

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church

Other Names/Site Number: First AME Church/5PE.8772

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & Number: 613 West Mesa Avenue

City or town: Pueblo

State: CO

County: Pueblo

Not for Publication:

Vicinity:

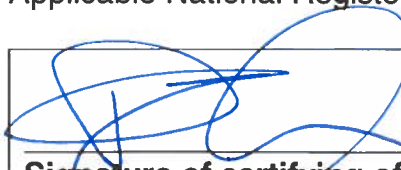
3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

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

national state local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

 Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	2/2/23 Date
History Colorado	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title:
Government

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal

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4. National Park Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – Federal

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site
<input type="checkbox"/>	Structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Object

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

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1	0	Buildings
0	0	Sites
0	0	Structures
0	0	Objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.):

Religion/Religious Facility
Religion/Church-Related Residence

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.):

Religion/Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.):

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STUCCO
walls: BRICK

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roof: ASPHALT
other: BRICK

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, known as First AME Church since 1976, stands at the northeast corner of West Mesa Avenue and Pine Street in the southern part of Pueblo, Colorado. Pueblo, in the south-central part of the state, reported a population of 111,876 in 2020.¹ The nominated area encompasses the substantial Mission Revival-style corner church (1915-16) and an attached Classic Cottage-style parsonage (1909) at its rear. The property retains a high level of historic integrity, with no additions and relatively few alterations since its construction. The included Sketch Map shows the nominated area and photograph locations.

Narrative Description

Setting

St. Paul AME Church is situated on a single corner lot within the former Town of Bessemer, with entrances on the south (addressed as 613 West Mesa Avenue) and west (1146 Pine Street). The surrounding area mostly contains single family residences, with Bessemer Elementary School (1931) a block to the east and the center of the Bessemer business district a quarter mile to the southeast. The residential area holding the church once contained a high percentage of the city's African American population, many of whom worked at the nearby Colorado Fuel & Iron Company steel plant.

The 0.11-acre rectangular parcel occupied by the church is evenly level. The site features the 1915-16 church building, which is connected to a 1909 parsonage to the east (Photographs 1 and 2). Concrete public sidewalks border the church along both streets. There is a graveled tree lawn along West Mesa Avenue containing two large evergreen shrubs, while a diagonal parking area is adjacent to Pine Street. The east end of the parcel contains an asphalt driveway connecting to West Mesa Avenue and a small brick incinerator at the northeast corner of the property. A chainlink fence runs along the north and east sides of this area. The small brick incinerator (not included in the count of resources) measures about 6' x 6' and is 4' high. It has a concrete cap and a short brick chimney (Photograph 3). A graveled alley abuts the property on the east.

Description

The somewhat unusual construction sequence of St. Paul AME Church occurred because the parsonage was erected as a freestanding dwelling associated with an earlier frame church to the west. The 1915-16 construction removed the earlier church and added a new masonry church with an interior connection to the parsonage.

1915-16 Church. The substantial one-story, red brick 1915-16 church has soaring walls rising from a raised, stucco-clad foundation terminated by a tooled sandstone water table with a beveled top.

¹ Only real property, not water rights (per 365 CFR 60.6), is the subject of this nomination.

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Distinctive features of the asymmetrical west façade facing Pine Street include a broad double-height bay to the north crowned by a curvilinear parapet and a three-story corner entrance tower on the south.² The long south wall east of the tower features a large, central stained glass window. A lower and stepped in hipped roof connecting entrance tower joins the church to the parsonage (described below). The first story of the church on the west and south walls has arched and flat headed wood windows with rock-faced sandstone sills highlighted by hood and label molding of slightly projecting contrasting tan brick. The front gabled roof displays overhanging eaves, exposed rafters; and a plain cornice board. The roof is clad with asphalt composition shingles.

Front. The basement level of the parapet topped bay at the north end of the facade has three flat-headed window openings covered with stucco. The first story holds two, wide, round rowlock arch four-light wood windows with painted stone sills. Arched hood molding elaborates the windows, which are glazed with yellow pebble glass covered on the exterior with plexiglass. Above, the choir loft level contains two sets of paired, small flat-headed, bricked in windows with projecting sills. Each pair of windows shares a label mold. The curvilinear parapet is elaborated with slightly projecting tan brick coping. At the center of the parapet face is a narrow rectangular louvered wood vent with a rock-faced stone sill and a label mold.

The square, three-story tower at the southwest corner is flush with the west and south walls, which are brick; the east and north walls of the third story of the tower are frame and clad with asphalt roofing shingles (likely to save on construction costs). On the west facade the tower has a slightly inset, flat-headed entrance holding double faux-paneled metal doors facing a single step and surmounted by a covered transom. The entrance is sheltered by a shed roof wood hood with cross braces (Photograph 4). The entrance is elaborated by a panel outlined by slightly projecting tan brick above the hood. The former choir loft level displays paired brick windows identical to those on the northern bay. The west wall of the third story of the tower features an elongated round rowlock arch window opening (now filled in with stucco), with a contrasting tan brick hood mold and stone sill. Above the water table at the southwest corner is a sandstone cornerstone. The west face of the stone is inscribed "First A.M.E. Church Rededicated July 30, 2000" (Photograph 5).

South Wall. The basement level of the long south wall of the church is unfenestrated at the west and east ends. On the south wall of the tower, the cornerstone reads "St. Paul A.M.E. Church, John Adams Pastor, May 9, 1915." On the first story the tower displays a tall, narrow double-hung sash stained glass window with contrasting label mold and stone sill. A single small bricked in window with a label mold and stone sill is at the choir loft level. An elongated window identical to that on the west wall is on the third story.

The south foundation includes four flat-headed boarded-up windows aligned under the central windows of the first story (Photograph 6). East of the tower, the first story holds a flat-headed, tall, narrow, one-over-one-light stained glass window with label molding and a stone sill; a center wide elliptical rowlock arch stained glass window with hood molding and a stone sill; and two tall, narrow, flat-headed stained glass windows with label molding and stone sills. The choir loft level east of the tower contains five small bricked-in flat-headed windows with label molding and stone sills aligned above the windows of the first story.

To the east, the slightly lower entrance tower connecting to the parsonage is stepped in slightly (Photograph 7). The tower has a raised stucco-clad foundation, a stone water table, and a red brick wall. The square entrance tower contains a diamond-shaped, single-light wood window with a brick surround to the west and an entrance with double faux-paneled doors, a narrow two-light transom,

² The choir loft was removed from the west end of the interior in the location of the bricked-in paired windows. Sanborn maps indicate the tower as three stories.

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and a large stucco-clad overlight. The upper portion of the wall holds a narrow rectangular panel outlined in slightly projecting tan brick. The wall above the panel has a small central cross composed of tan brick. The connector has a hipped roof, flush eaves, asphalt shingle roofing, and a tall red brick chimney.

East Wall. The gable face of the church above the connecting tower is clad with asphalt composition shingles. The connector's east wall is unfenestrated above the parsonage (Photograph 8).

North Wall. The north wall of the connector is stepped in slightly from the church and contains a single flat-headed stained glass window (Photograph 8). The long north wall of the church holds (from east to west) two evenly spaced tall, narrow, flat-headed stained glass windows; paired tall, narrow, flat-headed stained glass windows; a tall, narrow, flat-headed stained glass window; and a section of unfenestrated wall (Photographs 8 and 9). There are small, flat-headed, filled in windows aligned above the first story windows. All of the windows have rock-faced stone sills. A red brick chimney rises on the north roof slope near the front of the building (Photograph 10).

Interior. The southwest entrance to the building opens onto a foyer, and a long flight of stairs descends north to the basement (Photographs 11 and 12). A short flight of stairs ascends east to a landing, then turns 90° north, where a short flight of stairs rises to a landing. Double wood doors with single diamond-shaped lights open onto the nave.

At the rear (south wall) of the nave are two offices, which feature windows glazed with yellow pebble glass (Photograph 13). The nave has a lowered ceiling clad with acoustical tiles, hanging light fixtures, and fans (Photographs 14 and 15). The floor of the nave declines gradually to the level of the chancel. Two aisles divide the original oak pews into three sections; each section of pews is slightly curved to provide sightlines toward the center of the chancel.

Illuminating the nave are stained glass windows along the north and south walls. The large, elliptical rowlock arch, stained glass window near the center of the south wall is a focal point (Photograph 16). The window reflects an Art Nouveau design with French scrollwork and employs yellow, blue, white, purple, and green glass.³ The flat-headed stained glass windows of the north and south walls employ a simpler design: a large opalescent yellowish-cream rectangular center panel with a narrow red border, a wider border of blue rectangles, and a narrow green exterior border. Each window features the names of those who provided funding at the bottom (Photograph 17). Trustee Ann E. Batey believes the elliptical arch window was original, with the other stained glass windows added later.

The chancel is raised two-steps above the floor of the nave and bordered by a curved, solid oak rail with entrances at the north and south ends (Photograph 18). An altar table utilized for services stands at the center. A raised dais accessed by steps holds three oak chairs and a central oak pulpit. A stair with railing on the north wall provides access to the choir area at the rear of the chancel. The choir area, which extends into the footprint of the connector, contains two rows of pews. The entrance to the connector is at the southeast corner of the sanctuary.

The basement is accessed by stairs at its east and west ends. A long flight of stairs descends from the southwest entrance and opens onto a large room with steel columns supporting the first story (Photograph 19). Along the south wall is an elevated area with a wood floor, apparently employed as a stage. The room was utilized for group events, such as dinners, church gatherings, and meetings. At the east end of the room to the south are men's and women's restrooms. Through a connecting

³ Jane Watkins, Watkins Stained Glass, Denver, Colorado, email to Thomas H. Simmons, August 25, 2022. The firm or firms crafting the stained glass windows could not be determined. Jane Watkins of Watkins Stained Glass of Denver stated, "we can't say for sure but not likely made by Watkins." The 2005 history of the church reported that the flat-headed stained glass windows were added during the tenure of Rev. Eugene W. Wright, Sr. (1981-85).

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room on the north, at the east end of the basement, is a kitchen, with a mechanical room to its south (Photograph 20). A flight of stairs at the northeast corner of the basement ascends to the entrance hall in the connector.

Alterations. The choir loft was removed in the 1955-59 period, and two offices were created at the rear of the sanctuary. The choir loft windows were bricked in at that time, and the windows on the third story of the tower (originally one-over-one-light windows with transoms) were likely filled in during the same period. The interior of the sanctuary was remodeled about 1965. The basement windows were boarded or covered with stucco after 1957. The west entrance received the shed hood between 1983 and 2005. Some of the church's stone sills and the foundation were painted and the doors were replaced on the west and south in the early 2000s.

