

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET PH0183075

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
JUN 30 1975	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	AUG 6 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME** Mount Zion Cemetery:  
 (Methodist Episcopal Burying Grounds; Female Union Band Society)

HISTORIC

\*\*

Graveyard)

AND/OR COMMON

Mount Zion Cemetery

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

27th and Q Streets, N.W.

—NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Washington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

— VICINITY OF

Walter E. Fauntroy, District of Col.

STATE

District of Columbia

CODE

11

COUNTY

District of Columbia

CODE

001

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

 DISTRICT  
 BUILDING(S)  
 STRUCTURE  
 SITE  
 OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC  
 PRIVATE  
 BOTH  
**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**  
 IN PROCESS  
 BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

 OCCUPIED  
 UNOCCUPIED  
 WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
 YES: RESTRICTED  
 YES: UNRESTRICTED  
 NO

## PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE  
 COMMERCIAL  
 EDUCATIONAL  
 ENTERTAINMENT  
 GOVERNMENT  
 INDUSTRIAL  
 MILITARY  
 MUSEUM  
 PARK  
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
 RELIGIOUS  
 SCIENTIFIC  
 TRANSPORTATION  
 OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME (Continued on Form 10-300a)

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

— VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**
COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Sixth and D Streets, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

District of Columbia's Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE

May 21, 1975

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Joint District of Columbia/National Capital Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

Mount Zion Cemetery occupies lots 802 and 803 in Square 1289 in the northeastern section of the Georgetown Historic District. It is located on Mill Road off 27th Street, just north of the intersection of 27th and Q Streets, N.W. The tract is polygonal in shape, approximately three acres in extent. It is divided almost equally on a north-south axis. The Female Union Band Society Graveyard (lot 802) is to the east; the old Methodist Episcopal Burying Ground (lot 803), to the west. The former is 66,500 square feet in area; the latter, 67,300 square feet. The cemetery is laid out principally on a gently sloping plateau which is at its highest point approximately 85' above Rock Creek. The land falls sharply away on three sides, descending to the banks of Rock Creek in the steeply undulating topography typical of the Rock Creek ravine. Old Lyons Mill on the far side of Rock Creek to Georgetown, ascends the declivity along the western boundary of the cemetery. It becomes 27th Street at the southwest corner of the cemetery. Though now abandoned, the old road bed, surfaced with wash gravel, still survives.

Oak Hill Cemetery, founded in 1849, lies to the west of this road. Mill Road, the original access road to the old Methodist Episcopal Burying Ground runs from the end of 27th Street approximately three quarters of the length of the southern boundary of the cemetery. Garages belonging to an apartment building on Q Street and two semi-detached, two-story brick residences are located on the south side of Mill Road. A large high rise apartment building complex, dating from 1939-1940, 2511 Q Street, lies to the southeast of the cemetery. The northern and most of the eastern boundaries of the cemetery abut Rock Creek Park. Originally the cemetery was bounded on the south by the Creek itself. In 1929 an 18,580 square foot parcel of land on the south bank of the Creek, now lot 801 in squares 1288-1289, was condemned for use as parkland.

Mount Zion Cemetery is not perpetually endowed and has not been properly maintained. There are no fences or entrance gates. There are no paths or roads. Many graves are sunken. Most headstones and other markers are tilted or fallen. Ancient wooden markers have decayed. Though the graves have apparently been laid out in rows, there are no plat books showing their location. Records are fragmentary and vague and deal only with twentieth century burials in the old Methodist Burying Ground. Until recently the entire cemetery was grown up in a thick woodland. Underbrush was so heavy that graves were difficult to locate or even reach. Volunteer workers under the direction of the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation have now cleared trash, debris, ground cover, underbrush and all but the largest trees from the Methodist side of the Cemetery. They have recently been granted a court order to similarly clear the Female Union Band side. Tombstones have been recorded by volunteer workers from Western High School and Washington Technical Institute. All but the largest markers have been removed to facilitate grading the area and planting grass.

