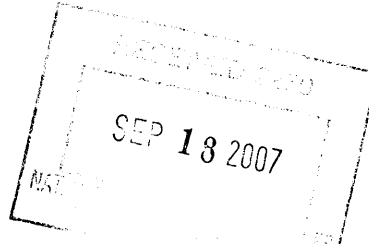


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1116

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 16A). 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 Mt. Zion Memorial Church, S-405
other names Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church

2. Location

street & number 29071 Polks Road not for publication
city or town Princess Anne vicinity
state Maryland code MD county Somerset code 039 zip code 21853

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Elizabeth H. Hinkle / DSHPO 9.17.07
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 certifying official/Title 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 11.1.07
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Mt. Zion Memorial Church, S-405
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

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

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility/church

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Gothic

foundation	CONCRETE
walls	VINYL
roof	ASPHALT
other	

Narrative Description

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

Description Summary:

The Mt. Zion Memorial Church, also known as the Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, was built in two stages, beginning with the main body of the church in 1887. In 1916 the church was remodeled significantly, particularly inside, with new colored glass windows and most of its extant woodwork. The church stands at 29071 Polks Road, northwest of Princess Anne, Somerset County, Maryland. The single-story asymmetrical plan frame church faces

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north with the principal gable roof oriented on a north/south axis. The asymmetrically planned frame structure is supported on an infilled brick pier foundation, and the exterior is sheathed with vinyl siding over the original plain weatherboard siding. The steeply pitched gable roofs are covered with asphalt shingles. The church is set within a cemetery, with many above ground burial vaults. The cemetery is counted as a contributing resource to the property.

General Description:

The Mt. Zion Memorial Church, also known as the Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, is a single-story asymmetrically planned T-shaped frame structure located at 29071 Polks Road, northwest of Princess Anne, Somerset County, Maryland. The timber frame structure is supported on an infilled brick pier foundation. Fixed in the northeast corner of the foundation is a marble datestone inscribed with the initial construction date of 1887 and the date of a major remodeling in 1916. The stone is inscribed with two names, Rev. H. T. Rich, who was the minister in 1887, and Rev. R. C. Hughes, the minister during the remodeling in 1916. The church faces north with the principal gable oriented on a north/south axis. On the east side of the church is a cemetery with many above ground vaults.

The north (main) elevation is an asymmetrically arranged façade with a three-story entrance tower rising in the northeast corner of the T-plan. A double-door entrance pierces the first floor of the tower and diamond shaped windows mark second story. The top of the tower tapers slightly as it rises toward the open belfry. The tapering portion of the tower is sheathed with wood shingles. The belfry is distinguished by Victorian sawn brackets and paired spindles across the bottom and top levels of the belfry opening. The belfry is capped by a short pyramidal roof, which is a modification of the original spire. Defining the adjacent gable-front wall of the main body of the church is a Gothic inspired tripartite window filled with early twentieth-century colored and opaque glass panes. The edges of the roof are finished with an extended eave. Piercing the front edge of the roof is a single flue chimney stack.

The west side elevation is defined by a single story gable roofed structure flanked by shed roofed side sections that extend from the main body of the church and house the altar area, choir and an adjacent vestment room. The altar wall is pierced by a round colored glass window, and the shed roofed sections are pierced by Gothic inspired single-pane colored glass sash.

The south (rear) elevation is an asymmetrically planned façade with the gable end of the sanctuary pierced by another Gothic inspired tripartite window fitted with early twentieth-century colored glass panes. The adjacent shed room to the west is marked by a door opening

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fitted with an early twentieth-century five-panel door. Another single flue brick stove chimney pierces the roofline.

The east elevation of the T-shaped church is finished in a similar fashion with the gable end wall pierced by another Gothic inspired tripartite window.

