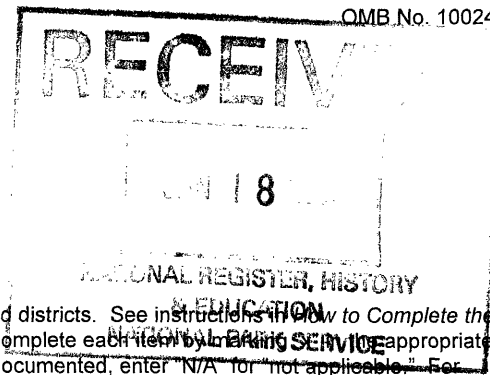


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

140



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by entering 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 Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church

other names/site number Mt. Zion Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

2. Location

street & number 105 North Greenwood

N/A not for publication

city or town Union City

N/A vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Obion code 131 zip code 38261

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.)

Harold D. Hayes JR  
Signature of certifying official/Title

1/11/2001  
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  
State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

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:)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

for  
Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

2/16/01  
Date of Action

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.)

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

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

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.)

Historic and Architectural Resources of Union City, TN, 1850-1947

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS: Religious Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, CONCRETE

walls BRICK; CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD; GLASS; METAL

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)

ARCHITECTURE  
ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

**Period of Significance**

1896-1940

**Significant Dates**

1896, 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 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

Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
Name of Property

Obion County, Tennessee  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** Approximately one acre Union City 427 NE

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>316720</u>	<u>4033180</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

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.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Nathan Poe and Carroll Van West  
organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date July 11, 1997  
street & number P.O. Box 80 telephone 615.532.1558  
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

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## Additional Documentation

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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.)

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## Property Owner

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

name Contact Person: Mrs. Willie Williams  
street & number 2313 Norward Drive telephone 901.885.9212  
city or town Union City state TN zip code 38261

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**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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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
Obion County, TN

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## DESCRIPTION

The Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (Mt. Zion CME Church) in Union City, Obion County, Tennessee, is located at the corner of North Greenwood Street and East College Street. A simple gabled-end basilica design, the structure has served the needs of the surrounding African-American neighborhood since its construction in 1896. The building, both interior and exterior, is largely intact, and any changes over the last one hundred years are either minor, reversible, or obvious additions to the original building. The building combines two visibly different parts, the original 1896 sanctuary, and a rear section, the community building and classroom, built with concrete block circa 1940. The sanctuary boasts an all brick construction, both the foundation and the exterior walls liberally following the common American bond of anywhere from five to ten stretcher rows to each header row. Asphalt shingles cover the huge roof, which is pitched at a sharp angle of about 45 degrees. A small clipped gable perches atop the huge roof on the east facade, and a large double-hipped roof protrudes from the rear of the building. A bell tower hides the clipped gable's angle, but the clipped gable on the front facade indicates its existence. A pyramid roof crowns the bell tower, and tar paper shingles cover its walls. The builders used masonry to create the minimal, yet effective ornamentation of the east facade, brickwork doubling as wall and decoration. The combination of red brick construction and the white painted wood of the gothic window frames creates a contrast that, when combined with the other elements of the building, makes the Mt. Zion CME Church a symmetrical vernacular building that is both simple and visually engaging.

The west, and primary, facade contains five openings, four on the first floor, and one located in the middle of the pediment created by the gabled roof. Five brick pilasters divide the exterior of the first floor into three sections, imparting to the building a slight classical bearing. The two outer sections, which contain the openings for the two separate entrances, are symmetrical and larger than the middle section. The middle section, itself divided into two sections by three brick pilasters, contains two windows. An unbroken corbel table lying directly above, and flush with, the five brick pilasters tops the three sections. From a distance the brickwork, when viewed in combination with the pilasters, resembles an entablature. A descending three course unbroken brick corbelling lies under and supports the corbel table. The masons embedded the first course, all header bricks, directly under the corbel table, slightly below the level of the raised brick of the pilasters and corbel table. The second row, all stretchers, also rises above the facade's surface, but the bricks lie slightly lower than the headers of the first row. Projecting out an inch from the surface of the facade, but an inch below the second row, the final row, consisting of stretchers positioned to alternate with the second row, finishes the pattern. The pattern of the corbelling