1909 Parsonage. The 1909 parsonage connected to the east end of the church is a one-story Classic Cottage-style brick house facing south toward West Mesa Avenue. The dwelling has a stone foundation, red brick walls (once painted red), and a hipped roof with overhanging, flared eaves. There is a short red brick chimney on the roof ridge toward the rear. The south roof slope contains a hipped roof dormer with shingled walls, a rectangular window, and overhanging eaves.

Front. The front (south) features a full-width, hipped roof, open porch supported by square red brick piers with tan brick caps (Photographs 21 and 22). There is a concrete porch deck and a wrought iron railing between the piers. An off-center entrance to the west holds a wood slab door with a small rectangular light that is surmounted by a single-light transom. There is an aluminum storm door. To the east is a large segmental arch one-over-one-light wood parlor window with a wrought-iron security railing over the lower sash and a painted, rock-faced tan sandstone sill.

East Wall. The east wall of the parsonage holds three segmental arch windows with painted rock-faced stone sills (Photographs 22 and 23). The two larger windows to the south have wrought-iron railings over their lower sashes; the south window holds a replacement one-over-one-light vinyl window and the one farther north contains a one-over-one-light wood window. At the north end is a small window partially covered with a corrugated metal panel.

A shed roof frame porch (present on the 1951 Sanborn map) projects from the rear (north). Its east wall contains an entrance holding a wood slab door with an aluminum storm door that opens onto a concrete stoop. The wall is clad with rolled asphalt resembling red brick.

North Wall. The north wall of the projecting porch is clad with wood tongue-and-groove siding above sill level and with rolled asphalt resembling red brick below (Photograph 24). There are two sets of six-light wood sliding windows separated by an unfenestrated section of wall. To the west is a boarded up window opening. A set back shed roof enclosed projection clad with wide wood siding is present farther west. The projection has a single one-over-one-light window.

West Wall. The west wall of the parsonage abuts the east wall of the 1915-16 church and is not visible.

Interior. The interior of the parsonage accesses the connector at its southwest corner. In the southeast corner of the parsonage is a large space (likely the former living room), now used as a meeting room. One smaller room (likely a former bedroom) is present along the west wall of the building, with a restroom and storage room to the north. A kitchen is located in the northeast corner of the parsonage.

Alterations. The larger east rear addition is shown on the 1951 Sanborn map; the smaller west rear addition was added after that date. The wrought iron porch railing was installed after 1977. In the early 1980s the brick walls were painted a darker red; much of the paint has now worn away. The windowsills are painted. The wrought iron security grilles were added to the east windows after 2019.

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Integrity

St. Paul AME Church retains a very high level of historic integrity. The church's *location* is unchanged since its original construction. Its siting in the Bessemer neighborhood, where many African Americans lived and worked at the nearby steel mill, was logical and beneficial to the community it served.

The *design* of the church displays a high level of integrity without additions, continued maintenance of the fenestration and most original wood windows, and preservation of the corner tower. The design includes representative elements of the Mission Revival style, which also ties the building to its Southern Colorado roots.⁴ The soaring tower, curvilinear parapet, overhanging eaves with exposed rafters, and round rowlock arch windows that convey the style are still present. The interior plan, with its entry vestibule, large nave, raised chancel, and supplementary rooms in the basement, are also representative of early twentieth century church construction in many locales. The choir loft windows and third-story tower windows were filled in within the period of significance.

The building's *setting* at the intersection of two thoroughfares in a residential neighborhood of modest single-family workers' homes remains unchanged. The prominent corner location was important as the church brought the community together for a variety of events and stood symbolically and literally as a safe place for Black residents and travelers. The church maintains a very high level of integrity of *materials* that convey its style, purpose, and era of construction and use, including the red brick of the walls and contrasting tan brick elements, stone sills, and wood stained glass windows. Integrity of *workmanship* is displayed in the masonry of the curvilinear parapet, the tall tower, and the windows and entrances elaborated with contrasting brick hood and label molding. Skilled stonework is displayed in the carving of the cornerstone and the tooling of the sandstone water course and the rock-faced stone window sills. Although the building was constructed in a working class neighborhood, the materials and workmanship demonstrate great pride in and reverence for the church.

The church possesses a very high level of integrity of *feeling*, conveying its role as a neighborhood church for Black worshippers. The brick and stone, clear and stained glass, Mission Revival style, arched and flat-headed windows, entrance towers, and prominent location testify to the importance of the church in many aspects of the congregants' lives and, in a broader sense, its centrality to African American life in Pueblo.

The building has excellent integrity of *association*, serving as a direct link to events in the history of Pueblo's Black community since its completion in 1916. The substantial building was erected to withstand the test of time and to serve as a refuge for a community that often faced challenges to its rights and safety. After more than a century, First AME Church still serves as a place of worship and community for Black residents of Pueblo and, as it proclaims on its Facebook page, "is a standing testament to the strength and resilience of the African American community."⁵

⁴ That part of Pueblo, including the Bessemer area, south of the Arkansas River was once part of Mexico.

⁵ First AME Church, Pueblo, Colorado, facebook.com, December 9, 2019.

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8. Statement of Significance

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

X	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X	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:

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.):

- Ethnic Heritage/Black
- Social History
- Architecture

Period of Significance: 1909-1976

Significant Dates: 1915-16

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion D is marked above): N/A

Architect/Builder (last name, first name): Wilson, Alex M.

Period of Significance (justification): The period of significance for Ethnic Heritage/Black and Social History extends from the completion of the church in 1915-16 until 1976, when the St. Paul and St. John AME congregations joined to form First AME Church. The period of significance for Architecture is 1909 and 1915-16, the construction years of the parsonage and church, respectively.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): A. The building is owned by and used as a church, but it derives its significance for its Ethnic Heritage and Social History associations and its Architecture.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Black as a neighborhood church built by and for an African American congregation, which it continues to serve today. The church was a place of safety, where Black culture, social

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interaction, and civil rights activities could flourish. St. Paul AME is also locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History as a place for church and community activities, such as meetings, lectures, musical and theatrical performances, and dinners for its congregation and the larger Pueblo African American Community. The church was important in the lives of many of the African American steel mill workers in the Bessemer community. The church is also locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture as an example of the Mission Revival style applied to a church, one of only two employing that idiom within the city. The period of significance extends from 1909, from completion of the earliest part of the church, until 1976, the date the city's two AME congregations merged.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A. St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church is locally significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Black. The St. Paul African American congregation organized in 1889, occupied an existing pre-1891 church on this parcel in 1903, and erected a parsonage in 1909. In 1915-16 the congregation built this solid brick Mission Revival-style church connecting to the parsonage. St. Paul was the second church built by the AME in Pueblo and the only historic one still surviving. The Bessemer residential area around the church drew increasing numbers of African Americans working at the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company's steel mill and other industries during the twentieth century. In 1960 and 1970, a majority of Blacks in the city lived in the neighborhood around the church. St. John AME Church, the city's oldest AME church, also moved to Bessemer in 1960. In 1976 the two congregations consolidated to form First AME Church. Within its Bessemer community, St. Paul AME Church fulfilled the pivotal role that the National Trust for Historic Preservation described for African American churches in the United States: "Foundational to Black religious, political, economic, and social life, Black churches continue to inform and shape Black identity today. They serve as houses of worship as well as safe havens, social centers, and cultural repositories, and provide vital social services and spaces that uplift their communities."⁶ The First AME African American congregation continues to worship in the building.

The church is also locally significant in the area of Social History, serving as a location for activities of the congregation and the larger AME denomination, as well as a venue for the wider Front Range African American community. At the time of its construction the *Denver Star* described the church's large sanctuary, ample basement event space, and kitchen facilities as second only in the state to Shorter AME Church in Denver.⁷ It became a desirable meeting location for social and civic organizations and hosted such varied functions as meetings, musical performances, lectures, celebrations, and dinners. St. Paul and other Black churches in Pueblo alternated in hosting meetings of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Significantly, the church was listed in the 1951 edition of the *Negro Motorist Green Book*, a national guide for Black travelers, as the local address for the civil rights organization. Only one other AME church in Colorado is listed on the National Register: Handy Chapel in Grand Junction (NRIS.94001012).

Criterion C. St. Paul AME Church is further locally significant in the area of Architecture as a well-preserved example of a neighborhood church constructed in the Mission Revival style. Key elements of the style represented in the church design include its curvilinear gable parapet, round rowlock arch windows, corner tower, overhanging eaves, and exposed rafters.⁸ The solidity of the brick

⁶ National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Preserving Black Churches," <https://savingplaces.org/black-churches> (accessed June 11, 2022).

⁷ Shorter AME Church was built in 1889 and destroyed by fire in 1925. The congregation completed a new church at the same location in 1926; it became a Denver Local Landmark in 1997.

⁸ History Colorado, *Field Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture & Engineering* (Denver: History Colorado, 2008).

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composition is reflective of much Mission Revival construction, as is its prominent placement on a corner site. The design of the church tower was common for the Mission revival-style, according to architectural historians Paul Duchscherer and Linda Svendsen, with a hipped roof, square plan, and rising a full story above the rest of the building.⁹ The California building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition was an early example of the style, according to architectural historian Virginia Savage McAllister. The style grew in popularity "when the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railways adopted the style for stations and resort hotels throughout the West."¹⁰ In Colorado, the style was typically used for churches, schools, businesses, and residences.

An architect for the church could not be identified. The design for St. Paul could well have been inspired by several examples of Mission Revival buildings in the Bessemer neighborhood erected in the early twentieth century by the Colorado Fuel & Iron Corporation. The steel and iron manufacturer adopted the style for its 1901 administration building, 1901 Minnequa Hospital, 1902 dispensary, and 1902 Colorado Supply Company retail store and warehouse buildings (NRIS.02000628). Several members of the congregation were employed by the steelworks. The only other Mission Revival-style church in Pueblo is the 1925 St. Leander Catholic Church (Pueblo local landmark, designated 2010), in the northeast section of the city. Other National Register-listed churches in Pueblo primarily use more ornate revival styles, including the Gothic Revival First Methodist Episcopal Church (NRIS.79000620), Sacred Heart Church/Cathedral (NRIS.89000037), and First United Methodist of Pueblo (NRIS.12000201); the Romanesque Revival First Congregational Church (NRIS.85000230); and the Classical Revival St. John's Greek Orthodox Church (NRIS.02000123).

Developmental History/Additional Historic Context Information

Pueblo's African American Community

In 1842 a trading post/fort occupied the future site of Pueblo, but it was later abandoned. Permanent settlement of the city dates to 1858. Three separate towns were established at the confluence of the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek: Pueblo farthest north, Central Pueblo adjacent to the south, and South Pueblo farthest south. The three jurisdictions consolidated in 1886 as Pueblo. Farther south and immediately west of the Colorado Coal and Iron Company's (CCIC) steel plant was the Town of Bessemer, which was platted in 1886 and became part of Pueblo eight years later. Pueblo prospered as a manufacturing, smelting, and transportation center and was the state's second most populous city from 1890 to 1960.

