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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

COVER

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

X New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Rural African-American Churches in Tennessee, 1850 - 1970

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each Associated Historic Context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each>)

I. Creating A Tradition, 1850 - 1890

II. Maintaining Tradition in an Era of Jim Crow Segregation, 1890 - 1945

III. The Modern Era, 1945 - 1970

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Carroll Van West

organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date March 1995

street & number PO Box 80, MTSU telephone 615-898-2947

city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (☐See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Harper — Signature of certifying official/ Title

10/19/99 — Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall — Signature of the Keeper

11/30/99 — Date of Action

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B. Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☒ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Introduction

. . . the Negro church in Robertson County is the most stabilized of our institutions, the Negro minister in the county is yet the recognized leader in his respective community, and that the majority of our people yet cling with faith to the church. . . we have God with us, we can hear the still, small voice whispering in the darkest hours of battle. "I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

Jacob C. Morton and Virdner D. Moore, Jr., Springfield, Tennessee, 1938

Everyone knows that the black church in America is a rock and a beacon, and others are far more steeped in its ways and history, more qualified to speak of its nature, than a white woman whose beliefs do not rest within any one system. But surely people of any faith or ancestry may feel the moral fire that has moved in this church and others like it. And anyone may register the gravitas of its rooms. Anyone may notice that this church is a place of routine loveliness, an American place whose respect for elders, whose gloved ushers and afternoon collations, whose tradition of formal address and courtesy titles (Reverend, Deacon, Doctor, Brother, and Sister), are all elements in a honed artistry--in the sheer comeliness of the community--that is itself a form of sanctuary.

Emily Hiestand, a native of Oak Ridge, in 1998

It is generally agreed that the Negro church is the greatest institution developed by Negroes on American soil. It has held in common unity more Negroes than any other organization, and it has had more influence in molding the thought and life of the Negro people than any other single agency. The fact is often overlooked, however, that in its major development and until comparatively recent years, the Negro church was predominantly a rural church.

Harry V. Richardson, 1947

The Black Church has no challenger as the cultural womb of the black community. Not only did it give birth to new institutions such as schools, banks, insurance companies, and low income housing, it also provided an academy and an arena for political activities, and it nurtured young talent for musical, dramatic, and artistic development. E. Franklin Frazier's apt descriptive phrase, "nation within a nation," pointed to these multifarious levels of community involvement found in the Black

> Church, in addition to the traditional concerns of worship, moral nurture, education, and social control. Much of black culture is heavily indebted to the black religious tradition, including most forms of black music, drama, literature, storytelling, and even humor.
>
> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, 1990

> While fulfilling its role as a spiritual agency, the [black] church took on broader responsibilities [between 1870 and 1920] as the traditional center and unifying institution in the black community. Viewed by many of its members as an extension of the family, the church served as a school, a lecture hall, a social and recreational center, a meeting place for an assortment of groups, and a source of information.
>
> Leon Litwack, 1998[1]

For over 100 years, scholars of African-American culture, history, and religion--along with writers and commentators over the decades in between -- have consistently pointed to the church as the single most significant institution in African-American life, from the late antebellum era to modern times. In the fall of 1996, Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) staff began discussing with the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University regarding the possibility of developing a statewide National Register Multiple Property Nomination on rural African-American churches. A proposal was drafted and funding for the final project came from both THC and the Office of Sponsored Programs at Middle Tennessee State University. Thus, in the fall of 1997 the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation launched a permanent documentary program titled the Tennessee Rural African-American Church Project. It has three initial goals: 1) to bring together and establish a network of scholars, activists, and preservationists across the state who are interested in the history and preservation of rural African-American churches; 2) to conduct a statewide reconnaissance survey of extant African-American churches in the Tennessee countryside and small towns; and 3) to prepare for the Tennessee Historical Commission a Multiple Property Nomination that addresses the rural African-American church as a distinct and significant property type and to begin a process of nominating eligible churches to the National Register of Historic Places.

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[1] Jacob C. Morton and Virdner D. Moore, Jr., comp., *Robertson County Negro Year Book* (Springfield: private, 1938), 6; Emily Hiestand, "Hymn," The Atlantic Monthly 282(July 1998): 74; Harry V. Richardson, *Dark Glory: A Picture of the Church Among Negroes in the Rural South* (New York, 1947), xi; C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 8; Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 379.

This document, therefore, is both a summary of what was discovered and a guide to what future assessment may uncover. Since several state historic preservation offices have expressed an interest in the project, the narrative is designed to be of value to as broad of an audience as possible. It begins with brief denominational histories of the primary African-American churches; these sketches are useful for any state and are not Tennessee-specific. Next, the text is organized around questions of assessment--what makes the building eligible for the National Register--keyed to three different chronological periods from 1850 to 1970. Attention is given to questions of integrity, date of significance, and criteria of eligibility in the extended discussion of property types and registration requirements based on the survey of over 350 churches across Tennessee. Finally, there is a representative bibliography of scholarship about African-American history in general and African-American religion in specific. These sources should be the starting points for others to explore the role of the church in their history.

Denominational Histories

African Methodist Episcopal Church
By Rebecca Smith

In November 1792 a disturbance occurred within the congregation of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. African-American members of the congregation were forced out of the seats they had taken in the church's gallery. They in turn left the church with their appointed leader, Richard Allen. After Allen and his band withdrew from St. George's, they first focused their energies on the self-help organization called the Free African Society, which they had earlier established in 1787. However, Allen saw his goal as organizing an African-American Methodist church and left the society to work within the religious system he felt best suited the needs of black people.

In 1794 Allen and his followers assembled in his house and out of this meeting came the organization of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The members managed to buy an old blacksmith shop, and to move it to a lot at the corner of Sixth and Lombard Streets in Philadelphia. For the next twenty-two years difficulties arose between Bethel and the white Methodists who were supplying ministers for the urban African-American church. The church struggled for its independence until 1816 when the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania declared Bethel to be an independent church. Allen saw his chance to propagate his ideas about Methodism and decided he needed an organization with disciples located around the country. Sixteen delegates assembled in Philadelphia on April 9, 1816. They came from Baltimore, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. They resolved to unify as a new church

called the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, which was controlled by African Americans and dedicated to improving their condition.

The church that Allen and his associates organized adopted the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church with only a few minor changes. The pro-slavery provisions in the Methodist Discipline were stricken out, and the office of presiding elder was abolished in the AME hierarchy. Elections were held on April 9, 1816, for the office of bishop with the Reverend Daniel Coker elected. However, he resigned the next day, opening the door for Richard Allen to be elected two days later. From these beginnings the AME Church spread throughout the North and Midwest and by 1856 numbered some 20,000 souls. Allen and the AME Church both desired to improve relations between blacks and whites and instill a sense of civic pride in blacks and immediately offered their support and services to the community. This tradition of public service was transferred to the South when AME missionaries embarked from the northern states to uplift their southern brethren.

Prior to the Civil War, slave owners, who feared that it would serve as a catalyst for slave revolts, banned the AME Church from many areas in the South. But when Union forces occupied areas of coastal South Carolina in 1863, AME missionaries James D. Lynch and James D. Hall were sent from Baltimore to Charleston to establish mission churches. Their arrival marked the beginning of permanent AME missions in the South. The process occurred in Tennessee in the same year, when in December 1863, AME officials came to Nashville. Bishop Daniel Payne conferred with Military Governor Andrew Johnson before organizing St. John's AME Church in Nashville. In 1864, AME missionaries extended their activities into occupied areas of West Tennessee. Missionary activity also was underway in occupied East Tennessee before the end of the war. Due to the presence of Union troops throughout the state, in other words, Tennessee received a large share of the initial AME missionary efforts in the South.

By 1866, missionaries and local residents had established AME churches in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. During the last two years of the war and the months following the end of hostilities, several of these churches even served as Union hospitals when no other suitable accommodations could be obtained.

The AME missionaries condemned the institution of slavery and excluded all slave owners as members. They also tried to set moral examples of dignity, education, and neat physical appearances for the southern African Americans in hopes of alleviating some of the prejudices against color. The AME ministers did not approve of emotional outbursts at its services and instructed the members to approach the altar decorously. The AME Church hoped to uplift the

black race by pointing the way. Some of the most prominent black men in the South joined the church during the nineteenth century. These included Martin R. Delany, doctor, explorer, and Black Nationalist; Henry M. Turner, bishop of the AME Church, Georgia politician, and African emigrations; James Lynch, clergyman and Mississippi politician; and Hiram Revels, clergyman and senator from Mississippi. In Tennessee, the AME church, "organized rapidly in the state, attracting to its membership many of the more aggressive and assertive black men and women."[2] For example, Edward Shaw, a significant community leader and politician in Memphis, was an AME activist.

After the Civil War the AME Church became very active in Reconstruction politics and pushed for civil and political equality for black people. The Reconstruction Act of 1867 provided African Americans with the opportunity to participate in southern politics. Taking advantage of this situation, a heterogeneous group of twenty-three AME Church missionaries became politicians who held public offices. Only three were northerners, the rest came from the South and Border States. Thus, from its very origins in the crucible of Reconstruction the AME church established a reputation for community and political activism.

In the late nineteenth century, the AME church made quick headway among the millions of newly freed people of color in the South. In the times of slavery, the Methodist Episcopal Church counted over two hundred thousand African-American members. With emancipation, most of this group shifted its religious affiliation to the AME church. By 1866 only 78,742 black members remained out of the 207,766 associated with the southern white M.E. Church. Four years later, in 1870, most of the African Americans who still remained in the white Methodist Episcopal Church, South, left to establish the Colored Methodist Episcopal (CME) church, which was based in Tennessee (see discussion on CME church below). Many black Methodists in the South believed that the AME church provided them with the greatest opportunity to exercise their talents and education, and to express their identity and dignity. It always has been a larger denomination than the CME church. By 1868, AME churches were founded in every southern state and by 1896 there were over 450,000 members.

In the early part of the twentieth century the path of AME Church began to expand nationwide as urban and rural African Americans began the Great Migration from the South. Overseas missionary work for the AME church, in addition, claimed some one million members and over twenty-two thousand churches in Africa and the Caribbean. The AME Church became recognized as the most effective of all the African-American denominations in its overseas

[2] Lester C. Lamon, *Blacks in Tennessee, 1791-1790* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 45.

missionary efforts. The AME Church also became the largest of the Black Methodist communions, a position it maintains today throughout the South. In 1989, church membership totaled 2.2 million.

In Tennessee, the AME and AME Zion churches are most numerous in East and Middle Tennessee, with fewer churches, as an overall percentage of the total of African-American churches, located in West Tennessee. This distribution reflects the impact of Union occupation in Tennessee from 1862 to 1865, when Union forces occupied large portions of East and Middle Tennessee compared to smaller occupation forces in West Tennessee outside of Shelby County. It also reflects the relative strength of the CME church in West Tennessee. The CME world headquarters is in Memphis; its college, Lane College (NR 7/02/1987) is in Jackson. The AME publishing house is located in Nashville, which gives Tennessee an increased prominence in AME operations.

In summary, the general historical patterns of the AME church underscores two important questions that should be asked of any individual AME church property. First, what is the date when the congregation was established—does this congregation, and by extension the property in question date to that period, have a significant association with the beginnings of established African-American religious institutions in this locality? Second, since most AME congregations were socially and politically active from their beginnings, surveyors should explore the church's association and involvement with civil rights activism, from the congregation's establishment into the modern Civil Rights Movement. There may be a significant association between the property in question and the significant civil rights activity.

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
By Rebecca Smith

Historically associated with the AME Church in Tennessee, and particularly numerous in East Tennessee, is the African Methodist Episcopal (AME Zion) Church. In 1796 the blacks, that worshipped in the John Street Methodist Church of New York City, withdrew from the congregation because of resulting tensions and discriminatory treatment when their numbers had risen over forty percent of the members. Also dissension among the black congregation had peaked from the white controlled church's refusal to fully ordain black preachers and allow them to join the conference as itinerants. Under the leadership of Peter Williams, a former slave employed at the John Street Church, some of the former members organized a separate African chapel. It met at member William Miller's cabinetmaker's shop. Local African-American preachers of the John Street Church conducted services there until the building of a new house

of worship was completed in September of 1800. In 1801 the chapel was incorporated as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of the City of New York with Peter Williams and Francis Jacobs as signatories.

From 1800 to 1819 the Zionists existed as an independent congregation within the Methodist Church. During this time the Methodist Church supplied the black congregation with ministers. Ultimately the arrangement proved to be unworkable because the blacks began to resent the control the whites exercised over their affairs. The Zionists asked Bishop Richard Allen of the African Methodist Episcopal Church to ordain a minister for them. William Lambert was sent to Philadelphia to be ordained but when he returned he shunned the Zionists by establishing a new church. The Zionists believed Bishop Allen of the AME Church had encouraged Lambert to desert them and that he was only interested in building up the AME Church. This suspicion was correct, Bishop Allen did indeed want to unite all Black Methodists into one church. In consequence, the Zionists convened their first annual conference on June 21, 1821, in New York City, with representatives from four other congregations in Pennsylvania, Connecticut and New York with the determination to establish a distinctive identity from the AME Church, which was based in Philadelphia. This conference is commonly accepted as the official organizing meeting of what was to become the African Methodist Episcopal Zion denomination, although a total break with the Methodist Episcopal Church did not occur until after the 1824 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In 1822 James Varick, then pastor of Zion Church, was elected the first superintendent and was regarded as the founder of the denomination. In 1848 the word Zion was officially added to this African Methodist Episcopal Church to make clear the distinction of this denomination from Allen's AME Church. Yet, like the AME church and in contrast to United Methodist congregations, bishops wield considerable power and possess "substantial interpretive discretion."[3]

Because of internal dissension and of competition from the AME Church, the Zion Church experienced only modest growth prior to the Civil War. Starting with 1,400 members and twenty-two preachers in 1821, the church in 1860 numbered 4,600 with 105 preachers. Expansion was limited in these years to the Northeast but gained momentum in the South following Emancipation. Long known as "The Freedom Church," AME Zion claims such abolitionist luminaries as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Reverend Jermain Louguen, Catherine Harris, Reverend Thomas James, and Frederick Douglass, who was licensed as a local AME Zion

[3] Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 59.

preacher. Many Zion members, pastors, and church officials were abolitionists and were intensely involved with the Underground Railroad. In Tennessee the Craig's Chapel AME Zion Church near Greenback in Loudon County stands adjacent to a cave associated with the Underground Railroad in this early Quaker settlement area in East Tennessee.

Like the AME Church, Zionists went as missionaries into the South during Reconstruction and founded AME Zion Churches throughout the Southern states. By 1884 church membership had grown to 300,000, and in 1896 membership stood at 350,000. In the second half of the nineteenth century foreign mission programs were established in South America, Africa, and the West Indies. The twentieth century brought a third major period of expansion with the growth of cities and the migration of African Americans to the North and West following the two world wars. Currently, the AME Zion Church is the second largest of the Black Methodist denominations, numbering in 1989, 1.2 million members in the United States with an additional 100,000 in Africa and the Caribbean. The church claims three thousand clergy, who serve 2,900 churches, two hundred of which are overseas. The AME Zion publishing house is in Charlotte, North Carolina.

In this Tennessee survey, the AME Zion church is particularly strong in numbers in East Tennessee. This section of the state did not favor secession in 1861 and generally remained unionist throughout the Civil War. Since that time, in fact, it has been the foundation for the Republican Party in Tennessee. In comparison, the AME Zion church is almost non-existent in West Tennessee, where its reputation as the "Freedom Church" meant that any missionary activities met with strong opposition from white officials.

Consequently, historic preservationists can expect to encounter AME Zion churches largely in East Tennessee. The historical questions they direct at these properties will be similar to those of AME churches: does the property have a significant association with the establishment of organized African-American religion in the county due to the early date of AME Zion missionary activity? Is there an association with "Freedom" activities, especially the Underground Railroad? What is the congregation's later history of civil rights activism and does the property in question have a significant association with this activism?

Colored (Now Christian) Methodist Episcopal Church
By Heather Fearnbach

The earliest recognized Colored (now Christian) Methodist Episcopal (CME) church is Capers Memorial CME Church (NR 1/02/1985) in Nashville. It dates to 1866 and its leaders had a prominent role in the creation of the formal CME convention in 1870. In that year, Capers

members along with about forty black Methodists in West Tennessee broke from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and formed an independent denomination more reflective of issues central to the black community. Advanced education, community involvement through outreach, and spiritual growth were just a few of the tenets of the founding group, who became the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America (CME) on December 16, 1870, in Jackson, Tennessee.

Compared to the earlier African-American Methodist organizations, the AME and AME Zion churches, the new CME church was more conservative. Old segregated 'colored churches' within the white Methodist Church, South, comprised its initial members. White conservatives within the Methodist Church, South, had urged their Black brethren not to join the AME or AME Zion movements. They encouraged, however, the creation of another separate Black Methodist organization for several reasons. First, increasing white racial prejudice during the Reconstruction years meant that White members wanted the Black churches out of their organization. Second, a separate Black organization eliminated white financial responsibility for Black Methodist activity. As Lincoln and Mamiya explain, "the strategy appeared to be to formulate an arrangement that would create a separate church for the former slaves which would retain unofficial ties with the parent church rather than become a part of the existing African [Methodist] movement."[4] In 1870 the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, turned over all titles to "colored church property" to the CME church, making the separation of White and Black Methodists official.

Due to its historical relationship with the White Methodist church, the CME church was sometimes derisively referred to as the "old slave church." According to Tara Mitchell Mielnik:

> Other African-American churches frowned upon the new CME church and its close relationship with the white MECS. They called it the "kitchen church" or "slavery church" and accused the former slaves of still doing the bidding of their former masters. CME remained the smallest of the African-American churches, but many former slaves identified more closely with CME leaders, who were also newly emancipated, than the northern, educated leaders of other black churches. In the establishment of CME, ex-slaves consciously broke with white churches, but refused to join northern-based separate African-American churches. At the same time, the creation of CME churches represented some of the first institutional foundations of racial segregation in the South.[5]

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[4] Ibid., 62.

