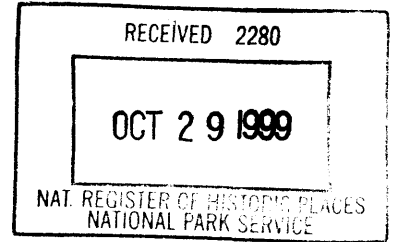


(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pikeville Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
other names/site number Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church

2. Location

street & number East Valley Drive not for publication N/A
city or town Pikeville vicinity N/A
state Tennessee code TN county Bledsoe code 007 zip code 37365

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant

nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Hays 10/19/99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

11/30/99
Date of Action

Pikeville African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Name of Property

Bledsoe County, TN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object |

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic Rural African-American Churches in Tennessee

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: no style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE, CONCRETE

walls Weatherboard, Vinyl

roof ASPHALT, METAL

other METAL, CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black
 RELIGION
 EDUCATION

Period of Significance

circa 1870 - 1948

Significant Dates

circa 1870, circa 1900, circa 1940

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Center for Historic Preservation, MTSU

Pikeville African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Name of Property

Bledsoe County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .5 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Pikeville, TN 110 SW

1 16 664360 3941450
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carroll Van West
organization Center for Historic Preservation, MTSU date January 1998
street & number P. O. Box 80, MTSU telephone 615 898 2947
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Contact Person - Mildred Bridgeman
street & number P. O. Box 243 telephone _____
city or town Pikeville state TN zip code 37367

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church
Bledsoe County, TN.

7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church is located on the east bank of the Sequatchie River on East Valley Road adjacent to the southeast corner of the city limits of Pikeville, Bledsoe County, Tennessee. Built ca. 1870, with later alterations ca. 1900, ca. 1940, 1978, and 1997, the church has the form of an ell. The church has a prominent bell tower located at the northeast corner of the building, a Sunday School room or community hall, and kitchen (1978) located at the rear of the building. The tower has an asphalt shingle roof while the rest of the building has a metal gable roof. The building initially rested on a solid stone foundation on its facade and stone piers on the other elevations. The spaces between the piers were in-filled with concrete ca. 1940.

The north facade of the church features a bell tower built ca. 1900. The small cupola has a pyramidal roof and houses the original church bell. The cupola was covered with vinyl siding, ca. 1978. There is a rectangular ventilation grille on each sides of the bell tower. At the bottom of the bell tower is the primary entrance into the church. A series of ten concrete steps (circa 1940), with metal hand rails (circa 1940), leads to the double six-paneled wooden doors (1978). Also in 1978, a gable-roof portico supported by two square wood posts, with a metal roof was added at the front entrance to protect members from the rain. This replaced an earlier covered entrance that probably dated circa 1900. The remainder of the north facade consists of a solid gable-end weatherboard wall, with an off-center window flanked by two air-conditioning units. The air-conditioners and the window between were added also in 1978, when the congregation undertook a remodeling of the church's interior. At the northwest corner of the facade is the church's dedication stone, which was installed in 1997.

The west elevation has two distinct parts: the original school and church building and the rear addition of 1978. The original section has three symmetrical bays set in a weatherboard wall. The windows were last replaced in 1997. The rear addition is covered in vinyl siding and has two small symmetrically placed windows.

The south elevation shows how the rear addition of 1978 was connected to the original building. The original building has a solid weatherboard wall while the 1978 addition has a solid vinyl wall with a symmetrically centered single window.

Dominating the east elevation is the original building. Initially this was a solid weatherboard wall with three symmetrically placed windows. However, when the rear addition was constructed 1978 the southernmost window was removed, an interior doorway added, and the two wings were physically tied together. An entrance to the rear addition is located in the north facade of the addition.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2 Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church
Bledsoe County, TN.

The interior consists of the circa 1870 sanctuary or schoolroom and the rooms of the rear addition, which include a Sunday school room or community room, a kitchen and two restrooms. In 1978, the congregation remodeled the sanctuary with new windows, fabric on the original pews, carpeting on portions of the floor, faux pine paneling. The ceiling was lowered by adding acoustic tiles and installed of two fans with lights. However, key features of the original church interior remain intact: the pews, the altar railing, the pulpit and choir platform, and the original hardwood floors.

The rear addition has linoleum floors, faux pine paneling, acoustic tile ceilings, and fluorescent light fixtures. The Sunday school room and community room occupy the east half of the addition while the kitchen and two rest rooms occupy the west section of the addition.

Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church meets the registration requirements for individual church buildings listed in the Historic Rural African-American Churches in Tennessee, 1850-1970 MPN Cover Sheet. Built circa 1870, it is the only known Reconstruction era African-American church and school building to be extant in rural and small-town Tennessee. The only earliest black church building in the state is the Beale Street Baptist Church (NR 2/11/1971) of Memphis, and it was built at approximately the same time and it too has undergone various changes since its original construction. The Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church building has experienced change at three times in the twentieth century. The bell tower's date of circa 1900 is from oral interviews with present church members. Circa 1940, concrete steps and a metal railing were added to the front and concrete was used to enclose the original stone pier foundation. These changes fall within the historic period of the church. In 1978, the congregation modernized the interior and added an exterior rear wing. These changes did not alter the building's location, setting, association, or feeling, but do affect its integrity to some degree. The church remains isolated from the main part of town, setting on the east bank of the Sequatchie River. The addition lacks the height or size to alter significantly the front facade appearance of the building. Changes to the interior do not affect the period of significance to the church. These changes reflect what many small rural churches did to rejuvenate their membership and are also a sign of additional funds available for updating the building. Something that would have been harder to do in earlier times.

The 1978 changes, however, do not belong to the church's period of significance and they have affected the historic design, materials, and workmanship of the building. Yet, considerable original features of the building remain. On the exterior, the historic weatherboard siding, bell tower, stone pier and concrete foundation and the roof pitch remains intact. The building still conveys the simple, unadorned design, materials, and workmanship of the building, as altered with the construction of the bell tower circa 1900. The addition is of the size and scale that it does not overwhelm the historic building. The interior changes to the sanctuary affect the walls

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Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church
Bledsoe County, TN.

and ceiling with the faux pine paneling and a dropped ceiling placed over original building materials. The wooden floors and pews are historic, dating either circa 1870 or circa 1900. The altar railing and its platform are most likely circa 1900.

Due to its age, local significance, and retention of the majority of its historic exterior and interior features, materials, feeling, location, association, setting, and design, the Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church retains its historic integrity to meet the registration requirements set out in the Historic Rural African-American Churches in Tennessee 1850-1970 cover form, and to be eligible for listing under Criterion A.

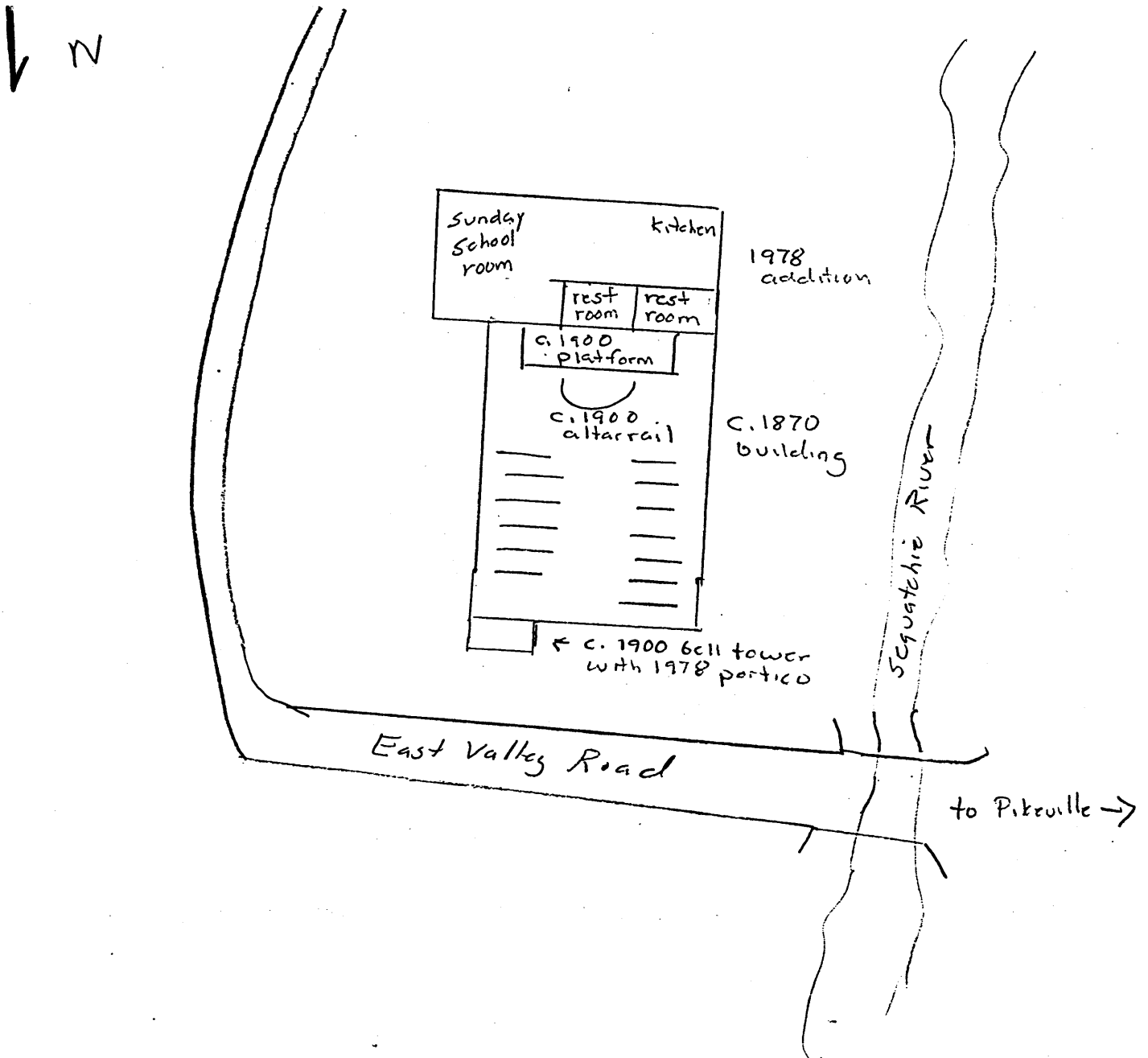
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National Register of Historic Places
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Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church, Bledsoe Co., TN