Pueblo reported twenty-seven African American residents in 1870. The 1900 city census enumerated 1,213 Blacks, when the group comprised 4.3 percent of the total population (see Table 1).¹¹ Between 1890 and 1950 Pueblo reported the second highest number of Black residents in Colorado. The number of African Americans in Pueblo remained fairly stable between 1910 and 1950, varying from a low of 1,305 in 1930 to a high of 1,496 in 1910. Since the non-African American population grew faster in later decades, the Black percentage of the total city population dropped from 3.4 percent in 1920 to 2.3 percent in 1950.

Local historian Elmer E. Wells, in a 1979 publication on Pueblo's Black population, reported most Blacks had ancestors who came to the city from southern states, with 54 percent coming from Missouri, Tennessee, Alabama, and Arkansas. Wells asserted that prior to 1954, "although blacks

⁹ Paul Duchscherer and Linda Svendsen, *Beyond the Bungalow: Grand Homes in the Arts and Crafts Tradition* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 2005), 127.

¹⁰ Virginia Savage McAllister, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 512 and 518.

¹¹ Denver, the state's largest city, was the bastion of Colorado's African American population during this period, holding about half of the state's total Black residents each census year.

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here suffered little residential segregation, social segregation was common.” He pointed to practices in high schools, where Blacks were banned from prom dances and yearbooks placed African American students in a separate section at the back. Blacks were segregated in theaters, hotels, restaurants, and swimming pools. St. Paul AME Church member Nanette McMurray recalled that Whites were seated on the main level of local theaters, while Blacks and Chicanos were relegated to separate areas in the balcony.¹² In terms of employment, “as a rule, blacks had poorly paid, menial jobs with little security and questionable advancement. ... Many early black [steel] mill workers tell of training white apprentices, only to see them get promotions and raises while blacks remained at the bottom of the ladder.”¹³

Table 1. African American Population by Census Year, Pueblo, Colorado

Census Year	African American Population		Total City Population
	Number	Percent	
1870	27	4.1%	666
1880	147	4.6%	3,217
1890	885	3.6%	24,558
1900	1,213	4.3%	28,157
1910	1,496	3.4%	44,395
1920	1,395	3.2%	43,050
1930	1,305	2.6%	50,096
1940	1,381	2.6%	52,162
1950	1,441	2.3%	63,685
1960	2,026	2.2%	91,181
1970	2,068	2.1%	97,453
1980	2,146	2.1%	101,686
1990	2,147	2.2%	98,640
2000	2,465	2.4%	102,121
2010	2,686	2.5%	106,595
2020	3,044	2.7%	111,876

SOURCE: US Census Bureau, Census of Population.

The Census Bureau did not report the distribution of Blacks within the Steel City until 1960. However, a circa 1938 Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) report and map provides insights into the distribution of Blacks at that time. The HOLC ostensibly classified areas within cities in terms of “residential security” for loans, but in practice the maps were used to “redline” certain areas, reflecting racial prejudice and serving to increase racial segregation. The Pueblo report observed that the area west of downtown holding St. John AME Church contained “the highest concentration of negroes of any in the city. The ‘colored belt’ is chiefly that lying between Sixth and Ninth Street and Grand Avenue and West Street.”¹⁴ Four areas in the far northeast, east, and “The Grove,” south of downtown, were identified as having notable numbers of African American residents.

¹² Nanette McMurray, Pueblo, Colorado, interview by Patricia Hill, July 14, 1978, on file Pueblo City-County Library District, Pueblo, Colorado.

¹³ Elmer E. Wells, *The Pueblo Black Directory* (Pueblo: Colorado Ethnic Communities, 1979), 5.

¹⁴ Home Owners’ Loan Corporation, “Realty Map of Pueblo, Colorado,” areas D4, D5, D6, and D8, circa 1938, Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America website, dsl.richmond.edu (accessed August 4, 2022). The term “redlining”

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The 1938 study did not identify the central Bessemer area (holding St. Paul AME Church) as a Black residential area but labeled it as “declining,” “occupied chiefly by workers from the steel mills to the east of it, many of them foreign-born. ... The houses are old and many of them not preserved. However, it is not difficult to sell them to steel mill workers.”¹⁵ Two decades later, most of the city’s Black population had shifted to the Bessemer area. St. Paul AME Church then stood near the center of census tracts holding 63 percent of Pueblo’s African American population in 1960 and 59 percent in 1970 (see Figure 1).¹⁶

The African Methodist Episcopal Denomination and Its Beginnings in Pueblo

Historically, Pueblo possessed two African Methodist Episcopal (AME) churches: St. John in the northern part of the city and St. Paul in the Bessemer area to the south. The founding of the AME Church grew out of Rev. Richard Allen’s 1787 decision to withdraw from Philadelphia’s St. George’s Methodist Episcopal Church, when the white members of the congregation sought to place members of African descent “in the gallery of the church, and otherwise place a badge of inferiority upon them.”¹⁷ Historian Dennis C. Dickerson explained that Allen’s view of John Wesley’s theology “affirmed the humanity of all peoples and required that all should be physically and spiritually freed from the bondage of both slavery and sin.”¹⁸ Representatives from African American churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland formally established the denomination at a meeting in Philadelphia in 1816. Richard Allen was selected as the church’s first bishop.

During the first half-century of the church, the denomination was active in the northern states, chiefly in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. Ministers took an active role in the campaign to abolish slavery and assisted persons escaping slavery via the Underground Railroad. Following the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, the AME Church began organizing newly freed enslaved persons in the Confederate States. The church also sought to protect the civil rights of African Americans after Reconstruction, as southern states sought to disenfranchise and segregate them. From seven churches and a membership of 400 in 1816, the AME Church grew to 7,500 churches and 650,000 members by 1916.¹⁹ Noting the hierarchical organization of the church, Dickerson judged: “The bishops, presiding elders, pastors, and many other officials of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church forged a cohesive infrastructure that proved to doubtful whites that African Americans were fully capable of effective self-governance.”²⁰ By 1947, the AME Church had grown to one million members worldwide, with 8,000 ministers and more than 8,500 churches.²¹ In the post-World War II era, AME ministers “challenged segregation and systemic discrimination on the streets, in the courts, and at other levels of government.”²²

derives from the fact that the areas deemed least desirable were colored red on the HOLC maps.

¹⁵ Home Owners’ Loan Corporation, “Realty Map of Pueblo, Colorado,” area C8.

¹⁶ US Bureau of the Census, *Pueblo, Colorado, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, Census Tracts, 1960*, PHC(1)-123 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1961) and *Pueblo, Colorado, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, Census Tracts, 1970*, PHC(1)-168 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1972). Census tracts are small geographical areas within a jurisdiction for which census data are collected and reported.

¹⁷ Richard R. Wright, Jr., ed., *Centennial Encyclopedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1816-1916* (Philadelphia: The Book Concern of the AME Church, 1916), 5

¹⁸ Dennis C. Dickerson, *The African Methodist Episcopal Church: A History* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 23.

¹⁹ Wright, *Centennial Encyclopedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, 5; Dickerson, *The African Methodist Episcopal Church*, 157.

²⁰ Dickerson, *The African Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1.

²¹ Richard R. Wright, Jr., comp., *Encyclopedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Book Concern of the AME Church, 1947), 12.

²² Dickerson, *The African Methodist Episcopal Church*, 366.

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The presence of the AME Church in Colorado dates to 1865, when the Missouri AME Annual Conference recommended that a mission be opened at Denver to be known as the Colorado Mission.²³ The Colorado Annual Conference of the AME Church organized in 1887 and embraced the states of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Arizona, and New Mexico.²⁴ By 1906, the US Census Bureau found fifteen AME congregations in Colorado with a total membership of 1,139 persons.²⁵ In Pueblo, St. John AME Church organized in 1875 and erected a church at the southeast corner of 8th and Elizabeth Streets west of the downtown area.²⁶

The Bessemer Neighborhood and Creation of St. Paul AME

The Town of Bessemer was platted in 1886, and many of Bessemer's residents worked at the Colorado Coal and Iron Company's (CC&I) steelworks. CC&I was the first plant west of the Mississippi to produce steel from raw materials, rather than starting with scrap iron. In 1892 CC&I merged with the Colorado Fuel Company to create the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I). The new enterprise dominated the Rocky Mountain coal trade as well as western steelmaking and grew to become the largest private employer in Pueblo and Colorado.²⁷ Historians Jeffrey DeHerrera, Cheri Yost, and Adam Thomas judged that by the late 1890s "CF&I increasingly looked to immigrants and minorities to toil in the Minnequa Works. The mill and the Bessemer neighborhood provided a cultural and economic entrepôt for immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, Mexico, and Asia, as well as new opportunities for African Americans and women. The results were little short of spectacular, creating one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse neighborhoods in the Rocky Mountain region."²⁸

CF&I hired a number of African Americans in its operations. A history of the church noted that the company "attracted a number of Black Families especially from the great steel mills of Alabama, who located primarily on the southside of Pueblo."²⁹ In 1903 there were 600 Black workers (3.8 percent) with CF&I of a total workforce of 16,000. As the number of Blacks increased in the Bessemer neighborhood, a move to organize an AME congregation began. The effort was prompted by Bessemer's remoteness from St. John AME, which lay two miles north on the opposite side of the Arkansas River.³⁰ Reflecting on her early years in Pueblo, Mrs. D.W. Evans recalled that there were no churches in Bessemer when she and her husband arrived in 1884.³¹ The situation had changed by 1891, when three churches were identified on a map of the community.³²

²³ Charles Spencer Smith, *A History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: Book Concern of the AME Church, 1922), 534.

²⁴ Wright, *Encyclopedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, 357.

²⁵ US Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies: 1906*, 2nd ed., Bulletin 106 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910).

²⁶ St. John AME Church is no longer extant and the location now contains a parking lot. St. John AME moved to the Bessemer area of the city in 1960 and joined with St. Paul AME to form the First AME Church in 1976.

²⁷ Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, Colorado Fuel and Iron Company Administrative Complex, Pueblo, Colorado, National Historic Landmark nomination, October 19, 2018 (revised December 6, 2020; designation pending), on file National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service, Washington.

²⁸ Jeffrey DeHerrera, Cheri Yost, and Adam Thomas, *Forged Together in the Bessemer Neighborhood* (Denver: Historitecture, LLC, August 2012), 91. The Minnequa Works was another term used to describe the CF&I steel mill.

