



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: Zion Baptist Church  
other names/site number:

**2. Location**

street & number: Little Zion Church Road West, 2 miles north of Lauderdale/Kemper County line  
city or town: Collinsville vicinity X  
state: Mississippi code: MS county: Kemper code: 69 zip code: 39325

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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        nationally        statewide X locally. (        See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kenneth H. P. Paul  
Signature of certifying official

OCTOBER 17, 2002  
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Ball  
Signature of the Keeper

12/12/02  
Date of Action

**5. Classification****Ownership of Property:**

private

**Number of Resources within Property:**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

**Category of Property:**

building

## Contributing

1

1

## Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

2

1

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:**

RELIGIOUS: Religious facility

**Current Functions:**

RELIGIOUS: Religious facility

**7. Description****Architectural Classification(s):**

Other: vernacular Carpenter Gothic

**Materials:**

foundation: Brick, sandstone

roof: Galvanized tin

walls: Weatherboard

other

**Narrative Description:**

See Continuation Sheets

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

- 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**  
ARCHITECTURE**Period of Significance**  
1910**Significant Dates**  
1910**Criteria Considerations:**

Property is:

- ☒ **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.

**Significant Person(s)****Cultural Affiliation(s)****Architect/Builder**  
Roland Greenberry Skinner**Narrative Statement of Significance:**

See continuation sheets.

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography** See continuation sheet.**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:

Zion Baptist Church Minutes

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property: 6 acres

| UTM References: | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|-----------------|------|---------|----------|
|                 | 16   | 323450  | 3609310  |

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description** See continuation sheet.**Boundary Justification:** See continuation sheet.**11. Form Prepared By**

|                  |                             |                        |                    |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| name/title:      | Ms. Janice Calvert Harrison | Sheila Alawine Thead   | date: 18 June 2002 |
| street & number: | 9306 Cole Road              | 10303 Wildcat Road     |                    |
| city or town:    | Meridian, MS 39307          | Collinsville, MS 39325 |                    |
| telephone:       | 601-483-3749                | 601-986-2189           |                    |

**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(s)**

|                  |                                                       |                           |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| name:            | Zion Baptist Church, Trustees c/o Ms. Janice Harrison |                           |
| street & number: | 9306 Cole Road                                        | telephone: 601-483-3749   |
| city or town:    | Meridian                                              | state: MS zip code: 39307 |

**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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

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Zion Baptist Church  
Kemper County, MS

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

Located on West Zion Church Road in the southwest corner of Kemper County, Zion Baptist Church is about two miles north of the Kemper-Lauderdale line. It is surrounded mostly by timber company land, and very few families remain in the area.

The vernacular "Carpenter Gothic" church building rests upon its original pillars of sandstone and bricks. This foundation has been left undisturbed except for repairs to make the floor and overall structure more stable and level. The area underneath the church is open and not enclosed with screens or concrete blocks.

The front-gabled church has a very steeply pitched roof covered with galvanized tin. The roof has been replaced at least once. The structure is sided with six-inch-wide heart-pine weatherboard. Its southwesterly façade is simple and unrelieved by ornamentation except for flat, boxed cornices at eaves and a triangular-peaked, louvered vent near the top of the gable. Flanking the double-leaf front door topped with a double-paned transom are two triangular-peaked windows, each containing five panes of glass. Four wooden steps ascend into the building.

The northwestern and southeastern elevations are identical, both being unornamented, with plain, narrow fascia, and having four symmetrically-spaced triangular-peaked windows of the same sort flanking the façade entry door. All windows in the church are still operable and have original hardware. All are eight feet tall and have plain, unornamented casements 7 inches wide, trimmed with additional molding at the outside edges.

Two triangular-peaked windows are combined and centered on the rear, northeasterly elevation, directly behind the pulpit inside. A single, rear entry door constructed similarly to the double-leaf entrance door opens onto a small deck and handicap-accessible ramp added in 1982.

