

**Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form**

1. Name

historic: St. James African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Temple

and/or common: St. James A.M.E. Church

date: 1919-1921

2. Location

address: 624 North Good-Latimer Expressway

location/neighborhood: Deep Ellum

lot/block: Lots 1, 2 Block 271 survey: John Grigsby Survey tract size: 0.64 ac.

3. Current Zoning PD No. 298

4. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> residence
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public	Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Acquisition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes:restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> yes:unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other,specify
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional

5. Ownership

Current Owner: Meadows Foundation

Contact: Bob Weiss

Phone: 214.826.9431

Address: 3003 Swiss Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75204

6. Form Preparation

Date: 06.20.00

Name & Title: S. Solamillo, Pres. Planner; with R.Clipper-Fleming and D.A. Nieves, Contributors

Organization: for Preservation Dallas

Contact: Stan Solamillo

Phone: 972.390.8713

7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide) local state national National Register
H.P.L. Survey (CBD) A B C D Recorded TX Historic Ldmk
Oak Cliff TX Archaeological Ldmk
Victorian Survey
Dallas Historic Resources Survey, Phase high medium low

For Office Use Only

Date Rec'd: _____ Survey Verified: Y N by: _____ Field Check by: _____ Petitions Needed: Y N

Nomination: Archaeological Site Structure(s) Structure & Site District

8. Historic Ownership

original owner: St. James A.M.E. Church Congregation (1919-1983)

significant later owner(s): Richard Finley (1983-1998); Meadows Foundation (1998-present)

9. Construction Dates

original: 1919-1921

alterations/additions: n.d., 1983, 1998-1999

10. Architect

original construction: William Sidney Pittman (1919-1921)

alterations/additions: Unknown (n.d.), Richard Finley (1983), Meadows Foundation (1999)

11. Site Features

natural: N/A

urban design: Iron and brick pier security fence

12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

unaltered

altered

Check one:

original site

moved (date _____)

Describe present and original (if known) physical appearance. Include style(s) of architecture, current condition and relationship to surrounding fabric (structures, objects, etc.) elaborate on pertinent materials used and style(s) of architectural detailing, embellishments and site details.

St. James African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Temple is an important example of the Neoclassical designs that were produced by the African American architect William Sydney Pittman (1875-1956) during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Built from 1919-1921 at a cost of \$50,000, it was constructed entirely by African American contractors and building crews and housed the St. James congregation for sixty-four years. Altered slightly at indeterminate dates by the congregation, it was later purchased by local developer, Richard Finley, who gutted and renovated the building for a law firm that occupied it from 1983-1998. The church was sold once more on May 22, 1998 to the Meadows Foundation, which renovated the interior as offices for the Mental Health Association of Greater Dallas and the Greater Dallas Community of Churches. The foundation's purchase of the building, restoration of the exterior facades, and rehabilitation of the interior have resulted in the preservation of an elegant piece of Pittman's architectural legacy.

The building's site is at grade and located on the highest elevation of Good-Latimer Expressway, which then decreases in elevation to provide approaches to Deep Ellum to the south and North Central Expressway to the northwest. There are paved parking lots adjacent to the building's south (side) and east (rear) facades. The parking lot on the south side of the building is enclosed by an ornamental iron fence that has been painted and is interrupted by regularly spaced yellow brick piers.

St. James A.M.E. Temple is oriented east-west with the principal facade facing west and fronting Good-Latimer Expressway. Three stories in height and faced with yellow brick that has been laid in seven-course common bond, the west (front) facade is dominated by a large, gabled portico with four massive white concrete columns that form a *Tetrastyle* (Chitham 1987: 158). They are symmetrically placed on an elevated masonry platform or *podium* (Ibid.: 156). The columns are rendered in Ionic fashion with capitals

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consisting of simple volutes embellished with egg and dart as well as bead and reel motifs. The column bases are simply detailed with torus and fillet moldings.

The masonry podium that supports the Testrastle is fenestrated by three segmented arches that have been infilled with windows, modeled after the design of the building's original third story arched wood windows. Initially built as an entry portico and flanked by a pair of stairways that provided a formal entry for church members from the street, the stairways and balustrades were removed during the 1983 renovation. However, the portico and other details were recorded by Finley in a series of pre-renovation photographs (Figures 3-7). In addition, unknown photographers produced images for the *Dallas Express* in 1921 and a local black City directory in 1941 (Figures 1-2). The latter was printed as part of a full-page advertisement that showed members of the St. James A.M.E. congregation posing on the stairways at front of the building (*Dallas Negro City Directory* 1941-1942: LIV).

A new cornerstone is located on the building's northwest corner. Installed by the Meadows Foundation on the occasion of the building's restoration and rehabilitation in 1999, it measures 1'-1" x 2'-2", and has been carved with a dedication, along with the following names and titles:

ST. JAMES A.M.E. TEMPLE
ERECTED 1919

C.W. ABINGTON
J.A. JONES
J.H. WILHITE
S.W. BROOKS

PASTOR
PRESIDING ELDER
SECRETARY
BISHOP

TRUSTEES

J. LOWERY
T.J. BAGBY
T.W. WILKINS

J.L. SNEED
J.H. WILHITE
G. BROWN

WM. MCGEF
O.T. MOORE
G.F. PORTER

WILLIAM SIDNEY PITTMAN

ARCHITECT

The entry portico is pedimented and supported by an entablature that consists of an architrave, frieze, and cornice. The entablature supports a large stucco *Tympanum* that is capped with a raked cornice. The cornice is embellished with simple modillions and dentils and is fenestrated with a circular wood vent. The vent was presumably installed during the 1983 renovations and replaced a stained glass window. The underside of the portico is finished in beaded ceiling board and has been painted.

Beneath the portico is a central entry that is flanked on the north and south by side doors. These serve as the formal entries for the St. James A.M.E. congregation. The central entry has a pedimented cornice with a stained glass transom. The original doors have been replaced by a pair of fifteen-light glazed doors. Similarly, the side doors are glazed with fifteen lights each and are surmounted by stained glass transoms. The second story windows are one-over-one wood sash that have been glazed with opalescent stained glass and they are surmounted by wood transoms that are similarly glazed. The windows are simply

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detailed with cast concrete sills and soldier course lintels. There is a cornice of pressed metal that is detailed with simple modillions and dentils, and an attic parapet that is capped with three corbelled courses and metal flashing.

A suspended cruciform sign was added to the west façade at an indeterminate date. Also removed during the 1983 renovations, its letters were arranged in the following manner:

A
M
E
S
T. J A M E S
T
E
M
P
L
E

The east (rear) facade, unlike the other three facades that are built in masonry, has been finished in plaster. The plaster has been tinted an earth tone hue and is interrupted by horizontal and vertical expansion joints to prevent cracking. The plaster provides a cementitious waterproofing layer over the original red colored brick. The east facade also features a concrete string course and the terminating returns of the entablature. With the exception of the first floor fenestration, which consists of one-over-one aluminum sash and a metal door, the remaining two stories remain blind.

The north (side) facade is finished in yellow brick, laid in seven-course common bond, over two at-grade courses of red colored brick, and features the building's original cornerstone. Located on the northwest corner at a height of 4'-5 1/2", the stone dates presumably, from the construction of the edifice in 1919. It measures 1'-1 3/4" in height and 2'-2 1/4" in length, and it is carved from a single limestone slab. Unfortunately, the majority of the cornerstone's face has been badly pitted by rainwater that escaped from a downspout that had failed to carry its effluent to grade and away from the building, and most of the text has been obliterated. What information is partially discernable is located on the stone's right side and is recorded as follows:

[Illegible] [S.W. BROOKS] BISHOP J.A. JONES P.E.
[Illegible] [G.] BROWN BUILDING COM.
[Illegible] [TR]USTEES
[Illegible] G. PORTER
[Illegible] W. WILKINS
[Illegible] CONTRACTOR
[Illegible] [C.W.] ABINGTON, PASTOR
[Illegible] K. OF P.

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The north (side) facade is divided into seven bays. It features a concrete string course, pressed metal entablature, and masonry parapet. A door is located at the northeast corner and is a modern six-panel replacement, whose transom has been infilled with brick to a lintel height equal to that of the windows in the succeeding bays. Three central bays in this facade are framed by four step-shouldered brick buttresses. The shoulders are capped with cast concrete coping. The buttresses support three masonry gablets that project above the masonry parapet. They are fenestrated with arched wood sash luscernes, that are glazed with opalescent glass, and capped with cast concrete coping.

The windows of the central bays include: paired one-over-one wood sash on the first floor; paired one-over-one wood sash with operable, opalescent glass transoms on the second floor; and paired and arched two-light wood sash, surmounted by circular wood windows glazed with opalescent glass, and flanked by small lunettes on the third floor. In contrast, the windows in the two bays on either side of the buttresses include: single one-over-one wood sash at the first floor; single one-over-one wood sash and operable opalescent transoms at the second floor; and single one-over-one wood sash at the third floor. The windows at the first floor are detailed with rowlock sills and soldier course lintels, while the upper two floors feature cast concrete sills and soldier course lintels. In addition, the rowlock arches of the third floor windows in the central bays are further accentuated by the addition of single stretcher courses.

The south (side) facade is similar in design and treatment to the north facade with the exception of the fenestration on the first and second floors. A small replacement one-over-one wood sash is located at the southwest corner with a modern metal door located in the adjacent bay. The middle bay, located between the center buttresses, is also fenestrated differently from the north facade and features a segmented arched one-over-one wood sash. The remaining first floor windows are one-over-one wood sash. A first floor gabled entry canopy, supported by two narrow metal columns is located in the sixth bay, adjacent to the southeast corner. It has a modern six-panel door. A second story doorway located at the corner bay was infilled with brick during the 1983 renovations, but its circular window, glazed with opalescent glass, remains intact. With the exception of this window, the remaining fenestration of the second floor is similar to that of the north facade.

The roof is hipped and is drained by metal scuppers and downspouts that are located on the east and west (side) facades. The present roof replaced another of similar design, however, the original was punctuated at mid-point, by a metal drum that supported a metal dome and oculus. Currently, the oculus is concealed beneath a pent roof that provides a platform for turbine vents, communication antennae, and lightning rods.

The entire interior of St. James A.M.E. Temple was gutted in the 1983 Finley renovations. In an interview with the developer conducted during the following year, a local writer summarized the work as follows: "foundation problems were corrected, floors were straightened, some windows were removed, and new electrical, heating, and air conditioning systems were added" (Hansard 1984: 3E).

Unfortunately, the extent of the renovations accomplished the removal of much of the building's interior historic fabric. Although the majority of the work may have been necessary for an adaptive reuse of the building, some of it may in hindsight, appear excessive. An example of this was the treatment of the oculus that illuminates the interior of the building. It was originally constructed of stained opalescent

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glass and featured a center piece embellished with the "Eye of God." The principal donors of the piece were incorporated into the design within a circular band that carried the following dedication: "W.M. MCDONALD JR. BY HIS PARENTS." The image of the "Eye of God" was removed during the 1983 renovations, along with the benefactors' tribute. In the 1984 interview with the local press, the developer explained his reasoning for altering the design by stating: "I tried to maintain as much detail of the church as possible, but I don't think people would want to work with the three wise men watching them" (Ibid.).

Similarly, a circular stained glass window located in the frieze above the diastyle was removed and replaced with a louvered vent. The window was restored by the Meadows Foundation in 1999. Other stained glass windows, doors, and miscellaneous architectural elements were also removed along with the church furnishings and their dispositions remain unknown (Wise 1999: personal communication). Propitiously, however, there was some photo-documentation of the work as it progressed and this provides a record of some of the architectural elements that were removed.

