

NR - 09/29/83

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic First Missionary Baptist Church

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 7th at Gaines (701 S. Gaines) N/A not for publication

city, town Little Rock N/A vicinity of

state Arkansas code 05 county Pulaski code 119

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name First Missionary Baptist Church

street & number 7th at Gaines Street

city, town Little Rock N/A vicinity of state Arkansas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pulaski County Courthouse

street & number Markham at Broadway Street

city, town Little Rock state Arkansas 72201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Survey of I-630 Corridor has this property been determined eligible? yes no N/A

date 1978 federal state county local N/A

depository for survey records Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

city, town Little Rock state Arkansas

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

The First Missionary Baptist Church is an outstanding 1882 example of the application of the Gothic Revival to ecclesiastical architecture. Traditional in plan, the church features rectangular sanctuary with square towers at each corner of the front facade. Beautifully detailed throughout, the brick structure is highlighted by decorative corbeling on three of its four elevations.

ELABORATION

Located at the southeast corner of Seventh and Gaines Streets in downtown Little Rock, the 101 year old First Missionary Baptist Church is a Gothic Revival structure of red brick with wood and stone trim. The church has a rectangular plan, with a square buttressed tower at each corner of the front facade. A steeply pitched gable roof, originally covered with slate, was covered with asbestos shingles in the early 1960's. A stone parapet embellishes each gable end. The most distinctive exterior detail is the corbeled brickwork along the cornice line of each of the four principal elevations. The sanctuary is seven bays deep, with six pointed arch stained glass one-over-one double-hung windows with transoms and brick surrounds, alternating with buttresses on each side elevation (north and south). All windows, with the exception of those on the rear elevation, are of stained glass and have, through the years, been donated by members of organizations of the church. While some of the windows have been relettered, repainted or repaired following tornado damage, none has been replaced. The front elevation (west), which is a gable wall, consists of a center entrance, with an entrance in each projecting corner tower. All three entrances have double doors with stained glass transoms. Buttresses extending the full height of the elevation flank the center entrance. Large fixed stained glass windows, positioned between the center entrance and two corner towers were installed and dedicated in 1919. A pair of lancet windows are located above the center entrance. A stone plaque commemorating the building's date is positioned above the two windows. Railed steps lead to each tower entrance, while reconstructed double stairs, original in placement and configuration, are located in front of the principal center entrance. The three-story belfry, tower, positioned at the southeast corner of the front facade, originally had a pyramidal spire. Pairs of lancet windows pierce the north, south and east sides of the belfry. Those on the second floor are double-hung. The third story windows are fixed with five lights each. A quatrefoil fenestration with round brick surround is positioned in the wall above the windows. The west side of the belfry has a single round third floor window. The two-story flat-roofed tower at the north corner has identical fenestrations and a crenellated parapet. Located at the rear of the church is a one-story projection that consists of a center gable roof, with a flat-roofed section with parapet on either side. Side entrances are located on the

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

north and south corners. Centered in the gable wall are three side-by-side double-hung windows. Other fenestrations include two basement and three double-hung windows. A hooded door leads to the basement.

The vestibule was created by sectioning off a portion of the original sanctuary. Stairs in each corner tower lead to the balcony which is supported by paneled square wood columns and exaggerated scroll brackets. Three doors lead from the vestibule to the sanctuary. Because of poor acoustics and heating problems, the floor of the sanctuary has been raised and the ceiling lowered. The pulpit, which faces west, is positioned at the edge of the elevated choir stand, which at some point was added. Located in the center of the choir stand is a pipe organ installed in 1915. The original rectangular baptistry is directly behind the altar and beneath the choir stand. The original pews of the church have been replaced by two sections of new pews. Those removed are used in the Sunday School building and as supplemental seating throughout the church. To the rear of the sanctuary, on either side of the choir stand, are doors leading to the rear of the building. The door to the right leads to the Pastor's study, while the choir room and a restroom are reached through the left door. When built, the church possessed the modern conveniences of fans and steam heat.

Alterations to the church include those previously discussed, as well as the addition of a new organ, the replacement of the front doors, the rebuildings of the front steps and a 1960's alteration of the interior. For the convenience of the elderly members, the women's restroom was moved from the basement to the rear of the church, adjacent to the choir room.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1882 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

