

**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 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 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Cook Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, South

other name/site number Scruggs Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South; Scruggs Memorial Colored Methodist Episcopal Church

**2. Location**

street & town 3680 Cook Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Saint Louis N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis (Independent city) code 510 zip code 63113

**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.)

Mark A. Miles July 10, 2008  
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
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 certifying 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. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain):	_____	_____

**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	
2	1	buildings
		sites
		structures <input type="checkbox"/>
		objects
2	1	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**  
0

**6. Function or Use**  
**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

- RELIGION/religious facility
- RELIGION/church-related residence

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

- RELIGION/religious facility
- VACANT/NOT IN USE
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure

**7. Description**  
**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

- Gothic Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation limestone
- walls limestone
- brick
- roof asphalt
- other cast iron

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

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Cook Avenue Methodist Church, South  
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent city) MO  
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 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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Cook Avenue Methodist Church, South  
Name of Property  
Cook Avenue Methodist Church, South  
Name of Property

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1884-1905  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1884  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1905  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Persons**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Annan, Thomas B.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mauran, Russell & Garden  
\_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

St. Louis (Independent city) MO  
County and State  
St. Louis (Independent city) MO  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than an acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 741047.919 4281142.361  
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots No: 29-34, inclusive of Abner Stone's Subdivision and in block No. 2293 of the City of Saint Louis, together fronting 146 feet 5 inches on the South Line of Cook Avenue, by a depth Southwardly of 151 feet 2-1/2 inches to a public alley, having an aggregate width on the North line of said alley of 146 feet 6-3/4 inches bounded West by Spring Avenue, EXCEPTING there from the Southeastern part of lot No. 34 conveyed to the City of Saint Louis by deed recorded in Book 8249, Page 206.

Property Tax No. 2293 00 00100

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Judith White, Dianna Isaac-Johnson Ed. D., and Mary M. Stirtz

organization Scruggs Restoration Committee date 12/31/07

street & number 10501 Green Slope Drive telephone 314-867-0714

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63136

**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**

name/title Trustee Board of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Street & number 4466 Elvis Presley Blvd. telephone 901-345-0580

city or town Memphis state TN zip code 38116

**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

**Cook Avenue M. E. Church, South  
St. Louis (Independent City) MO**

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### Summary

Facing north, Cook Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at 3680 Cook Avenue in the City of Saint Louis, Missouri, is a cross-gabled Gothic Revival church with rectangular side-tower and an Akron plan Sunday school expressed as a semi-circular rotunda. The building was constructed in 1884 of load-bearing stone and brick to designs of Thomas B. Annan (St. Louis). The property includes an adjacent (freestanding) two-story and attic, load-bearing stone and brick parsonage in Tudor Gothic with cross-gabled roof; the house was erected in 1905 to designs of Mauran, Russell & Garden (St. Louis). A non-contributing, small, one-story garage built of concrete block in 1952 stands at the rear of the parsonage. Overall, the property has survived remarkably intact with only minor losses and alterations to the original fabric.

### Elaboration

The nominated property is located a few blocks northwest of the Midtown Historic District (NR 7/07/1978) in a neighborhood of late 19th/early 20th century single and multiple family dwellings. In recent years, scattered new housing has filled in vacant neighborhood lots though blocks near the church survive with dwellings contemporary with its mid-1880s construction. The reconfiguring of Spring Avenue in the early 1960s resulted in demolition of residences directly east of the church property.

### Church exterior: Photos #1, #2, #3, #9, #11

Rising from a stone basement, the church is on an elevated site approached by flights of concrete stairs. The church proper (nave/sanctuary), rectangular in plan, faces north on Cook Avenue and features a cross-gabled roof of asphalt shingles (originally all slate); the Sunday school area of the church building, semi-circular in plan, extends westward from the tower (**Photo #9**) to form a clerestoried rotunda roofed with asphalt shingles. The primary (north and west) facades of the church are constructed of rock-faced St. Louis limestone (**Photos #1, #2**); the south (rear) and east (side) facades are red brick (**Photo #3**). Indiana limestone of smooth finish is employed as belt courses and trim for windows, doorways, buttress caps, and other detailing. Wood is employed for all window framing and tracery.

Entrances to the church on the primary (north) elevation are through pointed arch openings (with blind traceried wood tympana) on the east and west elevations of a shed-roof vestibule/narthex; the double entry doors are replacements. A row of five rectangular stained glass windows mark the front (north) elevation of the vestibule; corners are punctuated with stepped buttresses topped with short pink granite columns with foliated limestone capitals. A large pointed arch window of stained glass is centered in the gable-front wall above the vestibule; smaller pointed arch windows pierce the wall below the belt course. A low parapet wall featuring a pointed arch opening extends eastwardly from the nave wall.

A stone tower of four stages (marked by belt courses) flanks the west side the gable-front nave; the base of the tower features a large pointed arch entrance with carved stonework in the arch

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**Cook Avenue M. E. Church, South  
St. Louis (Independent City) MO**

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spandrels and a blind tympanum filled with wood tracery; the wooden double entry doors are replacements. Inside, a door opens to the nave/sanctuary. Stone buttresses accent three corners of the tower. On the lower three stages, openings are glazed; the top level (belfry) is filled with wood louvers; the bell has been removed (**Photo #1**). Originally, the tower was capped with a pyramidal roof that was destroyed in 1927 by a tornado (**Photo #11**).

Stone buttresses between vertically oriented rectangular windows (double-hung with transoms) mark the exterior of the Sunday school rotunda (**Photo #2**). Small basement windows (headed with rock-faced lintels) are now filled with concrete block. The rotunda's sloped roof is topped with a slope-roof clerestory of small two-light ribbon windows grouped into units of three by short wood columns.

The red brick east (side) elevation (**Photo #3, right**) exhibits a buttressed gabled wall with limestone coping. The wall is pierced by stained glass windows in the form of a large wheel, set above a large pointed arch window flanked by smaller windows, all headed with geometric wheel tracery resting on lancet designs. The southernmost window (partially boarded) is composed of two lancets: one a door opening to the side yard and the other a window.

Centered in the gable of the red brick south (rear) elevation (**Photo #3, left**) is a wheel window; two windows (now boarded) headed with segmental arches are located at the outer sides of the wall. Below the windows, a hipped roof covers a series of utility rooms (original to the church) displaying rectangular windows on the south (alley) elevation; this portion of the church now connects to the east end of a small, flat-roof addition constructed in 1964-65 of concrete block faced with red brick (**Photo #2, right**). The three-bay primary (west) elevation fronts on Redd Foxx Lane and is articulated with simple modernistic detailing of cast concrete that forms a border around the openings.