[5] Ibid. Tara Mitchell Mielnik, "Christian Methodist Episcopal Church," Carroll Van West, et.al. eds., Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1998), 156.

From its inception, the CME Church eschewed political activity in favor of a devotion to spirituality, in what members considered to be a more black-controlled and dominated church and services. In county seats and larger towns in West Tennessee, the church became popular with middle-class and professional African Americans. CME congregations mushroomed from 1870 to 1880, claiming 78,000 members by 1880. Early bishops included William Henry Miles, Richard H. Vanderhorst, Isaac Lane, Lucius H. Holsey, and Joseph A. Beebe.

The key church leader in Tennessee was Bishop Isaac Lane, who was the fourth bishop of the CME. Born a slave in Madison County, Tennessee, Lane established a CME school, that later became Lane College, in Jackson in 1882. His daughter, Jennie Lane, was its first teacher and principal. His son, James Franklin Lane, became the college's president in 1907 and served in that role for the next thirty-seven years.

Church membership by 1890 totaled 103,000, the vast majority of whom were in Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. The Great Migration and missionary activities during the first half of the twentieth century led to the church establishing congregations in eighteen states by 1945. The broadening of the membership base also coincided with a broadening of the church's mission and its level of activism in community affairs. In the 1920s, for instance, Bishop Charles H. Phillips led the church to become more activist in the region-wide anti-lynching campaigns of that era. CME colleges and churches supported the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s by providing meeting sites and voter registration centers and supporting activist ministers. It was also during this period that the CME Church changed its name from the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (1954), and moved its headquarters from Jackson to Memphis in 1970. The two events in Tennessee represent a period of substantial church growth and the construction of new church buildings. Twenty-one of the forty-nine CME churches recorded in the survey were either newly constructed or rebuilt between 1955 and 1975, with another six churches being constructed from 1975 to 1980.

During its first fifty years, the CME Church promoted the foundation of twelve colleges, four of which are still in operation: Lane College (Jackson, TN), Paine College (Augusta, GA), Texas College (Tyler, TX), and Miles College (Birmingham, AL). Lane College graduates have especially influenced the church's development and persistence in Tennessee. The vast majority of CME churches in the state are located in West Tennessee, with many of those located in Jackson and the surrounding counties. In the Tennessee survey only five of forty-nine rural CME churches had been recorded in Middle Tennessee while none had been documented in East

Tennessee. However, in the larger towns and urban areas of East and Middle Tennessee there are several active and large CME congregations. Memphis's oldest African-American congregation is the Collins Chapel CME Church, which traces its roots to 1841. Dickerson Chapel CME in Madison County dates its beginnings to 1845.

The modern CME church operates missions and relief agencies in Ghana, Nigeria, and Liberia. Outreach within the United States continued to focus on the strong support of scholastic endeavors, culminating in the 1994 "One Church, One School" project, which pairs churches with schools to fund school programs. Women have always played an important part in the missionary societies of the CME Church, and are now beginning to be represented in the clergy as well. Today the CME Church has more than 3,000 congregations with over 800,000 members in the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa. Memphis is the location of the church headquarters and its publishing house.

The historical differences between the AME, AME ZION, and CME churches mean that the historical questions addressed at a CME property are different than those asked of an AME and AME Zion property. Is a congregation's founding date between 1870 and 1880? If so, that would indicate a very early CME church and the property then may have significance in the establishment of organized African-American religion. Second, one should not expect to find significant civil rights activity at a CME church until, at the earliest, the anti-lynching movement of the 1930s and 1950s. It is more likely that the church's significant association with civil rights activism would come from the mid-1950s to 1970s.

United Methodist Church

The Methodist church was the first mainstream white denomination to actively bring evangelism to Tennessee slaves, largely through the work of William E. Capers of Virginia. Capers Memorial CME Church (NR 1/02/1985) in Nashville dates to 1832 and belongs to these early Methodist missionary efforts. Most Tennessee slaves and free blacks were Methodists in 1840. This pattern of denominational affiliation began to shift toward the Baptists in the 1850s.

Toward the end of the Civil War, in 1864, the Methodist Episcopal Church North launched an ambitious and aggressive missionary program in the defeated southern states. In part, church leaders pushed this missionary agenda, but President Abraham Lincoln also encouraged northern Methodists to take over what were then abandoned buildings of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in the occupied South. In Nashville, for example, AME leaders organized St. John's AME Church and then St. Paul's AME Church. Northern white Methodists, on the other

hand, retained the Andrew Chapel Methodist church building and organized its former slave mission into the present Clark Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church. In East Tennessee, the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1881 created Morristown Normal and Industrial College (NR 9/15/83) in Hamblen County. The school was largely an elementary and high school but during the early twentieth century, it added two years of college courses to its curriculum. Its name of Morristown Normal and Industrial College dates to 1901. Adjacent to Morristown College's historic campus is Bethel United Methodist Church (circa 1890), which is recognized locally as the oldest extant church building in Morristown. Morristown College later became the Morristown branch of Knoxville College before it closed in the 1990s.

These efforts of the mainstream Methodist Church, however, lacked the success of evangelizing and church building associated with the AME or AME Zion churches. However, Methodist membership for African Americans throughout the nation did remain larger than those Methodists who belonged to the CME church. By 1896 nationwide the United Methodist (UM) Black membership totaled almost 250,000 while there were only 130,000 CME members. These national proportions, however, were reversed in Tennessee, where CME churches historically were more numerous than UM churches, especially in West Tennessee. Today, UM churches are located statewide, but they are dwarfed in numbers by CME churches in West Tennessee and by AME and AME Zion churches in East and Middle Tennessee. In Tennessee, the survey recorded seventeen UM churches, with only one of these in East Tennessee. The United Methodist Publishing House is in Nashville.

By 1868, eight Black Methodist conferences existed in the United States, but these remained segregated units within the Methodist Church for the next one hundred years. In Tennessee, the Methodist Church played an important role in religious and educational affairs. It sponsored, for example, Meharry Medical School (Lyttle Hall, Meharry Medical College, NR Listed 7/27/1998) in Nashville. While the degree of social activism may vary from church to church, United Methodist congregations in general have been supportive of community attempts to improve education and living conditions, and to promote civil rights and equality, in their communities. Due to their relative small numbers in comparison to Baptist and AME congregations the United Methodist churches lacked the building size, and leadership potential to play a primary role in the Civil Rights Movement in rural Tennessee in the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1939 the various Methodist bodies--the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church adopted a plan for union, establishing the United Methodist Church, with five jurisdictions, based on geographical region, spread across the nation. African-American Methodists, however, were excluded from this union. They comprised

a sixth jurisdiction, the Central Jurisdiction, which was officially segregated. "The effect of this action," according to Lincoln and Mamiya, "was to institutionalize a black Methodist church, literally a church within a church. Not until 1966 when a merger with the Evangelical United Brethren Church was effected was the Central Jurisdiction officially abolished. True integration in the church, however, failed to follow local desegregation. In practice if not in policy, black Methodists remained separate."[6] Only in 1972 did the last segregated unit--the South Carolina Conference--become integrated into the church as a whole.

Churches of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Church (Independent)
By Heather Fearnbach

Religious reformers Barton W. Stone (1772-1844), Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), and Thomas Campbell (1763-1854), united in 1832 to promote a return to the doctrine, worship, and practice of New Testament Christianity. They traveled throughout Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia, organizing congregations today known as Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Christian Church, and Churches of Christ. The Stone-Campbell movement churches shared many affinities with Protestant denominations: simplicity of worship, lay ministry, adult baptism, separation of church and state and freewill doctrine. In the early years efforts to organize a national church never came to fruition. By 1860, as church membership grew to almost 200,000, theological, political, social and economic differences, exacerbated by the controversial issue of slavery, resulted in a schism among the congregations.

Stone and the Campbells were opposed to the American institution of slavery, but the regional spread of congregations in the Border States between the North and the South included pro-slavery areas such as Middle Tennessee. The lack of a formal national denominational structure precluded an official split in the church over slavery and secession, but sectional divisions festered and correlated with later congregational divisions. Churches of both divisions exist both north and south of the Ohio River. However, the more conservative Churches of Christ, located for the most part in rural areas south of the Ohio River, argued for a strict interpretation of the Scriptures and objected to the formation of missionary societies and forbid the use of instrumental music in church services. The moderate, predominately Northern, Disciples of Christ, advocated a more progressive reading of the Scriptures. Despite the dissension, congregations continued to grow, doubling by 1875 and including over one million members by 1900. By 1906, the federal religious census recognized the two groups as separate and distinct denominations.

[6] Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 67.

In 1906, the census recorded 159,658 members of the Churches of Christ, with almost two-thirds of that total living in the former states of the Confederacy. By 1994, the Churches of Christ had become a worldwide movement, found in 121 nations. United States membership totaled 1,260,838, with Texas having the most, followed by Tennessee, with 169,190 members. As Dr. Harold Hazelip of Lipscomb University observes, "historically marked by internal and external controversy, the Churches of Christ remained committed to their ideals. While some representatives have claimed these churches include the only known Christians, others insist that their commitment is to be 'Christians only'--an ideal which reflects the original goals of unity (non-denominational) and restorationism (restoring primitive practices of the earliest churches)."[7]

The Churches of Christ had several large African-American congregations in urban Tennessee during the late nineteenth century. The Jackson Street Church of Christ in Nashville, for example, produced the church leader Marshall Keeble, who reportedly baptized over 40,000 whites and blacks across the country while establishing 300 churches in a remarkable career from the late 1890s to 1968. Keeble preached for harmony between the races and looked upon Booker T. Washington as the race's key leader. David Lipscomb of Nashville, a turn of the century leader of the splintered Churches of Christ denomination, stated that a true Church of Christ congregation could not discriminate based on race. Yet, Lipscomb and many other white church leaders practiced racial accomodationism and had separate seating sections in churches.

There are comparatively few black Churches of Christ in rural Tennessee. In the Tennessee survey eleven rural African-American Churches of Christ had been identified, five in Middle Tennessee and six in West Tennessee.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the twentieth century has proven to be the more favored among urban African Americans of the historic Stone-Campbell movement churches in Tennessee. One of Campbell's reformers, young English immigrant Philip S. Fall, began missionary work in Nashville in 1826. His efforts led to the eventual establishment of Vine Street Christian Church, one of the church's most influential congregations. Its historic membership was almost equally divided between whites and blacks. As debates about slavery and abolition intensified in the 1850s, Vine Street Church split off its black members into the Gay Street Colored Christian Church in 1855. Vine Street Church continued to supervise the Gay Street Church, which was headed by freed black Peter Lowery. Today this initial Disciples of Christ African-American congregation is now the Gay-Lea Christian Church in north Nashville. In 1917

[7] Harold Hazelip, "Churches of Christ," ibid., 162.

Preston Taylor, a prominent turn-of-the-century black Nashville businessman, and others organized the Colored Disciples of Christ Convention and held its first meeting at the Gay Street Church, with Taylor presiding. The Disciple's largest single congregation is the 9,000-member Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church, an African-American congregation, in Memphis.

Like the Churches of Christ, there are comparatively few African-American rural Disciples of Christ congregations in Tennessee. Unlike the Churches of Christ which does not have a national headquarters, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) national headquarters are located in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Disciples of Christ Historical Society are located in Nashville.

Harder to identify with the Stone-Campbell Movement are the Independent Christian Churches, some may follow the tenants of Stone and the Campbells, but others are churches that identify themselves as a Christian Church and are completely free of association with any other church.

This Tennessee survey identified two historic rural Christian Churches.

Church of God (Original) and Church of God
By Heather Fearnbach

Holiness and Pentecostal movements gained in popularity in the South between 1880 and 1920, resulting in the formation of new denominations such as the Church of God, the Church of God in Christ, and the Assemblies of God. The socially and economically isolated populations of southeastern Tennessee, northern Georgia, and western North Carolina shared a heritage of revivalism and a belief in the necessity of conversion conducive to an enthusiastic, optimistic, and authentically biblical approach to religion. Most southern Holiness and Pentecostal congregations opposed the production, consumption, or sale of alcoholic beverages. They sanctioned a strict observance of the Sabbath. They forbade women to wear jewelry, makeup, cut their hair or wear pants. They objected to the formation of labor unions, Masonic orders, and secret societies such as the Ku Klux Klan. They also advocated a pacifistic response to war, particularly the draft. Women preached in some congregations, and even became church leaders. Interregional revivals impacted the spread of charismatic religious movements in the South, diversifying the region's indigenous evangelicalism.

Tennessee has played a significant role in the rise of the Church of God. A revival at Azusa Street, a mission in Los Angeles, in 1906, had a national impact when southern Holiness leaders such as Aubrey J. Tomlinson of the Church of God of Cleveland, Tennessee, embraced the

Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in tongues. Tomlinson became general overseer in the Church of God for life in 1914. Controversy regarding the disbursement of Church of God funds at Tomlinson's discretion resulted in the 1923 split into the Tomlinson Church of God and the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee). In 1953, ten years after Tomlinson's death, the former denomination became known as the Church of God of Prophecy.

Many early African-American holiness churches trace their beginnings to the missionary work of Mary Magdelena L. Tate (1871-1930), a Tennessean who has been recognized as one of the founders of the holiness movement in the country. In 1903 Tate, along with her sons Walter C. Lewis and Feliz E. Lewis, established the House of God. In 1908, the Bishops and Board of Trustees of the Church of God formally ordained her. That same year, she helped to organize and presided over the First General Assembly of the Church of God, which was held at Greenville, Alabama. Ever since that time, Tennessee has played a special role in the black Church of God movement. In 1924, the Church of God's headquarters was established in Nashville, where it still is located today on Heiman Street. [Tate died in 1930 and was buried in a family plot in Dickson; in 1963 her remains were removed to Greenwood Cemetery in Nashville.] An important question to assess with any African-American Church of God property is whether it has a significant association with the missionary work of Mary Magdelena Tate, due to Mother Tate's significance in the holiness movement.

Southern Holiness and Pentecostal Churches were interracial until the 1910s. Southern blacks did create their own denominations. The congregation and brick building of the Original Church of God in Pulaski, Giles County, dates to 1906 and is the earliest known one in the state. The Tennessee survey had identified eight congregations listed as Church of God or Original Church of God. These churches are concentrated in Middle Tennessee.

A council of Pentecostals founded the Assemblies of God, yet another major Southern Pentecostal tradition, in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1914. They advocated an empirical interpretation of the New Testament, protesting against the modern rejection of God based on reason and science. Disputes over the issues of unity and race resulted in the formation of the Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God (all Black congregations, one has been surveyed in Winchester, Tennessee), the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ (principally white congregations who later became the United Pentecostal Church), and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (predominately black congregations based in Indianapolis). Five congregations located across the state had been surveyed as African-American Holiness congregations.

Church of God in Christ
Adapted from entry in the *Tennessee Encyclopedia* by Dr. Randolph Meade Walker of LeMoyne Owen College, Memphis

The Church of God in Christ (COGIC), headquartered in Memphis, is estimated to be the second largest black religious denomination in the United States and is characterized as a Pentecostal denomination. Followers of Pentecostal faiths embrace the spiritual gifts that early Christians first received on the day of Pentecost (the fiftieth day after the Resurrection of Jesus). COGIC emphasizes all the gifts of the Spirit, particularly speaking in tongues, which is testimony to the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Although the convening of the first Pentecostal General Assembly of the church in Memphis during November 1907 is regarded as the official founding date, the antecedents of the church date much earlier. COGIC's architect was Charles Harrison Mason, who in November 1878 at the age of twelve, became a professing Christian at the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church near Plumerville, Arkansas. In 1893 the Mt. Gale Missionary Baptist Church in Preston, Arkansas, licensed Mason into the ministry.

In 1895 Mason met C. P. Jones, J. E. Jeter, and W. S. Pleasant. These radical holiness preachers conducted a revival in Jackson, Mississippi, the following year. The dogmatic teachings of Mason resulted in his alienation from the Baptist Church, but this did not stall his ministry. His meetings continued to take place in an abandoned cotton gin house in Lexington, Mississippi. Despite Mason's independent stance, persecution still followed him. Five pistol shots and two double-barreled shotgun blasts disrupted one meeting, wounding several worshippers.

Such attacks failed to discourage Mason and his followers. Instead, they founded the holiness sect known as the Church of God. In 1897 Mason envisioned the name "Church of God in Christ," and the name change gave Mason's church its own distinct identity.

1907 marked a maturation point in Mason's efforts of establishing a distinctive church when he and Elders D. J. Young and J. A. Jeter attended the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles. There, under the teaching of W. J. Seymour, Mason became a believer in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and in tongues as witness to this baptism. Upon his return to Memphis, where his church was now located, Mason proclaimed speaking in tongues a New Testament doctrine. C. P. Jones split with Mason over this issue and led the non-Pentecostal faction of COGIC, which eventually became known of the Church of Christ (Holiness), U.S.A. Mason's followers retained

the COGIC name and convened the first Pentecostal General Assembly in Memphis in 1907. Representatives from twelve churches attended the initial meeting.

Between 1907 and 1914, the Church of God in Christ was the only incorporated Pentecostal body in the nation. Mason ordained both white and black clergy, since both needed licenses of ordination, but whites and blacks generally gravitated to separate congregations. Many of the white clergy ordained by Mason helped to form the Assembly of God Church in 1914.

COGIC grew in numbers and influence, especially in urban areas, in the middle decades of the twentieth century. In the Civil Rights Movement in Tennessee, COGIC congregations and churches played important leadership and support roles. At Mason Temple (NR 4/10/1992) in Memphis in April 1968, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his final major public address, the "I've Been to the Mountaintop" sermon, the night before his assassination. The World Headquarters of the Church of God in Christ is in Memphis. Church membership has topped five million and today COGIC is ranked as the largest Pentecostal denomination in the country and is one of the ten largest denominations in the country. It is the second largest African-American church in Tennessee.

