

VLR-3/10/94 NRHP-6/3/94

53-140

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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" (or "N/A" 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 Ebenezer Baptist Churches

other names/site number VDHR File No. 53-140

2. Location

street & number NW quadrant of jot. SR 719 & SR 779 not far publication n/a

city or town Bloomfield vicinity x

state Virginia code VA county Loudoun code 107 sip code 22012

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Lyle C. Miller
Signature of certifying official

March 7 1994
Date

Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources
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 commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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 Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	buildings
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	objects
<u> 3 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: Religious facility
 FUNERARY Cemetery

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: Religious facility
 FUNERARY Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls STONE

roof METAL: tin

other WOOD

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.
x 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.)

- x A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
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

ART

Period of Significance ca. 1769 to ca. 1876

Significant Dates ca. 1769

ca. 1855

ca. 1876

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

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

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

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)
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:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7.2 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Table with 4 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Contains two rows of UTM coordinates.

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 Ann Miller Andrus
organization Virginia Department of Historic Resources date January 27, 1994
street & number 221 Governor Street telephone 804 786 3143
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

=====
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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Ebenezer Cemetery Company, Inc., % Alec Walsh, President
street & number 142 East Main Street telephone 703 338 5730
city or town Purcellville state VA zip code 22132

=====
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 listings. 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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

**Ebenezer Baptist Churches
Loudoun County, Virginia**

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The two churches known as the Old Ebenezer Baptist Church and the New Ebenezer Baptist Church sit side by side about 100 feet apart facing State Route 719 near Bloomfield in a rural area of southwestern Loudoun County. Both churches possess a high degree of architectural integrity and quality of design and workmanship. The Old Church, a well preserved vernacular stone building, may have been built before 1769. Apparently used by both Old School and New School Baptist congregations prior to 1855, its plain, unadorned interior is in keeping with Old School, or Primitive, Baptist practice. The New Church, built of stone and covered with stucco, is in the Greek Revival style and is thought to have been built ca. 1855 when the land on which it stands was deeded to trustees of the New School Baptist Church at Ebenezer. The interior of the New Church features a trompe l'oeil painting attributed to local artist Lucien W. Powell (1846-1930) as well as Victorian furniture and gas light fixtures. There are two cemeteries on the site, both surrounded by walls of native field stone. The older cemetery, just to the west of the churches, contains approximately 235 gravestones with dates ranging from ca. 1800 to 1905. The newer cemetery, to the north of the church buildings, contains more than 1700 gravestones with dates ranging from 1888 to the present. The rural setting of the Ebenezer Churches is well preserved and remains much the same as it was in the mid-18th and 19th centuries.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The Old Ebenezer Church

The Old Ebenezer Baptist Church is a one-story, one-room building covered by a standing-seam metal gable roof. Possibly built before 1769 on land belonging to Samuel Butcher, Sr., the church is constructed of native field stone laid in a coursed rubble pattern.

The church is one bay wide and five bays long, 30.58 feet wide by 46.75 feet long. Although there is a door centered in the south side of the building which faces State Route 719, the church is now entered from the east gable end through paired raised-panel doors. Over this east gable entrance are two six-over-six sash, double-hung windows that light the upper gallery.

It is difficult to determine whether the south or east doorway is the original entrance. What is clear is that the opening for the door on the south side has been altered. Scars in the stonework suggest that an earlier, larger opening has been closed in. The existing door appears slightly out of proportion with the rest of the openings. This door is no longer functional and there is no stoop or set of steps in front of it. There are two six-over-six sash, double-hung windows on either side of the door. Scars in the stonework below the easternmost window, now hidden by shrubbery, may be evidence that this window was once a door opening.

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The west gable end contains only a pair of six-over-six sash, double-hung windows at the level of the upper gallery like those in the east gable end. From the scars in the stonework, however, it appears that two former openings have been closed in. What was probably a window opening in the center of the west wall has been closed in. What looks to be a closed-in door opening is found in the northwest corner.

There are four openings on the north side of the building - three six-over-six sash, double-hung windows and a single door. The door is at the northeast corner of the building and provides the only access to the upper gallery.

