

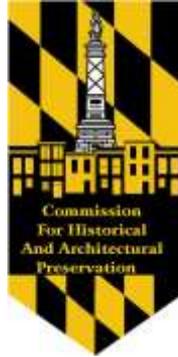
**Baltimore City
Commission for Historical and
Architectural Preservation**

**Landmark Designation Report
February 9, 2016**



Apostolic Faith Church of God Building

1939 Walbrook Ave.
Baltimore, Maryland



COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

ERIC HOLCOMB, *Executive Director*

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STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE
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Director

Significance Summary

The building today known as the Apostolic Faith Church of God Building was constructed in 1894 for Concordia German Lutheran Church in the Walbrook suburb of what was then Baltimore County. This frame chapel was constructed to serve as a temporary structure until the congregation raised the funds to complete a more substantial building on the same lot; a practice that was common among congregations in Baltimore. Except in this case, this frame church has remained as a rare surviving example. Following a merger with St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1921, the congregation moved to another location but retained this building as the clubhouse of the church-sponsored Emorywood Athletic Club through the 1930s. The building became the church for the African American Pentecostal congregation of the Apostolic Faith Church of God No. 1 after 1946. The founders moved to Baltimore from the South in the early 20th century during the Great Migration, spreading this denomination. This building served as the mother church for the international denomination for decades, and today it houses the office of the Bishop and is used for special events.

Property History

This one story frame chapel was constructed in 1894 by John Sheiblein & Son for Concordia German Lutheran Church in the Walbrook suburb of what was then Baltimore County.¹ Today, it is in the Baltimore City neighborhood of Mondawmin, on Walbrook Ave. near the intersection with Payson St. The German American congregation that built this church was formed April 9, 1893 by five members, first meeting in the home of George R. Hebbel, who became the long-serving president of the congregation.² The congregation grew quickly and services were moved to Clifton Hall on Druid Hill Ave. until this chapel was completed. Pastor J.J. Burghardt (also Burkhardt) was called to be the first pastor, serving 60 parishioners and 125 Sunday school students just one year after the congregation was founded.³ Adjacent to the chapel is a large lot, where the congregation intended to construct the main church in the future. This was a common practice among congregations in Baltimore. However, in this case, the new church was constructed elsewhere, and this frame chapel stands today as a rare survivor.⁴ The *Sun* article announcing the dedicatory service described the church as a one-story painted frame building with a cupola, with a neatly finished auditorium inside that could accommodate 300 people.⁵

The church appears to have originally held its services in German, which was common in German Lutheran churches in Baltimore and the U.S. at large in the early 20th century. A long-serving pastor who ministered at the church in the early 20th century, Frederick F. A. Giese, was an emigre from Germany; and a *Sun* article notes that August Brendel, pastor for the church in 1899, offered an address in German at a service of another German Lutheran Church.⁶

In 1921, Concordia Lutheran Church merged with St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, which was previously located on Biddle Street near Pennsylvania Avenue. The congregation became St. John's Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church, and they worshipped in this chapel on Walbrook Ave.⁷ In November 1921, it was announced in the

Sun that the congregation was going to build a new church at Elgin and Pennsylvania Avenues.⁸ The congregation continued to worship at the chapel at Walbrook Ave. until the new church was completed in 1924.⁹ This church, at the southwest corner of modern-day Reisterstown Rd. and Elgin Ave. no longer stands today.¹⁰ According to a 1970 article in the *Sun*, the church later moved to Woodlawn and changed its name to Bethany Church.¹¹

Beginning in 1923, the chapel at Walbrook Ave., while still serving as a church, also became the clubhouse of the Emorywood Athletic Club.¹² The Athletic Club was founded in 1923 by two members of the church, William D. Hoffman and James T. Ireland.¹³ The club debuted in 1923 by hosting a seven-mile all-for-glory street race open to all athletes in the city that began at the clubhouse on Walbrook Ave.¹⁴ The club's focus was running, but members also engaged in other sports. Bill Agee, a runner who was a member of 1928 U.S. Olympic team, was the club's most prominent member.¹⁵ The Emorywood Athletic Club continued to use the building as its clubhouse into the 1930s, even after the church moved to its new quarters.

