

VLR - 9/17/97
NRHP - 5/8/98

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church (VDHR # 53-339)

other names/site number Mount Zion Primitive Baptist Church, Mount Zion Old School Predestinarian Baptist Church

2. Location

street & number 40309 John Mosby Highway (U.S. Route 50) not for publication N/A

city or town Aldie vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Loudoun code 107 zip code 22001

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 forth 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.)

M. Catherine Slusser
Signature of certifying official/Title

3/23/98
Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State of 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 of 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

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Name of Property

Loudoun County, Virginia
County and State

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 the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	2	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

ELNERARY/cemetery

DEFENSE/battle site

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

roof METAL

other WOOD

GLASS

Narrative Description

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

Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Name of Property

Loudoun County, Virginia
County and State

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
- Military
- Religion
- Archeology/Historic Non-Aboriginal
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1851-1947

Significant Dates

1851
1862-1864

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

unknown

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** a birthplace or 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.

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 the 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:

Mount Zion Church Preservation Association

Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Name of Property County and State

Loudoun County, Virginia

10. Geographic Data

Acreege of Property 6.816 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	273780	4315760
	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 Elizabeth Barthold O'Brien, Project Architectural Historian

organization John Milner Associates, Inc. date February 1997

street & number 5250 Cherokee Avenue, 4th floor telephone 703-354-9737

city or town Alexandria state VA zip code 22312

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete 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 Mount Zion Church Trustees, c/o Wynne Saffer

street & number 23152 Watson Road telephone 703-327-4583

city or town Leesburg state VA zip code 20175

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 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 20503.

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Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Loudoun County, Virginia

Narrative Description

The Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church (VDHR File #53-339) is an unadorned two-story rectangular brick building. Because few changes have been made to the structure since its initial construction in 1851, it has excellent historical integrity. Other than some settling of the stone foundation, which has caused the west wall to bulge, the building is in good condition. While it is similar in form to many rural church buildings, it is strikingly similar to two nearby Baptist churches that were built around the same time. The Mount Zion church stands on the south side of a two-lane road amid a rural landscape that appears largely unchanged since the time the church was built. The property was originally bounded on the west by the Old Carolina Road. The trace of this abandoned route remains visible and contributes to the significance of the property. The property also includes a large cemetery and two concrete-block privies. The cemetery is a contributing resource, but the privies, which appear to have been built in the mid-twentieth century, are non-contributing buildings.

The 46-foot-2-inch-by-36-foot-2-inch church building is bilaterally symmetrical and is oriented with the points of the compass.¹ As with many church buildings, its primary elevation is on a gable end that faces east. This three-bay front elevation has doors symmetrically placed in the first and third bays. A rectangular date block under the gable end states "erected 1851." The building has additional entries in the easternmost bays of the three-bay north and south elevations. The west elevation is two bays wide with no door openings.

The church is constructed of five-course-American-bond brick that varies in color from red to brown. White lines visible throughout the mortar joints indicate penciling, a common brick treatment in the early- to mid-nineteenth century. The building stands on a randomly coursed low stone foundation. The brick walls were laid flush with the exterior face of the foundations, which are probably slightly wider than the walls. As a result, eccentric loading has caused rotational settlement, and the west elevation bulges slightly outward.² To minimize the bulging of the walls, metal tie rods and a metal cable have been installed at the first floor ceiling and balcony floor levels. The variously sized and shaped iron anchors holding the ends of these beams and the cable are visible on the east and west elevations.

The gable roof is covered with standing-seam metal. On its south slope is a rectangular trap door providing access to the roof from the attic. The cornices on the north and south elevations are accented with corbeled brickwork. Alternating projecting headers create a denticulated effect that is similar to that employed in the cornice of the Pleasant Vale Baptist Church, erected in Fauquier County in 1845. On the east and west elevations, approximately six-inch-wide flat bargeboards run along the raking cornices. Brick flues project from the north and south slopes of the roof. They are situated flush with the brick walls between the middle and easternmost bays of the north and south elevations. Both are topped with vaulted brick caps for weather protection that are identical to those on both the Pleasant Vale Church and the Ketocin Baptist Church, built near Round Hill, Virginia, in Loudoun County in 1854 (VDHR File #53-308).³

Seven windows illuminate the first floor of the Mount Zion Church. Two windows pierce the first level of the north, south, and west elevations, and one window is located between the two doors on the east front elevation. They are all eight-over-eight double-hung wood sash windows with two-panel operable shutters. Most appear to retain their original glass panes. The eleven windows on the second level—three each on the east, north, and south elevations and two on the west elevation—have all been sealed from the inside with drywall. From the outside, they are obscured by closed louvered wood shutters, except for the two openings on the west elevation, which have been sealed with plywood. The windows all have plain wood surrounds and flat wood sills.