On the interior, the church is one large room with plastered sheetrock walls and ceiling and uncarpeted hardwood floors. The upper gallery runs the full width of the building at the east end of the room, directly over the entrance. The face of the upper gallery is clad in horizontal boards with a narrow batten nailed over the joint between the boards. Two wooden posts support the upper gallery from the floor of the church. Tie rods and a tie beam span the width of the meeting space between the front and the back of the church.

A 1973 interior photograph of the church, in the archives of the Department of Historic Resources, shows the ghost of a former upper gallery on the west wall of the church along with the ghost of an access stair rising from the northwest corner. In that photograph some cracking of the plaster is visible where a center window opening would have been and where the door providing gallery access would have been, corresponding with the scars still visible in the exterior stonework. The evidence of these earlier openings is no longer visible because the original plaster has been removed.

An architectural survey report from the early 1970s on file at the Department of Historic Resources suggests one or two theories about the upper gallery. The surveyor speculated that either there were once galleries at either end of the room and the one on the west end was removed, or, that the gallery was originally at the west end of the room and was moved to the east end.

The minutes for the church on file in the Virginia State Library and Archives cover the period 1804 to 1896, but include only a few scattered references to the church building itself and offer nothing conclusive about the gallery. The minutes show that a proposal to erect a gallery was rejected in 1804 in favor of finishing the meeting house "on the plan it was begun." In January of 1805 the membership voted that the "meeting house should be left in a frame, that a gallery hereafter might be erected." The records do not, however, provide clues as to when that gallery was erected, where it was placed or whether it was later moved. A fire in the northwest corner of the church may have been the reason for the removal or relocation of the western gallery. The evidence of the fire was uncovered during the restoration work at the church in the 1970s.

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**Ebenezer Baptist Churches
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The meeting space is devoid of decoration. A plain wooden lectern, painted white, stands at the head of the central, uncarpeted aisle. The lectern is not original to the church, but was made and donated for the restoration. Straight-backed wooden pews from a church in Bloomfield are arranged on either side of the aisle. A pair of simple wooden armchairs and a pair of cast-iron stoves once used for heating, but now without their stove pipes, are the only other pieces of furniture in the room. Lighting is supplied through modern recessed light fixtures and wall lamps and ceiling fixtures in a "colonial" style.

It is estimated that worship services were no longer being held in the Old Church by the early 1900s. In 1934 the church was acquired by the Ebenezer Cemetery Company, Inc., and since the early 1970s substantial restoration work on the Old Church has been carried out by that organization. The existing metal roof, hardwood floors and plastered sheetrock walls and ceiling are the products of these restoration efforts.

The New Ebenezer Church

The Greek Revival-style New Ebenezer Church is a one-story stuccoed stone building covered by a standing-seam metal gable roof. The church is 40.25 feet wide by 45.25 feet long; it is two bays wide and three bays deep. The dominant feature of the building is the vernacular, tetrastyle, steeply-pitched, pedimented portico with paneled frieze on the south side, or front, of the building. Its four columns are unfluted, with narrow Doric-type capitals, and no bases. The tympanum is weatherboarded. Two small stuccoed chimneys for heating stoves are located on both the east and west sides of the roof.

The floor and steps of the portico are of concrete. A survey report from the 1970s on file at the Department of Historic Resources states that the floor of the portico was wooden until the 1930s. A simple iron pipe railing, also a 20th-century alteration, surrounds the portico.

There are three tall, rectangular windows regularly spaced on both the east and west sides of the building. These twenty-over-twenty sash, double-hung windows are recent replacements, but they match the form of the originals. Access to a semi-excavated basement is made by three half-height door openings, one on the east side near the southeast corner and two on the west side near the southwest corner of the building. These doors permit a view of the building's rough hewn beams some of which are still covered with bark.

There are no openings in the north gable end of the building. The tympanum is weatherboarded matching the front of the building.

Two Greek Revival-style paneled doors are symmetrically positioned on the front of the building. In front of each door is a small concrete step and a deep wooden sill. The door

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**Ebenezer Baptist Churches
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reveals are paneled. Two six-over-six sash, double-hung windows are placed directly over the entrance doors and provide light for the upper gallery.

