 34:2, 1968 188.

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Figure 8. Attorney Moorfield Storey argued the case before the United States Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court ruled on *Buchanan v. Warley* in November 1917, overturning Louisville's segregation ordinance. Cities were no longer able to designate residential areas for solely blacks or whites. Racial segregation moved to the private market instead, via the practice of restrictive covenants. Real estate agents and developers would place restrictive covenants in deeds prohibiting African Americans and other disfavored groups from occupancy in certain subdivisions throughout the country. This practice would be outlawed in 1948 in the *Shelley v. Kraemer* Supreme Court case.

Buchanan v. Warley was instrumental to the NAACP's subsequent growth and momentum.⁴¹ It also marked the beginning of a new model of civil rights activism. Quinn Chapel had hosted two meetings at the beginning of the case, each meeting galvanizing community support and raising enough money to pursue the case further. The third meeting in 1915 raised funds for the Supreme Court case itself. Also, the national press attention garnered from the Quinn mass meetings engendered support for the NAACP. Before the Louisville case was decided, the NAACP had 85 branches and 9,866 members. Afterward, the NAACP added 32 new branches and 35,888 new members.⁴² Besides, *Buchanan v. Warley* provided judicial precedent for overturning segregation laws related to higher education, interstate transportation, and restrictive covenants.⁴³

Quinn Chapel A.M.E.'s Connections to the National Conversation

In 1920, Dr. Noah W. Williams was appointed pastor of Quinn Chapel A.M.E., replacing Rev. J. R. Harvey. Rev. Williams was a follower of Marcus Garvey and his organization, the United Negro Improvement Association. It is uncertain whether this was met with approval by the Louisville NAACP branch since W.E.B. Du Bois and Garvey were at philosophical odds, but Rev. Williams was unquestionably a strong civil rights proponent. In 1921, he was threatened with arrest during a picnic with his family when a Cherokee Park guard suggested he move to the

⁴¹ Wright, 54.

⁴² Wright, 52.

⁴³ Rice, 197.

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segregated portion of the park and he refused, pointing out that the permitted areas were unmarked. In response, the park commissioners erected signs. Rev. Williams and the black community were outraged. They aimed their ire at the local Republican party. Black voters had put the Republicans in office, but once in office their willingness to advance black causes diminished drastically. The eventual concession to the black community's demands was to construct a separate park for blacks—Chickasaw Park in Louisville's West End.

Quinn Chapel A.M.E. remained closely involved with African American education, hosting many state and national African American educational events. In 1923, the Association for Study of Negro Life and History held their evening sessions at Quinn Chapel, including an address by historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Woodson was the second African American awarded a Ph.D. at Harvard and became the first historian to investigate African American history.⁴⁴ In 1930, the Kentucky Negro Educational Association (KNEA) held its convention at Quinn Chapel for the first time. The group was composed mostly of African American women schoolteachers.

In 1931 Municipal College opened in the Limerick neighborhood at South. 7th Street and West Kentucky Avenue. The segregated school fulfilled a campaign promise by Republican politicians, who had pitched a college in exchange for black votes in favor of an education bond issue.⁴⁵ Municipal College held its convocations at Quinn Chapel, bringing more nationally significant guests to the church. Dr. Carter G. Woodson was the convocation speaker in 1938, and Mary McCleod Bethune in 1939.⁴⁶ At the time Bethune was the highest-ranking African American in Roosevelt's administration: the director of Negro Affairs in the National Youth Administration, a New Deal agency. In 1940, Bethune became the NAACP vice-president.

Langston Hughes was a featured speaker at the 1940 KNEA convention at Quinn Chapel.⁴⁷ The KNEA returned in 1942 with William Pickens as a featured speaker.⁴⁸ An NAACP stalwart, Pickens had previously come to Quinn Chapel for the July 1914 mass meeting in support of *Buchanan v. Warley*. In 1942, he was on leave from the NAACP, working for the United States Treasury Department promoting the sale of war bonds to minority audiences. The 1943 KNEA convention at Quinn Chapel featured William Hastie, who had become the first African American to serve as a federal judge in 1937 and had served as an advisor to the U. S. Secretary of War, Henry Stinson, since 1941. However, three months before the KNEA convention, Hastie had resigned in protest from his position in response to segregated training and assignments for African American Army Air Force pilots. Hastie received the NAACP's Spingarn Medal in part over his resignation.

