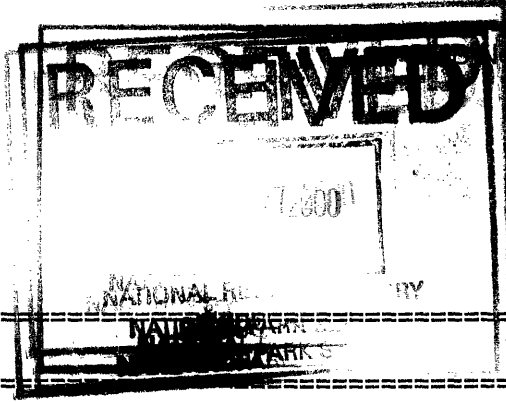


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



1024-0018

333

1. Name of Property

historic name Mt. Zion Baptist Church

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 514 West North Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Canton vicinity N/A  
state Mississippi code MS county Madison code 089 zip code 39406

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.)

Kenneth H. P. Paul FEB. 25, 2000  
Signature of certifying official Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
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 4/6/00  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

           
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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

1

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1

Noncontributing

\_\_\_\_\_ buildings

\_\_\_\_\_ sites

\_\_\_\_\_ structures

\_\_\_\_\_ objects

\_\_\_\_\_ 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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility/church

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility/church

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Neo-Classical Revival

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

roof asbestos

walls brick

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition on continuation sheet/s.)

USDI/NPS Registration Form

Property Name Mt. Zion Baptist Church

County and State Madison County, Mississippi

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)

- X 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.
X 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.)

- X 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)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/African-American
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1929-1950

Significant Dates 1929

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

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Spencer, Raymond H.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.
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: N/A
[X] State Historic Preservation Office
[ ] Other state agency
[ ] Federal agency
[ ] Local government
[ ] University
[ ] Other
Name of repository

USDI/NPS Registration Form

Property Name Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
County and State Madison County, Mississippi

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** less than 1 acre

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

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing  
1 15 777620 3612300 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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

=====

name/title Jefferson Mansell  
organization Mansell & Company, Consultants date July 12, 1999  
street & number 4 Windsor Drive telephone (205) 556-9286  
city or town Tuscaloosa state AL zip code 35404

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**Additional Documentation**

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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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mt. Zion Baptist Church Attn: Jewel Williams  
street & number 514 West North Street telephone (205) 859-9278  
city or town Canton state MS zip code 39046

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Name of Property: Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
County and State: Madison County, Mississippi

**Mt. Zion Baptist Church**  
**Narrative Description**

Constructed in 1929, Mt. Zion Baptist Church is one of the most monumental and intact historic resources associated with Canton's African-American community. Designed by Raymond H. Spencer, the building is a locally significant example of the Neo-Classical Revival style and clearly reflects the renewed popularity of that style for public, governmental and religious buildings throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Basically, rectangular in shape, the two story, red-brick veneered church faces south and rests on a poured concrete foundation. The main building has a front-facing broken-gable, or spraddle, roof. Centrally located, however, is a projecting, pedimented pavilion that dominates the front façade. Six Doric pilasters support the triangular pediment. Two pilasters are grouped at each end of the pavilion while the remaining two are placed one either side of three arched, stained-glass windows. Single small rectangular windows are located between the paired and single pilasters. The triple arched windows are set into surrounds with decorative brick stringcourses that imitate radiating voisoirs embellished with concrete keystones. These arched stringcourses rise from a horizontal brick stringcourse resting on the concrete foundation. Flanking each side of the projecting pavilion are identical pedimented entrance porches with full entablatures supported by Doric-capped brick piers resting on low brick balustrades. Multi-light transoms rest above the double-leaf entrances. Windows are 1/1 double hung sash with multi-pane stained glass.

The east and west facades are identical and feature seven bays. Projecting pavilions are found at the mid-point of each elevation. Containing double-leaf entrances at the base, the pavilions were designed to accommodate staircases, as well as restroom facilities. The windows on the first floor that open into the sanctuary are 1/1 double-hung-sash with multi-pane stained glass. The remaining windows are 2/2 double-hung-sash. The northern elevation originally consisted of a three bay façade flanked by projecting end pavilions. The central three-bays consist of paired 2/2 double-hung-sash windows while those in the pavilions are single, 2/2 double-hung-sash.

