# **United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Page				
	SUPPLEMENTARY LIS	STING RECORD		
	NRIS Reference Number: 95000911	Date Listed:	8/10/95	
	Mount Zion Baptist Church Property Name	Dougherty <b>County</b>	GEORGIA State	
	Multiple Name	<del></del>		
Ço	Places in accordance with the attace subject to the following exceptions notwithstanding the National Park S in the nomination documentation.  Signature of the Keeper	, exclusions, or	amendments,	
	Section No. 8			
	This nomination is amended to delet significance.	e religion as an	area of	
	This change was confirmed by phone	with the Georgia	SHPO.	

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

m 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

NAT	IONAL REGISTER OF	HISTORIC PLACES	REGISTRATION FORM
complete each item not apply to the p areas of significa use continuation s	roperty being documented, ent nce, enter only the categorie heets (Form 10-900a). Type a	riate box or by entering t er "N/A" for "not applicab s and subcategories listed	ility for individual properties of iter forms" (National Register Bulletin 146). The requested information. It an item does ble "For functions, styles, materials, and in the instructions. For additional space
1. Name of	Property		INTEDACENCY
	me Mount Zion /site number	Baptist Church	INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE NATIONAL REGISTER BRANCH
2. Locatio	n		
street & nu city, town county Dou			(n/a) <b>vicinity of</b>
(n/a) not f	or publication		
3. Classif	ication		
Ownership o	f Property:		
· · ·			
Category of	Property		
<pre>(x) buildi () distri () site () struct () object</pre>	ure		
Number of R	esources within P	roperty:	
	Contributing	Noncontribut	ting
buildings sites	1 0		0 0
structures	0		0
objects	0		0
total	1		0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

4. State/Federal Agency Certifi	cation	
As the designated authority under the National Histor this nomination meets the documentation standards for Places and meets the procedural and professional requ property meets the National Register criteria. ( ) S	registering properties in the National Registification of the National Registification of the register.	ter of Historic
property meets the wattonat Register criteria. ( ) s	ee continuation sheet.	
Maul Glyans Signature of certifying official		95
Mark R. Edwards State Historic Preservation Officer, Georgia Department of Natural Resources		
In my opinion, the property ( ) meets ( ) does not me	et the National Register criteria. ( ) See co	ontinuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official	Date	
State or Federal agency or bureau		
5. National Park Service Certif	ication	
I, hereby, certify that this property is:	Caras D Shull	
( A entered in the National Register	Clair & Shull	8-10-95
( ) determined eligible for the National Register		
( ) determined not eligible for the National Register		
( ) removed from the National Register		
( ) other, explain:		
( ) see continuation sheet	Signature, Keeper of the National Register	 Date

## 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions:

Religion/religious structure

### Current Functions:

Work In Progress

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification:

Late Victorian: Late Gothic Revival/Romanesque Revival

#### Materials:

foundation brick brick roof metal other

## Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Mount Zion Baptist Church is located at the corner of West Whitney Avenue and Jefferson Street in Albany, Dougherty County, in south Georgia.

The church is a 1906, one-story, red-brick building with Late Gothic Revival and Romanesque Revival style detailing. The exterior is rectangular-shaped with a pressed-metal gable roof. The front gable facade features a parapet wall, portico with large archway supported by two brick columns, double-door main entrance with semicircular transom window, brick and concrete steps, and two square towers of unequal height. The towers are topped with eight-sided metal spires and brick and concrete battlements. The larger tower has four arched openings and served as the bell tower. Arched entrance doors are also located in each of the towers. Decorative brick ornamentation, rowlock, arched brick windows, stained-glass, brick pilasters, and chimneys remain, as well as gable, tower, and foundation vents (photographs 1 - 6).

The rear of the church has a c. 1930s brick addition built to house the pipe organ and a c. 1960s concrete block storage/bathroom addition (photographs 3, 4). The common-bond, red-brick 1930s addition has a hipped roof with the same pressed metal shingles as the remainder of the building. On each side of this shed addition are anteroom entrances to the rostrum of the church. Each entrance has a brick articulated cornice, concrete steps, and wood-paneled doors.

Three small square brick chimneys remain. These chimneys served the wood burning stoves used for heating prior to installation of steam heat radiators. A small basement mechanical room containing a boiler for the steam system is located directly under the southeast anteroom.

