

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mosaic Templars State Temple

Other names/site number: Site #PU4434

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 906 South Broadway Street

City or town: Little Rock State: AR County: Pulaski

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national X statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<hr/>	<hr/>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/>	<hr/>
Signature of commenting official:	Date
<hr/>	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

BUSINESS/office building
HEALTH CARE/hospital

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

BUSINESS/office building

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

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Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, TERRA COTTA

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Mosaic Templars State Temple Building is located at 906 South Broadway in downtown Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas. Broadway, which is also the route of U.S. 70 through Little Rock, was historically the main through street in Little Rock, and as part of U.S. 70 was part of the "Broadway of America." The two-story brick and terra cotta building is located on the west side of the street, and faces east. The front façade is decorated with ornate terra cotta decoration and the building rests on a brick foundation. The roof is currently a membrane roof. Fenestration throughout the building is two-pane, metal-framed stationary windows that were installed sometime after 1992.

Narrative Description

The Mosaic Templars State Temple Building is located at 906 South Broadway in downtown Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, and it is the last remaining historic building associated with the Mosaic Templars organization in Little Rock. (The two buildings directly to its north are new buildings that replaced previous buildings that burned.) Broadway, which is also the route of U.S. 70 through Little Rock, was historically the main through street in Little Rock, and as part of U.S. 70 was part of the "Broadway of America." Ninth Street, which is the street to the north, was historically the city's center of African-American culture and commerce.

The two-story brick and terra cotta building is located on the west side of the street, and faces east. The front façade is decorated with ornate terra cotta decoration and the building rests on a brick foundation while the other façades are much simpler facades comprised mainly of plain brick walls. The walls were originally red brick with light-colored terra cotta decoration, but the brick walls were painted white and the terra cotta was painted green sometime after 1992. The roof is currently a membrane roof that is behind a low parapet on the north, east, and west sides.

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Fenestration throughout the building is two-pane, metal-framed stationary windows that were also installed sometime after 1992.

Front/Southeast Façade

The front façade of the building is symmetrical in arrangement. On the first floor is a central recessed entrance with a metal-framed plate-glass door and plate-glass sidelights and transoms. The entrance is surrounded by terra cotta detailing with shields surrounded by foliate designs and “x” borders. A terra cotta cornice with dentils projects above the entrance and a shield with foliate detailing on either side is located above the cornice. The central entrance is flanked on each side by a single window opening that has a two-pane, metal-framed, stationary window. The sill of the windows is a projecting cast-concrete water table that spans the façade. At the north end of the façade is a recessed entrance with a metal-framed plate-glass door. Above the entrance is a decorative terra cotta panel that reads “STAIRWAY.” To the right of the entrance is the building’s cornerstone, which reads “19 STATE TEMPLE 21 / MOSAIC TEMPLARS OF AMERICA / FOUNDED / MAY 22, 1882 / BY / J.E. BUSH & C.W. KEATTS / W.T. BAILEY, ARCHITECT / SIM JOHNSON, CONTRACTOR.” At the south end of the façade is a recessed brick panel that mimics the north entrance. Above the entrance is a decorative cast-concrete panel that is blank but which mimics the panel above the north entrance.

In between the first and second floors, the façade is spanned by a decorative terra cotta frieze. In the center of the façade, above the main entrance, the frieze reads “MOSAIC STATE TEMPLE.”

The second floor of the front façade is fenestrated by three windows located in slightly recessed sections of the façade. Each window opening has a two-pane, metal-framed, stationary window. The central window lines up with the central entrance on the first floor and the other two windows line up with the first floor windows. Each window has a terra cotta sill and a terra cotta window hood that is part of a band that spans the façade. The non-recessed parts of the façade have decorative picket designs, with narrow pickets between the windows and wider pickets near the north and south ends of the building.

Above the central second-floor window, in a slightly taller part of the façade, is a decorative terra cotta panel with crossed shepherd’s crooks with a “3” above, a “V” to the left, an “S” to the right and a figure below.