²⁹ First African Methodist Episcopal Church, *Historical Reflections: First African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1875-1983* (Pueblo: First African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1983), on file First AME Church, Pueblo, Colorado.

³⁰ Joanne West Dodds, *They All Came to Pueblo: A Social History* (Virginia Beach, Virginia: Donning Company, 1994), 137.

³¹ *The Indicator* (Pueblo), May 13, 1911.

³² DeHerrera, Yost, and Thomas, *Forged Together in the Bessemer Neighborhood*, 94. One of the churches on the 1891 map was the Bessemer Methodist Episcopal Church at the northeast corner of West Mesa Avenue and Pine Street, which

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In the summer of 1889 a group of six men organized an AME church in Bessemer: Von Dickerson, John Moore, Gabriel Holmes, W.A. Holly, John K. Williams, and Doel Gray.³³ Moore had founded Moore's Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, while Williams later served as President of Paul Quinn College, an AME affiliated institution in Waco, Texas. Services initially were conducted on the second story of the Colorado Trading Company (later the Colorado Supply Company) building at the southwest corner of Northern and East Abriendo Avenues.³⁴ The trustees hoped to raise sufficient funds within a short time to construct a church building.

Acquisition of the Church Property and the Early Years of St. Paul AME Church

In February 1903 the congregation approved formal incorporation of the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church and elected trustees and officers. Nine men were chosen as trustees: D.Z. "Doc" Bray, M.B. Brooks, G. S. Stacker, John Moore, M.D. Davis, William Alberter, Gie Gleaves, Jefferson Jackson, and John Hill. In terms of occupations, Moore, Davis, and Gleaves were laborers at the CF&I steel mill, Bray and Brooks were janitors (the latter for the Minnequa Town Company), and Hill was a cook. Most of the men were in their thirties, and all for whom information could be located came from southern states: two from Tennessee, and one each from Florida, Texas, and Alabama. The church elected its pastor, Frank P. Greenlee, as president and Doc Bray as Secretary.³⁵

The legal organization likely was undertaken in anticipation of purchasing a church property. In October 1903 St. Paul AME Church acquired Lot 12 of Block 42 of the former Town of Bessemer (the northeast corner of West Mesa Avenue and Pine Street) from the Bessemer Methodist Episcopal Association, a White congregation that sometimes offered services in German. The parcel contained a white and black frame church building that was shown on the 1893 and 1905 Sanborn fire insurance maps (see Figure 2).³⁶ The 1903 deed provided that part of the consideration for the sale was the prohibition of "the manufacture, sale, &c. of intoxicating liquors" on the property. The sale price was \$1,500, and St. Paul AME took out a loan of \$700 to help fund the purchase.³⁷

Rev. Greenlee left St. Paul soon after its incorporation. By January 1904 St. Paul AME was operating in the building under the pastorship of Rev. B.F. McIntyre. The church offered morning and evening services on Sunday, a Sunday School, and a Wednesday evening prayer meeting. A Ladies Sewing Circle was active. In the church's early years newspaper accounts indicated it served as venue for a variety of community events, including: a presentation of "Bubbles' Troubles," a comedy-drama

was occupied by St. Paul AME Church in 1903.

³³ First African Methodist Episcopal Church, *First African Methodist Episcopal Church, 130th Church Anniversary, July 17, 2005* (Pueblo: First African Methodist Episcopal Church, 2005), on file First AME Church, Pueblo, Colorado. "Von Dickerson" was likely Julian Von Dickerson, based on other contemporary newspaper articles.

³⁴ *Bessemer Indicator*, April 8, 1893. St. John AME was the only AME church listed in the 1893 and 1899-1900 city directories, perhaps since St. Paul did not have its own building. In April 1893 the *Bessemer Indicator* reported that the AME church had organized Handy's AME mission in Bessemer with services "in the old drug store cor. Routt and Northern avenues." It is not known if this was an earlier name used by the 1889 organization or a completely separate undertaking.

³⁵ St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, Certificate of Incorporation, February 4, 1903, filed February 26, 1903, on file First AME Church, Pueblo, Colorado. Occupational and demographic information was developed using the 1900 manuscript census and city directories.

³⁶ *Colorado Daily Chieftain*, July 7, 1892 and May 24, 1902; *The Indicator* (Pueblo), October 3, 1896 and May 13, 1911 (Evans recollection). As early as 1891 the earlier building housed the Bessemer Methodist Episcopal Church, a White congregation that sometimes had services in German. By 1896 it was referred to as the Pine Street M.E. Church and continued to meet here through 1902, when it erected a new building. Mrs. D.W. Evans recalled that the frame church became too small for the Bessemer M.E. congregation.

³⁷ Pueblo Title Guaranty and Trust Company, Abstract of Title to Lot 12, Block 42, former Town of Bessemer (Pueblo: Pueblo Title Guaranty and Trust Company, May 28, 1920), Book 281, Page 50, on file First AME Church, Pueblo, Colorado; First African Methodist Episcopal Church, *First African Methodist Episcopal Church, 130th Church Anniversary*.

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(1908); revival services led by Rev. Mixon (“said to be about the most eloquent colored preacher in Alabama,” 1909); and a talk “to the combined congregations of the negro churches of Pueblo” by Juvenile Court Judge Frank G. Mirick on the important role played by home, school, and church in “developing the child into useful manhood” (1914).³⁸ In June 1909 St. Paul AME sponsored an excursion for its members to Cañon City, the Royal Gorge, and nearby points of interest.³⁹

The AME church has a practice of reassigning pastors to new locations rather than encouraging long stays in a single church. Rev. H. Franklin Bray served at the church 1904-05. Rev. J.C. Bell was pastor in 1909-12, and it was during his tenure that a brick parsonage (now the eastern part of the current church) was erected in 1909 (see Figure 2).⁴⁰

Rev. John Adams, Sr. and Construction of the Church

Rev. John Adams, Sr. At the September 1914 Colorado AME annual conference, Bishop Henry Blanton Parks assigned Rev. John Adams, Sr. to St. Paul AME Church in Pueblo (see Figure 3).⁴¹ Rev. Adams played a pivotal role in erecting a new church for the congregation. Adams (1876-1962) was born in Atlanta, Georgia, attended public schools there, and continued his education at Lincoln University (Chester County, Pennsylvania), Yale University, Gammon Theological Seminary, and Campbell College in Jackson, Mississippi, an AME affiliated school where he received a Master of Arts degree.⁴²

Adams married Hattie E. Bowman of Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1902. While Adams did not receive a formal education in law, he “read” or studied law and was admitted to the South Carolina bar in the 1900s. He practiced law in Orangeburg, South Carolina, with Jacob Moorner, another African American attorney. The two lawyers became involved in a case that gained national attention by defending Black sharecropper Pink Franklin on a charge of murder. Adams and Moorner challenged the constitutionality of their client’s conviction on the grounds that he had been found guilty by an all-White jury. The two attorneys argued the case (*Franklin v. South Carolina*) before the US Supreme Court in 1910, only the second time that African American lawyers had appeared before the Court. The Court decided against Franklin, but his sentence was commuted and he was paroled in 1919.⁴³

Adams relocated to Washington State and lived in Butte, Montana, before coming to Colorado about 1914-15. Following his service at St. Paul, Rev. Adams moved in about 1922 to Omaha, Nebraska, where he affiliated with St. John AME Church and eventually served as its Presiding Elder. Rev. Adams was well known in Omaha and emerged as a strong advocate of civil rights. In 1941 he organized an address by attorney and civil rights activist Earl B. Dickerson and a mass march by African Americans in North Omaha to show “their determination to break down discrimination in our city.”⁴⁴ In 1948 he was elected as a senator to the Nebraska unicameral legislature, where he supported legislation ending discrimination in employment and opposing legalization of bingo. Grandson Malcolm W. Adams recalled Rev. Adams as “a great orator.”⁴⁵ John Adams, Sr. died in Omaha in 1962.

³⁸ *The Indicator* (Pueblo), December 19, 1908 and August 28, 1909; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 11, 1914.

³⁹ *The Indicator* (Pueblo), June 19, 1909.

⁴⁰ *The Indicator* (Pueblo), March 20, 1909 and April 17, 1909.

⁴¹ *Denver Star*, September 26, 1914.

⁴² *Omaha Star* (Adams obituary), May 4, 1962, 3; Nebraska Legislative Council, *Nebraska Blue Book, 1960* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska Legislative Council, 1960), 213. One source provided Augusta, Georgia, as his birthplace.

⁴³ U.S. Supreme Court, *Franklin v. South Carolina*, 218 U.S. 161 (1910); *Franklin v. South Carolina*, Wikipedia.com (accessed June 9, 2022).

⁴⁴ *Omaha Star*, September 19, 1941, 4.

⁴⁵ Malcolm W. Adams, Tokyo, Japan (grandson of John Adams, Sr.), Facetime interview by Thomas H. Simmons, July 28,

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Construction of St. Paul AME Church. Invigorated by the leadership of Rev. Adams, church planning and construction progressed quickly. The involvement of an architect in drafting plans for the church seems likely, given its ornamentation and substantial size, but searches of city building permits, church records, end-of-year building summaries, and biographies of local architects did not identify the designer.⁴⁶ During construction, the congregation met in temporary quarters at 1236 Routt Street. Excavation likely began in the spring of 1915, with a planned cost of \$15,000 for the building.⁴⁷ According to local historian Elmer E. Wells, stonemason Alex M. Wilson (1846-1943), a formerly enslaved person born in Virginia, was “instrumental in building both St. Paul A.M.E. and Bethlehem Baptist Churches” and created the cornerstones for both buildings.⁴⁸

On May 9 the cornerstone at the building’s southwest corner was laid with great ceremony by the Knights of Pythias, who conducted “a grand uniform dress parade.”⁴⁹ Bishop Henry Blanton Parks, head of the Fifth Episcopal District of the AME Church, came from Chicago to participate in several days of celebrations. He spoke at the Sunday morning church service, the cornerstone laying, and at a Sunday united service of the African American churches of Pueblo, at which St. Paul AME Holy Matron Mrs. Mollie Davis presented him “the contracts, plans and specifications for the new building.” Bishop Parks also spoke at a Monday evening lecture: “A charge of 35 cents will be made, which will admit one both to the lecture and the grand Episcopal banquet tendered the bishop by the ladies of the church.”⁵⁰

St. Paul AME was nearing completion by mid-September 1915. The Pueblo City Directory for that year showed four other African American churches in the city, a surprisingly large number of congregations for a total Black population of roughly 1,400 persons. The Colorado AME annual conference of September 1915 took note of the progress on St. Paul, as reported by the *Denver Star*:

Prominent among the exceptional features that came to the attention of the conference was the work of the Rev. John Adams, D.D., at Pueblo. ... In one year this pastor has very nearly completed the erection of a \$14,000 edifice and has brought this charge to second place in the conference. The only church plant in the Colorado work which will have the leading of this in any respect will be that of Shorter chapel, Denver.⁵¹

In September 1916 the now complete St. Paul AME Church hosted the Colorado AME annual conference. The *Denver Star* observed: “The Rev. Dr. John Adams, lawyer-preacher, and his great people put the conference under a big debt of gratitude to them for the splendid modern church building which they have erected at great sacrifice and for the fine entertainment given. The work of the pastor and people during the past two years has been little short of a miracle.”⁵² Of all the churches in the conference, Rev. Adams reported the largest amount of money raised for building purposes in that year.