While the Church of God in Christ is the fastest growing urban African-American church in the nation, there have emerged several rural COGIC churches located statewide, but concentrated for the most part in West Tennessee. The Tennessee project had surveyed nineteen rural COGIC churches, with fifteen of those located in West Tennessee.

Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America
Adapted from entry in *Tennessee Encyclopedia* by Dr. L. Thomas Smith, Jr., Johnson Bible College

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church grew out of revivals on the Tennessee-Kentucky frontier in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The formation of the independent Cumberland Presbytery on February 4, 1810, at Dickson, Tennessee, by ministers Finis Ewing, Samuel King, and Samuel McAdow, were followed by the subsequent establishment of the Cumberland Synod (1813). Controversies arouse over the frontier revivals, Calvinist theology, and church order raised by the "New Side/Old Side" division at the 1829 General Assembly within the Presbyterian Church.

The Church grew five-fold in membership from 1835 to 1860 and survived the Civil War without division. In 1869 a contingent of African-American ministers, representing approximately 30,000

black members of the church, petitioned for the formation of independent "presbyteries of colored ministers." The General Assembly of what is known currently as the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America (CPA) was established in 1874 in Nashville.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America remains a small institution today, with a heavy concentration of membership in Middle Tennessee. Four CPA churches had been surveyed in Tennessee. Despite its small numbers, the CPA is an important component of African-American religious history in Tennessee because the church originated in Tennessee and still maintains its headquarters and publishing house in the state.

East Tennessee is home to a handful of African-American United Presbyterian congregations, an outgrowth of the church's missionary efforts that began with the creation of Knoxville College in 1875. The United Presbyterian Church (1901) in Athens, McMinn County, is an impressive architectural landmark of eclectic Victorian style. The Beth Salem Presbyterian Church, also in McMinn County, is one of the nominated churches in this project. The United Presbyterian Church is aligned with the Presbyterian Church and is not part of the Cumberland Presbyterian faith.

MISSIONARY BAPTIST/ PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH
By Teresa Biddle-Douglas

The Baptist denomination is one of the oldest and largest denominations in the United States, and it is a leading faith among African-Americans. Exposed to the faith as it spread throughout the South in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, African-Americans found not only a spiritual experience that spoke to their African heritage, but also a rare opportunity for independence and equality in an otherwise brutally racist world. A sustaining source of strength and solidarity through the trying times of Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement, the Baptist Church has been more than a spiritual force in black communities; it has played a central role in their social, political, and economic lives as well. The number of Black Baptists reflects the denomination's status as a leading institution among African-Americans. Figures from 1990 estimate over eleven million African Americans belong to eight major Black Baptist associations. The largest among these, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., consists of over 7.5 million members, making it the largest black organization in the world. As such a significant force in black communities, the development of the Baptist denomination plays a primary role in African-American history. In Tennessee, the overwhelming majority of African-American Baptists identify their churches as Missionary Baptists. The next largest group is the Primitive Baptists. African-American groups of Progressive Baptists and Free Will Baptists exist

in much smaller numbers.

Beginnings:

The Baptist faith was one of several Protestant faiths that developed during the Reformation in fifteenth century England. It is chiefly known for the practice of adult baptism by immersion and an insistence of the separation of church and state. But as the faith spread throughout the American colonies many sub-denominations emerged. General, Regular, Arminian, Particular, Separatist, Primitive, Free Will, Hard-shell, Missionary, and Progressive are but a few of the over eighty divisions that exist today. Although subtle but distinguishable differences in doctrine and practices make each sub-denomination unique, they largely fall within two broad categories based upon their redemption beliefs--either general atonement or Calvinistic predestinationism in varying degrees. Seeds of both doctrines took root early in the American colonies during the late seventeenth century.

English colonist Roger Williams is credited with establishing the first Baptist Church in the American colonies. Williams came to Massachusetts in 1631, but was soon banished from the colony by the Puritans because of his different religious beliefs. Williams settled in the more tolerant Rhode Island and began a Baptist Church in Providence in 1639. Other Baptist congregations began to appear in the Rhode Island area, and as the religious fever of the Great Awakening took hold, the faith spread throughout the middle colonies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland.

The Baptist faith first appeared in the South in the late seventeenth century with the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina. This early group of Baptists was Calvinist in doctrine, preferred an educated clergy, and worshipped in an orderly fashion. By the mid-1700s, however, another Baptist group arose in the South that came to shape the defining regional character of the faith. Its leader was the dynamic evangelical preacher Shubel Stearns, who traveled and led revivals throughout the South. He adhered to a modified Calvinism, which offered the possible salvation for all whom had a personal conversion experience with God. The masses found this doctrine, Stearns' emphasis on anti-worldliness, and his spontaneous, emotional preaching greatly appealing. These characteristics came to determine the basic nature of the Baptist faith in the South as the majority of congregations that developed adopted Stearns' doctrine.

Missionary and Anti-Mission Movements and the Emergence of Primitive Baptists:

A hallmark of Baptist polity is the strong autonomy of individual congregations, a characteristic

that has eased, and to some degree encouraged, the many divisions within the Baptist faith that have emerged over time. If irresolvable conflicts over basic doctrines and practices arose within a congregation, the usual outcome was that the group that disagreed with the church's current direction would splinter off and form a separate autonomous congregation. This was the case in the 1700s as Calvinist "Particular" Baptists emerged separately from Armenian or "General" Baptist congregations. Another division among the Baptists occurred in the early 1800s with the rise of the missionary movement.

In the early 1800s benevolent and missionary activities became increasingly prevalent among Baptists and other denominations. As their efforts grew, they began formal organizations to manage their operations. By 1810 Congregationalists formed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Baptists soon followed this lead and in 1814 established the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions. This organization, later became the American Baptist Missionary Union and primarily funded overseas missions. Although many Baptists strongly supported missionary activity, those who were staunch Calvinists strongly opposed it and as controversy erupted over the issue an anti-mission movement quickly emerged.

The anti-mission movement was a bitter conflict nationwide among many denominations. Daniel Parker, John Taylor, and John Leland were key leaders of the movement, which was fueled by a fear of a strong church-state relationship and of the power of large eastern ecclesiastical agencies. This fear was particularly strong in the South, "where rural religionists resented the efforts of eastern missionaries and 'dandies' to save the frontier from barbarism."[8] In addition, the majority of Southern congregations held strong Calvinistic or restorationist views that directly conflicted with missionary activity. They believed in predestination and that salvation was only for the elect; therefore they objected to missionary work because they saw it as interfering with the saving of those God had chosen. In their view, if the redemption of mankind was predetermined, then attempting to convert or save individuals, the objective of missionary activity, was futile. God already decided the outcome. Advocating the simplicity and freedom of the primitive church, which they saw as a model to emulate, anti-missionists were also opposed to the elaborate organizations that missionary work required. The majority of Baptist churches in Tennessee had adopted the anti-mission position by 1820, and by 1832 they had begun to separate formally into a distinct sub-denomination.

[8] William Ferris and Charles R. Wilson, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

Baptists involved in the anti-mission movement became known as Primitive Baptists. The majority of them derived from rural restorationist congregations in the Shubel Stearns tradition of strong allegiance to the primitive church and to scripture. The title "Primitive" then refers to the original or pure church and faith of the apostles. Their cardinal doctrine is a rigid predestinationism and they reject all auxiliaries not in scripture--including seminaries, Sunday schools, and Bible societies in addition to missionary organizations; because these outreach programs are viewed as vain and offensive to basic church doctrines. Nonetheless, regional and national Primitive Baptist associations do exist, but authority is vested in the local church. Associations generally meet annually and are primarily social in nature. It is common for individual congregations to meet once a month, particularly in rural areas where ministers travel and preach at a different church each week. Members then will often attend a neighboring church on the weeks when their local church does not meet.

Primitive Baptist ministers are not formally trained but are simply respected elders of the local congregation to whom God has given the gift of preaching. They are often unsalaried outside of donations from the congregation and so usually have an additional occupation. The local congregation ordains potential preachers only after they have demonstrated their ability. Proving that their vocation is truly inspired from God, Primitive Baptist ministers do not prepare sermons in advance, but provide a spontaneous oration.

Both the worship and the architecture of the denomination reflect this emphasis on simplicity and fundamental methods. Services are simple in nature, composed largely of preaching, prayer, and singing. Members sing lined hymns in a distinctive rhythmic manner without musical accompaniment, which most Primitive Baptists do not allow. Baptism is by immersion, and many Primitive Baptists participate in foot washing, the practice of washing one another's feet as an act and lesson in humility.

The buildings in which these services are held are equally unassuming and humble. Churches are usually small rectangular wooden structures coated with white paint. Lacking adornment they have no steeples and have plain glass windows. The interiors are likewise uncomplicated with plain white or paneled walls and no decor. Plain wooden pews provide the seating, which in the early years was segregated by gender. Older Primitive Baptist churches also have separate entrances for men and women; generally two doors stand parallel under the gable end opposite the pulpit.

The two nominated Primitive Baptist churches included with this initial nomination of historic rural African-American Churches - St. Mark United Primitive Baptist in Maury County and Republican

Primitive Baptist in Haywood County - are both outstanding examples of the unadorned, yet symbolic architecture associated with Primitive Baptist churches. They are frame buildings, painted white, and lack a steeple. St. Mark's is believed to be one of the oldest black Primitive Baptist churches in Middle Tennessee and has hosted Primitive Baptist convention meetings. Republican Primitive Baptist is a good example of how these basic architectural characteristics continued into the early twentieth century.

Given the general Baptist propensity toward schism, it is not surprising that different divisions have emerged even within sub-denominations. Today there are five discernible groups of Primitive Baptists: Absoluters, who are the most rigid predestinationists. Old Liners "allow human responsibility in predestination." Progressives are the least rigid, and have Sunday schools and paid ministers. Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit-Predestination Baptists, of which only a few members remain, are located primarily in Texas and Louisiana. National Primitive Baptists are African-American.

Although originally a white denomination, Primitive Baptists have gained an even greater following among blacks. After having withdrawn from white congregations at the close of the Civil War, African-Americans initiated their own congregations, which were on the average more progressive than those of whites, operating both conventions and Sunday schools. In 1907 Black Primitive Baptists formed the National Primitive Baptist Convention of the United States of America, which in 1990 had an estimated 250,000 members.

In assessing the National Register eligibility of African-American Primitive Baptist churches, three trends come to the forefront. First, due to their beliefs in simplicity and direct worship with God, the church buildings are typically intimate and unadorned in their architectural appearance. Second, many buildings are little changed since their initial construction and often date after 1907, when the first formal Black Primitive Baptist Convention was formed. Third, there is little written or oral tradition of civil rights activism associated with Primitive Baptist congregations, although that certainly may vary from congregation to congregation.

African-American Baptists:

The first African-American Baptist churches began in the South in the last half of the eighteenth century. The African Baptist or "Bluestone" Church formed on William Byrd's plantation in Mecklenberg, Virginia, in 1758 is the earliest church whose origin date is verifiable. The Silver Bluff Baptist Church near the Savannah River in South Carolina might also claim this title, but its origin dates cannot be confirmed. Its significance, however, is well known. Scholars estimate

that slave George Liele established Silver Bluff between 1750 and 1775 during which time he spread the Baptist faith through mission work at nearby plantations. Liele eventually gained his freedom and for a time settled in Savannah, where he became a well-known preacher, before moving to Jamaica circa 1782. Liele left behind many slave converts who continued to spread the Baptist faith among African Americans. Among them were Andrew Bryan and Jesse Peters, who established the First African Church of Savannah circa 1788. Black churches soon spread throughout the region, especially in areas with a concentration of free blacks. Other evangelical faiths were also sweeping through the South in this era, but the Baptist faith obviously held something special for African Americans as by 1800 there were over 25,000 black Baptists in the United States.

The Baptist faith appealed to blacks, the majority of whom were slaves, for a variety of reasons. The faith's beliefs, rituals and practices had much in common with African religious traditions; its message of eventual salvation gave them hope past their current life of enslavement; and, more than any other denomination, it offered them some degree of equality and freedom. Many aspects of the Baptist faith, such as its concepts of visions, spiritual journeys, rebirth, healing, and prophecy, shared many similarities with African religious traditions and values. Although blacks managed to maintain much of their African heritage, the circumstances of slavery contradicted and weakened their connection to traditional concepts. The African worldview had been one of personal independence and a Sacred Cosmos that connected the spiritual and material worlds. The world of slavery, however, demanded submissiveness and looked upon African religious beliefs as foolish. Historian Mechal Sobel claims that the resulting "no coherent worldview" combined with the similarities between traditional African values and the Baptist faith to make African Americans "uniquely ready for the Great Awakening." Blacks yearned for "new coherence and a new sense of unity and purpose" and found in the Baptist faith "a Sacred Cosmos with which they could integrate their African values." Sobel concludes that "what emerged was a new whole . . . a new coherence that was both African and Baptist."[9]

In addition, the Baptist emphasis on congregational autonomy and individual religious experience gave blacks some degree of self-determination. With limited white authority, blacks were allowed to preach and could start their own congregations. The ability to form and conduct their own religious services was a step toward independence and the message of salvation in the next life gave enslaved African Americans an inner strength to meet the harsh realities of their current situation.

Prior to the Great Awakening, slave owners were largely disinterested in converting their slaves

[9] Mechal Sobel.

to Christianity. Their economic priority was to occupy slaves' time with work, and they feared that baptism might give slaves the impression they were free. Also many planters viewed participation in religious activities as a mere extension of their power and social status. A preacher's time needed to be devoted to whites, not to people the planters saw as barbarians incapable of understanding Christianity. The Anglican Church did make some efforts to involve slaves, but its emphasis on literacy and decorum did not appeal to the group. Compounding this situation was the fact that keeping the race uneducated and unsophisticated was in the best interest of slave owners.

In contrast to the strict formalities of the Anglican Church, African Americans found the emotion and spontaneity of the newly emerging faiths of the Great Awakening inviting and accepting, as did many whites. In its initial stages, the Great Awakening was in many ways a populist movement, giving poor whites a distinct social and religious outlet beyond the authority of the elite planter class. The conventions of the Anglican Church only reinforced the South's rigid social order, but the new evangelical faiths liberated the masses to an equal spiritual, if not social, plane. Their emphasis on emotion, conversion by individual personal experience, and a lack of strict dogma related more to the life experiences of the common people.

Over time, however, the new faiths became more widespread and conformist. What had emerged in the first Great Awakening as separatist sects, became major denominations as their practices became more widely accepted by the upper classes. Revivals declined, congregations became less radical, and the majority of them held a much weaker antislavery stance. As tensions over slavery increased and slave rebellions were more frequent, black churches were suppressed out of white fear of potential black defiance. Black congregations then either melted into white churches or existed in secret. Yet slave owners, many of whom were now among the converts, leaned toward Christianizing their slaves. Some with the belief that it increased slaves' obedience to the planters authority. By allowing slaves to participate in religious activities within the slave quarters, planters could, in their contention, oversee and thus control, the services. Some planters also used this 'interest' in their slaves' spiritual well being to appear benevolent and to appease abolitionists.

As slavery became an increasingly pressing national issue, Baptists, like other denominations split over the question. Initially Baptists tried to remain neutral claiming that slavery was a political and not a religious issue. But the issue came to head in 1845 when the election of a slaveholder to the national board was denied. Southerners then withdrew and formed the Southern Baptist Convention.

Yet this same time period of 1840-1860 witnessed the creation of the first African-American Baptist churches in Tennessee, typically in urban areas. The First Colored Baptist Mission (also known as the Spruce Street Baptist Church) in Nashville was established in 1848 and is considered the mother church for Baptist congregations in Nashville. Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church in Columbia, Maury County, dates to 1843. Out of this early evangelist movement came famous black Baptist leaders, such as Edmund Kelly and Nelson G. Merry, who impacted not only the Baptist movement in Tennessee but also the national black Baptist church. Merry (1824-1884) was of special significance. Merry, the first ordained black Baptist minister (1853) in Nashville, served as the moderator of the First Colored Baptist Mission Church, which soon had 2,000 members, making it the largest black church in Tennessee. It remained associated with the white First Baptist church until 1866, when it gained its independence. Merry, who established at least fourteen black Baptist churches, was a founder of the Tennessee Colored Baptist Association (1866) and was editor of *The Colored Sunday School Standard* in 1874-75.

After emancipation African Americans rapidly withdrew from white churches to form independent congregations. Finally free to worship as they chose a large percentage of blacks chose the Baptist faith, and the number of black Baptists rose from 150,000 in 1850 to 500,000 in 1870. A landmark of this movement in Tennessee is the Beale Street Baptist Church (NHL10/15/1966) in Memphis. Some white congregations assisted the fledgling churches in establishing facilities and organizing administrative systems, others cut all ties with African Americans. Creating their own religious institutions and associations was extremely important to the newly freed people. Like owning their own land and educational establishments, the ability to freely worship in their chosen manner and space was a large step toward independence and self-determination. Desiring to distance themselves from both southern discrimination and northern paternalism, African-American Baptist congregations retained only marginal relations with white congregations and gradually began to develop a separate network of black associations.

The first all black Baptist associations were formed in the West. In Ohio, African Americans organized the Providence Association in 1834 and the Union Association in 1836. Illinois' Wood River Association was established in 1839, and the Amherstburg Association in Michigan began in 1841. In 1864 these four associations formed the Northwestern and Southern Baptist Convention, a regional association which represented eight states. The first regional organization; however, was the American Baptist Missionary Convention formed in 1840 by members from the New England and Mid-Atlantic areas. The first attempt at a national black Baptist association came in 1866 when the Northwestern and Southern Baptist Convention merged with the American Baptist Missionary Convention to form the Consolidated American Baptist Missionary Convention. The national organization, which held its first meeting in

Nashville in 1867, lasted twelve years until 1879. By then the national organization was splitting into separate regional conventions.