### **Church Interior and plan: Figs. 1 & 2, Fig. 3 (plan); Photos #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #10**

The floor of the vestibule/narthex (approximately 10 by 22 feet) is laid with encaustic tile in muted colors (**Photo #10**). Entry from the vestibule into the five-bay nave is gained through pointed arch openings fitted with original "storm" doors covered in quilted leather; ornamental brass door pulls are affixed to the doors. The nave floor (approximately 48 by 72 feet) of hard pine slopes downward toward the chancel/choir. Pews, seating four to five hundred, are of oak with quatrefoil designs on the ends; the pews are angled toward the pulpit and choir, and are divided by two aisles running the length of the nave. Two large stained glass windows dominate the north (**Photo #4**) and east (**Photo #7**) gabled walls of the nave; smaller windows flank the large east window. A vibrant multicolored flower motif is carried out in the design of the glass with only occasional use of Christian symbols such as the cross, anchor, and triangle; the large east window displays a small, painted glass portrait (circa 1910) of benefactor Richard M. Scruggs. A few of the subordinate windows feature stained glass in geometric designs (largely circular). The nave is articulated with an elaborate hammer beam roof springing from stone

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Cook Avenue M. E. Church, South  
St. Louis (Independent City) MO

corbels on plaster walls (**Photo #8**). Metal tie rods cross the nave (east-west) with filigree metal ornaments centered on each rod; tie rods also converge at the nave crossing.

The nave/sanctuary terminates at the elevated chancel/choir set within a shallow recess; a wheel window is featured at the apex of the Gothic arch (**Photo #7**). The choir space is marked off by a semicircular communion railing of mahogany; steps on each side lead to the raised pulpit platform, and to a higher platform that houses the choir, enclosed by a richly paneled wood parapet. Original liturgical furniture (pulpit and chairs) remains intact. The historic organ (inoperable) remains in the choir area; the organ pipes have been moved from their original location above the organ to sidewalls (**Figs. 1 & 2**). Small pointed arch doorways with tympana of wood tracery flank the chancel and lead to utility rooms.