The church interior survives with a blend of finishes dating from the 1887 and 1916 building programs. The main sanctuary occupies the rectangular center section of the church with the altar and choir to the west. In the east leg of the T-plan is an adjacent seating section housed in a room that can be closed off with a folding set of paneled doors. When the seating demands require, the two spaces can be consolidated into one large space. It appears, through the pervasive use of wire nails, that the interior was significantly remodeled in 1916. The sanctuary is trimmed with two periods of vertical board wainscoting. The wainscoting that distinguishes the sanctuary is finished with a layer of oak graining, whereas the wainscoting around the altar and choir areas is distinctly different with a dark mahogany stain. The use of wire nails indicates the altar, choir, and vestment room were reworked in 1916. The altar and choir are distinguished by round arched openings and turned baluster railing that stretch across each area. The turned baluster altar rail is semi-circular. One of the most distinctive finish features of the interior is the early twentieth-century beaded board ceiling. A gridwork of panels, fitted with alternating diagonal tongue-and-groove boards distinguishes the ceilings of the main sanctuary east wing. Bulls-eye blocks mark many of the points where the panel framework meet. Hanging from the ceiling are the original 1916 milk glass style globe chandeliers.

Around the church are burial grounds which contain many above ground concrete vaults due to the low-lying nature of the lot.

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 pattern of our history.
- B** Property 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)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1887-1916

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

African American

Architect/Builder

Benjamin D. Price, architect (attributed)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- 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: Maryland Historical Trust

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Summary Statement of Significance:

Mt. Zion Memorial Church, also known as Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church or Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion C for its architectural importance, due to its essentially intact condition and survival as one of a small collection (approximately 16 in number) of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century African-American churches in Somerset County. The formation of a Methodist church for the rural black population residing in the Polks Road community of Hungary Neck dates to the closing years of the Civil War, and until 1980 the original meeting house stood at this location. The Victorian church the congregation financed in 1887 follows the asymmetrical Gothic Revival format advocated by the mainstream Methodist Church hierarchy. The design of the church is almost certainly derived from one of the numerous mail-order plans created by architect Benjamin D. Price and published from Philadelphia by the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church during the late 19th century.

The interior underwent a thorough remodeling in 1916, and the early twentieth-century finishes remain largely intact. The use of curved pews and folding doors across the east side of the sanctuary reflect the denomination-wide movement to incorporate the Auditorium plan and lecture room arrangement that dominated Protestant church architecture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Only a handful of the remaining African-American churches in Somerset County have survived with such a high level of original fabric. Most churches have been remodeled and enlarged periodically as congregations demanded larger and more modern facilities. The Mt. Zion Memorial Church is the only distinctive and historically important structure surviving in this African-American community along Polks Road in northern Somerset County. The period of significance begins with construction of the church in 1887 and ends with the 1916 remodeling campaign, by which time the building had achieved its present form and appearance.

Resource History and Historic Context:

The complete history of the Mt. Zion Memorial Church, also known as Mt. Zion M. E. Church or Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, is unknown due to a lack of records detailing the nineteenth-century history of the congregation. Oral tradition within the remaining members of the congregation relate that the church was organized in 1864 by a group of free blacks living along Polks Road in the Hungary District of Somerset County, east of the village of Mt. Vernon.¹ The earliest recorded reference to the church at this location is on the Hungary District map incorporated in the Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson

¹ Interview with Retta Jones, Mt. Zion Historical Society, 10 August 2005.

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Atlas, published in 1877.² The next date of any documented activity is 1887 when the congregation financed the construction of the Victorian structure under nomination. The design of the church is almost certainly derived from one of the numerous mail-order plans created by architect Benjamin D. Price and published from Philadelphia by the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church during the late 19th century. While the specific plan has yet to be identified, it is worth noting that in both its overall form and its detailing the building bears close similarities to Church Plan No. 19A in the 14th edition of the Board's Catalogue (1889).

The 1887 date is inscribed on the marble stone fixed in the northeast corner of the foundation. The stone reads, "Mt. Zion Memorial Church, built by Reverend H. T. Rich, 1887." Harrison T. Rich served the Mt. Zion congregation as well as the Friendship Methodist organization located northeast of the nearby village of Allen in Wicomico County. In a short summary history of the congregation, Cordra W. Williams wrote in 1933,

*Mt. Zion Church Hall at nearby Polk's Road is still standing, erected in 1864. It was once a sister church to our own first Friendship, that is sharing the same pastor, the Reverend Harrison T. Rich. That building was built for and used as a church until 1887, and since in continuous use as a hall. Friendship was a look a like of about the same dimension, 20 by 24 feet.*³

Perhaps as a result of the construction of the 1887 church, the Mt. Zion congregation decided to incorporate, which was formally recorded on February 11, 1892.⁴ Listed as the official board members in the incorporation proceedings were Frost Dorman, Jacob T. Waters, W. J. Handy, Mingo J. Bell, George W. Dashiell, Grayson Jones, Isaac Wilkins, and Morris Jones. An election of these individuals had been held on the first day of February at the Mt. Zion Church, and the following incorporation papers documented their election as trustees.