The floorplan of Mt. Zion church provided for several interesting features. The side walls (east, west, and north) of the large 36' x 38' sanctuary are constructed of folding doors which can be opened to provide more space. The north wall of the sanctuary opens into the 28' x 36' Sunday school auditorium. The pulpit and choir loft are located along the south wall in the projecting pavilion. The pulpit and choir loft are flanked on each side by choir rooms. Offices, classrooms, bathrooms, stairhalls, and a women's lounge are placed along the lateral walls of the building. A balcony and classrooms are located on the second floor. The interior of Mt. Zion features plastered walls and beaded-board ceiling and wainscoting. The light fixtures, hanging basket-shaped chandeliers, are original. Of particular interest is the concrete baptismal font located behind the pulpit that was installed during construction.

In 1980, the congregation erected a one-story, rectangular kitchen and dining facility at the rear of the church and connected the buildings with an enclosed breezeway. Although the new building obscures the rear elevation from the street, the subsequent addition does not compromise the integrity of the structure. Overall, the Mt. Zion Baptist Church retains a high degree of integrity in regard to design, craftsmanship, materials, feeling, association, and sense of place. Mt. Zion Baptist Church remains the one of the most monumental and intact historic resources associated with Canton's African-American community.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

Name of Property: Mt. Zion Baptist Church

County and State: Madison County, Mississippi

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**Mt. Zion Baptist Church**  
**Statements of Significance**

**Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage/African-American**

Organized in 1865, Mt. Zion Baptist Church is eligible for listing in the National Register or Historic Places under Criterion A – Ethnic Heritage/African-American as one of the oldest African-American churches in the City of Canton, as well as Madison County, Mississippi. Prior to the Civil War, most of Canton's African-Americans were slaves who were permitted to worship in the all white congregations of the city's churches. After the Civil War, the former slaves that had attended the First Baptist Church, desired to establish their own congregation. With the encouragement and assistance of the white congregation of First Baptist Church, the local freedmen formed the Mt. Zion Baptist Church. In 1870, the congregation erected their first house of worship on a two acre site on the plantation of Jane and R. B. Johnson. By the 1920's, Mt. Zion had outgrown this structure and in 1929, they erected the imposing Neo-Classical building that serves the congregation today. In the 1960s, Mt. Zion served as the center for the local civil rights struggle and became known in the African-American community as the "Church of Refuge." Today, Mt. Zion Baptist Church is one of the most monumental and intact historic resources associated with Canton's African-American community.

**Criterion C: Architecture**

Constructed in 1929, Mt. Zion Baptist Church is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C – Architecture as a locally significant example of the Neo-Classical Revival style. Designed by Mississippi architect, Raymond H. Spencer, the imposing two-storied brick church is well preserved and carefully maintained. Boasting an imposing façade with six Doric pilasters supporting a pediment, rounded arched stained-glass windows, and twin porticoes, the church has not been altered. It retains a high degree of integrity in regard to design, craftsmanship, materials, feeling, association and sense of place.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

Name of Property: Mt. Zion Baptist Church

County and State: Madison County, Mississippi

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**Historical Narrative**

**Mt. Zion Baptist Church**

The population of Madison County, Mississippi has been predominantly African-American since 1840. Prior to 1865, some members of the African-American population, most of whom had arrived in the county as slaves, were permitted to attend worship services, to be baptized and married in area churches, and to join established white religious congregations. Records indicate that even in the county's earliest days, slaves were a part of the church communities. Old Madison Presbyterian Church and both the First Presbyterian and First Baptist Churches of Canton also admitted African-American slaves to their membership. For example, in 1850, First Baptist Church listed a total membership of 34 whites and 100 slaves. After the Civil War, African-Americans naturally desired to establish their own congregations and erect their own houses of worship. In 1865, the former slave congregation of the First Baptist Church, with encouragement and financial assistance from the white members, organized the Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Rev. T. J. Drane, pastor of the white Baptist Church, served as Mt. Zion's minister, receiving for his services a monthly salary of one dollar. In 1870, Jane and R. B. Johnson donated two acres of land on the northern boundary of their plantation to the Mt. Zion Church Association and the congregation subsequently constructed a wooden frame church. <sup>1</sup>

In addition to serving as pastor, Rev. Drane, assisted by a white woman, Lillian Highgate, also ran a day school; Rev. Drane received an additional \$1.50 per month to run the school. Rev. Drane served Mt. Zion for seven years until Rev. Jordan Williams replaced him as pastor. Since the churches were often the center of activity in the black community, newspapers frequently carried announcements concerning Mt. Zion's activities. Those notices contained items such as, "Several recent converts to the colored Baptist Church of this city were baptized at the railroad culvert, north of town, on Sunday afternoon last," or "Rev. Jordan Williams, pastor of the colored Baptist Church, immersed ten converts last Sunday night."<sup>2</sup>

