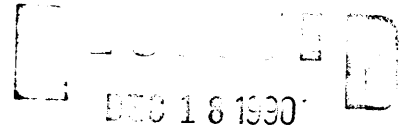


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Old Ship African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
other names/site number Clinton's Chapel, Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church

2. Location

street & number 483 Holcombe Street NA not for publication
city, town Montgomery NA vicinity
state Alabama code AL county Montgomery code 101 zip code 36104

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. 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. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 12-6-90
Signature of certifying official Date
Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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): _____

Mark J. Baker Entered in the National Register 24 June 1991

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICKwalls BRICK

roof ASPHALTother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church, which was moved in 1852 from its original location on Court Street, is now situated on the northeast corner of Holcombe and Mildred Streets. Sparsely settled prior to the Civil War but later prospering as a middle-class white neighborhood during the late 19th century, this area is now surrounded by abandoned houses and vacant lots. The original section of the Old Ship Church was a frame building constructed in 1835 and then remodeled in the 1850's. The only visible evidence of the early building is the frame siding and gable roof with a return cornice located to the rear. Although the frame church was covered with a brick facade around 1888, the most dramatic changes to the building occurred between 1918 and 1920 when it was completely remodeled in the Classical Revival style.

The Old Ship Church is a brick, rectangular building with small wings projecting north and south off the front facade. A stone beltcourse is located above the raised basement. Unadorned pilasters distinguish the corners of the wings. A wide cornice with dentils surrounds the north, south, and west facades. Truncated twin towers have louvered arched openings. The bell tower, cast by the Buckeye Foundry, bears the date of 1876 and is located in the south wing belfry. Four Ionic columns support a central pediment which shields the recessed portico. The pediment displays dentils and a lunette. Three, double door entranceways have stained glass transoms (the central transom includes the inscription "OLD SHIP") and architraves with curved brackets and dentils. Single doors located off the sides of the portico lead into the vestibule. Paired rectangular windows with double sash 1/1 leaded stained glass are located over the front (west) double doors. Fenestration on the front facade also includes single rectangular windows with double sash 1/1 leaded stained glass and two, almost square, basement windows with 3/3 sash and stone sills.

The side (north and south) facades display arched stained glass windows with keystones, brick lintels, and stone sills. The windows closest to the chancel display vignettes illustrating the history of the church. On the south window, the stained glass depicts the original frame building with the date "1852." The north window depicts the church after it was remodeled with the brick veneer; this window bears the date "1888." The paired basement windows on the north and south facades have 2/2 sash and arched lintels. An arched entrance with sidelights and a transom leads to the level on the south facade. Fenestration on the rear facade includes rectangular windows with 4/4 sash and brick sills. A modern, single door entrance is inset with glass louvers and is crowned with a small aluminum canopy. Above the rear wing is evidence of the 19th-century gable roof and frame siding.

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On the interior, the main floor consists of the vestibule, sanctuary with balcony, and church offices. Sunday School rooms are in the basement. The carpeted sanctuary has plastered walls and displays dentils and a water leaf design bordering the coved ceiling. Stained wood pilasters flank the choir and are topped with Roman Corinthian capitols. Anthemion rosettes are located above these capitols. A large pipe organ is located behind the choir. The chancel, rails, wainscotting, door and window surrounds, and exposed ceiling beams are stained wood. According to church records, the stained pews in the balcony are from the original building. The pews from the main floor, as well as the light fixtures, date from the 1918-20 remodeling.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1918-1920

Significant Dates

1918-1920

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

Alexander, Jim (builder)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

CRITERION C (ARCHITECTURE):

Retaining most of its architectural features including its front pedimented gable roof, cornice with dentils, Ionic columns, and brick veneer, the Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church, Montgomery, as remodeled between 1918 and 1920, is a fine example of a classical revival building. The remodeling of the church reflects the trend in the A.M.E. congregations to erect fine ecclesiastical buildings. Early reports note that the Old Ship congregation sought to build "a structure commensurate with the national reputation and historical greatness of this institution." Other A.M.E. churches in the state of Alabama following this movement to erect fine churches include Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, Selma (built 1908, NRHP 1982), Butler Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, Greenville (early 20th century, NRHP 1986), and Lebanon Chapel A.M.E. Church, Fairhope (1923, NRHP 1988).

