

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER  
LISTED

NOV 15 2005

# 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 an 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 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church

Other name/site number ~~472-5880-0157~~ 045-3010-0111

## 2. Location

Street & number 900 New York Street  not for publication

City or town Lawrence  vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Douglas Code 045 Zip code 66044

## 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.)

Christy Davis 9/30/05  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

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 the property is

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register.	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action

St. Luke AME Church  
Name of Property

Douglas Co., Kansas  
County and State

**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	0	total

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

N/A

**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 Gothic Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Limestone  
Walls: Brick

Roof: Asphalt

Other:

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

St. Luke AME Church

Name of Property

Douglas Co., Kansas

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1910-1955

Significant Dates

1910

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown (see text)

Constant, J. T., Builder

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):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by survey, recorded by engineering.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Watkins Community Museum of History Archives

St. Luke AME Church  
Name of Property

Douglas Co., Kansas  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one

UTM References  
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5	3	0	6	7	4	0	4	3	1	5	3	2	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

2

Zone				Easting				Northing						

3

Zone				Easting				Northing						

4

Zone				Easting				Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description  
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Katie Ambler and Napoleon Crews; Edited by KSHS staff

Organization St. Luke Second Century Fund Date January 20, 2005

Street & number 1431-4 W. 7<sup>th</sup> St. Telephone 785-841-0736

City or town Lawrence State KS Zip code 66044

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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church

Street & number 900 New York St. Telephone 785-841-0847

City or town Lawrence State KS Zip code 66044

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.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Saint Luke AME Church  
Douglas Co., Kansas

### Description

#### Summary

The Saint Luke AME Church is located at 900 New York Street in Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas. The church, constructed in 1910<sup>1</sup>, is a twin towered brick structure representative of the Gothic Revival ecclesiastical style. The building was and continues to be a private, community place of worship invested in its neighborhood setting. The church is surrounded by residential housing, a public school, and a small area of commercial structures to the east. The historical landscape remains substantially intact from the date of construction with the lot to the east of the church remaining vacant and the public school to the south maintaining its original use. The church is of brick veneer, wood balloon-frame construction, typical of buildings built in the Midwest in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>2</sup>.

#### Elaboration

Architecturally, the building is an excellent representative of Gothic Revival style architecture. On the front, or western, elevation, the twin towers are separated by a steep gable end roof behind a limestone capped parapet. The asphalt-shingled roof is hipped on the rear elevation (east) and has intersecting cross gables on the north and south elevations. Each tower is crenellated and has modest Gothic detailing. The stained-glass windows have keystones set at their apex and stones set at the base of the arc, which serves to articulate the Gothic window forms. The window details create the decorative polychromatic pattern common to this revival style.<sup>3</sup> The north tower is three stories and 34 feet in height. The south tower is two stories and 26 feet in height. The entrance is on the northwest corner and is raised above the ground with limestone steps leading up to double-doors.

The building is one-story tall, with a basement dug underneath. The main floor structure measures 43' by 90'5". The main entrance to the church faces west. The main doors are located in the three-story north tower and are connected to the sidewalk by means of a stone framed flight of stairs. There is also a door facing west located in the two-story south tower, also connected to the sidewalk by means of a staircase. Each of these doors has a double-paned transom window above it. The second story of the north tower has a lancet window, while the tower's third story has double lancet bell tower vents. The south tower has two lancet windows above the door located on the tower's second story. Each tower has a crenellated parapet made of pressed tin. Some of these are missing caps. Between the two towers on the west façade is located a wood-framed, stained-glass lancet window. Each west entrance door leads into a 9' by 9' foyer in the sanctuary.

<sup>1</sup> Julia Mathias, interview and personal notes taken Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2003. On file with the author.

<sup>2</sup> Bucher, Ward. *Dictionary of Building Preservation*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1996 p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Mc Alester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1991 p. 198.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Saint Luke AME Church  
Douglas Co., Kansas

The basement of the church is made out of limestone and was excavated under the existing structure in the 1940s and finished in the 1950s. The basement was remodeled in 1972 by the addition of wood paneling and other decorative features. In 2002, the basement congregation and banquet area was dedicated as the "Langston Hughes Fellowship Hall."