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⁴⁶ Architects active in Pueblo ca. 1913-17 included: Francis W. Cooper, William A. Fry, Jacob M. Gile, George W. Roe, William W. Stickney, and C.H. Trask. AME churches in other parts of the country display a variety of styles, and there does not appear to have been a standardized approach to AME church design.

⁴⁷ *Pueblo Star-Journal*, May 8, 1915, 2.

⁴⁸ Wells, *The Pueblo Black Directory*, 19-21.

⁴⁹ *Pueblo Star-Journal*, May 8, 1915, 3. This Knights of Pythias group was composed of African Americans. Black lodges organized using the same organizational structure and regalia after the White group denied Blacks membership.

⁵⁰ *Pueblo Star-Journal*, May 8, 1915, 3. The church does not possess the documents presented to Bishop Parks.

⁵¹ *Denver Star*, September 18, 1915; *Colorado Statesman* (Denver), September 18, 1915. Other AME churches in Colorado in 1915 included St. John in Pueblo, Shorter AME in Denver, Handy Chapel in Grand Junction, and Payne Chapel in Colorado Springs.

⁵² *Denver Star*, September 30, 1916.

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Despite this effort, some construction costs remained outstanding following the completion of the church. Liens for labor and material were filed against the property in late 1915 and early 1916 by the Newton Lumber Company, carpenter W.A. Phelps, and the Pueblo Foundry and Machine Company.⁵³ At the annual St. Paul business meeting in May 1917, the congregation was told that the church's debts to the Newton Lumber Company, the Iron City Lumber Company, and the Pueblo Foundry had been fully paid, but that there were "some small carpenter bills that will become troublesome provided they are not paid very soon."⁵⁴ Mrs. Mary Smith was elected church treasurer.

Rev. Adams left at about this time and was succeeded by Rev. W.H. Prince, who remained at the church until October 1919. Retirement of the mortgage on the church and payment of other debts would be a continuing issue addressed by pastors in succeeding years. In July 1918 the church announced that funds had been raised to pay off "the heavy mortgage" on the property, and Bishop Parks planned to attend the burning of the mortgage.

The church continued to face financial challenges. In September 1918, the *Pueblo Chieftain* reported that the church had \$1,600 in court judgments and other debts outstanding.⁵⁵ Prior to its formal dedication, the church began an effort to raise \$1,500 to erase its debt. In July 1919, members pledged \$500, and the church asked one thousand members of the public to contribute a dollar each.⁵⁶ Bishop Parks dedicated the church in mid-September 1919.⁵⁷

Church and Community Activities at St. Paul AME Church

Religious Functions. St. Paul AME Church was and continues to be important to the religious life of the Bessemer community, conducting worship services, Sunday School, and other internal church activities from its construction to the present. Visiting ministers occasionally preached at the church. In January 1921 Mrs. Mary Wilson, "a leading colored evangelist," preached at St. Paul AME.⁵⁸

The large number of Blacks living in the neighborhood and employed at CF&I and other businesses resulted in a thriving congregation for St. Paul AME. A 1923 article in *The Crisis* reported 370 Black CF&I employees, with 270 at the steel plant and 162 working in company mines. A company census in 1923-24 enumerated 416 African American employees or 3.8 percent of its workforce.⁵⁹ By 1921 there were sufficient numbers of Black workers for the company to convert the former superintendent's club in the administrative complex into the Steel Works YMCA Number 2, generally known as the "colored YMCA." In comparison to the four-story Steel Works YMCA to the west available to White employees, the small building for Blacks "contained meeting rooms, a dormitory, and a small gymnasium, but considerably fewer recreational and educational opportunities."⁶⁰

The church had more than four hundred members at its height, and current trustee Ann E. Batey remarked: "We had a vibrant church at one time."⁶¹ The church hosted meetings of the Colorado

⁵³ Pueblo Title Guaranty and Trust Company, Abstract of Title to Lot 12, Block 42. The liens were not recorded as satisfied until December 1918.

⁵⁴ *Pueblo Chieftain*, May 8, 1917, 3.

⁵⁵ *Pueblo Chieftain*, July 28, 1918 and September 22, 1918.

⁵⁶ *Pueblo Chieftain*, July 1, 1919.

⁵⁷ *Pueblo Chieftain*, September 14, 1919.

⁵⁸ *Pueblo Chieftain*, January 26, 1921.

⁵⁹ H. Lee Scamehorn, *Mill and Mine: The CF&I in the Twentieth Century* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University Press of Nebraska, 1992), 35; Jesse Fauset, "Out of the West," 27 *The Crisis* (November 1923): 13; Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, Nationalities of Employees [sic], 1923-24, on file Steelworks Center of the West, Archives, Pueblo, Colorado.

⁶⁰ DeHerrera, Yost, and Thomas, *Forged Together in the Bessemer Neighborhood*, 52.

⁶¹ *Pueblo Chieftain*, September 2, 2017; Ann E. Batey, Pueblo, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, July 11, 2022.

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AME Annual Conference in 1916, 1957, and 1971.⁶² A 1957 publication included photographs of several groups within the church, including, the trustee board, the trustee helpers club, the choir, Sunday School, the Dorcas-Wallas Missionary Society, the usher board, the stewardess board, and a pastor's aid group (see Figures 4 through 6).

Other Functions. St. Paul AME Church also played an important role as a meeting and event space for the larger African American community of Pueblo and beyond. Some examples of these functions appear below.

Group Meetings and Events. St. Paul AME hosted a large number of events for a variety of community, civic, and social groups over the years. In June 1917 the church welcomed the annual meeting of the Colored Women's Clubs of Colorado. The three-day meeting attracted seventy-five attendees.⁶³ A "mammoth race council" for the African American citizens of Pueblo was held by the Negro Business and Civic League in October 1919. Merchant Sam Nelson, former pastor Adams, and F.W. Fluellen were among the meeting's organizers.⁶⁴

The Girl Reserves of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) presented a program at St. Paul in February 1921.⁶⁵ St. Paul AME was one of ten Pueblo churches holding father-son banquets in February 1922 in cooperation with the Boy Scouts.⁶⁶ In 1927 the church hosted a reception for Black chapters of the Knights of Pythias from Colorado and Wyoming, who were attending a regional meeting in Bessemer.⁶⁷

In 1951, the church parsonage (Rev. T.A. Patterson, pastor) was listed in the *Negro Motorist Green Book* as the address for the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The *Green Book* included listings in each state where African American travelers were welcome. In addition to lodging and restaurants, the publication included community organizations, lawyers, and even funeral homes.⁶⁸ Rev. Toussaint A. Patterson (1891-1978) served as the president of the Pueblo chapter of the NAACP. A family profile recalled "he was constantly working for Civil Rights."⁶⁹

Community Events and Lectures. In February 1919 the church staged a week-long "Celebration of the Tercentenary of the Negro's Residence in America," that included addresses, music, and an art display.⁷⁰ In April 1919 St. Paul AME held a banquet for African American soldiers returning from World War I. The *Pueblo Chieftain* remarked that "the talks by the returning soldiers were interesting and the music was all that could be desired."⁷¹ In August 1919 Lt. H.M. Collins of Kansas City presented a lecture on "The Negro Soldier in Foreign Lands." Pueblo Black soldiers were asked to meet in the church basement to escort the speaker to the auditorium.⁷²

⁶² First African Methodist Episcopal Church, *First African Methodist Episcopal Church, 130th Church Anniversary*.

⁶³ *Denver Star*, June 9, 1917 and *Pueblo Chieftain*, June 15, 1917.

⁶⁴ *Pueblo Chieftain*, October 3, 1919.

⁶⁵ *Pueblo Chieftain*, February 19, 1921.

⁶⁶ *Pueblo Chieftain*, January 30, 1922.

⁶⁷ Robert Strader, "The Knights of Pythias," *Pueblo Lore* (September 2011): 19.

⁶⁸ See Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, *Colorado African American Travel and Recreation Resources Survey Plan* (Denver: Front Range Research Associates, Inc., March 2021), on file History Colorado, Denver, Colorado.

⁶⁹ *San Bernadino County Sun* (San Bernadino, California), September 17, 1978, 28 (Patterson obituary); Alma Patterson Stokes, "The Patterson History," riversider.org (accessed August 23, 2022).

⁷⁰ *The Crisis*, 17 (April 1919): 296.

⁷¹ *Pueblo Chieftain*, April 4, 1919.

⁷² *Pueblo Chieftain*, August 12, 1919.

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One of the more significant events hosted by St. Paul AME was an annual community gathering to recognize Black formerly enslaved persons. The Lincoln Day banquet was established by the Trustee Helpers Club of the church in 1934 to honor living Black Puebloans who were born into slavery and personally experienced President Lincoln's emancipation in 1863. The yearly event continued until 1965 and was held in the basement of the church or at the Black YMCA in Bessemer. Local funeral director Alva C. Jones served as master of ceremonies, and the banquets included "firsthand stories about life as a slave on a farm or plantation, work conditions, etc."⁷³ This appears to have been an unusual event held within Colorado, as no similar occurrences in other communities were found in a search of Colorado online newspapers.

The church held a civil rights symposium in April 1970, featuring speakers representing African Americans, Chicanos, Native Americans, Italian Americans, and women.⁷⁴ In 1975 Rosemary Brown, the wife of Lt. Gov. George L. Brown (the first African American elected to statewide office in Colorado), was honored with a luncheon at the church. The guest speaker, Mrs. Fuchsia L. Jeanmard, president of the Steel City Republican Women's Club, discussed the changing role of women in society and remarked that "this country would be better off if women had more to say about politics." She spoke favorably of the Equal Rights Amendment, and urged women to develop a working knowledge of the local political system and cast intelligent votes.⁷⁵ The church's role in broadening equity for all continued into the current century. In 2001 the local NAACP celebrated Black History Month at the church with a mass choir presentation and speeches by Sen. Penfield Tate and Rep. Peter Groff, two Denver African American state legislators.⁷⁶

Musical Performances. St. Paul frequently has been a venue for musical performances. In 1919 Troy P. Gorum, "a noted negro singer" of Boston, held two recitals at the church.⁷⁷ In April 1921 the church choir presented a folk song concert. Admission was free but tickets were required.⁷⁸ Miss Clifford Freeman a "gifted singer" from Portland, Oregon, presented a sacred concert at the church in October 1921.⁷⁹ Music is still an important element in the church's programs.

