

AN HISTORIC SURVEY
OF
THE NORTHEAST NEIGHBORHOOD
IN ANADARKO, OKLAHOMA

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PART I

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this project were to survey the 12-block area described as the Northeast Neighborhood, also the site of the City's 1989-90 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Project Area, identify and characterize the buildings in the area, and identify reference material relating to the history of the area.

Anadarko and State contexts appropriate to the neighborhood include:

- Native Americans (Because of adjacent Indian Development); and
- Commerce and Urban Development (Because of noted business activity).

The Survey identified 132 buildings and also included a WPA drainage ditch. Only one of the buildings, the First Baptist Church (1910), is definitely of National Register quality, although the 1936 WPA Brick School should also be considered, in spite of extensive interior alterations. Residential development (apparently on a scattered basis) in the neighborhood dates to the early 1910's, although most of the oldest buildings are dated between 1916-1930; there is some indication that some of the homes were built elsewhere and moved into the neighborhood between 1920 and 1930. WPA activity in the mid-1930's accounts for a School Building and a Drainage Ditch.

The recommendations are National Register Nomination for

the First Baptist Church and further review and National Register consideration for the 1936 WPA Brick School; there are no other buildings which retain their architectural integrity of National Register quality in the area, nor is there any Historic District potential, based on current available data.

PART II.

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The neighborhood history document of the 12-block CDBG project area, as indicated on the map, is intended to provide a contextual background and individual structural data base for each building in the area. The survey emphasis was on the recording of standing buildings at a minimum level of documentation and was designed to provide a cost effective approach for increasing not only the area inventoried within the City of Anadarko, but also the number of recorded properties. The results obtained were expected to provide information useful in making management decisions about properties potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

To insure the usefulness of the project results as a cultural resources management planning tool, the basic objectives of the activity were:

1. To identify in the area, those individual properties and potential districts which, on the basis of age and retention of historic integrity, warrant further study to determine eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and to substantiate such assessments;

2. To identify and characterize those portions of the survey area which, on the basis of insufficient age or integrity, warrant no further study to exclude them from consideration for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, and to substantiate such assessments; and

3. To identify and annotate reference material necessary for completing National Register nominations of properties and districts in the study area that have been determined to warrant further study.

Survey Area and Boundaries

The Survey Area is a twelve (12) block area bounded on the west by Highway 8, on the east by 7th Street, on the south by the C.R.I. and P. Railroad Tracks, and on the north by Kansas Avenue. Five (5) of the twelve (12) blocks on the south are decreased in size because of the diagonal pattern of the railroad right-of-way.

Research Design and Methods

All properties, regardless of age or condition, in the survey areas, were documented to the following standards:

1. Within the intensive level survey areas, all individual properties regardless of age or condition were minimally documented. Minimum documentation included completion of the Historic Preservation Survey and Inventory form and photographs of the property.

2. All project work was consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Identification and Guidance for Intensive Level Survey

All photodocumentation was 35mm black and white photography. All photographic negatives have been placed in archival, clear plastic negative holders designed for binder storage (one roll per sheet, with negatives arranged so that strips do not extend beyond the edge of the sheet). All prints are five by seven (5"x7") glossy prints on standard, non-resin coated paper. An index of all photographs has been compiled for submittal with the negatives. The index includes a listing of each property (corresponding to the order of the file folders) with a cross reference to roll sheet and negative frame number.

The form designed by the OK/SHPO was used, as were the designations and codes indicated on the guidesheets. The computer-generated forms meet the following requirements:

1. Forms follow exactly the OK/SHPO format;
2. Forms are of letter quality print;
3. Forms are printed only on finished edge paper;
4. Forms are printed on twenty pound or heavier white, smooth finish paper;
5. Print is uniform in darkness and clarity;
6. Each form was placed in its own half cut, end tab, legal size, file folder with a typed label with county, city and address or legal description of the property, arranged as follows:
Numbered Avenues: Numerically by avenue number, alphabetically by direction and numerically by street address;

Numbered Streets: Numerically by street number, alphabetically by direction and numerically by street address;

Named Avenues: Alphabetically by avenue name, alphabetically by direction and numerically by street address;

Named Streets: Alphabetically by street name, alphabetically by direction and numerically by street address;

Miscellaneous designators, i.e. circles, drives, etc.: Alphabetically by name and direction and finally numerically by street address.

When the previous arrangements were not applicable, survey forms were organized alphabetically by plat name and numerically by Block and Lot numbers. Properties that could not be assigned to any of the previously mentioned arrangements were organized by County, Range, Township, and Section to the nearest quarter.