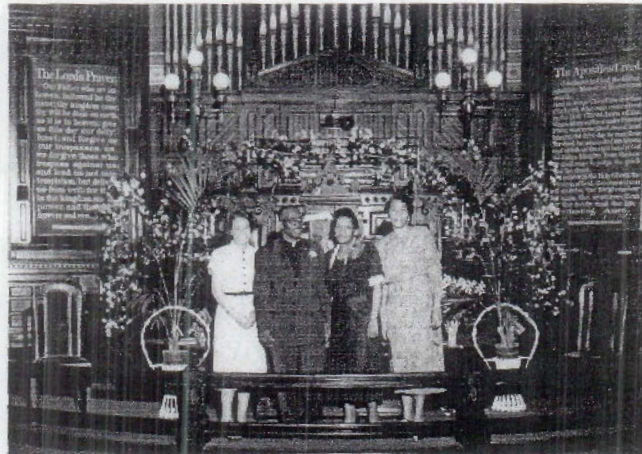


Figure 1: Chancel Choir, c.1950

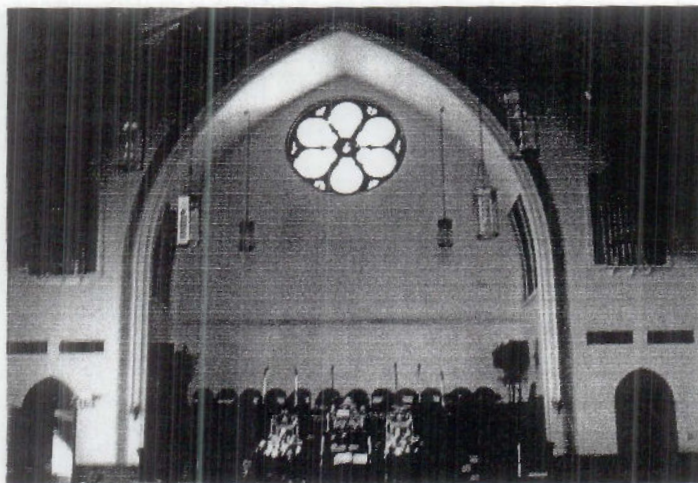


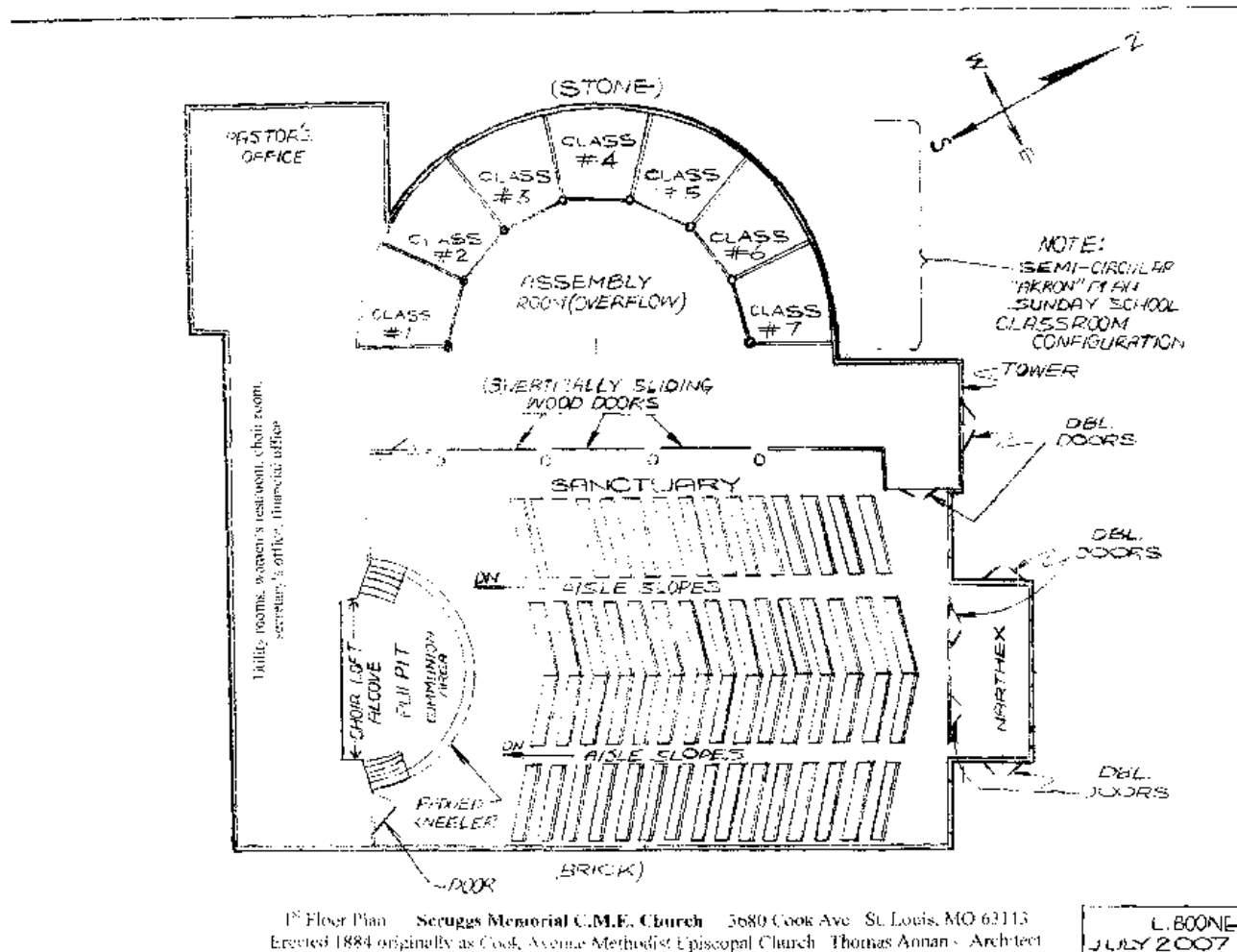
Figure 2: Chancel Choir 2007

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Cook Avenue M. E. Church, South  
St. Louis (Independent City) MO



**Figure 3: First floor plan, Sunday school, Cook Avenue M.E. Church, St. Louis, Missouri**

### Sunday school: Fig. 3, Photos #5, #6, #13, #14

The west side of the nave opens to the assembly space of the Sunday school (Fig. 3) through three large vertically-sliding doors of paneled oak and glass; each sliding door measures approximately 12 1/2 feet wide by 14 feet high. Tall cast iron columns (painted white) with foliated capitals support this opening (Photo # 5) and also support the gallery and the open timbered ceiling over the assembly space of the Sunday school (Photo # 6). Seven classrooms ring the curvilinear outer (west) wall (Photo #14); the northernmost classroom has been converted to a bathroom, but it retains the original entry door. The classrooms, finished in dark

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St. Louis (Independent City) MO**

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wood wainscoting and wall paneling, interconnect through hinged doors in the partition walls which also are pierced with two small windows (in most, glazing has been replaced by wood panels). Access from each classroom to the center assembly space is gained through a hinged door of paneled wood, and through tall, vertically sliding wood panels that flank the door. The Sunday school is lighted by clerestory windows and by rectangular windows on the outside (west) wall (**Photo #13**). Above the classrooms, the cast iron columns in groups of three (separate rectangular transoms of decorative frosted glass); additional frosted glass panels are still in place on some of the classroom entry doors; other door glass has been replaced with wood panels. The gallery is articulated by a wooden arcade of pointed arches; ornamental pressed metal fills arch spandrels, and is displayed in paneling that bands the gallery. An ornamental cast iron railing edges the gallery on the east side, above the vertical-sliding doors (**Photo #6**). Entry to the gallery is by stairs in the tower.

### **Parsonage and garage: Fig. 4 (plan) and Photos #1 (far left), #12**

Constructed in 1905 to designs of Mauran, Russell & Garden, the two-bay parsonage fronts north 25 feet on Cook Avenue (**Photo #1**) (immediately east of the church), and rises two full stories with a large finished attic story and full stone basement. The house, finished in rock-faced limestone on the primary (north and west) elevations, is articulated in Tudor Gothic to harmonize with the materials and Gothic design of the church. The cross-gabled, dormered roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The north and west elevations display double-hung windows (glazed with nine lights over one) with stone lintels, sills, and quoining of smooth-finished limestone; basement windows are headed with flat stone lintels. The primary entry to the house, located on the side (west) elevation, is through a pointed arch doorway. Two chimney stacks at the northeast corner serve fireplaces in the first floor living room and second floor master bedroom.

On the north (Cook Avenue) elevation, second story windows are accented with gabled hoods and half-timbering (painted white). The gabled west façade also features half-timbering (painted white), and a second story bay window. The east elevation is blind covered with buff colored concrete, probably an alteration related to demolition of adjacent houses when Spring Avenue was reconfigured and cut through in the early 1960s. The south (rear) elevation is red brick with double-hung windows (two over two lights) headed with segmental arches. Directly south of the house stands a small, gable-roofed garage (non-contributing) constructed in 1952 of cement block; the garage opens to an alley.

### **Integrity**

Evidence of the historic integrity of the nominated property is exhibited throughout the exterior and interior. The high survival rate of original materials, design, workmanship, location and setting strongly conveys the sense of historic time. Alterations to the property have been minor and do not significantly diminish its historic identity. Changes include the loss of the pyramidal roof on the church tower in a 1927 tornado; replacement of original slate shingles; construction of a small brick addition on a subordinate elevation of the church; and cement surfacing of a side