The entrance doors lead into a vestibule that is about 12 feet deep and extends the entire width of the front of the building. Access to the upper gallery is provided by an enclosed winding stair in the southwest corner of the vestibule. Paneled interior doors topped by three-light transoms are directly opposite the entrance doors and provide access to the sanctuary.

The sanctuary is one large room with a tongue-and-groove board ceiling painted a soft blue-green and plastered walls painted a pale blue-grey. Two carpeted side aisles lead from the interior doors to a dais at the front of the church. The carpeting covering the aisles and the dais is a neutral grey. Facing the front of the church are eight rows of simple wooden pews, arranged between the two aisles and along the sides of the church.

The lectern is set on a platform raised three steps from the dais. A set of carpeted steps leads to the platform from both the right and left sides of the dais. The platform is painted to look as if it is paneled. On either side of the lectern is a slightly tapered wooden pier holding a tall brass gas lamp with an etched glass globe and a shorter pier holding a simple brass candelabrum. The fronts and sides of the piers are painted to resemble carved panels, some of which are in the shape of a Gothic arch.

A pair of straight wooden chairs and a simple table sit on the dais in front of the lectern platform. Behind the lectern is an upholstered Victorian-style sofa. Three straight wooden benches are arranged in both the northeast and northwest corners of the church facing the dais. An electric organ sits in front of the steps to the right of the pulpit; an old-fashioned pump organ to the left of the pulpit faces the back of the church.

Two cast-iron stoves once used for heating, but now without their stove pipes, are found on either side of the church between the first and second windows at the head of the ranks of pews. On either side of the church a pew with its back to the lectern faces each stove and the forward-facing pew on the other side of the stove. A flat bench along the wall on either side of the church connects the facing pews and forms a C-shaped seating arrangement around each stove.

The upper gallery runs the width of the building at the south end of the room. Two square wooden columns support the gallery from the floor. A gaslight wall lamp with glass globe hangs on each of the columns. The face of the gallery is composed of horizontal wooden panels decorated with carving in a Greek key motif. The panels are painted white. The top rail of the gallery and the rail on which the panels rest, as well as the divisions between each panel, are painted a mocha brown. In the gallery are several rows of straight backed wooden pews; the wooden floor is not carpeted.

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Behind the lectern and filling the space from floor to ceiling on the north wall of the church is a trompe l'oeil painting that gives the impression of an apse beyond the lectern. The painting, which is not signed, is attributed to American artist Lucien Whiting Powell, who lived and worked in the area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In varying shades of cream, brown, and grey to suggest light and shadow, the painting shows monumental Corinthian columns rising from large paneled base blocks flanking an arch resting on an entablature supported by square paneled pillars with Ionic capitals. Centered beneath the large arch is a smaller--and seemingly recessed--round-arched opening flanked by square paneled pillars with Ionic capitals.

The walls on either side of the painting are painted to resemble recessed panels in a beige color containing a central shield-like motif. The same beige panels, but slightly taller and without the central motif, are found between the windows on the east and west walls of the church. An intricate cast-metal gas light fixture hangs from a painted medallion in the center of the ceiling. Painted in colors similar to the painting behind the lectern, the medallion is shaded to give a three-dimensional effect. Related painted decoration in a triangular shape is found in the northeast and northwest corners of the ceiling. It is not known if the painted panels, ceiling medallion and corner decorations are also Powell's work.

Between the first and second windows on either side of the sanctuary are cast-metal gas wall lamps with decorative glass globes. Simple pull-down shades are hung at each window. While the building has electric outlets, there are no electric lights and there is no central heat.

It is believed that by 1941 worship services were no longer being held in the New Church. The Ebenezer Cemetery Company, Inc., which had acquired the New Church by 1959, replaced the roof, repaired the stucco, and replaced the windows during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Just behind and slightly to the east of the New Church is a non-contributing storage building. It is a frame structure covered with corrugated metal with a metal gable roof.