The north side of the church has a gabled transept. Within the gable there is a wood-framed lancet window that matches the one on the west in dimension. Looking to the left of this window, there is a small doorway with two lancet windows around it. There is a third lancet window on this side with an enclosed entrance to the basement below it.

The south side of the church is also intersected by a gabled transept. This gable has two windows on the south side; one facing east and one facing west. There are three unusually spaced lancet windows to the right of the gable on the south side and one to its left. The north side of the north tower has a single door with a staircase to the sidewalk, while the south side of the south tower does not. In its place is a lancet window. The north side of the north tower has a lancet window on the second story and twin lancet bell tower vents on the third story. Twin lancet windows are located on the south side of the south tower on its second story.

The east side of the building has a hipped roof. Three lancet windows are located in the main section of the east side. A smaller, fourth lancet window is visible on the south transept.

The exterior of the church remains largely unchanged since its construction in 1910. The building retains a high degree of integrity because it remains in its original location, its setting and environs are largely intact, the church continues to be used for its historical function, it has traditional construction methods and materials, and it continues to serve an essential purpose within the neighborhood and community it serves.

The following changes have been made to the interior:

1. The original pulpit faced north and the pews faced south. In 1950-1951 the pulpit was rebuilt to face west and the pews repositioned to face east.
2. In 1950-1953, the ceiling was dropped in the sanctuary and is covered by drywall with a popcorn finish.
3. The basement of the church was excavated under the existing structure in the 1940s and finished in the 1950s.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Saint Luke AME Church  
Douglas Co., Kansas

### Statement of Significance

#### Summary

The Saint Luke African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion C for its architectural significance as an example of ecclesiastical Gothic Revival and under Criterion A for its association with the development of African-American social patterns and cultural history.

#### Historical Significance

The Saint Luke AME Church, built in 1910, has great value to the cultural characteristics of the Lawrence community. In a city that prides itself on diversity, St. Luke has been an important part of Lawrence's African – American community since it was built in 1910. Furthermore, St. Luke is identified with Langston Hughes, one of the most important writers of the twentieth century. Langston Hughes even wrote about his experiences at the church while living in Lawrence with his "Auntie Reed" in his work *The Big Sea*.<sup>4</sup> He later recounted that his experiences at the church influenced his spiritual life and writing style.

The St. Luke AME Church was originally organized in 1862, according to former pastor Reverend Joseph F. Washington. The original church stood at the same site, in East Lawrence, as the modern structure but was located at the east end of the lot. The current building was erected in 1910. The cornerstone was laid on August 14<sup>th</sup> of that year. The building cost \$10,000 to build which included the building contract, new materials, and materials saved from the previous structure. According to an article in the *Lawrence Daily World* dated June 3, 1910, there were 300 members of St. Luke at the time the church was built. They had \$2500 to start the building construction and \$800 more in pledges. The pastor raised the rest of the money by obtaining a mortgage and appealing to the community by urging that the new modern building would add value not only to the East Lawrence neighborhood but to the community in general. On the day that the corner stone was laid there were more than 1000 community members in attendance to be part of what citizens called "a spiritual, intellectual and social feast."

The impact that the church had on the local African-American community during its first forty years was significant. As this was a time of racial discrimination and segregation, the church fulfilled an essential role as the center of the black community. In an interview with the *Lawrence Journal World* celebrating the 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Luke, Martha Chieks, who at the time had been attending St. Luke for over sixty years, recounted the importance of the church in the community.

<sup>4</sup> Hughes, Langston. *The Big Sea*, Thunder's Mouth Press: New York, 1940.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Saint Luke AME Church  
Douglas Co., Kansas

Ms. Chieks stated: "The church was the center of all activities. For the younger people it was the only means of amusement we had."<sup>5</sup> The importance of a place to meet and grow as a community is underscored by the situation facing African-American citizens of Lawrence at the time. In the same *Lawrence Journal World* article, Curtis Nether recounted that an unidentified former member of the church stated: "We had no recreation. Our children had never been allowed to swim. We were still fighting to go to the movies and sit where we wanted to sit . . . and if you had a guest, you know, you couldn't put them up at the motel . . ."<sup>6</sup> During this time St. Luke was one of the only places that African-American residents could meet freely without the constant threat of discrimination.

