

QUINDARO and WESTERN UNIVERSITY

1856-1862 and 1881-1948
Vicinity of 27th Street and Sewell Avenue
K.C.K. Historic District: March 1, 1984

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The area in question was originally part of the Wyandott Purchase, the land that the Wyandot Indians bought from the Delaware in 1843. In January, 1855, the Wyandots signed a treaty dissolving their tribal status, taking citizenship, and dividing the Wyandott Purchase among the individual members of the tribe, thus opening the area to white settlement. Ownership of the area in question under the Wyandot allotments was divided among 13 individuals, including Esquire Greyeyes, Ebenezer O. Zane, Mathew Brown, and Abelard and Nancy Brown Guthrie.

In the fall of 1856, the Quindaro Town Company was formed by an alliance of abolitionist Wyandots and several former representatives of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. The intent was to develop a profitable and safe port of entry into Kansas for free-state settlers, as the established river ports such as Atchison and Leavenworth were largely in pro-slavery hands. The new town was named in honor of Nancy Brown Guthrie, whose Wyandot name was Seh Quindaro. Her name, which the Quindaro Chindowan stated was popular and common among Wyandot women, actually meant "Bundle of Sticks," but the town's backers interpreted it to mean "Strength through Union."

Nancy Brown Guthrie's husband, Abelard Guthrie, was a white man who had been appointed registrar of deeds in Upper Sandusky, Ohio, at the time of the Wyandots' removal to Kansas. He had followed Nancy to Kansas, married her over her father's objections, and been adopted into the Wyandot tribe. He was vice-president of the new town company and

its principal promoter. The men who had first come to Kansas in 1854 as representatives of the New England Emigrant Aid Company included Dr. Charles Robinson, the founder of Lawrence, who was treasurer of the town company (and later became the first governor of the State of Kansas), and S. N. Simpson, also of Lawrence, who was company secretary. Robinson's connections in the East provided the initial financial backing for the Quindaro venture.

The president of the town company was a Wyandot, Joel Walker. Like other members of his prominent family, he was pro-slavery in his sympathies (and was in fact a slave owner), but Wyandot unity was considered to be an important factor in the town's hoped-for success. Apparently such business alliances between the two otherwise bitterly opposed factions were not uncommon in territorial Kansas, particularly once the free-state forces began to gain the upper hand.

The plat of the proposed townsite was surveyed in December, 1856, by Owen A. Bassett, and covered the area from the present 18th Street to 42nd Street and from Parkview Avenue to the Missouri River. The plat included Quindaro Park, making it the first park in Wyandotte County and one of the oldest in the state. The Missouri River was then somewhat to the west of its present position, exposing a long rock ledge which formed a natural levee for steamboat landings (where the Missouri Pacific right-of-way is today), and this was apparently a major factor in choosing the town's location. It may in fact have been the only advantage of the location, as the remainder of the original townsite was quite steep and rough.

Despite the roughness of the terrain, the town was laid out on a grid, with the longer dimension of the blocks running north and south. The main north-south street in the town was Kansas Avenue (the present

27th Street), while the other north-south streets were lettered from west to east, A through Y, with Kansas taking the place of Q. Beginning at the river, the east-west streets were numbered, with 8th Street being the present Sewell Avenue and with 10th Street, the present Parkview Avenue, marking the southern edge of the original plat. Two additional streets, Levee and Main, ran diagonally across the top of the plat from the northwest to the southeast, adjacent to and paralleling the river.

The plat of Quindaro was filed with the Leavenworth County Register of Deeds in Delaware City on February 15, 1857, but by then the sale of lots and the construction of buildings was already well under way. The business center of the new town was at the intersection of Kansas and Main, and stretched both east and west along Main and Levee as well as south on Kansas nearly to 6th Street. Attempts to cut Kansas through the bluff to the top of the hill were never finished, and the end of the cut may still be seen just north of the present north end of 27th. The flanking north-south streets, P and R, both apparently continued through but were primarily residential in nature. R Street (the present 26th) still provided access from the hill top to the river as recently as the 1930s. Other development occurred in the valley of Quindaro Creek that led back from the riverfront, along stretches of M, N, and O Streets. There was some development further east as well, but most of the platted area of the town was never developed for anything but farmland.