Three major regional organizations arose out of the disbanded Consolidated American Baptist Missionary Convention. The Baptist Foreign Mission Convention of the United States of America formed in Alabama in 1880. Covering eleven states, its headquarters were in Richmond, Virginia, and its primary activities included missions to Africa and addressing social issues. In 1886, the American National Baptist Convention formed in St. Louis. Over one million members came from nine thousand churches in seventeen states. The third regional association emerged in 1893 in Washington, DC. titled the National Baptist Educational Convention of the United States of America, the organization focused on training and educating clergy. On September 28, 1895, these three regional organizations merged to form the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America (NBC, USA), which became and has remained the most prominent African-American Baptist organization in the country. Although it would later split into two institutions, the National Baptist Convention of America (unincorporated) and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., Reverend E. C. Morris served as the first president, and the association immediately formed subsidiaries addressing foreign missions, home missions, and education. It later added publishing in 1897. The convention was also very active in supporting education and racial equality issues. The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. has had a special relationship with Tennessee since the late nineteenth century. In 1896 Reverend Richard H. Boyd established and located the National Baptist Publishing Board in Nashville. It soon became one of the largest businesses in the country that was owned and operated by African Americans. The World Headquarters for the church, and its primary seminary (American Baptist College), were also located in Nashville.

The Baptist church remained a source of strength, solace, and solidarity in African-American communities at the turn of the century as the enactment of Jim Crow laws confirmed that severe racism still existed. Throughout the Jim Crow years, black churches grew in numbers and in membership. Black Baptist ministers, who were important leaders and authorities in the community, increased from 5,500 to 17,000 between 1890 and 1906.

Despite their strong affinity, African-American Baptists did experience internal conflicts. The Baptist tendency toward schism over policy and ideology resulted in significant divisions among the members of the National Baptist Convention. The first split came in 1897 with the appointment of a new secretary to the Foreign Mission Board and the movement of its headquarters to Louisville. Conflicting loyalties and resentment over the new publishing activities caused some members to withdraw from the organization and form the Lott Carey Foreign

Missionary Convention. The Lott Carey faction largely consisted of the well-educated members of the NBC, reflecting a class and ideological division within the convention. The two groups reconciled by 1905, and remained separate but affiliated organizations.

A major split, however, came to the National Baptist Convention in 1915. With over three million members, the convention split over a ten-year conflict over leadership and control of the publishing division. Dissenting members formed the National Baptist Convention of America (NBCA), which controlled the National Baptist Publishing Board, created in 1896. After the split, NBC, USA incorporated and created the Sunday School Publishing Board of the National Baptist Convention. The NBCA became a leading Black institution in its own right and developed programs for home and foreign missions, education and training, and benevolent activities.

Conflict returned again to the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., in the early 1960s as members disagreed over how to respond to the era's impending social issues. Under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Joseph H. Jackson, the organization had become increasingly conservative during the 1950s. Jackson strongly opposed the civil disobedience strategy of Martin Luther King and prevented the convention from participating in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1961 King and others withdrew from the NBC, USA and founded the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.

Despite the fight on the national level, local churches remained a source of service and leadership to African Americans throughout the struggle for civil rights. Whether providing facilities, funds, or direction for voter registration, sit-in organization, or inspiring speeches, the community church was the pivotal spiritual and physical guiding force for many individuals. Two nominated Missionary Baptist churches submitted with this Multiple Property Nomination are each strongly associated with the local movement for civil rights and equality in their communities. Canaan Baptist Church, located in the Tipton County seat of Covington, is an early twentieth century church building. The congregation provided leaders and the church building was a meeting place for civil rights activists, especially in the mid-1960s in the wake of congressional passage of the Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965. Mt. Zion Baptist Church, located in the Lincoln County seat of Fayetteville, is a turn-of-the-century black architectural landmark in Fayetteville. It hosted the initial organizational meetings for the NAACP in Lincoln County. Fredonia Baptist Church in Haywood County, one of the county's oldest African-American congregations, is a future potential nomination. Built in 1957, the church building reflects both the rising prosperity of the Douglas community (a Farm Security Administration project of the late 1930s and early 1940s) and also a split within the church over the necessity of civil rights activism. Those who wanted change in their lives built the new church building to

house their part of congregation, and to serve as a symbol of the change to come in the following decade.

This social activist tradition continues in African-American Baptist churches today as the church plays a continuing vital role in the spiritual and social lives of its members. Its American Theological College in Nashville produced the notable student leader, John R. Lewis, during the Civil Rights Movement

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR NOMINATING HISTORIC RURAL AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCHES TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Historic rural African-American churches are, above all, historical artifacts of the creation, development, persistence, and continuity of African-American ethnic heritage, ethnic identity, religion, and education. After Emancipation, the actual places or locations of historic rural African-American churches signified the establishment of a sacred place where community institutions would be nurtured, cemeteries would be established, and rituals of culture and identity perpetuated and protected. Rural African-American churches also were closely associated with the development of social institutions that were designed to promote the welfare of African-American society and with the creation and enhancement of African-American drama, dance, and music.

The fact that this process of historical and cultural transformation took place over a long period of time, involving different people with different motives working within different, or at least changing, buildings, makes the assessment of rural churches a formidable task. The way of thinking about the National Register eligibility of rural churches that is detailed below reflects the historical and cultural patterns found in the 1997-98 survey of 365 churches across the state. While this number is not all of the possible rural African-American churches in Tennessee, it is much more than a small random sample. Along with the initial nominated churches submitted with this MPN cover form, it is a logical database from which to begin the difficult, but important, task of assessing the significance of rural African-American churches in Tennessee history and architecture.

Indeed, this intensive survey suggests that, depending on the nature of the resource, there are two ways to assess the National Register eligibility of a rural African-American church: 1) as a single property and 2) as part of a historic district.

I. Creating a Tradition, 1850-1890

Context: There are no known examples of rural or small-town church buildings that date to the years of slavery or the years of Civil War occupation between 1861 and 1865. Most rural African-American churches that have strong associations to the establishment and development of newly freed people after the Civil War date between 1863 and 1883. Those founded between 1863 and 1870 having especially strong historical significance due to their early founding date.

Historians of Reconstruction and of African-American history agree that the years immediately after the Civil War provided a crucible for the creation of permanent African-American institutions. "Blacks were free now, and they enjoyed options they could only have imagined a short time earlier," observed historian William E. Montgomery." No longer required to attend racially mixed churches or chapels established for them by whites, thousands of blacks began organizing their own autonomous congregations. The months that followed emancipation marked the beginning of a new era for the black church, a time during which it began to mature and to take on new forms and functions."[10] These new churches took ideas of organization and ritual from the hundreds of church missionaries that flooded the state, from such organizations as the AME, the AME Zion, the Methodist Freedmen's Aid Society, the American Baptist Home Mission Society, and the American Missionary Association (see the denominational histories above). But they blended the ideas and traditions of the missionaries with their own prior heritage and traditions of worship, what William Montgomery has called "the folk church, the product of a primal culture, nonintellectual, experiential, and indigenous in the sense that it was the syncretistic product of a dynamic African-American culture."[11]

In some cases, however, the impact of the missionary efforts went hand-in-hand with the creation of African-American education institutions that helped to produce the pastors and leaders of early churches. Especially important in Tennessee in the 1880s were Lane College (NR 7/02/87) for the CME church in West Tennessee; Knoxville College (NR 5/01/80) for the United Presbyterian Church in East Tennessee; and Morristown College (NR 9/15/83) for the United Methodist Church in East Tennessee. Historic congregations that are significantly associated with these educational institutions often date to the 1880s and 1890s. It is for this reason that this subdivision of "Creating a Tradition" extends to 1890.

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[10] William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South, 1865-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 42.

[11] Ibid., 36.

The newly established church immediately became a focus of identity, culture, and heritage. Historian Leon Litwack adds: "with the withdrawal of thousands of blacks from the white-dominated churches, the black church became the central and unifying institution in the postwar black community. Far more than any newspaper, convention, or political organization, the minister communicated directly and regularly with his constituents and helped to shape their lives in freedom. Not only did he preach the gospel to the masses in these years but he helped to politicize and educate them."[12]

According to the Tennessee survey, the oldest church buildings were: Pikeville AME Zion Church, Bledsoe County, circa 1870; New Salem Baptist Church, Sevier County, 1886; Green Grove Missionary Baptist, Hardeman County, 1888, with 1926 and 1976 renovations; and Henderson Chapel AME Zion, Grainger County, 1890.

Several Criterion A themes are significantly associated with these buildings. Religion is an important theme, for example, because the buildings often represent the beginnings of organized religious institutions among local African Americans. Their continuance until the present underscores their significant associations with the development, practice, and enhancement of religion in local black communities. Reverend Kelly Miller Smith of Nashville summarized the African-American religious legacy, and its enduring significance, in his 1982 essay, "Religion as a Force in Black America." Studies by professors of religion and a social historian in the 1990s have documented the historical roots and cultural significance of African-American religion.[13] The scholarship has exploded the previous stereotype that African-American religion was mostly a derivative of existing white religious practices, and thus deserving of little individual attention. As Lincoln and Mamiya argue, the black sacred cosmos or the religious worldview of African Americans are related both to their African heritage, which envisaged the whole universe as scared, and to their conversion to Christianity during slavery and its aftermath. It has been only in the past twenty years that scholars of African-American history, culture, and religion have begun to recognize that black people created their own unique and distinctive forms of culture and worldviews as parallels rather than replications of the culture in which they were involuntary guests.

Faith in salvation through Jesus Christ was a sustaining force through the violence and

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[12] Tara Mitchell Mielnik, "Christian Methodist Episcopal Church," Carroll Van West, et.al. eds., *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1998), 156.

[13] Kelly Miller Smith, "Religion as a Force in Black America," James D. Williams, ed., *The State of Black America 1982* (New York: National Urban League, 1982), 210-17; Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*; Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree.*

degradation of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and onto the renewed promise of freedom in modern times. The words of the Holy Bible further taught African Americans that their church was true to the teachings of Jesus and the dictates of God. "The black Christians who formed the historic black churches also knew implicitly that their understanding of Christianity, which was premised on the rock of anti-racial discrimination, was more authentic than the Christianity practiced in white churches."[14] This basic understanding provided the faith that many African Americans took into the battlefields of the movement for Civil Rights from Reconstruction to 1970.

When historian Eric Foner reviewed the Reconstruction era across the South, he concluded that the newly freed African Americans rushed first to create three separate institutions: churches, cemeteries, and schools. Education, therefore, is important to consider as an area of significance. Pikeville AME Zion, which was built for and served as the local black school until the 1920s, represents education for the era of 1850-1890. The research of Dr. Dorothy Granberry provides the only close look at the development of a county's African-American schools from Reconstruction to the present.[15] Granberry focused her studies on Haywood County, in West Tennessee. There she found that by 1866 African Americans had established a school, which met in a private home. The following year, African Americans moved to create a more permanent institution. Of the seven trustees for the new school, two were prominent African-American ministers: Mortimore Winfield and Hardin Smith. Winfield was a founder of First Baptist Church in Brownsville; Smith played a similar role at Woodlawn Baptist Church in Nutbush (NR listed 12/2/1996). All seven school trustees were also church trustees, five with local Baptist churches and two with the Methodist church. Independent churches paved the way for independent schools. Of the churches surveyed thus far in Tennessee, only two--Springhill CME Church and Liberty Branch Baptist Church, both in Fayette County--retain a nineteenth century school building on its property.

No incidents of social activism and civil rights activism could be documented for these churches between their construction and 1890, but social history was an area of importance later in the twentieth century.

Criterion B for these early churches should focus on the ministers who established the

[14] Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 2.

[15] Dorothy Granberry, "Origins of an African-American School in Haywood County," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 56(1997): 44-55. Also see the earlier work of Paul D. Phillips in "Education of Blacks in Tennessee During Reconstruction, 1865-1870," *ibid.*, 46(1987): 98-109, and "White Reaction to the Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee," *ibid.*, 25(1966): 50-62.

congregations and directed the construction of the churches. None of the congregations of the nominated churches could identify a prominent founding minister. But certainly established scholarship indicates that the prominence of early ministers is an issue always worth investigating. The minister, or pastor, is the central person associated with the worship services, rituals, social history projects, and community events associated with the rural African-American church. In *The Souls of Black Folks*, W. E. B. DuBois movingly wrote of his first experience with a rural revival in Wilson County, Tennessee:

> . . . so most striking to me, as I approached the village and the little plain church perched aloft, was the air of intense excitement that possessed that mass of black folk. A sort of suppressed terror hung in the air and seemed to seize us,---a pythian madness, a demoniac possession, that lent terrible reality to song and word. The black and massive form of the preacher swayed and quivered as the words crowded to his lips and flew at us in singular eloquence.[16]

From these experiences with rural Wilson County religious meetings, Du Bois concluded that the Preacher, the Music, and the Frenzy were the three key components of the black religious experience. "The preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil," he stressed. "A leader, a politician, an orator, a 'boss', an intriguer, an idealist--all these he is, and ever, too, the centre of a group of men . . . The combination of a certain adroitness with deep-seated earnestness, of tact with consummate ability, gave him his preeminence, and helps him maintain it."[17]

For decades after Emancipation, African-American ministers found themselves situated squarely between their congregations and God, and between their congregations and the white world outside of their everyday existence. Thus, concludes Leon Litwack:

> Compared to his white counterpart, the black preacher exerted a greater authority within his community. That authority, however, rested on precarious grounds, dependent as it often was on white whims and toleration. . . . the black minister in the South viewed himself as a necessary agent of social control. He had to find ways to navigate the conflicting roles assigned him, that of pleasing constituents while not alienating necessary white tolerance and support. Even as he encouraged the aspirations of his people, he needed to disabuse their minds of extravagant pride and unrealistic ambitions. That delicate balance was not always

[16] W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1961[1903]), 140-41.
[17] Ibid., 141.

easy to maintain.[18]

The prevailing scholarly consensus for a century is that from the days of slavery through Emancipation and into the days of Jim Crow, African-American ministers were the most powerful and respected members of local black communities. Historian William E. Montgomery's chapter, "The Preachers," in his book *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South, 1865-1900*, provides a very able summary of the significance of the ministers in establishing the actual church, increasing its membership, and enhancing the social, cultural, and religious life of their communities. Beginning at the turn of the century, the new professional and merchant class began a tradition of secular leadership within the black community, but the minister still maintained respect and significance, as would be evident in their leadership roles in the Civil Rights Movement. The significance of founding ministers is also documented in the interiors of many rural African-American churches, where formal photographic portraits of the congregation's ministers received a prominent place, often on the walls flanking the pulpit, where they brought wisdom, passion, and courage every Sunday. St. Mark United Primitive Baptist Church, one of the nominated churches, recognizes its founders in just that way.

For the Era of 1850-1890, Criterion C is superbly represented by the New Salem Baptist Church, which is attributed to master craftsman Isaac Dockery of Sevier County. This well-deserving historic building is not included among the initial nominations, however, because of an inability to gain owner consent at this time. Henderson Chapel AME Zion is representative of the vernacular tradition of the frame, gable-entrance church building, which is a dominant property type for rural African-American churches throughout the twentieth century. When assessed within the social, cultural, and economic context in which they were created, church buildings can be recognized for what they are: a sincere, intentional attempt to create a distinctive and meaningful place of worship within a social and built environment that, in most cases, was antagonistic to the notion that African Americans even deserved a spot in the landscape.

As an architectural style within the National Register guidelines, it is probably best to classify most of the churches as "No Style." But within the literature of architectural history, most buildings would be classified as "vernacular," but that word here is used as American studies scholar John Kouwehoven used it almost forty years ago in his classic chapter, "What is American about American Architecture," in his book of essays titled *The Beer Can by the Highway*. In his opinion, the attributes of American vernacular design were conveyed by four words: "resilient, adaptable, simple, and unceremonious." Focus should be on the form and its evolution over time. The Tennessee survey of 365 churches identified a few with an architectural

[18] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 389.

style (typically either Gothic Revival or Classical Revival and usually located in small towns), but most churches fell into several categories of dominant forms and types, which could be found in all denominations, geographical regions, and time periods. "The difference between style and form is the difference between a statement and a language," observes Stewart Brand. "An architectural statement is limited to a few stylistic words and depends on originality for its impact, whereas a vernacular form unleashes the power of a whole, tested grammar."[19] With the rural African-American church, the form is much more important than its style. In assessing the architectural significance of these buildings, the form and how its has changed over time should be evaluated within the context of Kouwenhoven's four terms of resiliency, adaptability, simple, and unceremonious. The most typical rural African-American church building for 1850-1890 is a one-story, gable roof, rectangular-shaped building, with the primary entrance on the gable end. The foundation may be brick, concrete, or stone piers. The walls are frame, except for the case of the Green Grove Missionary Baptist Church, which received a brick veneer circa 1970. The windows typically are square or rectangular.

Summary: Rural African-American church buildings that date between 1850 and 1890 are so few in number that when surveyed and identified, they should receive careful scrutiny from historic preservationists. Their dates of construction and then their survival into the twenty-first century may strongly suggest that they possess potential significance under Criterion A. The most pertinent themes are settlement patterns (the beginning of post-Reconstruction freemen communities), religion (the beginnings of organized black religious institutions), education (the beginnings of freemen schools), and social history (the beginnings of black social activism, community programs, and organizations). Another primary area of eligibility lies with Criterion C for their significance as extant examples of late nineteenth century African-American craftsmanship. Criterion B is a secondary category of eligibility if the initial ministers of a congregation also played a significant role in the creation of other African-American congregations and churches in the region. Several early churches are known as "mother churches" since their first pastors also helped to establish other churches throughout the area.

II. Maintaining Traditions in an Era of Jim Crow Segregation, 1890-1945

Context: The vast majority of historic rural African-American churches in Tennessee date to the Era of Jim Crow segregation. As ample scholarship documents, and as Leon Litwack has summarized in his recent *Trouble in Mind* (1998), this era was the nadir of race relations throughout the South. Violence and intimidation became increasingly common. From 1882 to

[19] John A. Kouwenhoven, *The Beer Can by the Highway* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 156; Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn* (New York: Penguin, 1994), 155.