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Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Loudoun County, Virginia

The two front doors in the east elevation are three-panel double doors topped by four-light transoms. The door in the first bay of the north elevation is a six-panel door with a three-light transom, and its counterpart in the third bay of the south elevation is a vertical board door, which also has a three-light transom. One of these doors is likely the replacement door that was added after the loss of a door during the Civil War. All of the windows, as well as the four doors are topped by brick jack arches.

The exterior of the building clearly reflects the arrangement of the interior space. The two front doors lead into the main room and are aligned with the two parallel aisles that run the length of the building. At the west end of the building, centered between the two windows on the west wall, is the wood pulpit raised on an approximately eight-inch-tall wood platform. The two side doors lead into the boxed staircases in the northeast and southeast corners of the building that access the second-floor balcony. The staircase in the northeast corner is accessible only from the exterior door on the north elevation. The southeast staircase is accessed by a four-panel interior door on its west wall as well as from the outside by the exterior door on the south elevation. Four-panel doors on the north wall of the southeast staircase and the south wall of the northeast staircase access storage spaces beneath the stairs.

Ten pews form the central seating block on the first floor. The ten pews are interconnected by a center board that runs down the center. This board was included as a physical separation between the north and south halves of the building, dividing the men and women in the congregation. According to Primitive Baptist tradition, men were seated to the preacher's right, and women sat to his left.⁴ In addition to the center block of pews, ten free-standing pews are situated between the north aisle and the north wall, on the women's side of the church, and nine free-standing pews are located between the south aisle and south wall, on the men's side of the church. The pews all have slanted backs and are finished with decorative wood graining. Some are paneled, however, while others are plain. Because thirty-five pews were reportedly destroyed during the Civil War, these pews are not original to the building.⁵ The three pews at the west end on the north side of the building face south and the three on the west end of the south side of the building face north, providing a better view of the pulpit. Toward the rear of the sanctuary, pews on both sides face away from the pulpit and toward the two brass pot-bellied stoves that provided the only source of heat for the building. Four of the pews in the side aisles are shorter than the rest to accommodate four of the seven columns that support the balcony above. A fifth column rises from the center of the second to the last pew in the center section and the sixth and seventh columns are located near the corner staircases. The arrangement of the pews and columns in the Mount Zion Church is nearly identical to that in the Ketocin Baptist Church. The wood columns supporting the balcony in the Mount Zion Church are sixteen-sided, each topped by a round echinus and square abacus.

The balcony runs along the east, north, and south walls and is surrounded by a paneled wood parapet, which is also finished with painted wood graining. Presently, several types of wood pews and benches are stored haphazardly in the balcony. Also stored upstairs are the six electric lights that formerly hung from the ceiling. These were installed around the 1950s but were recently removed during a Civil War reenactment.⁶ A small trap door in the ceiling at the east end of the building accesses the attic. A built-in ladder in the attic leads to the roof opening.⁷

The interior walls are lath and plaster, although some areas have been repaired with dry wall. In areas where the plaster has deteriorated, the circular-sawn wood lath beneath it is exposed. The ceiling is covered with narrow wood boards, and the floor boards of the balcony are tongue and groove. The first floor is also covered with wood boards, although these are partially covered by red carpeting.

The church stands on a roughly triangular tract of about six acres, although the original deed for the property referred to a tract of 3½ acres. The church is located about 200 feet south of U.S. Route 50, from which it is accessed by a circular drive. A wood-rail fence encloses a small yard around the church building. Northwest of the church is a large cemetery enclosed by a high stone wall. According to the last pastor of the church, this wall was erected in 1853.⁸ Quarried from local stone, a portion of the wall

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Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Loudoun County, Virginia

reportedly features a fossilized imprint made by a dinosaur. More than 200 graves from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are marked with inscribed stones. It is likely that the cemetery also contains a number of unmarked graves.⁹ The older burials are located towards the south side of the enclosure. Outside the walled cemetery are at least 33 more graves that are reportedly the burials of blacks. Except for two graves with inscribed markers, these graves are unidentified. Some of the graves are indicated by field stones placed on end in the uneven ground, while others have no markers. The walled cemetery and the graves outside the wall comprise a contributing site. West of the church and cemetery is the remaining trace of the Old Carolina Road. When the road was abandoned, 0.3576 acres were added to the church tract. Because the Carolina Road was significant in the history of the church, the portion of this trace on the church property is also a contributing structure.