PART III

NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The City of Anadarko began with the opening of the Kiowa, Comanche, and Wichita-Caddo lands in 1901. These surplus lands of the southern Plains tribes living in western Oklahoma were sold at auction. Three counties were created from these lands--Comanche, Kiowa, and Caddo--and 320-acre townsites were set aside for county seats with Anadarko selected as Caddo's county government center.

The Northeast Neighborhood is a part of the Original Townsite Plat filed in 1901. However, most development in the area occurred much later. The two most appropriate historic contexts for review in an discussion of this Project Area neighborhood, are the "Native American" and "Commerce and Urban Development".

When the Indian Tribes were removed to the area in 1859, the Wichita Indian Agency was established as a part of the requirements of the peace treaty. The Agency employees lived in the area north of the Project Area neighborhood; this area was later known as "Old Town" and was a focal point for Native American activities until the homes were destroyed, removed or moved in the early 1900's; at that time, most of the "Old Town" occupants moved into the residential area to the east of the Central Business District, across the railroad tracks to the south of the study area. In the 1930's, WPA construction

in the area included the Athletic Field (on the north side of Kansas Avenue), and the Brick School (1936) at 302 East Washington. There was also a WPA Drainage Ditch constructed on the south side of the neighborhood, along the railroad tracks. The Athletic Field and Stadium is now gone.

Several factors account for the origin and development of the Black community in Anadarko. To promote peace in the area in the late 1800's, the U.S. Army had sent the Ninth U.S. Cavalry, an all-Black unit known as the "Black Buffalo Soldiers", to the Anadarko Indian Agency area. Many of these Black soldiers bought some of the best land in 1901 when the surplus acreage was made available at public auction. Black participation in the land runs into Oklahoma Territory was also promoted by Black boosters and immigrationist societies who developed the idea that Oklahoma could become an all-Black state. Black boosters, such as E.P. McCabe, used promotional schemes to lure Blacks into Oklahoma Territory prior to statehood in 1907. In 1904, the Town site of Clearview was platted in eastern Oklahoma by three Black businessmen, Lenauel Jackson, James Roper and John Grayson; Clearview was to be promoted as an all-Black Town, and actually achieved a population of over 250 persons by 1910. As these three founding fathers were selling out and leaving in 1911, James E. Thompson left Anadarko and moved to Clearview, where in just four years, he amassed considerable wealth, land and power. His greatest achievement, however, was the creation of the Patriarchs of

America, in January of 1911, described as an organization that would do for Black Americans what Masonry has done for the civilized world. James Thompson's days in Anadarko, from 1907 to 1911, are virtually unrecorded, but were spent in the Northeast Neighborhood, according to Ms. Anna Mae Brown.

Of the three counties created from the 1901 opening, Caddo attracted the greatest number of Blacks. By statehood, there were 1,148 Blacks living in Anadarko, or roughly 33 percent of the city's total population of 3,439. A thriving Black business district and residential section later developed in the northeast sector of Anadarko, located predominantly on the west side of the study neighborhood. Grocery stores, a barbershop, cafe, rooming house, and a variety of other businesses were established to serve the Black Community, which was denied these services by whites in the era of separatism.

In the 1950's, several businesses were started along the area adjacent to Highway 8, which have endured and become a major part of the black business economy in the community. The most notable of these is Wilsons's Bar-B-Q.

Life in the Black Neighborhood was heavily related to athletics, religion and music. As in most Black Towns, economic control usually rested in the hands of a few people, typically bankers; additionally such areas were the sources of a number of lodges, usually more social than benevolent.

Because the Anadarko economy relied heavily on agricultural production, most of the Black labor force was employed in farming. After Statehood, the doors seemed to open for a greater variety of Black business activity, and it is likely that the small beginnings of Black Commercial effort were first seen between 1907 and 1910.

PART IV

PHYSICAL SURVEY ANALYSIS

Results

Of the 133 surveyed buildings, only 1 is of National Register quality; the (1910) First Baptist Church; another requires further examination to determine the extent of interior alterations: the (1936) WPA Brick School. All of the other buildings, except those from the 1950's on are extremely run-down and most have been altered extensively. There are no notable architectural styles exhibited in the neighborhood, with the exception of the Bungalow, which forms the only discernible architectural pattern in the area. In summary, the survey results do not indicate the need for any special guidelines or restraints in the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for housing rehabilitation; nor do they suggest a potential for an historic district. Many of the homes in the area are vacant and dilapidated, or fire-damaged, and will be demolished as part of the City's Nuisance Abatement program; nothing in the research indicates that this process should be slowed or stopped for historic or architectural considerations.