13. Historical Significance

Statement of historical and cultural significance. Include: cultural influences, special events and important personages, influences on neighborhood, on the city, etc.

St. James A.M.E. Church was founded in Dallas, Texas, in 1876 as "St. James African M.E. Church" by Reverend W.R. Carson and located at a site that was addressed later in the twentieth century as 421 Young Street. The congregation remained at that location for thirty-eight years. On May 26, 1914, trustees for the church purchased Lots 1 and 2 in Block 271 at the southeast corner of Good and Florence Streets for "\$10,000 in cash" from the Trustees of a German Baptist Church (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 623: 284; Figure 8). Two years earlier, St. James A.M.E. had sold the Young Street site for \$25,250 to an I.E. Rose, presumably with the understanding that they remain at that location until they found another church site and moved (*Ibid.*: Vol. 562: 62).

The date that the congregation razed the Baptist Church to erect a new edifice is unknown, however, Building Permit Number 1113 was issued by the Dallas Building Official to J.L. Sneed on October 1, 1919. The official noted that the permit was for a "brick and concrete church," and that the construction costs for the new building were \$100,000 (*Building Official's Record* 1916-1920: 117). However, the agent misspelled the applicant's initials as "J.S." in the record. J.L. Sneed was listed in the City directories as a "Carpenter" (Worley 1919: 987) and he acted as the assistant to C.L. Brewer, the superintendent for the project. In a listing of the Brotherhood of Negro Mechanics published six years later in a local black directory, two of his relatives---C.H. and E.S. Sneed---were also listed as "Carpenters," but J.L. Sneed was not listed (*Negro (?) Bulletin* 1925: n.p.).

Funds for the construction of the church are reputed in the oral tradition to have been received from donors in Dallas and throughout the United States. The costs of the four-column *Tetrastyle* are said to have been donated by a family in New York (Wise 1999: personal communication). Similarly, money for the stained glass oculus is recalled as having been donated by four local black attorneys (*Ibid.*).

The new building was erected and dedicated on Sunday, January 9, 1921, and the ceremonies were extended through the following Monday. The local African American press carried a rather lengthy announcement of the event, stating that "The New St. James A.M.E. Temple, [at] Good and Florence Streets will celebrate Its Opening Exercises [from] Sunday, January, 9th to Monday Evening, January 10th, 1921" (*Dallas Express*, January 1, 1921: 1).

The text continued:

After a little more than a year of hard and persistent efforts, the congregation of this splendid structure will occupy [its] new church home for the first time. Nothing in the history of church building in our city has been more remarkable than the beginning and completion of this church. The membership is small; numbering only 325[,] including men, women and children; and yet the work never ceased until it was finished.

The structure is modern in all of its details and will ever stand as a monument to Negro Labor. It has been designed and constructed by [black] men. Mr. W. Sidney Pittman was the Architect and Mr. C.L. Brewer has superintended the construction[,] assisted by Mr. J.L. Sneed. This church is conceded to be among the best owned by the race in the country. Every Negro should feel a measure of genuine pride in this building as it proves that there is no color in the line of the building art, that the black man can do anything, if given a chance, [that] any one else can do (*Ibid.*).

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On Saturday, January 15, another article appeared in the same newspaper with the headline, "Great Throngs Attend Dedication of New \$50,000 St. James A.M.E. Church" (*Dallas Express*, January 15, 1921: 1). The article stated that: "St. James A.M.E. Church began eighteen months ago, was opened to the public and formally dedicated Sunday (Figure 9). Beginning with the morning service and continuing throughout the day, great throngs of citizens of all denominations of the city and hundreds of out of town visitors crowded its aisles" (Ibid.).

The dedication services began Sunday morning and lasted throughout the week. The following was the program of events.

Sunday morning the service was in [the] charge of the Pastor, Rev. C.W. Abington. Sunday afternoon the services were held by Rev. R.C. Walker of Corsicana, who brought his choir and a large portion of his membership to help in opening the new church. Sunday night, Rev. J.H. Smith of Bethel Church of the city with his choir and entire congregation worshipped with the pastor and members of the new church and formally presented a beautiful window given by them.

Monday night, Reverend J.F. Williams of Waco preached. Tuesday night. . .all met in celebration. Wednesday night, Rev. Johnson of Evening Chapel; Thursday night, Rev. Harper of St. John; [and] Friday night, Rev. J.E. Edwards of Waxahachie held the services in the new building. Beginning with Sunday. . .local churches of all denominations will each have charge of the services on special nights [during] the whole week (Ibid.).

In the same article, under the caption entitled, "The New Church Building," the writer enumerated the building contractors and provided a description of the church's interior.

The church[,] which costs approximately \$50,000[,] was designed by William Sidney Pittman, constructed by Clifton Brewer as contractor[,] wired and lighted by Lemon Bros.[,] concreted and plastered by S. Johnson. Practically all the work was done by Negro workmen.

It is built of white press brick and is three stories in height. [It] consists of a basement which contains a well[-]appointed dining room and kitchen, [a] furnished guest room, S.S. Room, ladies guest room, gents['] toilet and reading room. The second floor is given over to the auditorium and balcony which are comfortably seated with [the] most comfortable opera chairs. On this floor are the pastor's study and choir room. The total seating capacity is 850 persons (Ibid.).

An editorial also appeared in the *Dallas Express*. It indicated the importance that the new edifice held for many of its readers.

The opening of the New St. James A.M.E. Church is an event [that] should cause a feeling of pride and genuine pleasure to possess every member of our group in Dallas. It represents an unusual accomplishment for the reason that it bespeaks courage on the part of its pastor, confidence on the part of its members[,] and [a] co-operative spirit of all the citizens who contributed toward its erection.

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It was designed by a Negro, erected by Negro masons and carpenters[,] directed by a Negro contractor, and wired by Negro electricians. It is a monument to Negro brain[s], skill and purpose . . . [It] should serve as a concrete example of what team work and co-operation may accomplish. Such a lesson may be profitably drawn from the successful completion of this building by members of our group everywhere. . . We need to heed and learn the value of co-operation. We need to realize that greater progress is possible where all men concerned bend their efforts in a common direction.

Dallas especially needs to learn and apply this principle in an ever increasing degree to its business projects as well as [to] its churches. There is room for much greater development (*Dallas Express*, January 15, 1921: 4).

Even the local Anglo press carried a story on the church's dedication in one of the Sunday editions (Figure 10):

Announcement was made Saturday that the new St. James A.M.E. Church [at] Florence and Good Streets, is completed. The colored Methodists are to take charge of their new building Sunday. The building has been in the course of construction for fifteen months and is the best structure of its sort in the South [that is] owned by Negro Methodists.

It is the purpose of the congregation to make this building serve the whole community. Provisions have been made for reading rooms, [a] day nursery, club meeting [room]s, and every means of uplift and convenience for the whole race, as their financial prosperity may permit.

The church is to be opened at 6 p.m. Sunday with a prayer and praise service, which is the beginning of an opening program extending over more than a week. The pastor, Rev. C.W. Abington, hopes in this effort to get sufficient funds to care for pressin[g] obligations that he is very anxious to meet promptly. All the colored churches will meet with the congregation during this effort.

There will convene in this church early in February the largest and most important meeting of the colored people ever assembled in Texas. A large committee is busy with plans for the care and entertainment of of the delegates, who will be here from all over the country and many from [other] countries. Dr. H.T. Hamilton is chairman of the committee and is meeting with much success (*Dallas Daily Times Herald*, January 9, 1921: 11).

In that same year, agents of the Sanborn Insurance Company recorded St. James A.M.E. Temple, along with a two-story wood frame parsonage and a small wood frame shed on the site (Figure 11). The church was addressed as "624" North Good Street and the parsonage was labelled "620." The Sanborn agents also included the following details about the temple, calling it, "St. James A.M.E. Church," and noting that it was "42' To [the] Eaves," had a "T[in] C[ei]L[ing] Dome," and had "Heat: Gas," and "Light: Elec[tric]" (Sanborn Map and Publishing Company of New York 1921: 36).

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The church's growth in membership during the 1920s and 1930s was substantial. Good Street was improved by 1928, with the construction of an underpass to permit the unencumbered flow of automobiles and pedestrians under the congested tracks of the Houston & Texas Central (H&TC) rail yard and into Deep Ellum---the area's Black shopping district (Solamillo 1995: 6). This brought an increased flow of traffic past the St. James A.M.E. edifice and an unidentified photographer recorded the building in 1930 (Figure 1).

At its height in the 1940s, the membership of St. James A.M.E. comprised the largest congregation of that denomination in North America (Meadows Foundation 1999: n.p.). Another unknown photographer produced a print of the congregation in front of the edifice for a local Black city directory at the beginning of the decade (Figure 2). In 1948, the church's pastor of five years, Rev. J.R. McGee, was quoted by the local press as stating that the congregation had a membership of 500 and that "his. . .churchmen [had] paid off[f] \$22,000 of the debt on their building" (*Dallas Morning News*, February 9, 1948: n.p.). The same article described his establishment of a soup kitchen for the poor in Dallas after seeing two men walking away from the City-County Welfare Department at 1313 Pacific (Ibid.; Worley 1948: 202).

The congregation that was responsible for the building of St. James A.M.E. Temple is reputed by the oral tradition to have gathered as a group as early as 1876, holding services in a brush arbor. By the early 1880s, they had built a church at 421 Young Street. A local city directory stated a decade later that "Services [were at] 11 a.m., 3 and 8 p.m.; [and] Sun[day] School [was at] 9:30 a.m." (Evans & Worley, 1894-1895: 35). In addition, the directory noted that "Rev. J.E. Holmes, [was] Pastor [and] W.H. Thornton, Supt. [of the] Sunday School" (Ibid.).

The African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) church had historical roots that can be traced back to the eighteenth century Anglo Methodist Episcopal Church. Founded by John Wesley in the eighteenth century, the Methodist Episcopal Church was initially very successful in converting slaves to Christianity because of its anti-slavery stance. However, when "church officials dragged Richard Allen and Absalom James, both former slaves and respected preachers, from the White section of the sanctuary of St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia in 1793, the entire group of African American communicants withdrew from the fellowship" (Montgomery 2000: 7). This led to the formation of the Bethel African Methodist Church by Allen and within two decades, congregations of that denomination were established in New York, Delaware, and Baltimore. The A.M.E. Church was officially organized in 1816, with Allen being ordained its first bishop, and the denomination rapidly grew in the northern states (Ibid.).

At the end of the Civil War, numerous missionaries from all of the Protestant denominations entered the south to organize Black churches and Michael M. Clark and Houston Reedy organized the first A.M.E. churches in Texas, beginning in Galveston in 1865 (Ibid.: 11). Two years later, a meeting was held in that city to organize an annual conference in Texas. On October 28 of the following year, the first conference was held in Galveston and was presided over by Bishop James A. Shorter. Among those in attendance was Houston Reedy. The event claimed over 3,000 members in attendance, and the Texas membership grew considerably in the following two decades. By 1890 the A.M.E. membership in Texas totaled 23,000 and by 1926 had reached almost 34,000, ranking it second only to Baptists as the most numerous of Black church denominations (Ibid.: 16).

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In the early years of the Texas conference, most A.M.E. churches were established within a triangular-shaped area whose points were Galveston, Bryan, and San Antonio. Through the use of circuit-riding preachers who were responsible for opening new churches throughout the state, two additional conferences were established in Texas. They included the West Texas and Central Texas Conferences, which were organized in 1875 and 1883, respectively (Ibid.).