The interior of the church is virtually intact from the year of its construction, with original door hardware still in place. The double-leaf entrance door opens into a small, enclosed foyer with additional swinging doors to the right and left leading into the church proper. Past the point of the foyer and the two bays formed on either side of this vestibule, the church interior is a simple rectangle with barreled ceiling which reaches a height of 16 feet in its middle section. Three rows of pews fill the interior, forming two aisles, each about 3½ feet wide, leading away from the two vestibule doors. Pews on either side of the center section are 7 feet long; those in the middle row are 9 feet long. There are 3 additional rows of the shorter pews in the two bays on either side of the foyer. Standing 3 feet in height, the pews were all constructed by Mr. Skinner and have rounded ends decorated with small, squared, medallion-like forms and applied flat molding to produce rectangular panel ornamentation.

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Kemper County, MS

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At the northeasterly end of the interior, an additional group of three 7-foot-long pews placed at right angles to the other church seating forms the "prayer-pew section", where it was customary for a few women dressed in black to remain during services, according to older church members. The pulpit, preacher's chair and flower table are all original furnishings, probably purchased rather than locally crafted. These items, other split-bottom chairs and an old upright piano occupy a 21-foot, three-inch by 8-foot, 11-inch raised platform; the pulpit itself stands on another raised dais 7 feet, 10 inches long and 6 feet wide, built atop the first elevated area. Each platform is sided with vertically-laid bead board.

The interior walls of the church are covered with diagonally-laid bead board to a height of 36 inches from the floor, equaling the top of the pews' backs. (However, in the foyer, this bead board is applied vertically.) Above the bead board is an inch-wide, simple chair rail. From that point upward to, and on, the ceiling, bead board is applied horizontally and painted a light peach color. All other woodwork, including pews, piano, the lower wainscoting and chair rail, is painted a dark walnut color. The tongue-in-groove 3-inch heart pine floorboards are unstained. A noteworthy feature of the church is that only the highest-quality boards available to Mr. Skinner were used in its construction, so that there are no observable blemishes or knots anywhere in the building.

Original oil lamps are no longer present in the building but have been replaced by more modern electric lighting. The one concession to weather has been the addition of space heaters for occasional winter use; there is no air conditioning.

The six-acre property also contains a large cemetery surrounded by the original fence. This cemetery contains many graves of early settlers of the area, including immigrants from Ireland, Scotland and England. Its earliest burials date from around 1860, predating by about fifty years the construction of the present church building. Because of this historical significance in relation to the church, it is counted as a contributing site. (An African-American cemetery associated with the community and church lies behind the Zion cemetery, with access granted through the north side of the fence. Zion Baptist Church does not own this property, and it is not included with this nomination.)

A modern, noncontributing open-air pavilion with enclosed restrooms has been built away from the church building itself. This functions as a site for yearly homecomings and other gatherings.

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Zion Baptist Church  
Kemper County, MS

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Zion Baptist Church, located on West Zion Church Road approximately two miles north of the Kemper-Lauderdale County line, is significant under Criterion C because of the quality of its architectural detail as a rural, vernacular church built during the early 1900s, and its unusually high degree of integrity. The church has remained virtually unaltered since its construction, with the exceptions of necessary repairs, the addition of electricity, and the construction on the property of separate bathroom facilities and an open-air pavilion for the traditional dinner-on-the-ground. A handicap accessibility ramp was also added to the rear of the building in 1982. The building itself exhibits a very high degree of care taken with its construction, given its rural location, and the quality of its materials is outstanding. With its exceptionally high ceiling and Carpenter Gothic details (as in the triangular-peaked windows and decorated pews), the country builder apparently took great pains to produce an uplifting effect for the congregation.

This state of integrity even extends to its rural setting. A number of extremely large old oak trees shelter the two cemeteries associated with the church, and the road which the façade overlooks is quite narrow and winding. An occasional wedding party may still be seen approaching the church in a horse-drawn buggy rented from a local vender.

