

## **Calvary Baptist Church**

601 North Water

Wichita

The Calvary Baptist Church is one of the three last significant physical remnant of Wichita's historic black settlement. Josiah Walker, a black plasterer and architect, probably designed the building, which is an exemplary work of Neoclassical Revival architecture.

The first black settlers in Wichita, freed slaves relocating to the Great Plains from the Civil War-torn South, called themselves "Exodusters." By 1880 almost two dozen black families had settled in the vicinity of North Main Street, primarily in the 500 block, the first area of black residential and business concentration. This area thus became the primary location of cultural, social, business, and religious activities for Wichita's black community, with Calvary Baptist Church as the nucleus. During the years 1917-38, Calvary Baptist Church provided services to the black community of Wichita through sponsorship of a number of organizations within the congregation. The church became nationally known through its pastor, the Reverend S. B. Butler, who was treasurer of the National Baptist Sunday School and the Baptist Young Peoples' Union Congress. Presently Calvary Baptist serves as a source of pride for Wichita's black community. [CA 10/28/88, 88001905]