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The floorplan features a large rectangular sanctuary, two bell tower rooms, anterooms next to the rostrum, and a rear balcony (photographs 7, 9). A baptismal pool is concealed under the raised pulpit flooring (photograph 8). The rostrum is framed by pilasters and a cornice. Interior elements include original wood floors, a cove ceiling with decorative pressed metal, simple wooden pews, plaster walls, wood moldings and wainscoting, cast-iron radiators, balcony support columns, and paneled doors (photograph 9, 10).

The church building is situated on a level corner lot with minimal landscaping. The surrounding neighborhood contains some historic houses and noncontributing buildings.

Use of the church continued until 1972 when the congregation relocated to a new facility in south Albany. Plans are underway for rehabilitating the structure for use as a Civil Rights museum.

8. Statement of Significance				
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:				
(x) nationally (x) statewide (x) locally				
Applicable National Register Criteria:				
(x) A ( ) B (x) C ( ) D				
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): ( ) N/A				
( ) A ( ) B ( ) C ( ) D ( ) E ( ) F (x) G				
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):				
Architecture Religion Social History/Ethnic Heritage:African American				
Period of Significance:				
1906 - 1963				
Significant Dates:				
1906 1961				
Significant Person(s):				
n/a				
Cultural Affiliation:				
n/a				
Architect(s)/Builder(s):				
n/a				

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Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Mount Zion Baptist Church is significant for its architecture, religion, ethnic heritage, and social history. The church is being nominated at the local, state, and national levels of significance because of the important role it has played for the African-American community in Albany, Georgia, and the nation from the early to mid-20th-century.

Mount Zion Baptist Church is significant in <u>architecture</u> as an intact 1906 church constructed using Late Gothic Revival and Romanesque Revival detailing. The building is a good example of an early 20th-century brick church structure. The rectangular brick structure with two front towers, gabled metal main roof with parapet walls, eight-sided metal tower spires, tower battlements, arched windows, and a large, segmentally-arched front entrance are characteristic Late Gothic Revival and Romanesque Revival features. The interior remains relatively intact with plaster walls, wainscoting, stained-glass windows, and a cove ceiling covered with decorative pressed metal. The larger bell tower retains the wooden stairway that leads up to the platform where the bell was located. The building's design features are typical of many urban African-American churches built during the early 20th century.

The property is significant in <u>Religion</u> for the religious and educational role the church played in the black community for over 100 years. Organized in 1866, the church was Albany's first African-American Baptist congregation. The church is significant as the center of the religious and educational activities of the community and has also served the social needs of its members. The church also reflects the basic form of a Baptist church with the built-in baptismal pool, a feature that is faith-specific to this religion. This church contains the basic features for a religious edifice: a vestibule, sanctuary, pulpit, and choir area which have been identified in late 19th- and early 20th-century urban black churches in Georgia's <u>Historic Black Resources</u> handbook.

Social History and Ethnic Heritage: African-American significance is documented by the building's use as a primary meeting place for the Albany Movement during the early 1960s. The Albany Movement, an important part of the national Civil Rights Movement, engaged in activities such as voter education and registration, sit-ins, bus desegregation, and economic boycotts. The impact of the Albany Movement led to associated civil rights activities in many southwest Georgia towns. On November 25, 1961, the Albany Movement held its

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first public mass meeting at Mount Zion following the first sit-in at the local bus station protesting segregation of transportation This same meeting served as the first performance of the Freedom Singers, a group of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) teenagers who would later tour nationally and perform during the March on Washington. The acappella style of freedom songs would become a trademark of the Civil Rights Movement. Subsequent mass meetings were held at Mount Zion to provide communication and encouragement for the black community during this time of adversity. Most of the mass meetings were conducted at Mount Zion Baptist Church and Shiloh Baptist Church, buildings which face one another on West Whitney Avenue in Albany. Because the mass meetings would draw overflow crowds, particularly those conducted in December 1961 and in the summer of 1962, the doors of the churches would be opened and the crowd would fill the street. When Martin Luther King, Jr. first spoke in Albany, he would alternate between the two churches, each time speaking to a new group. Ralph David Abernathy, John Lewis, and other renown civil rights figures were also speakers at these meetings.

## National Register Criteria

The property meets Criterion A for its association with the events of our American heritage. The Mount Zion Baptist Church has served throughout its history as a major social, cultural, and religious institution for the African American community and is an important community landmark building.

The building also meets Criterion C as an example of early 20th-century architecture used for an important religious building within the African-American community of Albany.

## Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The property meets Criteria Consideration G because of the extraordinary significance of the events which took place during the 1960s and events that contributed to the Civil Rights Movement in Albany and South Georgia.