During these years, several important figures in religion and education were members of the church. A 1960 church document states "St. Luke has been instrumental in sending out a number of National and International leaders in different fields of religious service."<sup>7</sup> Bishop John A. Gregg of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was a St. Luke member. In fact Bishop Gregg boasted that he was a custodian at St. Luke while he attended Kansas University. The document also lists an educator, Professor J. P. King as a member of the church.

St. Luke became a center of community activism during the civil rights era. Church members took part in protest marches during the 1950s and 1960s. Mary Hampton, a St. Luke parishioner and participant in anti-discrimination protests, recounted the feelings of the period in an interview with the *Journal-World* stating: "We had quite a struggle to get people to understand each other." Also, the church provided a rallying point for efforts by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to combat discrimination.<sup>8</sup>

As the aforementioned examples indicate, the St. Luke AME Church has been the center of Lawrence's African-American community since the church was built in 1910. Indeed the following 1982 quote from St. Luke member Paula Holmes summarizes St. Luke's place in the community:

The church—all churches should be involved with more than the spiritual aspects of a person's life. Children who don't have the free meal program in schools, the voting issues, the housing issues—all of those kinds of things can be addressed by the church because people come together on Sundays, on Wednesdays, for prayer meetings, for regular worship

<sup>5</sup> Hoenk, Mary. "AME Church Takes Pride in 120 Years." *Lawrence Journal-World*, 1982 (Exact date of publication is unlisted). Document is on file at the Watkins Community Museum, Lawrence, KS.

<sup>6</sup> Id.

<sup>7</sup> "A Partial History of St. Luke AME Church" Document is on file at the Watkins Museum.

<sup>8</sup> Hoenk.



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Saint Luke AME Church  
Douglas Co., Kansas

service. You've got an ideal opportunity there to address the issues that are going on in the local community as well as on the national level.<sup>9</sup>

St. Luke was the social, cultural, and political bedrock for Lawrence's black community in the twentieth century.

St. Luke adds great value to the cultural character of Lawrence and is one of the last known standing structures in Lawrence that can be linked to writer Langston Hughes. Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri on February 1, 1902, and authored countless novels, short stories, and poems. Many of Hughes' writings document and make comment on the African-American experience of the early to mid-twentieth century America. He was one of the primary figures of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. His role in the aforementioned movement of African American artists and writers led admirers to refer to him as "the bard of Harlem" and "the Negro Poet Laureate." His works include *The Weary Blues*, *Not Without Laughter*, *The Ways of White Folks*, *The Best of Simple*, and *The Negro Artist & Racial Mountain*, which Amiri Baraka called "... the manifesto of the Harlem Renaissance." The work that is most closely tied to St. Luke is Hughes' magnificent autobiography, *The Big Sea*. In this work, Hughes describes certain experiences that were tied to St. Luke which helped shape his views and writing style. Hughes was clearly moved by his experiences as a member of St. Luke. His time there shaped his voice as a writer and his life.

In a 1960 radio address Langston Hughes made the following statement about the influence that his experience at St. Luke had on his writing and spiritual life:

I grew up in a not very religious family, but I had a foster aunt who saw that I went to church and Sunday school . . . And I was very much moved, always by the . . . rhythms of the Negro church . . . of the spirituals . . . of the sermons . . . And when I began to write poetry, that influence came through.<sup>10</sup>

Hughes also recounts an incident that occurred at a St. Luke revival. The pastor was calling the young members of the audience to come forward and be saved. As the other children were moved by the message, they got up walked forward to the pastor's platform. But Hughes sat and waited for a vision from Jesus to move him to be saved. The vision never came. After several hours, Hughes went forward to be saved, but the fact that he was not inspired by a vision from Jesus to do so, upset him greatly.

St. Luke is the last known standing structure in Lawrence that can be directly linked to Langston Hughes. The Patee Theater and Woodland Park, past links to Hughes, have been torn down. The Pickney and New

<sup>9</sup> Ford, Susan Jezak, "St. Luke AME Church." University of Kansas, Architecture 664, Spring 1994 p. 11. The original quote appeared in the *Lawrence Journal-World*, February 10, 1982.