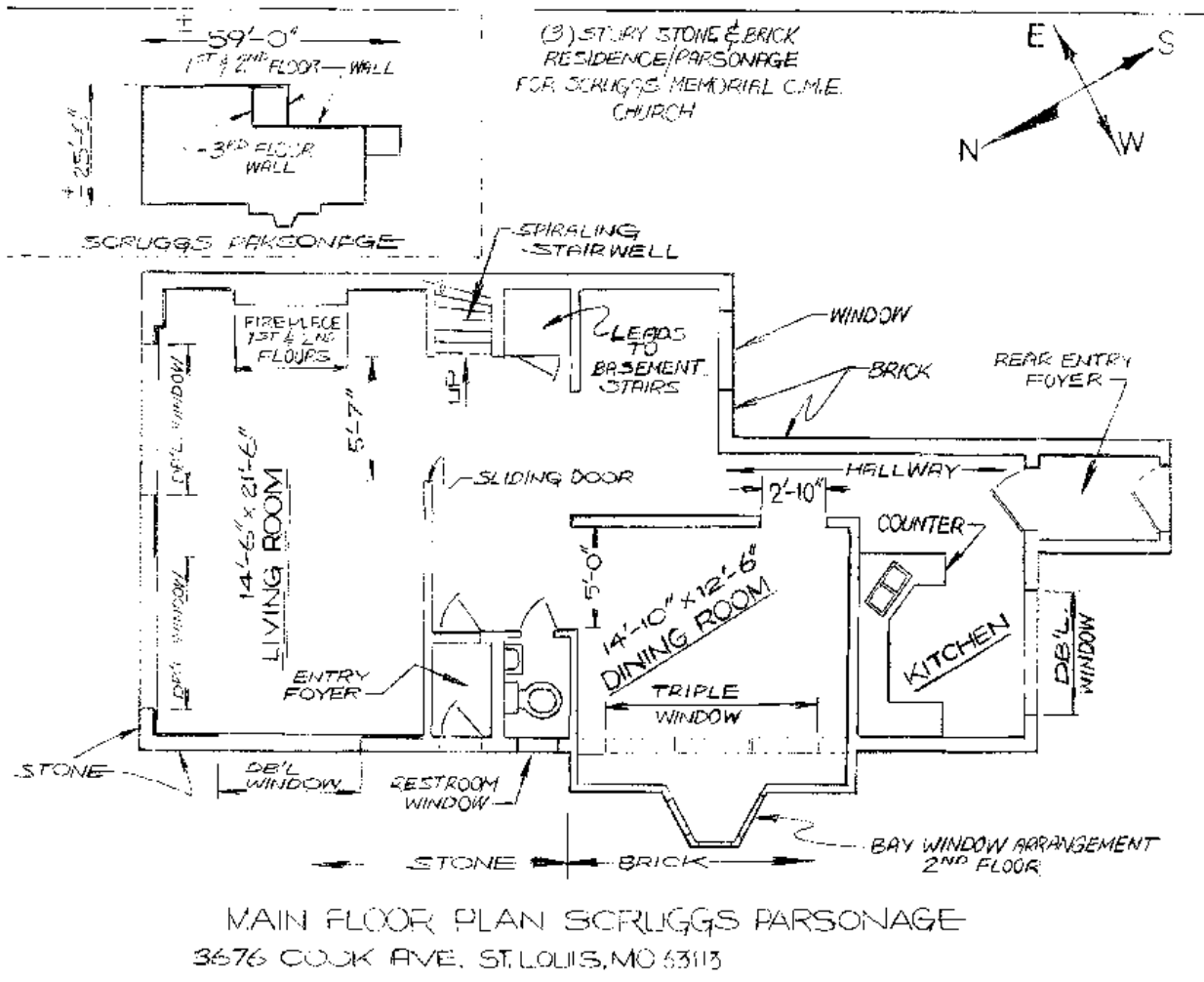
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(east) elevation of the parsonage when Spring Avenue was cut through in the early 1960s  
(Photo #12).



L. Boone  
July 2007

Figure 4: First floor plan parsonage, Cook Avenue M.E. Church, South St. Louis, Missouri

The parsonage has been vacant since 1993 and has sustained some water damage due to a leaky roof. The congregation is in the process of having the roof repaired.

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**Cook Avenue M. E. Church, South  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO**

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### SUMMARY

The Cook Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 3680 Cook Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, is nominated to the National Register under **CRITERION C**, and is locally significant in the area of **ARCHITECTURE**. Constructed in 1884, the Gothic Revival style church is one of St. Louis' outstanding examples of an Akron Plan religious building. While the church is richly articulated throughout, Cook Methodist is distinctly set apart from other St. Louis churches of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by the architectural expression of its Akron Plan Sunday school space prominently exhibited on the exterior by the semi-circular shape and corresponding layout of classrooms on the interior. The uncommon attention given to articulating this portion of the church reflects strong influence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestant Sunday school movement, and in particular, design influence of the original Akron Plan, introduced in 1868 in a Methodist Sunday school building in Akron, Ohio. The high artistic standards found in Cook Avenue Methodist are embodied in the overall design and in features such as stained glass, open timber ceilings, cast iron detailing, encaustic tile, and stonework. The quality of the architecture is indebted to the collaboration of prominent local laymen of the Methodist Church, South: most notably, Thomas B. Annan, architect of the church, along with Richard M. Scruggs and Samuel Cupples. The latter two men were affluent merchants who were active in Sunday school work and generous benefactors of Cook Avenue Methodist. The stone-faced parsonage, built in 1905 to designs of Mauran, Russell & Garden, harmonizes with the materials and styling of the church building. The period of significance, 1884-1905, reflects the construction dates of the church (1884) and the parsonage (1905).

### ELABORATION

In many respects, the founding history of Cook Avenue Methodist Church, South, together with the design of the building, is a virtual textbook example of characteristics associated with the American Sunday school movement during the period of its "second birth" at the close of the Civil War. The genesis of Cook Methodist followed a national pattern of Protestant urban churches which typically began as small mission Sunday schools dedicated to instructing children of families that had settled in emergent neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup> Page Avenue Sunday School, the predecessor of the nominated Cook Avenue Church, opened in 1872 in a modest frame building in the newly developing West End of St. Louis. Located on Page Avenue, the mission school was just a few blocks away from the future site of the Cook Avenue Methodist church building.

The mission Sunday school was supported by members of St. John's Methodist Church, South (demolished), then located in a prestigious but older neighborhood some distance from its satellite school. Like its counterparts throughout the country, the Page Avenue Sunday School served the parent church as a pioneering vehicle for recruiting families to form the

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<sup>1</sup> Arne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution 1790-1880* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 33; 166-67.

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**Cook Avenue M. E. Church, South  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO**

nucleus of a permanent future church. Credit for giving new impetus or a postbellum "second birth" to the Sunday school movement belongs to the "Illinois Band," an enthusiastic group composed largely of church laymen from the Midwest. Members of this new generation of interdenominational leaders included businessmen such as Dwight L. Moody, a Chicago salesman and later founder of the Moody Bible Institute, and one clergyman, John H. Vincent, a Methodist pastor in Chicago who became a leading force in the movement, particularly in education. The Illinois Band shared a passionate belief in the principles of "organization and efficiency" as powerful keys to success in life. They believed that those principles, if applied systematically to the Sunday school, could greatly improve its effectiveness and advance its scope.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of developing networks of Sunday school supporters and of staffing schools with qualified teachers and superintendents led the new movement to seek leaders from the business world that offered successful models of organization as well as a source of financial aid to fledgling mission schools.<sup>3</sup> In St. Louis, Richard M. Scruggs (1822-1904), founding partner of a leading department store, Scruggs Vandervoort & Barney Dry Goods Co., and Samuel Cupples, (1831-1912) head of Samuel Cupples Woodenware Co., were typical of the kind of persons recruited to the cause of Sunday school reform. These two St. Louisians joined a force of business giants in other cities, including John D. Rockefeller, John Wanamaker, and H. J. Heinz, all of whom served as superintendents of church schools.