The Cemeteries

To the west and north of the Ebenezer churches are the Old Cemetery and the New Cemetery, respectively. Both cemeteries are surrounded by handsome walls constructed of native field stone. The cemeteries are well maintained and provide an appropriate setting for the Ebenezer Baptist Churches. Between the two churches is one entrance to the cemeteries. On either side of the entrance is a set of two stone pillars, one between 4 and 5 feet tall, the other 12 to 18 inches shorter. Between the taller and the shorter pillar on the west side of the entrance is a short section of wooden picket fence. That between the pillars on the east side is now missing, but is visible in earlier photographs. Also visible in earlier photographs, but no longer in place, is a set of picket gates between the larger pillars. Another set of stone pillars frames a second entrance to the cemetery just to the east of the New Church.

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The wall surrounding the old cemetery probably was erected after 1804, when the will of John Butcher, oldest son of Samuel Butcher, Sr., gave the use of his plantation, upon the death of his wife to "the church formerly called Butcher's meeting house, but now called Ebenezer" to be rented out with 100 pounds of the rent money to be put toward a wall to enclose the cemetery.

The old cemetery contains about 235 gravestones. The oldest marker appears to date from ca. 1800; the most recent is dated 1905. Most of the stones are simple markers with rounded or scalloped tops. Many of the stones in the cemetery date from the 1840s, '50s and '60s.

The Ebenezer Cemetery Company, Inc., which cares for the churches and the cemeteries, has prepared a listing of the inscriptions on the gravestones in the old cemetery. One of the markers is for the grave of Elder Charles Polkinhorn, a minister of the Old School Baptist order. The cemetery also contains the grave of a Civil War soldier who died from wounds received at the Battle of Ball's Bluff in October of 1861.

The Ebenezer Cemetery Company was incorporated on April 29, 1887. Land for the new cemetery was deeded to the Ebenezer Cemetery Company in 1888 and the first burial there occurred in that year. The new cemetery has been in continuous use since 1888, with additional land being acquired as needed. The new cemetery contains about 1700 graves marked by a variety of older style and more modern gravestones and obelisks with dates ranging from 1888 until the present. At least one of the stones is a five-foot monument styled to resemble a tree trunk. Marking the grave of Henry G. Smallwood (died in 1918), it is topped with a World War I Army infantryman's hat; a rifle leans against the tree trunk and a canteen rests at the base along with a flower pot holding vegetation that climbs up the "tree." The cemetery contains the graves of two other World War I soldiers, the grave of a Spanish American War soldier and the graves of about 30 Confederate veterans who were buried there between 1897 and 1929.

The Ebenezer Cemetery Company has prepared an index of the pre-1940 graves in the new cemetery. Organized by date of death, plot number, and surname, the index is a useful research tool.

The Old Ebenezer Church was transferred to the Ebenezer Cemetery Company in 1934, there being no congregation using the church by that time. In 1941, the Cemetery Company's charter was revoked for non payment of taxes during the previous two years and it is assumed that by that date there was no longer any congregation using the New Ebenezer Church.

The Ebenezer Cemetery Company was re-incorporated in December 1959 to care for the two cemeteries and both of the churches. Since that time the Ebenezer Cemetery Company has carried out restoration work on both of the churches as well as on the walls surrounding the cemeteries. Work continues to be done as funds are available.

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**Ebenezer Baptist Churches
Loudoun County, Virginia**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The two buildings known as the Ebenezer Baptist Churches are located side by side in a well preserved rural area of Loudoun County near the town of Bloomfield. The Old Ebenezer Baptist Church is a vernacular stone building that may have been built before 1769 and was used by both Old School and New School Baptist congregations until ca. 1855; the New Ebenezer Baptist Church is a stucco-covered stone building constructed ca. 1855 in the Greek Revival style for the New School Baptist congregation at Ebenezer. Behind the lectern in the New Church is a trompe l'oeil painting executed by Lucien W. Powell, a nationally known artist who had a home and studio in the area. A rare type of painting, it is Powell's best surviving work in the county. The churches are significant, individually, for their architecture and when considered together they form one of the best preserved pairs of Baptist churches in Virginia. The surrounding cemeteries with their handsome stone walls provide an appropriate setting for the churches and contain an interesting collection of gravestones dating from the early 19th century to the present day. The older cemetery contains about 235 stones with dates ranging from ca. 1800 to 1905; the newer cemetery contains more than 1700 gravestones with dates ranging from 1888 to the present, including the graves of 30 Confederate veterans who were buried there between 1897 and 1929.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Old Ebenezer Church