After 1946, the chapel on Walbrook Ave. became the church of the Apostolic Faith Church of God. The Apostolic Faith Church of God is a Pentecostal church. The Apostolic Faith traces its founding to William Joseph Seymour, an African American evangelist who founded the Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, CA in 1906.¹⁶ The charismatic, interracial services held by Seymour at this church, called the Azusa Street Revival, are credited as the catalyst for both the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, which today have over 500 million members worldwide.¹⁷ Seymour later traveled across the U.S., establishing Apostolic Faith Missions. Between 1907 and 1911, he established a mission in Hansom, VA, with Rev. Charles W. Lowe as the Bishop.¹⁸ Rev. Rossie Cleaveland Grant, who was from Woodland, North Carolina, was the Vice-Bishop of this denomination.¹⁹ This mission led to the establishment of a denomination of several Apostolic churches in the southeast collectively named the Apostolic Faith Churches of God.²⁰

According to Bishop Gaines, Vice-Bishop Grant and other members moved to Baltimore from the south in the early twentieth century as part of the Great Migration of African Americans to northern cities.²¹ The Apostolic Faith Church of God was chartered in Baltimore City on June 28, 1938.²² Its founders were Rossie Cleaveland Grant, Elijah Mack, James Stevenson, Lois C. Grant, Thomas White, and Vernon Chambers.²³ Three days prior, Rev. Grant and other members purchased the storefront church located at 708, 710, and 712 N. Calhoun St. for the congregation.²⁴ (In 1943, the Trustees purchased the ground rents on the property, thereby becoming the fee simple owners.)²⁵ In 1941, the church hosted the week-long annual convocation of the Pentecostal Union Holy Church of America, which demonstrates its connection to the larger Pentecostal movement.²⁶

In 1945, there was a shake-up in the Apostolic Faith Churches of God, when Bishop Lowe left to form his own independent church.²⁷ Rev. Grant, who was Vice-Bishop, was elected as Presiding Bishop of these churches in 1946, thus making the Baltimore Church the Mother Church of the Apostolic Faith Churches of God.²⁸ This was the impetus for

the congregation's move to 1939 Walbrook Ave.²⁹ There are no readily-accessible documents recording the sale of the property, but the 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map confirms that the Apostolic Church of God No. 1 had moved to 1939 Walbrook Ave.³⁰

As the mother church of the denomination, the church helped grow the denomination by founding other churches, including Trinity Faith Holiness Church in Baltimore City, and the Holy Trinity Apostolic Faith Church in Bridgeport, CT.³¹ Following Bishop Grant's death in 1965, the next Bishop moved the headquarters to Washington, D.C., and the denomination later dissolved under the oversight of another Bishop.³² Following the election of Rev. Lois C. Grant, son of Rossie Cleaveland Grant, as the Presiding Bishop in 1978, the denomination was reincorporated.³³

Bishop William E. Gaines Jr., the current pastor, was raised in this church. At the age of 19, he was ordained as the youngest Elder of the Apostolic Faith Church of God, Inc.³⁴ Four years later, in 1975, Rev. Gaines opened a mission of the Apostolic Church, the United Brethren for Christ, Inc. Christian Community Educational Center.³⁵ His mission was successful and grew. Meanwhile, due to hardships and the death of members of the Apostolic Faith Church of God at 1939 Walbrook Ave., the congregation ceased to exist. However, Rev. Gaines was appointed to the Board of Presbytery for Apostolic Faith Churches of God, Inc. in 1989, and the church at 1939 Walbrook Ave. is used for special events of the ministry.³⁶

The property is not listed as historic on a federal or state inventory.

Architectural Description

The property consists of a three-bay wide, five-bay deep one story tall front-gabled frame Gothic Revival church clad in formstone, with a stone foundation, located on a 0.17 acre lot. There is a cornerstone inscribed with the date 1894 on the northwest corner. The building is adjacent to an alley to the west, and sits on a wide lot with a parking pad and lawn located to the east of the church. The church has a projected central entrance bay on the façade, with entrance doors on the front and side, with a three-story tower above, featuring a window opening on each elevation at the top. The steeply-pitched front gabled roof is sheathed with green asphalt shingles, and has exposed plain brackets on the underside. The windows are simple 2/2 arched windows, glazed with yellow stained glass. There is a rear one-story addition that has a separate entrance on Walbrook Ave, set far back from the street. It has the appearance of a small three-bay storefront, with a central door flanked by two windows, covered by an awning, and topped with a dentilled wood cornice and flat roof. It was constructed prior to 1914.