One of the first buildings to be completed was Colby and Parker's four story Quindaro House hotel at 1-5 Kansas Avenue (Feature No. 1).¹ Later accounts state that it was of stone, but some early records and the archaeological evidence suggest that it was wood frame. As with most hotels of the period, the first floor was occupied by commercial enterprises such as Johnson and Veale, Merchants. Behind the Quindaro House to the west was a small brick structure that may have housed the office of the town company (Feature No. 76). Across the street to the east at 2 Kansas Avenue was the more modest Wyandott House hotel, originally owned and operated by Ebenezer O. Zane (Feature No. 6). The 32-year-old Zane was a member of a large and well-known Wyandot Indian family, and was one of the original property owners in the Quindaro area.

Abutting the Wyandott House on the south, at 4 Kansas Avenue, was one of the largest commercial buildings in town, erected by Jacob Henry (Feature No. 3N). The structure was three stories in height, with stone side walls, a brick and cast iron front, and a metal roof. The footings indicate that there was a row of interior columns as well, which may also have been of iron. The first floor was a mercantile store, and offices occupied the second, while a public meeting hall was on the third. A smaller store building at 6 Kansas Avenue was built by Otis Webb, proprietor of the steam ferry that ran between Parkville and Quindaro (Feature No. 3S). It may have housed a grocery.

¹Lots were numbered consecutively, so that lot numbers and address numbers were one and the same. This has greatly simplified the subsequent location and identification of building remains. Feature numbers are those numbers assigned to remains found in the course of the archaeological investigation of the Quindaro site.

South of the Quindaro House, across Fifth Street at 7 Kansas Avenue, was the J. B. Upson Building (Feature No. 62). This housed the office of the Chindowan, Quindaro's weekly newspaper edited by J. M. Walden. The first issue was published on May 13, 1857. For the first three months of the paper's existence a woman, Mrs. Clarinda I. H. Nichols, served as associate editor and reporter before resigning over editorial differences. An abolitionist and pioneering feminist, Mrs. Nichols gained fame for her role in the drafting of the Kansas state constitution in 1859, and in later years left a written account of her days in Quindaro. The Ranzchoff Building, perhaps the largest mercantile store in the town, adjoined the Chindowan office on the south, at 9-11 Kansas (Feature No. 7).

Additional development lay further south on Kansas Avenue, halfway up the hill. On the west side of the street, at 21 Kansas, was a frame building erected by Hiram Hill which apparently contained a boarding house (Feature No. 11). Another large residential structure (which may also have housed a business) stood at 39 Kansas (Feature No. 9). Across the street was a substantial row of commercial buildings at 34, 36, 38 and 40 Kansas Avenue (Feature Nos. 8, 53, 54, 63). A drugstore operated by H. P. Downs occupied 34, while 38 housed a variety store and the office of Dr. J. B. Welborn, another prominent figure in the early history of Wyandotte County.

At 17 R Street, on the crest of the hill to the east of the commercial buildings on Kansas, there was a sizeable residence (Feature No. 5). The house was subsequently rebuilt and expanded in the late 1870s or early 1880s, and was photographed at about that time, perched above a cultivated hillside. It remained standing and occupied as recently as 40 years ago.

Given its somewhat isolated location, construction of roads out of Quindaro began almost immediately. One led to Wyandott, and eventually became the present Quindaro Boulevard. A second went south to the Shawnee Reserve, with a Quindaro Town Company-sponsored ferry across the Kansas River south of the present 38th and Kaw Drive. A third led, naturally enough, to Lawrence, and was completed by mid-May, 1857. "Robinson, Walker and Co.'s Daily Passenger and Express Line" charged \$3.00 for the dusty, six hour trip between the two towns. (In this instance, the Robinson in question was Alfred Robinson, a long time resident of the Quindaro area.)

Quindaro initially had two church buildings, a brick Methodist Episcopal Church on the east side of O Street between 8th and 9th, and the Rev. Sylvester Dana Storrs' stone Congregational Church on the southwest corner of Kansas and 8th (27th and Sewell). St. Paul's Presbyterian church was organized by the Rev. Octavius Perinchief, but apparently never had a building of its own. The town's better-known Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Eben Blachly, was actually the founder and pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in the neighboring town of Wyandott, some four or four and one-half miles away.

Quindaro also had two saloons, but they were closed by a Vigilance Committee on June 17th, 1857. Abolition, women's rights, and temperance were all "progressive" issues in the mid-Nineteenth Century, so it is not surprising to find them joined in Quindaro. Temperance seemingly prohibited only hard liquor, however, not beer, and consequently Quindaro boasted a small brewery. Built and operated by Henry Steiner and Jacob Zehntner, the Quindaro Brewery was located at 45 N Street in the valley near the west side of Quindaro Creek (Feature No. 34). The brewery operation was apparently in several

out-buildings, while the stone and brick main building had living quarters on the second floor and a tap room below, with a vaulted beer cellar dug back into the hillside behind. The tap room may have been the site of one of the Vigilance Committee's raids, where the whiskey bottles were duly smashed but the beer barrels left unharmed.

Other Quindaro enterprises included a post office, which opened June 12, 1857, with Charles S. Parker as postmaster; a large capacity, steam powered saw and grist mill, initially owned by the town company and located near where the present 18th Street ends at the Missouri River; and Otis Webb's steam ferry that connected Quindaro to Parkville. On its maiden voyage, Webb's ship The LIGHTFOOT of Quindaro steamed up the Kansas River to Lawrence, before being rechristened The OTIS WEBB and pressed into the less venturesome ferry service.

There were also schools for both white and black children, supported by public subscription, although their pre-Civil War locations have not been determined. When it came to self government, however, Quindaro was a bit shaky. An initial attempt to organize a town government was rejected at a town meeting held on July 7, 1857, on the grounds that it was premature, and in any case the Vigilance Committee was deemed sufficient for the time being. On February 9, 1858, the Kansas Territorial Legislature approved Quindaro's incorporation, but the legal description was faulty and the charter was rejected by the voters. An unincorporated town government was subsequently organized, and Alfred Gray elected mayor.

As the town rapidly grew, town lots were selling for \$150 to \$1500. The population soon passed 600, and some estimates have placed it as high as 1200 before decline set in. One of the new settlers was reportedly William Tecumseh Sherman, who may have briefly practiced law

in Quindaro. There is absolutely no evidence, however, that Abraham Lincoln visited Quindaro on his 1859 trip to Kansas. It has also generally been held that John Brown was never in the town, but Mary Killiam, who with her husband George acquired the Quindaro House in March, 1859, later claimed that he had been among their guests prior to his final return to the East and martyrdom.

Through 1857 and into 1858, growth in Quindaro continued. On September 8, 1857, Joel Walker died, and Abelard Guthrie subsequently replaced him as president of the town company. On June 1, 1858, Guthrie, Robinson, Otis Webb, and Joseph Lyman filed the plat of the First Addition to Quindaro with the Leavenworth County Register of Deeds. This added two rows of twenty blocks each to the original plat south of 10th Street (Parkview Avenue), extending the platted area down to 12th Street (Brown Avenue), which also corresponded to the location of the road connecting Wyandott to Leavenworth. This extension of the town southward to the Leavenworth Road unknowingly presaged an eventual shift in the center of the community.

For almost two years the town boomed, attracting national attention. As the only free-state river port, it was also rumored to be involved in Underground Railroad operations in Kansas. Slaves escaping from Missouri were reportedly brought across the river in small boats and by secret runs of the Parkville-Quindaro ferry. Such activities were of course denied by the editor of the Chindowan - aiding an escaped slave violated the federal Fugitive Slave Law, and under the pro-slavery Kansas Territorial Statutes was a hanging offense - but Mrs. Nichols and Benjamin Mudge later recounted three such instances. Angry Missourians must have believed the stories, because after the start of the Civil War they sank the steam ferry in September

of 1861. The escapees reportedly hid during the day outside the town, in shallow caves in the wooded bluffs or in farmers' barns, and were then conducted by night on a route leading to Nebraska by way of Lawrence, Oskaloosa, and Holton.

On January 29, 1859, Wyandott County was formed out of portions of Leavenworth and Johnson Counties, and the towns of Wyandott and Quindaro were both incorporated by the Territorial Legislature as cities of the third class. In the elections subsequently held on February 22, Alfred Gray was again elected mayor (and was to be the only mayor Quindaro ever had). The incorporated area of Quindaro included not only the area of the town's two original plats, but was extended as far south as the present Parallel Parkway, taking in the Wyandot's Methodist Episcopal Church ground at the northeast corner of 38th and Parallel that had become the Quindaro Cemetery. (Gray and Guthrie both had homes in this unplatted portion of Quindaro.)

Despite incorporation, Quindaro was beginning a decline almost as rapid as its growth. The rough topography was proving to be a major barrier to continued development, a nation-wide business depression dried up investment capital, and the triumph of free-state forces in Kansas ended much of Quindaro's basic reason for existence. As if to confirm Quindaro's decline, on November 1, 1859, Wyandott County voters chose Wyandott over Quindaro as the new county seat.

Yet another blow came on December 3, 1860, when the Quindaro sawmill burned. Several thousand board feet of lumber were destroyed, along with the tools and machinery, and the loss to the owners was uninsured. Moreover, Guthrie and Robinson had quarrelled, each accusing the other of shoddy business practices. In 1859 Guthrie filed suit against his various partners in the Quindaro venture, claiming

that the town company's funds had been mishandled. The situation grew worse when S. N. Simpson was horse-whipped by Guthrie for reportedly "seducing and ruining" Guthrie's deaf, dumb and feeble-minded sister-in-law, Margaret Brown.

Guthrie's suit against Robinson was finally resolved in Robinson's favor on January 1, 1861, the judge protesting Guthrie's uncooperative attitude. Having invested everything in the Quindaro venture, Abelard Guthrie soon went bankrupt, and after the war moved with his family to the re-established Wyandot Reserve in Oklahoma. He died in Washington, D.C. in January, 1873, while pursuing his claim to his mother-in-law's 200 acre Shawnee Allotment in the hope of recouping his fortunes.

By the time the Civil War broke out in 1861, Quindaro's population had shrunk to less than 700. Much of the town's male population enlisted in the Union army, and moved their families to the greater safety of Wyandott or else returned them to the East. The Kansas Tribune, successor to the Chindowan, ceased publication in June of 1861 and was moved by its owners to Olathe.

Among those who remained behind was the Rev. Eben Blachly. As early as 1862, he and his wife began offering schooling to the children of escaped slaves who were beginning to settle in the area. With the main part of the town largely deserted, on January 20, 1862, the Ninth Kansas Volunteer Infantry under Col. A. C. Davis was stationed in Quindaro to supposedly protect the town from bushwhackers and border raiders. Instead, the troops reportedly quartered their horses in vacant buildings, pulled down houses for firewood, and generally devastated the community. This brought expressions of outrage from the people of Wyandott and those like Benjamin Mudge who still lived in the Quindaro area. (Mudge suspected Col. Davis of being pro-slavery in his

sympathies; the good Col. eventually fled Kansas for Missouri with a vigilance committee from Wyandott hot on his heels.) The troops were removed from the town on March 12, but only after the state legislature had repealed Quindaro's incorporation on March 6, 1862.

Throughout the war years, and immediately following the war, the area's black population grew as escaped slaves and freedmen, largely from Platte County, settled the deserted townsite, particularly in the valley of Quindaro Creek. These families farmed their own land, or else worked for the white farmers still in the Quindaro area. In January, 1867, Rev. Blachly's school was formally organized as Freedman's University under the governance of the Kansas Synod of the Presbyterian Church. The following month, the state legislature relinquished to Freedman's University all the state's interest in taxes on the lots of the Quindaro townsite. According to oral tradition, the school may have originally been located in Steiner and Zehntner's Quindaro Brewery building, although by 1870 it apparently occupied at least part of the former commercial property at 34-40 Kansas Avenue. In addition to the state's support, Rev. Blachly and other property owners in the area donated a substantial amount of land to the school and purchased additional tracts at tax sales beginning in the late 1860s.

Contrary to some reports, the transition from the white frontier town to the black refugee settlement was gradual rather than discontinuous or abrupt, and was never total. While the former business section of Quindaro near the riverfront was largely abandoned, many individuals and institutions associated with Quindaro remained, as the center of activity in the diminished town shifted south to the area of Kansas Avenue's intersection with the Leavenworth Road. In addition to

Rev. Blachly and his wife, those who remained in the area included Alfred Gray, R. M. Gray, Alfred Robinson, Judge Sortor, Dr. J. B. Welborn, and Charles Morasch. Benjamin Mudge, who resided in Quindaro all through the war years, moved to Manhattan in December, 1865, where he became a professor of natural history at the new Kansas State Agricultural College as well as state geologist.²

In 1866, Alfred Gray, Alfred Robinson, David Pearson, Francis A. Kessler Sr., and Francis A. Kessler Jr. re-established the Parkville-Quindaro ferry, although it is not known how long it remained in operation. The Quindaro Post Office never closed but was moved to the corner of Kansas and 12th (27th and Brown), where it continued to serve the area for many years. Both of the Quindaro schools received new buildings in 1868. The school for white children, District 4, was erected at the northeast corner of P and 11th (28th and Farrow) on six lots purchased the previous October from Alfred and Julia Robinson. The site still serves as part of the property of the present Quindaro Elementary School. The school for black children, District 17, was built next to the Quindaro Congregational Church at Kansas and 8th. The church itself finally moved to a new location on Leavenworth Road in 1869, and the old building was eventually acquired by Allen Chapel AME Church. The Quindaro Methodist Episcopal Church also remained in the area, by 1900 being located at 27th and Russell, less than four blocks south of its first location.

In 1872, the Colored Normal School of Quindaro was established by the state legislature to function as part of Freedman's University, and

²In addition to Benjamin Franklin Mudge, another chronicler of the transition years in Quindaro was a young schoolteacher from Heath, Massachusetts named Elizabeth May Dickinson. She arrived in Quindaro in April, 1859, and left about 1863.

\$2500 was appropriated for its operation. At the time, the university had an enrollment of eighty-three. But the following year, two major blows were struck against the townsite's revitalization. Following an appropriation of \$1100 to pay the school's debts, state funding was withdrawn due to widespread agricultural losses, and the Wyandotte County Commissioners vacated Quindaro's original plat with the exceptions of Quindaro Park and a handful of streets. With the death of Rev. Blachly in 1877, the school was in danger of closing.

In 1879, the school's trustees took out a mortgage on the property in an attempt to keep it open. That same year, the Kansas Fever Exodus brought a large influx of African-American families into Wyandotte County and renewed interest in Freedman's University. Finally, in 1881, the school was taken over by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, chartered as a vocational/college preparatory institute, and renamed Western University.

In 1891, the existing university building was replaced by a new structure named Ward Hall near 29th and Sewell, where Primrose Villa now stands. In 1896, a young AME minister named William T. Vernon took over the presidency of the still-struggling school. He succeeded in getting state funding restored in 1899, with the resulting construction of Stanley Hall at 27th and Sewell to house the newly-formed State Industrial Department.

In 1901 an annex was built to the north of Stanley Hall, and in the following year two stock barns were constructed. A power plant and reservoir were added in 1904, and in 1905 work was begun on the girls' trades building. Within another two years, a boys' trades building was constructed; and by the close of the decade a four story girls' dormitory named after Bishop Abraham Grant had also been built at the

north end of 27th Street. Enrollments at the college grew by a commensurate amount - from twelve in 1895 to over 200 in 1906.

The curriculum at Western University reflected Vernon's educational philosophy of training the "head, heart, and hand for the home." Although the State Industrial Department was an important feature in the development of the school during this period, the course offerings were diversified and included a strong emphasis on theology, the classics, and music. Western provided teacher training and college preparatory classes in addition to basic instruction in such vocations as printing, drafting, carpentry, tailoring, and business. Agriculture was also stressed, and a portion of the food consumed by faculty and students was raised on campus.

National recruiting efforts were the life blood of the school. Western University attracted students from throughout the United States, and a majority of those who attended were boarders. One of Western's strongest promotional assets was its music department. The department was begun in 1902 by R. G. Jackson, who was a recent graduate of the music department at the University of Kansas. In 1907, Professor Jackson founded the Jackson Jubilee Singers - a musical troupe similar to the Fisk Jubilee Singers of Fisk University. Such noteworthy musicians as Etta Moten and Eva Jessye at one time performed with the Jackson group. The group traveled across the country, giving concerts and publicizing Western University.

Reverend Vernon, the guiding force behind Western's growth and consolidation, gained a national reputation for his accomplishments at the school. He traveled extensively, lecturing and conferring with other black educators. In 1906, President Roosevelt appointed him Registrar of the U. S. Treasury, which at that time was the highest

position in government to be attained by an African-American. Upon receipt of the appointment, Reverend Vernon took a leave of absence from Western. In 1910, he was reappointed to the Treasury post by President Taft, at which time he stepped down from the presidency of Western and was replaced by H. T. Kealing.

The famous statue of John Brown was erected on the campus of Western University in 1911. The statue was the first monument in the United States to be raised to the controversial figure. In view of the existing political climate, it was a project that was both courageous and defiant; "Jim Crow" laws were being passed in many states, violence against blacks was on the rise, and in 1910 Kansas City, Kansas had elected an avowed segregationist, J. E. "Cap" Porter, as mayor.

The effort to build the monument was begun in 1909. The major sponsor of the drive was Bishop Abraham Grant of the AME Church, who was assisted by Dr. S. H. Thompson and I. F. Bradley, two prominent figures in the African-American community in Kansas City, Kansas. A sum of \$2,000 was raised in what was labeled "the washerwoman's contribution." The money also came from packinghouse workers, teachers, and businessmen. People of all races and from many different parts of the country donated money toward the establishment of the memorial. When the funding goal had been reached, an Italian sculptor was commissioned to carve the life-sized marble replica. The artist rendered the bearded figure of John Brown erect on a tall base, clothed in a great coat with a facsimile of the Emancipation Proclamation rolled up in his right hand. The inscription on the base of the statue reads, "Erected to the memory of John Brown by a grateful people."

The statue was placed in front of Ward Hall and unveiled at commencement exercises for the class of 1911 on June 8 of that year.

Bishop Grant was not present to view the completion of this project, as he had died the previous winter. The master of ceremonies was J. P. King, a teacher at Sumner High School (later to be principal of Northeast Junior High School and president of Western University). Three thousand people gathered on the grounds in front of the statue. A significant proportion of those in the crowd were white, and the dedication ceremony was regarded as a strong gesture of unity. Among the dignitaries present was the aging John P. St. John, who had been governor of Kansas at the time of the Exodus. He became nationally known for his efforts to find practical and just solutions for the problems of the Exodusters and, in his time, was nearly as controversial as John Brown had been.

Western continued to prosper through the 1920s, but like many small schools it was severely hurt by the Great Depression. Enrollments and contributions declined, and the establishment of the draft, followed by World War II, was the final blow. The class of 1943 had only 13 graduates, and the school was forced to close its doors in 1944. Legal dissolution came in 1948, once it was apparent that no post-war revival was at hand. Western University Lands, a holding entity of the A.M.E. Church, still retains title to most of the Rev. Blachly's property.

Douglass Hospital occupied the remodeled Grant Hall in 1945. Douglass was established in 1898, when hospital care was generally closed to African-Americans, and its nursing school had been affiliated with Western since 1915. One by one, the buildings on the Western campus were demolished, to be replaced by institutions affiliated with Douglass - Primrose Villa elderly housing and Bryant-Butler-Kitchen nursing home. Douglass itself was closed in 1978, an ironic victim of

integration. Grant Hall, the last remaining Western building, was subsequently demolished in the summer of 1980.

As Western University declined, so did the surrounding area. In the 1930s, parts of the ruins at 5th and Kansas were still visible, a number of residential structures from the original development of Quindaro were still being lived in (including the Quindaro Brewery building), the residential neighborhood east and south of Western was still thriving, and children from Vernon Elementary School sometimes ventured on picnics and field trips down R Street to the riverfront. Twenty years later, with Western closed, the area had become a somewhat isolated backwater as Kansas City, Kansas expanded to the west. The buildings of Western became derelict and were eventually demolished to make way for newer structures. The ruins disappeared under silt and underbrush, and their extent and location was forgotten. Of the original residences, only the Brown/Blachly house remained intact. The others were abandoned to scavengers and the elements, and R Street north of the Brown/Blachly house gradually became impassible.

In the late 1960s, I-635 highway cut a wide swath through the area, taking a corner of Quindaro Park and converting the eastern portions of the townsite into a dumping area for excess fill material. According to residents, a two story, stone house still stood near 6th and T Streets, only to disappear with the highway construction. No attempts at salvage archaeology were made by the state, as Quindaro's significance had largely been forgotten and somehow everyone "knew" that the now vanished Quindaro ruins had been in the valley of Quindaro Creek, a half mile to the west. Apparently no one consulted the older residents of the area.

The highway only served to isolate the area still further, setting the stage for the approval of Browning-Ferris' landfill by a lame duck City Commission in 1983. Only as something of an afterthought, Browning-Ferris was required to do an archaeological survey of the landfill area prior to beginning construction. The results surprised everyone, except perhaps for some elderly residents of the city who had probably known all along what lay buried at the foot of North 27th Street, but were never asked.

DESCRIPTIONS OF SIGNIFICANT SITES AND STRUCTURES

A. Within the property designated as Western University Lands:

Quindaro Townsite 1856-1862

Much of the developed parts of Quindaro lay within the area that was to be filled by the proposed Browning-Ferris landfill. Ruins were still visible in the early 1950s. The recent archaeological survey has disclosed more extensive remains than had previously been known to exist, particularly along Kansas Avenue/27th Street, which functioned as Quindaro's main business street. The other substantially built-up area would appear to have been along Main and Levee Streets paralleling the Missouri River, where commercial buildings were mixed with several large warehouses, but that area has been heavily disturbed over the years, first by the construction of the Missouri Pacific Railroad and later by the pipelines feeding into Fairfax. The latter may also have been the case with the Quindaro House hotel, which stood on the block bounded by 5th Street, Kansas Avenue, and Main. At the present time the property is split largely between two owners, with the AME Church retaining title to the area west of the centerline of 27th Street, while the property east of the centerline now belongs to the City of Kansas City, Kansas.

Quindaro African-American Cemetery c. 1865

Sited half-way up the bluff on the west side of the valley of Quindaro Creek, this was the cemetery of the African-American community that began forming in the Quindaro area during the Civil War. The first burials were presumably in the mid to late 1860s. Still in use and still maintained, this may be the oldest African-American cemetery in the state of Kansas. The cemetery has apparently never had a separate legal existence, but remains part of what was once the Freedman's University property. It should not be confused with the Quindaro Cemetery at 38th and Parallel Parkway.

Pumphouse or waterworks (Feature No. 22) c. 1857/c. 1885

This has been claimed to be the first public waterworks in Kansas. A large spring half way up the Quindaro Creek valley emptied into a reservoir created by a low dam. Water was then conveyed through tiles following the channel of the creek to cisterns or reservoirs along the way. The Quindaro House reportedly depended on this water supply. The old reservoir may still be seen. A brick structure was built over the adjoining cistern in about 1885, and an engine installed to pump water to Western University. This remained the school's principal source of water until about 1910.

Quindaro Brewery (Feature No. 34)
 (originally 45 N Street)
 Henry Steiner, builder
 1857

The exact site of the first building housing Rev. Blachly's school remains to be determined. The ruin in the valley identified as Steiner and Zehntner's Quindaro Brewery may have housed the school, but an 1870 Wyandotte County map locates the school in the group of commercial buildings on the east side of Kansas Avenue, a block and one-half north of Rev. Blachly's house. The brewery itself was remodeled as a residence in the early 1900s and was still occupied in the 1930s. A substantial portion of the building's front wall remained standing until quite recently. Its vaulted cellar, common to small breweries of the period, continues to fuel speculation about tunnels, in a misunderstanding of what the Underground Railroad actually was.

Western University
 27th Street and Sewell Avenue (originally Kansas Avenue and 8th Street)
 Various architects
 1891-1948

All of the buildings of Western University have been demolished, the last in 1980. The only remaining physical artifacts are a few cornerstones and the John Brown statue. In 1958, Ward Hall, the oldest of Western's buildings, was torn down to make way for Primrose Villa, an elderly housing project. (This property is now in private hands as a result of a tax sale.) As the statue stood in the way of the new construction, it was proposed to move it to the north end of the new building. This generated a great deal of opposition, and consequently the statue was instead placed between Primrose Villa and Sewell Avenue. The move was botched, resulting in serious damage to the statue: the nose and one coat tail were broken off, and reportedly the head was broken off in its entirety, although that damage is not now visible.

The statue was again moved in the spring of 1978, to the northwest corner of 27th and Sewell, where it became the focus of a memorial plaza dedicated to the memory of Western University and the town of Quindaro. Architects for the new memorial were Buchanan Architects and Associates, and the work was initiated and funded through the historic preservation component of the Kansas City, Kansas Community Development Program. The mover was required to post a bond of \$75,000, a measure of the value that the community still places on its most famous memorial.

B. Within the corporate limits of Quindaro:

Brown/Blachly Residence
3464 North 26th Street (originally 83 R Street)
Builder unknown
Circa 1850

By oral tradition, this house was built by the Brown family, Wyandot relatives of Nancy Brown Guthrie. If so, it may be the oldest remaining structure in Wyandotte County. The house is a severe, two-story rectangle with a centered entry and a low pitched, hipped roof. The stone walls are 18 to 24 inches thick, and the floor joists consist of rough-hewn logs, lending credibility to the belief that construction predates that of the town of Quindaro. In the years of Quindaro's development it was the home of Fielding Johnson. It became the home of Rev. Blachly in 1868, and it was there that he died in an upstairs bedroom in 1877. The house has been added to, and the walls stuccoed over, but the original structure remains substantially intact.

Quindaro Cemetery
38th Street and Parallel Parkway
1852

This property was given to the Methodist Episcopal Church by Lucy B. Armstrong in 1850 or 1851 to serve as the site of a new mission church, following the split in the Wyandot congregation over the issue of slavery. The first burial in the cemetery was that of Eliza S. Witten, wife of the Methodist missionary, on January 3, 1852. The church itself was burned on April 8, 1856, in the general turmoil that swept Kansas over the slavery issue (an event which may have contributed to Quindaro's founding). It was not rebuilt, but the property subsequently became the public cemetery for Quindaro. Rev. Blachly is buried here, along with other notable citizens of both Quindaro and Wyandott.

Quindaro Park
32nd Street to 34th Street and Sewell Avenue to Parkview Avenue
(originally L Street to I Street and 8th Street to 10th Street)
1857

This park was part of the original plat of Quindaro, although there is no indication that it was ever developed. When Quindaro's incorporation was revoked in 1862, it became the property of Quindaro Township. J. J. Squires, a Kansas City, Missouri banker, attempted to claim the property as his but the Township's title was upheld in federal court. The area was annexed by Kansas City, Kansas on December 1, 1923, and the park was deeded over to the City by the Township on February 8, 1924. In the late 1960s, the southeast corner was taken for the construction of I-635. This is the oldest park in the county.

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church
 3421 North 29th Street
 Architect unknown
 1914

Allen Chapel is the oldest African-American church in the Quindaro area. It was founded in 1869, with the Rev. Skylar Washington of Wyandotte as pastor. The original church was of logs and stood on the northeast corner of J and 8th Streets, near the present 33rd and Sewell. The church was eventually able to acquire the stone building that had housed the Quindaro Congregational Church at 27th and Sewell. A tornado destroyed that structure, and the congregation began meeting in the adjacent stone school house. A new frame church was built on the Congregational Church site in 1893, followed by a larger building on the same site in 1910. Disaster then struck in the form of a fire in 1911 or 1912. The present building, built in 1914, is thus the sixth to house the congregation. Many members of the present church can trace their descent to the ex-slaves who originally settled the area and founded Allen Chapel in the 1860s.

Bishop W. T. Vernon Residence
 2715 Sewell Avenue
 Architect unknown
 1918

W. B. Kennedy Residence
 2725 Sewell Avenue
 Architect unknown
 1911

H. T. Kealing Residence
 2805 Sewell Avenue
 Architect unknown
 1916

Bob Ransom Residence
 2821 Sewell Avenue
 Architect unknown
 1922

These four residences, all built in the early years of this century, originally housed faculty and students of Western University, and faced the campus to the north across Sewell. The home of Bishop Vernon is surprisingly modest, given the range of his accomplishments. The largest, and architecturally the most interesting, is that of Bishop Vernon's successor at Western, Dr. Kealing, with its bell-cast gable and extensive veranda. All four structures would appear to be basically sound but in need of maintenance, with few, if any, alterations.

Vernon Elementary School
2700 Sewell Avenue
Joseph W. Radotinsky, Architect
1935-36

This property was originally the site of the Quindaro Congregational Church (see above). It later became the site of the Colored School of Quindaro, with its own school district (No. 17) and an all-black school board. The original stone school was replaced by a four-room brick structure sometime after the turn of the century, and later renamed in honor of Bishop Vernon. The school lay outside the city limits of Kansas City, Kansas and eventually became part of the Washington School District. The present building was built by the W.P.A. in 1936 as a segregated school for black students, and features an interesting piece of Art Deco bas relief sculpture over the main entry. Following the annexation of 1967 and the consolidation of Washington District with Kansas City, Kansas District 500, use of the school was discontinued and its pupils transferred to Quindaro Elementary School two blocks to the south (which is itself descended from the all-white Quindaro School). The Vernon School building now houses a neighborhood center.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

At the request of neighborhood residents intent on fighting the Browning-Ferris landfill, the Quindaro and Western University Historic District was approved by the City Council on March 1, 1984. That approval was for all the historic district applied for by the petitioners, except for those portions for which a special permit for a landfill had already been granted to Browning-Ferris Industries. Thus, of the above noted sites and structures, the following have been included in the historic district as approved: the portion of the Quindaro townsite east of 27th Street (Kansas Avenue) that was previously owned by Freedman's University, the site of Western University including the John Brown statue, the Brown/Blachly house, Quindaro Park, and the school, houses and church along the south side of Sewell Avenue between 27th and 29th. In addition, although not part of the district, the Quindaro African-American Cemetery was given a surveyed boundary and was supposed to remain undisturbed by the landfill operation.

It should be noted that the local historic designation of the AME Church property west of 27th that was leased to Browning-Ferris was never denied. Instead it was put on indefinite hold, and with the landfill permit now voided could presumably be brought back before the City Council for reconsideration.

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Additional information was taken from the clipping files in the Archives of the Wyandotte County Museum.