⁴⁴ W.E.B. Du Bois was the first African American to be awarded a Ph.D from Harvard.

⁴⁵ K'Meyer,

⁴⁶ William Ferris, "K.N.E.A. Program Is Centered on Goals of Negro Education"

⁴⁷ "Outstanding Speakers Booked for 68th K.N.E.A. Meeting." *Louisville Courier-Journal*, April 14, 1940, 55.

⁴⁸ "Speakers Listed for 66th Meeting of K.N.E.A." *Louisville Courier Journal*,

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Quinn Chapel A.M.E. continued to hold civil rights mass meetings. In 1943, a mass meeting for Julia Mae Woods, a woman who was beaten by the police was held. The police involved were later suspended.⁴⁹ One officer, Authur Beville, was tried for assault and battery. He was acquitted and reinstated to the police force.⁵⁰ Democrats later complained that the case threw the 1944 gubernatorial race to the Republicans when her photograph was distributed during the election.⁵¹

Organized labor came to Quinn Chapel in 1945 when Willard Townsend, president of the United Transport Service Employees of America (C.I.O.), spoke about "The Stake of Organized Labor and the Negro in the Postwar World."⁵² In tackling police brutality and union-organizing the church was at the forefront of civil rights issues.

Sociologist and Fisk University president Charles S. Johnson was the convocation speaker at the 1948 Municipal College graduation ceremony.⁵³ Johnson was the first black president of Fisk University and advocated working with whites in the South for incremental change.

In 1961, the NAACP and CORE started a campaign to integrate places of public accommodation. As part of the campaign, the national NAACP promoted a "Buy Nothing for Easter" campaign in 1961 aimed at retailers who promoted segregative practices or refused to hire black employees. Inspired by student protests in the South, Louisville students began their own campaign. NAACP Youth Council and CORE youth members initiated a boycott of downtown department stores in March 1961.

The Quinn A.M.E. Church was instrumental and once again provided a place for mass meetings and a staging area for protest marches. Protests were launched from Quinn Chapel to City Hall through downtown from March through April 1961. The police would ultimately arrest 600 students during the protests, severely taxing the local NAACP and other organizations.⁵⁴ On April 19, 1961, Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at Quinn Chapel to a well-over-capacity crowd of 1,000 high school students, parents, and others who were engaged in nonviolent protest in Louisville. Ultimately the campaign harmed the downtown retail scene to such an extent that more than 80 percent of downtown retailers changed their practices.⁵⁵ On May 14, 1963, Louisville passed a public accommodations law. Kentucky passed a more robust law in 1966.

⁴⁹ "Hearing on Charge Patrolmen Beat Woman Set for Tuesday." *Louisville Courier-Journal*, October 10, 1943, 15.

⁵⁰ "Police Freed of Beating Charge Given Job Back" *Louisville-Courier Journal*. January 16, 1944, 45.

⁵¹ "Civil Rights Group Votes to Postpone Interracial Picnic" *Louisville Courier-Journal* September 30, 1948, 21.

⁵² "Round the Town." *Louisville Courier-Journal*, March 4, 1945, 50.

⁵³ "Municipal College Seniors Told to Carry 3 Talismans." *Louisville Courier-Journal*, June 3, 1948, 15.

⁵⁴ Luther Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville: African American Migration in the Urban South, 1930-1970* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010, 139.

⁵⁵ K'Meyer Oral History

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Figure 9. Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. speaking at Quinn Chapel in 1961.