## Period of significance (justification)

1906 - 1963 encompasses the period from when the church was constructed to its use as an meeting place for early Civil Rights activities in the community during the early 1960s.

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Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

Contributing:

1 - building

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

The following history is from the draft National Register nomination form written by consultant Carolynn Segers.

Mount Zion Baptist Church was first established Dec. 8, 1866 when Rev. R.R. Watson and a group of followers organized the Mount Zion Baptist Church congregation in Jerry Watson's blacksmith shop Dec. 8, 1866. Mount Zion Baptist Church is the first African-American Baptist church formed within the original city limits of Albany Georgia.

An examination of Freedmen's Bureau records reflects that as early as December 1865, two buildings at Wooten Station were to be moved to Albany for church and school house. While not stated in records, it is inferred that these structures became the Baptist and Methodist worship houses. A fair to benefit both churches of freedmen was held May 30, 1866 at Jerry Walters' blacksmith shop. Both black and white citizens were invited.

According to William E. Montgomery, author of <u>Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South 1865-1900</u>, two distinct types of churches, formal and folk, emerged in black Christianity. Mount Zion Baptist Church emerged as an elitist church, with members representing the privileged class whose characteristics included greater wealth, higher education, and more skilled occupations than the lower class that made up folk churches.<sup>2</sup> Wealthier African-Americans formed churches that resembled Caucasian churches with fancy exteriors (and) opulent interiors.<sup>3</sup> The architecture of the Mount Zion Church exemplifies this trend.

A history of Mount Zion Baptist Church contained in working papers of the 1930s Work Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Writers Project locates Jerry Walters' blacksmith shop at the corner of State Street

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>"Three African-American Churches in the Albany Area After the Reconstruction Exodus," Lynda Roberts, unpublished paper. Mount Zion's classification as an elite church is reflected in the 1870 U.S. Census data analyzed by the SPSS/PC+ program.

<sup>3&</sup>quot;The Class Divisions in Albany's Black Churches," Sandra Penn, unpublished paper.

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(now Highland Avenue) and Jackson Street. Services were held there for more than six months when the membership outgrew the shop and a lot was purchased on the corner of Washington Street and Highland Avenue. The amount raised to erect the church was \$2,600, but before it was completed it was blown down by a storm. A decision was then made "to move the church to another place."

The WPA history and the Freedmen's Bureau records describe details of two houses moved in the spring of 1867 from Leesburg, by Col. O.H. Howard of the Bureau, one of which was placed on the current Mt. Zion church site. It is reported March 29, 1867, that Albany has "two good churches that can be used for school houses," and April 1, 1867, bureau records report that M.W. Early opened a free school in the Baptist church.

The Bureau budgeted \$1,600 to repair the two churches for school buildings June 1867, and one month later black carpenter Henry Cook claimed an incumbrance on the Baptist church he was building at 72 South Street. A year later, on August 25, 1868, this lot was purchased from Joseph S. Smith by the "colored Trustees of the Colored Baptist Church of the city of Albany County of Dougherty" at a cost of \$150.4

Freedmen's Bureau records reflect the structure at 72 South Street, (now W. Whitney Avenue) was used as the Worchester School taught by American Missionary Society teacher Lucy E. Case beginning November 1868.

The first association of which Mount Zion was a member was the Middle Georgia Association, and in  $1870^5$ , was among churches obtaining letters of dismissal from the association for the purpose of organizing the Georgia Baptist Southwestern Association.

In 1894, Rev. N.B. Williamson, became the church's second pastor and conducted a city school in the church. Due to the increased attendance Mrs. M.L.G. Copper was employed as an assistant.

The third pastor, Rev. T.J. Simpson, served while the church house was torn down in 1905, and the extant brick church built in 1906. During

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Deed Book 4, page 670, Dougherty County, Georgia.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Church history lists date of 1870, but <u>Profiles of Black</u> <u>Georgia Baptists</u>, by Clarence M.Wagner, lists the Southwestern Georgia Baptist Association's beginning at 1869. The written record of the association begins in 1871. Rev. David Hines served as first moderator until 1879.

the construction, worship was conducted in the Supreme Circle Hall for nearly a year. The building was constructed by church members.

Sometime during the service of Rev. W.J. Jenkins, 1916-1925, the extant church was remodeled, "the walls beautified, new lights installed, steam heat and new seats added." During his pastorate existing church debts were paid. Church records prior to the late 1930s have been lost. Oral histories with church members suggest that the baptismal pool was added during this renovation since octogenarian members recall the pool existing since their childhood.