The architect of St. James A.M.E. Temple, William Sidney Pittman, began a short but very prolific professional career in architecture, following the completion of his graduate studies in 1900. He had been born in Montgomery, Alabama, on April 21, 1875, the son of a former slave who worked as a laundress and an unknown Anglo man. His paternity gave him a light complexion, however, he neither met nor knew the identity of his father (Stewart 1977: 77; Childers 1997: 21). Little is known about Pittman's early years in Montgomery, except that he grew up in poverty and is said to have been his mother's favorite among several older children (Stewart 1977: 77). In addition, he is also reputed to have had an uncle named Will Watkins who was a local building contractor (*Black World* 1974: 11). Along with his mother, his uncle is remembered in the oral tradition as having encouraged him from a young age to pursue an interest in the building trades (Ibid).

Pittman's impressive achievements as a young architect by the age of twenty-eight, however, prompted several period writers to produce contemporary, though abbreviated biographies, which provide some information about his life as he matured into adulthood. One such article was printed in the New York publication, *Colored American Magazine* in the winter of 1906 (Figure 12). The article, entitled "A Successful Architect," included a brief personal history and enumerated Pittman's then completed projects. The author's summary of Pittman's educational background began with the following paragraph:

W. Sidney Pittman. . . attended the public schools of Montgomery and Birmingham. At the age of seventeen, without means or financial support, he entered the Industrial Department of the Tuskegee Institute, completing in the following five years a course in wood work, a three years course in architecture and mechanical drawing combined and the general academic course. After graduation the authorities of the Institute offered to assist him in continuing the study of architecture in some [n]orthern [t]echnical [s]chool the following year with the condition that he reimburse them after graduation. He accepted and was duly admitted to the Drexel Institute at Philadelphia, in 1897, graduating in Architecture, and in the special Mechanical Drawing course in 1900 (*Colored American Magazine* 1906: 424).

The writer continued:

The following fall he was recalled to Tuskegee and given charge of the Architectural work [there]. In the five years following, over \$250,000 worth of buildings were built from his plans. Among these are the \$70,000 Collis P. Huntington Memorial Building, Douglass Hall, Rockefeller Hall, Carnegie Library, Emory Dormitories, and some others next in size and importance. Aside from these, plans were also drawn for various schools and individuals in other places. Notably among these was the Voorhees Industrial School at Denmark, S[outh] C[arolina], where he planned their four largest buildings. In May 1903 (Dozier 1976: 166) he resigned for the purpose of opening an office and finally decided to locate [to] Washington, D.C. (*Colored American Magazine* 1906: 424).

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During his first few years as a practicing architect and a new member of the faculty at Tuskegee, he worked under the direction of the school's chief architect, Robert R. Taylor (Dozier 1976: 166). Recruited by Booker T. Washington in 1892 to develop the Mechanical Industries Department at Tuskegee (which also included the program in architecture), Taylor had been one of the first African Americans to graduate with an architecture degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Ibid.: 164). Ruth Ann Stewart, the biographer of Pittman's wife, Portia, later wrote that Sidney's resignation came as a result of a disagreement with Taylor in 1903 (Stewart 1977: 79). Pittman is reputed to have "refused to be conciliatory" following the incident, and left for Washington, D.C., where prior to opening up his own office in 1905, he worked with another prominent African American architect, John A. Lankford (Ibid.; Dozier 1976: 164).

Lankford had also been an early student of Taylor's, and established in 1899, the first known African American professional architectural office in the United States, in Jacksonville, Florida. He had been the superintendent of the Mechanical Industries Department at Shaw University prior to opening his Florida office and had subsequently moved his practice to Washington, D.C., by 1901. He went on to serve as the national supervising architect for the A.M.E. Church (Dozier 1976: 166). Lankford also produced designs for numerous churches throughout the South, and along with another prominent African American architect, William A. Rayfield, published much of his work in period journals such as *The Crisis* and *Opportunity* (Adams 1991: 85).

In 1905 Pittman opened up his own Washington D.C. architectural office in two rooms at 494 Louisiana Avenue. Within one year of his opening, his workload had increased to the point that he had hired a draftsman and stenographer (*Colored American Magazine* 1906: 424). Two years later Pittman won a competition to design the Negro Building at the Tercentennial Exposition in Jamestown, Virginia, which made him the first African American architect in the country to be awarded a Federal contract. Under his supervision, the building was erected in eighty days by an all-black construction crew (Stewart 1977: 80).

The only known description of the Negro Building appeared decades later in a Black almanac. The publication noted that, "Pittman's design called for 60,000 sq. ft. on two floors, a column free auditorium, a roof span of 93 feet, 128 [columns] supporting the second floor, and 86 windows. Bolling & Everett, contractors for Washington's United Order of True Reformers' [Hall were the general contractors and Arthur Johnson was the electrical contractor]" (*Black World* 1974: 11).

Following his completion of the Tercentennial project, Pittman transmitted his correspondence on letterhead that proudly announced:

Sidney Pittman

. . . Architect . . .

Washington, D.C.

Architect for Negro Building, Jamestown Exposition

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In addition, his office stationary also included the following list of services: "Plans and Specifications," "Estimates and Supervision," and "Steel Construction a Specialty" (Pittman 1907: n.p.).

Pittman advertised in the Black press throughout the major cities of the eastern seaboard. A New York contract for a three-story frame apartment financed by R.F. Turner in New York City was made possible through an advertisement that Pittman ran in the *New York Age* (Ibid.: 425). Another period advertisement in an unidentified Black newspaper in Washington, D.C. carried the following description of his practice:

W. SIDNEY PITTMAN

ARCHITECT

STEEL CONSTRUCTION a SPECIALTY

Plans furnished through correspondence

Pittman also successfully courted Booker T. Washington's daughter, Portia, and married her on October 31, 1907 (Childers 1997: 21). Portia Washington was a musician and had been studying music in Berlin. Pittman had met her during his post-graduate service at Tuskegee and had corresponded with her throughout the course of her studies. He finally convinced her to end her studies in Germany and join him in Washington, D.C.

Pittman designed and built a new home for his wife in Fairmont Heights, Maryland, which was a residential development that was platted by the Fairmont Heights Improvement Company. The investment company was a speculative venture entered into by Pittman and several other African American investors to develop a planned suburban community as an alternative to the overcrowded inner-city housing that comprised the urban ghettos of Washington, D.C. (Stewart 1977: 80).

Pittman also is reputed to have designed and built a vernacular brick school in the Fairmont Heights Development (Figures 13, 14). However, the building's simple, if not generic appearance, seems enigmatic when compared with the high style masonry buildings that he designed during this period. Covered with asbestos siding, its brick details remain obscured.

The years in Washington, D.C. saw Pittman and his wife establish themselves as members of a growing elite class of suburban African American families. Booker T. Washington had some influence with then President Theodore Roosevelt and was invited to the White House in 1908. Portia's biographer later wrote that: "the reverberations from that simple act of social amenity were felt across the entire country. The president was condemned for socializing with a [Colored man] and Booker, for presuming to step out of his class. . .Despite the furor, Booker continued to remain a powerful advisor to the President" (Stewart 1977: 82).

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However, the changing dynamics of the relationship between a very famous father-in-law and a son-in-law of growing prominence in one of the most prestigious African American families in the country remain largely unknown. Portia's biographer described their relationship at Tuskegee as amiable by stating that, "Booker liked and respected Sidney" (Ibid.: 74). After his daughter's marriage, however, the relationship appears to have changed, although to what degree will probably never be known.

Washington should have been demonstrably proud of the accomplishments of his son-in-law during this period. He wrote and published an article about one of Pittman's projects in Washington, D.C.---the Neoclassical Young Mens Christian Association Building on Twelfth Street (Figures 15-17)---but failed to mention his role as the architect. The article, entitled, "How the Colored People of Washington Raised \$25,000 in Twenty-six Days," focused instead on the local African American community's successful fund-raising efforts for the project (*The Independent* 1907: 1115-1116). The only mention of architecture that Washington made was that the building was to be "in every way adequate and architecturally beautiful," "a monument to the good will of the people of [the city]," and "to the self sacrifice of the Colored people," "thr[ough whose] efforts, the erection of such a building. . .will have a far-reaching influence for good in the community" (Ibid.: 1116).

A year later, Pittman was commissioned by the District of Columbia to be the architect for the Tudor Revival-styled Garfield Public High School (Figures 18-19), in addition to producing plans and specifications for the Agricultural Building at Tuskegee, two more buildings at Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute, and the remodeling of a hotel in Norfolk, Virginia (Stewart 1977: 80; Nieves 1999: personal communication).

Between 1909 and 1911, however, the chronology of Pittman's architectural *oeuvre* becomes obscure and whatever buildings he may have designed during this period remain unknown. Within a year he had moved from Washington, D.C., to Texas. Unlike his practice in the nation's capital, however, Pittman chose to office out of his house at 2213 Juliette Street. Portia's biographer later suggested that Sidney's decision to leave the east coast was predicated on his desire to get "away from a city [that was] dominated by his father-in-law's presence" (Stewart 1977: 85). In addition, the Fairmont Heights Improvement Company that he had been president of had failed and at least one historian has inferred that his eastern seaboard commissions were beginning to wane (Childers 1997: 21).

Whatever reason prompted Pittman to move his wife and three children to Dallas, Texas---a city that in the first decades of the twentieth century had a rather notorious reputation for its treatment of persons of color---remains something of a mystery. Perhaps the existence of at least one project in the nearby City of Fort Worth and the lure of potential architectural commissions in the Black communities that were located in such a large state were enough for him to relocate to the city.

Although reputed in the oral history tradition to have arrived in Dallas in 1913 to prepare the plans for and supervise the construction of the Knights of Pythias Temple, Pittman appears to have moved to Texas at least one year earlier. His first project in the state was Allen A.M.E. Church in Fort Worth (Figures 20-21). Pittman had to have been involved in the design and production of construction drawings for the Allen A.M.E. Church while in his Washington office sometime late in 1911 or early in the following year, because the erection of the church began on December 22, 1912.

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Presumably, he moved his family and practice to Dallas in that year, in order to supervise the construction of the Allen edifice. The project took two years to complete and the building was finally dedicated on July 22, 1914 (Gage 1982: 8). Pittman's involvement with the Allen A.M.E. project and his arrival in 1912 is further substantiated by the fact that his first listing in the Dallas City Directories occurred in 1913 as "Pittman Wm S. Architect" (Boykin 1972: n.p.). For this to occur, he would have had to have been residing in the city before the printing and distribution of the local city directory.

In 1914 the Black Pythians voted while in convention in Galveston, Texas, to approve the construction of the Knights of Pythias Temple in Dallas. News of the event even received mention in the local Anglo press under the headline: "Negro Pythians To Build[,] State Convention Authorizes Expenditure of 100,000 for Temple In Dallas" (*Dallas Morning News*, (?), 1914: 6). The writer of the article indicated that "the site for the structure at Elm and Good Streets, [which had been] purchased several years [earlier was] now entirely paid for." As a result, ground [would] probably be broken sometime [in the] Fall. In addition, he stated that the Pythians would have "about one-half of the total cost of the temple. . . in the treasury before work [would] be started" and that there was at the time of his writing in excess of 20,000 dollars already on deposit (Ibid.).