By the 1920s, the congregation of Mt. Zion had outgrown its small frame building and in the late 1920s, under the leadership of Rev. A. D. Purnell, they began to raise money for a larger and more substantial building. Appropriately located on Freedman Hill, the lot for the new Mt. Zion Church on West North Street was purchased from a man named Jackson Warren. Rev. Purnell approached Mr. S. M. Riddick, vice-president of the Madison County Bank and asked the banker to serve as custodian of the church's building funds. Purnell also asked Riddick to direct the building of the church and to issue bonds to underwrite construction costs. Riddick and the Madison County Bank issued \$14,000 in bonds and the congregation of Mt. Zion erected the present brick building at a cost of \$35,000. The members of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church moved into the building on the fourth Sunday of February, 1930.<sup>3</sup>

Raymond H. Spencer was the architect for Mt. Zion Church. Little is known of the architectural career of Spencer. In 1916, he is listed in the Jackson city directory occupying an office in the Millsaps building. The cornerstone of the YMCA building (1914) on the campus of Mississippi State University, names the firm of Payne, Overstreet, & Spencer as architects, indicating that at some point in his career, Spencer was in practice with Noah Webster Overstreet, one of Mississippi's more notable and prolific architects. The firm of Spencer & Abbott designed the First Baptist Church of Clarksdale in 1919 and while there is no concrete evidence linking Raymond H. Spencer as the partner of this firm, it is highly probable that he was one of the architects of the building. In 1922, Spencer designed the First Methodist Church of Canton. S. M. Riddick was a member of First Methodist and

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Lynn Mead, *The Land Between Two Rivers: Madison County, Mississippi*, (Canton, Mississippi, 1987) pp. 170-185.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Phil Mulen, "How a White Banker Built a Negro Church," *Madison County Herald*, n.d., n.p.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Name of Property: Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
County and State: Madison County, Mississippi

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he recommended Spencer as an architect for the Mt. Zion project. As with the other religious buildings attributed to Spencer, Mt. Zion Church was designed in the Neo-Classical style.<sup>4</sup>

With a new sanctuary and Sunday school rooms, Mt. Zion continued to serve the Canton African-American community. It would be in the summer of 1964, however, that Mt. Zion was the location of one of the pivotal moments in the state's civil rights struggle. In her autobiography, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Anne Moody notes that Mt. Zion was the "the biggest Negro church in Canton" and the center for the local marches and demonstrations. On Friday, May 29, 1964, on the lawn of Mt. Zion Church, local police beat McKinley Hamilton, a young African-American. The six hundred members of Mt. Zion poured onto the lawn and witnessed the near death beating of the young man. That afternoon, eighty church members marched on the Madison County Jail in one of the first protest marches in Canton. Mt. Zion Baptist Church became known as the "Church of Refuge" and all subsequent marches began at the front steps of the building. In 1968, 1200 schoolchildren marched from Mt. Zion to the steps of the Madison County Courthouse, expressing outrage and grief at the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. <sup>5</sup>

Today, the Mt. Zion Baptist Church continues to serve the African-American community of Canton, Mississippi. The congregation is one of the oldest African-American religious groups in the county and the church building is one of the most monumental and intact historic resources associated with Canton's African-American community. The church clearly reflects the importance of the congregation in the social and religious life of the African-American community during its period of significance, 1929-1950.

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Cawthon, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, interview, Jackson, Mississippi, July 12, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, pp. 272-341.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9,10 Page 5

Name of Property: Mt. Zion Baptist Church

County and State: Madison County, Mississippi

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**Bibliography**

Cawthon, Richard. Interview, Jackson, Mississippi. July 12, 1999.

Mead, Carol Lynn. *The Land Between Two Rivers: Madison County, Mississippi*. (Canton, Mississippi:1987).

Moody, Anne. *Coming of Age in Mississippi*. (New York: Dial Publishing, 1968).