Both Scruggs and Cupples were active members of St. John's Methodist Church, South, and became deeply involved in its mission Sunday school work with Scruggs taking over the job of superintendent for Page Avenue Sunday School (forerunner of Cook Avenue Methodist). Both men kept abreast of progressive Sunday school ideas through membership in local, state and national organizations.<sup>4</sup> Later, Scruggs and Cupples were called to the building committee that planned Cook Avenue Methodist Church. The largest part of funding for the new church came from Scruggs who contributed \$35,000 (half the total cost of construction), and from Samuel Cupples' donation of \$10,000. Business associates of the two men covered much of the remaining balance.<sup>5</sup>

One of the primary goals central to Sunday school reform, and one which would have significant implications for church architecture, involved the adoption of a uniform curriculum and method of instruction, an organizational device enabling the movement to efficiently disseminate its Sunday school chain to the far corners of the country, or even the world. The uniform system of

<sup>2</sup> Robert W. Lynn and Elliott Wright, *The Big Little School: Sunday Child of American Protestantism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 56-59.

<sup>3</sup> Lynn and Wright, *The Big Little School*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>4</sup> "Sunday-School Conventions," in William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis* (New York: The Southern History Co., 1899), pp. 2179-82.

<sup>5</sup> *Missouri Republican* 25 October 1885.

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**Cook Avenue M. E. Church, South  
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religious education promised a common language, a unifying influence among the diverse Protestant groups that would strengthen the sect's position in America while empowering its Sunday school effort. Already, by the mid-1860s, the Methodist church had forged a uniform lesson series for the use of that denomination.<sup>6</sup>

Samuel Cupples was among the St. Louis delegates to the interdenominational national convention of Sunday school teachers that in 1872 officially approved a uniform program of study. The Uniform Lesson System, as it became known, provided for an orderly sequence of weekly lessons allowing all children regardless of denomination or place of residence to study the same Bible passage each week. The Uniform Lesson System also provided for a graded approach to learning, following the example of the public school model. The Sunday school student body thus was subdivided into various age groups; all ages covered the same weekly scripture, but each group received separate instruction appropriate to its age or level of learning.<sup>7</sup>

Architecturally, the question of proper housing for the Sunday school had received little serious attention before the close of the Civil War. Sunday instruction of children often took place in church basements or in the sanctuary or gallery when services were not in session. Children were gathered together in one group regardless of age, in the tradition of the secular one-room schoolhouse. However, as interest grew in the uniform lesson plan and graded study groups, progressive churchmen such as Lewis Miller, a Methodist industrialist in Ohio, saw an urgent need to find an appropriate architectural setting for the work of the school.

The design solution developed by Miller in 1866-1868 was introduced for the first time in Akron, Ohio, at First Methodist Church (demolished) where Miller was superintending the Sunday school.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Lynn and Wright, *The Big Little School*, pp. 63-71; Boylan, *Sunday School*, p. 98.

<sup>7</sup> Edwin Wilbur Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement and The American Sunday-School Union 1780-1917* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1917), pp. 310-07.

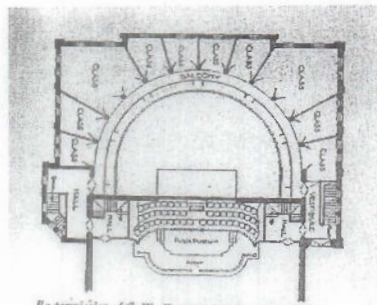
<sup>8</sup> Though Miller is credited with the essential plan, Ohio architects Walter Blythe and Jacob Snyder assisted him. Marion Lawrence, *Housing the Sunday School or A Practical Study of Sunday School Buildings* (Philadelphia: the Westminster Press, 1911), pp. 83-86.

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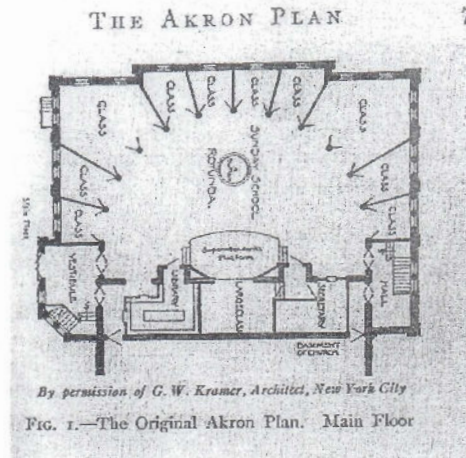
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Cook Avenue M. E. Church, South  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO



By permission of G. W. Kramer, Architect, New York City  
FIG. 2.—The Original Akron Plan. Balcony Floor

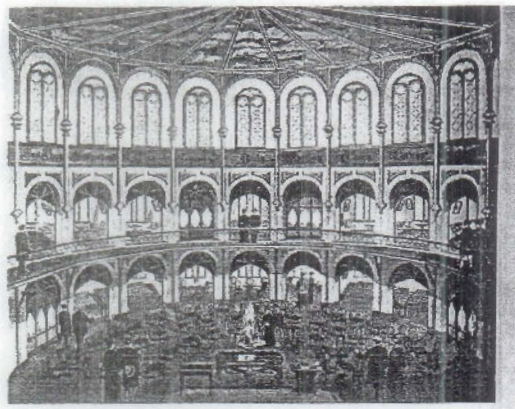


By permission of G. W. Kramer, Architect, New York City  
FIG. 1.—The Original Akron Plan. Main Floor

**Figure 5: Balcony Plan,**

(Figures 5 & 6 show Sunday school, First Methodist Church, Akron, Ohio)  
(From: J. H. Kilde, *When Church Became Theatre*, p. 178)

**Figure 6: First floor plan**



**Figure 7: Interior, Sunday school, First Methodist Church, Akron, Ohio**  
(From: J. H. Kilde, *When Church Became Theatre*, p. 177)

Miller's Akron plan (Figs. 5,6,7), which became the model for Cook Avenue Methodist in St. Louis, answered the functional needs of the modern Sunday school by providing spaces both for "togetherness and separateness." The center open space or rotunda, ringed by a two-tiered series of individual classrooms, allowed the whole school to be "brought together . . . for simultaneous exercises" (usually at the opening and closing of the instruction period) and then, "with the minimum of movement be divided into classes for uninterrupted class work."<sup>9</sup> The provision of

<sup>9</sup> The quotation is attributed to Methodist Bishop John H. Vincent (one of the

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work.”<sup>9</sup> The provision of a vertically rising, glass-paneled wood door in each classroom permitted students, when the doors opened, to participate in the collective exercises without moving from their assigned room; when the doors closed, the rooms became private areas for class study. The superintendent presided over the group exercises from a platform in the rotunda where, when the doors closed, he could observe teachers and students. Miller’s school in Akron also gave careful attention to other practical needs such as acoustics, light, and ventilation. The semicircular, amphitheater-like layout of the Sunday school borrowed from theater and auditorium designs that offered well-developed solutions for good acoustics and sight lines, important for the school’s group activities. Outside-wall windows in each classroom and clerestory windows above the rotunda permitted entry of abundant light and air.<sup>10</sup>

The design solutions offered in the Akron Sunday school plan gained national attention, widely praised in the religious press, at conventions, and by building committees and teachers who traveled to Akron to inspect the building. By the mid-1870s, leading architects in the East had adopted the plan in new churches, and at least two St. Louis 1870s churches (both demolished) employed major Akron features. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Akron design could be found nationwide, applied to churches large and small.