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Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
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breaks only when it meets the larger outcropping of a pilaster. The far left pilaster of the north section holds the cornerstone of the Mt. Zion CME Church. Painted white, this cement block reads:

MT. ZION  
COL. M.E. CHURCH  
ERECTED BY  
REV. W.E. FARMER  
1896

An opening sits directly in the middle of the northern (left) section of the facade. Serving as both window and entrance, this large gothic-revival opening houses a set of double glass doors topped by a gothic pointed arch transom. A curved "V" wooden tracery divides the arch, creating two smaller, lower pointed arches on either side of the sash, and an asymmetrical diamond between the arms of the "V." A double row of vertically laid headers that lie flush with the facade act as voisoirs around the arch. The white painted wooden frame and slim archivolt of the gothic windows on this facade and the other elevations are original.

A set of metal framed single pane glass security doors, circa 1990, replaced the original wooden doors to better protect the building from unwanted intruders. Concrete steps and a sidewalk lead from the entrance to the street. Although the present glass doors obviously do not add to the historic appearance of the church, they do not significantly subtract from the facade, either. Another alteration, circa 1940, involved the middle section of the facade. It was split into two smaller sections by a brick pilaster and each section houses a two-over-four, double-hung, light window. The exposed lintel, sill, wooden frame, and sashes are all painted white. Originally, the middle pilaster ran up to the head of the two windows. One, large, semi-circle arched transom sat atop both windows and connected them, but bricks now fill in the space the arched window once occupied. When masons filled in the semi-circle, they also extended the middle pilaster, which originally stopped at the bottom of the semi-circle, to reach up to the corbelling, so as to match with the other, original pilasters. These alterations took place at the same time that the community building and classroom section was added to the rear of the church. The bell was removed from the bell tower and placed on a concrete slab located in front of the church.

The northern section of the front facade is identical to the southern section, however, a sidewalk runs from the concrete steps of the northern entrance to the street. Above the first floor, the pediment of the clipped gable roof is unadorned except for a round opening situated directly in the middle of the pediment.

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A double row of voisoirs surrounds the circle. Originally this opening held a stain glass window, but when the window was broken a white painted piece of wood was used to cover the opening circa 1950. The roof overhangs the facade by about a foot. The shingle molding and fascia are both unadorned and painted white, characteristic of all the visible wooden details of the church. The western face of the bell tower, with its pyramid roof and tar paper covered walls, perches atop the clipped gable.

Both the sanctuary and the circa 1940 community building and classroom comprise the south elevation. Four identical windows, symmetrically placed, provide light to the sanctuary. These four-over-four single hung lancet windows lack the wooden "V" tracery of the front facade windows, but instead are vertically divided down the middle by a wooden sash. The lancet arch forces the top two panes of each window to follow its arched course, creating two quarter-circle panes at the top of each window. The wood frames and sills of the windows are all painted white. Three rows of vertically laid headers form the voisoirs of each lancet arch. The top row, farthest from the window opening, projects an inch from the surface of the building, highlighting the gothic arches. On the far western edge of the roof line, the southern side of the square bell tower projects into the skyline. On the first floor, a furnace pipe extends from the interior and runs up the side of the building between the two middle lancet windows. A similar pipe runs up the side of the building between the two most western windows. Looking to the far eastern edge of the sanctuary section, the smaller second hip of the rear hipped roof created for the recessed pulpit on the interior extends from the main roof line. Connecting directly to and flush with the sanctuary, the one-story circa 1940 addition projects out from the rear of the sanctuary. Above the roof line of the extreme western edge of the addition, the cemented-in point of a lancet window of the original church is just barely visible. The window, almost wholly obscured by the addition, was part of the wall projecting out from the sanctuary that forms the interior's recessed pulpit. A window opening sits in the middle of the nondescript white painted concrete block addition. Containing a single hung two-over-two window, the opening provides light to the southern side of the community room and the classroom.

A small brick chimney protrudes from the low sloped pyramid roof on the far eastern edge of the circa 1940 addition.