Side/Southwest Façade

The southwest façade of the building is divided into multiple bays, and the terra cotta frieze and water table wrap around the building to the easternmost bay of the façade. The first floor of the southwest façade is fenestrated by thirteen single-pane, metal-framed, stationary windows. In addition, there are also two window openings with two-pane, metal-framed, stationary windows. These two windows are located in the easternmost bay, and the second bay in from the west end.

The second floor of the southwest façade is fenestrated by five single-pane, metal-framed, stationary windows. In addition, there are also six window openings with two-pane, metal-framed, stationary windows. These six windows, beginning at the eastern end of the building,

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are located in the second and sixth through tenth bays. In addition, the seventh bay from the east end now contains two louvered vents and a partially bricked-in window opening.

Rear/Northwest Façade

The first floor of the rear façade has a central entrance with a door. There is no fenestration to the south of the entrance, and to the north of the entrance is a shed-roofed projection that houses the mechanical equipment. The projection may be original to the building; at least it is known that it was in place by 1939 according to the Sanborn maps for Little Rock.

The second floor of the façade also has a central entrance with a metal fire door with a single rectangular window in the upper right-hand corner that leads to a metal fire escape that was added to the building after 1992. To the north of the entrance is a single two-pane stationary window and to the south are two window openings that were bricked in at a later date.

Side/Northeast Façade

Like the southwest façade, the northeast façade of the building is divided into multiple bays, and the terra cotta frieze and water table wrap around the building to the easternmost bay of the façade. Also at the eastern end is the north side of the building's cornerstone, which reads: "19 STATE TEMPLE 21 / P.H. JORDAN, S.G.M. / JENNIE M. MILLER, S.G.S. / GEO. E. BROWN, BURIAL SEC'Y. / TEMPLE TRUSTEE BOARD / P.H. JORDAN, PRES. / W.H. ESTELL, SEC'Y. TREAS. / T.J. PRICE, ATTORNEY / GEO. W. KELLEY / JOHN CAMPBELL." The first floor of the northeast façade is fenestrated by eight single-pane, metal-framed, stationary windows. In addition, there are also three window openings with two-pane, metal-framed, stationary windows. These three windows are located in the easternmost bay, and the first and second bays in from the west end.

The second floor of the southwest façade is fenestrated by eleven single-pane, metal-framed, stationary windows. In addition, there are also three window openings with two-pane, metal-framed, stationary windows. These three windows, beginning at the eastern end of the building, are located in the eighth and twelfth through thirteenth bays.

Interior

The interior of the building has all non-historic finishes likely installed when the building was last renovated in the 1990s. The plan of each floor is similar with a central hallway and rooms lining each side of the corridor. There are small lobby spaces at the front of each floor that would have catered to the medical offices that most recently occupied the building. In addition an elevator is located near the northeast corner of the building.

Integrity

With respect to the exterior of the building, it has relatively good integrity from the time of its construction in the 1920s. The largest changes to the exterior of the building, all of which have occurred since 1992, have included the replacement of the windows and the painting of the brick and decorative terra cotta detailing. The interior, on the other hand, has had significant alterations, at least to finishes. Currently, the plan of the interior is likely close to the original layout, but no historic finishes remain on the interior. Although the setting of the building

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remains urban like it was during the 1920s, the types of buildings around the building have changed. During the historic period, Broadway, as the route of U.S. 70, included many auto-related buildings, such as gas stations and auto sales and service buildings. Although some modern gas stations and auto facilities still exist in the area, there are also many fast-food restaurants, including Wendy's and Starbucks right across the street. In addition, the construction of I-630 just to the south of the building has also introduced a new and non-historic element into the building's setting.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE:Black

Period of Significance

1921-c.1940

Significant Dates

1921

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Walter Thomas Bailey, Architect

Sim Johnson, Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Mosaic Templars State Temple is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of African-American businesses and fraternal organizations in the late nineteenth century in Arkansas. The Mosaic Templars of America was founded in 1882 and incorporated in 1883 by former slaves John Edward Bush and Chester W. Keatts as an African-American fraternal organization that offered mutual aid to the black community. At its peak, the Mosaic Templars had over 100,000 members in chapters in twenty-six states, the Caribbean, and South and Central America. The Mosaic Templars State Temple is the last remaining historic building associated with the Mosaic Templars of America Headquarters, and its prominent location at 9th and Broadway, which was the heart of Little Rock's (and the state's) African-American business district, helps to illustrate the organization's importance in the state's black community.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