1932, at least 177 African Americans were lynched in Tennessee; the last recorded lynching took place in Haywood County in 1940. Ministers used church pulpits to denounce the violence. Led by sermons and publications from Bishop Henry M. Turner, the AME and AME Zion pulpits especially decried the situation African Americans found themselves in during the Jim Crow Era. For example, in a 1900 publication, Turner thundered: "Every man that has the sense of an animal must see there is no future in this country for the Negro . . . we are taken out and burned, shot, hanged, unjointed and murdered in every way. Our civil rights are taken from us by force, our political rights are a farce."[20]

In response, African Americans turned to their churches for guidance. Historian Bobby Lee Lovett concluded that "Not only was school held in the church, but the teachers were often ministers or church missionaries. The important meetings involving black politics and movements for civil rights and suffrage always took place in the churches."[21] In the long Jim Crow Era, churches were among the few public spaces where African Americans could and would gather. They became more important as a nurturing center for African-American identity. Through their Sunday sermons, for example, ministers gave local African Americans the courage to seek out better solutions to their lives. Editorials and speeches by Bishop Henry Turner, published in various AME publications and given as sermons to local AME congregations during the early twentieth century, preached pride and self worth. "Convinced that the church should play a role in transforming the black psyche," Turner developed a "theology designed to improve the self-image of the race. It asked black people to reject any of the teachings and practices of white Christianity that reinforced feelings of inferiority."[22] Turner and other AME ministers especially questioned the significance of "whiteness"--and in AME churches in specific, and many other faiths in general; images of Jesus stopped being white, and were black. Images of other black heroes were placed on Sunday School walls. As Edwin S. Redkey has suggested, the church, while decrying the violence of the era, also promoted a "basic optimism" among African Americans, optimism grounded in the eventual integration of society and Christian redemption. This optimism never disappeared; once refocused and energized in the post-World War II era, it became a basic faith of those who fought for civil rights.[23]

This optimism helps to explain the comparative explosion of adjacent social and community institutions located next to prominent churches. Education is perhaps the most prominent

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[20] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 393.

[21] Cited in Lester C. Lamon, *Blacks in Tennessee, 1791-1970* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 45.

[22] Henry M. Turner, "The Negro Has Not Sense Enough," *Voice of Missions*, July 1, 1900.

[23] Edwin S. Redkey, *Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), especially p. 13.

example. In the Tennessee project, thirty-three extant school buildings stood immediately on the church lot or were located in the immediate lot because the church had either provided land or served as a major sponsor for the school's establishment. This represented about nine percent of the total number of church properties surveyed.

The schools' dates of construction range from the turn-of-the-century to last gasp attempts to maintain "separate but equal" facilities in the 1950s. For instance, in Rogersville a historic brick school building (circa 1900) that is associated with the Swift Memorial College lies between the Russell Chapel AME Zion Church and the Hassan Street Christian Church. Several of the schools are associated with Rosenwald school building program of the late 1910s and 1920s. According to the research of Mary S. Hoffschwelle, church congregations again played a key role in supporting, and providing land for, the ambitious Rosenwald program. Rosenwald agent Robert E. Clay typically held his first organizing meetings in a given African-American community at a local church. Women church members, who supplied the labor and dedication for Sunday school programs, grasped similar leadership roles in the Rosenwald campaigns. They organized community suppers, entertainment, and chicken feasts, usually at local churches. Of course, in some communities, denomination divisions between congregations led to local fights over the Rosenwald campaigns. Clay invariably returned to the communities and generally ordered the warring factions to stop and to work together, giving what he called a "frank" speech.[24]

Illustrative examples of the close relationship between churches and the Rosenwald program include Wingo, in Carroll County, where on the west side of the railroad tracks, at a local crossroads, is the Wingo Missionary Baptist Church (to the south) and immediately north is the Rosenwald school from 1920-21. Across from Goodes Temple AME Zion in Jefferson County, south of White Pine, is a circa 1919 two-room Rosenwald school. Other churches such as Craigs Chapel AME Zion in Loudoun County and Durham Chapel Baptist in Sumner County, incorporate twentieth-century buildings in their churches. Indeed, some churches took over old schools, abandoned after consolidation or desegregation in the 1950s, and turned them into their churches. Toles Chapel CME in Camden (Benton County) and Union Hill Missionary Baptist in Elkton (Giles County) are good examples of this conversion of a building's function, keeping a historical landmark in use in the community.

Fraternal lodges also impacted church property during this time in two ways. Some lodges built their buildings on church lots or adjacent property. Lodge members also built new church buildings. In the Jim Crow Era, fraternal lodges transcended the function of group effort and race

[24] Mary S. Hoffschwelle, Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools, and Homes in Tennessee, 1900-1930 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998).

consciousness. According to Bobby Lovett, "blacks had no choice but be racially conscious—a racist society and white-imposed Jim Crow rules dictated that for them." To Lovett, "lodges signaled the development of white and elite class structures in the post-Emancipation Negro communities, and often embodied the leadership for erecting" such institutions as schools, churches, and cemeteries.[25]

As historian Lester Lamon adds: "in addition to creating occasions for socializing, the fraternal organizations usually provided small illness or death benefits, represented blacks in public celebrations such as Fourth of July parades, and served as important training grounds for black leaders.[26]

Fraternal lodges share land with, or lie adjacent to, church buildings at several sites across Tennessee. Three good examples are:

> St. Luke AME Church, South Fulton, Obion County where the two-story concrete lodge of Jacksonville F&AM Lodge No. 50 is located.
>
> Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Grand Junction, Hardeman County, where the Frank Gibson Masonic Hall stands across the street from the church.
>
> Third Avenue Baptist Church and Howard Chapel AME Church in Huntingdon, Carroll County, where the Golden Eagle Lodge No. 111 building stands on a lot behind the Baptist Church and adjacent to the AME church building.

More numerous are the dedication stones that record the lodge that constructed the church building. Rarely is there any information available about the builders of rural African-American churches. But dedication stones indicate that, at least, in the twentieth century, fraternal lodge members helped to reshape the local African-American built environment through their construction of church buildings. This also was a continuation of the building traditions of slave craftsmen; African-American stone and brick masonry is an important folk attribute still documented in many rural church buildings. In central West Tennessee, in particular, it appears that a close relationship existed between fraternal lodges and the construction of new churches, especially Baptist churches

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[25] Bobby L. Lovett, "Comments on Rural Church Nomination," October 1998, Rural African-American Church Project Files, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

[26] Lamon, Blacks in Tennessee, 45.

Lodges that identified as constructing specific churches from 1931 to the 1980s include:

Antioch Lodge No. 151
New Zion CME, Fayette County

Celestial Lodge No. 80, F&AM, Humboldt
First Baptist Church, Alamo, Crockett County
Lane Chapel CME, Humboldt, Gibson County

Evening Star Lodge No. 62, F&AM, Covington
Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Covington
St. John Missionary Baptist Church, Tipton County

Golden Eagle Lodge No. 110, Huntingdon
Bible Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Henderson County
Timberlake Grove Baptist Church, Henderson County
Clark Street Missionary Baptist Church, Carroll County
Third Avenue Baptist Church, Carroll County

St. John Lodge, No. 43
St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, Henderson County

Sunbeam Lodge, No. 235
Sixth Street Missionary Baptist Church, Humboldt

Terrestrial Lodge, No. 9
New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Gibson County

Victoria Lodge, No. 53
Green Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Hardeman County

The Jim Crow Era also witnessed the beginnings of organized civil rights activism among rural church congregations. As Leon Litwack points out, many African-American ministers "struggled in various ways to make life less hellish on each. The many churches burned to the ground since emancipation and the number of preachers beaten, intimidated, and murdered provided grim testimony to the price paid by blacks to wage such a struggle. How could the church stand apart from politics, a black journal asked soon after emancipation, when the issues in question were

civil rights, suffrage, education, and equal protection under the law?"[27]

"As an institution managed and owned by black people," the African-American church "by its very existence and democratic structure imparted racial pride and dignity, providing parishioners of all classes the opportunity to participate in its meetings and rituals and to exercise roles denied them in the larger society."[28] For years, therefore, the church created the best, and often the only, available laboratory in rural Tennessee for African Americans to practice and learn the benefits of democracy. In the brutally segregated spaces of the Jim Crow Era, the church and its lot served as a public space where social and cultural rituals grounded in equality took place on each Sunday morning. Historian William E. Montgomery aptly summarizes recent research on the overarching significance of the African-American church in an era of violence and terrorism:

> The churches were the nerve centers of their denominations, simultaneously sending pulses of humanity running upward through the institutional hierarchy and generating cohesion and a sense of belonging among people in isolated neighborhoods and settlements whom the larger society shunned because of their race. The congregations were an essential element in the personal identity through which the people defined themselves as Christians and as members of an African-American community. In a myriad of ways, the congregation recognized the hopes and fears of the people who came together regularly to worship and to socialize and communicated them to others far away through a network of denominational agencies. They gave support and succor to people who struggled to maintain a positive self-concept against an onslaught of negative images and assertions emanating from the dominant white society and against poverty and the frustration of opportunity for advancement that were closed to them. *In helping to promote a distinctive African-American identity, the congregations were vital contributors to African-American culture.*[29]

Churches most often were the initial meeting places, and recruitment centers, for the emergence of African-American civic groups. Much more research needs to be directed toward the creation of the civic leagues and like-minded groups as well as the demographic composition of these groups, especially in smaller towns and rural areas. Most of what we do know comes from research on urban groups in Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, and Knoxville. The NAACP formed chapters in Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Jackson between 1917 and

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[27] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 390.
[28] Ibid., 391.
[29] Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*, 254-55

1920. Groups formed to foster interracial cooperation, such as the Triangle of Peace (1918) and the Race Relations Institute in Nashville and the Interracial Commission in Knoxville, typically had prominent African-American ministers among their leaders.

But there were effective groups in small towns too. In Wilson County, for instance, the Wilson County Civic League formed by 1920 and one of its early projects was the cleaning up of Rest Hill Cemetery, the first African-American cemetery in Lebanon. In the 1930s the Farm Security Administration attempted to build a new base of African-American land-owning farmers through its Stanton Farm Project in Haywood County, one of thirteen designated African-American projects across the nation. The federal government took an old plantation--the Douglas plantation near Stanton--terraced the land, improved it with fertilizer, and then divided it into individual farms of 90 to 110 acres for area black farmers. Besides building a house, a barn, and a smokehouse for each property, the FSA also erected a modern school, called Douglas school. In fact, the whole community was known as Douglas. Two churches in the Tennessee survey--Fredonia Baptist Church and Douglas CME Church--have significant associations with this New Deal project. The Stanton project also had the result, explains Richard Couto, of transforming many residents into political activists. Four of the original residents were members of the county's first NAACP chapter.

The anti-lynching movement also was prominent in the Jim Crow Era. In the mid-1920s, for example, the decision of CME leaders to speak out against lynching was considered a turning point in that denomination's history, the first step toward the church's name change from the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in the mid-1950s. Church congregations, who held anti-lynching meetings, who were led by activist anti-lynching leaders, and who supported the various political and legal strategies of the early twentieth century to end the violence and madness, have an important historical association with the movement.

The performing arts became more important at rural churches during the Jim Crow Era. The church has been long recognized for its importance in the nurturing of African-American drama and music. The African tradition of call-and-response was present in the services of the earliest churches from the slavery era and Reconstruction and remains a mainstay in most congregations today. Black preachers became masters of this type of worship. "Sermons were--and still are--characterized by an increase in emotional and spiritual intensity, expressed by the gradual transition from traditional pulpit oratorical style, through chanting, to highly emotional singing," explained scholar Bruce A. Rosenberg. "Many black folk preachers are excellent singers and have had several years' experience with church choirs, if not on the professional

stage. Quite a number have been choirmasters . . . A musical sense has thus been acquired, and its rhythms, intonations, timbres, and verbal phasing are inextricable parts of the tradition."[30]

In their recent survey of the black church in the United States, Lincoln and Mamiya observe that "singing is second only to preaching as the magnet of attraction and the primary vehicle of spiritual transport for the worshiping congregation." In fact, their research indicates that good preaching and good singing are almost invariably the minimum conditions of a successful ministry. Both activities trace their roots back to Africa where music and religion and life itself were all one holistic enterprise. There was no disjunction between the sacred and the secular, and music, whether vocal or instrumental, was an integral aspect of the celebration of life, as indeed was the dance that the music inspired in consequence of its evocation of the human spirit. So it was that music initially assumed a major role in the black experience in region as the West African Diaspora sought to adapt to the new forms of spiritual intercourse to which they were eventually introduced in the United States. First of all, music served the important function of convoking the cultus that is, assembling the faithful to a common place and a common experience of worship. Once this was accomplished it functioned to transcend or to reduce to insignificance those social, cultural, or economic barriers which separate individuals in their secular interests in order that genuine corporate worship might take place.[31]

One rural African-American church from the Jim Crow Era that has already been evaluated for its significance in music is Woodlawn Baptist Church in Haywood County, (NR Listed 12/2/1996) This church is associated with important performers and writers of gospel, blues, and popular music, including Bootsie Whitelaw, Tina Turner, and Sleepy John Estes. Nearby Springhill Baptist Church in Lauderdale County is also associated with early choir singing career of Tina Turner, who first sang as a regular church choir member here. Other churches may have significant associations with individual artists and composers or have local significance as the place where annual church singings and performances take place. Musical forms influenced by the black church include gospel, blues, ragtime, jazz, and rock-n-roll. Church of God in Christ congregations deserves careful evaluation for their significance in music. "The Church of God in Christ, more than any other single denomination, has pioneered in the creation of contemporary gospel," declare Lincoln and Mamiya. The church: has produced such performers as the Hawkins Singers, Andree Crouch, and the Clark Sisters, and their influence has been such that every contemporary gospel choir of whatever church is almost inevitably brushed with elements of Pentecostalism through its music and its performance practices."[32] If Wyatt Tee Walker is

[30] Bruce A. Rosenberg, "Preacher, Black," Ferris and Wilson, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, 184-85.
[31] Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 346-47.
[32] Ibid., 364.

correct in his conclusion that black religious music is "the primary root of all music born in the United States," the African-American church is an important reason why.[33]

From 1890 to 1945, the design of rural African-American churches took on distinctive characteristics. In the larger towns and county seats of Tennessee, a few of the older and more established congregations erected imposing landmark buildings of architectural distinction. These multi-story buildings of brick and concrete were typically built in the first half of the twentieth century and exhibit varying interpretations of late Gothic Revival style. Two representative examples which suggest the chronological range and the stylistic range are Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church (1902), Fayetteville (one of the project's nominated buildings) and Morning Star Baptist Church (1952) in Humboldt, Gibson County. Others include the following churches:

Oak Grove Baptist Church (1922), Martin, Weakley County
St. James CME Church (1908), Dresden, Weakley County
St. Paul AME Church (1911), Fayetteville, Lincoln County
Quinn Chapel AME Church (1917), Paris, Henry County
Cleaves Temple CME Church (circa 1910), Halls, Lauderdale County
Martin Tabernacle CME Church (1922), Trenton, Gibson County
El Canaan Baptist Church (circa 1910), Whiteville, Hardeman County
St. Paul AME Church (1921), Alcoa, Blount County
Canaan Baptist Church (1916), Covington, Tipton County
Williams Chapel AME Zion Church (1910), Emory Gap, Roane County
Bethel AME Church (1917), South Pittsburg, Marion County
Mt. Zion Baptist Church (circa 1910), Paris, Henry County
Campbell Chapel AME Church (1925), Pulaski, Giles County

Although influenced by Gothic design, few churches have Gothic-influenced lancet windows; fewer still have stained glass, although several churches use a imitation type of stained glass where colored plastic sheets are applied over the glass windows. By the 1930s, Colonial Revival influenced churches began to appear, but in small numbers overall. The Mt. Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Spring Hill, Maury County, is a good small town example of Colonial Revival style from the mid-1930s; this style would become more popular for African-American churches after the Second World War.

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[33] Wyatt Tee Walker, *"Somebody's Calling My Name": Black Sacred Music and Social Change* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1979)

For the small congregations located in the countryside, vernacular traditions of a frame building with gable front entrance still predominated. Bethsalem Presbyterian Church in McMinn County, one of the nominated properties, is a largely unaltered example of this vernacular form from circa 1920. Its unadorned, yet dignified appearance certainly meets Kouwenhoven's tests of simple and unceremonious. That the building served on the same spot for two generations as a church underscores its resiliency while its use today as a ceremonial setting for an annual African-American homecoming indicates both its resiliency and adaptability. It is still a place of respect, honor, ritual, and identity for local African Americans.

Another very interesting design characteristic of the Jim Crow Era church was the emergence of dedication stones on church buildings. Dedication stones, or date markers, are another important way that the church buildings themselves serve as key historical documents about the church's origins and development. In analyzing the totality of the material culture associated with the rural African-American church, they become a dominant feature and a key element to the identification of the building and of its historical importance. Dedication stones sometimes take the form of the traditional cornerstone, a stone or concrete rectangular object that gives the date when a building was constructed (see, for example, Mt. Hope Baptist Church, Maury County). But the majority of dedication stones found at historic rural African-American churches are more similar to plaques that detail considerable information about the builders as well as the date of the building. At the New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in Fayette County, the dedication stone gives considerable detail about the members of the congregation involved in the "rebuilt" of the church on its historic site in 1968. But it also tells when the church was organized--1873--and who gave the land for the original church site, Julia B.F. Anderson.

Some dedication stones exhibit a high degree of craftsmanship and are a significant folk art form as well as a historical document. A good example is the dedication stone for Mt. Olive CME Church in Fayette County, a location that also contains a late nineteenth century historic cemetery. The tradition of dedication stones has deep historical roots within rural African-American church buildings. Examples can be found from the nineteenth, mid-twentieth century, and modern times. At Salem Missionary Baptist Church in Gibson County, for example, stones mark a remodeling in 1982 as well as arson in 1995 that prompted President Bill Clinton and others to participate in its rebuilding in 1996. The arson of this church in 1995 galvanized state and national attention to the recent spate of African-American church burnings in the South. In the fall 1996, President Bill Clinton and Vice-President Albert Gore, Jr. visited the church and participated in its rebuilding. Clinton gave a presidential address on the need to protect African-American churches from arson at that time. Salem Missionary Baptist is the only place in the nation where the President of the United States officially addressed the significance of rural

African-American churches and the need for their preservation.