The congregation continued to prosper and grow during the last years of the nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth century. The next principal event in the history of Mt. Zion was the extensive remodeling of the church in 1916, which is documented on the marble

² John L. Graham, ed. *The 1877 Atlases and Other Early Maps of the Eastern Shore of Maryland*. Wicomico County Bicentennial Committee, 1976, p. 28.

³ Cordra W. Williams, Summary History of Mt. Zion Memorial Church, 1933-34, Allen, Maryland.

⁴ Somerset County Land Record, HFL 10/219-222, 11 February 1892, Somerset County Courthouse.

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datestone under the pastorship of Reverend R. C. Hughes. The building was significantly reworked with the addition of the colored glass windows and interior matched board ceiling, doors and altar woodwork. The pervasive use of wire nails in this work documents the large extent of the remodeling. It appears that part of the turned baluster altar rail, common to the 1880s, was reused in the 1916 remodeling, and the oak grained vertical beaded board wainscoting on the side walls dates from the late 19th century as well.

The congregation maintained a sizable membership through the mid twentieth century, but during the past 25 years the membership has diminished. At present, the Mt. Zion congregation has consolidated with other local Methodist congregations. The Mt. Zion Church now stands unused on a regular basis with only occasional history-related events or meetings held there. A group of interested local residents, many of whom attended the church, have organized the Mt. Zion Historical Society in an effort to preserve this structure as well as maintain the history of its existence within the Polks Road community and Somerset County.

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Major Bibliographical References:

Kynett, Rev. A. J. ed. *Catalogue of Architectural Plans for Churches and Parsonages*, Board of Church Extension, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1889.

Graham, John L. ed. *The 1877 Atlases and Other Early Maps of the Eastern Shore of Maryland*. Wicomico County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Personal interview with Retta Jones, 10 August 2005, Princess Anne vicinity, Somerset County, Maryland.

Somerset County Land Records, various volumes, Somerset County Courthouse.

Touart, Paul Baker. *Somerset: An Architectural History*, Maryland Historical Trust and the Somerset County Historical Trust, 1990.

Williams, Condra W. "Summary History of Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church," 1933.

Williams, William H. *The Garden of American Methodism: The Delmarva Peninsula, 1769-1820*. Peninsula Conference of the United Methodist Church: Dover, Delaware, 1984.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.5 acres Eden, MD USGS Quadrangle Map

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

1	1	8	4	3	4	9	1	2	4	2	3	4	7	4	8
	Zone			Easting				Northing							
2															

3															
	Zone			Easting				Northing							
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 Paul Baker Touart, Architectural Historian
Organization Private Consultant date 6.28.06
street & number Cedar Hill Box 5 telephone 410-651-1094
city or town Westover state Maryland zip code 21871

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name Mt. Zion Historical Society c/o Mrs. Retta Jones
street & number P. O. Box 325 telephone 410-651-2169
city or town Princess Anne state Maryland zip code 21853-0325

Paperwork Reduction 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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Verbal Boundary Description:

All that lot or parcel of land situate in said Mt. Vernon Election District, Somerset County, on the south side of the County road leading from Van Buren Corner of the Creek known as Polks Road and Beginning for the same at the northwest corner of the land now owned by the said Mt. Zion Church, and on which the church building is erected, thence running in a southerly direction by and with the said church property a distance of seventy-six yards to a stone, thence in an Easterly direction and parallel with the aforesaid County road a distance of sixty four yards to another stone, thence Northerly and parallel with the first line a distance of seventy six yards to the County road, thence westerly by and with the County road a distance of sixty four yards to the place of beginning, containing 2.5 acres, more or less. (Somerset County Land Record, BLB 121/521, 3.16.1938.)

Boundary Justification:

The legal boundary that defines the current lot is coincidental with the boundary for this nomination.

Mt. Zion Memorial Church
Princess Anne, Somerset Co., MD
S-405, Somerset County Tax Map
Map 4, Grid 19, Parcel 4