Settlement in the Little Rock area began shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. Although surveying land and offering it for sale did not begin until 1815, a few settlers were in the area prior to then. Edmund Hogan, for example, who was originally from Georgia and came to Arkansas via Missouri, was living on the north bank of the Arkansas River opposite Little Rock where he operated a ferry by 1812. Another distinguished early settler was Wright Daniel who settled at the base of Big Rock Mountain prior to 1814 and opened a gristmill in 1815. When the Arkansas Territory was created in 1819, the state's first capital was at Arkansas Post. However, it was not the best location since it often flooded and was far away from the majority of the territory's population. In 1820, a new centrally-located site for the capital was chosen on the south bank of the Arkansas River at the Little Rock.¹

Initial settlement and development in Little Rock was focused on the river. The original plat of Little Rock consisted of 88 square blocks stretching south from the river to what is now Eleventh Street. By the 1860s, however, the city began to expand beyond the original plat, notably with the platting of the Woodruff's and Masonic additions on the city's east side, the Wright's Addition on the south side, and the Capitol Hill Addition on the west side. Apparently, building sites on the city's west side were popular. An announcement in the November 21, 1872, issue of the *Arkansas Gazette* stated that "This property consists of twenty-seven full and fractional blocks, overlooking the Cairo and Fulton railroad as it leaves the city. ... This is a fine property,

¹ Roy, F. Hampton, Sr., and Charles Witsell, Jr., with Cheryl Griffith Nichols. *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*. Little Rock: August House, 1984, pp. 12-14.

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and from its geographical position, will soon become a portion of the city. Upward of one hundred lots in the addition have already been disposed of, and are at this time being improved.”²

In the state’s capital city of Little Rock, and also within the city’s original plat, 9th Street was the center of African-American life and culture. The character of the corridor developed in the late nineteenth century as the dwellings along 9th Street began to be replaced with commercial buildings and lodge halls. However, the heyday of the corridor came during the first half of the twentieth century.³

Throughout its publication run, *The Green Book*, which was a travel guide that catered to African-American travelers, listed many places along 9th Street, or just off of the corridor on the side streets, that catered to African-American travelers. From hotels and tourist homes and restaurants to beauty parlors and barber shops and night clubs, African-Americans could find everything that they needed on 9th Street. One could dine at restaurants like the Brown Bomber or the Pic-A-Rib and then relax at the Lafayette or Shangri-La night clubs. If one overdid it partying, the right medicine could probably be found at the Floyd or Children’s Drug Store before you headed back to your room at the Graysonia Hotel or The Marquette Hotel or the tourist homes operated by Mrs. F. F. Boone or Mrs. T. Thomas, among others.⁴

Although the 9th Street corridor in Little Rock was the center of the city’s African-American community, and in certain respects the center of the state’s African-American community, it wasn’t strictly due to the presence of businesses that catered to African-American travelers. Others businesses existed in the 9th Street area, and along Broadway, that were significant to the state’s African-American population, most notable of which was the Mosaic Templars of America.

The Mosaic Templars was founded by two former slaves, John Edward Bush and Chester W. Keatts, in 1882 and incorporated in 1883. With respect to the founding of the organization, the *History of the Mosaic Templars of America* states:

As the purpose was only to correct local conditions [of African Americans in Little Rock], plans were laid and with a little band of thirteen persons the first lodge was organized known as Zephro Temple No. 1, on May 21, 1882, at Little Rock, Arkansas...

The organization of this lodge formed the nucleus around which has been built the now magnificent institution. The formation of this branch, however, does not mark the beginning of the business career of the institution, because one year lapsed before the Articles of Incorporation were filed and the charter granted to do business, which was May 24, 1883. The date of

² *Ibid*, pp. 19, 104.

³ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Little Rock, Arkansas, 1892, 1897, 1913, 1939 and 1950.

