

MANHATTAN'S HISTORIC LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS

Second (Pilgrim) Baptist Church

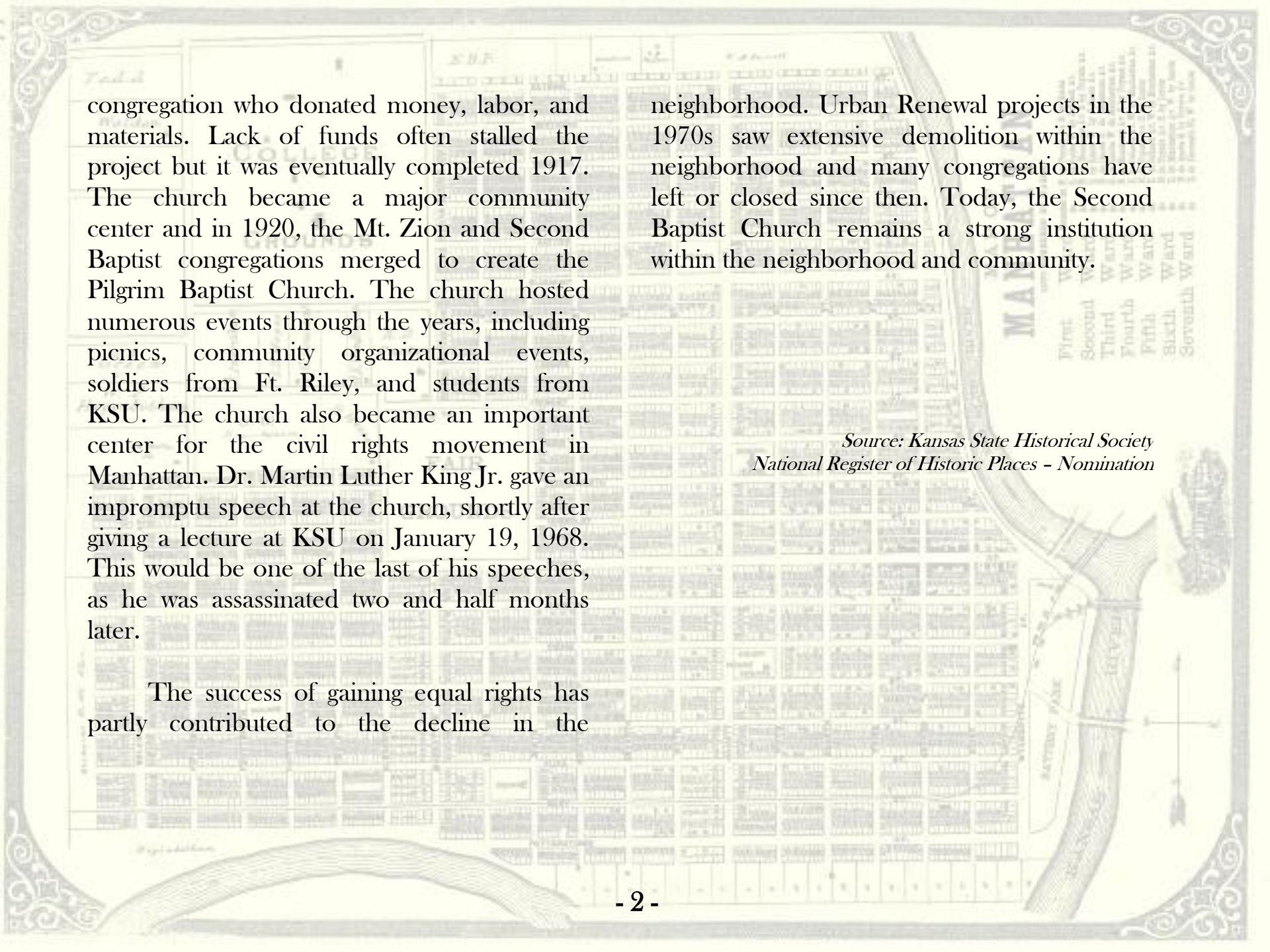


Second (Pilgrim) Baptist Church, 831 Yuma St.

The Second Baptist Church, constructed in 1917, is a rare extant historic African American community institutional

building, located within the traditional black neighborhood of Manhattan. The congregation was established in 1880, many members were from former slave states seeking a new beginning in Kansas. The congregation purchased the site at the corner of 9th and Yuma Streets in 1882 and constructed a wood frame building which later was heated by a stove and lit with electric lights, which many buildings in the neighborhood lacked.

As the congregation grew at the beginning of the new century, plans for a new church building were created. The congregation hired Henry B. Winter to design a new building built from brick. Henry B. Winter, originally born in Germany and raised in Manhattan, graduated from the architecture program at Kansas State Agricultural College in 1905. Construction began in 1915 and was financed by the

A historical map of Manhattan, Kansas, showing a grid of streets and several wards labeled on the right side: First Ward, Second Ward, Third Ward, Fourth Ward, Fifth Ward, Sixth Ward, and Seventh Ward. The map is framed by decorative scrollwork in the corners.

congregation who donated money, labor, and materials. Lack of funds often stalled the project but it was eventually completed 1917. The church became a major community center and in 1920, the Mt. Zion and Second Baptist congregations merged to create the Pilgrim Baptist Church. The church hosted numerous events through the years, including picnics, community organizational events, soldiers from Ft. Riley, and students from KSU. The church also became an important center for the civil rights movement in Manhattan. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave an impromptu speech at the church, shortly after giving a lecture at KSU on January 19, 1968. This would be one of the last of his speeches, as he was assassinated two and half months later.

The success of gaining equal rights has partly contributed to the decline in the

neighborhood. Urban Renewal projects in the 1970s saw extensive demolition within the neighborhood and many congregations have left or closed since then. Today, the Second Baptist Church remains a strong institution within the neighborhood and community.

*Source: Kansas State Historical Society
National Register of Historic Places - Nomination*