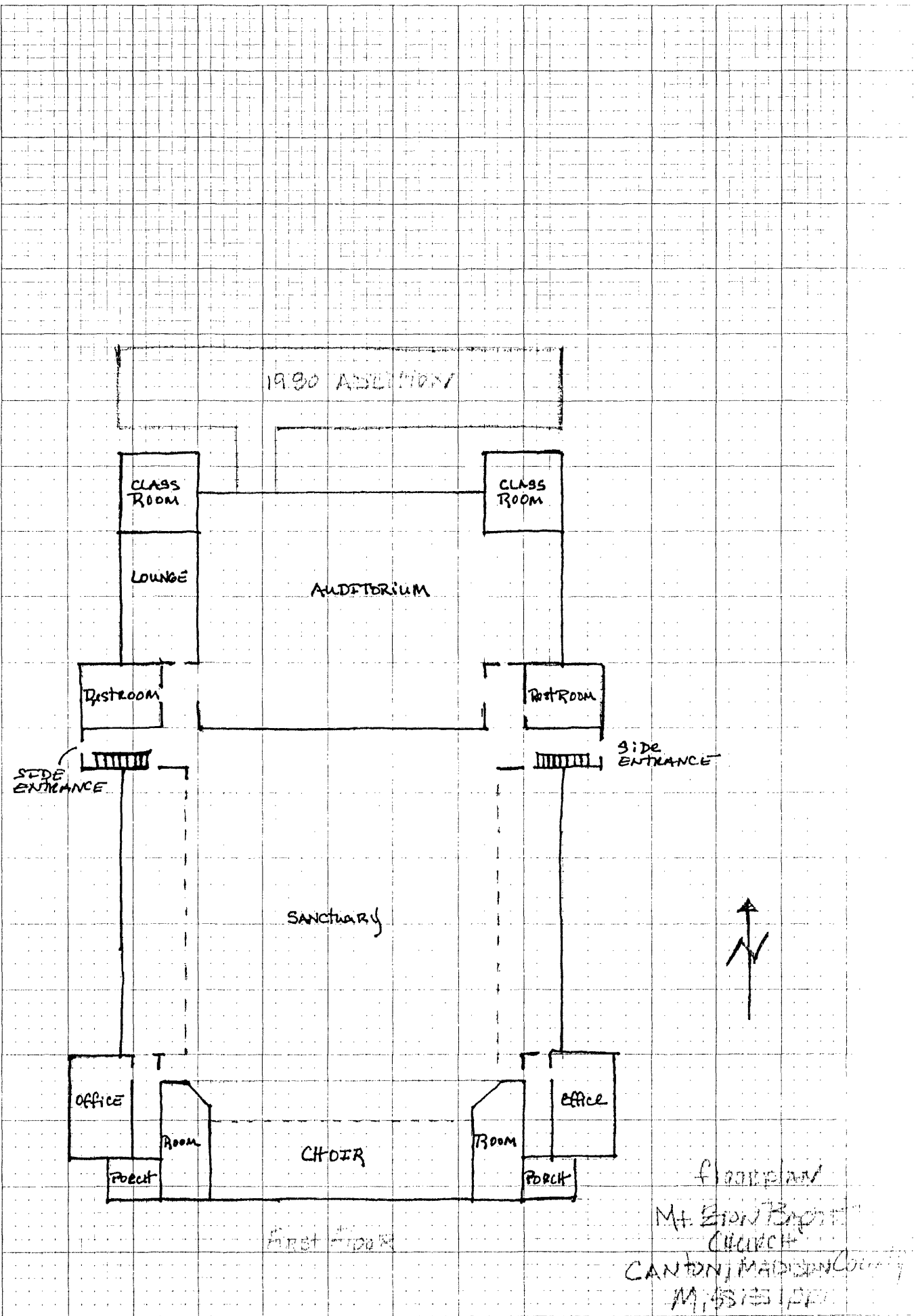
Mulen, Phil. "How a White Banker Built A Negro Church." *Madison County Herald*. (Canton, Mississippi: n.d.).