Staff Recommendations

The property meets CHAP Landmark Designation Standards:

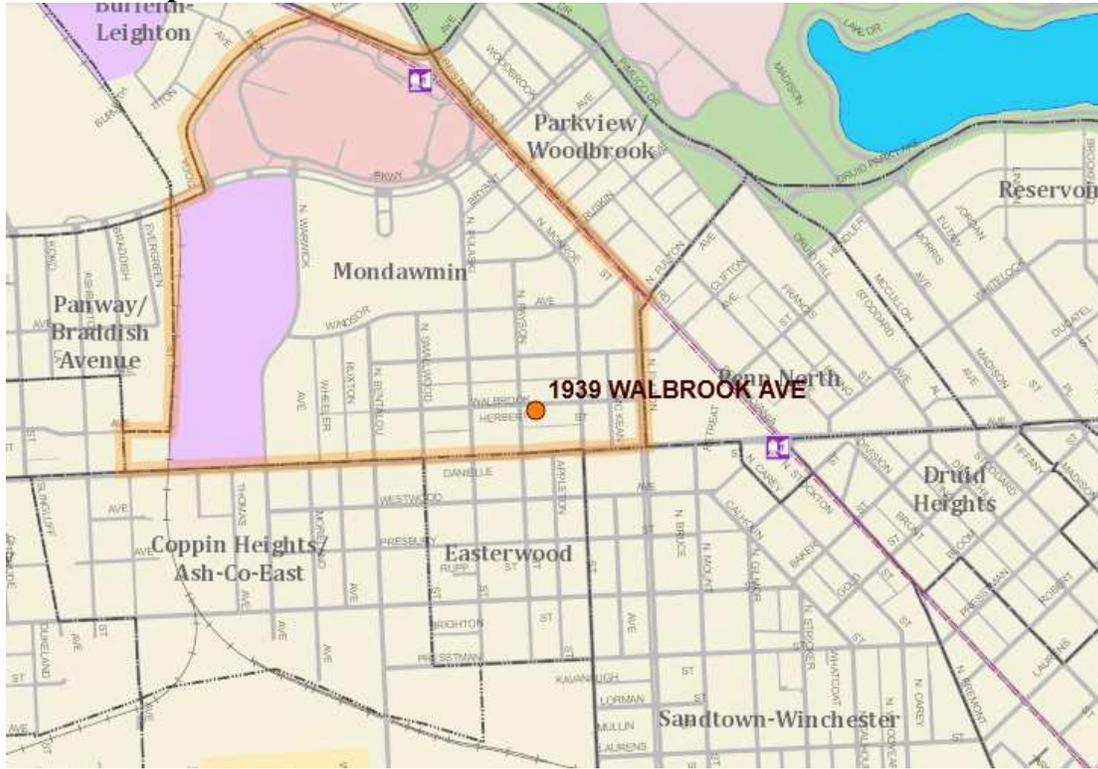
B. A Baltimore City Landmark may be a site, structure, landscape, building (or portion thereof), place, work of art, or other object which:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad

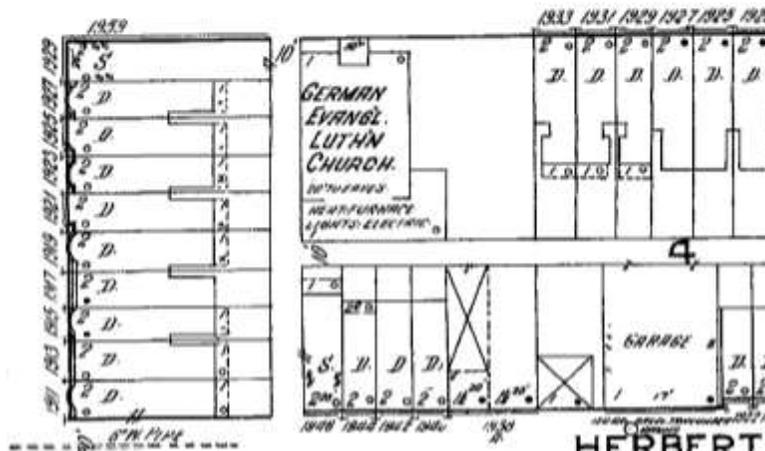
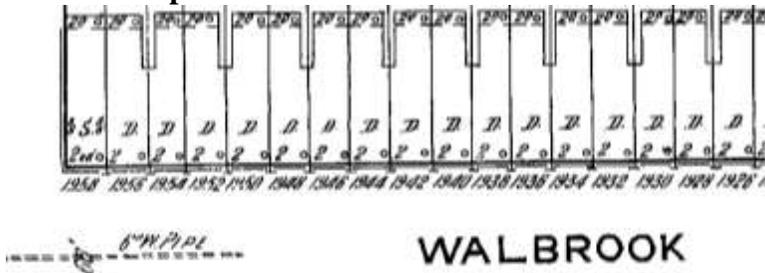
- patterns of Baltimore history;
3. That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

