

**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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Echols Memorial Christian Church

other names/site number The United Evangelical Lutheran Church; May Ave. Church of Christ; Vietnamese Baptist Church

**2. Location**

street & number 2801 Alabama  not for publication

city or town Fort Smith  vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Sebastian code 131 zip code 72901

**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  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cathi March  
Signature of certifying official

11/17/05  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- 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)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do Not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion / religious facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS

Late Gothic Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Composition shingle

other

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)  
SEE CONTINUATION SHEET (pgs. 1 thru 3)

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)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1911

Significant Dates

1911

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET (pgs.1 thru 2)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Echols Memorial Christian Church  
Name of Property

Sebastian County, Arkansas  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>372689</u>	<u>3916365</u>
2	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>

	Zone	Easting	Northing
3	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
4	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEET.)

Boundary Justification (SEE CONTINUATION SHEET.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Galen Hunter, Architect/Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 10/04/05

street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone 501-324-9787

city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

##### Continuation Sheets

##### Maps

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

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

##### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Vietnamese Baptist Church

street & number 2901 Alabama telephone 646-0148 (Mr. Tuan Vo)

city or town Fort Smith state AR zip code 72901

**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. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The May Avenue Church of Christ is a structure constructed in 1911 in the late Gothic Revival architectural style. The structure is basically rectangular in plan with the tower/ belfry at the southwest corner. The structure is built upon a rusticated stone base, rising about 4 ½ ft. and topped with a ledge table of polished cut stone. Three of the facades are parapeted end gables built of brick with corbelling features and rusticated cut stone accents. A 2-story tower at the southwest corner contains the main entry for the church, and is located at corner of May Avenue and Alabama Street.

Starting with southwest corner, the tower/belfry portion of the church, there is a south-facing entry that is 5 risers above finish grade, framed by an equilateral arch of voussoir brick, utilizing a combination of rowlock and soldier courses. A pair of paneled doors has a transom light above, set beneath the Gothic arch; the transom's muntins provide a pattern in the stained glass lights of coupled acute arches and a lozenge which itself inscribes a circle of stained glass. Rusticated stone accents are provided at the springing course and a keystone for this entry arch. The base of the tower features the rusticated stone and polished cut stone ledge table which intersects with about two feet above the sill of the gothic main entry.

The brick wall above the ledge table features cantons of brick at each corner. Additionally, there are brick belt courses, each typically of 4 corbel courses that intersect this pilaster mass at each corner. The first belt course occurs just above the Gothic arch of the main entry. Another belt course, about 1'-4" above, has a rusticated stone accent set within each canton, and this aligns with the top of the double course of brick at the top of the corbel course that also forms the sill for a Gothic arch opening for the south and west facing louvers of the belfry portion of the tower. About two feet above this arch is a third belt course of corbel brick that aligns with the face of the brick cantons. About one foot above this is a ledge of corbeled brick, projecting beyond the face of the cantons. This ledge serves as base to the tower's parapet featuring battlements. The crenels and merlons are capped with cut-stone coping; however the pilaster mass at each of the tower's corners rise another foot above adjoining merlons with a rusticated stone cap.

The arched openings to the belfry portion of the tower have similarity to the main entry arch below, being an equilateral arch framed in voussoir brick and rusticated stone accents at the springing course but no keystone. The painted wood louvers are set in muntins that create a pattern of coupled lancets with a lozenge. The belfry's gothic openings face both west and south of the tower's second story portion, and have about 4/5 the height as the arch that frames the main entry. Beneath the west-facing belfry arch and just above the ledge table of polished cut stone is coupled lancet windows, about 2/3 the height of the main entry arch, and have double hung sash and lights of stained glass. Their lancet arch is framed with similarity of the other Gothic arches, having voussoir brick and rusticated stone accents at the springing course but no keystone.

A 33 foot long wall is a parapeted gable end that projects about four feet south from the east corner of the tower portion of the structure. This façade is the "front" and the fenestration provides great symmetry to it. The brick wall above the ledge table of cut stone features cantons of brick at both east and west corners. Each of these have the corbelled brick treatment that aligns with the first belt course in the tower; above this is a rusticated stone accent that aligns with and matches those stone accents found in tower's corners at the second belt course. There is a polished cut-stone coping that caps this stone accent; the corner pilaster mass functions as the gable shoulder.