⁴ *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. 1936 – 1963/64 editions found at <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/the-green-book/#/?tab=about&scroll=16>.

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filing of the Articles of Incorporation was on May 22, 1883. And we can therefore feel safe in saying that the Mosaic Templars of America began business as a fraternal society on that date.⁵

The Mosaic Templars organization offered illness, death, and burial insurance to African Americans at a time when white insurers did not treat black customers equally. The name derived from the name of Moses and the Mosaic Templars' purpose was linked to Moses' leadership role in leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. The founding of the organization in 1882 is also likely linked to an 1881 study carried out by Prudential that showed that African Americans had a higher mortality rate, and subsequently led to many insurance companies charging higher rates or refusing to insure African Americans.⁶

The Mosaic Templars manifested a larger fraternal movement that developed during the late nineteenth century. Thousands of people, both men and women, black and white, joined a number of organizations that offered insurance benefits and friendship and fellowship to their members. However, due to the fact that white fraternal organizations in the United States refused to issue charters to black groups, they either had to get a charter from an organization's European counterpart or create a new and separate fraternal organization. The Mosaic Templars was an example of an independent African-American fraternal organization not based on a white counterpart.⁷

As an organization that provided illness, death, and burial insurance to its members, the Mosaic Templars consisted of several departments that provided several different types of services, including endowment, monument, analysis, uniform rank, recapitulation, records, and a juvenile division. The monument department, for example, gave every member at the time of their death a custom-made 'Vermont marble marker' engraved with the Mosaic Templars of America logo.⁸

The governance of the Mosaic Templars was carried out by an executive committee of seven chief officers, which included National Grand Master, National Grand Scribe/Treasurer, National Chief Grand Deputy, National Grand Medical Examiner, National Attorney General, National Grand Auditor, and National Monument Secretary-Treasurer. John Bush, one of the Mosaic Templars founders, served as the National Grand Scribe/Treasurer until his death in 1916 and Chester Keatts, the other founder, served as the National Grand Master until his death in 1908.

⁵ Bush, A. E., and P. L. Dorman. *History of the Mosaic Templars of America – Its Founders and Officials*. Little Rock: Central Printing Company, 1924, pp. 133-134.

⁶ Wintory, Blake, and Ashan R. Hampton. "Mosaic Templars of America." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1186>.

⁷ Wintory, Blake, and Ashan R. Hampton. "Mosaic Templars of America." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1186>.

⁸ Wintory, Blake, and Ashan R. Hampton. "Mosaic Templars of America." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1186>.

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After Bush's death, his sons, Chester and then Aldridge, served as the next two National Grand Scribe/Treasurers.⁹

The establishment of the Mosaic Templars Headquarters at 9th and Broadway began in 1911 when the organization purchased land at the southwest corner of the intersection. The first building built on the site was the National Grand Temple, its national headquarters, which was designed by Little Rock architect Frank M. Blaisdell and built by the Windham Brothers Construction Company of Birmingham, Alabama. The building's cornerstone was dedicated on May 18, 1913, and the building was finished by October 15, 1913, when Booker T. Washington delivered the dedication speech. However, as the Mosaic Templars organization grew, another building was needed and a two-story annex was built to the south of the headquarters in 1918.¹⁰

Although the Annex was built in 1918, it was only a couple of years until a third building, the Mosaic Templars State Temple, was built in 1921. The fact that the organization had real property in the form of the national headquarters, annex, and state temple was highly unusual for an African-American fraternal organization. As noted in the *History of the Mosaic Templars of America*:

NATIONAL PROPERTIES

The success of the Order is not only reflected in its great accession of a membership of 108,000, but it stands out singularly from other fraternals of the race in the accumulation of large reserves in real properties. Its national headquarters located in the city of Little Rock represents a total outlay of \$200,000.00, having upon these premises two elegantly appointed and modernly equipped office buildings. The annex building, a two-story structure, serves only for the purpose of housing the various national departments of the organization. The main building, a four-story edifice, contains rented office suites, store-rooms, and a spacious auditorium. ...