Representative Members of the Congregation

Members of the St. Paul AME congregation historically were active in Pueblo's business, civic, social, and educational spheres. The congregation included blue collar, white collar, and professional occupations. Some representative members are highlighted below.⁸⁰

James F. Poole taught mathematics at Central High School and worked as an investment advisor. Active in Democratic politics, Poole served on many civic boards and was a talented baritone singer. Robert Lee Hawkins worked in Colorado state government for forty-six years, retiring as superintendent of the Colorado Mental Health Institute in Pueblo. Dr. Charles L. Knight received a doctorate from the University of Denver and served in several administrative positions in higher

⁷³ Wells, *The Pueblo Black Directory*, 19.

⁷⁴ *The Arrow* (Pueblo), April 10, 1970.

⁷⁵ *Pueblo Star-Journal and Sunday Chieftain*, April 27, 1975. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) provided "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." It has not yet become part of the US Constitution.

⁷⁶ *Pueblo Chieftain*, February 21, 2001.

⁷⁷ *Pueblo Chieftain*, August 6, 1919.

⁷⁸ *Pueblo Chieftain*, April 15, 1921.

⁷⁹ *Pueblo Chieftain*, October 22, 1921.

⁸⁰ The information on members of the congregation was drawn from clippings and other information in the records of the First AME Church, Pueblo, Colorado.

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education. In athletics, in 1950 Loree "Pi" Sanford became the first Black woman to participate in the World Softball Tournament in San Antonio, Texas.

St. Paul AME members were part of the Pueblo business community. Ohio native Alva C. Jones operated the Jones Mortuary from 1921 until 1968. Helen L. Jones, his wife, also worked at the funeral home. She organized the St. Paul Trustee Helpers Club and was its president for many years, as well as serving on the boards of the Lincoln Home and the YWCA. Arthur F. Simmons, Sr. ran the Simmons Downbeat Night Club in Bessemer for forty-nine years. Ernestine L. "Tina" Walker co-managed the Bro Walkers Bar B Que Palace with her husband. Nanette White McMurray (a St. Paul deaconess) was one of the first Black women to obtain a real estate license in Colorado. She also participated on community boards, volunteered for the Democratic party, and served as the secretary of the local NAACP chapter.

Many members of the congregation worked for the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company (CF&I). James A. Moore, a CF&I employee for fifty years, was superintendent of YMCA No. 2. Orville T. Benjamin completed more than thirty-one years of service at CF&I and became the first African American blast furnace foreman. Martha J. Jones, a St. Paul deaconess and steward, was a graduate of Wilberforce University in Ohio. She began working for CF&I during World War II and finally retired as a forklift operator. A CF&I employee for more than thirty-one years, Joseph M. Harris mostly labored in the blast furnace department. Harris was active in the Steelworker's union, a founding member of Pueblo's Juneteenth celebration, and participated in local historical groups.

Alabama native Walter L. Ervin, a master electrician, was employed by Pueblo Bank and Trust for twenty-six years. St. Paul AME Secretary Mary Anne Lemon worked for Mountain Bell for twenty-four years, in addition to playing an active role in civic and social groups. Church Trustee Ann E. Batey taught in the public schools of Denver and Pueblo and helped organize the local James P. Beckwourth Foundation, a historical group recognizing the importance of the mountain man and trapper to Pueblo's history. Andrew Cornelius completed twenty-four years in the Air Force before serving as an affirmative action director for Rockwell International and later the University of Southern Colorado. John R. Batey became Executive Director of the Pueblo Urban Renewal Authority. Marguerite Washington, born in a coal camp near Walsenburg, was the last matron of Pueblo's Lincoln Home (a Black orphanage) in the 1950s and 1960s. Her husband, Louisiana native Lud E. Washington, came to Pueblo for construction of the Pueblo Army Depot in 1941. After the facility's completion, he gained employment there and became the first Black foreman of the Munitions Department.

Changes to the Building and Property

Rev. A.H. Hamilton, who served as pastor from 1955 through 1959, removed the choir balcony at the west end of the sanctuary (see Figure 7). Church Secretary Mary Anne Lemon believes that safety concerns prompted the removal.⁸¹ In 1965, during the tenure of Rev. Melvin L. Shakespeare (1963-69), the church sanctuary was renovated using a \$12,500 loan from Columbia Savings and Loan (see Figure 8). Rev. J.R. Williams (1972-75) purchased a house in the Belmont area of northeast Pueblo as a new parsonage, and the original parsonage became the church annex, repurposed as an office and for meetings (see Figures 9 and 10).⁸² A small garage to the east of the church was erected sometime before 1951, but it is no longer present.

Later History of the Church

⁸¹ Mary Anne Lemon, Pueblo, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, July 11, 2002.

⁸² First African Methodist Episcopal Church, *First African Methodist Episcopal Church, 130th Church Anniversary, July 17, 2005* (Pueblo: First African Methodist Episcopal Church, 2005), on file First AME Church, Pueblo, Colorado.

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As geographic changes occurred in Pueblo's African American population, St. John AME moved from its location in northern Pueblo to a building a few blocks west of St. Paul AME. The 1875 St. John AME building was later demolished for a parking lot. The 1976 Colorado AME annual conference discussed merging St. Paul and St. John AME Churches, and in November of that year a joint conference of the two congregations approved the plan and adopted the name First African Methodist Episcopal Church. Following the merger of the churches, the congregation no longer needed two buildings, so it retained the former St. Paul AME Church as its home and sold the St. John building in 1977.⁸³ In 1979, Rev. R.J. Paul was pastor of First AME, which then had a reported membership of 300 (see Figure 11).⁸⁴

In the 1990s-early 2000s the church taught students cooking and art classes, offered tutoring, and provided a computer lab in the church annex. In 2000, under the tenure of Rev. Charles Langston, the church celebrated its 125th anniversary. The celebration included removal of the cornerstone at the southwest to re-inscribe the west face with the following: "First A.M.E. Church Rededicated July 30, 2000."⁸⁵ The public was invited to a celebratory dinner in the church basement that included turkey, ham, greens, cornbread, pies, and cakes. Church membership then stood at 125 persons (see Figure 12).⁸⁶

In recent decades the average age of the congregation grew older, and its size declined to about thirty-seven members in 2017, most of whom were over seventy. Rev. Margaret Redmond, pastor in 2010-17, became the first woman to serve in that capacity at First AME. She remarked: "If you look at the history of the AME churches, they were planted at the intersection of roads leading into town. As America was moving westward, black people could always find a place to sleep, eat and to find jobs at the churches."⁸⁷

During the COVID pandemic of 2020-22, the church offered virtual worship services in cooperation with Payne Chapel in Colorado Springs. Rev. Olga P. Copeland is the current pastor. First AME Church continues to play the important role described by historian Henry Louis Gates, Jr. for African American churches: "The Black church has been the seminal force in shaping the history of the African American people. It's the root out of which so many celebrated aspects of Black culture would branch. It's the first institution that enslaved Black people and their freed descendants created, and it will become the longest lasting and without a doubt the most consequential."⁸⁸

9. Major Bibliographical Resources

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⁸³ Pueblo County Assessor, real estate information and chain of title information, Pueblo, Colorado. The building later occupied by St. John AME Church was built in 1949 and located at 1200 Carteret Street. Since its sale by the congregation in 1977, the property has been used as a residence.

⁸⁴ Wells, *The Pueblo Black Directory*, 19.

⁸⁵ Church trustee Ann E. Batey recalled that the west face of the cornerstone originally held the name of Bishop Henry Blanton Parks, who presided over the district when the church was erected.

⁸⁶ *Pueblo Chieftain*, July 29, 2000, 1A.

⁸⁷ *Pueblo Chieftain*, September 2, 2017.

⁸⁸ Henry Louis, Gates, Jr., writer, "The Black Church: This Is Our Story. This Is Our Song," documentary film (Washington: McGee Media, Inkwell Media, and WETA, 2021), episode 1.

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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

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_____ 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): 5PE.8772

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 0.11

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.246246 Longitude: -106.618162

UTM Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

1. Zone: 13 Easting: 533412 Northing: 4233206

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

The nominated area consists of Lot 12, Block 42, former Town of Bessemer within the City of Pueblo, Pueblo County, Colorado (equivalent to all of Pueblo County Assessor parcel number 1501314015).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundary is the historic extent of the church property and contains all of the resources historically associated with the St. Paul AME Church.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, Architectural Historians (for the owner)
organization: Front Range Research Associates, Inc.
street & number: 3635 West 46th Avenue
city or town: Denver state: CO zip code: 80211
e-mail: frraden@msn.com www.frhistory.com
telephone: 303-477-7597
date: February 2, 2023 (revised)

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

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- **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.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church

City or Vicinity: Pueblo

County: Pueblo

State: Colorado

Name of Photographer: Thomas H. Simmons

Date of Photographs: May or July 2022 (see individual images)

- 1 of 24, Overview of the property showing west and south walls of the church. View northeast. Date: May 2022.
- 2 of 24, Overview of the property showing south and east walls of the church. View northwest. Date: May 2022.
- 3 of 24, The incinerator at the northeast corner of the property. View northeast. Date: May 2022.
- 4 of 24, West wall of the church. View east. Date: May 2022.
- 5 of 24, Cornerstone at southwest corner of the building. View northeast. Date: May 2022.
- 6 of 24, South wall of the church. View north. Date: May 2022.
- 7 of 24, East wall of the church showing connector to the parsonage. View northwest. Date: May 2022.
- 8 of 24, East and north walls of the church from alley (the house to the right is on an adjoining parcel). View southwest. Date: May 2022.
- 9 of 24, North wall and part of the west wall of the church. View east-southeast. Date: May 2022.
- 10 of 24, North and west walls of the church. View southeast. Date: May 2022.
- 11 of 24, Interior of church, view of foyer and stairs to sanctuary from the west entrance. View east-northeast. Date: July 2022.
- 12 of 24, Interior of church, view from basement of the of the stairs descending from the foyer at the west entrance. View southwest. Date: July 2022.
- 13 of 24, Interior of church, view of yellow pebble glass window glazing in the office at west end the of building. View southwest. Date: May 2022.
- 14 of 24, Interior of church, showing sanctuary looking toward chancel. View east-northeast. Date: July 2022.
- 15 of 24, Interior of church, showing sanctuary looking toward west entrance and offices. View west. Date: May 2022.