In addition to the church and cemetery, two concrete-block privies are also located on the property. One is located south of the church near the southeast boundary of the property, and the other is located closer to the church at the juncture of the wood-picket fence around the church and the cemetery wall. Both are concrete-block structures with shed roofs. Corrugated metal walls have been added near their entrances, presumably as a screen for privacy. Vertical board-and-batten walls are propped around both structures. These were added during a recent Civil War reenactment to make them appear more historic.¹⁰

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Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Loudoun County, Virginia

Statement of Significance

The Mount Zion Old School Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery is significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with the Primitive Baptist denomination and for the events that occurred there during the Civil War. It is also recommended eligible under Criterion C for its architectural design and Criterion D for its potential to yield important historical information. The church was built in 1851 to serve an Old School Primitive Baptist congregation, which used the church nearly continuously for 129 years before holding its last service there in 1980. Since 1980 the church has been used periodically for a variety of gatherings. The period of significance, from 1851 to 1947, includes the date of the building's construction and much of the time it served as an Old School Baptist church. Although the building served the same congregation until 1980, its significance within the past fifty years is not of the exceptional importance necessary to satisfy Criteria Consideration G for properties achieving significance in the past fifty years. The year 1947 marks no year particularly important in the church's history, other than the date fifty years prior to its nomination to the National Register.

As an excellent example of a rural antebellum church, the property is significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of religion for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The simple vernacular building has had few alterations during more than a century of service and typifies the conservative rural church styles of the antebellum South. Its design also incorporates specific features included to meet the particular needs and beliefs of the congregation. Thus, the church is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method, of construction. The property's association with events of the Civil War during the period 1862-1864 gives it additional significance under National Register Criterion A in the area of military events. Because of its prominent location on a hilltop at the intersection of two early roads, it was a landmark for travelers and a point of reference during the Civil War. During the conflict, Union troops used the building as a hospital, barracks, and prison, and Confederate partisan rangers under the leadership of John Singleton Mosby used the church as a meeting place. On July 6, 1864, Union and Confederate forces engaged in a skirmish near the church known as the Battle of Mount Zion.

The property also meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration A for religious properties. Because religious properties are among those types of properties not usually considered for listing, Criteria Consideration A states that a church may be eligible if it derives its primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance. Because the property's primary significance is from its historical importance to local religious history, because it is also architecturally significant and historically significant for its associations with the Civil War, it appears to meet the requirements of Criteria Consideration A.

Finally, the church property is eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield important historical information. The walled cemetery has the potential to yield information about nineteenth-century burial practices. The approximately thirty-one unmarked graves outside the wall have a particularly high potential for yielding historical information, since questions have been raised concerning the identity of the people buried there. Although no written documentation has come to light to identify these graves, oral tradition holds that black members of the congregation were buried outside the cemetery wall. The race, age, and gender of the people buried outside the wall, as well as the treatments of their grave sites, has the potential to yield information about the black community in this region. By determining the races of the people buried inside and outside the wall, archeological investigations could shed further light on the racial attitudes of Virginia Old School Baptists. Additional historical information could be gained from the domestic site on the west end of the property and scattered deposits related to the military use of the church during the Civil War.

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Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Loudoun County, Virginia

Recent archeological investigations on the property resulted in the identification of two archeological sites; the domestic site and the archeological resources associated with the church. The investigations also located three artifact scatters, two isolated artifact locations, and the limits of the burial ground outside the wall. Subsurface testing at the domestic site produced artifacts dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although testing adjacent to the church yielded no datable artifacts, it revealed an intact trench that may contain artifacts related to repairs of the church structure.

The Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church is a representative building of a religious movement that gained momentum in the mid-nineteenth century but steadily declined during the twentieth century. The church was founded by a group of former members of Loudoun County's Little River Baptist Church.¹ Matthew P. Lee, Robert A. Ish, William B. Marshall, Robert P. and Elizabeth Hutchison, Elizabeth Rogers, Sarah Horsman, Abigale Foley, Ann Matthew, and Jerucia Nattose reportedly left the Little River Baptist Church in 1850 in reaction to changes in its practices and doctrines that they found inconsistent with their beliefs. The original members of the Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church also included George, Sarah, and Ann Gulick and Pamela Lynn, who were members of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, but sought a church nearer to their homes.² These five men and nine women met in September 1850 with elders Robert Leachman and Samuel Trott to develop articles of faith and rules of discipline to guide a new church. The foundation of their beliefs was their conviction that salvation was for those predestined, or elected for grace, by God. Elder Leachman became the first pastor of the Mount Zion congregation, Robert Ish served as its clerk, William Marshall served as its treasurer, and Matthew P. Lee and George Gulick were its deacons.³