Pittman probably prepared the plans for the Knights of Pythias from late 1914 to early 1915 because Building Permit Number 376 was issued by the City for the construction of "a four story brick lodge building" on Friday, April 16, 1915. The value of the edifice was recorded by the Building Official as "\$73,600." (*Building Inspector's Record* 1915: 119). Construction of the temple began late in 1915 and was completed the following year. Prior to its opening, the architect produced in colored washes, a perspective view of the building. He signed the work in the lower right hand corner, "W.S. Pittman," and dated it, "5-1-1916." It is the only drawing that is known to have survived of any of his Texas projects (Figure 22).

When the Knights of Pythias Temple opened, it was Deep Ellum's most impressive addition. Rising up above a sea of rooftops from the surrounding one and two-story structures, it created a similar effect as the Twelfth Street Y.M.C.A. in Washington D.C., and was the shopping district's only multi-story office building. Despite this achievement, however, there remained the recollection of an incident that occurred during its construction that appears to have typified the nature of Pittman's interaction with members of the local Black community---an event that tragically portended the outcome of his future in Dallas. It was recounted in the biography of his wife:

Portia remembered that one of [the] workmen tried to kill her husband. Sidney was on a high scaffold overseeing the work on the [Knights of Pythias T]emple when one of the construction crew approached him and an argument ensued. Sidney was knocked down and was about to be pushed over the side to a long drop below when another workman intervened and saved his life. Portia remembered the rescuer's name as being Armstrong. Unlike his fellow workmen, Armstrong had developed a regard for Sidney [that] after this incident would protect him throughout the rest of the construction of the temple (Stewart 1997: 86).

The biographer went on to describe Pittman as "a very exacting man" and explained that, while he was a strong race man and tried to hire blacks whenever possible, he demanded that his workmen perform as

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well as, if not better than, their [Anglo] counterparts. [Consequently,] his strict attitude hardly endeared him to his employees or, for that matter, to his employers" (Ibid.: 85-86).

The Knights of Pythias Temple was dedicated in 1916 (Figures 23-24). Following the building's opening, it became a prominent address for the offices of Dallas' Black professional elite and was immediately filled to capacity. The new tenants included local lawyers, doctors, dentists, and insurance agents. Among the most notable were: Dr. E.E. Ward, who was instrumental in the founding of the Dallas [Black] Chamber of Commerce; A.S. Wells, a successful attorney and politician; and Dr. R.T. Hamilton, a prominent Black physician and civic leader, after whom was named the first "planned" single-family housing community---built for African Americans in Dallas---Hamilton Park (Ford 1985: 6). A selection of some of the other tenants officing in the Knights of Pythias Temple also included M.C. Cooper, Dr. H.W. Reid, W.P. Wallick, Dr. P.M. Sunday and A.H. Dyson. There also were a number of insurance companies listed in the city directories as leasing offices in the new building. They were the Excelsior Mutual Benefit Association, American Mutual Benefit Association, Victory Life Insurance Company, Superior Benefactors of America, and Standard Life Insurance Company (Worley 1917-1918: 1022).

The chronology of Pittman's next known Texas projects in the following two years, however, again becomes obscure. Following the Knights of Pythias Temple, Pittman's next known project was Joshua Chapel A.M.E. Church in nearby Waxahachie. Presumably travelling on the local interurban, operated by the Texas Electric Railway, from Dallas to that city, he produced a Romanesque Revival building for the Ellis County congregation and the church was completed in 1919 (Figures 25-27). Probably while involved with Joshua Chapel, he was also preparing the design and construction drawings for St. James A.M.E. Temple.

The oral tradition indicates that after construction of the St. James A.M.E. had begun, the congregation held services at the Knights of Pythias Temple. A local informant, Olivia Kizzee stated, "The Pythian Temple [at] Elm and Good Latimer was where we had our. . .service[s]. I was about eight years old. [Then,] they built this church from the ground [up] and it was ready in 19[21]" (Kizzee 1999: personal communication).

When the church was dedicated, there was a large community celebration to mark the event. Ms. Kizzee continued. "After they built this church. . .they had a big bazaar down in the basement, located in the lower level of the church. . .The big celebration was a bazaar. . .People from all over the country came to this. . .they had booths. [Even] the leading stores in Dallas, Texas. . .Neiman Marcus, Arthur A. Harris and [the] Linz Brothers [had] individual booths" (Ibid.).

Pittman's success with and accolades about the building notwithstanding, Portia's biographer wrote that after the dedication of St. James A.M.E. Temple in 1921:

Sidney was still struggling to establish himself. He had completed work on St. James A.M.E. [Temple], but few [Anglos] sought the services of this first black Dallas architect. There were a few other church commissions, but blacks who could afford his service[s] usually took their business to [Anglos]. This kind of reverse racism on the part of his own people enraged

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Sidney. He became a trial to live with and increasingly more bitter (Stewart 1977: 89-90).

It may be conjectured that Pittman's growing dissatisfaction with Dallas was not due solely to what Portia's biographer described, but also to what had been occurring elsewhere in the city. From 1921 until 1925, there was a Ku Klux Klan-controlled civil administration in power in Dallas. It had been voted into office under the pretext of "law and order," along with a platform that included the "protection" of Anglo sensibilities and concepts of morality. The local chapter of the organization, at its height in 1925, had a membership that numbered some 13,000 persons from Dallas County, making it the largest Klan chapter in the country. As such, it dominated the political and social life of the City (Jebson et al 1976: 323).

Consequently, Pittman's growing rage or bitterness, and his subsequent organizing of the Brotherhood of Negro [Building] Mechanics in Dallas in 1925 may have been more of a reaction to the local environment. Funded with \$2,500 "or more" in seed money to "cover its emergency claims," the organization was touted in an article that was published by the Houston Black press in the following year (*Houston Informer*, May 1, 1926: n.p.). Under the headline, "Pittman Heads Negro Builders State Movement," was featured a photograph of the architect with the subtitle, "W. Sidney Pittman. The Architect. Founder and organizer of the Brotherhood" (Ibid.). The Brotherhood of Negro [Building] Mechanics was described in the article as "a benevolent institution with headquarters in Dallas [that] is causing the people of [N]orth Texas to sit up and take notice" (Ibid.).

The writer continued, revealing the spirit of the new organization:

Besides the ability of the [group] to meet its obligations promptly and honestly, it appears to be founded upon a principle. . . of "Race Co-Operation". . . Its membership is being recruited upon this principle mainly, and its object seems to be to meet the issue squarely. . . An organization founded in a practical sense upon race co-operation, race efficiency and race support from within, will surely succeed, and along with its success a great change for our good cannot help but come about (Ibid.).

Coincidentally, a listing of the Dallas membership published in the advertisement section of the same newspaper included Noah Penn, the contractor who built another local landmark, the Vernacular Gothic Sunshine Elizabeth Chapel C.M.E. Church (Ibid.: n.p.).

Pittman's only known advertisement for his architectural services in Dallas appeared in an issue of the local Black business directories in 1925. One local researcher stated that she had seen the ad and that it instructed local African American businesses to hire from their own. In addition, it stated that in the field of architecture, there was a local architect who excelled in the practice. The copy concluded with the practitioner's name and title, "W. Sidney Pittman, Architect" (Clow 1999: personal communication).

Of this period, Portia's biographer wrote: "Sidney's problems stemmed from the fact that he was very exacting and severe in his standards. For this he gained a few small jobs and some measure of respect from the [local Anglo] community. But members of the [African American] community found him arrogant. . . Sidney in return felt that his fine training and experience were unappreciated" (Stewart 1977:

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90). It should be noted that his projects for Anglo patrons are unknown. Money problems plagued the Pittman household. "Architectural contracts were few and far between" and Portia provided income through teaching and providing piano lessons (Ibid.). The marriage finally collapsed in 1928, after Pittman hit his teenage daughter in a rage. As a result of that incident, Portia left Dallas with her children and returned to Tuskegee.

Unhappy following his wife's departure with the children to Alabama and perhaps disappointed with the progress of his Brotherhood of Negro Building Mechanics in advancing the cause of equality, he turned his energies to exposing what he felt were frequent examples of betrayal and hypocrisy in the Black Community.

He started a weekly newspaper that he titled *The Brotherhood Eyes* in 1931 (Barrineau 1986: D-1). The newspaper was written with a mixture of humor and sarcasm and singled out ministers, educators, and other local leaders. No known copies of the newspaper have survived except for two issues that were owned by Dallasite Willie Gary and were included in an article that was written about Pittman in 1986. A sample of his writing was recorded by the journalist with the following headlines: "Serious and Frivolous News Items of Negro Life in Dallas," "High School Mix-up Involves Two He-fessors And One She-fess and Another Sis Teacher in S. Dallas," "Oak Cliff Dumping Ground for Trash Parsons," and "Seven Year Feud Ends in One Death and Murder Charge Against Killer" (Ibid.: D-6).

On the title page of each issue was printed in red letters, "A Newspaper That Doesn't Cross the Color Line," and below the title, "The Brotherhood Eyes," was printed, "The Evil Doer within the Race. It plays no favorites and recognizes no sex. It works through the 'Eyes'" (Ibid.).

Pittman's "scandal rag," written in vernacular Black English, is reputed to have been popular reading--- "teenagers hid the newspaper in their desks at school [and adults] found it a never-ending topic of conversation" (Ibid.). But the newspaper incensed the local Black leadership to such a degree that he was sued for libel in 1932. The case was thrown out of court. Later commenting on the incident, Pittman wrote that "about 200 pastors and other self-anointed leaders met and organized to collect funds to prosecute and convict [me] for 'preaching the real gospel of our blessed Lord.' They collected \$1,100, 'more money than any group of Negro preachers ever collected. . .among themselves for any purpose'" (Ibid.).

Four years later, in the December 5 issue of 1936, Pittman wrote: "What is it about those who profess to be our spiritual leaders that impells them to think so much of their own welfare and so little of others? Why is there so little self denial and such an excess of selfishness among the salaried shepherds of His sheep?" (Ibid.).

The following year, Pittman was again taken to court and finally convicted of violating one of the U.S. Postal regulations---sending obscene material through the mail (Childers 1997: 23).

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He served two years of a 5-year sentence in Leavenworth Penitentiary in Kansas, working as the prison librarian. Portia lobbied then President Franklin D. Roosevelt through the assistance of his maid, Lizzie McDuffy, for Sidney's early release and he was paroled on June 13, 1939 (*Dallas Times Herald*, 7 December 1986: n.p.). Ironically, the Knights of Pythias Temple went into foreclosure in the same year that he was released from prison. The organization's records were remanded to the court and consequently, none remain documenting the building's construction, early tenants, and activities (Riddle 1984: n.p.)

For unknown reasons, Pittman returned to Dallas and lived an obscure life, neither drawing nor writing ever again. He lived at two addresses, first at the Powell Hotel at 3115 State Street, then at 1804 Clarence, then back at the Powell Hotel. A woman named Maggie was also listed as residing at the Clarence address from 1952-1954. Pittman died on March 14, 1958 (Index to Death Records 1956-1959: 1028; Payton 1986: 8) although several researchers have indicated the date as being February 19, 1958 (Stewart 1977: 130; Dallas Historical Society 1985: n.p.; Boykin 1972: n.p.). Whether a funeral was held for him or whether Portia returned from her new home in Washington, D.C., to attend to his burial remains unknown (Stewart 1977: 130; Hill 1993: 89). Even in death, however, there appears to have been a conscious attempt to erase his memory. He was buried in an unmarked grave in Glen Oaks Cemetery in Dallas (Childers 1997: 23). In addition, the oral tradition indicates that "there [had been] a street named after him, but [it was] changed to Bethrum Street (Kizzee 1999: personal communication). It may be noted that there remains a Pittman Street in north Oak Cliff.