Historic Properties and Types

The First Baptist Church of Anadarko is the most historically significant structure in the Neighborhood because: (1) it is the oldest unaltered religious structure in Anadarko, having been constructed in 1910, and (2) it is the only remaining cultural resource of the black community of Anadarko which retains both its historic and architectural integrity, in spite of physical deterioration.

On April 24, 1910, the cornerstone was laid for the First Baptist Church (Colored) of Anadarko. Deacons participating in the event included John Moore, Jim Nuckles and E.F. Nuckles. Black Baptist missionary work had begun in Oklahoma during the late nineteenth century and, by the religious census of 1906, there were approximately 16,000 Black Baptists.

The First Baptist Church retained its affiliation with the Baptist denomination until 1935 when it became the Church of the Living God (CWFF), which still holds services in the building each Sunday morning and evening as well as prayer meetings on Wednesday night.

Mrs. Anna May Brown, 89 year-old church elder and Sunday School teacher, recalls joining the First Baptist Church when she was a teenager. she stated that this was the first church building in Anadarko for either blacks or whites and was the religious and social focal point for the Anadarko black community from 1910 to 1935. Membership declined as the black population of Anadarko dwindled to

approximately 500 and today only about 30 people attend services at the church.

The (1936) WPA Brick School should be examined further to determine the degree of interior integrity remaining before it is recommended for the National Register.

Non-Historic Properties

All other recorded buildings (130) were not judged to be of historic or architectural significance, because of their (a) deteriorated condition, and (b) extensively altered status.

National Register Assessment

The First Baptist Church of Anadarko is a rectangle-shaped, detached religious building with a rusticated ashlar sandstone wall finish. It has a high-pitched gable roof covered with composition shingles. A two-story, square tower with pyramidal roof serves as the front entrance.

The facade, or north side, of the building contains two Gothic arched windows with masonry sills. These flank the tower which contains a plain wooden door with Gothic arch transom. Windows in the west side include four identical Gothic arched openings with 2/2 lights. The east side has the same window arrangement as the west wall.

The rear, or south side, consists of two openings. A plain wooden door is located near the southwest corner and one Gothic arched 2/2 window is set to the east of the door. Decorative elements are minimal. The two-story tower, Gothic arched openings, and masonry slip sills constitute the only architectural features.

The building has had no alterations during its history. It stands on the southwest corner of Fifty and Washington Streets in the black residential section of Anadarko. A small concrete block building (ca. 1955) is situated approximately 20' from the southwest corner.

PART V
RECOMMENDATIONS

This review concludes that there are limited actions that should be taken as a result of the Survey findings:

- (1) Re-submit the National Register Nomination for the (1910) First Baptist Church;
- (2) Re-examine the (1936) WPA Brick ~~Church~~^{School} to determine its eligibility for the National Register;
- (3) Continue to focus additional interview and research effort on Black businesses and business persons who live, or used to conduct business in the area; this is necessary to determine the full extent of the area comprising the "Black Central Business District" referenced in the nomination for the Church; and
- (4) Conduct additional research relative to James E. Thompson, a resident of the neighborhood from 1907 to 1911 (the founder of the Patriarchs of America), as well as other prominent blacks in Anadarko.

The available records do not adequately document neighborhood or Black Central Business District activity.

PART VI

NARRATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Very few primary resources were located for this project. The most significant of the secondary research materials is the National Register Nomination for the First Baptist Church, prepared by Mark C. Miller, a Geography student at Oklahoma State University in 1985. His references included an interview (1984) with Ms. Anna May Brown and excerpts from Black Oklahomans, a History: 1541-1972, by Arthur Tolson (Edwards Printing Co., New Orleans, 1972).

The project included a review of all available Sanborn Insurance Maps for Anadarko: 1902, 1904, 1906, 1907, 1910, 1916 and 1930 (which did not include all of the project neighborhood);

Other documents utilized in the project were The Black Towns by Norman L. Crockett (Regents Press of Kansas) and The Blacks in Oklahoma by Jimmie Lewis Franklin (University of Oklahoma Press, 1980). These last two works chronicled the pattern of life in Oklahoma's early black society, noting that several early-day prominent black townsites promoters and businessmen in Oklahoma had lived at one time or another in Anadarko.

Material was also used from the Oklahoma Historical Society's Context material for the WPA in Oklahoma, as well as the 133 survey forms for the project area.