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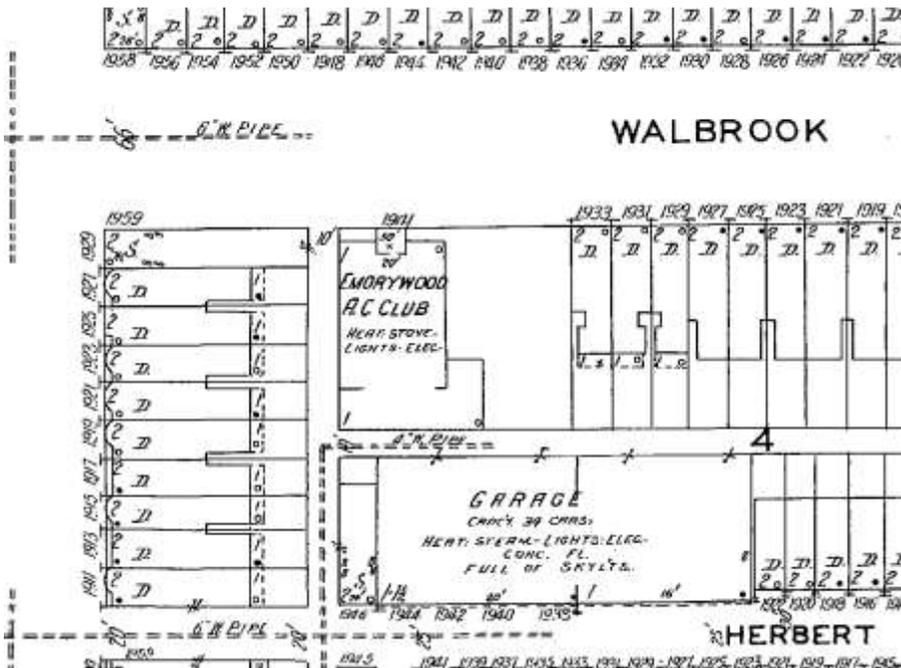
Locator Map