The formation of the Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church in 1850 was part of a nationwide movement among Baptists that had begun in the early nineteenth century. In 1827, the Kehukee Baptist Association of North Carolina made a resolution to resist a number of contemporary innovations that were being incorporated in Baptist churches throughout the country, such as salaried ministers and the formation of missionary societies, Sunday schools, temperance societies, and theological seminaries.⁴ Because the Kehukee Resolution and the similar resolutions that followed it were made in reaction to change, its advocates were identified with terms such as "old school," "old line," "primitive," "particular," and "hard shell." These congregations were also often identified as "predestinarian," because they held in common the belief that eternal salvation is determined by God alone without respect to the work of a human minister or the written or spoken word.⁵

Five years after the adoption of the Kehukee resolution, Baptists from the mid-Atlantic and northern states convened at the Black Rock Church in Baltimore County, Maryland, to adopt a position similar to that adopted in North Carolina. The Black Rock meeting of 1832 is widely considered as the beginning of the Primitive Baptist movement.⁶ Elder Samuel Trott, who was later instrumental in the formation of the Mount Zion congregation, was among the six elders who led the assembly at Black Rock. Gilbert Beebe, who was also among the leaders, began publishing a tract called the *Signs of the Times* the same year, and attracted a large following among Primitive Baptist congregations. Since its foundation, the Mount Zion congregation followed Gilbert Beebe's theology, despite subsequent divisions among adherents of old school beliefs.⁷

In 1835, the "Old School" movement was formally established in Virginia. That year, the Ketocin Association, which was formed in Loudoun County in 1766, passed a motion to exclude those Baptist churches which had joined the missionary movement.⁸ Although Old School Baptists eschewed ecclesiastical organizations other than the local congregations, associations such as the Ketocin Association had been an integral part of the denomination since its founding in the United States, and they encouraged fellowship and correspondence among the often geographically dispersed congregations.⁹ When it was established in 1850, the Mount Zion congregation was associated with the Ketocin Association, but during a schism in that body in 1852, joined the Virginia Corresponding Meeting of Old School Baptists, which had been established by Samuel Trott in 1836.¹⁰ During the

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Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Loudoun County, Virginia

nearly 130 years that the church was active, it had a small but consistent congregation and was served by only five pastors. Elder Leachman served the church until 1869, and was followed by Joseph L. Purrington from 1869 to 1874, J. N. Badger from 1876 to 1915, Horace H. Lefferts from 1917 to 1949, and John D. Wood from 1950 to 1980.¹¹

Pastors also often led services at more than one church, and as transportation improved they traveled farther afield to serve their gradually diminishing flock. Horace Lefferts's daybook from the 1920s indicates that he preached locally at the Mount Zion, Frying Pan, and New Valley churches and also traveled to serve congregations at the Broad Run Church in Maryland, the Welsh Tract Church in Delaware, and the Needmore Church in Pennsylvania. Generally he spent an entire weekend with each church community, preaching a sermon Saturday night and another the following Sunday morning.¹² Throughout the twentieth century, the Virginia Corresponding Meeting convened at the Mount Zion Church for two days each October. By 1949, the Virginia Corresponding Meeting included the Mount Zion congregation and Primitive Baptist congregations at Frying Pan Church in Herndon and the New Valley Church in Lucketts. At that time the three churches had a total of 36 members, and Mount Zion had the fewest, with only nine. Although the church had gained a new member that year through baptism, two of its members had died. The minutes of the annual meeting, however, were published and sent to congregations throughout the East Coast of the United States and Canada.¹³ Horace Lefferts died in 1949. His successor John D. Wood continued to preach at the Mount Zion Church until May 1980, when declining attendance prompted the closing of the church. Wood continued to preach at the Frying Pan Church until it also closed due to a lack of members in 1981.¹⁴

While the Mount Zion Church is historically significant for its association with the Primitive Baptist movement, the building is also architecturally significant. Its materials and design reflect building traditions of the time, yet it incorporates design elements included specifically to meet the needs of its congregation. At the time the Mount Zion congregation was established in 1850, a committee comprised of George Gulick, Robert Ish, Matthew P. Lee and a W. S. Hutchison was created to oversee the construction of a house of worship. On December 10, 1850, church trustees, Lee, Marshall, Ish, and Robert Hutchison, purchased a three-and-one-half acre wooded tract "at the intersection of the Little River Turnpike and the road from 'Miss Lacey's' to 'Ball's Mill' commonly called the 'Carolina Road.'" They purchased the land for \$100 from four members of the Riticor family, who also attended the church and were later buried in its cemetery.¹⁵ According to the date painted on its east elevation, the church building was completed the following year in 1851. Although the church builders are unknown, the design of this vernacular structure echoes the simple nave plan typical of many rural nineteenth-century churches. The church is similar in form, materials, and architectural details to two contemporary Baptist churches in the region, the Pleasant Vale Baptist Church in Fauquier County, which was built in 1845, and the Ketocin Baptist Church, built in 1854 near the town of Round Hill in Loudoun County.¹⁶