Quinn Chapel was again instrumental in providing a meeting space for fighting residential segregation in 1967. On April 11, 1967, the Louisville board of aldermen refused to pass an open housing ordinance, prompting demonstrations and threats to shut down the Kentucky Derby. Rev. A. D. King, the local minister who was also the brother of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., called for a march through downtown. The aldermen labeled the opposition “outside agitators” and refused to budge.⁵⁶ On May 3, 1967, Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. himself led a demonstration at Quinn Chapel. Cassius Clay, the boxer who had recently changed his name to Muhammad Ali, spoke to the demonstrators outside the church; the crowd subsequently marched from Quinn Chapel through downtown in support of open housing. In December 1967, Louisville passed an open housing ordinance.

History of 912 Chestnut Street after Quinn Chapel A.M.E.

The Quinn Chapel A.M.E. congregation occupied 912 Chestnut Street until 2002. By that time, the building was becoming untenable to the congregation due to maintenance demands and issues with a lack of space configured for contemporary needs. The YMCA of Greater Louisville purchased the building, and it remains vacant. The ceiling collapsed in the main auditorium in ca. 2016. The church was stabilized in 2017-2018 with a Department of the Interior, National Park

⁵⁶ K’ Meyer Gateway 41.

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Service Historic Preservation Fund grant through African American Civil Rights Program. The grant was awarded to Louisville Metro Government for \$450,000 Louisville Metro Government donated an additional \$150,000 to the project.

Conclusion

Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church at 912 Chestnut Street was the site of civil rights actions from 1914-1967 including actions with national impact such being a rallying spot for support and financing for *Buchanan v. Warley*, the NAACP's court challenge of a local segregation ordinance whose Supreme Court victory ended segregation ordinances in Birmingham, Alabama; Baltimore, Maryland; St. Louis, Missouri; Richmond and Norfolk, Virginia; and Atlanta, Georgia, among other cities.⁵⁷ The court decision pushed the practice of restrictive covenants (in contrast to local segregation ordinances) to the forefront as a preferred method of legal segregation. Residential segregation moved from being municipally enacted to being part of a contract, a practice that would affect African Americans in the North and South equally. Quinn Chapel's role as a meeting place to support and finance the case through the appeals process to the Supreme Court affected African American housing throughout the nation by both ending segregation ordinances but also popularizing restrictive covenants.

Quinn Chapel A.M.E. also hosted numerous local civil rights actions involving national figures. Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was at Quinn Chapel twice. He appeared in 1961 in support of the public accommodations protests and in 1967 to lead open housing demonstrations

Quinn Chapel served a location for generations to share information that would elevate Louisville's residents through lectures from the country's leading African Americans, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Mary McCleod Bethune, Williams Pickens, and Dr. Carter G. Woodson.

Quinn Chapel has historic integrity. Most of the historically significant indoor events took place in the auditorium in the front of the building. While portions of the auditorium are missing, including the ceiling and pews, the space itself is intact and continues to convey the church's feeling and association. The workmanship and materiality are evident, and the circulation pattern is intact. The mass and space of the interior are largely intact. The windows and fenestration pattern are intact.

Since many demonstrations and protests originated outdoors, the exterior historic integrity is also important. The building's envelope and windows continue to convey its historic design, workmanship, feeling, and association. The entrances are original. The building's architectural details are intact, and the location is original.

The Quinn Chapel continues to convey the aspects of integrity that marked over 100 years of civil rights actions and events on a local and national stage.

⁵⁷ Wright, NAACP and Residential Segregation, 54.

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Louisville Courier-Journal

Louisville Leader

New York Age

Pittsburgh Courier

Archives and Manuscript Collections

National Records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

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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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): JFWR-1751

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0 acres (already listed)

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 16 South	Easting: 607896	Northing: 4234221
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property boundary corresponds to parcel 13H0198000 in the Jefferson County Property Valuation Administrator records. (Figure 12) Previously referred to as Block 13H, lot 198.