STATE PROPERTIES

The erection of the National Temple was only the beginning of the plan to erect such buildings in each State jurisdiction. Since the inception of the idea, the States of Arkansas, Alabama, and Louisiana have purchased sites and erected buildings that are creditable to any institution. The States of Texas, Tennessee and Oklahoma have also purchased sites and plan the early erection of suitable buildings.

⁹ Wintory, Blake, and Ashan R. Hampton. "Mosaic Templars of America." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1186>.

¹⁰ Wintory, Blake, and Ashan R. Hampton. "Mosaic Templars of America." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1186>.

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These various “temples” are used for the housing of the State officials, as well as producing a revenue to each respective jurisdiction. In order to finance the building operations of these structures, a per capita tax was assessed and in this way no outside aid has ever been solicited. The combined cost of the real estate and buildings belonging to these various jurisdictions represent an investment of \$280,000.00, which is included in the total assets of the Order.¹¹

The Mosaic Templars State Temple was designed by African-American architect Walter Thomas Bailey who was born in Kewanee, Illinois, on January 11, 1882, to Emanuel and Lucy Reynolds Bailey. After graduating from Kewanee High School, Bailey began studies at the University of Illinois in Champaign in September 1900. Bailey studied in the architectural program at the University, and he was also a member of the students “Architect’s Club.” Bailey graduated from the University of Illinois in June 1904 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in architecture, and on October 15, 1904, he married Josephine L. McCurdy. The couple would have two daughters, Edyth Hazel, born in 1905, and Alberta Josephine, born in 1913.¹²

Bailey’s professional career began in 1904 when he worked as a draftsman in the office of Henry Eckland, and he had returned to Champaign by February 1905 when he worked for a short time with the firm of Spencer and Temple. However, his career really got a boost in September 1905 when he became the head of the Mechanical Industries Department as well as the supervisor of the architectural and planning aspects of the Tuskegee Institute.¹³

In 1916, Bailey opened his own architectural practice in Memphis, Tennessee, where he specialized in designing churches. He also landed many commissions through business contacts with lodges of the Knights of Pythias, a notable African-American fraternal organization, and it ultimately led to Bailey obtaining the commission for the National Pythian Temple in Chicago, an eight-story building that was planned to be the national headquarters of the Knights of Pythias. The building was estimated to cost more than \$1 million and it was touted to be “the largest building, financed, designed, and built by African Americans.” As a result of the building’s construction, Bailey moved his practice to Chicago in 1924.¹⁴

Even though the African-American business community in Chicago was known for sponsoring new buildings, Bailey received few large commissions during the period. Rather, his practice focused on smaller commercial, church, and remodeling projects. Bailey’s practice shrank further during the Great Depression, and his last major design was the 1939 design for the First

¹¹ Bush, A. E., and P. L. Dorman. *History of the Mosaic Templars of America – Its Founders and Officials*. Little Rock: Central Printing Company, 1924, pp. 174-176.

¹² Wilson, Dreck Spurlock, ed. *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865-1945*. New York: Routledge Books, 2004, p. 15.

¹³ Wilson, Dreck Spurlock, ed. *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865-1945*. New York: Routledge Books, 2004, p. 15.

¹⁴ Wilson, Dreck Spurlock, ed. *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865-1945*. New York: Routledge Books, 2004, pp. 15-16.

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Church of Deliverance in Chicago, an Art Moderne church design that was radically different than most ecclesiastical buildings of the period.¹⁵

The career of Walter Thomas Bailey was cut short when he died at the age of 59 on February 21, 1941, from pneumonia that was the result of complications from heart disease. At the time of his death, Bailey was still working on two projects, the interior remodeling of the Olivet Baptist Church and a design for the Ida B. Wells Homes, a large public housing project in Chicago for African Americans.¹⁶

The contractor for the Mosaic Templars State Temple was Simeon "Sim" Johnson, a local black contractor in Little Rock. Johnson had already built at least one building of similar size in the area – the Taborian Hall at 802 West 9th Street – which was built between 1916 and 1918.¹⁷ Interestingly, a notice in the November 17, 1921, edition of the *Manufacturers Record* also indicated that: "Ark., Little Rock – Sim Johnson will erect additional story to building at 802 W. 9th St., cost \$19,000."¹⁸ However, it is unknown if the work was ever carried out. Given the fact that Johnson was an African-American contractor that had already built at least one building of similar size and complexity in the area made him a perfect choice for the job of building the Mosaic Templars State Temple.