The Old Ebenezer Church, earlier referred to as Butcher's Meeting House or the Ebenezer Meeting House, may have been built before 1769 on land owned by Samuel Butcher, Sr. His will of September 12, 1769, gives two acres of his land for the use of "the Baptist Meeting House and School House," describing those two acres as "the same that the Meeting House is now built upon."¹ It was not until April 1804, however, that the Ebenezer Church was constituted when nine members of the Goose Creek Baptist Church and eight from Kectoctin Baptist Church were dismissed from their congregations for the sole purpose of constituting a new congregation.²

It is not known whether or not the founding members of the Ebenezer Church met in the old stone church building that stands today. In November and December 1804, again in October 1805, and even as late as January 1806 the minutes of the church business meetings discuss "finishing the Meeting House."³ It is possible that the building alluded to in the will of Samuel Butcher, Sr., was, therefore, no longer standing by 1804 when the Ebenezer Church was constituted.

The 1804 will of Samuel Butcher's son John provided for the Ebenezer Meeting House in several ways. First, he gave the church the use of his plantation to be rented out at his wife's

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death, with one hundred pounds to be put towards building a wall around the cemetery. John Butcher also willed his "Negro Daniel to be rented out or hired until he earns one hundred pounds . . . to [be] put to the use of said meeting house . . . and then I will Negro Daniel to be set free." Finally, the will identified 60 pounds to be applied to a free school at Butcher's Meeting House. No further information on a school at the meeting house, other than the two references in Butcher family wills, has been found.⁴

The whole of the senior Samuel Butcher's holdings passed from his wife, Susanna, to his son, Samuel Butcher, Jr., when he reached age 21. It was Samuel Butcher, Jr., who by indenture dated January 16, 1834, deeded those same two acres "on which the house called the Ebenezer Meeting house now stands" to two trustees of the Ebenezer Meeting House "as a place of worship for the Baptist Society in the neighborhood."⁵

Beginning in the 1830s differences in philosophy began to divide many Baptist congregations in the State. Church leaders and members were divided in thought concerning the appropriateness of Sunday schools, music in the worship service, reform and missionary movements, and Bible societies. Congregations accepting these new ideas and practices and favoring more independence of members were referred to as "New School Baptists"; those rejecting them were referred to as "Old School" or "Primitive" Baptists because they adhered only to what they believed to be the practices of the primitive church, or the church as described in the Bible.

The church minutes for Ebenezer reflected this growing controversy beginning in 1833 when eight members of the congregation requested dismissal from the church, charging the membership with not acting independently in the choice of a pastor and to being "blindly led by the influence of priestcraft." This "minority" was excluded from the fellowship of the church and apparently formed a separate congregation. The group dismissed from Ebenezer aligned themselves with the New School Baptists; the remainder considered themselves Old School Baptists. In December of 1833 the church minutes indicate that one of the excluded members had applied to a pastor to preach for the them at "this place" (Ebenezer). Subsequent entries in the minutes describe the need to meet with counsel concerning the meeting house and land.⁶

These events explain the language used by Samuel Butcher, Jr. in January 1834 when he deeded the meeting house property to the Trustees of the Ebenezer Meeting House. The indenture includes the following guidance:

inasmuch as difference of sentiment amongst the Baptists, have arisen, . . . which ought not to be the cause of separation between Brethren, it is not intended that one party so differing in sentiment shall use and enjoy the property herein conveyed to the exclusion of the other party, but the said Trustees are . . . hereby authorized . . . to permit any party of Baptists whom they . . . consider of good order and good Standing in the society, to use and enjoy the said property for the purpose of Worship, provided that no

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party shall have the exclusive privilege of the house more than two Lords days in the Month.⁷

Apparently, both Old School and New School Baptist congregations used the Ebenezer meeting house until about 1855.