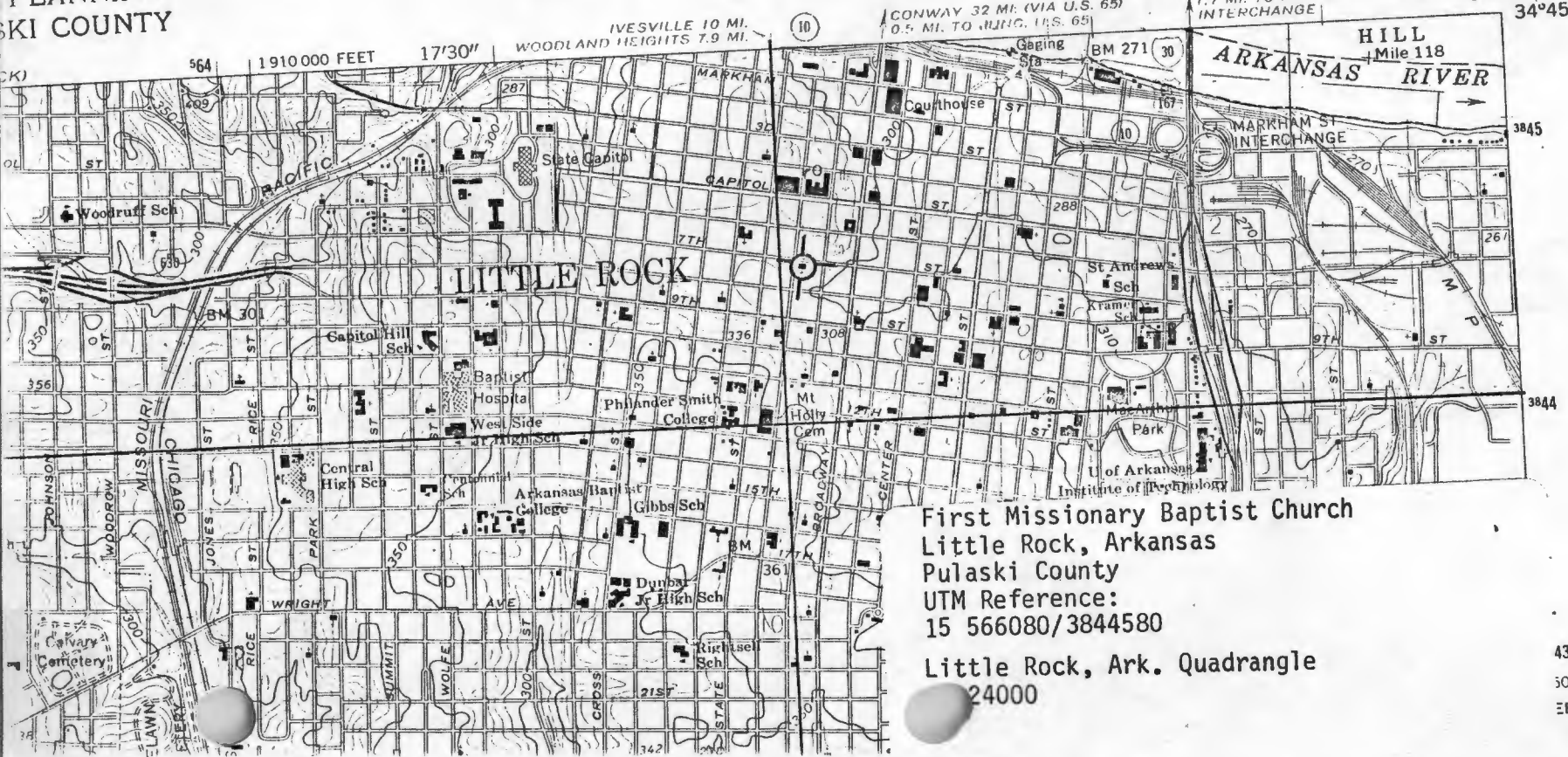
SUMMARY

The First Missionary Baptist Church at 7th and Gaines Streets in downtown Little Rock is the home of one of the oldest Black congregations in the State of Arkansas. This impressive red brick church with its distinctly Gothic influences was constructed in 1882. It is the third building to serve a group of parishoners who were first organized in 1845 by Reverend Wilson Brown. Brown was a slave who had attended the Missionary Baptist Church which served the white community of Little Rock. With the assistance of some of the members of that church, Brown was able to form his own congregation which served a large segment of the Black community of the city. By the 1880's Brown's congregation had outgrown two successive frame buildings. At the time of the present church's construction, it had all of the conveniences of the day -- steam heat, lights, and mechanical fans. A pipe organ was added to the church in 1915. Many of the present stained glass windows were added in 1919. Since many of these serve as memorials, others have been added over the years. The original slate roof was replaced by asbestos shingling in the early 1960's. This outstanding church building is beautifully maintained and continues to house the congregation for whom it was built over 100 years ago.

PLANNING
PULASKI COUNTY

LITTLE ROCK QUADRANGLE
ARKANSAS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

7553 I SW
(MC ALMONT)



First Missionary Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas
Pulaski County
UTM Reference:
15 566080/3844580
Little Rock, Ark. Quadrangle
24000

43
50 000
EET

9. Major Bibliographical References

"History of the First Missionary Baptist Church in the State of Arkansas"
by Mrs. Julia E. Brown, 1935.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Little Rock, AR

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	5	6	6	0	8	0	3	8	4	4	5	8	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1, 2, 3, & 4 original Block 129, City of Little Rock

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Reverend Lawrence Evans, edited by the staff of the AHPP

organization First Missionary Baptist Church

date August 8, 1983

street & number 701 Gaines

telephone

city or town Little Rock

state Arkansas

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

Wilson S. [Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 8-23-83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