The most powerful artifacts among the dedication stones are when ones from each phase of the church's evolution are combined together to create a dedication wall that documents history and memory for the congregation. A good example is the combination of dedication stones at Collins Chapel CME Church, Tipton County. In this way, rural African-American churches serve as literal memory palaces for their congregations and communities.

The Tennessee survey had identified the following as the oldest church buildings from this era: Brown Chapel AME, Obion County, 1895; New Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist, Giles County, 1895, Mt. Zion CME Church, Obion County, 1896; LaGuardo CME Church, Wilson County, 1897; Hackney Chapel AME Zion, Loudon County, 1899; St. Mark United Primitive Baptist Church, circa 1900; St. Luke's AME, Houston County, circa 1900; St. Luke's Baptist, Weakley County, 1901; Happy Hill Baptist, Giles County, 1901; and Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist, Lincoln County, 1902.

Hackney Chapel AME Zion, St. Mark United Primitive Baptist, and Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist were selected for nomination, due to their early founding date and their architectural significance. In each of the counties, they were the oldest known rural African-American churches. From later in the Jim Crow Era, however, three additional churches, all for different yet significant architectural characteristics were nominated. Campbell Chapel AME Church in Pulaski, Giles County, is significant for its Gothic Revival style and the exceptional craftsmanship of its stone masonry. Bethsalem Presbyterian Church, in McMinn County, is significant for its role in community history and as a highly intact vernacular example of African-American craftsmanship from the 1920s. In the southeast corner of Tennessee, in fact, it has long been recognized as a significant place of African-American rural history. Likewise, in the Lauderdale and Haywood counties of West Tennessee, Republican Primitive Baptist Church has long been recognized as the oldest extant rural church building. Largely unchanged since its construction, Republican Primitive Baptist also is a highly intact vernacular example of African-American craftsmanship from the 1920s.

Across the state, several other church buildings, because of their age, their documented historical significance, and their relative architectural integrity can best stand alone as individual building nominations. Of the very oldest, for example, Happy Hill Baptist and New Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist, both in Giles County, deserves close consideration as individual building nominations. Mt. Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Spring Hill, Maury County, is one of the few rural churches dating to the 1930s. It is a significant example of the influence of Colonial Revival

style on a vernacular frame church building.

The survey indicated that several churches, different, but related, buildings, structures, and sites exist on either the church lot or on immediately adjacent lots. By themselves, the church buildings were problematic as individual building nominations. But as part of a related church-based historic district, the churches and contributing structures and sites could potentially be eligible for listing. The extended discussion below is designed to help historic preservationists to sort out the admittedly difficult assessment of these potential National Register districts.

The most important contributing property, outside of the church building, is a historic cemetery. Historic cemeteries that surround the church buildings, or that lie immediately adjacent to the building, are typically much older than the building and will often contain graves that have death dates belonging to the nineteenth century. The Tennessee project had identified 82 historic cemeteries at the locations of surveyed rural African-American churches. Many have been in use since the 1860s and 1870s. The African-American cemetery, according to folklorist John Michael Vlach, "has long had special significance. Beyond its association with the fear and awe of death, which all humans share, the graveyard was, in the past, one of the few places in America where overt black identity could be asserted and maintained."[34] The presence of a historic cemetery will lend credence to oral traditions that a given church congregation dates to the Reconstruction era. The present Canaan Baptist Church building dates to 1961, but the congregation dates its establishment to 1867, making it one of the oldest in the county. The large historic cemetery, with its nineteenth century grave markers, that surrounds the church indicates that this indeed is a sacred place for over 130 years.

Moreover, historic cemeteries are invaluable historic resources in their own right and may be eligible for the National Register for their associations with African-American folk life, folk arts, and settlement patterns. The Greater Pleasant View Baptist Church and Cemetery in Williamson County, for instance, contains grave markers attributed to master folk craftsman Will Edmondson.

Next, there may be historic school buildings or fraternal lodges on the church property or on adjacent property. At some sacred places in Tennessee, churches, schools, and cemeteries stand side by side on one lot of land. Representative examples include Springhill CME Church in Fayette County, Craigs Chapel AME Zion Church in Loudon County, and Barr's Chapel CME Church in Henry County. The latter with its 1936 concrete block church building, a circa 1930 one-room school, and historic cemetery is a particularly interesting potential historic district. The ground in-between was used for picnics, church-school programs, and similar community events.

[34] John Michael Vlach, *From the Work of Thy Own Hands* (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1988), 107.

The function of the church site as a place of memory and identity is further enhanced when congregations transform their old church bells into monuments that signify the congregation's long life and persistence. Church bells placed on pedestals, either on top of the church sign or adjacent to the sign, are the most common way that congregations use their old church bells to link past with present. From the survey, it appears that the bell monument tradition began in the mid-twentieth century. The best-documented period of bell monument construction, however, is in Haywood County during the 1970s and 1980s. A local tradition emerged where the bells were placed in specifically designed brick structures, the front of which was then covered with dedication plaques about church history. J. E. Wilson, a brick mason, designed and built these bell monuments. First Baptist Church in Brownsville is a good example of this local tradition. Another is at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist in Stanton, built in 1985. In the latter case, neither the monument nor church (built 1973) would be eligible, but next door is a historic Rosenwald school (circa 1925) that may be potentially eligible.

A careful consideration of the overall historical setting of the property is one final caution in assessing the significance of rural African-American churches in both the Jim Crow Era and the Modern Era. This involves the identification and interpretation of how the church site fits into the overall patterns of black and white settlement in a given area, especially the impact of residential segregation. Church properties that can be best assessed, as historic districts will have a combination of the various physical components listed above--a nearby school, cemetery, bell monuments, and lodges. But they also will possess a setting within the larger landscape of settlement that helps to clarify that this place may be of significant symbolic importance to the African-American community.

This landscape pattern of the symbolism inherent in the placement of African-American churches within the larger settlement landscape is most clearly seen in small towns and villages across Tennessee. For example, on the north outskirts of Whiteville, in Hardeman County, is Lane Chapel CME Church, which faces west toward a main artery into the town (Tennessee Highway 179). Across the street from the church is the local African-American funeral home. Directly behind the church is the primary African-American neighborhood of Whiteville, a residential area characterized by small homes, small lots, and narrow streets. Lane Chapel CME, thus, serves as the public opening to the outside white world of an almost hidden African-American world. Two blocks east of Lane Chapel CME is El Canaan Baptist Church, located on a small rise that is visible only within the African-American neighborhood. While Lane Chapel CME served as an African-American public face to the outside white world, the lot of El Canaan Baptist was the center of the local African-American public, cultural, and religious world. Immediately north of the

church is a deteriorating brick Rosenwald school, with later 1950s school wing. Next to that is a "shopping center" that served local residents in the days of segregation. Together the two churches define the public and private worlds of the local community.

Another important association worth exploring is when African-American churches are located adjacent to railroad corridors. Certainly the phrase "the other side of the tracks," as a reference to the location of African-American neighborhoods applies to Tennessee's railroad towns and villages. In his book *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (1989), historian Neil R. McMillen identified a pattern where railroad towns of the late antebellum and Victorian eras were much more formally segregated than pre-existing towns. Charles S. Aiken's *The Cotton Plantation South Since the Civil War* (1998) finds this pattern of segregation across the region. This pattern holds true in Tennessee. Especially good examples are in Humboldt, where the Lane Chapel CME Church is directly on the other side of the tracks; and in Jonesborough, where the Jonesboro AME Zion Church lies immediately parallel to the tracks. But an aspect in this residential pattern that remains unexplored is the location of these church lots and their potential association with Union forces of occupation during the Civil War and Reconstruction period. The locations of contraband camps along the state's railroad lines are still largely unknown, even for such significant camps as that at Grand Junction at the Hardeman/Fayette county line. But existing research indicates that the location of contraband camps often became initial African-American settlement areas as soon as the battles were over. The best example in Tennessee thus identified is in Rutherford County where Stones River United Methodist Church and Ebenezer Primitive Baptist Church stand a few hundred yards west of the existing railroad corridor (the historic Nashville and Chattanooga line) and approximately one-quarter mile north of the boundaries of Stones River National Battlefield. The Union army occupied this section of Rutherford County from late 1862 to the end of the war. Contraband camps were established and African-American labor was relied on through the period of occupation. The small African-American rural neighborhood served by these two churches is the remnants of this period of war and Reconstruction. Although the surrounding socioeconomic dynamics and the demographics of the Murfreesboro area have changed dramatically, particularly in the last twenty years, the two churches still maintain their symbolic function as sacred ground for the county's black residents.

Summary: To determine National Register eligibility for rural African-American churches dating between 1890 and 1945, questions on both history and design are useful. Important Criterion A themes will be education, social history, and performing arts. Due to the nature and intensity of Jim Crow segregation, churches became even more important rallying centers for African-American culture. Schools and fraternal lodges were often located adjacent to the church buildings. Cemeteries become more prevalent. For Criterion C, identified architectural styles can

be found at churches in small towns and county seats. Gothic Revival and Colonial Revival styles predominate. Vernacular architectural traditions continue at countryside churches. Dedication stones become important parts of the church exterior. While many Jim Crow Era churches can be assessed as individual building nominations, the presence of multiple historic sites, structures, and buildings on church properties indicates that possible historic districts exist. To assess potential historic districts, key questions include: is a historic school or other community building on the grounds? Where is the cemetery--when did it begin? How long was this particular location within the larger cultural landscape used for religious purposes by African Americans? Are there symbolic artifacts, such as bell monuments or dedication stones, on the church property?

III. The Modern Era, 1945-1970

Context: In a new overview of the history of the rural South since World War II, historian Ted Ownby concludes:

> Two developments stand out as new political emphases in the post-World War II rural South. First, African-American churches took increasingly aggressive roles in the civil rights movement and expanded the range of their political and economic activities in the wake of that movement. Second, white evangelicals likewise expanded their political interests into new arenas, even if a great many remained issues of personal morality.[35]

In her study on the history of the Civil Rights Movement in Tennessee, historian Cynthia Griggs Fleming begins with the early abolitionist movement in East Tennessee -- a region that, in general, was always hostile to slavery and remained Unionist in the Civil War--and, then, the immediate agitation by African Americans during the early years of Reconstruction for civil rights. At a meeting at St. Paul AME Church in Nashville in 1865, freedmen proclaimed:

> The government has asked the colored man to fight for its preservation and gladly has he done it. Will you declare in your revised constitution that a pardoned traitor may appear in court and his testimony be heard, but that no colored loyalist shall be believed even upon oath? If this should be so, then will our last state be worse than our first, and we can look for no relief on this side of the grave.[36]

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[35] Ted Ownby, "Struggling to be Old Fashioned," R. Douglas Hurt, ed., *The Rural South Since World War II* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), 136.

[36] Cynthia Griggs Fleming, "'We Shall Overcome': Tennessee and the Civil Rights Movement," Carroll Van West, ed., *Tennessee History: The Land, the People, and the Culture* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press,

From the beginning, African-American churches were at the forefront of the movement for civil rights, a struggle that began in the mid-1860s and continued until the early 1970s, until the state's black population finally could see the effect of the Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 on local politics and institutions. (For example, in Hardeman and Haywood counties, among the state's most famous battlegrounds of the civil rights movement, schools were not integrated until 1970; many Tennessee systems were not fully integrated until that date or even later into the decade.) The long chronology of the struggle for civil rights is crucial to understanding the role of African-American churches in this significant social history transformation, perhaps the most significant social and cultural transformation in the American South during the twentieth century. Too often attention is focused solely on the implementation of desegregation after the Brown v. Board of Education case in 1954 and the subsequent push for the passage of meaningful federal civil rights and voting rights legislation in the mid-1960s. But these years are only the culmination of decades of argument, demonstrations, courage, and conviction. Indeed, church burning has long been a tool of those who oppose equality and civil rights; they understood that to strike at the heart of an African-American community, one only needed to strike at their churches.

From the histories of the churches surveyed in the Tennessee project, it is clear that the years of 1945 to 1970 were important years of change and improvement. According to the survey numbers at least sixt y-seven African-American churches were either built or remodeled significantly between 1945 and 1960. When the years 1960 to 1970 are added to that total, the number jumps to a total of 137 of the 343 churches surveyed. Congregations that possess surviving historical photos or illustrations of earlier church building -- or whose members can give a verbal description -- indicate that the vast majority of this new construction resulted in a brick building, with indoor plumbing and electricity, which replaced a frame building that had neither indoor plumbing or electricity. It was a quantum leap in physical comfort.

Clearly there are multiple reasons why these changes occurred at this point in time. Many similar examples can be found at white churches from this era. Affordable rural electrification programs became available in the later years of the New Deal and quickly spread statewide. Other New Deal agencies, especially the Works Progress Administration and the Public Works Administration, established modern utilities and sewers in many Tennessee towns. But the benefits of new technology appeared much more slowly in African-American neighborhoods, and even more so in rural areas where black farm families congregated. For example, well into the 1950s and even the 1960s in some counties, black children typically continued to be educated in

1998), 437-38.

the Rosenwald program's school buildings of the 1920s and 1930s; these facilities usually had outdoor privies only. Even in Alcoa, a "model" company town of the twentieth century in East Tennessee, the minister of St. Paul AME Church had to argue for and insist upon a modern sewer for the surrounding black neighborhood, in the 1980s. The technology certainly was there for better buildings, but without a fundamental change in the assumption that "public services and utilities" were for whites only, the benefits of new technology rarely extended to African-American communities.

Better church buildings became possible with the challenge and eventual smashing of Jim Crow segregation. This intensified period of church building and modernization is further associated with demographic change in rural communities and towns, where the expectations of World War II veterans, the rising number of professionals, and the expansion of a black middle class combined to provide the leadership and financial infrastructure for the push for civil rights. African Americans received civil rights in Tennessee because they organized, demanded their rights, and marshaled the financial and emotional resources necessary to sustain the fight.

The plethora of new churches reflected this assertiveness, pride, identity, and shared cultural purpose as the new quarters themselves served as the nerve centers for the battles, both large and small, that marked the era. Here is where congregations heard pleas from ministers and political speakers to stand together, where civil rights workers would instruct potential voters on how to register to vote, and where strategy sessions for court cases, boycotts, and demonstrations took place. These political and legal struggles at the local level are what brought about an end of Jim Crow in most Tennessee communities--in most cases, the only remaining physical resources left are the churches. "Most of the local black people, who provided the bodies for the demonstrations, were members of black churches acting out of convictions that were religiously inspired." Concluded Lincoln and Mamiya, "Black church culture also permeated the movement from oratory to music, from the rituals and symbols of protest to the ethic of nonviolence. . . . the role of the Black Church in whatever success that movement has accomplished is self-documented."[37]

However, for the purposes of listing historic rural African-American churches in the National Register, attention should be focused on the general rule that a building must be at least 50 years old to be eligible for listing, unless it can be documented to possess extraordinary significance. The "50 year rule test" means that careful attention must be directed to this Modern Era in the history of the rural African-American church. It is helpful to divide the Modern Era into two periods, 1945-1950 and 1951-1970.

[37] Lincoln and Mamiya, The Black Church, 212.

First, church buildings that date between 1945 and 1950 already do not have to meet the test of "extraordinary significance" since they are already 50 years old. These immediate post-World War II years, however, were not ones of great activism from most rural African-American congregations and especially their ministers. Their areas of significance mirror those from the first half of the twentieth century. Research by Ted Ownby, John Dittmer, and Taylor Branch indicates that many ministers feared that social activism and civil rights activity could undermine support from black middle-class professionals and white town leaders. Few congregations were ready to sponsor meetings by the NAACP or other civil rights groups. Such actions might also provoke white backlash and violence. Certainly in Tennessee, African Americans still had reason to fear white violence—witness the Columbia Race Riot of 1946, when whites attacked black businesses and homes in this Middle Tennessee town. Yet, the Columbia riot also highlights a new force shaping black communities—the leadership of World War II veterans and a younger generation that wished for change—that would become very important in the next two decades. This younger generation's new confidence and assertiveness carried over to all aspects of African-American culture, including religion. In this next period of the Modern Era, from 1951 to 1970, the church took on an extremely significant role in the local movement for civil rights across Tennessee. As Ted Ownby concludes, " . . . rural churches and especially their members became crucial forces in the civil rights movement. Even if the congregations as organized groups and ministers as individuals did not offer early leadership for civil rights activities, most came around to offering support after the movement was under way. By the mid-1960s, small-town churches had become common as meeting sites."[38]

This second period from 1951 to 1970 falls into the National Register assessment of extraordinary significance. In assessing whether an individual church building holds extraordinary significance for this period, under the Criterion A themes of social history and the Civil Rights Movement, the Tennessee survey suggests several areas of investigation. Special attention should be paid to a church's association with:

Voting rights activism (registration workshops, informing members about the candidates): The effort to register to vote dates to the late 1950s in most rural areas of Tennessee, especially after the passage of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1957. The effort did not become of great significance in most communities, however, until the passage of the Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, which put real meaningful power into the legislation. Churches by the mid-1960s to circa 1970, by which time large numbers of African Americans were registered and voting in

[38] Ownby, "Struggling to be Old Fashioned," 137.

elections, often hosted meetings and workshops on how to register. Among the initial nominations submitted with this Cover Sheet, Canaan Baptist Church, Covington, Tipton County, is an excellent example of prominent local church that took on the leadership of the voting rights movement in Tipton County.