CRITERION EXCEPTION A:

The Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church derives its primary significance from its architecture.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY:

Until the close of the Civil War, the majority of Montgomery's black population worshipped in white churches. The Methodists, however, were an exception; prior to 1852, separate services were occasionally held in a brush arbor on the premises of the Court Street Methodist Church under the supervision of white ministers and members. In the early 1850s, the Court Street Methodists decided to construct a large, masonry building on the site of their present church, which had been constructed in 1835 and was located at the corner of Court and Church Streets (now the site of the Montgomery Post Office). The Methodists offered the blacks their old building on the condition that it would be moved from the site. After the acquisition of a lot at the corner of Holcombe and Mildred Streets in south Montgomery, Thomas Wilson, a free black contractor, supervised the moving of the old frame church. Wilson was assisted by Sol Brack,

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Interviews: Members of Old Ship including: Berry, Mrs. Nelson; Boyd, Mrs. Sarah Crawley; Nixon, Mrs. Tessie Oliver; Newman, Dr. Roger; Oliver, Luther.
Books: Blue, Matthew P. City Directory and History of Montgomery. Montgomery: T. C. Bingham, 1878.
Chuches of Montgomery, Alabama. Montgomery: T. C. Bingham, 1878.
Bulletins: Van Catledge, John. The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Old Ship African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Montgomery, Alabama. (printed souvenir program, 1852)
Newspapers: Colored Alabamian, February 22, 1908, March 21, 1908.
Montgomery Advertiser, February 15, 1885, April 30, 1902
Southern Watchman, March 29, 1902
The Emancipator, June 19, 1920
Public Records: Records of conveyance, OS Book 17, pp. 303-305. County Courthouse, Montgomery, Alabama
Reports: Report of the Historical Committee, Old Ship AME Zion Church, 1977.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- 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

Specify repository:

Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery
Old Ship AME Zion Church, Montgomery

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than an acre

UTM References

A 16 564760 3581610
Zone Easting Northing
C

B
Zone Easting Northing
D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 53, Clayton's Tract:

Commencing north of intersection at Holcombe Street and Mildred Street; thence north 70 ft. to point of beginning; thence north 70 ft., thence east 210 ft., thence south 140 ft., thence west 70 ft., thence north 70 ft., thence west 145.3 ft. to the point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary described above is the lot on which the church stands.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Ann Neeley, Director, Landmarks; Melanie Betz/AHC Reviewer
organization Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery date September 21, 1989
street & number 310 North Hull Street telephone 205 263-4355
city or town Montgomery state Alabama zip code 36104

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Solomon Hannon, Emmanuel Noble, and a number of other slaves. The workmen moved the main body of the church on log rollers six blocks to the new location. It was necessary to place the 60' by 45' building on high piers because of the elevation of the lot.

The new black church was eventually christened the "Old Ship African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church" or "Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church." Although there is no documented evidence as to the origins of this name, local lore offers a possible explanation: the first states that as the crew rolled the building along, a bystander shouted, "What do you have there?" A laborer replied, "It is the Old Ship of Zion moving on." Another story is that as the men placed the building on its piers, someone inquired as to the name. An onlooker answered, "She has landed many a thousand. Let's call her the "Old Ship of Zion."