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16 of 24, Interior of church, large stained glass window on south wall. View south. Date: July 2022.

17 of 24, Interior of church, typical stained glass window on south wall, immediately west of elliptical arch window. View south. Date: July 2022.

18 of 24, Interior of church, looking toward pulpit area. View northeast. Date: May 2022.

19 of 24, Interior of church, basement activity room. View southwest. Date: July 2022.

20 of 24, Interior of church, basement kitchen. View southeast. Date: July 2022.

21 of 24, Front (south) wall of parsonage. View north. Date: May 2022.

22 of 24, Front and east wall of parsonage. View northwest. Date: July 2022.

23 of 24, East wall of former parsonage. View west-northwest. Date: July 2022.

24 of 24, North wall of former parsonage. Shed to the left is on the adjacent parcel. View south-southwest. Date: May 2022.

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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List of Maps and Historic Figures

Location Map

Sketch Map

Historic Figures

1 of 12, This map of 1960 census tracts shows areas containing the greatest numbers of African Americans clustered in southern Pueblo and the Bessemer neighborhood. The white dot indicates the location of St. Paul AME Church. Census tract 3 in the northwest part of the city included Black persons in the institutional setting of the Colorado State Hospital. SOURCE: Mapped by the authors from US Census Bureau, *Pueblo, Colorado, Standard Metropolitan Area, Census Tracts, 1960* (1961).

2 of 12, The 1905 Sanborn fire insurance map (left) shows the earlier frame church on the parcel, which was also shown on the 1893 map. The 1951 map (right) shows the present 1915-16 church attached to a dwelling built as a detached parsonage for the earlier church. The garage shown on the latter map is no longer extant. SOURCE: Sanborn Map Company, Pueblo, Colorado, fire insurance maps, 1905 and 1951.

3 of 12, Rev. John Adams, Sr. led the effort to erect a new church building for St. Paul AME in 1915-16. He relocated to Omaha, Nebraska, in about 1922. There he was active in a local AME church, civil rights advocacy, and politics, serving in the Nebraska legislature from 1948 to 1962. SOURCE: *Omaha Star*, September 10, 1943.

4 of 12, The front and south wall of the church are shown in this 1957 view northeast. The choir loft windows are not bricked in, the third story of the tower holds one-over-one windows, and the basement windows have not been covered. SOURCE: Colorado AME Conference, *Souvenir Program* (1957).

5 of 12, The St. Paul AME Sunday School is pictured here in 1957 with Rev. Hamilton seated in the foreground. SOURCE: Colorado AME Conference, *Souvenir Program* (1957).

6 of 12, The St. Paul AME church choir is shown in this image with Rev. Hamilton to the left. SOURCE: Colorado AME Conference, *Souvenir Program* (1957).

7 of 12, This interior view west of the nave (pre-1959) shows the choir loft still in place in the background. According to a church history, Rev. A.H. Hamilton removed the choir loft during his 1955-59 tenure. SOURCE: First AME Church, photograph collection, Pueblo, Colorado.

8 of 12, The interior of the nave and chancel was remodeled in the circa 1965 by Rev. Melvin L. Shakespeare, who was assigned to the church from 1963 to 1969. This view is to the east-southeast. SOURCE: First AME Church, photograph collection, Pueblo, Colorado.

9 of 12, In this ca. 1977 appraisal card photograph (view northeast) the choir loft windows and tower windows have been filled in. SOURCE: Pueblo County Assessor, 613 West Mesa Avenue, property appraisal card, circa 1977.

10 of 12, The 1977 appraisal card also contained a photograph of the parsonage (view north-northwest). SOURCE: Pueblo County Assessor, 613 West Mesa Avenue, property appraisal card, circa 1977.

11 of 12, This view north-northeast in 1983 shows the west and south walls of the church. SOURCE: First African Methodist Episcopal Church, *Historical Reflections, 1875-1983* (1983).

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12 of 12, The church seems essentially unchanged from this 2005 view northeast. The shed hood over the west entrance is present. SOURCE: First African Methodist Episcopal Church, *130th Church Anniversary* (2005).

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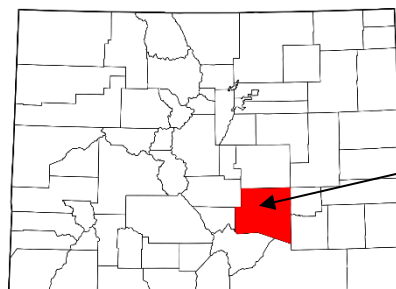
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Location Map



The labeled point indicates the location of the nominated resource, which has the following coordinates:

Latitude: 38.246246
Longitude: -106.618162
Image Date: March 25, 2021

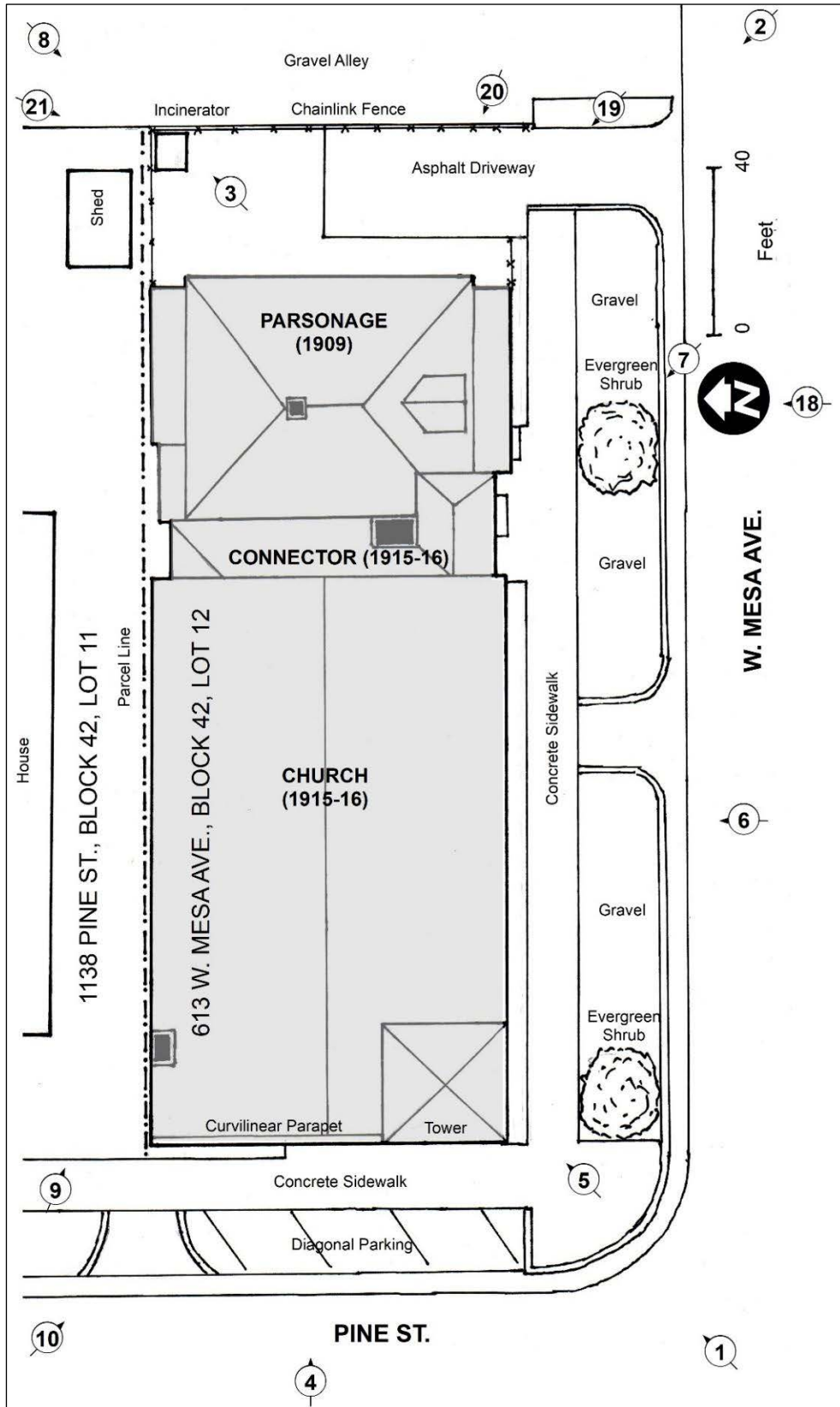


State Perspective:
St. Paul AME
Church

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Sketch Map



The nominated area consists of all of Lot 12; Lot 11 to the north is not included. Numbers in circles indicate photo locations and camera directions. Note that north is to the left.

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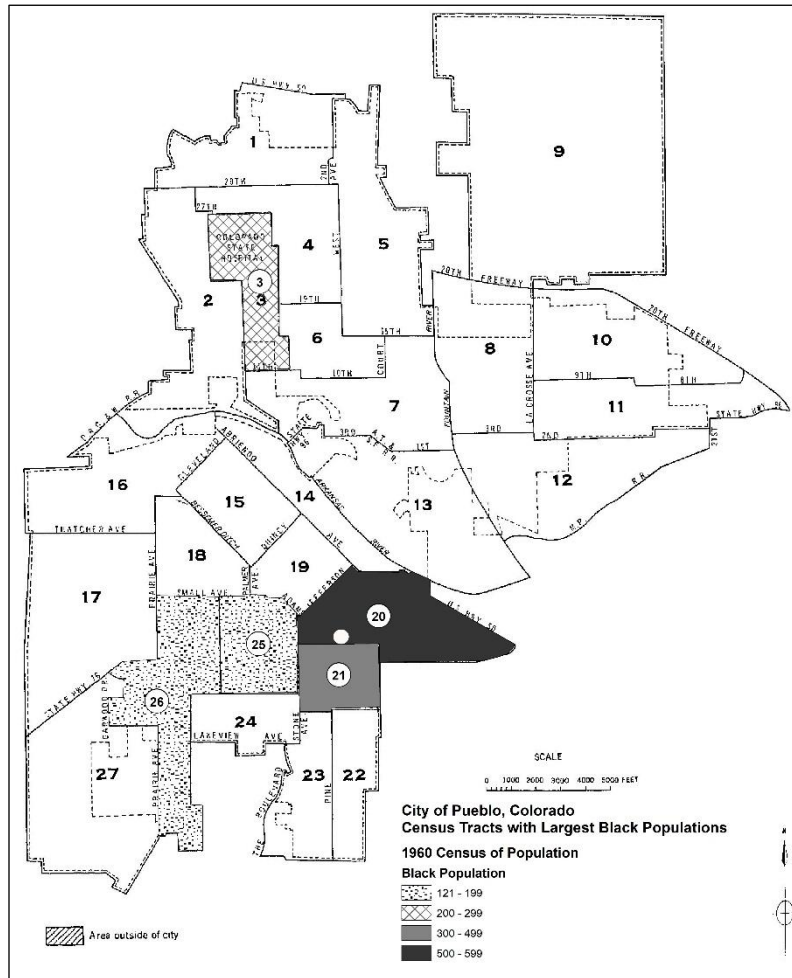


Figure 1. This map of 1960 census tracts shows areas containing the greatest numbers of African Americans clustered in southern Pueblo and the Bessemer neighborhood. The white dot indicates the location of St. Paul AME Church. Census tract 3 in the northwest part of the city included Black persons in the institutional setting of the Colorado State Hospital. SOURCE: Mapped by the authors from US Census Bureau, *Pueblo, Colorado, Standard Metropolitan Area, Census Tracts, 1960* (1961).