Public school integration (providing meeting places for parents, supporting legal counsel, a minister joining a desegregation suit against a local school board): In East Tennessee, compared to other southern states that practiced "massive resistance," efforts to integrate some schools came fairly quickly after the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954. Oak Ridge was the first to integrate in 1955-56. Nearby Clinton attempted integration in 1956, with leadership coming from the minister at the African-American Mt. Sinai Baptist Church in Clinton. The Colonial Revival-styled church building was built in 1955 and meetings were held there in 1956 and 1957.

Th push for integration came much later in most of the state, typically from the mid-1960s to 1970. Thus, some churches have little relationship with the school integration movement until the late 1960s.

The creation of new community organizations: In West Tennessee, the relationship between rural churches and African-American insurance companies is important. The best case study is Haywood County, where religion, insurance needs, and rural poverty in the immediate post-World War II years provided the impetus for creating one of the nation's most important black insurance companies, the Golden Circle Life Insurance Company.

In 1950 Charles Allen Rawls, a Haywood County mortician, joined forces with other prominent African-American residents in this poor rural county to create an insurance program "for struggling families living in black farm communities in West Tennessee. Poverty prevented many of the potential members from burying their deceased family members with dignity," explains historian Sharon Norris. Besides Rawls, the early organizers included G. W. Rawls, J. Z. Rawls, Reverend E. W. Selby, Reverend C. W. Allen, Alex Hill, John R. Bond, Reverend W. R. Hill, Mrs. Nola Bond, Ms. C. Y. Russell, Mrs. Mary Jane Willis, Mrs. Mabel Leigh, Louis T. Minor, and Joe Transou. Rawls and the group eventually established the Sons and Daughters of the Golden Circle and held their organizational meeting at the First Baptist Church in Brownsville. Haywood County black churches and ministers strongly supported the fledgling institution because Golden Circle was more than mere burial insurance. "Money collected was used to insure individuals and provide loans to help save farms and homes in the African-American communities," reports Norris. "In 1951 an attempt to build a 'Black Only' medical facility in Brownsville was initiated to

aid blacks unable to receive adequate medical care in the white hospital in Haywood County." Holding organizational meetings at churches across the county--in this survey the Woodlawn Baptist Church, First Baptist Church, Brownsville, Elam Baptist Church, and Fredonia Baptist Church are representative examples--Golden Circle established 33 units in Haywood County alone. Reverend A. E. Campbell established other units in Shelby County, the first being at Columbus Baptist Church.[39]

In 1958 the company became known as the Golden Circle Life Insurance Company, operating in Brownsville, Memphis, Nashville, and Knoxville. In 1997 its assets were more than $9 million and in 1996 it ranked ninth among the top ten black-owned insurance companies in America. At that time Cynthia Rawls Bond was the company CEO. As a young woman, she had been pivotal in the organization of a NAACP chapter in Haywood County in 1961. Churches, social organizations, and civil rights, thus, are tightly linked in this rural West Tennessee county. Among the surveyed properties of this project, Fredonia Baptist Church is significantly associated with the development of this company and its various social programs and civil rights activity. The congregation dates to 1869, making it one of the oldest in the county. In 1957, however, the congregation built a new Colonial Revival-influenced brick church building, reflecting the congregation's increased prosperity, its needs for a large, more comfortable space for church gatherings and community meetings, and the new leadership provided by World War II veterans and others from that generation. The 1957 church building, in other words, is an excellent example of the new type of rural black church associated with the extraordinary changes then shaping rural African-American communities.[40]

Merchant boycotts: During the late 1950s and early 1960s, African-American groups in Fayette and Haywood counties led some of the better known, and eventually successful, boycotts in reaction to a concerted white effort to throw black tenants, who attempted to register to vote, off their farms. Several Baptist churches in Fayette County were involved with the boycotts, providing food, clothing, and other essentials for evicted farm families. In 1961, for instance, the National Baptist Convention, USA, purchased 400 acres in Fayette County to provide homes for the tenant farmers evicted after they had attempted to register to vote in 1960.

Speaker platforms: Church provided platforms and meeting places for civil rights leaders, who gave support speeches and raised funds for voter registration drives at these meetings. The speakers came from the national (NAACP, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Congress of Racial Equality), state, and local groups. Local chapters of these same groups often held their

[39] Sharon Norris, "Golden Circle Life Insurance Company," West, ed., *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 366.
[40] Ibid.

initial organizational meetings, and initial chapter meetings, at black churches. As an example, the nominated properties include Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Lincoln County. Mt. Zion and its minister in the 1950s and 1960s established the county's NAACP chapter and meetings took place at the church.

Association with Highlander Folk School and/or Highlander Research and Education Center: Identified by the school's biographer as "the educational center of the early civil rights movement."[41] The school was located at Monteagle, Tennessee; the later research center was initially established in Knoxville, but moved to permanent quarters near New Market, Tennessee, in 1972. Its prominence in training leaders for the Civil Rights Movement has long been recognized.

For a church building to have "extraordinary significance" for the civil rights movement and social history, it should be strongly associated within its local community as leader in one or more of the above categories. This association, in fact, may have a design component when congregations decided to add additional rooms in order to serve better their expanded community functions. This new space provided space for Sunday School rooms, storage for choir robes, an office for the pastor, a kitchen and community in 1973, the congregation combined a new entrance and rear wing with the original elements to create a new building, topping it off with a Colonial Revival steeple to give it an identifiable "architectural style." More common, however, is the lack of such an obvious stylistic reference. The porticoes may reflect what can be described as a restrained interpretation of Classical Revival style, but certainly they reflect a "simple" and "unceremonious" approach to the concept of the classical portico and are in keeping with Kouwenhoven's "vernacular" designation. For example, Mt. Tipton CME Church (1955) in Tipton County is an excellent representative of the form of church that emerged during the 1950s and 1960s across the state. With its lunette and four Doric columns supporting the portico, it conveys a mild interpretation of Classical Revival style. The rear wing is present as well, giving the church an overall T-shape. Brick is the primary building material and windows are rectangular. The steeple was added at an unknown date, but does not distract significantly from the simple and unceremonious aesthetics of the building. Fredonia Baptist Church, one of the nominated buildings, is also representative of this dominant architectural expression from the Modern Era.

In the Modern Era of 1945-1970, extant examples of Folk Art associated with historic rural African-American churches become another potential area of significance under Criterion C. Dedication stones, for instance, possess skilled hand carving in the names found on the stones as well as decorative details enhancing the overall image projected by the stone. Adjacent

[41] John M. Glen, "Highlander Folk School," West, ed., *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 424

cemeteries will possess significance in folk art in the designs of historic headstones, mortuary art, and the landscaping of the site. The previously discussed cemetery of the Greater Pleasant View Baptist Church in Williamson County, for instance, is associated with the work of Will Edmondson, a noted craftsman of the mid-twentieth century.

Two other significant artistic attributes of rural African-American churches lie in the locally designed and hand painted signs that announce the presence of the church building and the paintings found over baptismal pools in many Missionary Baptist churches. The sign for the Durham Chapel Baptist Church in Sumner County not only identifies the church building, it also identifies the church's three major programs--Sunday School, Morning Worship, and Bible Study, and the pastor's name. The sign for la Goshen Baptist Church in Fayette County is used for directions, with a humble black hand pointing the way for parishioners (also insuring that visitors would know that La Goshen was an African-American congregation).

Of greater significance are the baptismal pool paintings found at many Baptist churches. The NR-listed Woodlawn Baptist Church in Haywood County features a baptismal painting that clearly suggests that the waters flowing below had their origins in the mother country of Africa. The Fredonia Baptist Church has a similar painting, executed by Tennessee State University professor Louise Thompson.

These two types of artwork are common, but from oral interviews and the few instances of artist-signed work, it appears that the tradition is recent, dating after 1950. Due to the date of their creation, the art might not contribute to Criterion C eligibility, unless it had extraordinary significance. Yet, the survey indicates clearly that more study needs to be directed at these neglected artistic expressions: did members of the congregations usually serve as artists? Was someone from the community known as a competent artist asked to prepare paintings for several surrounding churches? When did the paintings first appear? How many different denominations used such paintings in their sanctuaries? Were the images available commercially from African-American religious publishing houses? What is the religious significance of the paintings? The baptismal pool painting at Woodlawn Baptist Church suggests that it was a deliberate attempt to connect the past with the present. Water rites and celebrations of water were common in West African cultures; thus slaves from that region readily accepted the baptismal rituals associated with the Baptist church. Or was the context more immediate and local--with indoor plumbing, church members did not have to venture into a cold creek to be immersed but the bright colors and naturalistic themes of the paintings created an "outdoor" setting for the baptism? A representative example is the extant painting at West Harpeth Baptist Church in Williamson County.

Summary: A large number of extant rural African-American church buildings date to the era of 1945 to 1970. Significant association with the Civil Rights Movement dominates the history of many of these churches. For churches constructed and/or altered substantially after 1950, National Register eligibility must be documented to be of "extraordinary significance," with the most obvious area being Criterion A and the theme of the Civil Rights Movement in the local context. Important areas of investigation are voting rights activism, public school integration, the creation of new community groups and organizations, merchant boycotts, serving as meeting places for civil rights and social reform groups, and involvement with the civil rights projects of the Highlander Folk School. In the architecture of rural churches, classical porticoes gain increasing acceptance, replacing the earlier No Style buildings. Rear or side wing additions are also more common. The buildings are increasingly built with brick and have electricity. Art becomes an important area of investigation as well, although most of the documented art to date comes after 1950. Rarely will the art or architectural style of a church building meet an "extraordinary significance" test for Criterion C. Most likely, if the building is eligible, it will have extraordinary significance under Criterion A. A few church buildings may meet "extraordinary significance" under Criterion B, if the minister is the acknowledged leader and instigator of civil rights activism in the local context.

F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

1. Property Descriptions

This Multiple Property Nomination is focused on a specific type of property--the rural, African-American church - as it is manifested across the state of Tennessee. Based on the Tennessee survey to date, this property type had two categories: individual churches and church-based historic districts.

Individual Churches
Individual Churches may be brick, frame, or concrete buildings that rest on brick, stone pier, and concrete foundations. They commonly have asphalt-shingle gable roofs and the primary entrance is at the gable end of the building. Most rural African-American churches are from the twentieth century; with only a handful documented thus far dating prior to 1900.

Churches built before 1900: 9

Churches built, 1900-1930: 89

Churches built, 1930-1945: 23

Churches built, 1946-1970: 137

Churches built, after 1970: 78

A majority of properties in the Tennessee project commonly consist of a single church building on a lot of land. However, many church properties also contain other types of historic buildings and/or structures that serve a range of functions on the church lot. This pattern of social, cultural, political, and religious functions located at one location is one of the key distinguishing characteristics of the rural African-American church as a property type.

Outbuildings are also present on individual church properties and include typically unadorned, functional buildings such as: privies (wooden metal-covered shed roof board-and-batten structures, usually from circa 1930 to 1970), picnic shelters (both wooden and/or metal rectangular structures, with gable roofs and concrete floors, typically dating from circa 1950 to 1990), storage sheds (wooden and/or metal rectangular buildings, either with wood plank or concrete floors, dating from circa 1920 to 1990), bar-b-que pits (wooden structures with concrete

and dirt floors used for the preparing of bar-b-que meats for church picnics and fund-raisers), recreational facilities (playground equipment and baseball fields, often associated with an extant or non-extant school building on the property). Outbuildings may be considered contributing buildings and structures to the nomination if they date to the property's period of significance and possess integrity.

II. Registration Requirements:

As explained in detail in Section E, these properties may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places primarily under Criterion A, but may also be eligible under Criteria B and C. In brief the themes of significance within each criterion are:

Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage, Religion, Education, Social History, Settlement, and Performing Arts.

Criterion B: Prominent ministers in the church's history are the most likely subjects for significance under Criterion B. However, as discussed in Section E, the church building may be the only extant resource associated with prominent parishioners whose over all significance as a group is associated with their experiences in the church. If those tests are met, then the church building most likely has significance under Criterion B. These latter cases, however, may be rare as a single significant person is more likely to have an extant house or a primary business/performance property that dates to the period of their significance.

Criterion C: Architecture and Art. The vast majority of churches may be categorized as having no style, that is the buildings will be simple rectangular buildings with simple gable roof, often erected on the simplest form of construction. This, however, may not exclude them from meeting the criteria for architectural significance. Others exhibit differing degrees of formal architectural style. Gothic Revival and Classical Revival are more common in the first half of the twentieth century. Colonial Revival dominates the Modern Era, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. Few if any of these Colonial Revival churches from the Modern Era, however, will meet the significance for Criterion C if they are less than fifty years old. Significant expressions of folk art may include decorative carvings on dedication stones, and the carvings and mortuary art of individual cemetery headstones. There are extant baptismal paintings and church signs, but the vast majority of these in the Tennessee survey, to date, were painted in the last 50 years and probably will not meet the justification for less than fifty years criteria. Exceptions may occur if the paintings are the known work of a local artisan and is one of the few remaining examples of that person's work.

Period of Significance:
Three distinct periods in the history and architectural of rural African-American churches have been identified: 1) Creating a Tradition, 1850-1890; 2) Maintaining Traditions in an Era of Jim Crow Segregation, 1890-1945; and 3) the Modern Era, 1945-1970.

Churches built after 1950 must meet the criteria exceptions, with the most likely thematic association being the Civil Rights Movement in the local context, with eligibility under Criterion A. A church's association with the Civil Rights Movement has been targeted because scholars agree that black churches created the rock on which the Civil Rights Movement rested in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Indeed, for rural African Americans in Tennessee one of the most enduring legacies of the civil rights era was this transformation in their places of worship, making these new and renewed church buildings powerful symbols of the gains in identity, pride, and heritage marked by the Civil Rights Movement.

Integrity:
Individual churches may meet registration requirements if they possess sufficient character and integrity to retain their sense of time and place from their period of significance. Questions to raise about the integrity of individual church buildings are:

Location: Is the church situated on its historic lot from its period of significance?

Association: Is the church located at the place of its initial construction?

Setting: Is the historic rural setting of the church building intact? Do substantial modern intrusions, such as highways, commercial development, and modern outbuildings, sites, and structures, exist? Are these intrusions located on the church lot or on immediate adjacent property?

Feeling: Does the church building and its lot retain an ability to convey as sense of time and place from its period of significance?

Design: Due to the nature of church buildings housing congregations whose needs and abilities change over time, most church buildings will exhibit some change from their period of initial construction and occupation. Issues of race also directly affected this rate of change in the Jim Crow Era, which lasted throughout the state until the 1960s. Before the Civil Rights Movement, African-American communities often found that it was difficult to build and maintain anything

material on the landscape of Jim Crow segregation--black homes, schools, and churches had to appear second-rate so not to offend white sensibilities. "Consistent with deep-seated white resentment of black success or advancement, the prevailing racial code" of Jim Crow, explained historian Leon Litwack, "frowned on exhibitions of black accomplishments that suggested an equal capacity . . . For the Negro to get 'out of place' was to aspire to the same goals and possessions whites coveted, and whites often found such aspirations by blacks both distasteful and unnatural."[42] In reaction, whites often burned African-American buildings, both homes and churches, if they thought that the new buildings indicated that local blacks "were getting out of their place." This reality has two consequences for rural African-American churches. First, those that date to the Jim Crow Era are often very plain "no style" buildings; only in towns did you find more architecturally imposing buildings. This pattern is in contrast with many rural white churches from those same years. For white farmers, for example, the early twentieth century was a time of prosperity, in general. Churches that date between 1900 and 1920, and then in the post depression period of 1940 to 1950, often have distinctive architectural characteristics that are not found at the typical rural black church. Second, when new opportunities and freedoms presented themselves in the civil rights years, rural African Americans often moved quickly to add attractive porticoes with columns, to install central air-conditioning and heating, and to add indoor restrooms. This "delayed reaction" to adding the benefits of modern technology, especially for interior comforts, is both the result of rising incomes for blacks freed from Jim Crow restrictions and the general cultural freedom that it was now permissible to display wealth and accomplishment. It was a natural and logical cultural reaction to decades of Jim Crow's "do's and don'ts," those often unwritten but very effective codes of behavior for southern African Americans.

When assessing National Register eligibility, therefore, it is important to take the impact of segregation codes into account. Integrity will be retained if these adaptations belong to the church's period of significance and do not overwhelm the initial construction, design, and style of the building to the degree that the building loses its integrity of feeling, materials, and workmanship.

Materials: As much as possible, historic individual church buildings should retain their original building materials. Does the church building display its original construction materials? How much original material has been lost? How much has been retained? When and why did these alterations take place? Were the changes within the period of significance and associated with the building's thematic significance?

[42] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 329.

Workmanship: As much as possible, historic individual church buildings should retain their construction techniques and overall form and plan. How much of the original workmanship and building plan survive? When and why did these alterations take place? Were the changes within the period of significance and associated with the building's thematic significance?

Church-Based Historic Districts

Church based historic districts include historic buildings associated by proximity and/or function with extant historic churches. These may include the following: cemeteries, schools, fraternal lodges, and parsonages (minister's houses). If located on the church lot, or immediately adjacent property, as discussed in Section E, and if they are within the period of significance of the property and possess integrity, these buildings should be considered contributing properties within a historic district. Church-based historic districts reflect significant historical associations between churches, cemeteries, schools, fraternal lodges, and parsonages discussed in Section E above.

The primary components of church-based historic districts include individual churches (see above) and the following:

Cemeteries may date from circa 1850 (date of first identified burial) to the present. A contributing historic cemetery should have a majority of its burials dating prior to 1950 and its use and location should be associated with the adjacent church building. Headstones and other forms of mortuary art that date prior to 1950 should be investigated for possible significance in folk art. Cemeteries are also an indication of settlement patterns and may have significance with the development of rural African-American settlements. Over 100 historic cemeteries were identified as lying in the church lot or immediately adjacent to the church lot in the Tennessee project.

Schools are frame, brick, and concrete buildings ranging in date from circa 1890 to 1970 that served as segregated educational facilities for local African-American youth. Two extant nineteenth century school buildings have been identified. The remaining thirty-three buildings date from either the 1920s - 1930s and are associated with the Rosenwald school building program or were built in the 1950s in reaction to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Brown v. Board of Education (1954). The surviving schools from the 1920s-1930s are primarily frame buildings while those built in the 1950s are typically brick and concrete buildings. Schools constructed after 1950 will be non-contributing, due to their date of construction, unless they possess extraordinary significance.