In 1985 local researchers located the whereabouts of his remains and a local architect, Enslie (Bud) Oglesby, Jr., along with the Dallas Historical Society, paid for the fabrication and installation of a monument to mark his grave (Childers 1997: 23). An invitation to the dedication ceremony stated that "the marker [was] being placed on his grave in recognition of his architectural achievements" (Dallas Historical Society 1985: n.p.). When Portia's biographer was conducting research for her book a decade earlier, she noted that: "The uproar that Sidney created in Black Dallas was so great that. . .an elderly member of the Knights of Pythias became very upset, refusing to discuss the matter with the author" (Stewart 1977: 102). To this day, local informants are still hesitant to discuss anything about Pittman. Ms. Kizzee indicated that she had to ask her minister what she could say about the architect and he instructed her to say very little. She stated: "Well, I [wanted] to say something and the Pastor told me not to say it, so I'm not going to say it to you" (Kizzee 1999: personal communication).

The attempts to purge any and all things produced by Pittman, save his mention in the oral tradition about two local buildings that he designed, nearly erased his memory. However, at the conclusion of his brief 25-year architectural career, William Sidney Pittman claimed the following twenty-two known projects and probably several more (Nieves 1999: personal communication):

- Collis P. Huntington Memorial Building, Tuskegee, Alabama (1900-1903)
- Douglas Hall, Tuskegee, Alabama (1900-1903)
- Rockefeller Hall, Tuskegee, Alabama (1900-1903)
- Carnegie Library, Tuskegee, Alabama (1900-1903)

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Emory Dormitories, Tuskegee, Alabama (1900-1903)
R.F. Turner Apartments, New York City, New York (1906)
Voorhees Industrial School, Denmark, South Carolina (n.d.)
Pittman House, Fairmount Heights, Maryland (1907)
Fairmount Heights Housing Development (1907-1911?)
Negro Building, National Tercentennial Exposition, Jamestown, Virginia (1907)
Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.), Washington, D.C. (1907)
Agricultural Building Tuskegee Alabama (1908)
Garfield Public High School, Washington, D.C. (1908)
Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute (1908)
Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Fort Worth, Texas (1912-1914)
Knights of Pythias Temple, Dallas, Texas (1915-1916)
St. James A.M.E. Temple, Dallas, Texas (1919-1921)
Joshua Chapel A.M.E. Church, Waxahachie, Texas (1919)
Colored Carnegie Library, Houston, Texas (n.d.)
Wesley Chapel A.M.E. Church, Houston, Texas (n.d.)
United Brothers of Friendship Hall, San Antonio, Texas (n.d.)
Grand United Order of Oddfellows (Negro) Lodge Building, San Antonio, Texas (1924)

In Clyde McQueen's *Black Churches in Texas*---the first attempt to compile histories of African American congregations in the state---there are several buildings shown that appear to be Pittman designs. Further research is being conducted to compile a complete listing and analysis of his architectural projects in Texas and the east coast. When viewed in the context of the few projects recorded as part of this study, St. James A.M.E. Temple becomes part of a larger body of work and provides tangible evidence of this architect's great skill with a variety of architectural styles and building types.

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Portrait of William Sidney Pittman, ca. 1910. *Courtesy Schomburg Center, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.*

Rendering of the Knights of Pythias Temple, Dallas, Texas, dated "5-1-1916" and signed "W.S. Pittman." *Courtesy Louis Bedford.*

View of St. James A.M.E. Temple, looking southeast, ca. 1930.

View of St. James A.M.E. Temple, looking east, ca. 1940. In *Dallas Negro City Directory, 1941-1942: LIV.*

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15. Attachments

- District or Site Map
- Site Plan
- Photos (historic & current)

- Additional descriptive material
- Footnotes
- Other: _____



LANDMARK DESIGNATION FORM
CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

X ___ History, heritage and culture: Represents the historical development, ethnic heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or county.

___ **Historic event:** Location of or association with the site of a significant historic event.

X ___ Significant persons: Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state, or county.

___ **Architecture:** Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, landscape design, method of construction, exceptional craftsmanship, architectural innovation, or contains details which represent folk or ethnic art.

X ___ Architect or master builder: Represents the work of an architect, designer or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state or county.

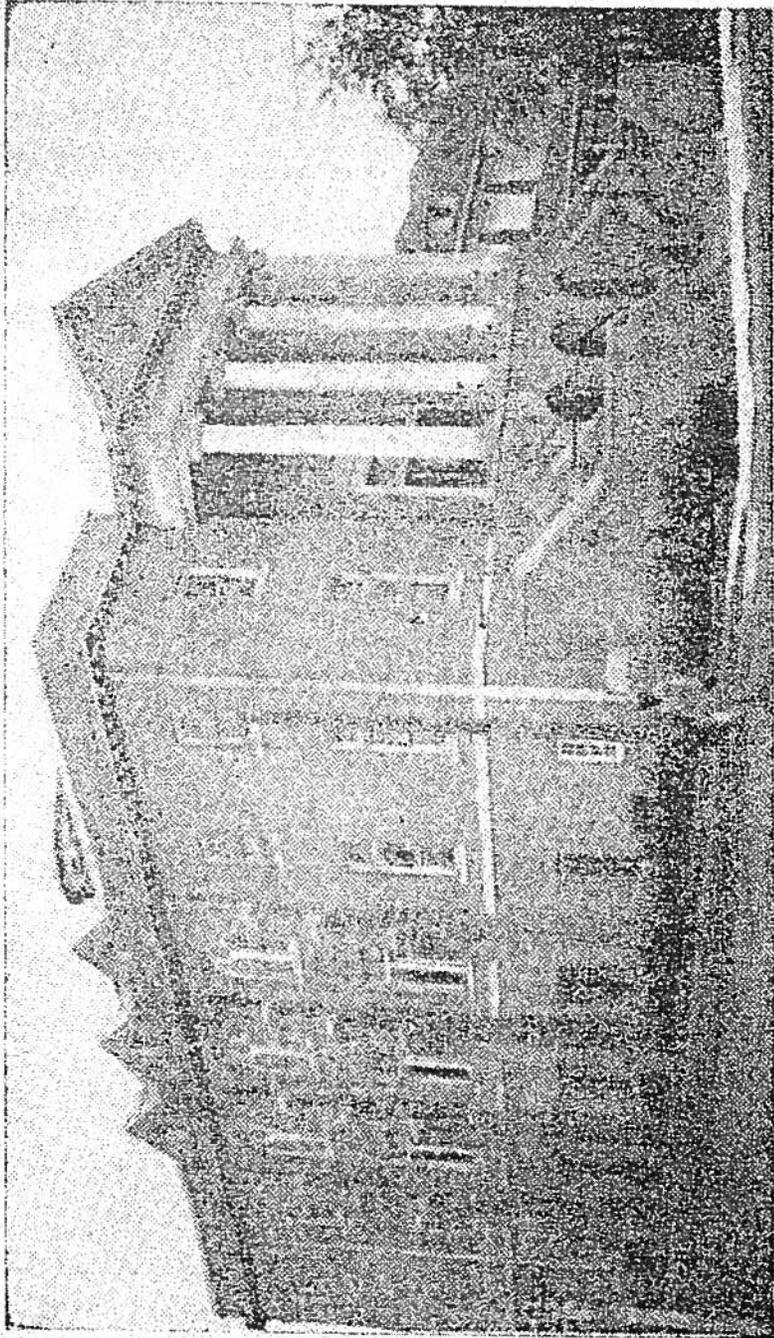
___ **Historic context:** Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites, or areas which are eligible for preservation based on historic, cultural, or architectural characteristics.

X ___ Unique visual feature: Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city that is a source of pride or cultural significance.

___ **Archeological:** Archeological or paleontological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric interest.

X ___ National and state recognition: Eligible of or designated as a National Historic Landmark, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, State Archeological Landmark, American Civil Engineering Landmark, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

X ___ Historic education: Represents as era of architectural, social, or economic history that allows an understanding of how the place or area was used by past generations.



St. James A.M.E. Church

Figure 1. St. James A.M.E. Temple, looking southeast (ca. 1930).

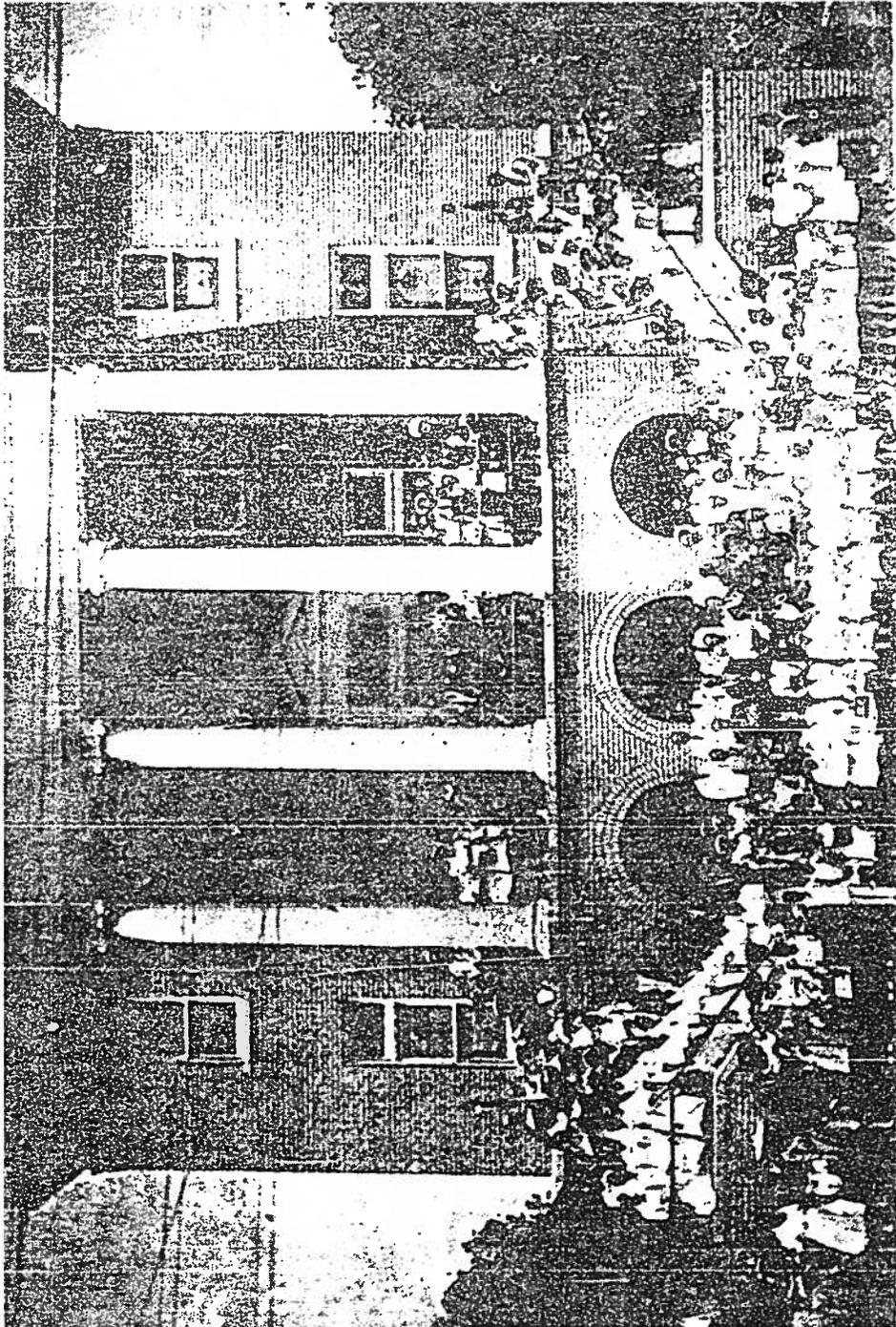


Figure 2. St. James A.M.E. Temple congregation in front of the church, looking east (1940).