Perhaps the most dominant characteristic of the church is its architectural severity. While this lack of adornment was economically practical, it also reflects the denomination's emphasis on the word of God rather than on worldly inventions. The structure contains only one room, the focus of which is the pulpit and lectern on a raised platform at the west end of the building. Here, on the fourth weekend of every month, the pastor read scripture and delivered sermons based on passages from the Bible. The congregation participated in the singing of hymns, which were traditionally sung very slowly and generally in a minor key. Any instrumental accompaniment was forbidden.¹⁷ As a result, one person who attended these services recalled that it sounded as if the hymns were being chanted rather than sung.¹⁸ Following the sermon, the church members then traditionally held business meetings to discuss the life of the church.¹⁹

The church could accommodate several hundred worshipers who sat in pews on the main floor and in the balcony. The congregation included church members as well as people who attended services but never formally joined the church. For instance, Henry Smith, Joshua R. Riticor, and John Riticor had all attended the church regularly since they were children, but when they petitioned before the Court of Claims in 1905 for funds to repair Civil War damages to the church, they all swore under oath that

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Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Loudoun County, Virginia

they had never become members of the church.²⁰ According to Primitive Baptist beliefs, church membership was limited to those who felt a call from God. Minutes from the Ebenezer and Frying Pan Churches, which were closely associated with the Mount Zion Church, give many accounts of the acceptance of new members. In general, those who wished to joined the church made a testimony before the congregation of the experience of their calling by God. The congregation then invited them to be baptized by full immersion. At the Mount Zion Church, these baptisms were reportedly performed in the Aldie Mill pond.²¹

Although Old School Baptists believed that God called men, women, blacks, and whites to membership, the church services were segregated by race and sex. Men sat to the preacher's right and women sat to his left. This division was enforced by a wood barrier built in the center block of pews. Traditionally, only men were permitted to speak out during services.²² The balcony that extends around three sides of the building was likely included in the church design to accommodate the slaves and free blacks who attended services. Although no records of the church confirm this use, records from the nearby Ketocin Baptist Church indicates that the balcony was included specifically for blacks.²³ The balcony in the Mount Zion Church is accessible by two flights of stairs. The stair serving the women's side of the balcony is accessible only from the exterior of the building, but the staircase leading to the men's side of the balcony includes a door leading to the main floor of the sanctuary. This perhaps allowed the men seated in the balcony to move more easily to and from the pulpit to speak during services and meetings.

The large cemetery to the rear of the church also appears to have been segregated. According to local tradition, slaves and free blacks were buried outside the stone wall, which was reportedly erected around the cemetery in 1853.²⁴ Although many African Americans formed their own churches after the Civil War, one of the graves outside the cemetery walls appears to indicate that blacks continued to attend the Mount Zion Church into the twentieth century. Lucinda DeNeal, a black resident of nearby Aldie, was buried in one of the few graves outside the walled cemetery with an inscribed stone.²⁵ It states that she died in 1885 and was "a consistent member of the Old School Baptist Church."

In keeping with the conservative beliefs of the denomination, Old School Baptist churches generally resisted modernizing their buildings. By the 1970s, however, most of them had been updated with carpeting, comfortable pews, and electricity.²⁶ The Mount Zion congregation also added carpeting and electric lights, which appear to date from the 1950s. Indoor plumbing, however, was never installed. Two twentieth-century, concrete-block outhouses on the property likely replaced earlier privies. Likewise, until its last service in 1980, the church continued to be heated only by two wood-burning stoves.

In addition to the historical and architectural significance of the church building, the property is imbued with military significance as a result of events that occurred there during the Civil War. From its earliest years, the location of the church on a high point at the intersection of the Little River Turnpike and the Old Carolina Road made it a visible local landmark. During the Civil War, it became a reference point for troops moving through the area. Because it was located in an area that shifted between Confederate and Union control, and perhaps because of damages it sustained, the congregation did not meet for services during the final years of the war. According to John T. Ritoric's testimony before the Congressional Court of Claims in 1905, Union troops camped on the church grounds and used the building as a barracks when they moved through the area in 1862.²⁷ The following year, Union troops used the building as a hospital to treat soldiers injured in fighting nearby. Although Ritoric swore under oath that no Confederate forces occupied the church property, partisan ranger John Mosby mustered his troops at the landmark when he embarked on his famous campaign of guerrilla attacks against Union supply trains and pickets. It was during the Union's bungled attempt to stamp out Mosby's stronghold in southern Loudoun County that the Battle of Mount Zion was fought near the building on July 6, 1864.