<sup>10</sup> Ford, p.17. The original quote appeared in *Langston Hughes* by James A Emmanuel, Twayne Publishers, 1967.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Saint Luke AME Church  
Douglas Co., Kansas

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York Schools still exist but not in the original building where Hughes attended as a boy. On January 27, 2002, St. Luke's basement congregation and banquet area were dedicated as the "Langston Hughes Fellowship Hall."

### Architectural Significance

The Saint Luke AME Church is a good example of the ecclesiastical Gothic Revival style of architecture. Gothic church design was "promulgated by the Cambridge Society in England and *The Ecclesiologist*, which it published, as well as branch societies in the United States."<sup>11</sup> Stylistic characteristics exhibited by the nominated property are the twin crenellated, square towers, a steeply pitched gable and hipped roof, arched lancet windows, and polychromatic design details. The exterior is a brick veneer, wood-frame construction also typical of the time period and utilizing locally available materials.

Although there is no supporting documentation, the church may have been designed by architect John Anderson Lankford. Lankford was designated as the principle architect of the AME Church from 1908 through 1912, which was during the time when St. Luke was built. Lankford, as the national AME church organization's supervising architect, had two years of exclusive design rights for all AME church structures<sup>12</sup>. Lankford published a book on his philosophy of church design, and St. Luke clearly exemplifies the design philosophy about which he wrote.

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<sup>11</sup> Roth, Leland M. *A Concise History of American Architecture*. New York: Harper & Row, Publisher, 1979.

<sup>12</sup> Julia Mathias, interview and personal notes taken Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2003. On file with the author.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Saint Luke AME Church  
Douglas Co., Kansas

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### Bibliography

"*Black Churches: Cultural Institutions*", *Lawrence Journal World*, 2/10/82.

Bucher, Ward. *Dictionary of Building Preservation*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996.

Dezurko, E.R. *Early Kansas Churches*, Kansas State College Bulletin, 4/1/89.

Ford, Susan Jezak, *St. Luke AME Church*, manuscript for Vernacular Architecture 644, Spring 1994.

Ford, Susan Jezak, *Kansas State Register Nomination*, accepted August 18, 2001.

Hoenk, Mary. "AME Church Takes Pride in 120 Years." *Lawrence Journal World*, 1982. (Exact date of publication unlisted). Document is on file at the Elizabeth Watkins Museum.

Hughes, Langston. *The Big Sea*, Thunder's Mouth Press: New York, 1940.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

"A Partial History of St. Luke A. M. E. Church", Souvenir Program for the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration for St. Luke, February 21, 1960. Watkins Community Museum.

Pennington, Dorothy, *The Histories and Cultural Roles of Black Churches in Lawrence, Kansas*, University of Kansas unpublished manuscript, 1982.

Rifkind, Carol, *A Field Guide to American Architecture*, (New American Library, 1980.)

Roth, Leland M. *A Concise History of American Architecture*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1979.

Schick, Kaethe, *Lawrence Black Community 1870-1915*, partial unpublished dissertation, Elizabeth Watkins Museum.

Three Gables Preservation. *Kansas Historic Resources Inventory Reconnaissance Form*, completed January, 30, 1995.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10,11 Page 1

Saint Luke AME Church  
Douglas Co., Kansas

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### Geographical Data

### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on New York Street Lot 70, Assessor's Parcel Number 079-31-0-10-16-001.00, Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas. The property is bounded by to the west by New York Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Street to the North, and lots on the south and east. The east lot is vacant and New York School is located on the south lot.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property historically associated with the church. It is the original lot upon which the church was built in 1910.