Boundary Justification

The boundary matches the parcel boundary, the historic extent of the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rory Krupp, historian Roy Hampton, architectural historian
organization: Owen & Eastlake LLC
street & number: P.O.Box 10774
city or town: Columbus state: Ohio zip code: 43201
e-mail: rkrupp@oweneastlake.com
telephone: 614-439-9068
date: June 5, 2019

Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: Quinn Chapel A.M.E.
City or Vicinity: Louisville
County: Jefferson State: Kentucky
Photographer: Rory Krupp
Date Photographed: June 29, 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0001)
Chestnut Street Baptist Church north and east elevations, view looking southwest.

2 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0002)
Chestnut Street Baptist Church south wing, east elevation, view looking northwest.

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3 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0003)

Chestnut Street Baptist Church, north elevation, view looking south.

4 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0004)

Chestnut Street Baptist Church 20th century addition, view looking southeast.

5 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0005)

Chestnut Street Baptist, auditorium interior from chancel, view looking northwest.

6 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0006)

Chestnut Street Baptist Church, auditorium, view looking northwest

7 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0007)

Chestnut Street Baptist Church, east vestibule, view looking northwest.

8 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0008)

Chestnut Street Baptist Church, chancel, view looking southeast.

9 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0009)

Chestnut Street Baptist Church, hallway, view looking west.

10 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0010)

Chestnut Street Baptist Church, Hallway, view looking east.

11 of 12, (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0011)

Chestnut Street Baptist Church, South auditorium, view looking south.

12 of 12 (Jefferson_Chestnut_Street_Baptist_0012)

Chestnut Street Baptist Church, south auditorium, view looking northwest.

Additional Documentation

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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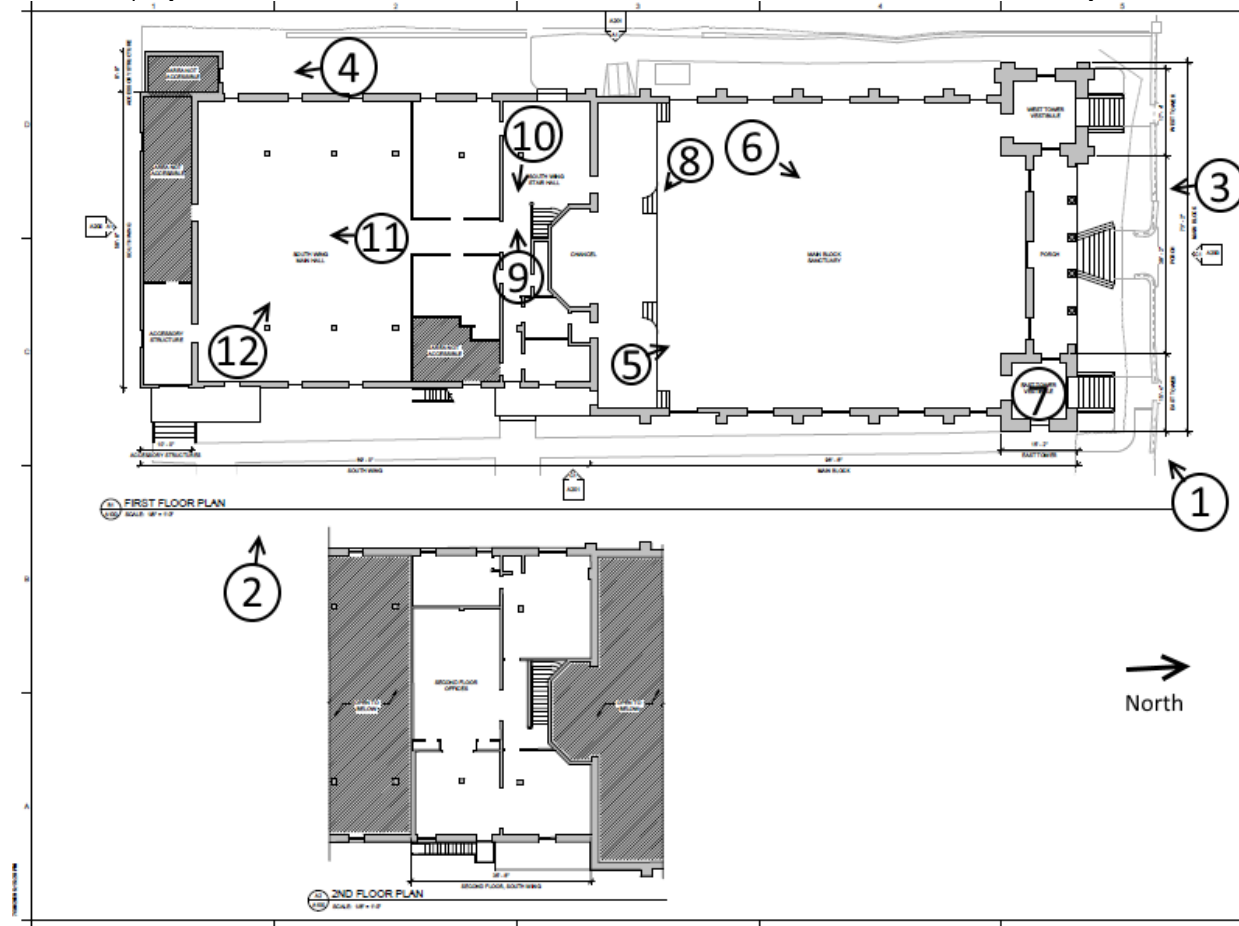