Under the authorization of Major General J.E.B. Stuart, Mosby began harassing Union troops in January 1863. When ordered to attack Union supply lines, Mosby formed a band of about fifteen men, led them to the Bull Run Mountains, and ordered them to disperse through the area and meet ten days later at the Mount Zion Church for further instructions. As ordered, the rangers

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reconvened at the church on January 28, where they mounted a raid on Federal pickets stationed elsewhere in the county. The raid was the rangers' first in a reign of terror against Union troops that earned Loudoun County and its environs the nickname "Mosby's Confederacy."²⁸

During General Robert E. Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania in the spring of 1863, Confederate and Union troops clashed in several fierce cavalry actions in Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville. The Mount Zion Church was among a number of buildings that were used as hospitals to treat the men injured in the engagements. According to a casualty list published in the *New York Times* on June 25, 1863, sixty men were being treated at the Mount Zion Church at the time, a number which included 56 soldiers fighting for the Union and four Confederates. Seven soldiers who did not survive their wounds were buried in the church cemetery.²⁹ When Joshua Riticor described the damage inflicted on the church at the time, he stated that about thirty-five church pews were ripped out of the floor and broken up to be used as coffins and headstones for the Union dead.³⁰ Mosby's guerrillas were close at hand during the actions and ambushed *New York Herald* correspondent Lynde Walter Buckingham on June 22 as he headed toward Washington with his reports on the cavalry actions. He was taken to the hospital at Mount Zion Church, where he died. He was buried in the Mount Zion cemetery in a grave dug for him by his close friend, Civil War artist Alfred Waud.³¹ Buckingham and the other soldiers buried at that time, however, were likely disinterred soon thereafter and reburied on friendly soil.³²

Although Mosby's Rangers saw numerous engagements throughout the war, their greatest victory was won on the grounds of the Mount Zion Church. On July 6, 1864, they fought a cavalry force sent into Loudoun County for the sole purpose of routing them in a skirmish that came to be called locally the Battle of Mount Zion. In search of Mosby, Major William H. Forbes rode into the county with a force comprised of 50 men of the 13th New York Cavalry and about 100 men of the Second Massachusetts Cavalry. The latter group included two companies of the California Battalion, a group of westerners hand-picked to fight Mosby and the only Californian troops to fight in the war. For two days, Forbes and his men searched unsuccessfully in the Blue Ridge Mountains before turning back east along the Little River Turnpike. Meanwhile, Mosby with his own force of about 175 men learned of the search and planned to attack Forbes on his return. Mosby's men proceeded to a point on the Little River Turnpike slightly east of Mount Zion church.

As the Union troops halted near the church for dinner on the evening of the sixth, Mosby's force approached along the road from the east. Forbes's pickets fired an alarm, and the Union troops hastily formed into two lines on the south side of the turnpike. As Forbes's men fired, the advancing Confederates fired their only cannon, a twelve-pound Napoleon. The shell exploded in the air in a noisy blast that disoriented Forbes's men and frightened their horses. Mosby's men charged into the confusion. Union troops rallied near the church and in the nearby woods where they engaged their opponents in hand-to-hand combat.

In the woods near the church, Forbes and Mosby came face to face and Forbes lunged at Mosby with a saber. One of Mosby's men moved in to take the blow while Mosby fired upon Forbes at close range. Forbes's horse reared at the same time and received a lethal bullet. The dead animal fell to the ground pinning Forbes beneath him. Forbes surrendered, while the remainder of his force fled. In the confusion following the battle, accounts of the number of casualties varied, but reliable accounts indicate that more than 105 Union soldiers were either killed, wounded or captured, while Mosby's losses were one man was killed and six wounded. The following day, a Federal relief force buried eleven of the Union dead in the Mount Zion cemetery, where they remain.³³

In a desperate effort to break Mosby's hold on Loudoun County, Union troops finally resorted to arresting all men in the county who were under the age of fifty. After this proved unsuccessful, even elderly men and local preachers were detained. Union forces held the men at Mount Zion Church before transferring them to federal prisons.³⁴

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When the war ended, the Mount Zion congregation resumed services in the beleaguered building, replacing the pews and making some repairs. Finally, in 1905, the trustees of the church petitioned the government for reimbursement "for rent and repairs" under the ruling of the Tucker Act of 1887. Three members of the congregation swore under oath that the church had remained loyal to the Union and that none of its members had fought on the Confederate side (although by that time, seven Confederate veterans had already been buried on its grounds, at least one of whom had been one of Mosby's Rangers). In response to the claim, in 1907 the U. S. Court of Claims granted the congregation \$500 to cover the loss of 35 pews, a pair of blinds, and the wood fence that had surrounded the church lot, and for damage to the doors, walls, ceiling, and pulpit.³⁵