Site Map
NTS. 1999.



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Bledsoe County, TN.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church, Bledsoe County, Tennessee, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its local significance in African-American ethnic heritage, especially in the areas of religion and education. Of the 360 plus churches surveyed in the initial Tennessee Rural African-American Church project of 1997-1998, Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church is the oldest such building in Tennessee. It meets the registration requirements set forth in the Historic Rural African-American Churches in Tennessee MPN.

Local tradition of the congregation dates the building to 1888, but a study of relevant public records indicates that the church building probably dates circa 1870. For an address to the Pikeville Chapel Homecoming of 1982, county historian Elizabeth P. Robnett researched county deed records. She found that in 1869 the tract of land now occupied by the church was part of a 343-acre parcel sold by the estate of the late General James G. Spears to a family from Pennsylvania named Henry for \$5,500. The congregation always has dated itself and the building from the years of 1869-1870.

Initially the building was both a church and school, a dual role apparent from reading local records. Judging from records kept by the Bledsoe County school superintendent during the 1870s, Pikeville had an African-American public school during those years. The 1877 report of the county superintendent to the state claimed that the black schools were "much better than the white schools due to the better class of teachers being employed from Fisk University in Nashville." Other evidence of the building's early origins comes from court records. In 1889, before the Bledsoe County Chancery Court, M. M. Swafford and others sued Alexander Browder and other trustees of the Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church for illegally taking title to the land and the building of the church. According to statements filed before the court, circa 1870 a group of African-American residents purchased a plot of land for a school for \$40.00, but they paid only \$18.00 of the agreed purchase price. A school was established, known as the Lincoln Academy, and church groups also used the building, with the primary congregation being the AME Zion congregation. The AME Zion group called the building the Mount Zion AME Church. In 1888, Alexander Browder and Elbert Henson raised the remainder of the purchase price and had the deed for the land transferred to the Trustees of the Zion AME Church, a group that included Browder, Henson, John Greer, Charley Springs, and LaFayette Worthington. The deed clearly states the transfer involved "the plot of land on which the Mount Zion meeting house is now located," indicating that the building existed before 1888. The case was settled when both parties agreed to use the building both as a school and as a church, with all of the local African-American congregations--including AME Zion, Missionary Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ and Cumberland Presbyterian--eligible to use the building. That arrangement of a dual

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Bledsoe County, TN.

use for the building remained in effect until 1925 when the new Rosenwald school--named Lincoln School (NR 7/15/1993) after this building--opened on the north end of town.

By circa 1900, the building was primarily the Sunday meeting place for the Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church, as other congregations either disbanded or built their own buildings. During the week, however, it was the black public school in days of "separate but equal" education facilities and perhaps for this reason, the bell tower was constructed circa 1900. As Elizabeth Robnett remarked in her 1982 address, "Bledsoe County 'sponged' on this Church. In other words, Bledsoe County got by cheap for over 30 years by using Zion Methodist Episcopal Church building for a public school."