Although white ministers continued to serve the congregation until 1862, a slave named Allen Hannon assumed the duties of the pastor. After Emancipation, the members voted to join the African Methodist Episcopal Zion denomination. The trustees of the Court Street Methodist congregation conveyed the property to the blacks in 1866 with the stipulation that if the group separated or dispersed, the property would revert back to the Court Street Methodists. In 1960, however, this restriction was removed. The name of the black church became Clinton's Chapel in honor of J.J. Clinton, bishop of the A.M.E. Zion national organization. The congregation officially changed the name to Old Ship in 1898, but in 1902, they reversed the title back to Clinton's Chapel. Today, it is again known as the Old Ship A.M.E. Church.

In 1888, having grown and prospered, the congregation modified the building by bricking the exterior and replacing the steeple with a central projecting tower. Between 1900 and 1910, electric lights and a hot air furnace replaced gas lighting and stoves. The most dramatic changes occurred from 1918 to 1920 when the congregation constructed an almost entirely new building. The extensive remodeling included a classical facade with twin towers, elegant stained glass windows, and a small rear addition. Except for the rear gable, the building today bears no resemblance to the frame 1835 church. The church, as reconstructed between 1918 and 1920, is a fine and intact representation of a classical revival building.

Many of the members of the Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church have taken an active role in community life. At a meeting in the church in 1887, the decision was made to move State Normal School (Alabama State University) from Marion, Alabama, to Montgomery. The following year, the first graduates of the school received their diplomas in the church. On a visit in 1898, President William McKinley spoke in the sanctuary after addressing the Alabama General Assembly. Church histories indicate that other prominent speakers visited Old Ship, including Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Governor Thomas Kilby, and Dr. Martin Luther King. During the 1955-56 Bus Boycott, organizational and planning meetings took place in the building.

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In 1916, the A.M.E. Zion Conference appointed Rev. W.W. Matthews to the pastorate of Old Ship with the express purpose of "building a structure commensurate with the national reputation and historical greatness of this institution." Although some of the congregation favored this program, others were opposed because of the financial burden that would be placed on the congregation. After a reorganization of the Board of Trustees, the decision was made to proceed with a major reconstruction of the edifice.

Apparently, the First World War intervened because work did not get under way until October 1919; dedication ceremonies took place on June 13, 1920. Six days later a local black newspaper, The Emancipator, commented that the building was one of "the most modern in the city...All conveniences and additions considered essential are embodied..." The paper noted that the work cost \$80,000. One fund-raising rally sponsored by the congregation brought \$5,000.00 which, according to a church spokesman, was the largest sum ever raised by a black congregation at one time.

W.W. Hunter chaired the building committee. Among those serving with him was Abraham Calvin Caffey, a former captain of the Capital City Guards. A militia unit, the Guards organized in 1885 during a period of prosperity and relaxed racial tensions. Caffey became captain in 1894 and retained the position until the Spanish-American War when white officers replaced blacks. Highly respected within the city, Caffey, a carpenter, received the commendation of both blacks and whites for his leadership abilities. Others on the committee were A. Hadnott, a well-to-do business man, and Mrs. Jeanette Lowe, an educator.

Several prominent black Montgomerians were members of the Old Ship Church during the late 19th and early 20th century. Business leader Victor Tulane was Chairman of the Board of Trustees during the period. Tulane had come to Montgomery from Elmore County as a young man and by the early years of the 20th century was an established grocer. Expanding his business interests, Tulane invested in real estate, was cashier of the Montgomery branch of the Penny Savings Bank until the collapse of the parent company, located in Birmingham, in 1915. Two years earlier, he had purchased Dean's Drug Store on Monroe Street. His civic activities included serving on the Board of Trustees of Tuskegee Institute and as a member of the Board of Swayne School, a Montgomery educational facility for black children. In 1919, he was the only black honorary member of the local Chamber of Commerce. He also was on the executive committee of the National Negro Business League.