Figure 3. St. James A.M.E. Temple, looking northeast in 1983. *Photograph Courtesy of the Meadows Foundation*



Figure 4. St. James A.M.E. Temple and parsonage, looking east in 1983. *Photograph Courtesy of the Meadows Foundation*

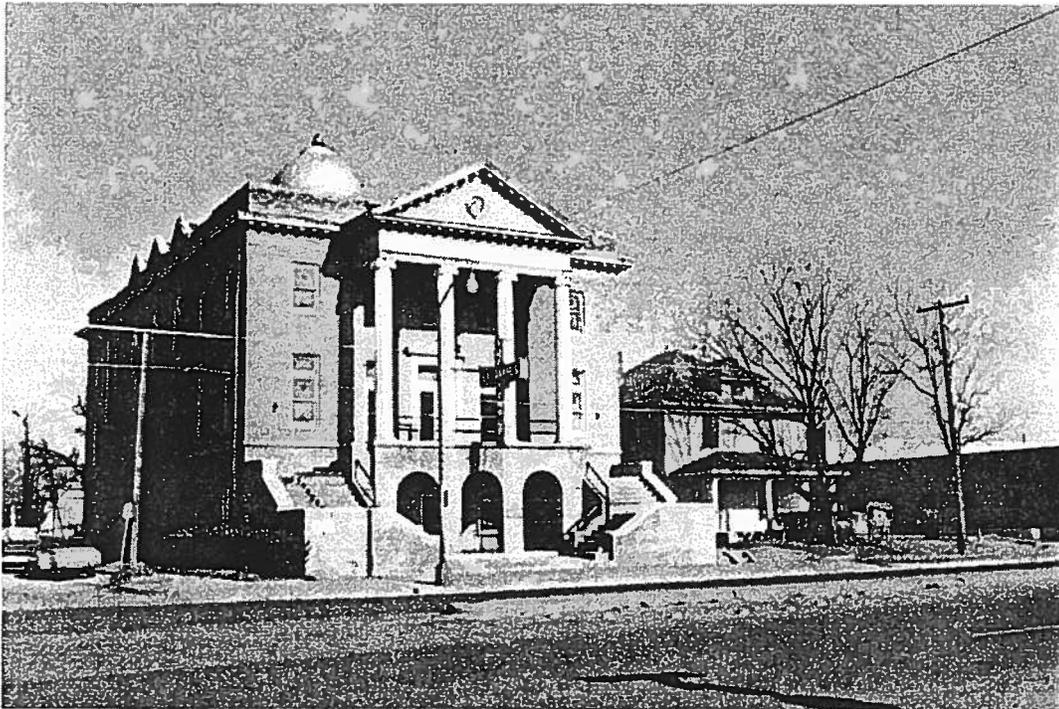


Figure 5. St. James A.M.E. Temple and parsonage, looking southeast in 1983. *Photograph Courtesy of the Meadows Foundation*

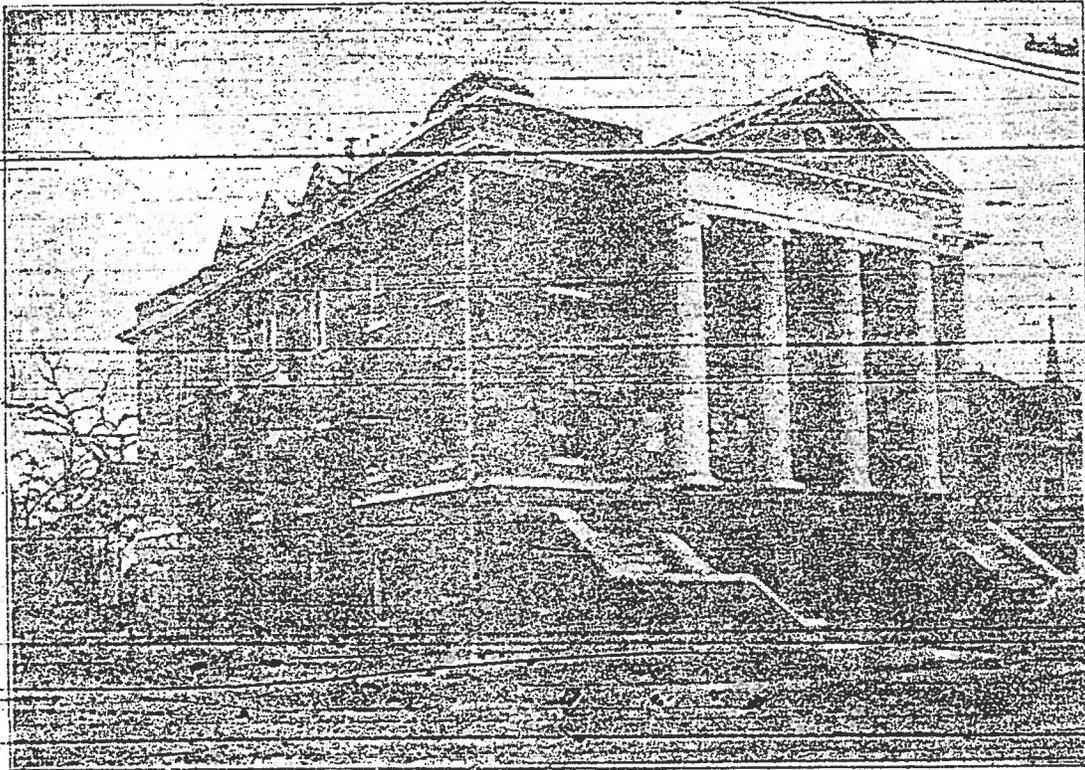


Figure 6. Parsonage and St. James A.M.E. Temple, looking northeast in 1983. *Photograph Courtesy of the Meadows Foundation*



Figure 7. St. James A.M.E. Temple, sanctuary interior, looking east in 1983. *Photograph Courtesy of the Meadows Foundation*

Great Throngs Attend Dedication of New \$50,000 St. James A. M. E. Church.



St. James A. M. E. Church began eighteen months ago, was opened to the public and formally dedicated Sunday. Beginning with the morning service and continuing throughout the day, great throngs of citizens of all denominations of the city and hundreds of out of town visitors crowded its aisles.

The dedication services began Sunday morning and lasted throughout the week. The following was the

program, constructed by Chilton Brewster as contractor. Wired and lighted by Lemon Bros. Concrete and plastered by S. Johnson. Practically all of the work done on it was done by Negro workmen.

It is built of white press brick and is three stories in height consisting of basement which contains a well appointed dining room and kitchen, on

M. McDonald for his son.

The portico of the building is supported by four large columns which were donated by Mr. and Mrs. Chintz Moore, H. Strickland, S. Coffield, The Golden Chain of the World and Wm. Harris.

Membership Not Large.

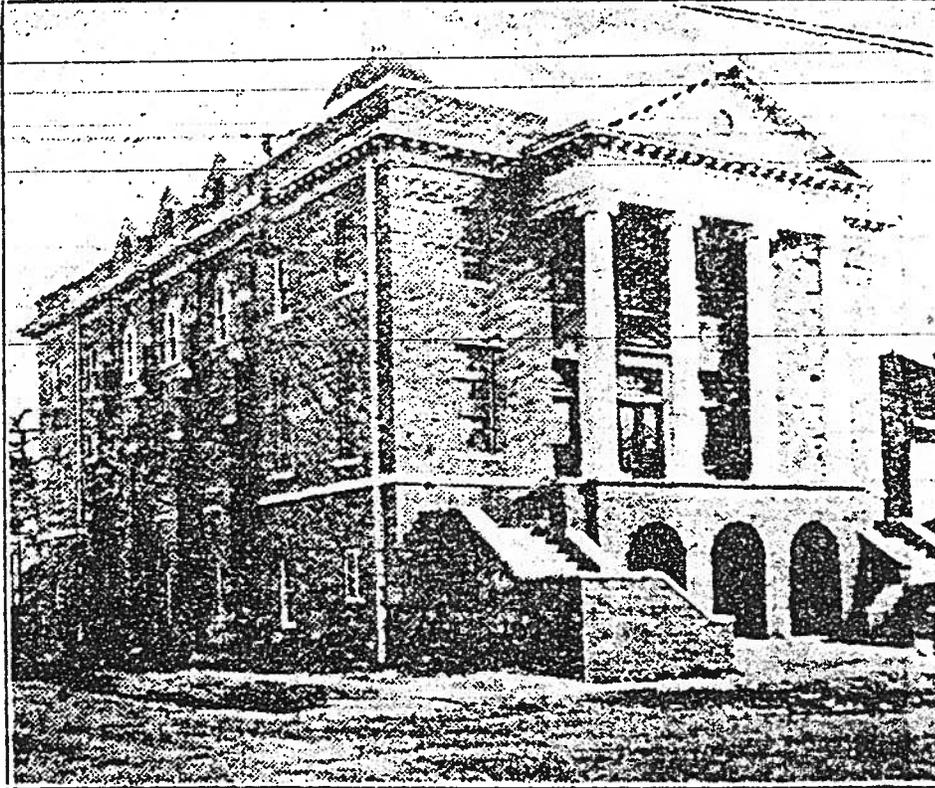
From the standpoint of membership St. James is not a large church. It has only 225 on its rolls. This fact

Figure 9. St. James A.M.E. Temple, looking southeast, after completion in 1921(*Dallas Express*, January 15, 1921: 1).

DALLAS DAILY TIMES HERALD.

ACTIVITIES IN CITY OF D

NEW A. M. E. CHURCH READY



Announcement was made Saturday that the new St. James A. M. E. Church, Florence and Good streets, is completed. The colored Methodists are to take charge of their new building Sunday. The building has been in the course of construction for fifteen months and is the best structure of its sort in the South owned by negro Methodists.

service, which is the beginning of an opening program extending over more than a week. The pastor, Rev. C. W. Abington, hopes in this effort to get sufficient funds to care for present obligations that he is very anxious to meet promptly. All of the colored churches will meet with the congregation during this effort. There will convene in this church

Figure 10. St. James A.M.E. Temple, looking southeast, after completion in 1921 (*Dallas Daily Times Herald*, January 9, 1921: 11).

A Successful Architect

W. SIDNEY PITTMAN, was born in Montgomey, Ala., and attended the public schools of Montgomery and Birmingham. At the age of seventeen, without means or financial support, he entered the Industrial Department of the Tuskegee Institute, completing in the following five years a course in wood work, a three year's course in architecture, and mechanical drawing combined and the general academic course. After graduation the authorities of the Institute offered to assist him in continuing the study of architecture in some Northern Technical School, the following year with the condition that he reimburse them after graduation. He accepted and was duly admitted to the Drexel Institute at Philadelphia, in 1897, graduating in Architecture, and in the special Mechanical Drawing course in 1900. The following fall he was recalled to Tuskegee and given charge of the Architectural work. In the five years following over \$250,000 worth of buildings were built from his plans. Among these are,—the \$70,000 Collis P. Huntington Memorial Building, Douglass Hall, Rockefeller Hall, Carnegie Library, Emory Dormitories, and some others next in size and importance. Aside from these, plans were also drawn for various schools and individuals in other places. Notably among these was the the Voorhees Industrial School at Denmark, S. C., where he planned their four largest buildings. In May 1905 he

resigned from Tuskegee for the purpose of opening an office at some place not then decided upon. And finally decided to locate in Washington, D. C., which was done the following October. The one year he has been in Washington, has been one of increasing growth through the patronage of nearly every



W. SIDNEY PITTMAN.

race represented in the city. An additional draftsman, and a stenographer are kept regularly employed which, along with two well appointed offices, have by reason of such growth, become necessities. The work has not been confined to Washington alone. A very recent instance of out of town work is that of a three story frame apartment,

Figure 12. Contemporary Pittman biography with photograph in 1906 (*Colored American Magazine*, 1906: 424).