The present building was built in 1910-11 for Zion Baptist Church, which was organized in 1844, according to church minutes. John Crowther, one of the earliest settlers of the area who had immigrated from England, deeded six acres to the church in 1852. Shortly afterwards, the first burial was performed in the cemetery. At least one previous building evidently stood on or near the site of the present building. In 1910 the church officially began discussing beginning a new structure. The minutes record, "Since our last meeting the Brethren had decided to make a start towards building a House of Worship at this place, and a considerable amount of the material had been put on the ground." By July 30, 1911, the church was apparently completed: "...The Church at Zion commenced a series of meetings, assembling in the new house of worship for the first time." The building was constructed by Roland Greenberry Skinner, a local carpenter descended from a line of rural builders.

The congregation met continuously until 1962, at which time regular services were discontinued, although weddings, homecomings, funerals and burials are still held on the grounds.

Zion Baptist Church and Cemetery Association maintains the upkeep of the church and cemetery. Although the church is not active during the year except for funerals and occasionally a wedding, it is visited many times by people who have ancestors buried in the cemetery or those in search of their roots. And though most of the early families have since dispersed and moved to other communities and joined other churches, some are still brought back to Zion for burial near their forefathers.

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Zion Baptist Church  
Kemper County, MS

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Calvert, Nina Tucker; Blanks, William and Ann. ***Zion Cemetery Census***. 1977. Published by Finis S. Calvert. (Currently being updated)

***Letters to Margaret***, 1862-1887. Compiled by Mable Joiner, Lela Muller and Nina Calvert. June 1979.

Mulholland, Henry D. (Ben). ***Mulhollands in Mississippi***. Privately published.

Patterson, Morrel J. and Ruby Seyfried. ***Our Family History and Cookbook: The Patterson, Chisolm and Calvert Family History***. 1996.

Zion Baptist Church. Minutes. 1924-1961.

Zion Baptist Church Record. 1844-1994. Minutes from February 1890 to November 1923. Transcribed by William L. Blanks, May 1977. Record of minutes given to Nina Tucker Calvert by Mary Anne Vance and published by Finis S. Calvert.



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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property consists of an area approximately triangular in shape, of 6.4 acres, located in the southeast quarter of Section 20, Township 9 North, Range 14 East in Kemper County, Mississippi. The property is bounded on the south by West Zion Road (formerly the Stage Road), on the east by the eastern boundary of Section 20, and on the north by a line extending eastward from the road junction just west of the church to the Section line.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries described above contain the property owned by the Zion Baptist Church and Cemetery Association, consisting of the church building, the church grounds, and the historic cemetery.



ZION  
BAPTIST  
CHURCH  
& CEMETERY  
ORGANIZED 1841

Zion Baptist Church

Kemper County, MS

Photo by Janice Harrison

May 20, 2002

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

Oblique frontal view of exterior toward north

Photo 1 of 7



Zion Baptist Church

Kemper County, MS

Photo by Janice Harrison

May 20, 2002

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

Oblique frontal view of exterior toward east

Photo 2 of 7



Zion Baptist Church

Temper County, Ms.

Photo by Janice Harrison

May 20, 2002

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

Rear of Church, view to southwest

Photo 3 of 7





Zion Baptist Church

Kemper County, Ms.

Photo by Janice Harrison

May 20 2002

Miss. Dept of Archives and History

Interior of Church, view to northeast

Photo 4 of 7



Zion Baptist Church

Kemper County, Ms.

Photo by Janice Harrison

May 20, 2002

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

Interior of Church, view to Southwest

Photo 5 of 7



Zion Baptist Church  
Kemper County, Ms.  
Photo by Janice Harrison  
MAY 20, 2002

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History  
View from road beside cemetery, view to northwest  
Photo 6 of 7



**ZION**

**BAPTIST  
CHURCH**

**& CEMETERY**

**ORGANIZED 1844**

Zion Baptist Church

Kemper County, Ms.

Photo by Janice Harrison

May 28, 2002

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

Cemetery, view to Southeast

Photo 7 of 7