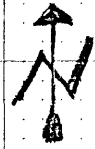
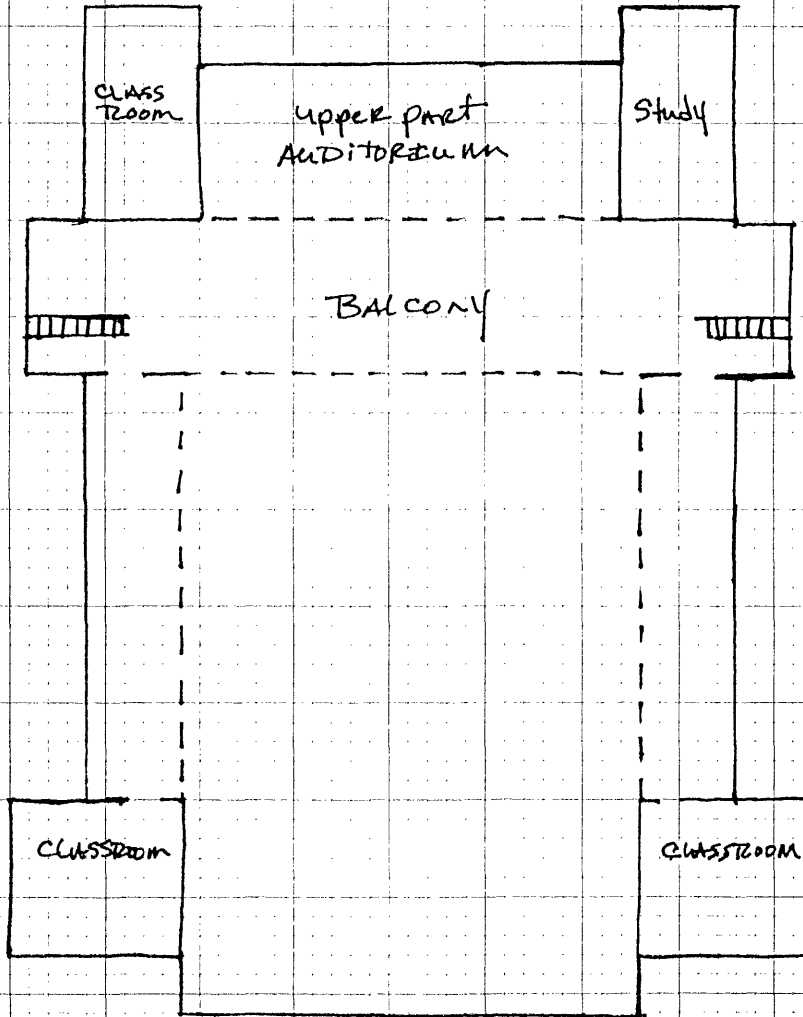
**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church are delineated on the accompanying tax map.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries were drawn to include the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Canton, Madison County, Mississippi.





Second floor

MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH  
CANTON, MADISON CO., MS

92E-24A

124.00

FRANK STREET

24A-368  
5 Ac. C  
381.2 D

MADISON COUNTY  
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

24A-367  
2.0 Ac. C

CANAL STREET

24A

CHURCH

24A-366  
2.0 Ac. C

24A-363  
2 Ac. C

24A-369  
2 Ac. C

24A-360

24A-353

24A-390  
24A-399  
24A-410  
24A-392  
24A-408  
24A-407  
3750 8000

24A-402  
24A-403  
24A-404  
3 Ac. C  
24A-401  
24A-398  
24A-400  
24A-402  
24A-403  
24A-404  
3 Ac. C  
24A-399  
3 Ac. C

24A-406

24A-423  
24A-424  
24A-426  
24A-427  
24A-428  
24A-429  
24A-430

24A-431  
24A-432  
24A-433  
24A-434  
24A-435  
24A-436  
24A-437  
24A-438  
24A-439  
24A-440

FROST STREET

STREET

MONTZON  
B CH  
24A-398

BOYMAN

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section photographs Page 6 Name of Property: Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
County and State: Madison County, Mississippi

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The information contained in items #1-5 is the same for all photographs.

1. Mt. Zion Baptist Church
2. Madison County, Mississippi
3. Jeff Mansell, photographer
4. June, 1999
5. Originals on file, Mississippi Department of Archives and History
6. Façade, camera facing north
7. Photograph #1 of 14
  
6. Southeast corner, camera facing northwest
7. Photograph #2 of 14
  
6. Southwest corner, camera facing northeast
7. Photograph #3 of 14
  
6. Façade, window detail, camera facing north
7. Photograph #4 of 14
  
6. Façade, detail of southwest entrance, camera facing north
7. Photograph #5 of 14
  
6. Northwest corner, camera facing southeast
7. Photograph #6 of 14
  
6. Rear façade over new building, camera facing north
7. Photograph #7 of 14
  
6. Northeast corner, camera facing west/southwest
7. Photograph #8 of 14
  
6. Interior, view of pulpit and choir loft, camera facing south
7. Photograph #9 of 14
  
6. Interior, view of balcony, camera facing northwest
7. Photograph #10 of 14
  
6. Interior, view of balcony and stained-glass windows, camera facing east
7. Photograph #11 of 14
  
6. Interior, view of sanctuary, camera facing west
7. Photograph #12 of 14
  
6. Interior, view of wooden screen over sanctuary door
7. Photograph #13 of 14
  
6. Interior, view of beaded board ceiling, camera facing south
7. Photograph #14 of 14