Pikeville Chapel was the home church of many prominent African-American citizens of the Jim Crow era. Trustee LaFayette Worthington was a cabinetmaker, who was the first black to own and run his own business in Pikeville. The pews and altar railing of the church have been attributed to his craftsmanship.

By the 1920s, according to Edward Angel, Jr., the son of the newly hired principal of the Lincoln Rosenwald School, there were only three African-American congregations in the county, with the AME Zion being the largest. It played a lead role in the fund-raising that occurred in the African-American community to gather the necessary matching funds for the construction of the Rosenwald School.

From its founding throughout the Jim Crow era, the setting and location of the church was significant to its association with African-American ethnic heritage. Lying on the east bank of the Sequatchie River, the church is physically segregated from the remainder of Pikeville. It was next to the town, but clearly not part of town. Even today it lies outside the official incorporated boundaries of the City of Pikeville. However, the riverside location also was desirable for the church's members. They held baptismal ceremonies in the river and the location was ideal for church social gatherings and picnics. As the oldest African-American church in the entire county, the grounds were used for all types of social and cultural events throughout the twentieth century. After the mid-1920s, the Rosenwald School could assume some of those civic roles—as a voting booth, a place for lectures, and the like. The more "controversial" events, such as when local blacks gathered to discuss anti-lynching laws in the 1910s and 1920s and later civil rights legislation in the 1950s and 1960s, could not occur at the school. These meetings took place at the church.

After World War II, the percentage of African Americans in the total population of Bledsoe County began a steady decrease to where today only about one percent of the population is African American. In order to retain local members, who began to attend services in Hamilton and

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National Park Service**

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Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church
Bledsoe County, TN.

Marion counties, because of the improved highway system of the 1970s, and to attract new members -- the congregation decided in 1978 to undertake a modernization and expansion of the church building. The interior received faux pine paneling, new electric lights, and air-conditioners. Added to the rear of the building was an ell that included a Sunday school room, community hall, and indoor restrooms. Ten years later, a Chattanooga newspaper writer reported on the handful of devoted members who had kept Pikeville Chapel functioning as a religious and cultural center. In the Chattanooga Free-Press of March 26, 1989, Jan Galletta observed that "their smallness makes for special warmth, however. No churchgoer leaves Pikeville Chapel without having shaken hands with all who were present, nor without exchanging pleasantries over coffee and cake after services; those who miss morning worship can count of the whole congregation's prayers being offered to heal them." In 1997, the congregation rededicated the building by adding one missing element essential to its identity as a rural African-American church--a dedication stone that lists the original trustees of 1888 and well as the minister at that time, Rev. Charlie Mack. Thus, the present reached back to the past to give new meaning and a rededicated future to one of the oldest African-American buildings in Tennessee. These rituals of renewal and rededication are repeated every August when Pikeville Chapel is home to three African-American homecomings, those of the Bridgeman, Lawson, and Swafford families. This homecoming event reaffirms the special place that Pikeville Chapel AME Church plays in the African-American ethnic heritage of Bledsoe County.

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Section number 9 Page 8

Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church
Bledsoe County, TN.

9. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Galletta, Jan. "Images of Easter." *Chattanooga Free Press*, March 26, 1989.

Robnett, Elizabeth P. *Bledsoe County, Tennessee: A History*. Pikeville: private, 1996.

Robnett, Elizabeth P. "Pikeville Chapel Homecoming 1982." Address Given to Pikeville Chapel Church, 1982. Filed at Tennessee Rural African-American Church Project, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

Swafford, M. M., et al. v. Browder, Alexander, et al., July 3, 1889, Loose Papers, Bledsoe County Chancery Court, Pikeville, TN.

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Section number 10 Page 9

Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church
Bledsoe County, TN.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church is located on East Valley Road and is Parcel 52.1 on the attached Bledsoe County Tax Map 65

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundaries contain all of the property historically associated with the Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church.

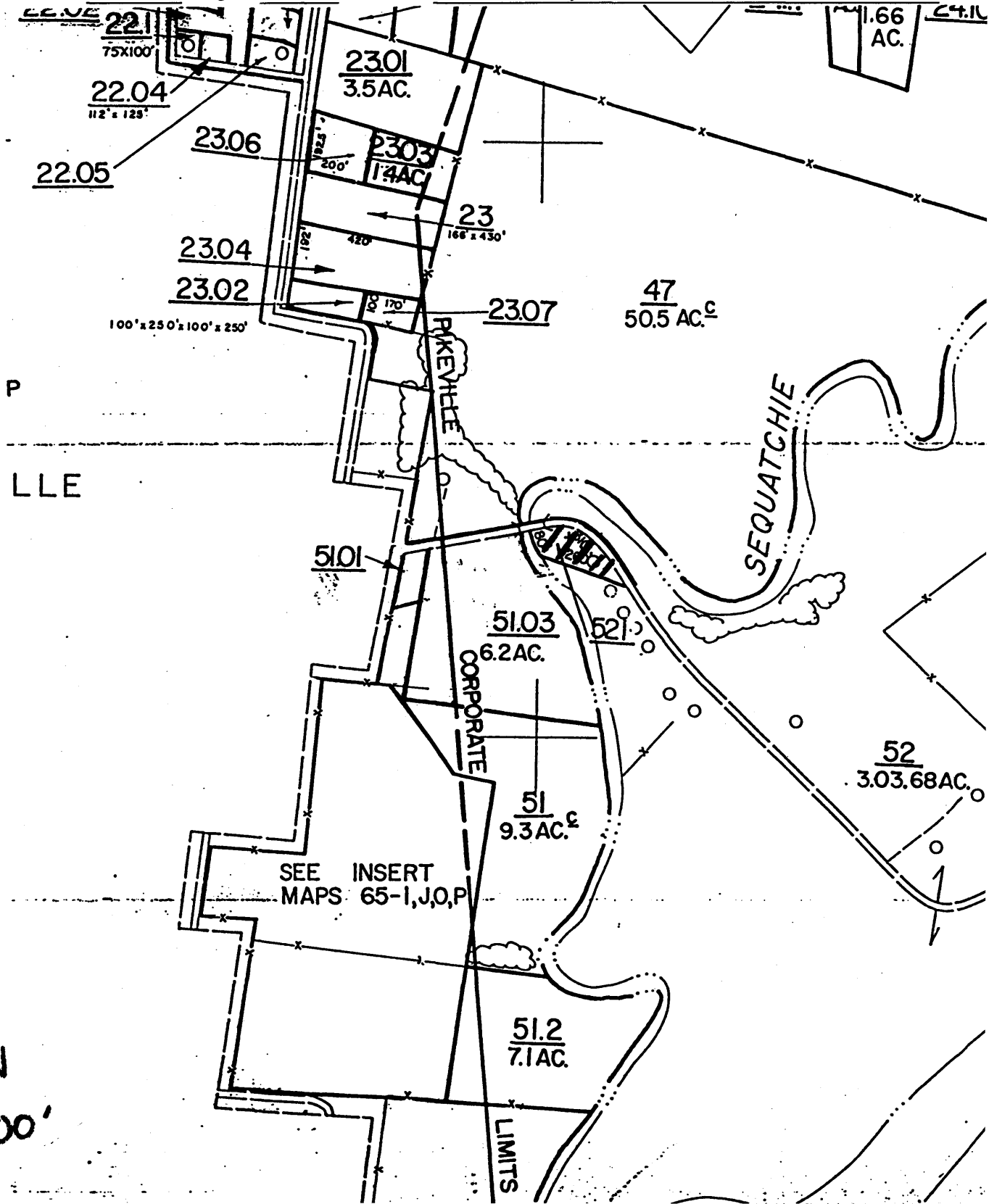
The Tax Map for this nomination has a scale 1" = 400'. The Tennessee State Board of Equalization prepares this scale tax map for rural areas. In the past, the Tennessee historical Commission has used this scale map for nominations and has found the 1" = 400' scale adequately meets our office needs. The Tennessee Historical Commission does not have the facilities to prepare maps to the scale preferred by the National Park Service.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church
Bledsoe County, TN.

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↑ N
1" = 400'

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National Park Service

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Section number photos Page 11

Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church
Bledsoe County, TN.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Pikeville Chapel AME Zion Church
Pikeville, Bledsoe Co., TN

Photos by: Carroll Van West
 MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
Date: June 1998
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
 2941 Lebanon Road
 Nashville, TN 37243

Historic photograph of church, east elevation, circa 1900
1 of 12

Dedication stone, facing south
2 of 12

North facade, facing south
3 of 12

West elevation, facing east
4 of 12

South elevation and east elevation, facing northwest
5 of 12

East elevation, facing west
6 of 12

North facade and east elevation, facing southwest
7 of 12

Altar railing and pulpit platform, facing west
8 of 12

Altar, pulpit, and sanctuary, facing south
9 of 12

Original flooring and pews, facing southwest

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Bledsoe County, TN.

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Sunday school room/Community Room, facing south

11 of 12

Kitchen, facing west

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