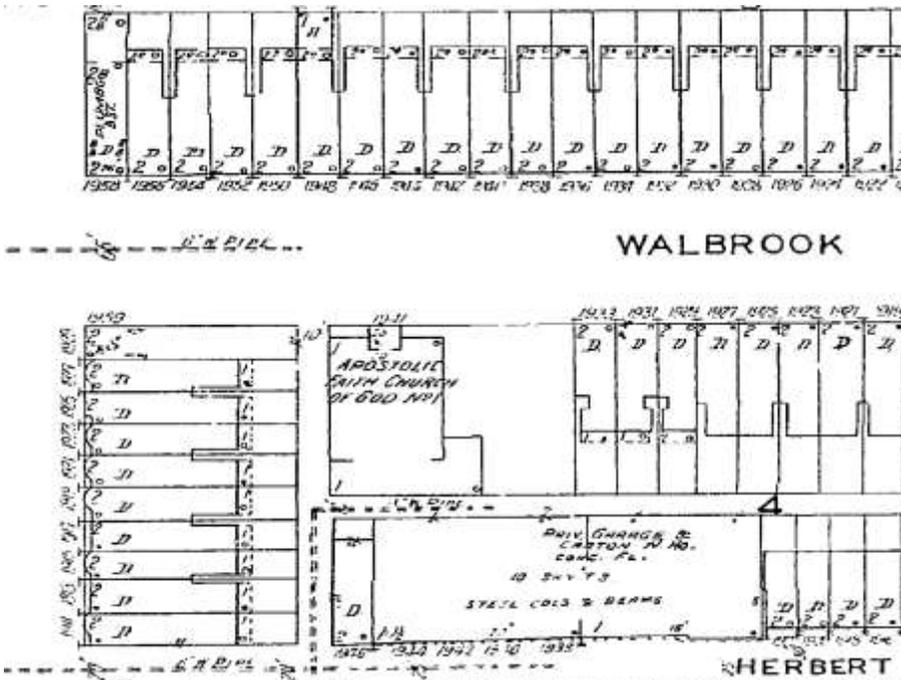
Historic Maps



1915 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, identifying the church as the German Evangelical Lutheran Church (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1914-1915, Vol. 7, Sheet 666)



1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, identifying the building as the Emorywood A.C. Club (Athletic Club) (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1928-1936, Vol. 6, Sheet 602)



1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, depicting the building after it became the Apostolic Faith Church of God No. 1. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1914-1951, Vol. 8, Sheet 810)

Current Photographs



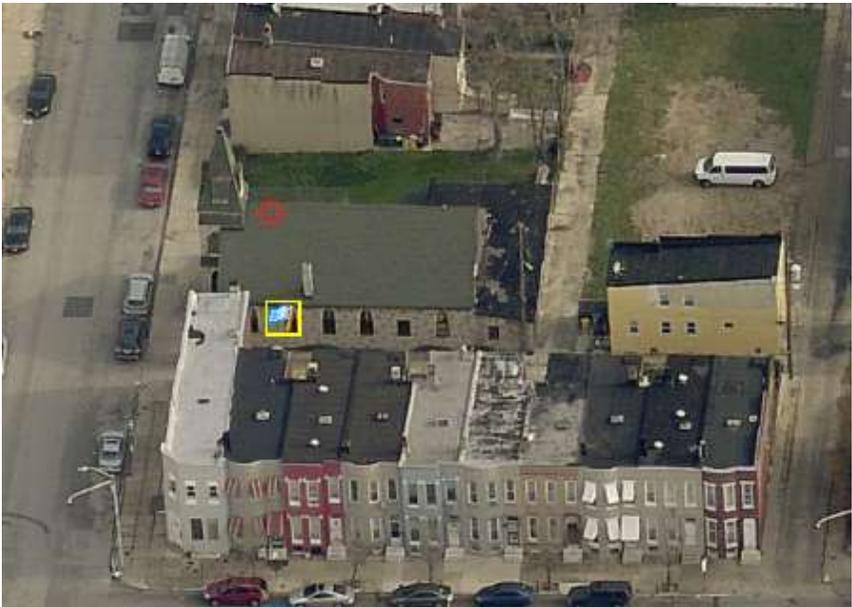
View from north.



View from south.



View from east.



View from west.