Fraternal lodges are concrete, brick, or metal buildings, with gable roofs, ranging in date from circa 1920 to 1980. They are most typically two-story buildings, with side entrances. Lodges built after 1950 will be non-contributing, due to their date of construction, unless they possess extraordinary significance.

Parsonages (minister's houses), frame, brick, or concrete dwellings, with gable, hipped, and pyramid roofs, ranging in date from circa 1910 to 1970. They may be generally classified as vernacular-styled residences, but identified formal architectural elements include those associated with Bungalow style, Ranch style, and Colonial Revival style. Parsonages built after 1950 will be non-contributing, due to their date of construction, unless they possess extraordinary significance.

Outbuildings are also present in church-based historic districts and include typically unadorned, functional buildings and structures such as: privies (wooden metal-covered shed roof board-and-batten structures, usually from circa 1930 to 1970); picnic shelters (both wooden and/or metal rectangular structures with gable roofs and concrete floors, typically dating from circa 1950 to 1990); storage sheds (wooden and/or metal rectangular buildings, either with wood plank or concrete floors, dating from circa 1920 to 1990); bar-b-que pits (wooden structures with concrete and dirt floors used for the preparing of bar-b-que meats for church picnics and fund-raisers); recreational facilities (playground equipment and baseball fields, often associated with an extant or non-extant school building on the property).

Outbuildings may be considered contributing buildings and structures to the nomination if they date to the property's period of significance and possess integrity.

II. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Church-based historic districts may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places primarily under Criterion A but may also be eligible under Criteria B and C. In brief, the themes of significance within each criterion are:

Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage, Religion, Education, Social History, Settlement, and Performing Arts. As discussed above in Section E, religion (the church), settlement (cemetery), education (school), and social history (lodges) are the most likely thematic areas of significance for church-based historic districts.

Criterion B: Prominent ministers in a church's history are the most likely subjects for Criterion B

significance. However, as discussed in Section E, the church building, school, lodge, or parsonage may be the only extant resource associated with prominent parishioners whose significance is associated with their experiences in the church. If those tests are met, then the building most likely has significance in Criterion B. These latter cases may be rare as the significant person likely will have a extant house or a primary business/performance property that dates to the period of their significance and that lies outside of the church-based historic district.

Criterion C: Architecture and Art. The vast majority of churches, schools, lodges, and parsonages may be categorized as vernacular or no style. However, this categorization does not preclude architectural significance. Others exhibit differing degrees of formal architectural style. Gothic Revival and Classical Revival churches are more common in the first half of the twentieth century. Colonial Revival churches dominates the Modern Era, especially in the 1950s and 1970s. Rosenwald schools are considered representative examples of standardized school design from the 1920s and 1930s. Parsonages may also exhibit some attributes of domestic architecture, with Bungalow and Colonial Revival styles predominating. Significant expressions of folk art may include decorative carvings on dedication stones on churches and lodges, and the carvings and mortuary art of individual cemetery headstones. There are extant baptismal paintings and church signs in some historic churches, but the vast majority of these in the Tennessee survey, to date, were painted in the last 50 years and probably will not meet the criterion exception of less than fifty years unless it is the work of a know artisan who's works are limited or exhibits exceptional qualities of the artists work.

Period of Significance

Three distinct periods in the history and architecture of rural African-American church-based historic districts have been identified: 1) Creating a Tradition, 1850-1890; 2) Maintaining Traditions in an Era of Jim Crow Segregation, 1890-1945; and 3) the Modern Era, 1945 - 1970. Churches, lodges, schools, and parsonages built after 1950 must meet the test of "extraordinary significance," with the most likely thematic association being the Civil Rights Movement in the local context, with eligibility under Criterion A.

Integrity

Church-based historic districts may meet registration requirements if they possess sufficient character and integrity to retain their sense of time and place from their period of significance. To do so, a majority of the primary properties in the historic district must be contributing properties. Questions to raise about the integrity of church-based historic districts are:

Location: Is the church-based historic district situated on its historic lot and/or lots from its period of significance?

Association: Are the primary properties of the church-based historic district located at the place of their initial construction?

Setting: Is the historic rural setting of the church-based historic district intact? Do substantial modern intrusions, such as highways, commercial development, and modern outbuildings, sites, and structures, exist? Are these intrusions located within the historic district or on immediate adjacent property? Are they so numerous as to comprise the rural setting?

In answering these questions about setting it is important to remember that modern intrusions, especially those of an industrial nature, may be present due to long-standing lines of segregation within southern communities. Black neighborhoods, and by extension black churches, could be near the main, white parts of town, but different patterns of streets, city services, industrial development, and natural features were utilized to establish a physical line of separation. At the turn of the century, DuBois in *The Souls of Black Folk* observed this pattern when he was teaching at Wheeler School in eastern Wilson County. The nearest town was Alexandria, "a struggling lazy village of houses, churches, and shops, and an aristocracy of Toms, Dicks, and Captains. Cuddled on the hill to the north was the village of the colored folks."[43] Later in that same book, he elaborated:

> It is usually possible to draw in nearly every Southern community a physical color-line on the map, on the one side of which whites dwell and on the other Negroes. The winding and intricacy of the geographical color line varies, of course, in different communities. I know some towns where a straight line drawn through the middle of the main street separates nine-tenths of the whites from nine-tenths of the blacks. In other towns the older settlement of whites has been encircled by a broad band of blacks; in still other cases little settlements or nuclei of blacks have sprung up amid surrounding whites. Usually in cities each street has its distinctive color, and only now and then do the colors meet in close proximity.[44]

Later scholars have documented the lines of segregation found in most southern places. Leon Litwack explains:

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[43] DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 59.
[44] Ibid., 124-25.

> To find the black neighborhood in almost any town or city, one needed no map or signs. The streets in black districts were seldom if ever paved, and in rainstorms they were certain to turn into quagmires or mud. The housing was the least desirable, sometimes places discarded by whites. Born in the "Bottoms," a section of Knoxville, Tennessee, James Robinson remembered the houses in which blacks lived as "hardly more than rickety shacks clustered on stilts like Daddy Long Legs along the slimy bank of putrid and evil-smelling 'Cripple Creek.'" Encircled by the creek, the tobacco warehouses, a foundry, and slaughter pens, the black neighborhood "was a world set apart and excluded."[45]

The Tennessee project has identified many churches located in similar circumstances, separated by the main part of town by new highways, railroads, industry, and geographical barriers.

Feeling: Do the buildings, structures, and sites, and the property on which they are located, retain an ability to convey as sense of time and place from their period of significance?

Design: Due to the fact that rural African-American churches, schools, lodges, and parsonages served people whose needs and abilities change over time, most buildings within a church-based historic district will exhibit some change from their period of initial construction and occupation. Issues of race also directly affected this rate of change in the Jim Crow Era, which lasted throughout the state until the 1960s. Before the Civil Rights Movement, African-American communities often found that it was difficult to build and maintain anything material on the landscape of Jim Crow segregation--black homes, schools, lodges, and churches had to appear second-rate so not to offend white sensibilities. "Consistent with deep-seated white resentment of black success or advancement, the prevailing racial code" of Jim Crow, explained historian Leon Litwack, "frowned on exhibitions of black accomplishments that suggested an equal capacity . . . For the Negro to get 'out of place' was to aspire to the same goals and possessions whites coveted, and whites often found such aspirations by blacks both distasteful and unnatural." In reaction, whites often burned African-American buildings, both homes and churches, if they thought that the new buildings indicated that local blacks "were getting out of their place."

This reality has two consequences for the historic buildings within a church-based historic district. First, churches, lodges, and parsonages are often vernacular or unadorned as far as a formal architectural style. Schools, on the other hand, will often reflect the influence of standardized school architecture of that time. This difference is directly attributable to the influence of the

[45] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 336.

Julius Rosenwald Fund program of the 1920s and 1930s. Second, changes to the exterior of the buildings within the district may date to the post-Jim Crow years of the 1960s. When new opportunities and freedoms presented themselves in the civil rights years, rural African Americans often moved quickly to add attractive porticoes with columns or new wings to hold interior comforts and new rooms to the older buildings. These new building projects were natural and logical cultural reactions to decades of Jim Crow's "do's and don'ts," those often unwritten but very effective codes of behavior for southern African Americans.

When assessing eligibility for the National Register, therefore, it is important to take the impact of segregation into account. Integrity will be retained if these adaptations belong to the district's period of significance and do not overwhelm the initial construction, design, and style of the buildings to the degree that the district as a whole loses its integrity of feeling, materials, and workmanship.

Materials: As much as possible, do the historic buildings, structures, and sites within the district retain their original building materials? Do they display their original construction materials? How much original material has been lost? How much has been retained? When and why did these alterations take place? Were the changes within the period of significance and associated with the district's thematic significance?

Workmanship: As much as possible, contributing buildings, structures, and sites within a church-based historic district should retain their construction techniques and overall form and plan. How much of the original workmanship and building plan survive? When and why did these alterations take place? Were the changes within the period of significance and associated with the district's thematic significance?

G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The surveyed area included all counties in Tennessee and all Tennessee towns with populations of 10,000 or less.

H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

For over 100 years, scholars of African-American culture, history, and religion - along with writers and commentators have consistently pointed to the church as the single most significant institution in African-American life, from the late antebellum era to modern times. This effort in Tennessee is grounded in a decade-long progression of shared effort and scholarship devoted to documenting better the role of African-American history and culture in the shaping of the historical landscape of Tennessee. Starting in the late 1980s, staff at the Tennessee Historical Commission began to collect data and erect state historical markers to places of significance in African-American history. By the time, the Commission's new *Tennessee Historical Markers* book was published in 1996, the number of markers associated with African-American history had increased substantially. Three churches included within the present MPN project have been so marked. Staff also worked with urban groups to identify and nominate to the National Register significant urban churches, the most important of which was Memphis's Mason Temple (NR 4/10/92), associated with the rise of the Church of God in Christ and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.[46]

From this research base, THC staff provided assistance to other state agencies that developed African-American historical and cultural programs in the 1990s. The state tourism department produced a guidebook pamphlet, *The Roots of Tennessee: An African-American Guide*, in 1993. It listed prominent sites in all three Grand Divisions of the state but included little information about African-American churches in general and no information about rural churches. The department partially corrected this oversight in its 1997 publication, The African American Guide to Cultural & Historic Sites. The booklet included a forward by Governor Don Sundquist, who stated the state's pride in "our African-American citizens. Their stories and experiences form part of the tapestry of Tennessee, a state strengthened by its diversity." This guidebook featured information of twenty-eight African-American churches; all came from metropolitan areas or larger towns like Jackson and Gallatin.[47]

In the late 1980s, the Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation also began its African-American history program with its Bradley Academy project in Murfreesboro. This led to an early interest in black schools, especially those associated with the Julius

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[46]. James B. Jones, Jr., "An Analysis and Interpretation of Historical Markers Relating to African-American Themes in Tennessee History," Paper presented to 8th Annual Local Conference on Afro-American Culture and History, Tennessee State University, Nashville, 1989; Tennessee Historical Commission, *Tennessee Historical Markers* (Nashville: THC, 1996).

[47] Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, *The Roots of Tennessee: An African-American Guide* (Nashville: State of Tennessee, 1993); Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, *The African-American Guide to Cultural and Historic Sites* (Nashville: State of Tennessee, 1997). Governor Sundquist is quoted on p. I.

Rosenwald Fund in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1993 the Center sponsored a symposium on Rosenwald Schools across the South, which brought together architectural historians, social historians, and preservationists to discuss the significance of rural African-American schools. As part of this project, Center staff also nominated two Rosenwald schools, one in West Tennessee and one in East Tennessee, to the National Register of Historic Places, (Lincoln School, Bledsoe County, NR Listed 7/15/1993, and Wells School, Shelby County, NR Listed 3/31/95). In addition, the Center prepared a historic district nomination for Tennessee State University in Nashville at the request of TSU officials. In *Tennessee's Historic Landscapes: A Traveler's Guide* (1995), the Center's Carroll Van West summarized the recent research and survey into black history sites across the state. It was through this book project that an initial interest grew about rural African-American churches. When THC staff asked for his assistance in nominating the historic Woodlawn Baptist Church (NR 12/2/96) in Haywood County in the fall of 1995, this interest led to the historical and cultural investigation of the church's significance. Woodlawn became the first of a series of African-American church nominations that Center staff has pursued from 1995 to the current MPN project. In fact, West highlighted the significance of Woodlawn Baptist Church, as a representative example of the power of race and class in the southern landscape, in a spring 1997 paper at the Goucher College conference, "Preservation of What, For Whom?: A Critical Look at Historical Significance" and in an essay titled "Understanding Ordinary Buildings: Two Tennessee Types" in the Newsletter of the Society of Architectural Historians in December 1997. "We forget that change is related to audience, purpose, and use," he observed, and this re-design represents a new layer of history, one perhaps as valid as that prescribed by the building's original builders and occupants. A case in point is the rural southern African-American church. These often unadorned buildings are powerful artifacts of identity, culture, class, and race." The latest nomination is the Mt. Zion CME Church (NR pending), part of the Union City Multiple Property Nomination in Obion County.[48]

In the fall of 1996, THC staff began discussing with the Center the possibility of developing a statewide National Register MPN on rural African-American churches. A proposal was drafted and funding for the final project came from both THC and the Office of Sponsored Programs at Middle Tennessee State University. Thus, in the fall of 1997 the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation launched a permanent documentary program titled the Tennessee Rural African-

[48] Caneta Hankins and Mary Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald School Conference: Resource Guide* (Murfreesboro: Middle Tennessee State University, 1995); Carroll Van West, *Tennessee's Historic Landscapes: A Traveler's Guide* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995); Nancy Tinker, "Rural African-American Church Project," in Carroll Van West, ed., *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1998), 816-17; West, "Assessing Significance and Integrity in the National Register Process: Questions of Race, Class, and Gender," Michael Tomlan, ed., *Preservation of What, For Whom?: A Critical Look at Historical Significance* (Washington: National Council for Preservation Education/National Park Service, 1999); West, "Understanding Ordinary Buildings" Two Tennessee Examples," *Newsletter of the Society of Architectural Historians* 41(December 1997): 9-11.

American Church Project. It has three initial goals: 1) to bring together and establish a network of scholars, activists, and preservationists across the state who are interested in the history and preservation of rural African-American churches, 2) to conduct a statewide reconnaissance survey of extant African-American churches in the Tennessee countryside and small towns and 3) to prepare for the Tennessee Historical Commission a Multiple Property Nomination that addresses the rural African-American church as a distinct and significant property type and to begin a process of nominating eligible churches to the National Register of Historic Places.

In the fall of 1997, the Rural African-American Church program established an Advisory Committee, which was charged, in part, with helping identify prominent historic African-American churches of which they, through their own personal experience or research, were aware. The members of the Advisory Committee are:

Adonijah Bakari, Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University
Cynthia Griggs Fleming, College of Education, University of Tennessee
Jimmie L. Frankin, Department of History, Vanderbilt University
Kenneth Goings, Department of History, University of Memphis
Dorothy Granberry, College of Education, Tennessee State University
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Thad Smith, Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University
Earlice Taylor, Cultural Heritage Preservation, Memphis.
Randolph Meade Walker, LeMoyne Owen College, Memphis

Advisory Committee members identified many potential properties to be researched as well as important bibliographical sources. They also serve as reviewers of the research reports generated by the project. In addition to the many contributions of the Advisory Committee, the Center has relied on earlier surveys from the Tennessee Historical Commission. The Center requested copies of the survey forms for identified historic rural African-American churches from the Tennessee Historical Commission. Commission staff provided these promptly. While many churches identified in the Tennessee survey are in urban areas outside of the scope of this project, the Tennessee survey provided locations of several possible eligible churches. The Commission also published an article about the program and survey in its newsletter, *The Courier*, which is received by thousands of Tennesseans and many public libraries across the state.

As names of potential churches were identified, project staff mailed to the congregations a packet that included a brochure about the program and a survey form that asked important questions about the history and built environment of the church building. These completed survey forms are stored in the project's permanent record files.

These various sources provided a list of churches to be researched by the project staff from the fall of 1997 through the spring of 1998. Beginning in May 1998, the project director began an aggressive search of potential churches through the Internet. This search greatly expanded the number of possible properties to be surveyed. Initially, the project had hoped to identify 100 churches across the state; instead, approximately 365 had been surveyed by August 30, 1998, and many others have been identified and await survey in the future. Information about the project is also at the web page for the Center for Historic Preservation, but at this time, only a handful of properties have been identified through responses to this information source. In 1998-1999, the Center plans to expand its web page section on the project, including photographs of a representative sampling of the buildings and the text of this multiple property nomination.

As these future plans indicate, the initial survey of 365 churches was not the universe of all rural African-American churches in Tennessee. We expect to identify 150 additional ones in the future. Many of these will be located in Shelby County. Preliminary work in this county focused on its northwest corner. The number of churches are so large there that it seemed best to reserve additional work for part of future countywide MPN on rural African-American churches.

The survey files for each church are kept at the Center for Historic Preservation and are organized by county. The files contain only those church buildings that have been actually visited by project staff. Typically there are 2-3 photographs of the building, a rough sketch of the building's outline, maps of its location, and relevant addresses and phone numbers. Research notes and materials relating to the church also are placed in the files. This collection is certainly a reconnaissance type of survey. As the project develops over time, the most promising churches identified by the reconnaissance survey will receive additional research, documentation, and nomination to the National Register.

The project's initial fieldwork team included Nancy Tinker (project coordinator), Heather Fearnbach, Teresa Douglas-Biddle, and Rebecca Smith. Fieldworkers during the summer of 1998 were Anne-Leslie Owens and Susan Besser. The assistant project director is Caneta Skelley Hankins.

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