Figure 13. Fairmount Heights Elementary School, Fairmount Heights, Maryland. Front Façade, *Photograph Courtesy of Angel David Nieves.*

Continuation Sheet

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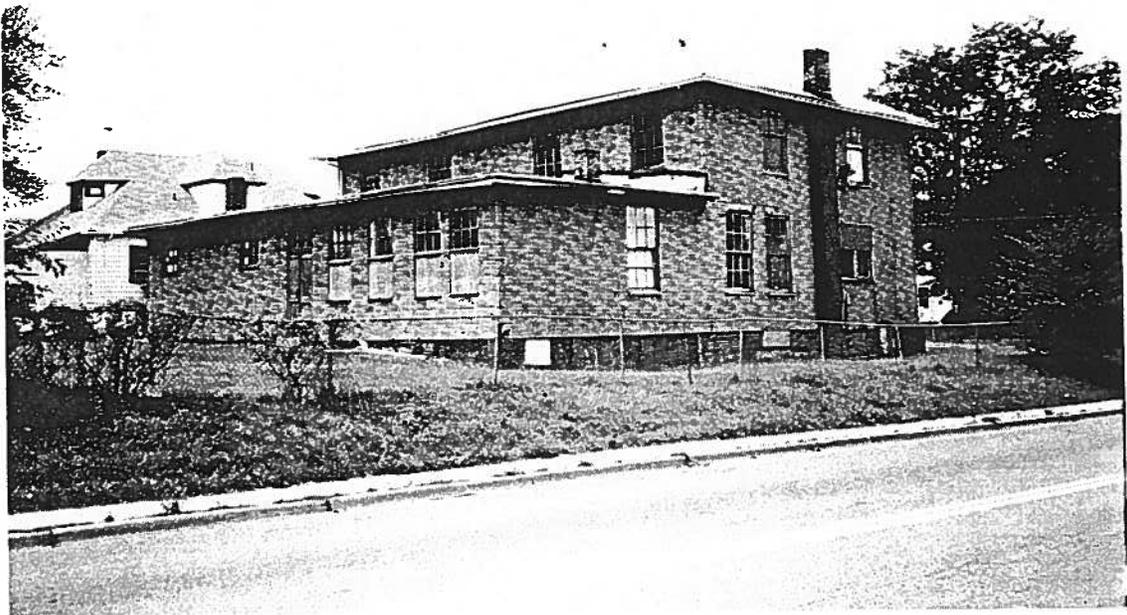


Figure 14. Fairmount Heights Elementary School, Fairmount Heights, Maryland. Rear Façade.
Photograph Courtesy of Angel David Nieves.

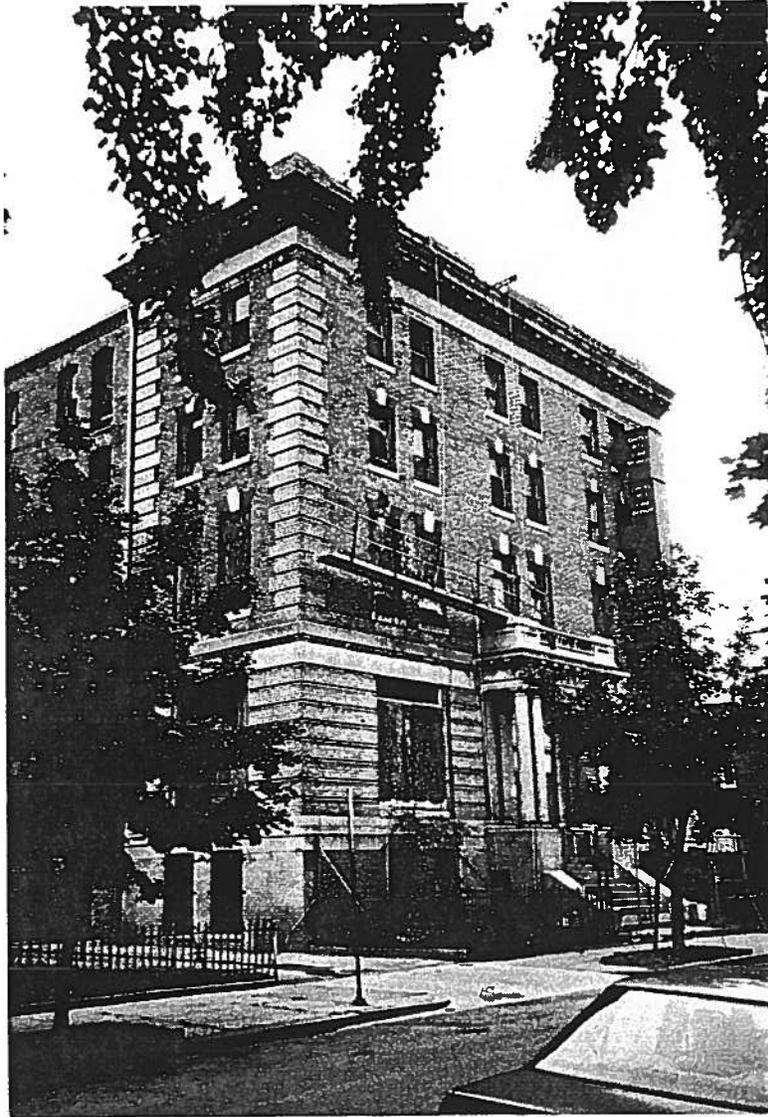


Figure 15. Twelfth Street Y.M.C.A., renamed Anthony Bowen Y.M.C.A., Washington, D.C. Front Façade. *Photograph Courtesy of Angel David Nieves.*

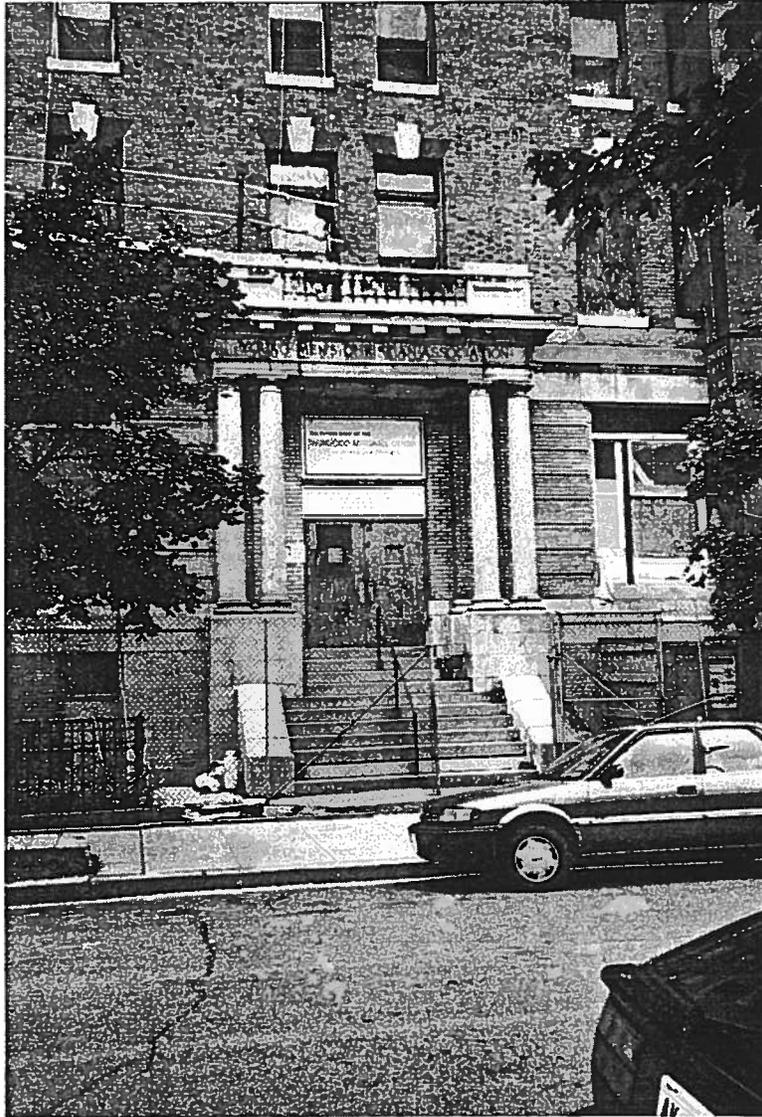


Figure 16. Twelfth Street Y.M.C.A., Washington, D.C. Front Entry Detail. *Photograph Courtesy of Angel David Nieves.*



Figure 17. Twelfth Street Y.M.C.A. Gym Interior with suspended jogging tracks. *Photograph Courtesy of Angel David Nieves.*

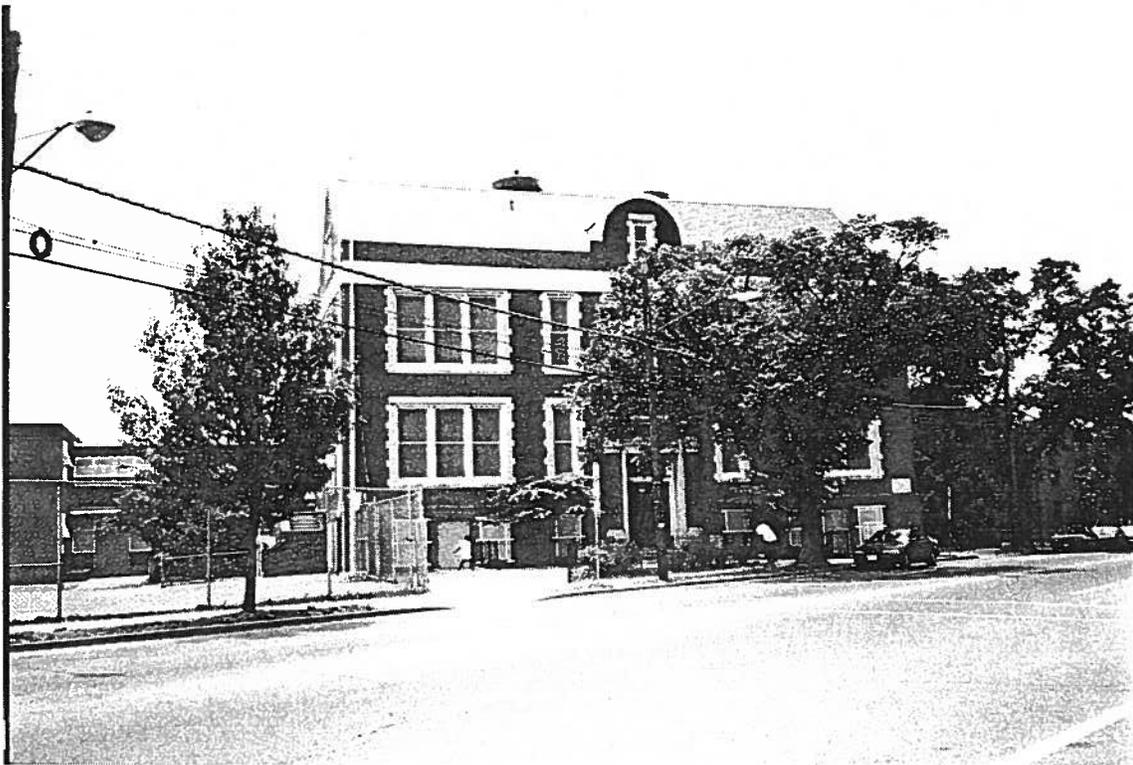


Figure 18. Garfield Public High School, Washington, D.C. Front Façade. *Photograph Courtesy of Angel David Nieves.*