- ¹ “THREE DEDICATIONS: GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH, ON CUMBERLAND STREET THE ...”, *The Sun* (1837-1990); May 7, 1894; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun pg. 10
- ² *The Evangelical Herald Vol. 17*, Vol 17, No. 30, July 25, 1918, pg. 4. (Eden Publishing House by the Evangelical Synod of North America), 1918. Available as a Google E-book: <https://books.google.com/books?id=bnQ0AQAAMAAJ>.
- ³ *The Evangelical Herald Vol. 17*; “THREE DEDICATIONS: GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH, ON CUMBERLAND STREET THE ...”
- ⁴ “THREE DEDICATIONS: GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH, ON CUMBERLAND STREET THE ...”
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ “Couple Celebrates 50th Anniversary”, *The Sun* (1837-1990); Nov 1, 1949; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun, pg. 13; “Missionary To Turkey”, *The Sun* (1837-1990); Sep 25, 1899; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun, pg. 7
- ⁷ “NEW CHURCH EDIFICE PLANNED”, *The Sun* (1837-1990); Nov 29, 1921; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun, pg. 15
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ “NEW CHURCH EDIFICE PLANNED”; “REAL ESTATE DEALS AND BUILDING NEWS: WESTOVER-BERKLY APARTMENTS ARE ...”, *The Sun* (1837-1990); Feb 29, 1924; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun, pg. 13
- ¹⁰ “Other 5 -- No Title”, *The Sun* (1837-1990); Nov 21, 1951; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun, pg. 11
- ¹¹ William D. Hoffman, “Remember . . . : the first time Hyman Pressman horned in on a picture” *The Sun* (1837-1990); Jul 12, 1970; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun, pg. SM2
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ “GIBBONS ARRIVES ON SHELBY SCENE” *The Sun* (1837-1990); Jun 7, 1923; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun, pg. 15
- ¹⁵ “Obituary” *The Sun* (1837-1990); Mar 28, 1954; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun; pg. 30
- ¹⁶ Vinson Synan, “Pentecostalism: William Seymour” *Christian History*, Issue 65, 2000. <https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/pentecostalism-seymour/>
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Marshall Allen, “Pentecostal Movement Celebrates Humble Roots” Religion News Service, April 15, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/14/AR2006041401421.html>
- ¹⁸ Sherry S. DuPree *African American Holiness Pentecostal Movement: An Annotated Bibliography*, (New York and London: Garland Press, 1996) pg. 140. Available as a Google e-book.
- ¹⁹ “Bishop R. C. Grant buried Thursday” *Afro-American* (1893-1988); Jan 30, 1965; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Afro-American, pg. 16
- ²⁰ Dupree; Larry G. Murphy, J. Gordon Melton, Gary L. Ward (ed) *Encyclopedia of African American Religions* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), pg. 50-51.
- ²¹ Bishop William E. Gaines, Jr., personal communication.
- ²² Murphy et al., pg. 51; Charter (on file at 1939 Walbrook Ave.)
- ²³ Charter (on file at 1939 Walbrook Ave.)
- ²⁴ Deed, Eleazer Winakur to R Cleaveland Grant, Jasper Worrell, and James Stevenson, Baltimore City Superior Court (Land Records) MLP Liber 5834, Folio 458-459; Mortgage, R Cleaveland Grant, Jasper Worrell, and James Stevenson to Eleazer Winakur, Baltimore City Superior Court (Land Records) MLP Liber 5834, Folio 459-461; Deed, R Cleaveland Grant, Jasper Worrell, and James Stevenson to the Trustees of the Apostolic Faith Church of God of Baltimore City, Baltimore City Superior Court (Land Records) MLP Liber 5834, Folio 461-462.
- ²⁵ Deed, Hyman Glick to Rossie Cleaveland Grant and Lois C. Grant, Baltimore City Superior Court (Land Records) MLP Liber 6464 Folio 529; Mortgage, Rossie Cleaveland Grant and Lois C. Grant to Eleazer Winakur, Baltimore City Superior Court (Land Records) MLP Liber 6464 Folio 529-531; Deed, Rossie Cleaveland Grant and Lois C. Grant to the Trustees of the Apostolic Faith Church of God of Baltimore City, Baltimore City Superior Court (Land Records) MLP Liber 6464 Folio 531-533.
- ²⁶ “Attended Pentecostal Church Meet” *Afro-American* (1893-1988);, Oct 18, 1941; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Afro-American, pg. 10
- ²⁷ Murphy et al., pg. 50-51.

²⁸ “History”, United Brethren for Christ, Inc. http://www.ubcministries.com/?page_id=2401; Murphy et al, pg. 51

²⁹ “Our Divine Legacy” United Brethren of Christ, Inc. http://www.ubcministries.com/?page_id=127

³⁰ Baltimore City Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1914-1951, Vol. 8, Sheet 810

³¹ “Apostolic Bishop L. C. Grant dies” The Sun (1837-1990); Jan 14, 1989; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun, pg. 7A

³² “Bishop R. C. Grant buried Thursday”; Murphy et al. pg 51; “History”, United Brethren for Christ, Inc.

³³ “Apostolic Bishop L. C. Grant dies”; Murphy et al., pg. 51; “History”, United Brethren for Christ, Inc.

³⁴ “History”, United Brethren for Christ, Inc.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ “Bio-Sketch of Bishop William E. Gaines, Jr.”, United Brethren of Christ, Inc. http://www.ubcministries.com/?page_id=2380