

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

FINAL - No Sig

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

224 Crawford Street

(N.W. corner S. 3rd St. on U.S. Hwy. 41 & Crawford St.)

CITY, TOWN

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Terre Haute

VICINITY OF

7th

CODE

Indiana

18

COUNTY

Vigo

CODE

167

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☒ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☐ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSEUM
☐ PARK
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☒ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☒ OTHER: Civic**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Trustees of Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

STREET & NUMBER

224 Crawford Street

CITY, TOWN

Terre Haute

VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Vigo County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Third and Wabash Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Terre Haute

STATE

Indiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYSTITLE General survey undertaken by Sheldon Swope Art Gallery in its study of
local architectural structures

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Sheldon Swope Art Gallery

CITY, TOWN

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Allen Chapel, the oldest Black Church in western Indiana, was first housed in a simple wood structure two blocks away from the present building. In 1870 the congregation moved into a handsome brick structure styled in the Lombard Italianate manner. At the present location, severe damage caused by a tornado and fire in 1913, the building was rebuilt on the present foundation resulting in the present yellow brick structure with stone courses, designed by local architect, J.W. Hensen.

The most outstanding feature of the building is a tower on the south-east corner. It stands on a heavy stone base and is capped with a low pyramidal broach tower. On each face of the upper register are four closely grouped, round headed slit windows. The double doored pedimented entry is at the base of the tower. This tower houses the original Vigo County courthouse bell, which is said to have been loaned to the Chapel by Judge William D. Mack. Another short tower is located on the south-west corner. Two Gothic, stained glass windows with wooden tracery on the south side and one on the east, accent the simple facade. There are also several small rectangular stained glass windows.

The unpretentious interior contains a small apse and altar on the north wall and a balcony encasing the other three walls. Metal sheeting decorated with impressed classical motifs is applied to the ceiling. A 1905, Herney pipe organ in the chapel, is the only tracker action organ remaining in Terre Haute.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Afro American History	

SPECIFIC DATES 1837, 1870, 1913 BUILDER/ARCHITECT J.W. Hensen

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1837, Rev. William Paul Quinn founded the Allen Chapel, the oldest black church in western Indiana, which was destined to become a focal point for the black community in Vigo County. Allen Chapel is an affiliate of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest black church organization which was started in 1789 by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, two self-educated blacks who had purchased their freedom before the legal end of slavery in Pennsylvania.

Members of Allen Chapel have, through the years, continued this spirit of determination so a great deal of historical interest stems from significant black figures who were associated with the Chapel. Rev. Hiram Revels, a former Allen Chapel pastor, organized and instructed the first school for blacks in the county. Classes were held in the Chapel for a weekly fee of 25¢ per pupil. Revels was later to become the first black elected to the United States Senate, replacing Jefferson Davis as senator from Mississippi. The Chapel also sponsored prominent blacks, such as the dynamic abolitionist, Fredrick Douglass, as speakers.

The Chapel has gained admiration as a refuge for the oppressed and as a place where blacks newly arrived in Terre Haute from North Carolina could find shelter. An underground railroad station was located in the first Allen Chapel. The ecclesiastical organization also provided an educational refuge, besides Revel's school. Allen Chapel also housed the first public school for blacks in Terre Haute.

For nearly 150 years, Allen Chapel has been regarded with pride as the oldest black organization in western Indiana and continues to be a focal point for black culture in the area. Much of its significance comes from its role as a symbol of black unity and contribution in the community. The Jethro Bass family, for example, one of the founders of the church, still has a member as the pianist.

Thus, the Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church is important as an architectural expression in the black community and for its associations with black history in Terre Haute.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Church minutes of various parish organizations and other church papers.

Bradsby, H.C., History of Vigo Co., Indiana with Biographical Selections, S.B. Nelson & Company, Chicago, 1891

Johnson, Edward A. (Ed.), School History of the Negro Race in America, (2 vols.), A.M.S. Press, Inc., New York, 1911

Handy, James A., African Methodist Episcopal History

International Library of Negro Life & History (10 vols), Assoc. for the Study of Negro Life and History, United Publishing Corp., Philadelphia, 1970

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 4643610 4367670
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Audrey Acton Graham (member & Sunday School Teacher)

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

7/23/75

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Route 1

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Merom

Indiana

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER