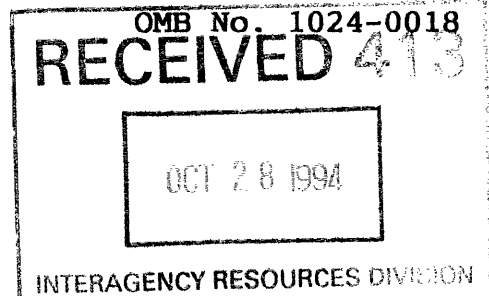


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 how to complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church

other names/site number Zion AME Church; K-6613

2. Location

street & number Center Street not for publication N/A
city or town Camden vicinity N/A
state Delaware code DE county Kent code 001
zip code 19934

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide x locally.

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] October 25, 1994
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
4. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Edson H Beall 11.25.94

Entered in the
National Register

Bar Signature of 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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	buildings
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	objects
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Religion</u>	Sub: <u>Religious Facility</u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Religion</u>	Sub: <u>Religious Facility</u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>brick</u>
roof	<u>asphalt shingle</u>
walls	<u>weatherboard</u>
other	<u>wood</u>

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Social History
Architecture

Period of Significance 1889-1942

Significant Dates N/A

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

N/A preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

N/A previously listed in the National Register

N/A previously determined eligible by the National Register

N/A designated a National Historic Landmark

N/A recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

N/A recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	452330	4329680	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

_____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====

11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Leslie D. Bashman, Research Assistant

organization State Historic Preservation Office date August 28, 1992

street & number 15 The Green telephone 302-739-5685

city or town Dover state DE zip code 19901

=====

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Zion AME Church
name of property
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7. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Zion African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church on Center Street in Camden, Kent County, Delaware, was originally built in 1845 and re-built after a fire in 1889. The one story Classical Revival church rests on a brick foundation which may be original to the site. The width of the church is 28 feet and 3 inches across the front and back and 36 feet 2 inches in length. The church, when established, was located in a rural section of Camden, very close to Wyoming, Delaware, on the edge of a traditionally African-American section of town. The expansion of the size of the City of Camden is readily identifiable since the white community has expanded in size towards the town of Wyoming and the African-American community has also grown in the same direction except that there is not as much development in the African-American neighborhood and there is more open space between the individual homes.

The gable-fronted church faces north and is covered in white-painted weatherboard which has a 4 1/2" reveal. The gable end of the church has a box cornice with partial returns. There is a lunette window in the front of the church which has been covered over, as well as a 6/6 double-hung sash window with colored glass, to the east of the entrance. Around 1940 two small additions were added to the front of the church. One addition is a stuccoed over narthex which has a roof line that mimics the larger one on the church. The second addition is that of a men's and lady's room. Because the bathrooms are located in an addition just to the west of the entrance in the narthex, the 6/6 double hung colored glass window which would answer the one on the east has been covered over with weatherboard. Although the front additions to the church appear to have been completed at the same time, a tell tale seam line in the plaster indicates that in fact the addition of the narthex and the addition of the bathrooms were each done separately. The narthex is entered by climbing three steps and going through double doors which open outward. Before the addition of the narthex, people entered the nave of the church from the outside through these double doors which have a glass transom.

The east and west sides of the church each have three 6/6 double- hung sash windows with colored glass. Window light colors include red, yellow, blue, brown and orange. It is thought that these windows contained stained glass until the 1950s when they were replaced with the colored lights that are still in them today. An old photograph of the church reveals that the original windows were 4/4 double hung sash. A new asphalt shingle roof was put on the church in May, 1992. At this time pieces of the original wood roof were discovered.

The interior of the church is covered with beaded cream colored wainscoting under the chair rail and modern panelling above. The church was originally heated by wood stoves. Two

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Zion AME Church
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interior chimney stacks extend out from the east and west slopes of the roof. Today, heat from a heater below the floor of the church enters the nave through two large grates in the floor.

A center aisle bisects the nave up to the chancel. Six red cushioned pews are on the left side of the nave and seven are on the right side. The chancel in the front of the church is separated by a white railing. To the left of the altar is a choir box which is 8 1/2 feet by 12 feet 7 inches and also has a railing. The choir box holds four, of the remaining eight original wood pews. Two of the other original pews provide extra seating in the nave, and the remaining two original pews are located together in the front of the church on the right hand side of the chancel, perpendicular to the altar.

An elaborate painted mural covers the apse behind the altar. The mural was painted around the time the church was re-built and is in good condition. The mural depicts a shepherd carrying a staff, herding his sheep near a stream. Below is painted the caption "The Lord is my Shepherd, I Shall not Want." Another item of ornamentation in the church is a needlework depiction of the Last Supper which hangs on the wall near the choir box. A wooden cross hangs down from the ceiling above the pulpit.

An old wood panel cabinet remains in the rear of the church, extra bibles and hymnals are probably kept there.

Outside, the ground around the Zion AME Church has been used since the church was established as a cemetery. The soil is quite soft and the ground is hilly. Most of the land surrounding the cemetery is to the east of the church, almost all of the graves are found there. There are probably many more people buried in the ground than there are markers indicating. There are several unmarked family plots, modern headstones and small stone markers. The oldest marked grave is from 1874 and the most contemporary is 1978. The rear of the cemetery is covered by thick underbrush. There is also underbrush in the middle of the cemetery along an aisle. The underbrush obscures many of the markers and headstones.

Cemeteries are typically laid out with graves in long parallel rows. The cemetery surrounding the Zion AME Church in Camden does not have a typical and readily definable pattern of burials. There are several rows distinguishable, but essentially many older graves are scattered in the rear of the cemetery and other markers and headstones are scattered upon the open ground. Types of gravestones range from the normal contemporary version to the crude. One example is a headstone with the name "Mother, Annie Mae" scratched onto the surface. Some graves merely have stone markers indicating a grave below. The gravestones of two Civil War veterans are identical in type, and were probably standard issue for veterans of the Civil War.

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Section 8 Page 1

Zion AME Church
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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Zion African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Camden, Delaware is significant under criteria A and C. It is significant under criterion A because it was the first African Methodist Episcopal church in Camden, Delaware and therefore spawned from the ideals and beliefs of the traditional African-American community in Camden, Delaware. The church is significant under criterion C because it is a good example of a diminishing resource, the rural African-American church.

Camden, Delaware, a traditional Quaker community, is said to have been a stop for slaves northward on the Underground Railroad. Beers Atlas of Delaware, 1868, clearly shows the church as being away from, and separate from, the white community of Camden, and on the west edge of the African-American community. The Zion AME Church established in 1845 and re-built in 1889, has been an important part of the African-American religious and social community of the city of Camden and its environs.

Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was a slave of Benjamin Chew's in Philadelphia. According to Woodson, Allen and his family were traded to a planter living near Dover, Delaware, Camden is just two miles south of Dover. Allen was able to purchase his freedom for \$2,000 before founding the AME Church. Frazier described the rise of the African Methodist Episcopal Church:

Richard Allen along with Absolam Jones organized the Free African Society in 1787. Allen believed that the Methodist form of worship was more suited to the religious needs of and the form of worship the negroes had become accustomed. The movement begun by Allen under the name of African societies spread to other cities where so-called African Methodist Episcopal churches were set up. Representatives of these churches met in Philadelphia in 1816 and established the African Methodist Episcopal Church. At this meeting Richard Allen was elected Bishop and a book of discipline was adopted which embodied the same articles of religion and rules as the Wesleyans.

In 1787, 30% of all Methodists on the Delmarva Peninsula were African American. The Methodist church treated white women as second class citizens and treated African-American men and women as third class citizens. This

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undoubtedly provided the impetus for Richard Allen and his followers to found the African Methodist Episcopal Church, a church where African-Americans could worship in the manner in which they chose.

Richard Allen's movement is described by Frazier as being much more important sociologically than theologically because, for the first time the world saw the birth of a church not on the basis of some new theological propositions but solely on sociological grounds. The AME church became the arena of African-American political and social life. Individuals could attain the distinction and status within the church which was not possible in their everyday lives. Thus the reason for the establishment of the Zion AME Church was to provide a safe haven for African-American's to worship and to gather as a community without controls from the white majority. While Camden had always had a tradition of tolerance due to its strong Quaker roots, there was still a perceived need for African-Americans to collect together as a separate community.

Zebley, in the Churches of Delaware, cites the Zion AME Church of Camden as being organized in 1845, with a church being built. The year that the first deed exists for the church is 1848, leading us to believe that the first deed went unrecorded because the 1848 deed makes mention of the church already standing at the site adjacent to the land being purchased.

The first recorded deed that does exist for the church was filed on September 12, 1848.

"George Jones (colored) on the one part and James Miller, Prince Caldwell, Palm George, Samuel Millis, and William Brinckley (colored) of the same place, Trustees of the Zion Methodist Episcopal Church near Camden, aforesaid witnesseth that the said George Jones for and in consideration of the sum of fourteen dollars to them in hand."

The deed illuminates that this land was purchased for the express purpose of a cemetery adjoining the church. The deed explains that the land is for the trustees mentioned and their successors forever in trust for the purpose of a burying ground or place of internment for the bodies of the deceased members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and their successors or majority of them, and for no other use or interest or purpose.

A second deed under the Trustees of the Zion AME Church was filed on April 9, 1863 in Kent County, for land which would enlarge the existing cemetery. This land was purchased by the trustees of the church from John

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Jones for fifteen dollars and was approximately sixty-eight feet by eighty-four feet by fifty-seven feet by eighty feet, abutting the existing cemetery.

After a fire, a second church was built in 1889. Zebley recounts an interesting story concerning the church in his book Churches of Delaware. He states that on October 6, 1898, while a service was in progress, Sam Jones declared that "I am the Lord and all who don't believe it are liars." then the trouble started. Ike Fulman drew his pistol and shot into the ceiling first and then sent a bullet crashing in Chas. Walters breast. A general melee followed after which Jones and Fulman fled to Hazletville and on into Maryland.

The third and final procurement of land that the trustees made for the church, was made on August 15, 1923, when they purchased a quarter of an acre of land from William Gaynes. The initial unrecorded deed of the land on which the church stands, and the three subsequent purchases of land surrounding the church are thought to equal the existing land holdings of the Zion AME Church in Camden.

The cemetery surrounding the church provides an eternal resting place for many people who were once fellow congregants and friends. There are at least eleven known designated war veterans buried in the cemetery. The most noteworthy are Caleb Fisher, known to have fought in Company D, of the 8th United States Colored Infantry of the Civil War, and Abraham Gibbs, known to have fought in Company I of the 41st United States Colored Infantry of the Civil War. The two headstones are identical, each with a cut out crest shape with their name and company. The exact same headstone is also found in Cedar Grove Wesleyan Church, marking the grave of a white Civil War veteran. It would seem as though this headstone was issued to commemorate the graves of all persons who fought in the Civil War. Of the remaining buried veterans, three participated in World War I and four in World War II. Evidence suggests that all of the veterans survived the time in which they were in service. The oldest marked stone in the cemetery is dated 1874 (the headstones of the two men who fought in the Civil War are undated). The most contemporary burial appears to have been in 1978.

Throughout the years the congregation of the Zion AME Church in Camden has ebbed. The current congregation is approximately twenty-four. Previous congregations have been as large as eighty. All church activities take place either in the church, rented hall or a hall belonging to another church. If large crowds are expected for an event, it is necessary for the church to rent accommodations. Occasionally other churches, or other church choirs

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visit and share Sunday services.

Several traditional annual events and celebrations take place in the church. The second Sunday in September is an annual Family Day. This day is also known as "Summers" and "Friends" Day. Each February there is an annual Men's Day and each March there is an annual Women's Day. Individual family's are also celebrated. The church has set aside specific days to honor such families as the Cowgill's, Penewell's and Gibbs', to name a few. Many current members are related to the very people who were the original trustees of the church.

The current Pastor of the Zion AME Church in Camden is Stony Daggett. The Church is part of the first Episcopal District of AME churches. Thirty-four AME churches currently exist within the state of Delaware.

The Zion AME Church is significant under criterion C in that it is representative of the type and style of church constructed in rural Delaware in the mid-nineteenth century. It is also distinctive because it is a surviving example of an African-American place of worship. Resources of this type are few within the state, the bulk of them having been abandoned or demolished.

The Zion AME Church in Camden, Delaware is a Classical Revival, white frame church, with small narthex and three windows on each side of the nave which is very similar in style to other rural churches in Delaware, established by both whites and African-Americans. Some examples of Delaware churches similar in style to the Zion AME Church in Camden are the St. Johnstown Methodist Episcopal Church and Shiloh Church, both in Sussex County, and Griffith's Chapel, Little Union Methodist Episcopal Church and Cow Marsh Church, in Kent County. These churches are similar to the Zion AME Church in Camden in that they are all basically small frame churches which were organized to fill the religious needs of certain people in rural communities. Little Union ME Church is very similar to the AME Church in Camden, although it only has two windows on each side of its nave. The Cow Marsh Church is also very similar in style, although it does not have a narthex. The Shiloh Church only lacks the partial return cornice that the Camden church has.

While there are similarities between the churches mentioned and the Zion AME Church in Camden, none are located in proximity to Camden, but rather centered in their own communities. The churches surveyed in Camden are larger than the small rural church that the Zion AME Church typifies. The

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past 40 years have not been kind to the small church as many have been demolished as their congregations have dwindled due to advancing age and migration away from the rural sections of the state, to the now urban areas of Dover and Wilmington, or out of Delaware.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

ZONE: UPPER PENINSULA
PERIODS: 1880-1940= / - ; URBANIZATION & EARLY SUBURBANIZATION
THEME: RELIGION
PROPERTY TYPES: PLACE OF WORSHIP, CEMETERY

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 1 Zion AME Church
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9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

=====

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1

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10. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

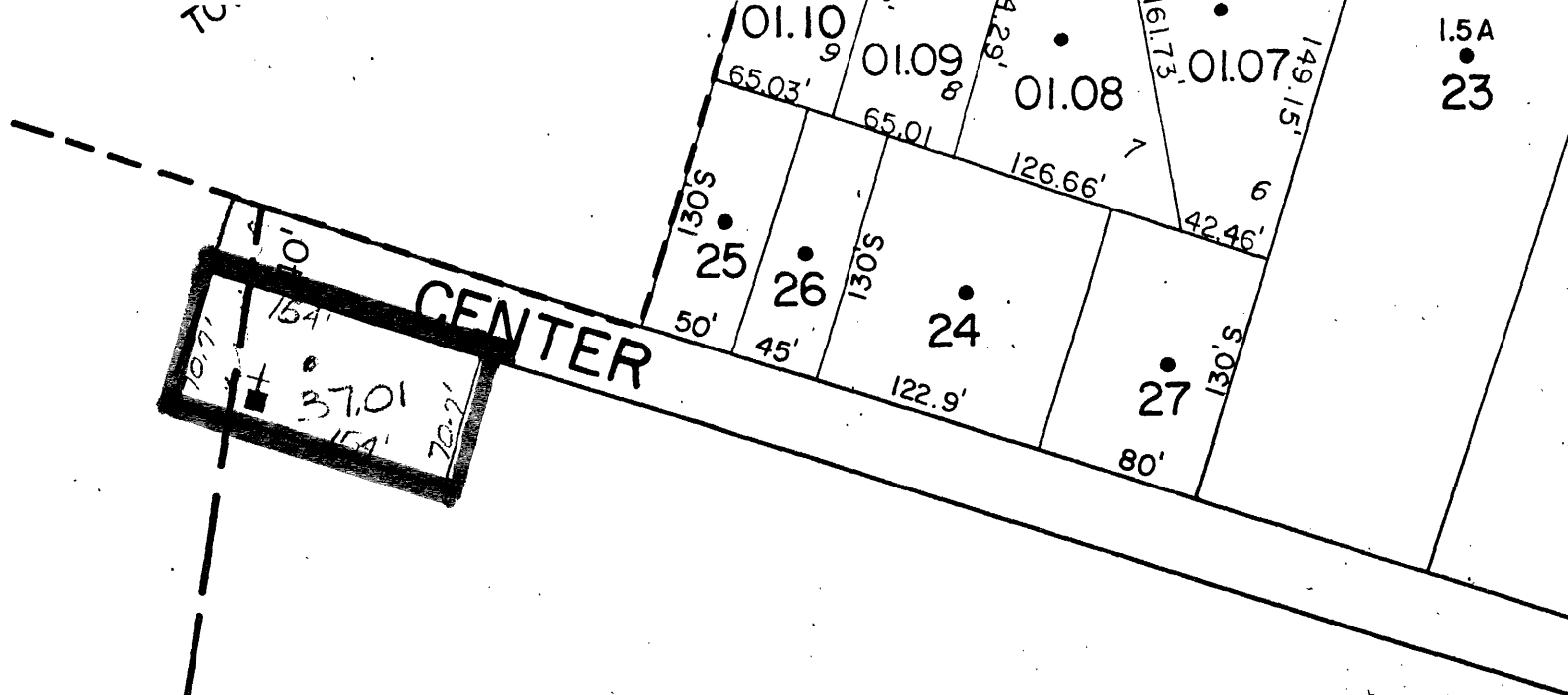
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The area described by and included within this nomination is the property of the Zion AME Church of Camden. The bounds are the legal limits of tax parcel NM-02-094.07-01-37.01-000 as recorded by the Kent County Recorder of Deeds, Dover, Delaware.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This nomination includes all of the land historically associated with the Zion AME Church of Camden.



CENTER

CAESAR RODNEY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

15.3Ap
37

HILL CREST
PB. 29 P.

CAMDEN

Zion AME Church
Center Street
Camden, Kent County, DE

Tax Map 1"=100' N ↑

NE 462,000
N 406,000

AINING PORTION
94.06

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94001388 Date Listed: 11/25/95

Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church Kent DE
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

1/26/16
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

This SLR corrects a technical omission. The DE SHPO requests that an additional Area of Significance, "Ethnic Heritage-Black," be added; it was inadvertently omitted from the form. The nomination is officially amended to add the additional Area of Significance.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)