The greatest influence of the Akron plan, however, proved to be in the selection of one element (vertical-sliding doors) rather than in the adoption of the far more costly, fully developed design with a ring of classrooms exhibited in the Cook Avenue Church. The vertical-sliding doors (used only in the classrooms at Akron) gained wide popularity as a relatively inexpensive, convenient means of opening church auditoriums to any adjacent room (sometimes a Sunday school or a fellowship hall) whenever additional congregational seating was needed. (These large, movable doors replaced the solid wall (**Fig. 6**) that separated the sanctuary and school at Akron.) Thus over time, the term Akron Plan gained general usage for church designs that otherwise showed limited reference to the original plan.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The quotation is attributed to Methodist Bishop John H. Vincent (one of the Illinois Band), whom Miller consulted for input on requirements of an ideal school plan. Quoted in Lawrence, *Housing the Sunday School*, p. 84. Later, Miller and Vincent founded the Chautauqua movement; for the founding of that movement, see Edwin Wilbur Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement 1780-1917 and the American Sunday-School Union 1817-1917* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1917), pp. 373-75.

<sup>10</sup> Lawrence, *Housing the Sunday School*, p. 89; Brother Christopher Stephen Jenks, BSG, “The Akron Plan Sunday School” in *Common Bond* (New York Landmarks Conservancy) December 1995 : 2-3.

<sup>11</sup> Jeanne Halgren Kilde, *When Church Became Theatre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 177-179.

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In contrast to the majority of other so-called Akron plan churches in St. Louis, Cook Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, South illustrates a clear intention on the part of the architect, Thomas B. Annan, and building committee members Richard Scruggs and Samuel Cupples to emulate the acclaimed Sunday school model in Ohio by adoption of Akron's semicircular layout of classrooms (**compare Fig. 6 with Fig. 3**); the clerestoried rotunda; and the two-tiered interior elevation (**compare Fig. 7 with Photo #6**); the Cook Methodist church additionally shows influence of the popular adaptive use of vertical-sliding doors (12 1/2 feet wide) that open the west wall of the St. Louis sanctuary to its Sunday school to provide additional seating for church services (**Photo# 5**).

The Cook Avenue Sunday school is further distinguished by the richly articulated interior spaces, noted by the local press in 1885 to be "not an incident of the building...but an integral part of the architectural plan and probably costing as much as the auditorium itself. They are the handsomest and most suitable rooms for their purpose west of the Mississippi."<sup>12</sup> The school rooms feature a variety of materials exhibiting fine craftsmanship that contribute to the overall artistic effect, including the high open-timbered ceiling, tall ornamental cast iron columns and gallery railing both by Christopher & Simpson (St. Louis), ornamental pressed tin paneling by Mesker & Bros. (St. Louis), frosted-pattern glass transoms, and dark wood wainscoting and wall paneling installed in the classrooms.

Significantly, the Cook Avenue Methodist congregation "neither a rich nor a large one" (135 members in 1885) gained a church building of high artistic expression throughout. The nave/sanctuary also displays an elaborated hammer beam ceiling to great dramatic effect. Of special interest also are the striking stained glass windows in the sanctuary, aptly described by the local press in 1885 as a "rich flowery pattern."<sup>13</sup> The floral motif (in vibrant colors) featured in the major windows observed the Methodist practice of avoiding figural religious themes in church decoration.

The windows further suggest a latter 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestant view embracing the beneficence of nature as a "serpent less garden of Eden" in which children and adults found signs of deity everywhere in nature - in flowers, sunlight, birds and trees.<sup>14</sup> Set low, the windows interact with the space of the congregation seated in the pews inviting worshipers into the 'garden'; rippled glass and glass nuggets effectively enliven the passage of light into the sanctuary. Other noteworthy artistic features original to the sanctuary area include the vestibule floor laid in encaustic tile by T. I. Foy (St. Louis), oak pews, the finely crafted mahogany communion railing, pulpit and liturgical chairs (the latter furniture placed on a raised platform within the shallow apse).

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<sup>12</sup> Missouri Republican 25 October 1885.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Lynn and Wright, *Big Little School*, p. 51.

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Richard Scruggs' commitment to Cook Methodist remained strong after the completion of the church building. He transferred his membership from St. John's Methodist Church, South to Cook Avenue Methodist, and continued to superintend the Sunday school at Cook Avenue. Following Scruggs' death in 1904, the church received a bequest of \$10,000 to be used for erecting a parsonage and for church repairs.<sup>15</sup> The high standards of design exhibited in the church were carried out in the parsonage erected in 1905 to designs of Mauran, Russell & Garden. Fronting north on Cook Avenue adjacent to the church, the parsonage features primary facades of limestone articulated in Tudor Gothic in keeping with the Gothic Revival styling and materials of the church. Not long after the completion of the parsonage, the Cook Avenue congregation adopted a new name, "Scruggs Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South," in honor of Richard M. Scruggs' founding role and long support. In further tribute to the benefactor, the congregation placed a stained glass portrait of Scruggs in the east window of the sanctuary.

### The Architects and Richard M. Scruggs

**Thomas B. Annan** (1839-1904) was among the leading architects practicing in St. Louis at the time he designed Cook Avenue Methodist Church, though most of his best-known major works have been demolished. Born and raised in St. Louis, Annan trained and worked with three of the city's most prominent designers: first Thomas Walsh, then George I. Barnett, and finally Francis D. Lee, before opening his own office in 1879. For two years, he was the instructor of the class in architecture at Washington University.<sup>16</sup> He was one of the founding members and also served as president of the St. Louis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The partnership Annan formed with Major Francis D. Lee captured a major commission in 1871 for the design of the St. Louis Merchants' Exchange Building (demolished) at 3rd and Chestnut Streets. The firm designed a number of large business buildings (all razed) for the old commercial district of the riverfront; the list includes Third National Bank, Gay Building, Hunt Building and the Ferguson Building. The only known survivor of the partnership is the Italianate Bradford-Martin Building (c.1875), later part of the May Company Department Store (NR 6/23/83) at 555 Washington Avenue.