In 1932 the church was badly damaged by a storm and services were held in the Masonic Hall. The church was repaired in June of the same year. On Jan. 12, 1935 a pipe organ was purchased and installed.

In July 1972, the use of the 1906 church for worship ceased with the completion of a new church building located in south Albany.

Area Baptist churches tracing roots to the Mount Zion congregation include Eureka Baptist Church, 1872; Shiloh Baptist Church, 1882/1888 (group broke from Mount Zion 1882, Shiloh history lists beginning 1888); Mount Hebron Baptist Church, 1885; Mount Calvary Baptist Church, 1932.

## Mount Zion Baptist Church and The Albany Civil Rights Movement

Mount Zion Baptist Church served as the site of the first mass meeting of the Albany Movement, Nov. 25, 1961. Members of the Mount Zion congregation who held leadership positions with the Albany Movement were Dr. William G. Anderson, C.B. King, Slater King, Marion King, A.C. Searles, and others.

Mount Zion Baptist Church derives historic significance as the site of mass meetings featuring national civil rights figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph David Abernathy, Andrew Young, John Lewis, Wyatt Tee Walker, and others.

Mount Zion Baptist Church derives significance as the site of the first performance at a mass meeting by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's newly formed Freedom Singers. The acappella style of singing spirituals and freedom songs began with the Albany Movement. This group later toured nationally.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Mount Zion Church History, WPA.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Lee W. Formwalt, "The origins of the post emancipation African-American Church in Dougherty County, Georgia," unpublished paper.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Church History

## The Albany Civil Rights Movement

"On Thanksgiving weekend 1961, African-American activists decided to test a recent Interstate Commerce Commission ruling on desegregation by using the whites-only facilities at the Trailways bus station in Albany, Ga. Their actions catapulted this southwest Georgia community of 56,000, 40 percent of whom were black, into national prominence. Albany became, in the early 1960s, both a catalyst for similar student-initiated actions, particularly those by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and a symbol of organizational factionalism, especially regarding the role of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in the ensuing 'Albany Movement.' On 22 November 1961, SNCC workers Charles Sherrod and Cordell Reagon, along with a group of black students from Albany State College and the local NAACP Youth Council, sat down in the whites-only section of the Trailways terminal and refused to leave. Following their expulsion a coalition of local black organizations and student leaders began a coordinated attack on Albany's strict color line. Internecine squabbling among the participants prompted King to make an appearance in Albany, but he left without achieving the real or symbolic victories that earlier had won him national acclaim. The mass protest continued for another six years. Although King would call Albany his most glaring defeat, the actions there galvanized SNCC workers into a stronger commitment to direct action campaigns and ushered in a new era in civil rights in which black spirituals, such as 'Ain't Gonna let Nobody Turn Me Around, were sung defiantly in the face of white oppression."21"The failure of King's Albany, Georgia, [campaign], during 1961-1962, led to revised nonviolent tactics which, in 1963, challenged segregation in Birmingham, Alabama."22

The Albany Movement organization was officially formed Nov. 17, 1961 in a spontaneous meeting of black community leaders at Slater King's home. Dr. William G. Anderson was selected as president, with Slater King as vice president. The Albany State College students participating in a bus station sit-in were arrested Nov. 22, 1961, and the first public mass meeting of The Albany Movement was held Nov. 25, 1961, at Mount Zion Baptist Church. It was during this meeting, at which Anderson, Slater King, attorney C.B. King, and newspaper publisher A.C. Searles spoke, and the SNCC Freedom Singers first performed. The song leaders of local teenagers Rutha Harris and Bernice Johnson, together with SNCC worker Cordell Reagon, first led the acappella style of freedom songs which would become a trademark of the national Civil Rights Movement.

Within a few weeks, Southern Christian Leadership Conference freedom riders would arrive at the Albany's Union Depot and be arrested for disorderly conduct before a crowd of about two hundred onlookers. The

Dr. William G. Anderson, first president of the Albany Movement, refutes this reasoning in an article to be published in "The Journal of Southwest Georgia History," Fall 1994. Anderson links King's first visit to personal friendships, including those between several Morehouse College graduates in Albany.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>"Encyclopedia of African-American Civil Rights," pg. 7-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Ibid.Pg. 303.

arrests touched off a week-long period of nightly mass meetings, protest marches and mass arrests, ending in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s first speech making, and his first arrest, in the city. These arrests marked the country's first significant mass jailings of the Civil Rights Movement. Within a seven day period, more than 700 of Albany's blacks were jailed.