Samuel Trott was pastor of the Old Ebenezer Church for close to thirty years from 1835 until his death in 1865. Trott was a leader of the Old School Baptists and had been preaching frequently at Ebenezer when the division in the membership occurred. He accepted a call to serve as pastor for the Old School congregation at Ebenezer in 1835, with the understanding that if he should prove to be the only reason for a division among the congregation then he would leave.⁸

In July of 1855 the minutes report "In the providence of God our meeting house being burned we proceeded to . . . appoint trustees . . . to prepare subscriptions and present to the Brethren and friends in order to rebuild." No further information is given concerning the extent of the fire damage or the amount collected to rebuild. There are no further notes in the minutes concerning progress on the rebuilding or of worship service resuming in the rebuilt church.⁹ When restoration work was carried out on the Old Church in the 1970s, evidence of the fire was discovered under the old floor in the northwest corner of the building. Most of the floor joists showed no serious damage from the fire. It is possible that damage from this fire was the reason for the relocation or removal of the upper gallery formerly at the west end of the meeting space.

Apparently the burning of the meetinghouse encouraged the New School Baptists to find a home of their own. In September 1855 William Galleher and his wife deeded three-quarters of an acre of land to trustees for the Ebenezer Church, identified in the deed as "(New School Baptist) who were accustomed to worship in the Old Ebenezer Church previous to the late burning of the same." The land being deeded is described as "lying immediately adjoining the lot on which stood the old Baptist Meeting house called Ebenezer."¹⁰

Tradition has it that it was at the Old Ebenezer Church that Confederate Colonel John Singleton Mosby and his men divided the Federal payroll captured during his Greenback Raid in 1864. According to historians, this raid was but one episode during two weeks in October 1864 in Mosby's "war" for the Manassas Gap Railroad after it was seized by Federal authorities.

On the evening of October 13, 1864, Mosby and his Rangers attacked a west bound train at an unguarded gap in the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at Duffield's Station, west of Harpers Ferry. The federal payroll on the train was seized by the Rangers and the passengers gave up their valuables. Historian Jeffrey Wert notes that the following day "at Ebenezer Church in Bloomfield" the stolen payroll was divided among the eighty or so Rangers participating in the raid.¹¹ While it apparently cannot be documented, the story is well known and deeply rooted

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in the area. A local Civil War historian, John Divine, notes that Ebenezer Church would have been on the route of withdrawal from the Greenback Raid and could well have been the secluded spot where the spoils were divided.

Whether or not Col. Mosby's exploits included Ebenezer Church directly, this area of Loudoun County suffered from continued military activity during the years of the Civil War. There are no minutes for the church business meetings between September 1861 and July 1865. A note follows the latter entry and states that the "church has not met together for upwards of three years and the cause thereof was the war . . . the armies of both sides being in the neighborhood and our pastor being a prisoner nearly the whole of the above time."¹² Sympathizers with the Southern cause were frequently imprisoned by Federal troops in an effort to drain support from operators like Mosby.

Following the Civil War, Robert C. Leachman, Joseph L. Pennington, and J. N. Badger, in succession, served as pastors of the Old Church. In 1869 the minutes indicate that a committee was appointed to find out the cause of the "colored members of this church absenting themselves from among us." Like most Baptist churches, from its constitution in 1804 Ebenezer's membership had been both black and white, with all men and women being received in the same way, either by baptism or upon submission of a letter from another church. As late as 1888 the minutes show that "colored" members were still being accepted.¹³

The minutes for the Old School Baptist Church at Ebenezer cover the period from 1804 to 1896. Members of the Ebenezer Cemetery Company who now care for the church estimate that services were discontinued at the Old Church around the turn of the century. It was 1934 when the Cemetery Company took title to the Old Church and became responsible for its upkeep.

The New Ebenezer Church

The New Ebenezer Church was built on three-quarters of an acre of land deeded by William Galleher and his wife to trustees for the Ebenezer Church (New School Baptist) in September 1855. The exact date of construction is not known but the building's Greek Revival style suggests a date not much later than 1855. No minutes of business meetings for this congregation have been found. It appears likely that the New Church was constituted soon after 1833 when eight members were dismissed from the Old Ebenezer Church after expressing their philosophical differences with the majority of the congregation. Until 1855 the New School Baptist congregation of the Ebenezer church apparently met in the Old Church.