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- ² Luis Fernandez, "Mount Zion Church, Preliminary Structural Evaluation of Rear Wall Distress," Letter report submitted by Fernandez and Associates to the Mount Zion Church Preservation Association, 1996.
- ³ John G. Lewis, "Ketoctin Baptist Church," Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey Form, File #53-308, 1973.
- ⁴ James L. Peacock and Paul W. Tyson, Jr. *Pilgrims of Paradox: Calvinism and Experience among the Primitive Baptists of the Blue Ridge* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 198.
- ⁵ U. S. Court of Claims, "Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church, Aldie, Virginia v. the United States," Congressional Case #11790, 1905-07 (Record Group 123, National Archives and Records Administration).
- ⁶ Wynne Saffer, interview with the author, 11 January 1997; Karen A. Titus, interview with the author, 11 December 1996.
- ⁷ Grier, "Mount Zion Old School Primitive Baptist Church," 17.
- ⁸ John D. Wood, "Mount Zion History is Traced," *Loudoun Times Mirror*, 21 March 1968.
- ⁹ Saffer interview.
- ¹⁰ Saffer interview.¹¹ Wood, "Mount Zion History."
- ¹² Minute Book of the Ebenezer Old School Baptist Church 1804-1904, Virginia State Archives, Microfilm.
- ¹³ Wood, "Mount Zion History."
- ¹⁴ Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Primitive Baptists of North America," *Baptist History and Heritage* 7, no. 1 (January 1972): 33.
- ¹⁵ Piepkorn, "Primitive Baptists," 35-36.
- ¹⁶ Peacock and Tyson, *Pilgrims of Paradox*, 4.
- ¹⁷ Garnett Ryland, *The Baptists of Virginia, 1699-1926* (Richmond, Virginia: Virginia Baptist Board of Missions and Education, 1955), 51; Piepkorn, "Primitive Baptists," 35; Titus interview.
- ¹⁸ William Vernon Ford, *Ketoctin Chronicle* (Leesburg, Virginia: Potomac Press, 1964), 4; Piepkorn, "Primitive Baptists," 35.
- ¹⁹ Piepkorn, "Primitive Baptists," 45-46.
- ²⁰ Wood, "Mount Zion History"; Grier, "Mount Zion Old School Primitive Baptist Church," 2.
- ²¹ Wood, "Mount Zion History."
- ²² Horace H. Lefferts, "Daybook 1917-49," (Diary in the collection of Karen A. Titus), n.p.
- ²³ *Minutes of the Virginia Corresponding Meeting, Held with the Mount Zion Church* (Middletown New York: J.E. Beebe & Co., 1949).
- ²⁴ Alan Fogg, "And Then There Was One: Its flock all but gone, a historic church closes," *Arlington Journal* (November 8 [year unknown], newspaper clipping in the collection of Wynne Saffer).
- ²⁵ *Loudoun County Deed Book* 5D, 323, Loudoun County Recorder of Deeds, Leesburg, Virginia.
- ²⁶ John G. Lewis, "Mount Zion Baptist Church," Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey Form, File #53-339, 1972; Grier, "Mount Zion Old School Primitive Baptist Church," 14.
- ²⁷ Peacock and Tyson, *Pilgrims of Paradox*, 115-116.

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- ²⁸ Titus interview.
- ²⁹ Minute Book of the Frying Pan Old School Baptist Church 1828-1879, Virginia State Archives, Microfilm; Ebenezer Minute Book.
- ³⁰ U. S. Court of Claims, "Mount Zion v. U.S."
- ³¹ Titus interview.
- ³² Peacock and Tyson, *Pilgrims of Paradox*, 198.
- ³³ Ford, *Ketocin Chronicle*, 14.
- ³⁴ Wood "Mount Zion History."
- ³⁵ U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Manuscript Census of the United States*, 1880. National Archives and Records Administration.
- ³⁶ Piepkorn, "Primitive Baptists, 47.
- ³⁷ U. S. Court of Claims, Mount Zion v. U.S."
- ³⁸ Brian W. Boucher, "A Brief History of Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church,[1995]" (Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, Virginia, Photocopy), 1.
- ³⁹ Boucher, "Brief History," 1.
- ⁴⁰ U. S. Court of Claims "Mount Zion v. U.S."
- ⁴¹ Frederic E. Ray, *Alfred Waud, Civil War Artist* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), 42.
- ⁴² Brian W. Boucher, telephone interview with the author, February 1997.
- ⁴³ Grier, "Mount Zion Old School Primitive Baptist Church," 9-11; Boucher, "Brief History," 2.
- ⁴⁴ Grier, "Mount Zion Old School Primitive Baptist Church," 1.
- ⁴⁵ U.S. Court of Claims, "Mount Zion v. U.S."