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At the center of this parapeted gable wall is a large equilateral arch framed in voussoir brick and with rusticated stone accents at the springing course and a keystone. The ledgement table of cut stone forms the sill of this window opening; the peak of this Gothic arch matches height of the capstone of the corner pilaster mass. A triple grouping of lancet windows have muntins that provide a pattern of three rectangular windows of fixed lights, a transom of three lancet arches and a lozenge trio, all with stained glass treatment.

Flanking this gothic arched window is a brick pilaster strip, about 18" wide, beginning at the ledgement table and rising about one foot above the polished cut-stone coping to the parapeted gable end. The pilaster strips each have rusticated stone accents that align with the one at the springing course of the center gothic arch window. A band located about 2 feet above the peak of the ached window opening has two corbelled courses in brick and it intersects with the flanking pilaster strips and abuts with the stone coping of the gable. This belt course then forms the sill of a trio of 2 ft. wide, louvered arched openings. The center one has a equilateral arch, about 5 ft. in height, framed by voussoir brick and rusticated stone accents at springing course but no keystone; it is flanked by arches about 4 ft. in height in similar treatment. Between each brick canton and pilaster strip that flank the large center Gothic arch is a double-hung sash stained glass window, about 6 ft. height and 3 ft. width, having its sill at the cut-stone ledgement table and heavy rusticated stone accent at its head.

From the southeast corner of this parapeted gable end, the east wall continues northward about 15 ft. and abuts the east wing's south facing wall. From the canton at the southeast corner to the internal corner the rusticated stone base continues, along with its cut-stone ledgement table. Fenestration in the brick wall includes coupled rectangular windows that are the same size and treatment as those flanking the arched window noted above. Above this is a corbelled brick course abutting mid-point of canton's first corbel band. Aligned with the top of this corbel band on the canton is the bottom of a belt course of comprised of three corbel courses in brick, supporting a short wall that forms a parapet gutter.

From the internal corner of this east wall, the south face of a 10 ft. long wall of the east wing continues with the same materials, including the rusticated stone base and cut-stone ledgement table and brick banding described in the wall noted previously. The parapet gutter abuts the pilaster mass that acts as a gable shoulder. The fenestration includes a single rectangular stained glass window that is same in size and treatment as described in the east wall adjoining.

At the south wall's external corner to the east wing is a brick canton, representing the southeast corner of the east-facing façade featuring a parapeted gable end. This gable wall is about 38 ft. long, having similar materials, treatments and fenestration symmetry as described for the south-facing parapeted gable end. There is the rusticated stone base and cut-stone ledgement table that continues around this façade and there are brick pilaster mass that act as gable shoulders, and polished cut-stone coping that caps the gable wall. Differences in this gable end include lack of strip pilasters, its intersecting band of corbelled brick that's located above the peak of large Gothic arch window, and the flanking fenestration to the center Gothic window opening.

At the center of the gable wall is a large equilateral arch framed in voussoir brick and with rusticated stone accents at the springing course and a keystone; the arch is of same size as its counterpart in south facing gable end. The ledgement table similarly form the sill of this window opening; the peak of this Gothic arch matches similarly the capstone of the corner pilaster mass. A similar triple grouping of lancet windows have muntins that create a pattern of three rectangular windows of fixed lights, a transom of three lancet arches and a lozenge trio, all with stained glass treatment. Flanking this center Gothic window are coupled rectangular windows, having double hung sash and stained glass lights, about 6 ft. height and 3 ft. width, having its sill at the cut-stone ledgement table and heavy rusticated stone accent at its head.

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The rusticated stone base and cut-stone ledge table terminates at the northeast corner of the east facing parapeted gable end. Extending northward from here, about 11 ft., is a brick wall, with a rusticated stone base that only ascends from finish grade to floor line. There is a single window of double-hung sash with cut-stone sill and heavy rusticated stone accent at its head. Near the top of the wall are 3 corbelled brick courses; just above this only a simple metal gutter denotes the edge of a nearly flat roof above. This wall treatment continues around the northeast corner, for about 50 ft. length of the north wall to this structure. Four window openings are similar in size and treatment as previously noted, about 4 ft. by 2 ft. in size. The metal gutter continues along this façade. At mid point of this mostly flat roof line there is a dutch gable hip roof whose ridge line aligns with that of the south wing's roof.