The interior of the New Church presents a striking contrast to the austere interior of the Old Church and emphasizes one of the differences between Old School and New School Baptist churches. The interior of the New Church is marked by use of color and decoration. The dominating feature of the interior of the New Ebenezer Church is the tromp l'oeil painting

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behind the lectern that suggests an apse beyond. Painted in varying hues of cream, brown and grey, the work is attributed to American landscape and historical painter Lucien Whiting Powell, who had a second home and studio just up the road at Airmont between 1876 and his death in 1930. The painting was not signed by Powell, but the artist and his work in the community are well remembered by some of its older residents.

Powell was born in Loudoun County at Levinworth Manor in 1846. He enlisted in the Confederate army at age seventeen and studied art in Philadelphia and Europe after the Civil War. Powell's paintings were very popular; his work was admired by presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt and by J. Edgar Hoover. His paintings can be found in the U.S. Capitol, in the National Gallery and the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C. Powell is best known for his paintings of the Grand Canyon and his views of Venice.¹⁴

It is not known when Powell made the painting at the New Ebenezer Church. While a resident of Washington, D.C., Powell bought property in 1876 at Airmont next door to his birthplace, so it is likely that the painting at the New Ebenezer Church was made sometime after that. Powell was appointed postmaster of Airmont by President McKinley in 1897 and is credited with naming the village for its abundance of fresh air and mountain views. A small two-room building that still stands at Airmont at the intersection of routes 719 and 734, just a little over a mile from the Ebenezer churches, is said to have been Powell's studio. That studio stands just across the street from the site of the Airmont post office. Another trompe l'oeil painting by Powell can be found in the Ketocin Baptist Church, near Round Hill in Loudoun County.

Powell's career was influenced by the friendship and patronage of Mrs. John B. Henderson, the wife of a senator from Missouri. She established a studio for him at her home in Washington, D.C. and supported him for many years. Powell was buried in Arlington National Cemetery in 1930, but was disinterred and reburied in Congressional Cemetery in Washington two years later.¹⁵

In 1974, the Powell painting at the New Ebenezer Church was repaired and repainted by Frank Millot, a commercial artist from Rochester, N.Y., and a grandson of Powell. A newspaper article from 1974 in the archives of the Department of Historic Resources explains that Millot carefully scraped the plaster walls, prepared them for repainting, and matched the colors of the original work, darkening the hues slightly to compensate for decades of fading. Millot comments in the article that Powell and his wife, the former Nora Fitzhugh, were married at Ebenezer Church in 1880.¹⁶

It is thought that by 1941 the New Church was no longer in regular use. By 1959 the church had been acquired by the Ebenezer Cemetery Company, Inc. Today, both the Old Church and the New Church and the two cemeteries on the site are owned and maintained by the non-denominational Ebenezer Cemetery Company, Inc. The churches are used for services several times a year, as well as for weddings and other special occasions.

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ENDNOTES

1. Loudoun County Will Books. Will of Samuel Butcher dated September 12, 1769.
2. Minutes of the Ebenezer Baptist Church. Miscellaneous microfilm reel 226. Virginia State Library and Archives.
3. Minutes of Ebenezer Baptist Church.
4. Loudoun County Will Books. Will of John Butcher. September 1804.
5. Loudoun County Deed Books. Indenture from Samuel Butcher, Jr. to Trustees of Ebenezer Baptist Church dated January 1834.
6. Minutes of Ebenezer Baptist Church.
7. Samuel Butcher, Jr. Indenture.
8. Minutes of Ebenezer Baptist Church.
9. Minutes of Ebenezer Baptist Church.
10. Loudoun County Deed Books. William Galleher to New School Baptist Church at Ebenezer. September 1855.
11. Jeffry Wert. Mosby's Rangers.
12. Minutes of Ebenezer Baptist Church.
13. Minutes of Ebenezer Baptist Church.
14. Eugene Scheel. "Airmont: Home of a Famous Painter". Loudoun Times-Mirror. 1976. Copy in archives of Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
15. Dictionary of American Biography.
16. Karen Timmons. "Keeping the Faith at Ebenezer Church". Metro Virginia News. July 7, 1974. Copy in the archives of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