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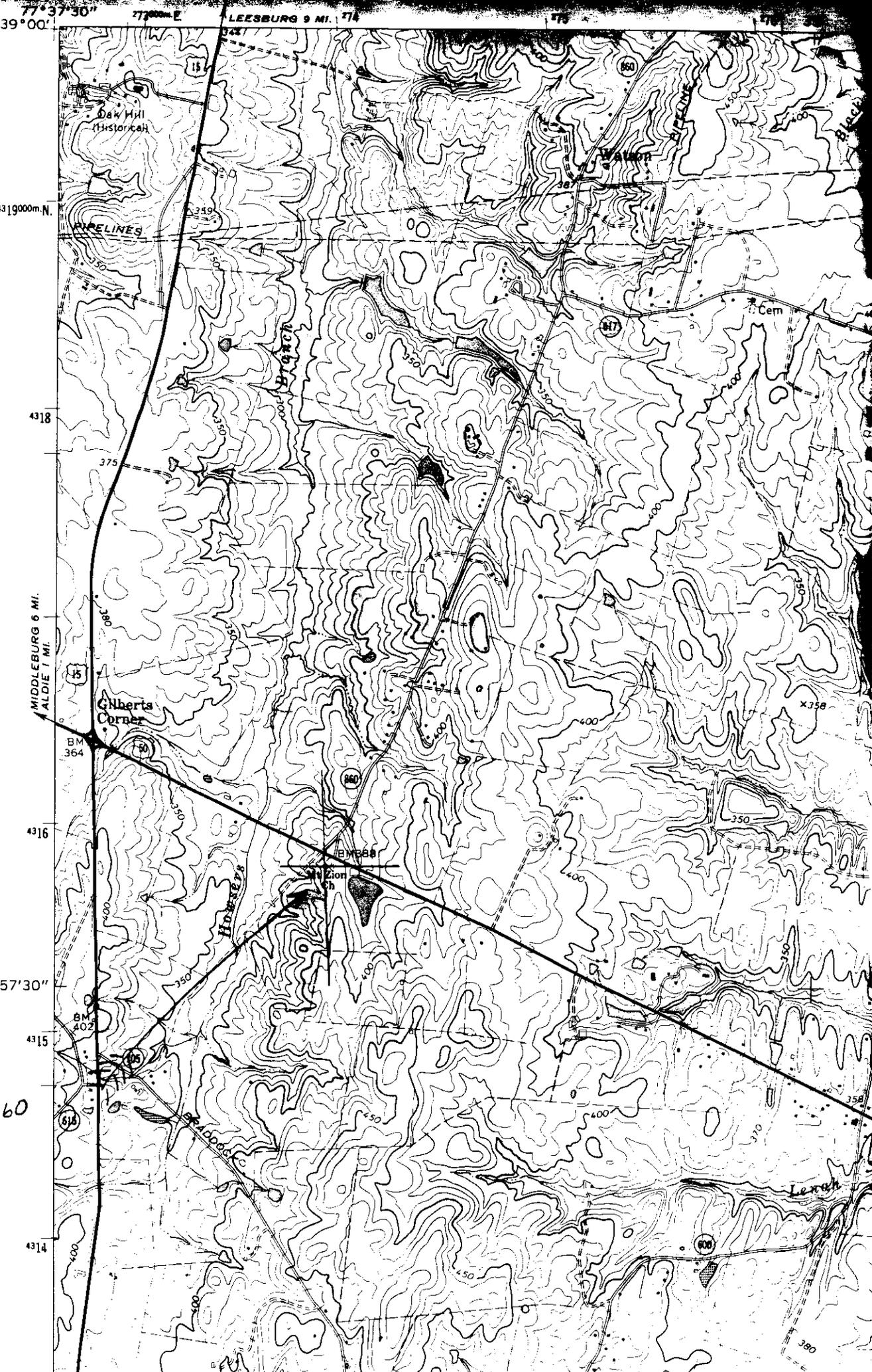
Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church
Loudoun County, Virginia

Verbal Boundary Description

The recommended National Register boundary for the Mount Zion Old School Baptist Church includes the two tracts within parcel 28 on Loudoun County Tax Map 90 containing a total of 6.8196 acres. The larger of the two parcels is Parcel 28B containing 5.8196 acres and the smaller parcel is Parcel 28A containing 1 acre.

Boundary Justification

The recommended boundary includes the legal parcel containing the church and its outbuildings as well as the smaller adjacent parcel containing the cemetery.



77°37'30" 39°00'

273000m E

LEESBURG 9 MI. 774

775

776

4319000m N

4318

MIDDLEBURG 6 MI.
ALDIE 1 MI.

4316

57'30"

4315

4314

ARCOLA
USGS

Mount Zion Old
School Baptist
Church

Aldie vicinity,
Loudan Canty,
Virginia

UTM References

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