Figure 10 Quinn Chapel Photo Key (Drawing by EOP Architects)

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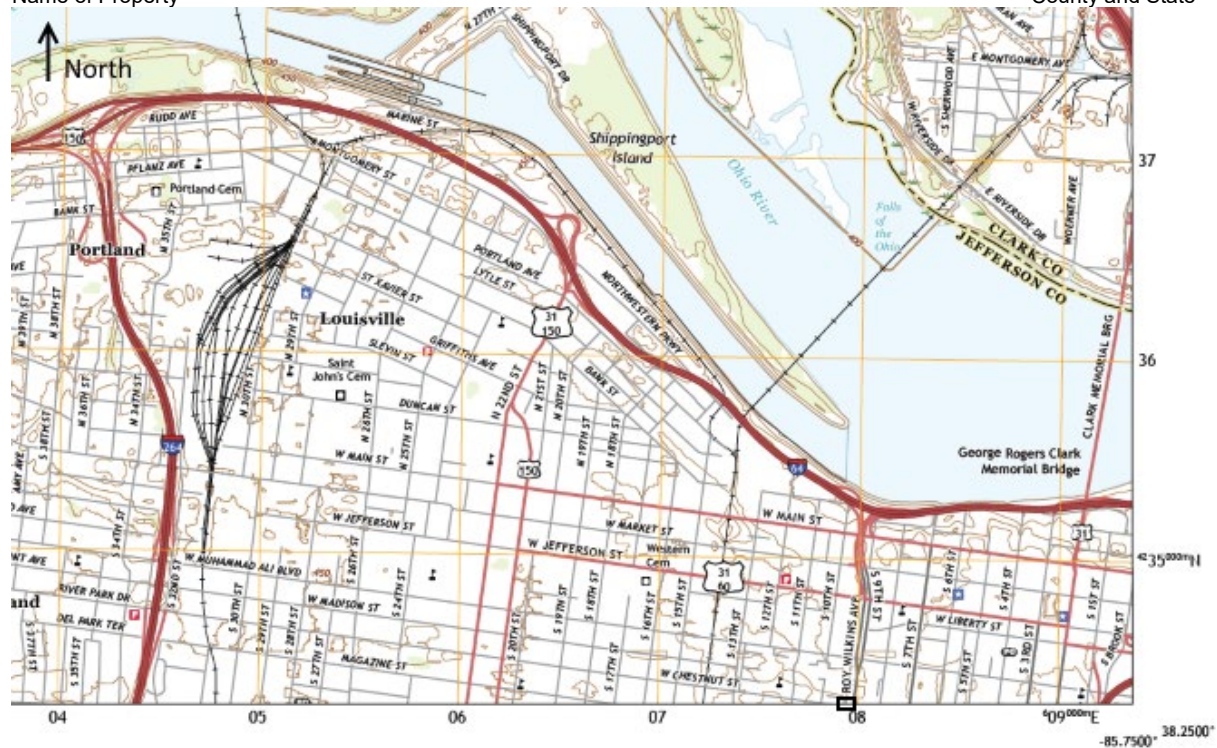


Figure 11. 2019 USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map showing Quinn Chapel location.