The building permit for the construction of the building was issued in February of 1921. The *Arkansas Gazette* reported on March 6, 1921, that "February was a good month for the builders, especially the home builders. The records at the Department of Public Works show that 173 permits were granted during the month for a total of \$185,070 worth of work..." Among the permits issued in February was a permit "...to Sim Johnson to build [a] two-story, fireproof building, 906 Broadway, \$88,774..."¹⁹

Once the permit was issued for the construction of the building, it was not long until the work began. However, reports on the construction of the building were few and far between in the newspaper. The next article on the building appeared in the May 22, 1921, *Arkansas Gazette*, which reported:

One of the largest building operations now well under way in Little Rock has been more than half completed with only slight notice having been given it. The Mosaic Templars of America, Jurisdiction of Arkansas, a negro fraternal organization, are

¹⁵ Wilson, Dreck Spurlock, ed. *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865-1945*. New York: Routledge Books, 2004, p. 16.

¹⁶ Wilson, Dreck Spurlock, ed. *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865-1945*. New York: Routledge Books, 2004, pp. 16-17. The Wells Homes were dedicated the year of Bailey's death and he is not listed as one of the official architects, so Bailey likely worked on the project in a secondary capacity.

¹⁷ Groshong, Danny. "Taborian Hall." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=6984>.

¹⁸ *Manufacturers Record*. 17 November 1921, p. 91.

¹⁹ "Much Building Is Started In Month." *The Arkansas Gazette*, 6 March 1921, part 2, p. 19.

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erecting a building at Ninth Street and Broadway at a cost of \$100,000.

Construction was started about March 1 and workmen already are at work on the second story of the building. The structure will be a two-story brick building covering a lot 50 by 140 feet. The building will contain office suites, storerooms and a large lodge hall. It is expected that the building will be ready for occupancy within 90 days.²⁰

It is not known exactly when the building was completed or dedicated, but the organization likely moved into the new building by the end of 1921.

Although the Mosaic Templars State Temple was built in Little Rock, there had apparently been some consideration of constructing the building in Hot Springs several years earlier. An item in the October 1, 1913, *Hot Springs New Era* newspaper indicated that "If it can be arranged agreeably between all parties concerned, the property of B. F. Jenkins on the corner of Church and Cottage streets will probably pass into the hands of the Mosaic Templars for the erection of the State Temple of that order. Negotiations are now pending." However, Jenkins did not sell the land to the Mosaic Templars, and the State Temple was never built in Hot Springs.²¹

During the 1920s, the Mosaic Templars reached its peak when it had a membership that was estimated at over 100,000 people. Chapters of the organization existed in 26 states, the Caribbean, and South and Central America. However, even with the phenomenal growth of the Mosaic Templars, the organization always kept its headquarters in Little Rock. Some of its holdings in Little Rock included the Mosaic National Building and Loan Association, the Mosaic State Hospital (which also had a nursing school), and the *Mosaic Guide* newspaper, which was originally known as the *American Guide*.²²

The Mosaic State Hospital, which was a thirty-bed hospital, was located on the second floor of the Mosaic Templars State Temple, and opened in 1927 after the failed attempt of the Mosaic Templars to construct a National Hospital in Hot Springs. The hospital was under the direction of Dr. John G. Thornton, but only lasted a short time, closing in 1932. The nursing school associated with the Hospital was chartered in 1929.²³

However, the phenomenal growth and size that the Mosaic Templars achieved in the 1920s was short-lived. The 1930s brought the demise of the Mosaic Templars of America, which, like

²⁰ "Negro Lodge Puts Up Big Building." *Arkansas Gazette*, 22 May 1921, part 2, p. 18.

²¹ McDade, Bryan. "In Pursuit of a Better Life in the Vapor City: Understanding the Contributions of the Mosaic Templars of America in Hot Springs, Arkansas." *Garland County Historical Society: Record*, 2012, p. 6.8.