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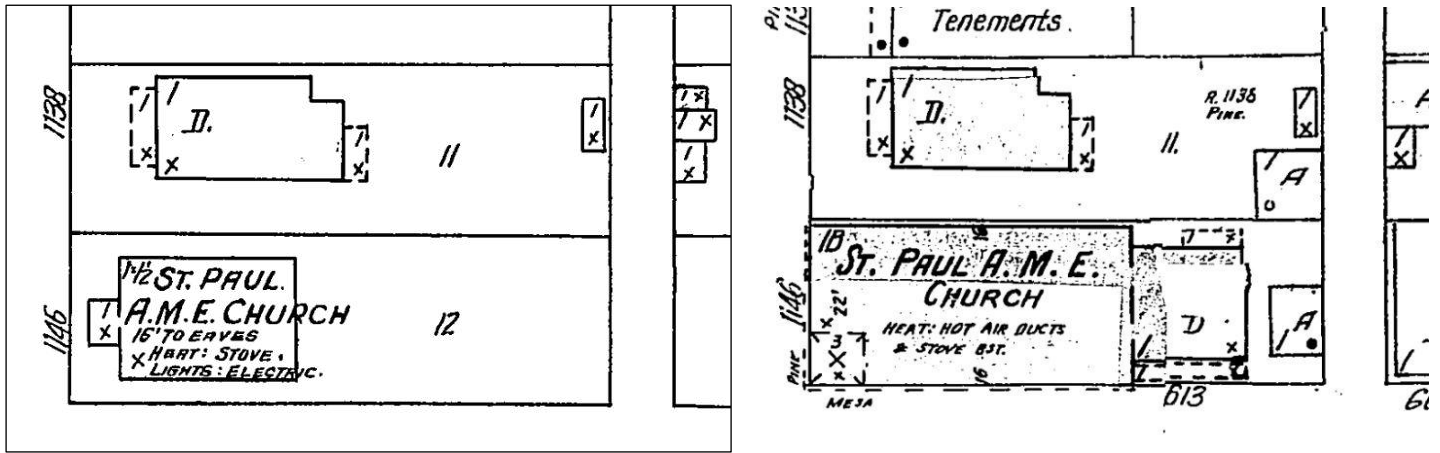


Figure 2. The 1905 Sanborn fire insurance map (left) shows the earlier frame church on the parcel, which was also shown on the 1893 map. The 1951 map (right) shows the present 1915-16 church attached to a dwelling built as a detached parsonage for the earlier church. The garage shown on the latter map is no longer extant. SOURCE: Sanborn Map Company, Pueblo, Colorado, fire insurance maps, 1905 and 1951.



Figure 3. Rev. John Adams, Sr. led the effort to erect a new church building for St. Paul AME in 1915-16. He relocated to Omaha, Nebraska, in about 1922. There he was active in a local AME church, civil rights advocacy, and politics, serving in the Nebraska legislature from 1948 to 1962. SOURCE: *Omaha Star*, September 10, 1943.

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Figure 4. The front and south wall of the church are shown in this 1957 view northeast. The choir loft windows are not bricked in, the third story of the tower holds one-over-one windows, and the basement windows have not been covered. SOURCE: Colorado AME Conference, *Souvenir Program* (1957).



Figure 5. The St. Paul AME Sunday School is pictured here in 1957 with Rev. Hamilton seated in the foreground. SOURCE: Colorado AME Conference, *Souvenir Program* (1957).

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Figure 6. The St. Paul AME church choir is shown in this image with Rev. Hamilton to the left.
SOURCE: Colorado AME Conference, *Souvenir Program* (1957).



Figure 7. This interior view west of the nave (pre-1959) shows the choir loft still in place in the background. According to a church history, Rev. A.H. Hamilton removed the choir loft during his 1955-59 tenure.
SOURCE: First AME Church, photograph collection, Pueblo, Colorado.

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Figure 8. The interior of the nave and chancel was remodeled in the circa 1965 by Rev. Melvin L. Shakespeare, who was assigned to the church from 1963 to 1969. This view is to the east-southeast. SOURCE: First AME Church, photograph collection, Pueblo, Colorado.

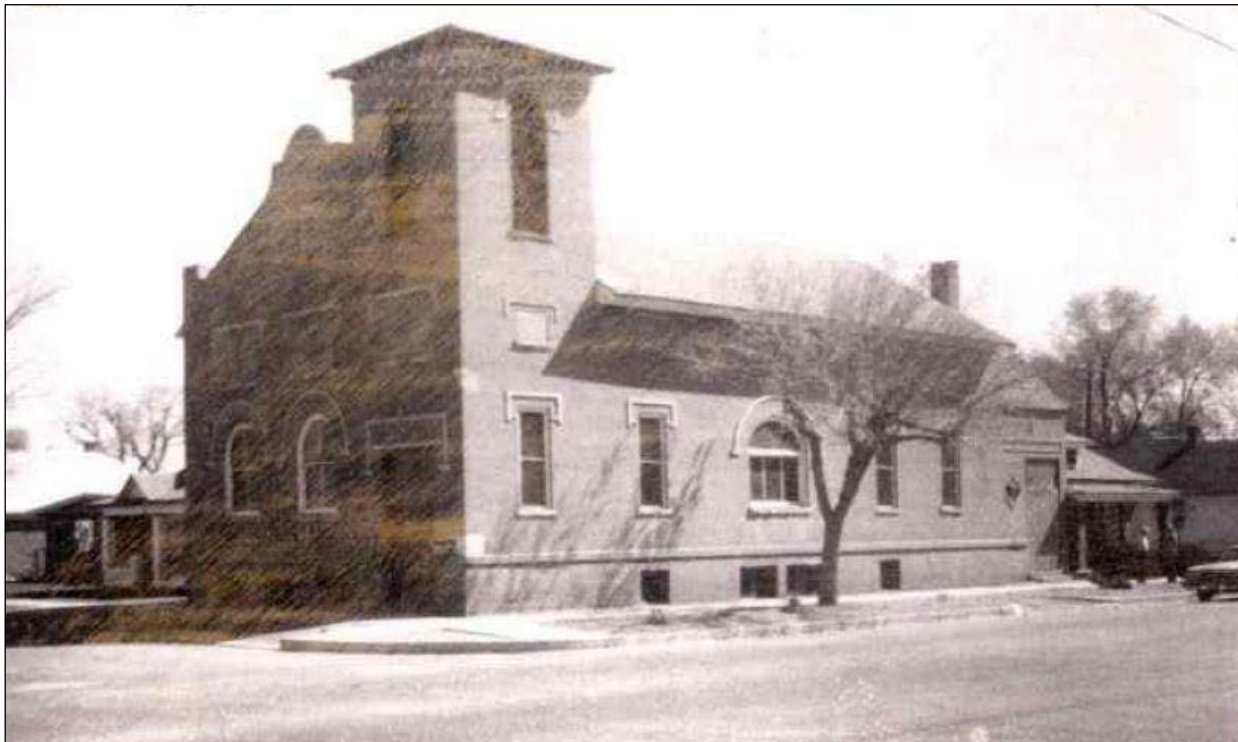


Figure 9. In this ca. 1977 appraisal card photograph (view northeast) the choir loft windows and tower windows have been filled in. SOURCE: Pueblo County Assessor, 613 West Mesa Avenue, property appraisal card, circa 1977.

St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church
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Figure 10. The 1977 appraisal card also contained a photograph of the parsonage (view north-northwest). SOURCE: Pueblo County Assessor, 613 West Mesa Avenue, property appraisal card, circa 1977.



Figure 11. This view north-northeast in 1983 shows the west and south walls of the church. SOURCE: First African Methodist Episcopal Church, *Historical Reflections, 1875-1983* (1983).

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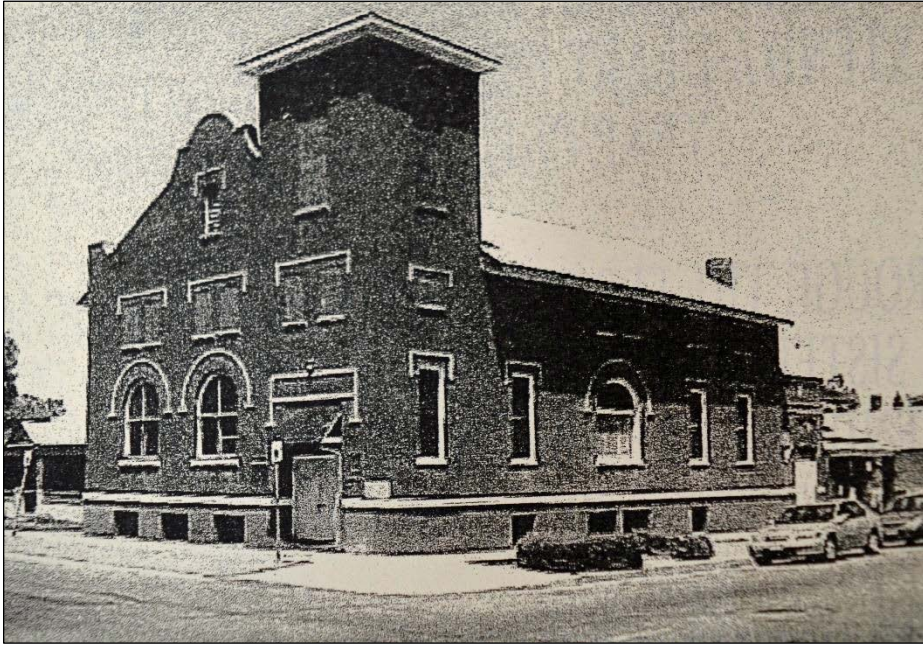


Figure 12. The church seems essentially unchanged from this 2005 view northeast. The shed hood over the west entrance is present. SOURCE: First African Methodist Episcopal Church, *130th Church Anniversary* (2005).