At the northwest corner of this wall some 11 ft. length of the west-facing wall continues to where it abuts the pilaster mass that forms the gable shoulder to the parapeted gable end to the west wing. For this short portion of brick wall there is a simple entry, having a paneled door with what appears to have been a transom light (now paneled over). A heavy, rusticated stone accent is at the head, and there are 4 risers up to its sill. A parapet wall with embattlements is provided atop this wall; the cut-stone caps of the merlons occur just beneath to bottom of the rusticated stone cap atop the pilaster mass at the northwest corner of the west wing gable end.

The west facing façade features a parapeted gable end that is a mirror facade to the east facing gable end, in regard to description of its length, materials, treatments and fenestration symmetry. At the northwest corner of this gable end the rusticated stone base and cut-stone ledge table begins, rising to 4½ ft. above floor line. At the southwest corner of this gable end, the brick wall abuts with the tower's north wall; here the west face of the tower portion of the structure projects about 2 ft.

The structure's roof has a 'T' configuration, which generates the parapeted gable ends that facing east, west and south. Overall the structure's roof is comprised of two intersecting gable roofs with a flat roof on the tower. The gable roofs are currently finished with composition shingles, pewter gray in color. Roof drainage on the south portion is accomplished by combination of parapet gutters and conductor heads with downspouts. On the north portion, exposed metal gutters at top the north facing brick wall receive the roof drainage.

There had been for a number of years an adjacent wood framed ancillary structure, having wood siding and a composition shingle roof. It was constructed at a much later date than the 1911 structure and had served at one point as educational classroom space, as well as providing a secondary access to the church building. This ancillary structure adjoined the masonry structure at the northeast corner of the gable end façade for the east wing. It has recently been removed, thereby revealing portions of the original coupled rectangular stained glass windows in that façade (save for remnants of a door opening cut into one of the window's masonry openings).

The original structure presently serves as a Vietnamese Baptist Church and remains in relatively good condition; some deterioration of certain masonry walls has occurred due to a few points of roof leakage. Additionally, the original colors of native red brick and stone accents have now been painted with some waterproofing material in two tones of blue-gray: the rusticated stone base is a darker smoky blue-green, while the brick and stone accents from the ledge table and above have a lighter blue-gray color. The texture of the brick is blurred somewhat by this recent coating. Nonetheless, the architectural elements remain quite readable, and the stained glass windows appear to be original vintage and intact most everywhere.

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Continuation Sheet**Section 8 Page 1**SUMMARY**

The Vietnamese Baptist Church was founded as Echols Memorial Christian Church from funds (of some \$600) provided by Mrs. Elizabeth Echols on January 30, 1911. The church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C**, as a good example of the late Gothic Revival architectural style in its neighborhood of Ft. Smith. Although the architect is unknown, the construction utilized native materials and serves as an excellent example of Gothic Revival architectural style. Additionally, it is being nominated under **Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties**.

**ELABORATION**

It was during a period of significant growth in population of Ft. Smith, having nearly doubled since the turn of the century to nearly 29,000 (by 1910 census), when Mrs. Elizabeth Echols provided a \$600 gift to construct in 1911 what became known as Echols Memorial Christian Church. Elizabeth was born in North Carolina in 1852. She came to Ft. Smith upon marriage to William Joseph Echols I, a progressive banker of this community. William founded Merchants Bank of Ft. Smith in 1882, was active on the School Board, and was a Democrat; he died in 1896. Elizabeth was active in the Fortnightly Club, an organization that developed library accessibility to citizens of Ft. Smith, which eventually led to the construction of the Carnegie Library building by 1908. Elizabeth was a member of DAR and active in life of the community. Her effort to have this church constructed was by a gift given as a memorial to her deceased husband, William Echols. She was member a at this church. Elizabeth died in May 14, 1925, and is buried within the Echols mausoleum at Ft. Smith's Oak Cemetery.

At the period Mrs. Echols provided construction funds for Echols Memorial Christian Church, Ft. Smith was bustling with new energy spurred by dramatic population growth. The electric streetcar system expanded its routes way out to Jenny Lind and South Dallas Streets, where the new site for the Inter-state fair was selected. The Old Commissary building became the site of Ft. Smith's museum. The majestic Goldman Hotel opened, as well as the grand Union Station for the Kansas City Southern Railroad. The Southwestern Bell Telephone Company had taken over operations of existing phone lines in the city. A middle class population grew significantly and life was good as commerce expanded and culture developed within this gateway to the southwest.