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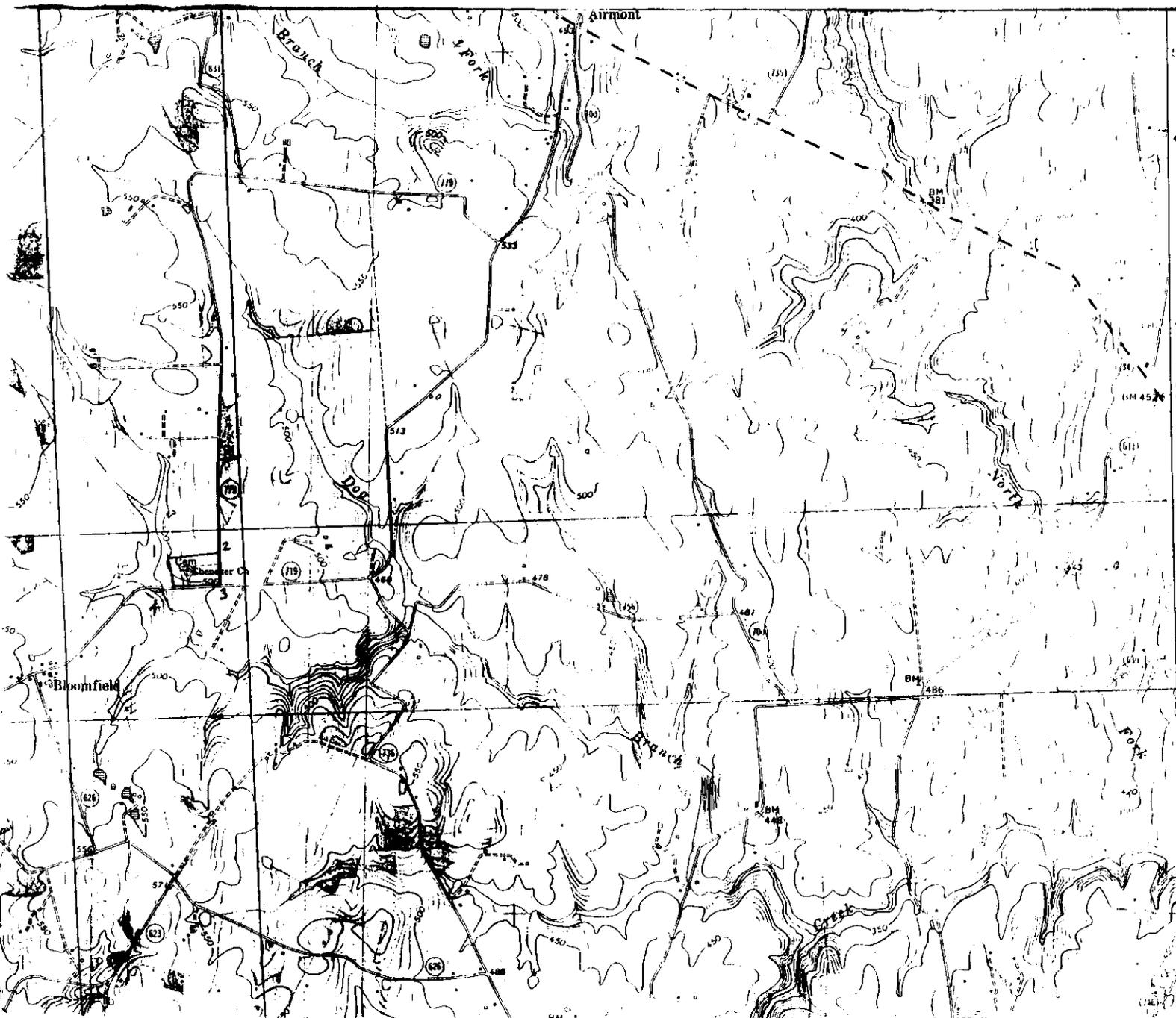
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: 1 - 18/256575/4326860; 2 - 18/256860/4326880; 3 - 18/256850/4326710; 4 - 18/256600/4326710.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encloses the property historically associated with the Ebenezer Baptist Churches and cemeteries.



LINCOLN
5462 II SW

EBENZEL CHURCH
LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

- UTM REFERENCES:
- 1 18/256575|4326860
 - 2 18/256600|4326880
 - 3 18/256650|4326710
 - 4 18/256600|4326710

4329
4328
4326
4325
2'30"