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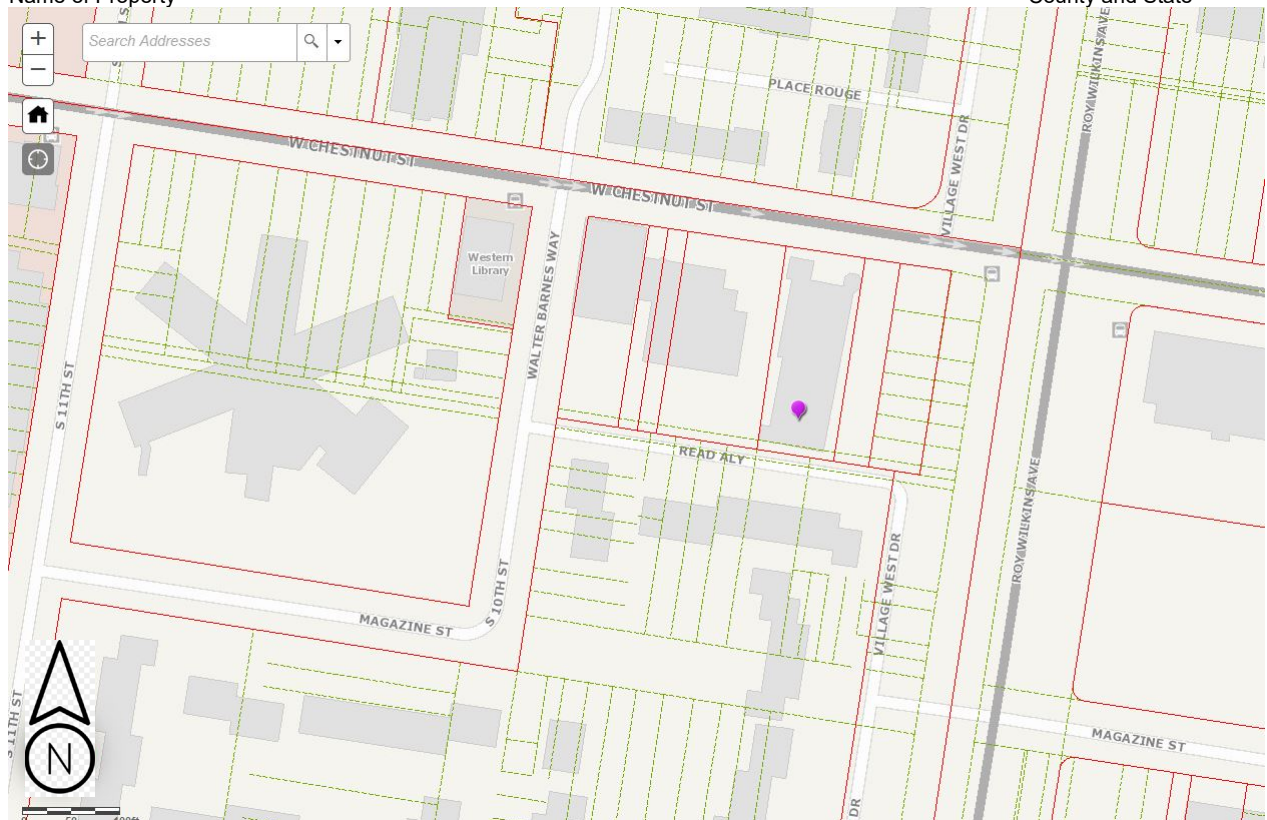


Figure 12. Quinn Chapel Location Map and Parcel. Historic Parcels outlined in green.