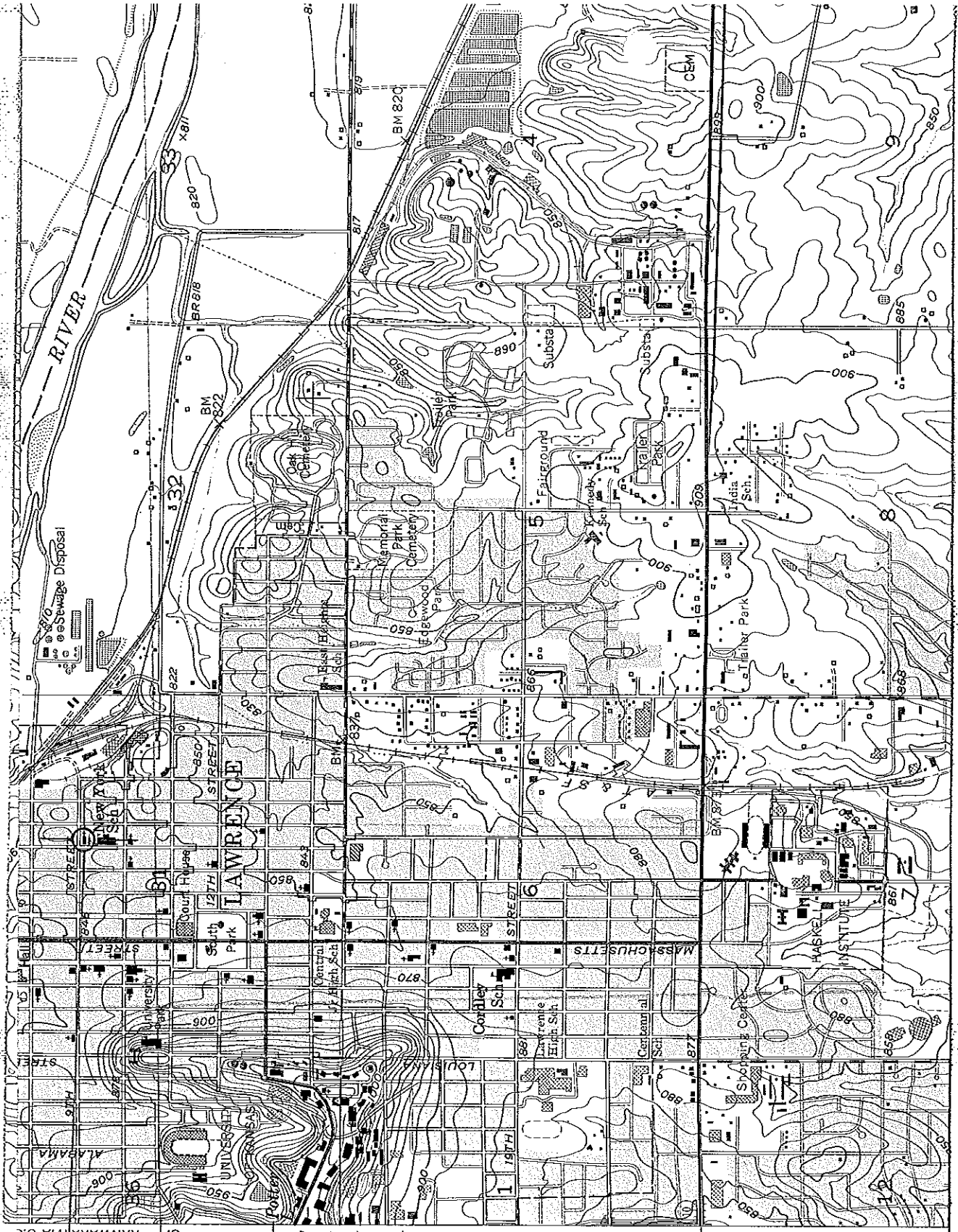
### Photographic Information

The following information is consistent for all photographs:

1. Saint Luke AME Church
2. Douglas Co., Kansas
3. Photograph by Patrick Zollner
4. July 20, 2005
5. Digital image on file at KSHS

The following information is specific to each photograph:

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Description of View</u>
1.	View of front elevation from the west.
2.	View from the north.
3.	View of north elevation stained glass window from the northeast.
4.	View from the southeast.
5.	View of western end of south elevation from the southeast.
6.	View of south tower entrance from the west.
7.	View of sanctuary and pulpit from the west.
8.	View of sanctuary from the east.
9.	View of room east of sanctuary from the south.
10.	View of north elevation entrance from the south.



TOP  
KANWAKARVIA U.S.

St. Luke A.M.E. Church  
 Douglas Co., Kansas  
 UTM Coordinates;  
 15/306740/4315320

4915  
 57°30"  
 T. 12 S.  
 T. 13 S.

4914

2.5 MI. TO U.S. 40  
 0.5 MI. TO U.S. 59

6961 IV NE  
 (LAWRENCE WEST)