Other distinguished members of the Old Ship Church during the early 20th century include Luther Oliver, one of the first 20th-century black city councilmen, and Mrs. Lillian Dungee, the first black deputy probation officer for the Juvenile Court of Domestic Relations (1915-1939). Mrs. Dungee was also on the Board of Trustees of the Alabama Reform School for Negroes at Mt. Meigs. Her husband, Dr. Alfred Dungee, was one of the early black physicians in Montgomery. Another early black physician, Dr. Cornelius Dorsett, was also a member of the church.

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SECTION #9 CONTINUED (BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RESOURCES):

Files of the Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery

Muskat, Beth Taylor, "The Last March: The Demise of the Black Militia
in Alabama," The Alabama Review, January 1990.

Richardson, Clement, ed. National Cyclopedia of the Negro Race.
Montgomery: National Publishing Company, 1919.

Souvenir Program, Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church, 1952.

The Emancipator, June 1920.

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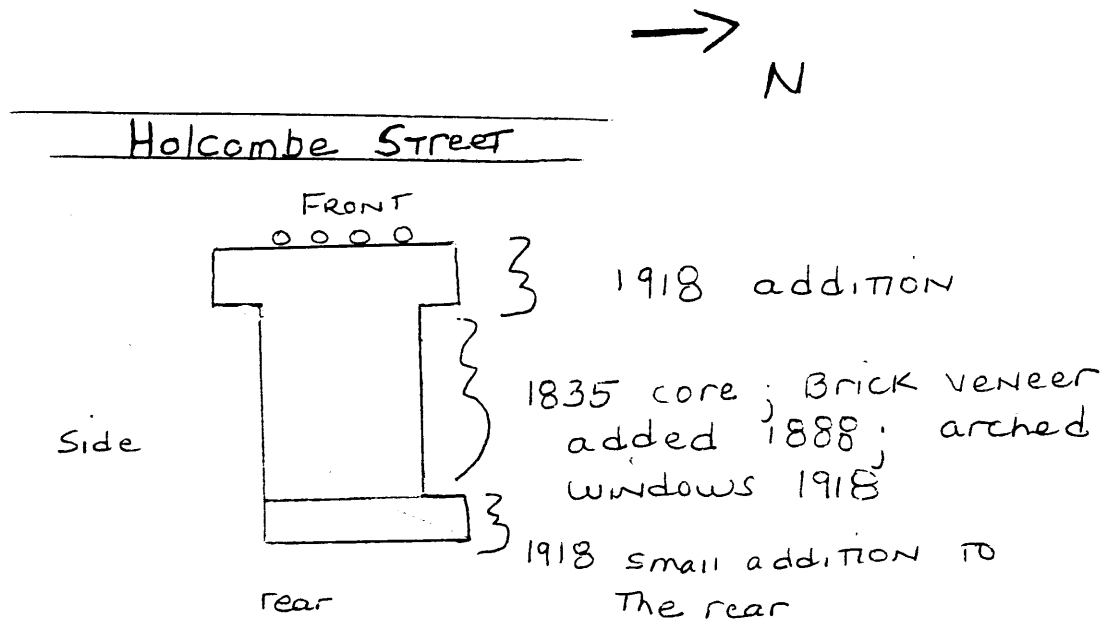
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Section number photo-
graphs Page 1 Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church

NAME OF PROPERTY: Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church
LOCATION OF PROPERTY: 483 Holcombe St., Montgomery, Alabama
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Mary Ann Neeley, Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHS: Fall 1989
LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery, Alabama

PHOTO #1: Front Facade, Looking Northeast
PHOTO #2: Side Facade, Looking North
PHOTO #3: Rear Facade, Looking West
PHOTO #4: Architrave Above Front Door
PHOTO #5: Interior, View From Balcony
PHOTO #6: Interior, South Stained Glass Window Depicting
1852 View of Church
PHOTO #7: Interior, North Stained Glass Window Depicting
1888 View of Church
PHOTO #8: Interior, Capitol Above Pilaster

Old Ship AME Zion Church
Montgomery, Alabama



Interior completely remodeled 1918