Important later work in the partnership Thomas Annan formed with his sons includes early 1890s Romanesque Revival business blocks: the Lambert Pharmaceutical Building (NR 2/24/1983), still standing at 2101-07 Locust Street; the Roe Building, and Boatmen's Bank Building (both demolished). In 1890, Annan designed an opulent residence for Samuel Cupples (NR 10/8/1976), and in 1895, Cupples enlisted Annan to prepare plans for a \$100,000 Methodist Orphans' Home at 4385 Maryland Avenue in Saint Louis. The firm's mausoleum for Samuel S.

<sup>15</sup> *St. Louis Republican*, 30 November 1904, "R. M. Scruggs' Will Filed For Probate."

<sup>16</sup> James Cox, *Old and New St. Louis: Concise History of the Metropolis of the West and the Southwest* (St. Louis: Central Biographical Publishing Co, 1894) p. 316.

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Cupples appeared in the October 1892 edition of *Northwestern Architect* along with a store for Joseph Lucas and a residence for W. C. Wertheimer. Only two other church commissions have been identified: Grand Avenue Presbyterian and Mount Auburn Methodist Church, both razed.<sup>17</sup>

The partnership of Mauran, Russell & Garden, formed in 1900 by John Lawrence Mauran, Ernest John Russell, and Edward Gordon Garden, received the commission for Cook Methodist parsonage in 1905. Previously, all three men worked for one of the nation's leading architectural firms, Shepley, Ruten & Coolidge (Boston), the successors to H. H. Richardson. Mauran, a graduate of M. I. T., came to St. Louis in 1893 where he managed the branch office of the Boston firm. The new partnership immediately gained prestigious commissions, including designs for First Christian Scientist (1903), Second Baptist (1907), Racquet Club (1906), all in Holy Corners Historic District (NR 12/29/1975); Pilgrim Congregational (1906) and Church of the Messiah, Unitarian (1907) both in Mt. Cabanne/Raymond Place District (NR 9/13/2002). Numerous commercial buildings designed by the firm are also listed in the National Register either individually or in historic districts.

**Richard M. Scruggs**, born February 10, 1822 in Bedford County, Virginia, received early business training in retail dry goods in his native state. After settling in St. Louis in 1850, Scruggs earned his fortune as a dry goods merchant, first with McClelland, Scruggs & Co., and later as the head of Scruggs, Vandervoort & Barney Dry Goods Co. The store grew to be one of downtown St. Louis' largest department stores, servicing the Saint Louis area for more than 100 years until closing in 1967. Scruggs' philanthropic contributions to numerous cultural, civic, and religious institutions matched his contributions to the city's commerce. Over many decades, Scruggs gave liberally of his business acumen and personal fortune to advance the progress of such organizations as the Missouri School for the Blind, Mullanphy Emigrant Relief Fund, St. Louis Mercantile Library Association and the St. Louis Provident Association.

Scruggs' long, dedicated service as a layman in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South stands out as a prominent chapter in his public life. In addition to his pivotal role as benefactor to Cook Methodist Church, Scruggs became involved in development of the denomination statewide, participating as a delegate to church conferences, serving on boards and giving financial support to church missions and educational causes. His deep interest in the work of the Sunday school movement led to a position as an executive officer in the Missouri branch of the national Sunday-School Association. Scruggs' skilled management and underwriting of the cost of the Sunday School Auxiliary Society expanded its reach into all 114 counties of the state. In 1899, it was reported that the Scruggs initiative in Missouri "advanced the State to the front in Sunday-school work—from the thirteenth to the third in the table of statistics for the United States, and only excelled by three of the more populous States."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.landmarks-stl.org/architects/bio/thomas\\_b\\_annan\\_1839\\_1904/](http://www.landmarks-stl.org/architects/bio/thomas_b_annan_1839_1904/)

<sup>18</sup> William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis* (New York: Southern History Co., 1899) pp. 2034-2035.

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Glass portrait of Scruggs  
Detail, east window, Cook Methodist



Engraving of Richard M. Scruggs  
J. Thomas Scharf, *History of St. Louis City and County*,  
1883

### Later History of Cook Avenue Methodist Church, South (1925-2008)

Following disbandment in June 1925, the congregation of Scruggs Memorial Methodist Church, South (formerly known as Cook Avenue M. E. Church, South) sold its historic property on Cook Avenue for a consideration of \$45,000 to trustees of Lane Tabernacle Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (CME Church).<sup>19</sup> An affluent, large African American congregation of middle class professionals, Lane Tabernacle had plans underway to establish a new mission in the Cook Avenue church, a property described by the *St. Louis Argus* as "one of the landmarks for white aristocracy of St. Louis." The local press further noted that the "acquisition of this most valuable property for the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in St. Louis" expressed Lane Tabernacle's interest in making St. Louis the "Mecca of Methodism," adding that the passing of the property "into the hands of a colored congregation marks one of the many large real estate transactions completed by our people."<sup>20</sup>

The new mission was given the title, "Scruggs Memorial Colored Methodist Episcopal Church" (in 1954, "Christian" replaced the word "Colored" in the church title). Within a month after opening services July 12, 1925, the congregation had grown to 100 members and the Sunday school boasted 75 students. Over the next decades, the congregation continued to expand, reaching a membership peak of around 1,100 in the 1950s. Despite eventual downsizing due to outward-migration of members from St. Louis City to suburban St. Louis County, Scruggs

<sup>19</sup> St. Louis Recorder of Deeds, Volume 4226, p.300 (30 June 1925); the Methodist Quarterly Conference stipulated that any new church built with funds from the 1925 sale of the former Cook Ave. Methodist Church must carry the Scruggs name; this condition was met in 1929 with the construction of "Scruggs Methodist Church" for a white congregation located at 3443 Grace Avenue on the south side of St. Louis.

<sup>20</sup> *St. Louis Argus*, 10 July 1925, "Grand Opening of Church at Cook and Spring Aves."

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Memorial C.M.E. congregation in July 2008 will mark 83 years in the property originally built as Cook Avenue M.E. Church, South.

Church dignitaries traveling from out-of-state to attend the 1925 installation of the new C.M.E. congregation on Cook Avenue included 91-year-old Bishop Isaac Lane (1834-1937) of Jackson, Tennessee (the national headquarters of the CME church until 1970). Bishop Lane's missionary work in St. Louis in the late 1890s and his founding role in his namesake congregation (Lane Tabernacle CME) underpinned the Bishop's special interest in the opening of Scruggs Memorial CME in St. Louis.<sup>21</sup> Born into slavery in Madison County, Tennessee, Rev. Lane early became a prominent and influential leader in the black church. He was elected bishop in 1872 assigned to the Tennessee area only two years after the C.M.E. Church officially became an independent denomination in 1870 at the General Conference held in Memphis.