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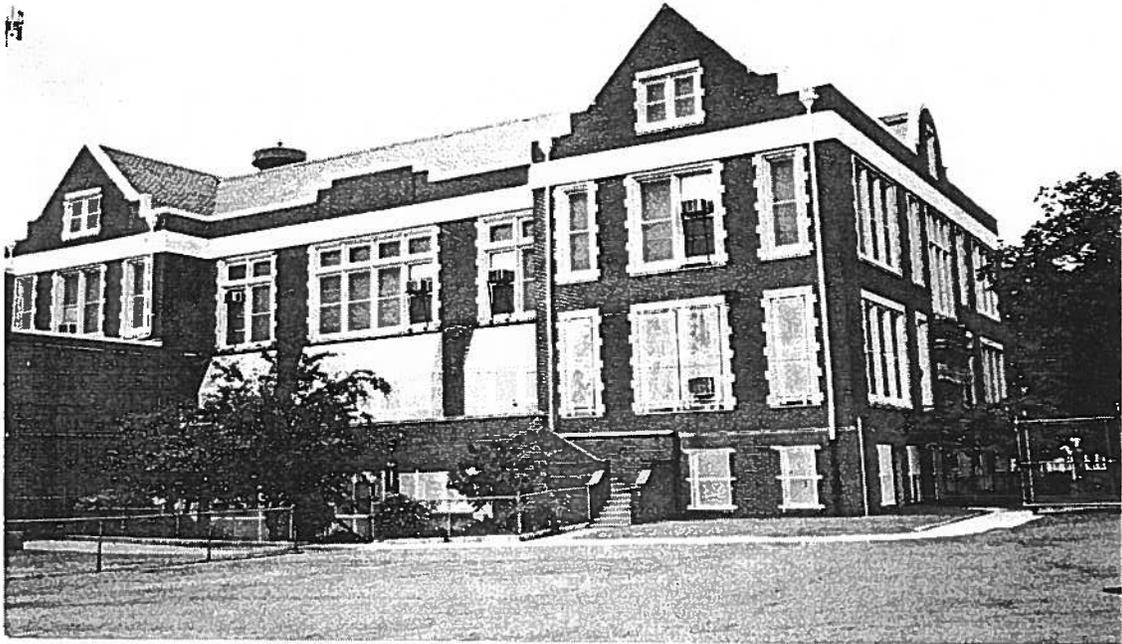


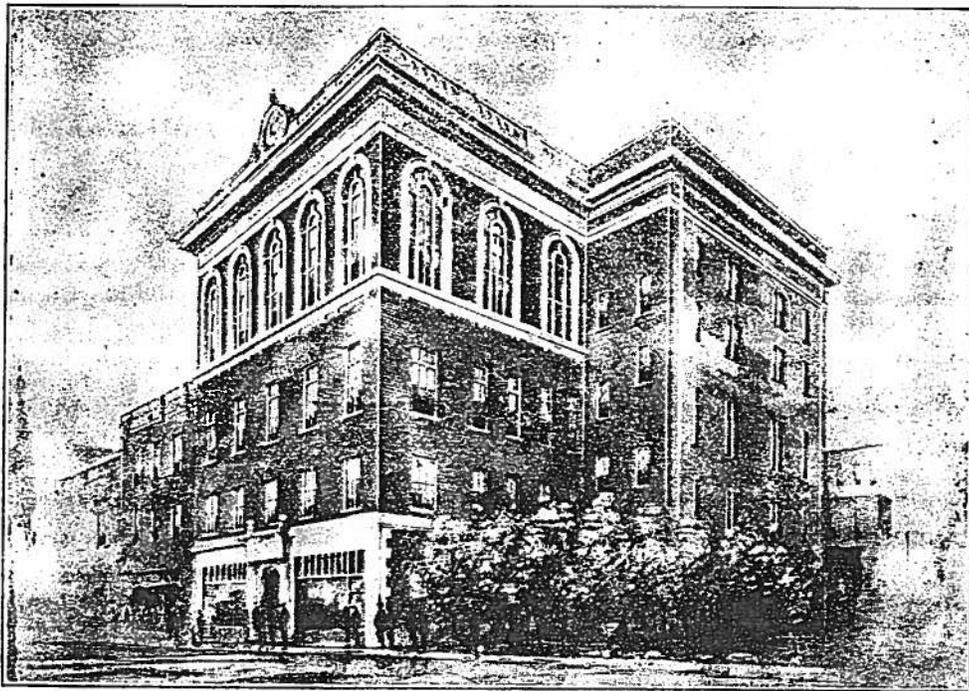
Figure 19. Garfield Public High School, Washington, D.C. Rear Façade. *Photograph Courtesy of Angel David Nieves.*



Figure 20. Allen A.M.E. Church, Fort Worth, Texas. Front and Side Façades, looking southeast.



Figure 21. Allen A.M.E. Church, Fort Worth, Texas. Rear and Side Façades, looking northwest.



PYTHIAN TEMPLE, DALLAS, TEXAS.

Figure 22. Pittman colored rendering of the Knights of Pythias Temple, Dallas, Texas.



Figure 23. Knights of Pythias Temple, Dallas, Texas. Front Façade, looking northwest.

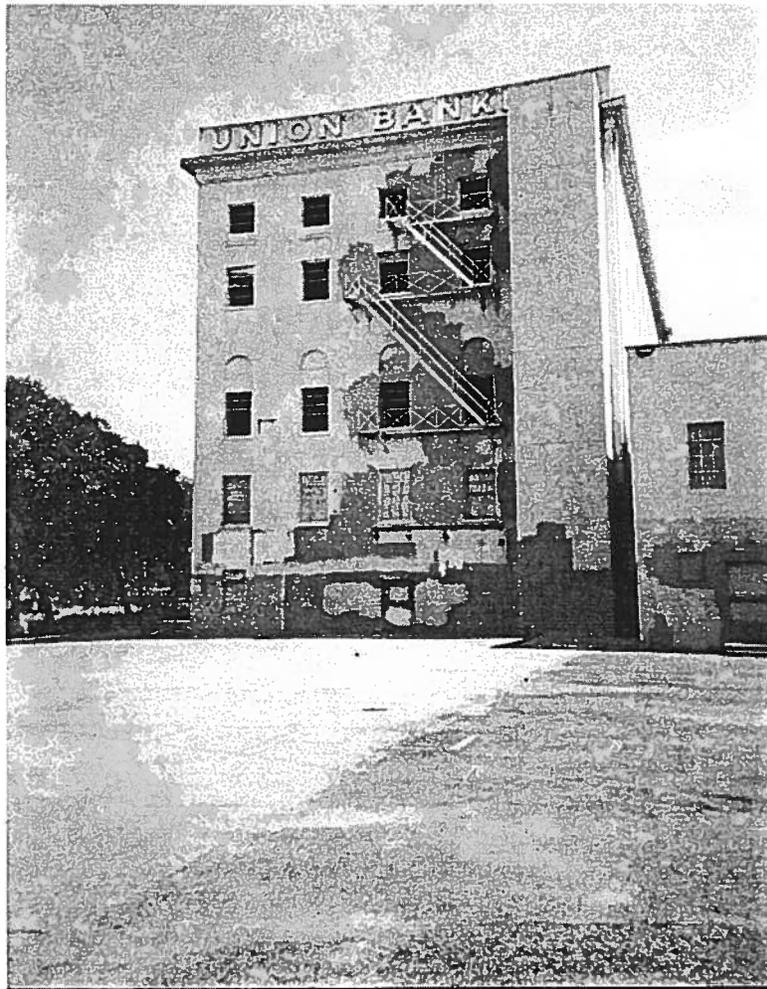


Figure 24. Knights of Pythias Temple, Dallas, Texas. Rear Façade, looking northeast.



Figure 25. Joshua Chapel A.M.E. Church, Waxahachie, Texas. Front Façade, looking northeast.



Figure 26. Joshua Chapel A.M.E. Church, Waxahachie, Texas. Rear and Side Façades, looking north-west.

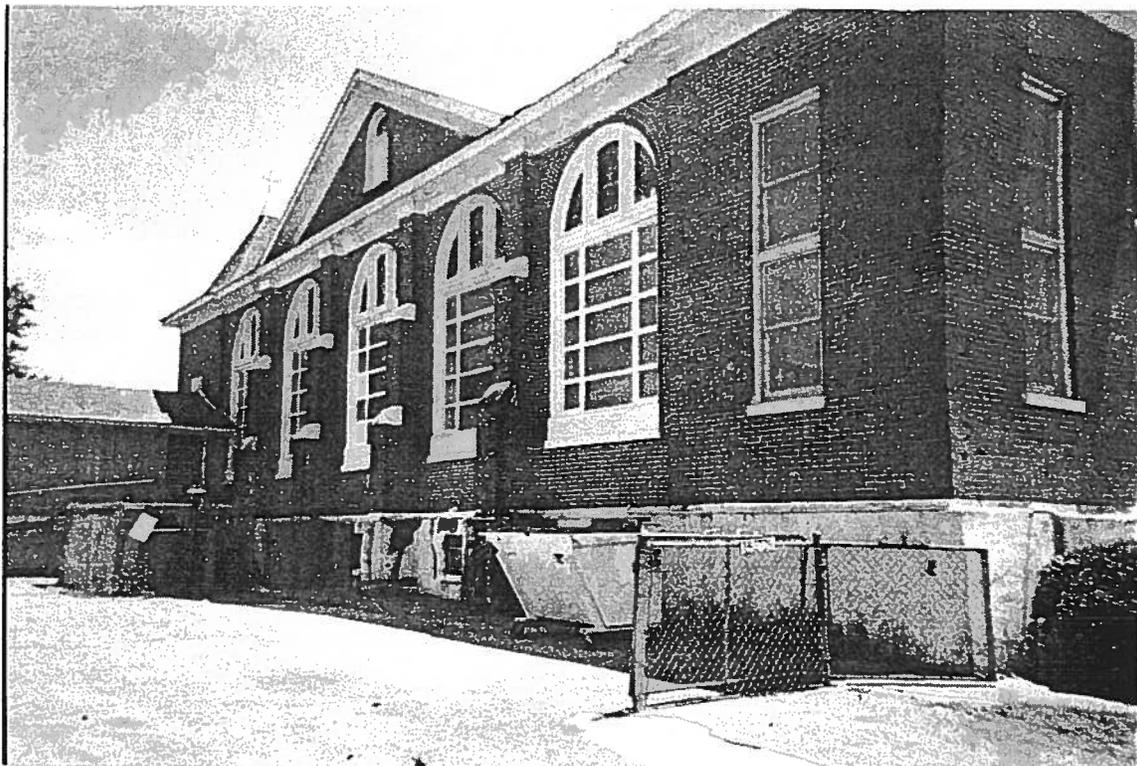


Figure 27. Joshua Chapel A.M.E. Church, Waxahachie, Texas. Side Façade, looking southeast.