The building consisted of materials native to Ft. Smith for that era, but featured an architectural style of late Gothic Revival. The exterior detailing has remained intact through all these years in the city's cultural development. The identity of those religious organizations that used this church, however, did evolve through the course of history. The United Lutheran Evangelical Church at first rented this building on Sept. 1, 1928, from Echols Memorial Christian Church, and then purchased it later. By Feb. 11, 1940, this congregation changed its name to St. Luke Lutheran Church. On Feb. 28, 1948, St. Luke Lutheran held its last service in this structure, located on this corner of May Ave. and Alabama St. Ownership of the building by May Ave. Church of Christ was established later in 1948. This congregation eventually moved to a new location and became known as Westark Church of Christ, and ownership of the May Ave. structure was established in 1988 by the current owners, Vietnamese Baptist Church.



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Unfortunately, no written records or archive materials have survived and/or remain with those who currently utilize this religious facility. However, Mr. Tuan Vo, who serves as church clerk for Vietnamese Baptist Church did have a brief history written in his native language, which he provided when contacted by telephone. The listings of original and successive owners of this structure (as previously noted) were the essence of his historical records. Additional written materials of this building was derived from a web site on the internet, for St. Luke Lutheran Church and from a "centennial ad" for St. Luke in local Southwest Times Record newspaper of Sept. 19, 2004. Here we learn that Rev. D.L. McConnell officiated at the first services of St. Luke Lutheran Church on May & Alabama on Sept. 28, 1928, and by Jan. 3, 1929, Rev. C.P. Karriker was called as pastor to this congregation.

The current congregation appears to have minimal means for upkeep to this structure, which has suffered from previous periods of neglect or lack of maintenance. There are areas noticeable from the interior where the building envelope has failed, leakage occurred and some deterioration has set in. The original colors (and textures to some minor degree) of brick and stone materials of its exterior have been altered by subsequent coats of paint. Nonetheless, the original elements of stained glass windows, and texture of stone and masonry materials read through, and the architectural style is easily seen and appreciated.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Vietnamese Baptist Church, who currently utilizes this structure, is a small congregation of a distinct Asian ethnic background, reflecting the continued changes in history of the diverse peoples who moved into this "hub of the Southwest." The architectural integrity of this religious facility is significant, and provides a distinct example with near the original appearance of 1911. The church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C**, as a good example of the late Gothic Revival architectural style in its neighborhood of Ft. Smith. Although the architect is unknown, the construction utilized native materials and serves as an excellent example of Gothic Revival architectural style. Additionally, it is being nominated under **Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties**.

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**Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography:**