²² Wintory, Blake, and Ashan R. Hampton. "Mosaic Templars of America." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1186>.

²³ McDade, Bryan. "In Pursuit of a Better Life in the Vapor City: Understanding the Contributions of the Mosaic Templars of America in Hot Springs, Arkansas." *Garland County Historical Society: Record*, 2012, p. 6.15 and 6.17.

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many organizations, felt the effects of the Great Depression. The organization went into receivership in 1930, but did resume operations later in the year as the Modern Mosaic Templars of America with Scipio Jones serving as the National Grand Scribe. However, by the end of the 1930s it appears that the organization had ceased to exist in Arkansas. Even so, the organization continued to exist internationally with a chapter of the British United Order of Mosaic Templars surviving in Jamaica until at least 1938 and the Grand United Order of Mosaic Templars of Barbados, West Indies, continuing to meet into the twenty-first century.²⁴

It is not entirely clear when the Mosaic Templars vacated the State Temple building. The 1939 Sanborn map for Little Rock indicates that the Mosaic Templars State Temple was being used for offices, but it is not clear if it was offices of the Mosaic Templars. However, by 1950, according to the Sanborn map, the building was a small animal hospital and it continued to be used in that capacity until at least 1992.²⁵ Most recently, the building was used as a medical clinic by Premier MRI before the purchase of the building by the Department of Arkansas Heritage for \$950,000 in 2017. After renovating the building in late 2017 and early 2018, the Department will lease office space in the building to other organizations.²⁶

Of the three buildings that the Mosaic Templars of America had at the corner of 9th and Broadway, the Mosaic Templars State Temple is the last surviving historic building on the site. The National Grand Temple, which was located at the southwest corner of 9th and Broadway, burned on March 16, 2005, and the annex, which was located immediately to the north of this building, burned in 1984. However, both the National Grand Temple and annex were rebuilt in 2007 and opened on September 20, 2008, as the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, a museum of the Department of Arkansas Heritage. The survival of the Mosaic Templars State Temple makes it an important part of the legacy of the significant and prominent Mosaic Templars of America organization.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

When the Mosaic Templars State Temple was built in the early 1920s, the Mosaic Templars was reaching its peak with a membership that was estimated at over 100,000 people. Chapters of the organization existed in 26 states, the Caribbean, and South and Central America. However, even with the phenomenal growth of the Mosaic Templars, the organization always kept its headquarters at 9th and Broadway in Little Rock.²⁷ In addition, during the organization's prime in the 1920s, the Mosaic Templars of America had members that included several notable local

²⁴ Wintory, Blake, and Ashan R. Hampton. "Mosaic Templars of America." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1186>.

²⁵ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Little Rock, Arkansas, 1892, 1897, 1913, 1939 and 1950.

²⁶ Information on the Mosaic Templars Grand Temple in the files of the Pulaski County Assessor's Office.

²⁷ Wintory, Blake, and Ashan R. Hampton. "Mosaic Templars of America." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1186>.

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and national black leaders, most notably Booker T. Washington, founder and president of the Tuskegee Institute.²⁸

In addition to the size of the organization, the Mosaic Templars was significant due to the fact that the organization had real property in the form of the national headquarters, annex, and state temple. This fact was highly unusual for an African-American fraternal organization. As noted in the *History of the Mosaic Templars of America*, “The success of the Order is not only reflected in its great accession of a membership of 108,000, but it stands out singularly from other fraternals of the race in the accumulation of large reserves in real properties.” Furthermore, the history also notes that, “The erection of the National Temple was only the beginning of the plan to erect such buildings in each State jurisdiction. Since the inception of the idea, the States of Arkansas, Alabama, and Louisiana have purchased sites and erected buildings that are creditable to any institution. ... These various ‘temples’ are used for the housing of the State officials, as well as producing a revenue to each respective jurisdiction.”²⁹

As Bryan McDade notes in his article on the Mosaic Templars:

The history of the [Mosaic Templars] reveals the story of a successful African American enterprise. It began as a simple idea to help the Little Rock African American community bury their dead. It embraced fraternal values and, before its demise, grew into one of the largest African American businesses in the country. In a Jim Crow society that restricted African American participation in government and limited African American rights, the [Mosaic Templars] allowed its members to participate in their own form of democracy, creating a sense of community and giving them purpose and a sense of security, while providing limited social services. It brought aid to African American communities and left its mark in twenty-six states...³⁰

With the burning of the Mosaic Templars annex in 1984 and the National Grand Temple in 2005, the Mosaic Templars State Temple is the last surviving historic building on the site. The survival of the Mosaic Templars State Temple makes it an important part of the legacy of the significant and prominent Mosaic Templars of America organization. The Mosaic Templars State Temple’s prominent location at 9th and Broadway, which was the heart of Little Rock’s (and the state’s) African-American business district, helps to illustrate the organization’s importance in the state’s black community. Due to that fact, the Mosaic Templars State Temple

²⁸ Wintory, Blake, and Ashan R. Hampton. “Mosaic Templars of America.” *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1186>.

²⁹ Bush, A. E., and P. L. Dorman. *History of the Mosaic Templars of America – Its Founders and Officials*. Little Rock: Central Printing Company, 1924, pp. 174-176.

³⁰ McDade, Bryan. “In Pursuit of a Better Life in the Vapor City: Understanding the Contributions of the Mosaic Templars of America in Hot Springs, Arkansas.” *Garland County Historical Society: Record*, 2012, p. 6.15 and 6.19.

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is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **statewide significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of African-American businesses and fraternal organizations in the late nineteenth century in Arkansas.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Bush, A. E., and P. L. Dorman. *History of the Mosaic Templars of America – Its Founders and Officials*. Little Rock: Central Printing Company, 1924.

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Manufacturers Record. 17 November 1921, p. 91.

"Much Building Is Started In Month." *The Arkansas Gazette*, 6 March 1921, part 2, p. 19.

"Negro Lodge Puts Up Big Building." *Arkansas Gazette*, 22 May 1921, part 2, p. 18.

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Wilson, Dreck Spurlock, ed. *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865-1945*. New York: Routledge Books, 2004.

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Witsell, Charles and Gordon Wittenberg with Marylyn Jackson Parins. *Architects of Little Rock: 1833-1950*. Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2014.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Mosaic Templars Cultural Center

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): Site #PU4434

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 566173 | Northing: 3844504 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Mosaic Templars State Temple is located on Parcel #34L0200604800.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses all of the land historically associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1100 North Street
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail: ralph.wilcox@arkansas.gov
telephone: (501) 324-9787
date: January 5, 2018

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Mosaic Templars State Temple

City or Vicinity: Little Rock

County: Pulaski

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph S. Wilcox

Date Photographed: November 7, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 16. Southeast façade of the building, looking northwest.

2 of 16. Terra cotta detailing on the southeast façade, looking southwest.

3 of 16. Terra cotta detailing on the south end of the southeast façade, looking southwest.

4 of 16. Terra cotta detailing above the north entrance on the southeast façade, looking

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west.

- 5 of 16. Southeast side of the corner stone at the northeast corner of the building, looking northwest.
- 6 of 16. Northeast façade of the building, looking west.
- 7 of 16. Northeast façade of the building, looking southeast.
- 8 of 16. Northwest façade of the building, looking southeast.
- 9 of 16. Northwest and southwest façades of the building, looking northeast.
- 10 of 16. Southwest façade of the building, looking northwest.
- 11 of 16. First-floor central hallway, looking southeast.
- 12 of 16. Typical room on the south side of the first-floor hall, looking southeast.
- 13 of 16. Typical room on the north side of the first-floor hall, looking northeast.
- 14 of 16. Second-floor central hallway, looking northwest.
- 15 of 16. Typical room on the south side of the second-floor hall, looking southwest.
- 16 of 16. Typical room on the north side of the second-floor hall, looking northwest.

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Figure 1: Mosaic Templars State Temple – c.1930.

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Figure 2: Mosaic Templars State Temple (left side of the photograph) – c.1975.

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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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.