There are few large monuments in Mount Zion Cemetery. Most headstones are simple and modest. The earliest graves, located in the old Methodist Burying Ground section near Mill Road, date from the early years of the cemetery. Here marble grave covers seal brick underground vaults. There are a few fenced family plots of later origin.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1950	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1809-1950

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Mount Zion Cemetery a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. Although cemeteries are not ordinarily considered eligible for the National Register, Mount Zion Cemetery meets the Criteria because it derives its primary significance from its historical importance. Mount Zion Cemetery's history and that of the generations of Blacks both free and slave interred therein uniquely convey the quality and thrust of Black life and evolving free Black culture in the District of Columbia from the earliest days of the city to the present. It is one of the few remaining physical reminders of the significant contributions of Black people to the development of Georgetown, which during the late nineteenth century was between one fourth and one third Black in population. Further study of Mt. Zion Cemetery is likely to yield information important in history. The Female Union Band Society Graveyard is a tangible reminder of a significant early commercial venture organized and successfully carried on by women. Although Mount Zion Cemetery is located within the boundaries of the Georgetown Historic District, a Category II Landmark listed in the National Register of Historic Places, its historical significance is sufficiently different from the qualities which qualified the Georgetown Historic District for the National Register to merit individual registration.

Mount Zion Cemetery is composed of two separate adjacent cemeteries--the old Methodist Burying Ground and the Female Union Band Society Graveyard--which almost equally occupy an approximately three acre wooded site overlooking Rock Creek Park. The land for the former was purchased in 1809; for the latter, in 1842. No fence separates the two properties and over the years they have come to be known in the community simply as the Mount Zion Cemetery.

The old Methodist Episcopal Burying Ground was purchased by Ebenezer Eliason on behalf of the trustees of the Dumbarton Street Methodist Episcopal Church (then known as the Montgomery Street M.E. Church) for \$500 on October 13, 1808. The deed provided that the land be used as a burying ground and subdivided into "lots, lanes or alleys of such dimensions as they (the trustees) or the majority of them, in their judgement and discretion, shall think best and most convenient for the aforesaid purpose." The trustees were given authority to sell lots and out of the proceeds of such sales to enclose the burying ground either with a wall or a post and rail fence.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Beard, Michael. MSS of a history of the Dumbarton Street Methodist Episcopal Church.

Brief for Appellant and Joint Appendix. Mount Zion Methodist Church, Appellant v. Unkown Heirs at Law, Devises and Alienees of Joseph Mason, Trustee, for

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.07+acres 133,800 square feet

UTM REFERENCES

UTM OK

A	1, 8	3, 2, 1, 8, <del>8</del> <sup>75</sup>	4, 3, 0, 8, 7, 9, 0 <sup>6</sup>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Square 1289, Lots 802 and 803

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Tanya Beauchamp, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Joint District of Columbia/National Capital Planning Commission Historic Preservation Office

DATE

STREET & NUMBER National Capital Planning Commission  
1325 G Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

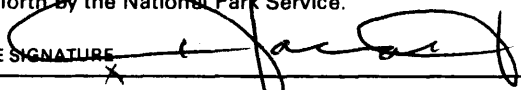
# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE X LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE



6-25-75

TITLE Acting Director, Office of Housing and Community Development

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

8/6/75

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

AUG 4 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

*(Continuation Sheet)*

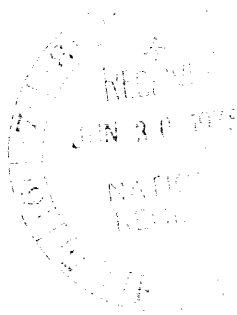
STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUG 6 1975

*(Number all entries)*

4. Owner of Property -

Mr. Robert Gell, Chairman  
Board of Trustees  
Dumbarton Avenue United Methodist Church  
3133 Dumbarton Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007

Mr. George H. Windsor  
Mr. Robert T. Smith  
Trustees  
Female Union Band Society and Estate of Charles L. Norris  
1915 Eye Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