Michael H. Chalfen, in his May 1993 work "The Way Out May Lead In: the Albany, Georgia Civil Rights Movement 1945-1965," outlined three major periods in the movement. The preclassic from 1945 to 1961; the classic from Nov. 1961 to Aug. 1962; and the postclassic from 1963 to 1965. "The [Albany] Movement employed the entire range of protest that was to be used during the civil rights era: voter education and registration, litigation, song, economic boycott and self-help; and direct action. 23

Primary to the Albany Movement was the use of mass meetings conducted at various churches in Albany and Dougherty County. Most of these mass meetings were conducted at Mount Zion Baptist Church, and Shiloh Baptist Church (building altered in the 1970s), properties which face one another on West Whitney Avenue. Because the mass meetings would draw overflow crowds, particularly those conducted in December 1961 and the summer of 1962, the doors of the churches would be opened and the crowd would fill the street in between the churches. When Martin Luther King, Jr. first spoke in Albany, he would alternate between the two churches, each time speaking to a new crowd. Third Kiokee Baptist Church, in south Albany, also was used for mass meetings.

The impact of the movement led to associated civil rights activities in many southwest Georgia towns including Americus, Sumter County; Dawson, Terrell County; Leesburg, Lee County; Newton, Baker County and Sylvester, Worth County.

The activism of the Civil Rights Movement continued for years following 1962, although the formal "Albany Movement" organization disbanded prior to the official end of legal segregation in Albany in March 1963.

In 1990, members of the Mount Zion Baptist Church formed the Mount Zion Baptist Church Preservation Committee to prepare a National Register nomination for the 1906 church building. In 1993, the committee received a Survey and Planning grant from the Georgia Historic Preservation Division to prepare a preservation plan for the church. In 1994, the committee received a Georgia Heritage 2000 grant to rehabilitate the church building for use as a Civil Rights museum. The Mount Zion Baptist Church was listed on the Georgia Register of Historic Place on October 14, 1994.

<sup>23 &</sup>quot;The Way Out May Lead In," 3rd year BA dissertation of Michael H. Chalfen, Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, England, May 1993.

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

Segers, Carolynn. "Mount Zion Baptist Church." <u>National Register</u>
<u>Nomination Form</u>, June 30, 1994. On file at the Historic
Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta,
Georgia.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A
<ul> <li>( ) preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested</li> <li>( ) previously listed in the National Register</li> <li>( ) previously determined eligible by the National Register</li> <li>( ) designated a National Historic Landmark</li> <li>( ) recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #</li> <li>( ) recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #</li> </ul>
Primary location of additional data:
<ul> <li>(x) State historic preservation office</li> <li>( ) Other State Agency</li> <li>( ) Federal agency</li> <li>( ) Local government</li> <li>( ) University</li> <li>( ) Other, Specify Repository:</li> </ul>
Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): n/a

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre.

#### UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 769960 Northing 3496300

## Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by a heavy black line, drawn to scale on the attached tax map.

## Boundary Justification

The property boundary follows the legal boundary on the east and south sides of the property; on the west it follows the edge of the curb along Jefferson Street, and on the north it follows the edge of the curb along West Whitney Avenue (Whitney Street). This boundary encompasses the entire building plus its immediate urban setting at the corner.

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Raflo, National Register Coordinator
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of
Natural Resources
street & number 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth Street, NW
city or town Atlanta state Georgia zip code 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 date June 1, 1995

(HPS form version 10-29-91)

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Name of Property: Mount Zion Baptist Church

City or Vicinity: Albany
County: Dougherty
State: Georgia

Photographer: James R. Lockhart

Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Date Photographed: October 1994

## Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 10. Front and side facade view; photographer facing southwest.
- 2 of 10. Side and rear facade view; photographer facing northeast.
- 3 of 10. Side and rear facade view; photographer facing northwest.
- 4 of 10. Rear facade view; photographer facing north.
- 5 of 10. Cornerstone on front facade; photographer facing southeast.
- 6 of 10. Front facade entrance; photographer facing south.
- 7 of 10. Interior view of sanctuary, raised pulpit; photographer facing south.
- 8 of 10. View of rostrum and raised pulpit; photographer facing south.
- 9 of 10. View of sanctuary and rear balcony; photographer facing north.
- 10 of 10. View of wooden pews and stained glass windows; photographer facing east.