A breakaway from the Methodist Episcopal, South (controlled by white clergy), the new C.M.E. Church was founded by newly emancipated slaves in West Tennessee, and drew its early members from the old "colored churches" within the white Methodist Church, South. Though the C.M.E. represented one of the first religious denominations developed by southern blacks it sometimes derisively was called the "old slave church" because of its historical ties to the white Methodist Church, South. By 1890, C.M.E. membership had mushroomed to 103,000, heavily concentrated in the states of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi; by 1945, C.M.E. congregations had expanded into eighteen states (including Missouri). The denomination's strong emphasis on education for blacks led to the establishment of schools and colleges, including Lane College (Jackson, Tennessee) founded by Bishop Isaac Lane in 1882; Paine College (Augusta, Georgia); Texas College (Tyler, Texas); and Miles College (Birmingham, Alabama).<sup>22</sup>

Today, Scruggs Memorial C.M.E. Church continues to serve as a place of Methodist worship and Sunday school education though the congregation has changed from a white Methodist to a black Methodist denomination. The congregation remains proud of its heritage and has respectfully maintained and preserved the architectural integrity of the church property it has occupied since 1925.

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<sup>21</sup> *St. Louis Argus* 17 July 1925.

<sup>22</sup> "The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture," accessed online at [tennesseeencyclopedia.net](http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net), sponsored by the University of Tennessee & Tennessee Historical Society.

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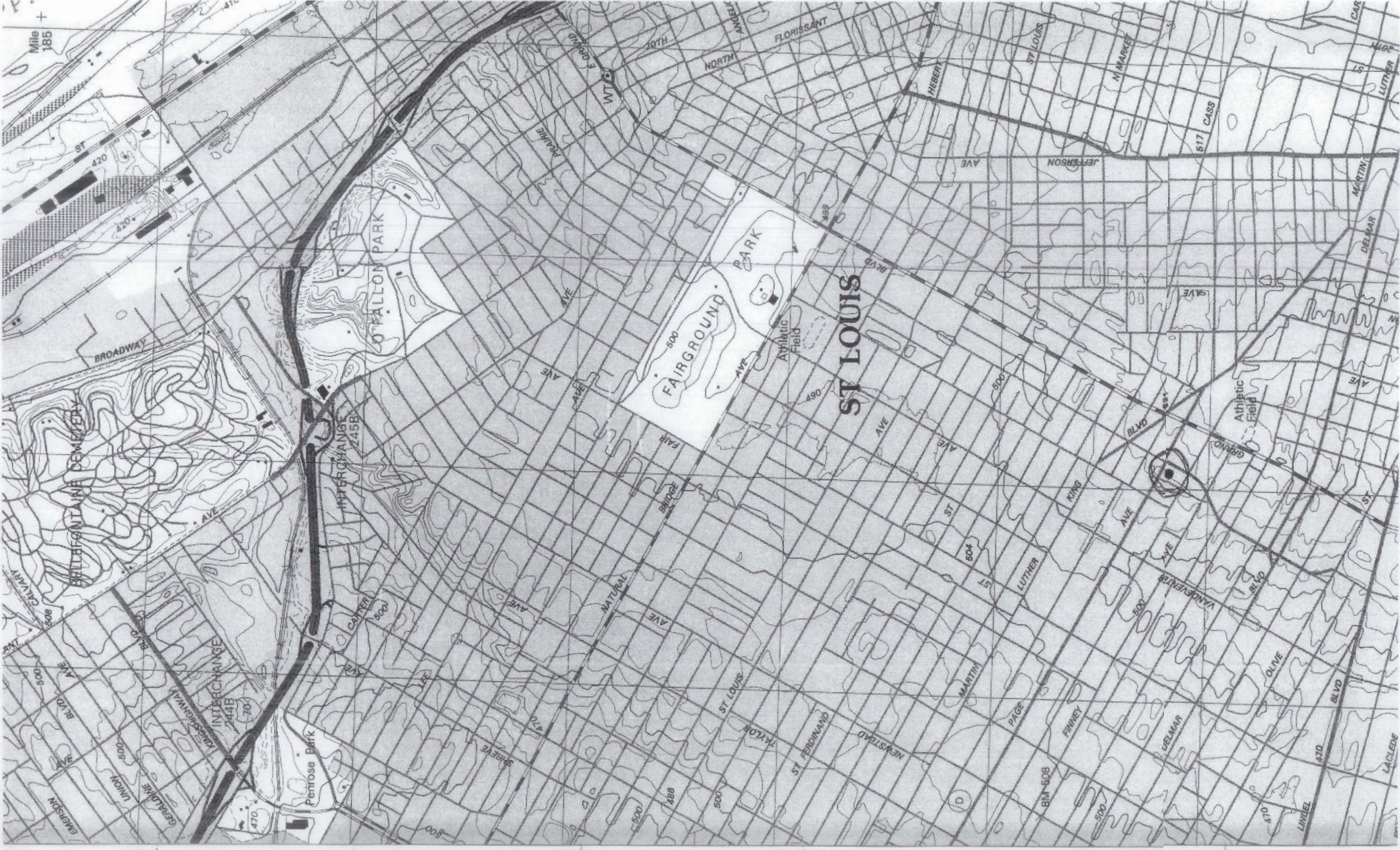
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### Section 10: Boundary Description

The nominated property is located at 3680 Cook Avenue. Lots No: 29-34, inclusive of Abner Stone's Subdivision and in block No. 2293 of the City of Saint Louis, together fronting 146 feet 5 inches on the South Line of Cook Avenue, by a depth Southwardly of 151 feet 2-1/2 inches to a public alley, having an aggregate width on the North line of said alley of 146 feet 6-3/4 inches bounded West by Spring Avenue, EXCEPTING there from the Southeastern part of lot No. 34 conveyed to the City of Saint Louis by deed recorded in Book 8249, Page 206.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property includes all of the land historically associated with the Cook Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, South.



Cook Avenue M.E. Church South  
 3680 Cook Avenue St. Louis (Independent City) MO  
 Zone 15 Easting: 741047.919 Northing: 4281142.361

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 (IL WEST)











RELATIONSHIP

GENUINE

SELF-DRIVEN

STEWARDSHIP











WEEKLY BULLETIN

of

Cook Avenue Methodist Church,

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1904.





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