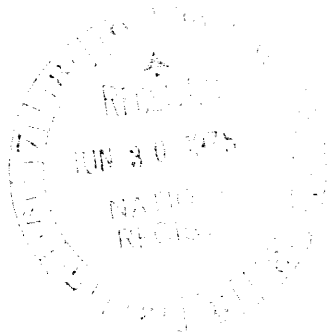
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STATE	
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	AUG 6 1975

(Number all entries)

7. Description - Continued

The appearance of Mount Zion Cemetery contrasts sharply with that of fashionable Oak Hill Cemetery where, on a neighboring ridge, can be seen obelisks and statuary and the elegant Van Ness mausoleum.



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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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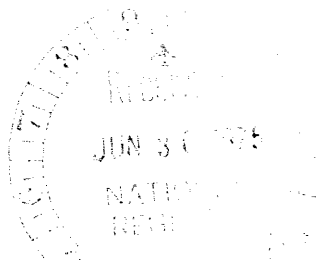
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8. Significance - Continued

The membership of the Dumbarton Street M.E. Church was at this time almost fifty per cent Black, and included both free men and slaves. On October 21, 1809, the trustees of the Church received \$41 for lots of \$3 each to be laid out as a burying ground for the colored friends." These lots were paid for by Blacks--probably free Blacks. By 1822 a new section of the burying ground was opened up with lots now selling for \$15. The earliest graves which survive today are those of white members of the congregation such as the Eliason family and the wife of Bishop Enoch George.

Apparently the burying ground lost popularity after neighboring Oak Hill Cemetery was chartered by Congress in 1849. Richard P. Jackson, writing in The Chronicles of Georgetown, D.C., published in 1878, reported "There is a disposition to sell this ground and apply the proceeds to other purposes, but this cannot be done. The best way is to turn it over to Mt. Zion Church, on condition that they keep up the fence and put the grounds in order." Mount Zion M.E. Church was formed of the Black members of the Dumbarton Street M.E. Church in 1816. In 1877 Mount Zion Methodist Church had applied for the use of the cemetery. A lease was drawn up in 1879, though not recorded until April 8, 1893. This lease gave Mt. Zion Church use of the burying ground for ninety-nine years. In return Mt. Zion agreed "...to make all needed improvements, fencing, roadways, walks, paths, planting of trees, and such other changes as may make the property suitable for their use and purposes."

The Female Union Band Society is a cooperative benevolent society whose members are pledged to assist one another in sickness and in death. It was founded by a group of free Black women circa 1842. The Constitution and By-Laws of the Society, published belatedly in 1859, pledged to each member assistance when sick--including the payment of \$2 a week--as well as a grave and \$20 for funeral expenses when deceased. Though its membership has been restricted to women, and preference given to female descendants of the original founders, men have been allowed to serve as trustees or agents. The Female Union Band Society Burying Ground was purchased by Joseph Mason in trust for the Society for \$250 on October 19, 1842. The deed was recorded August 8, 1842. The Burying Ground has been maintained by the Society since that time. The last burial, in 1950, was of Mary Logan Jennings, a president of the Society and granddaughter of one of its founders.



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(Continuation Sheet)

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COUNTY	
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(Number all entries)

9. Bibliography - Continued

Female Union Band Society, Appellees. No. 16, 977. U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

District Realty Title Company. Records of Female Union Band Society Graveyard.

Georgetown Architecture, Historic American Buildings Survey Selections, No. 10. "Mount Zion United Methodist Church, HABS No. D.C.--242." Washington. Commission of Fine Arts and Historic American Buildings Survey, 1970.

Jackson, Richard P. The Chronicles of Georgetown, D.C., From 1751-1878. Washington, D.C: R.O. Polkin, printer, 1878.

Martin Luther King Memorial Library. Washingtoniana Collection. Atlases, newspaper clipping files, directories.

Mount Zion United Methodist Church. Records.

National Archives. Manumission Records. R.G. 21.

Wesley Theological Seminary Archives. Records of Dumbarton Street Methodist Episcopal Church.