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- "A Brief History of St. Luke Lutheran Church". No Date. Viewed January 13, 2005.  
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Listing in First Christian Church 6 pg. Newsletter: "Merge in 1928 of Echols Christian with First Christian".
- The Journal. Periodicals by Ft. Smith Historical Society. Editions 1977 on. Volume 4, No.2. p. 13.
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p. 254, p. 265.
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- Vo, Tuan. Church Clerk at Vietnamese Baptist Church (May & Alabama). January 19, 2005.
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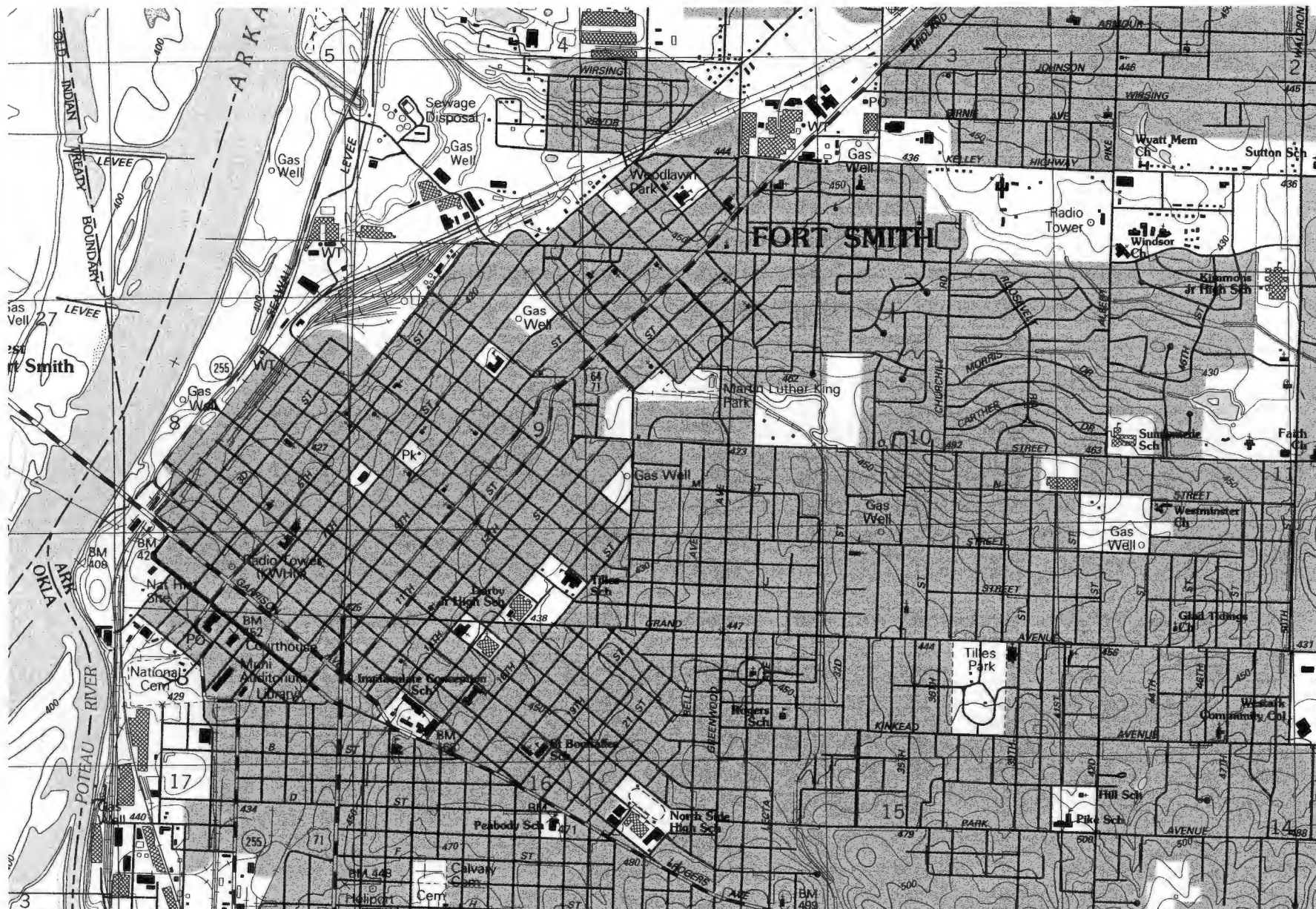
**Verbal Boundary Description:**

Lots Eleven (11) and Twelve (12) in Block Five (5), Tillis and Phillips Addition of the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas, as shown by the recorded plat thereof.

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**Boundary Justification:**

These are the original boundaries as deeded to the Echols Memorial Christian Church.

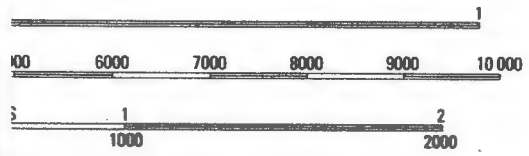


160 000 FEET  
 (OKLA. NORTH)  
 ECHOLS MEMORIAL  
 CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
 3916000N FORT SMITH,  
 SEBASTIAN COUNTY, A  
 UTM;  
 15/372689/3916365

SMITH) R 27 E R 32 W 371 25' 3 070 000 (OKLA. NORTH) 373

3740000E 3740000E 84° 22' 30" 35° 22' 30"

1 000



AL. 10 FEET  
 3 INTERVAL 5 FEET  
 CAL DATUM OF 1929  
 ERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048  
 MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, hard surface ..... Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ...
- Secondary highway, hard surface ..... Unimproved road ...
- Interstate Route U. S. Route. State Route

FORT SMITH, ARK.-OKLA.

(BARLING)  
 715 N SE