The east (rear) elevation, composed of both the double hip roof of the sanctuary and the circa 1940 addition, contains four bays – three windows and one door. The brick chimney, located in the southwestern corner of the pyramid roof, is visible. The door, which leads into the community building, sits four feet from the southern edge of the building. A featureless door, ornament is likewise absent from its framing. A square window opening containing a one-over-one double-hung window lies approximately three feet to the right of the rear exit. Two small horizontally oriented rectangular one light fixed pane windows lie near the northern edge of the building, about

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five feet up from the ground. Behind the pyramid roof of the circa 1940 addition, is the double hipped roof created by the recessed pulpit in the interior of the church. The second hip, smaller than the first, projects out from the first, creating an irregular roof line.

The north elevation combines the two sections of the church. The sanctuary section is identical in arrangement and appearance to its southern counterpart on the other side of the building, once again stressing the simplicity and symmetry of its design. The circa 1940 community building only contains two bays. One square two-over-two fixed pane window is located in the middle of the addition. Unframed, the builders placed the window directly into the concrete block of the addition. Another door lies about ten feet to the right of the window, near the area where the 1940s addition meets the original sanctuary. Visible behind the metal storm door is an original six panel wooden door. The cemented point of a lancet window is visible just above the door and the addition's pyramid roof line. The window, almost entirely covered by the addition, was part of the wall projecting out from the sanctuary that forms the interior's recessed pulpit.

The interior is simple yet powerful in its combination of space and ornament. A small narthex, created by a wooden partition added circa 1940, leads into the sanctuary, or nave, of the church. The partition, which runs the width of the church, is divided into four sections. Looking at the partition from the sanctuary, the northernmost section provides access to the sanctuary through four paneled double doors, and leads directly to the northern set of double glass doors of the front facade. Church members and the minister use the next two sections to the left for office space. Modern desks, cabinets, and shelves line the walls of these small offices. Located directly behind the two-over-four single hung windows of the front facade, and following the dividing line of the pilaster between the two windows, each office looks out onto North Greenwood Street. The windows offer the only direct light source to the two offices, for without ceilings, there is no space for hanging ceiling lights. The partitions, both interior and between the sanctuary and the interior wall of the east facade, only run up to a height of about ten feet, not reaching the height of the ceiling. The final, and southernmost section, offers access to the southernmost entrance/exit of the front facade, although it does not seem to be used as often as the northern entrance.

The sanctuary encompasses, save the area set aside later by the partition, the entirety of the original structure. A large open space, the hipped ceiling stands as the most prominent and notable feature of the church's interior. Entirely original, the hipped ceiling is approximately thirty feet above the wooden floor, making the already large space of the sanctuary seem even larger. Hung from the rafters of the huge roof are hundreds of long narrow wooden planks, which form the ceiling. Running vertically, west to east, these planks form three connected ceiling sections. The middle section, the largest, runs parallel with the floor, and the two side sections angle down from the middle section, meeting with, and diffusing the weight of the ceiling upon the firm brickwork of



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the exterior walls. All differing in width, the boards of the tongue and groove ceiling create a pattern that closely resembles the appearance of the flooring directly below, albeit painted white. The hipped tongue and groove ceiling of the church, unaltered and visible, exists as a now seldom seen direct link both to the original builders, church members, and a disappearing vernacular building technique.

Four historic Victorian light fixtures hang from the hipped ceiling; they were adapted for electricity from their original gas use circa 1920. Identical fixtures, all four are branched metal fixtures with modified sixteen light eloctoliers. A large sixteen-panel angled open shade directs the light from the sixteen bulbs to the floor and is decorated with a castleated triangle pattern, which runs around the circumference of the shade. Two additional, largely decorative shades attach directly to the metal pole, and four chains, spaced around the circumference of the shade, connect to the main stem and act as trim, somewhat obscuring the visibility of the main load-carrying metal stem. Individual shades do not cover the individual bulbs, and with the light angling shade, it does not appear that lamp shades ever adorned each bulb.

One and one-half inch wide hardwood planks form the tongue and groove flooring of the church, a typical vernacular solution for inexpensive but attractive flooring. Contemporary carpet now covers the main lanes of traffic down the aisles and around the pulpit, but the original wood flooring is still uncovered under and around the pews. The classic "scroll" pattern end-type finish off the sides of the flat, reclining back pews, date to the church's construction in 1896. Gothic inspired panels are attached to the ends of each pew, repeating the Gothic theme of the windows. Following the pattern of the ceiling, the basilica plan divides the pews into three sections, creating two carpeted middle aisles. Near the front of the church, the pulpit extends out with a rounded-off rectangular raised platform some ten to twelve feet from the rear wall. Carpeted as well, a turned spindle communion rail surrounds the extended pulpit, offering access to the pulpit only at the rear edges. Another smaller platform rises out of the middle of the original raised platform, upon which three Gothic style wooden chairs sit, positioned to reflect the Protestant faith's holy trinity. The middle chair, representing God the Father, is slightly larger and taller than its two counterparts, which represent the Son and the Holy Ghost. An elaborate pedestal type lecturn dating from 1896 stands in front of the three gothic chairs. Balanced upon a hexagonal base, a hexagonal table tops the paneled wooden stem, replete with decorative wreath and festoon designs, as well as a series of gothic arches with quatrefoils etched into them. Gothic style flying buttresses reach out from the stem to support the table, connected to the points of the hexagon. Behind the three chairs, the pulpit recesses from the main exterior wall, rising another level from the second platform. The double hipped roof of the exterior's rear roof covers the interior's recessed pulpit area. The choir uses this area as a choir loft. Two windows, one placed in both of the recessed interior side walls (or the projecting walls of the exterior) were once visible from the exterior, but

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Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
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are now mostly concealed by the circa 1940 addition. These windows are identical to the other windows of the sanctuary, single hung four-over-four lancet windows.

A pointed arch four paneled wooden door and window combination originally offered a rear exit from the church, but now offers interior access to the circa 1940 community building and classroom. The framing of the pointed arch repeats the curved wooden "V" tracery pattern of the front facade's windows, once again creating two smaller, lower pointed arches on either side of the sash, and an asymmetrical diamond that lies between the arms of the curved "V." The addition is constructed of concrete blocks with a concrete floor and a drop ceiling. A kitchen and serving area occupies the southwest corner of the room, the rest of the area devoted to fellowship and Sunday school space. A small furnace, also located in the extreme southwestern corner, provides heat through ceiling ducts that push heat into the sanctuary through a grate located to the right of the pulpit.

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Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, known since 1956 as the Mt. Zion Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A as a significant building and community center for African-American ethnic identity in Union City, and under Criterion C for its architectural significance. It meets the registration standards for historic churches as listed in the Historic and Architectural Resources of Union City, TN, 1850-1947 Multiple Property Nomination.

The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, now known as the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church or the C.M.E., is one of the most important African-American Christian organizations to be established in Tennessee in the post-Reconstruction era. In 1870, led by Bishops William Miles and Richard Vanderhorst, a number of African-American members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, announced at a Memphis church conference that they were forming a separate denomination to be called the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. The new C.M.E. church acknowledged its past ties and association with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which made it more conservative than other newly created African-American congregations during the Reconstruction era. Competing congregations, for instance, referred to the C.M.E. as the "kitchen church" or "slavery church" because they perceived that C.M.E. members and leaders were still too closely tied to their former white masters. But the C.M.E. church was one of the first to be developed by blacks for blacks, most of whom were former slaves. It placed its major church-supported school, Lane College (NR 7/02/87) in Jackson and eventually located its major boards and publications in Jackson and Memphis, where they remain today. However, as historian Paul K. Conkin recently observed, the C.M.E.'s friendly separation with the segregated Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and its reliance on white patronage early in its existence, "may have hurt its growth." (1) It is the smallest African-American denomination in Tennessee, with its greatest numbers located in West Tennessee where it typically appealed to the emerging black middle-class of professionals, merchants, and skilled workers.

These groups of people were obviously drawn to a large and soon thriving C.M.E. church in Union City. This congregation dates circa 1870 as it was formed soon after the split from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which was the largest white congregation then in Obion County. The congregation located its first sanctuary in the middle of the emerging African-American neighborhood of Union City. Within a generation of emancipation, the congregation had grown in size, and possessed enough wealth, to replace the earlier frame church with a large brick, and for the black community in Union City, an architecturally-imposing sanctuary. To celebrate the first 25 years of the church's existence, the congregation decided to build a new church building.

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Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
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Dedicated in 1896 and built by congregation members under the guidance of Reverend W. E. Palmer, the completed Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was the largest brick building yet constructed for African-American religious services in Union City. The church and the surrounding lots became a place for community meetings and when a segregated public school for African Americans was constructed in the early twentieth century, it was located on a lot across from the church. Perhaps another reason the congregation constructed the new building at this time is that a neighboring congregation, the Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, had just completed its own brick sanctuary (which was smaller in scale and more unadorned in its architecture) in 1895. Brown Chapel is extant, but has not been assessed for eligibility for the National Register. It too is a vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Revival, but the historical and architectural integrity of the Mt. Zion church makes Mt. Zion the town's oldest remaining architectural artifact of African-American craftsmanship of the late Victorian era.

The exterior and interior of the new Mt. Zion church reflected the needs, tastes, and affluence of its members. Meant to function as a meeting place for African-American Christians, the building lacked the added ornament and essentially superfluous adornment that many contemporary Anglo-Saxon churches normally possessed. Simple and spartan in overall effect, the church interior nevertheless possessed a wealth of Victorian era interior design features, especially the elegant craftsmanship of the pews, ceiling, and pulpit, which spoke to the congregation's pride and achievements after one generation of emancipation. The church interior reflects a cleanliness of spirit and statement of purpose that more elaborate churches often lack. The interior of the Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church makes as strong and clear a statement concerning its purpose and history as other, more elaborate, decorated church buildings do. It is the sole, largely unaltered example of African-American constructed Victorian architecture, in its case a Gothic Revival-influenced design, that is extant in Union City.

After the building's construction, the congregation continued to prosper and offered more community services as the twentieth century progressed. In 1917, the church served as a sponsor and advocate for the construction of a "modern" school for the city's African-American children. Miles School, a brick building built in 1917, was located directly across North Greenwood Street from the church. Standing virtually side-by-side, the two buildings jointly served as community centers for local African-American students and their parents. The Miles School location remained the site for the segregated black school of Union City, although the original school building was replaced by other brick school buildings in the 1950s and 1960s. The school site remains in use today. By the mid-1920s, the C.M.E. church statewide was actively involved in the civil rights protests of that era, especially the campaign against lynching, a horrendous practice that still continued in Obion County at that time.

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Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
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In the late 1930s, the congregation of Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Church decided that to better serve as a place for community gatherings, and to create classroom space in reaction to the popular Sunday School movement of the early twentieth century, it would build an addition for a

kitchen and classrooms. Times had been difficult during the Great Depression, however, and the best the congregation could manage was to build an unadorned concrete block addition, which was finished and in use circa 1940. The new addition allowed the church to expand its religious offerings to the community as well as serving as a meeting place for community events.

In 1956, the national leadership of the C.M.E. church, reacting to the growing civil rights movement, decided to change its name from the Colored Methodist Church to the Christian Methodist Church. Mt. Zion members, at that time, changed the name of their church to the Mt. Zion Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the name the congregation retains today.

## Endnotes:

1. Paul K. Conkin, "Evangelicals, Fugitives, and Hillbillies: Tennessee's Impact on American National Culture," *Tennessee History: The Land, the People, and the Culture*, ed. Carroll Van West (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 34.

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Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
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- Conkin, Paul K. "Evangelicals, Fugitives, and Hillbillies: Tennessee's Impact on American National Culture." In *Tennessee History: The Land, the People, and the Culture*, ed. Carroll Van West, 34. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998.
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**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 10

Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
Obion County, TN

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### **BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church is at 105 North Greenwood, Union City, Obion County, Tennessee, as marked on the attached Obion County Tax Map 49 I-D.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nominated property stands on its historic downtown lot, which contains all of the historic property associated with Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church.

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

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTOS Page 11

Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
Obion County, TN

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Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, Obion Co., TN

Photos by: Carroll Van West  
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Date: November 1996

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
2941 Lebanon Road  
Nashville, TN 37243

Exterior overview, west facade and north elevation, facing southeast  
1 of 18

Facade, facing east  
2 of 18

Cornerstone, facing northwest  
3 of 18

South elevation, facing northeast  
4 of 18

East elevation, facing northwest  
5 of 18

North elevation, circa 1940 addition, facing southeast  
6 of 18

North elevation, facing southeast  
7 of 18

Sanctuary, facing west  
8 of 18

Pew craftsmanship detail, facing south  
9 of 18

Ceiling, facing west  
10 of 18



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

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Mt. Zion Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
Obion County, TN

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Light fixture, facing west  
11 of 18

Pulpit and choir loft, facing east  
12 of 18

Pulpit and choir loft, facing northeast  
13 of 18

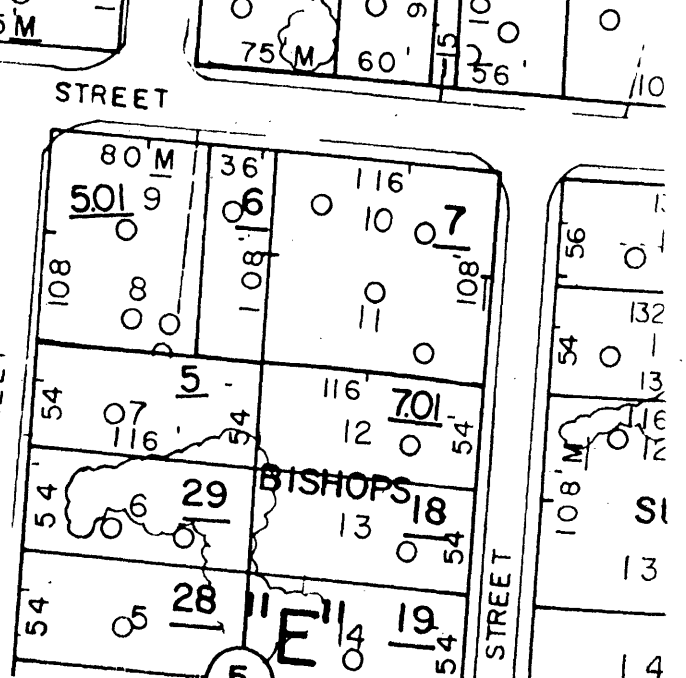
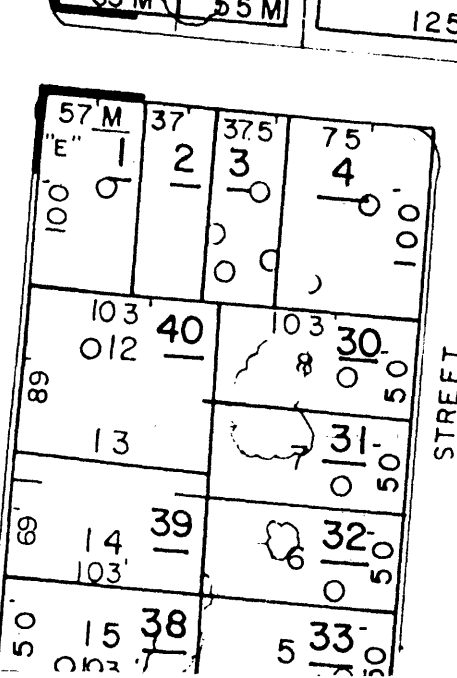
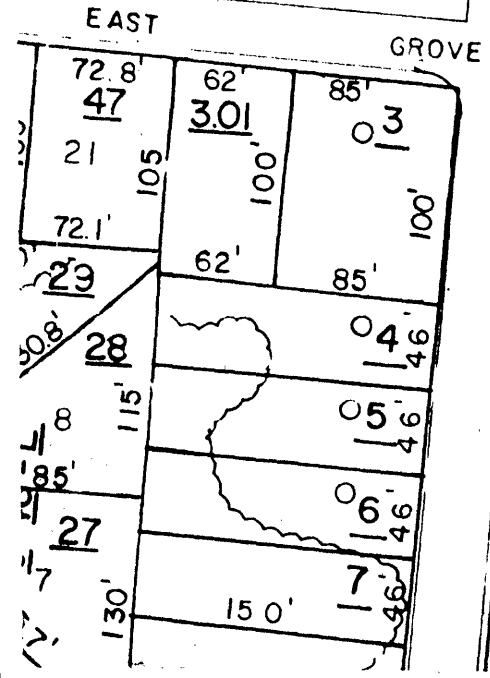
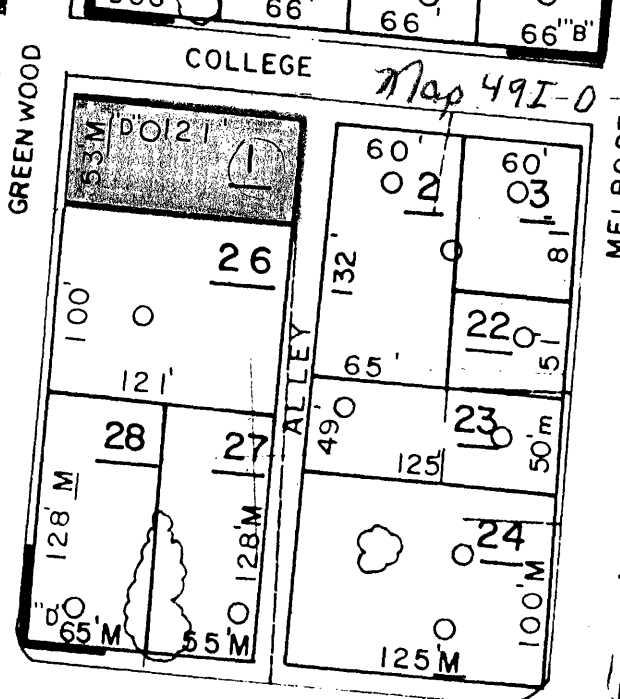
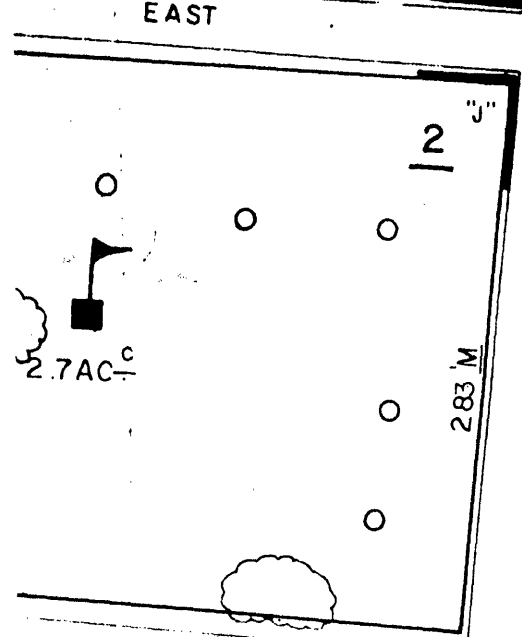
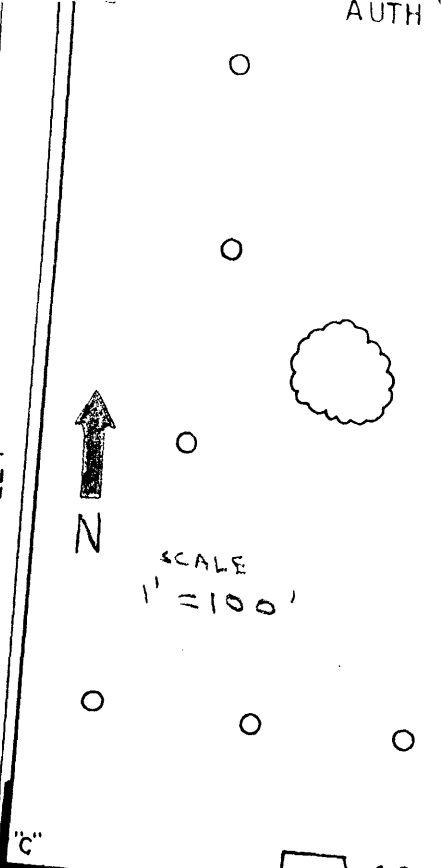
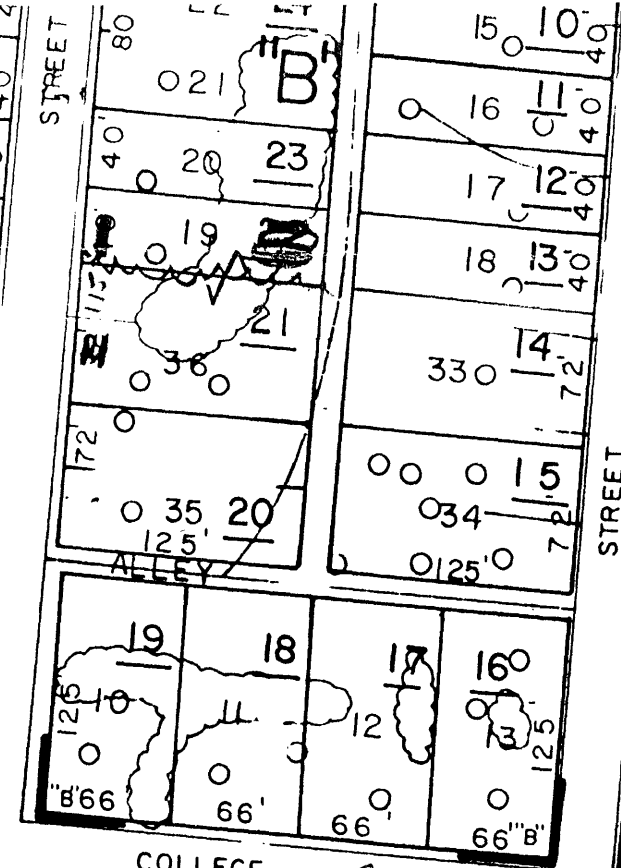
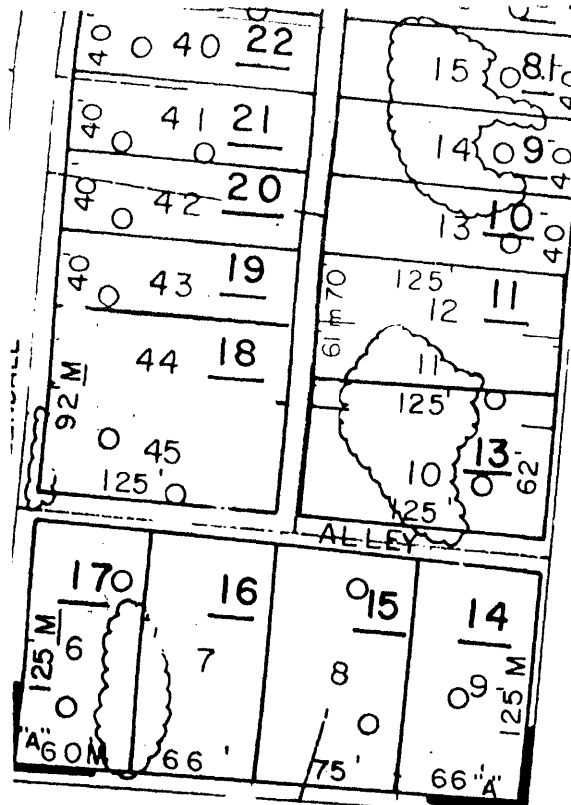
Pulpit, speaker's stand detail, facing northeast  
14 of 18

Pulpit, speaker's stand detail, facing east  
15 of 18

Partition and office, facing north  
16 of 18

Entrance, from circa 1940 addition to sanctuary, facing west  
17 of 18

Kitchen, circa 1940 addition, facing west  
18 of 18



Map 49I-0