

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

382

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 St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 201 Welbourne Street

N/A not for publication

city or town Johnson City

N/A vicinity

state Tennessee

code TN

county Washington

code 179

zip code

37601

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. Hager
Signature of certifying official/Title

2/28/01
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Elson H. Beall

4.12.01

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	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.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious facility; church school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Italianate influences

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE; BRICK; Limestone

walls BRICK

roof Tin, Asphalt

other METAL

Narrative Description

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

See 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
ETHNIC HERITAGE: AFRICAN-AMERICAN
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1920-1950

Significant Dates

1920

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Janes, Hobart K. of Janes Construction Company, Johnson City, Tenn., builder

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.

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 Record #

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

St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Name of Property

Washington County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre Johnson City 198 SW

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 378540 4020180
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 MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date September 22, 2000
street & number PO Box 80, MTSU telephone 615.898.5877
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 St. Paul AME Zion Church (Rev. Leroy R. Blair, contact person)
street & number 201 Welbourne telephone 423.926.6021
city or town Johnson City state TN zip code 37601

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.

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Section number 7 Page 1

St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, TN

DESCRIPTION

St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church is at 201 Welbourne Street, Johnson City, Tennessee. Built in 1920, the two and one-half story brick church is capped with a gable roof covered in asphalt shingles, with a full basement brick foundation. The structure is highlighted by two interior brick chimneys, which rise from the gable roof at the west end of the building, and yellow brick lintels that adorn each window and door opening. The church is located near an industrial complex and borders a small residential neighborhood near downtown Johnson City.

The east facade has a gable-front three bay entrance, flanked by three-story brick towers topped by tin-covered pyramidal roofs. A concrete stoop with a stepped brick facing and flanking stairs marks the entrance to the church. The concrete stairs lead to a pair of wood paneled doors containing multi-pane fanlights. Both the stairs and wood doors date circa 1970. The doors, in turn, are flanked by Colonial Revival-styled electric light lanterns, which also date circa 1970. Original window openings with one-over-one, double-hung, wood sashes flank the doors. On the second story, the three bays are organized around a central window opening with two-over-two, double-hung, wood sashes, which is flanked by two window openings with one-over-one, double-hung, wood sashes. Centered above the second-story bay is a four-pane bull's eye window, highlighted by stone keystones at four evenly spaced points in the circle. Except for two characteristics, the three-story brick towers are identical. Both have one window opening for every story that contain one-over-one, double-hung, wood sashes. The towers are highlighted with Italianate-styled bracketed cornices and are topped by tin-covered pyramidal roofs. The south tower, however, contains the bell cupola (the bell is extant), which is comprised of Italianate-styled wood squared posts with balustrade supporting a bracketed pyramidal roof. In addition, the south tower is the location of the church's concrete marker, located at the first story southeast corner. The marker reads: "A.M.E. Zion Church/1920/Rev. D.G. Moose, A. B. /Pastor/Sit Lux."

The north elevation has eight symmetrical window openings, on both the first and second stories, with one-over-one, double-hung, wood sashes. The windows on the first story, however, are topped with yellow brick lintels while the windows on the second story do not have colored brick lintels. In addition, the fourth bay from the west on the first story contains an original door opening, with a single light transom. The transom is original but the door is a replacement security door circa 1970.

The west elevation is the rear of the building. It has two symmetrically placed window openings with one-over-one wood sashes on both the first and second stories. Centered above in the gable end is a window opening with one-over-one, double-hung, wood sashes. Resting on concrete block platforms at the basement level are two air conditioning units, installed circa 1980. At that time, four window openings at the basement level were bricked in.

The south elevation has a general symmetrical appearance, but the number of window openings varies from story to story. The south elevation contains the only outside access to the basement.

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St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, TN

The basement story has five openings out of an original seven, with several changes to the west side of the elevation.

At the southwest end is a doorway entrance topped by a yellow brick lintel; the door is a replacement wood door circa 1980. A straight concrete staircase supported by metal posts and accompanied by a metal railing, rises from the ground at the basement level to the first story. Architectural evidence suggests that this staircase is a replacement staircase, and members of the congregation believe that it was installed circa 1970. The replacement of the staircase also appears to have affected two window openings, which were bricked in, probably circa 1970. The remaining four window openings, on both the first and second floors, on the east side of the south elevation remain largely in their original condition. A shared lintel connects a double light casement window with the primary basement entrance, which is identified at the street level by a low concrete wall. The double doors of the primary basement entrance, however, are replacement doors circa 1980. On the east side of the doors is another double-light casement window and a single light window.

The sanctuary generally possesses a high degree of architectural integrity, with many original features still intact. These include the wood floors, wood six paneled doors, a two-level wood pulpit and choir platform, wood altar rail, wood pulpit chairs, and the original wood wall and floor balcony, which is supported by original metal posts. The sanctuary is illuminated by seven sets of brass and glass electric lights, which date to at least circa 1940 according to parishioners.

Two sections of wood pews, with eight pews in each row, flank a central aisle that leads from the entrance to the pulpit. The wood railing of the pulpit is original as is the vertical beaded board platform. The pulpit raises approximately three feet and is accessible by flanking flights of three wood steps. Reached by flanking flights of five steps, the choir platform has three levels, and is located beneath a large arched recessed opening in the west wall of the sanctuary. A wood cross, date unknown, is centrally located on the west wall behind the choir. Flanking the pulpit and choir platforms are two original wood doors that lead into the pastor's office, on the north side, and to the choir room, on the south side. Both rooms retain their original size and function, but while the original baseboards and flooring survive, the plaster walls have been covered with paneling circa 1980.

At the east end of the sanctuary are two original central doors, which lead to a small vestibule. On either side are original wood doors that lead to the staircases that provide access to the balcony. At the southeast and northeast corners are two open spaces that are used for Sunday school rooms. The northeast room retains plaster walls, wood baseboards, and wood floors. The southeast room has original floors and an original chalkboard, but the walls are covered with paneling circa 1980.

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St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, TN

The original wood balcony is an exceptional element in this building. It wraps around the entire sanctuary in a horseshoe-like shape, with the closed end at the east end of the building while the open end faces the west. The balcony retains original beaded board walls and floors and has three levels on the north and south sides. The balcony also has its original pews: sets of eight pews on both the north and south sides and a single set of pews on the east side.

At the northwest, southwest, northeast and southeast corners of the balcony level are original wood doors that open into small Sunday school rooms. These rooms retain their original plaster walls, wood floors, and wood baseboards.

The basement retains much of its original spacing and its concrete floor, but the walls and posts have been covered with faux-pine paneling circa 1980. The basement was modernized, circa 1980, with the installation of a new kitchen, central heat and air, fluorescent lighting, and new restrooms for men and women.

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St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, TN

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church in Johnson City, Washington County, Tennessee, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in the African-American ethnic heritage of Johnson City, especially in the areas of religion and social history, and under Criterion C as an architecturally significant and the most extant example of historic ecclesiastical architecture within the African-American community.

The congregation of St. Paul A. M. E. Zion church dates before the end of the 1870s. In 1860, Washington County had 297 free black residents, the fourth highest number of free black residents of any Tennessee county. Whites also owned 952 slaves in the county. Black missionary activity in the African-American community of Washington County dates to the years immediately following the Civil War. Three churches, the Disciples of Christ, the Missionary Baptists, and the A. M. E. Zion were particularly active.

The Disciples of Christ, or Christian Church, had established a significant presence among urban free blacks and slaves in Nashville during the late 1820s and 1830s; during the 1850s separate black and white Christian churches had been established in Nashville. In Washington County, members of the Disciples of Christ established Bethel Christian Church, an African-American congregation in Jonesborough, the county seat of Washington, in 1866, as well as a rural Christian Church that survived until circa 1960. In Johnson City, the Disciples established a church in 1868-1869, now known as West Main Street Christian Church. Missionary Baptists formed a church in Jonesborough soon after the end of the Civil War and in Johnson City their efforts to organize a church date between 1872 and 1875. This Johnson City congregation later became known as Thankful Baptist Church (NR to be submitted 2001).

Among the northern black churches, the A.M.E. Zion Church had been particularly aggressive in North Carolina in creating new congregations among the freed people, and North Carolina missionaries came to East Tennessee and established several A.M.E. Zion churches throughout the region between 1865 and 1875. In Washington County, the denomination established St. Paul A.M.E. Zion in Johnson City, Jonesborough A.M.E. Zion in Jonesborough, and Limestone A.M.E. Zion in Limestone.

At the time of the Civil War, Johnson City was nothing more than a railroad stop known as Johnson's Depot. It received a charter as Johnson City in December 1869. According to a 1941 interview with early African-American Baptist preacher Horace Leftwich, the Disciples of Christ, A.M.E. Zion, and the Baptist congregations lacked the members and the money to build their own church building. As a result, they shared an old log house on Roan Hill, now 1303 Buffalo Street, on what was then the southern outskirts of the town during the 1870s.

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St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, TN

On June 21, 1878, P.P.C. Nelson and Elizabeth Nelson sold three-fourths of an acre atop Science Hill for \$25.00 to the trustees named as Alfred Hyder, John Cole, Lewis Haines, George Kincaide, and Alfred Lyle to be used "as a place of Divine worship" for the A.M.E. Zion church. Although local historian Mary Henderson-Alexander and Dr. Donald Schaffer of Milligan College have not found conclusive evidence that the trustees built a church building on this new lot, their assumption, based on scattered records and oral testimony, is that surely they purchased the land for that purpose, even if they only built a small log church.

Over the next two decades, especially after the construction of a railroad spur line from Johnson City to mines at Cranberry, North Carolina, the town grew as new industries and businesses located along the railroad line. Census records indicate that by 1890, 20 percent of the town's population was African-American. To meet the needs of a larger congregation, on January 21, 1890, the church exchanged its 1878 property for a new location, the present one, on the corner of Welbourne Street and Millard Street, a block from the railroad tracks. They constructed a frame church (not extant) for services.

After the successful expansion of the Clinchfield Railroad through upper East Tennessee, the establishment of the National Soldiers Home (Mountain Home), and the creation of a state teachers college (now East Tennessee State University) in the first eleven years of the twentieth century, Johnson City experienced significant industrial and residential growth. Events after World War I accelerated the boom, as the General Shale Products Corporation opened a large brickmaking company in 1919. The construction of the new St. Paul A.M.E. Zion church building in 1920 was due to the increased wealth of the African-American middle class in Johnson City and the population increases within the city's black community. The population boom of the World War I era was additionally fueled by the construction of huge rayon plants in nearby Elizabethton. By 1930, Johnson City was the ninth largest city in Tennessee. St. Paul A.M.E. Zion was the only A.M.E. Zion church in the city and boasted the largest number of members of any black church.

The congregation constructed its new sanctuary in 1920 to serve two purposes: 1) to be a large, architecturally impressive (although conservative in style) landmark within the black community, large enough to serve its growing number of members; and 2) to provide a meeting place for various community groups.

To meet the first goal, the new sanctuary's brick material with its twin Italianate-influenced three-story towers created an imposing presence for residents within the community. Herein lies the architectural significance of St. Paul's. The builder of the church was Hobart K. Janes of the Janes Construction Company in Johnson City. Although the architect is not known, the assumption is that the Janes company, as builder, was also the designer of the building. Using a construction company, rather than an architect, may help to explain the general conservative statement of the architectural style. Yet, the building is the most extant, and architecturally compelling, example of

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St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, TN

African-American ecclesiastical architecture in the city. Located parallel to the Southern Railway, which bisected the downtown, the building was also a visible landmark of pride and accomplishment to travelers, both white and black, to Johnson City. The loftiness of the interior and the craftsmanship of the wood carpentry also spoke to the local pride of place and strength of faith held by many within the African-American community during the Jim Crow era. The many extant features of the interior distinguish St. Paul's from the earlier Thankful Baptist Church, which was built in 1912. While both St. Paul's and Thankful have similar Italianate influences, especially evident in their dual towers, St. Paul's interior has an extremely high degree of integrity in its interior design and craftsmanship. In the 1990s, the owners of the Thankful Baptist Church building installed a dropped ceiling and closed the balcony, two improvements that lessened the architectural significance of the building.

To complement its status as an architectural landmark in the African-American community, St. Paul's seating on the main floor, together with that of the balcony, made the church building the largest single gathering point available for blacks in Johnson City at this time. Even when the city added an auditorium to Langston High School, the segregated African-American high school, in 1925, the auditorium was not as large as the auditorium of St. Paul's. Thus, the church became the preferred place for concerts, lectures, and other community events.

The basement was used throughout the week to provide social programs to the black community. In fact, it was clearly designed for that function since it contained its own outside entrance/exit, accessible directly from the street, and visitors did not have to enter the main sanctuary to enter the basement. Circa 1946, members of the congregation organized the city's first African-American Boys Club and the Jackie Robinson Boys Club at the church. The church furthered sponsored the activities of the boys. The Progressive League, an African-American organization devoted to civil rights, was associated with St. Paul's from its creation in 1954 through the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1960s. Dr. Eugene S. Kilgore, a graduate of Meharry Medical School, a local dentist, and a prominent St. Paul's member, was one of the organization's founding members. The group fought for school desegregation, fair hiring practices, and open public housing in Johnson City. By circa 1960 the church held meetings of the local chapter of the NAACP. During the mid-1960s, after the passage of the Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, the church was a place where voter registration workshops were held.

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St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, TN

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Alexander, Mary. Letter to Carroll Van West, October 15, 2000. St. Paul A.M.E. Church File, National Register Files, Center for Historic Preservation, MTSU.

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Goodspeed, Westin, ed., *History of Tennessee*. Chicago and Nashville: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1887.

Lamon, Lester C. *Black Tennesseans, 1900-1930*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977.

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

Powerful Artifacts: A Guide to Surveying and Documenting Rural African-A.M.E. Churches. Murfreesboro: Center for Historic Preservation, 2000.

Schaffer, Dr. Donald. Letter to Carroll Van West, October 3, 2000. St. Paul A.M.E. Church File, National Register Files, Center for Historic Preservation, MTSU.

Washington County Deed Book 46, pp. 483-484 (June 21, 1878). Washington County Courthouse, Jonesborough.

Washington County Deed Book 59, pp. 278-279 (January 21, 1890). Washington County Courthouse, Jonesborough.

Washington County Deed Book 146, pp. 469-470 (February 25, 1921). Washington County Courthouse, Jonesborough

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St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, TN

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church is at 201 Welbourne Street, Johnson City, Tennessee, designated as Lot 17 on the attached Washington County Tax Map 46-K (scale 1" = 100'). This urban lot contains all of the historic property associated with the St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church.

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St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, Tennessee
Photos by: Carroll Van West
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
Date: March 2000
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

East facade, facing southwest
1 of 19

Dedication stone, east facade, facing west
2 of 19

Detail, bell cupola, east facade, facing southwest
3 of 19

North elevation, facing south
4 of 19

North and west elevations, facing southeast
5 of 19

West and south elevations, facing northeast
6 of 19

South elevation, facing north
7 of 19

Sanctuary, facing west
8 of 19

Sanctuary from pulpit, facing east
9 of 19

Pulpit and choir platform, facing southwest
10 of 19

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St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
Washington County, TN

Choir room, first floor, facing east
11 of 19

Pastor's office, first floor, facing north
12 of 19

Sunday school room, southeast corner, first floor, facing north
13 of 19

Balcony, facing west
14 of 19

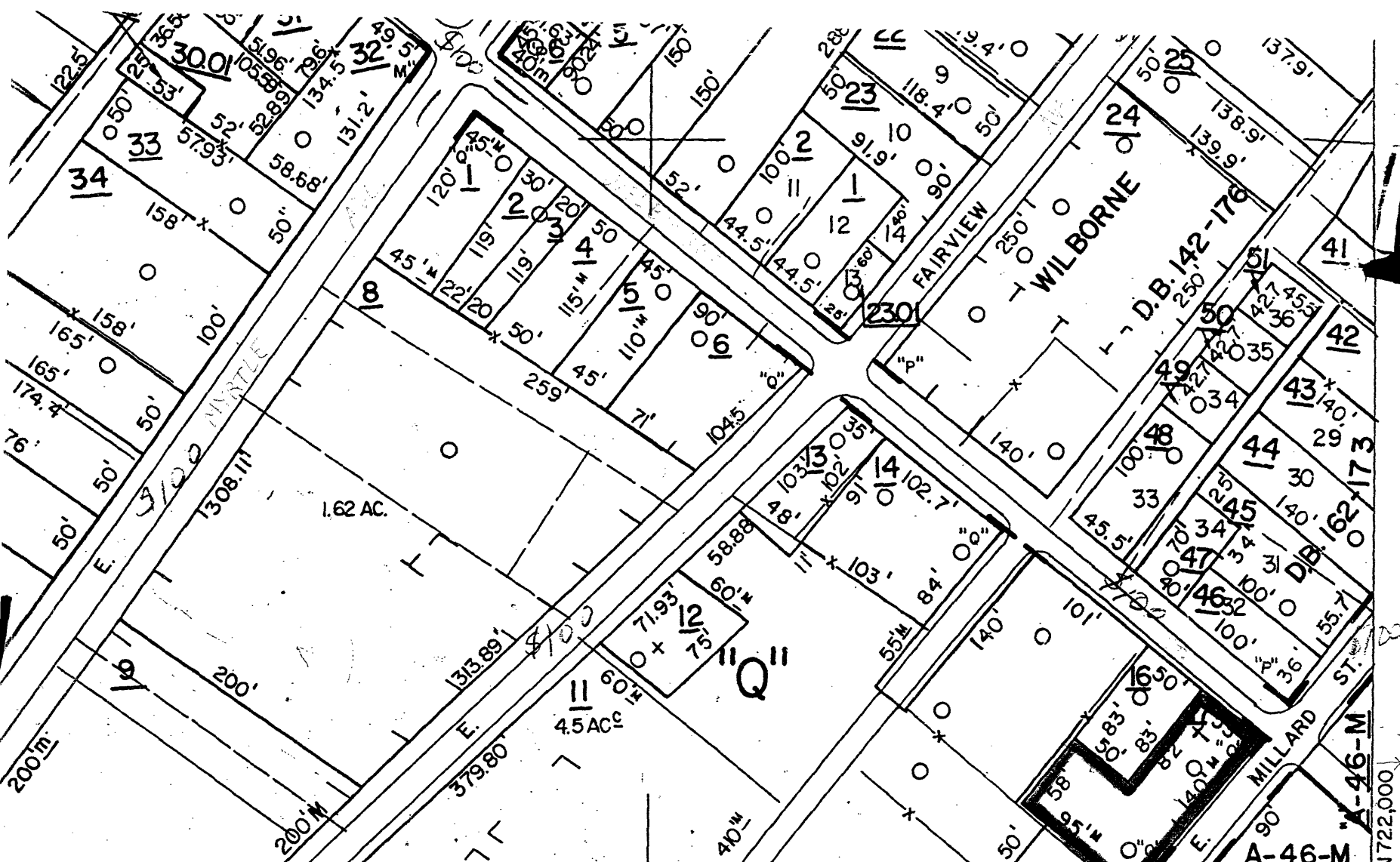
Balcony, facing southeast
15 of 19

Balcony, south wall, facing east
16 of 19

Sunday school room, northwest corner, balcony level, facing south
17 of 19

Basement, facing northeast
18 of 19

Restrooms, basement, facing south
19 of 19



— REVISIONS —		
99	6	11
	7	12
	8	13
	9	14
	10	15

JOHNSON CITY WASHINGTON COUNTY		MAP No
SCALE: 1" = 100'	DISTRICT: 9	46-K <i>Group Q</i>
DATE OF FLYING: JANUARY, 1967		
DATE COMPILED: AUGUST, 1967		



E 3,074,000

E 3,074,500 N 722,000

St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church
201 Welbourne St., at E. Millard St.
Johnson City, Tennessee

parcel 17

Washington County property tax map 46-K, group Q

Assessor's Office
Washington County Courthouse
Jonesborough, Tennessee