

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

LISTED ON:
VLR 12/16/2010
NRHP 02/22/2011

**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" 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

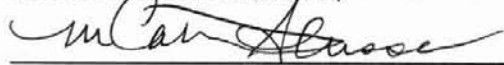
historic name: Diamond Hill Baptist Church
other names/site number: VHDR ID 118-0060-0057

2. Location

street & number: 1415 Grace Street not for publication: NA
city or town: Lynchburg vicinity: NA
state: Virginia code: VA county: NA Independent City code: 680 zip code: 24504

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)



12/28/2010
Date

Signature of certifying official
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title _____ 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 the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

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>0</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Religion Sub: Religious Facility, Church
Social Civic
Domestic Single Dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Religion Sub: Religious Facility
Domestic Single Dwelling

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Late Gothic Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Stone, Brick

Roof: Slate

Walls: Stone, Brick

Other: NA

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)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | A | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B | Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 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. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 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.)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | A | owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B | removed from its original location. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C | a birthplace or a grave. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D | a cemetery. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | E | a reconstructed building, object, or structure. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | F | a commemorative property. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | G | less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years. |

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

Period of Significance 1958-1963

Significant Dates 1958

Significant Person NA

Cultural Affiliation NA

Architect/Builder Lewis Bolling, mason

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

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: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than 1

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

Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>17</u>	<u>0664297</u>	<u>4141696</u>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

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: Kelvin L. Moore, Architect

organization: Moore + Goldman Architects

date: May 25, 2010

street & number: 616 Court Street

telephone: 434.846.7886

city or town: Lynchburg

state: VA

zip code: 24504

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 Diamond Hill Baptist Church

street & number 1415 Grace Street

telephone _____

city or town Lynchburg

state VA

zip code 24504

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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 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 National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Architectural Description

Summary Architectural Description

Diamond Hill Baptist Church is a Gothic Revival edifice erected in 1886. An addition was appended to the North side (the right side, facing the church from the street) and the rear of the church in 1993. The front of the church faces southeast. The church is divided into two wings; one serves as the original sanctuary and the other as support spaces compiled of classrooms, offices, storage, and halls. It is a three-story, L-shaped, brick building with a three-foot foundation of stone and masonry and a jerkinhead roof. The facades are articulated by brick buttresses capped with limestone. Gothic pointed arched windows fixed with painted wood sashes and stained glass highlight the facade. A three-story tower accentuates the main entrance and indicates the sanctuary by serving as a steeple. The side addition follows the same architectural features of the original building. Its façade and elevations incorporate the brick buttresses and the jerkinhead roof but it is distinguished by featuring double hung windows in lieu of the Gothic style and also has dormers and a chimney. The interior of the church features an open sanctuary with a balcony. The balcony is supported by metal columns and is accessible through narrow wooden stairs with ornately carved wooden posts. The balcony railing is composed of metal posts and wooden pickets. The sanctuary features a vaulted ceiling and a pulpit stage form with a choir pit behind it. Present behind the choir pit is a baptistery that sits above the seating, which was part of the 1993 rear addition. Curved wooden pews with Gothic foliate motifs at the ends fill the sanctuary. The parsonage is located just south of the main façade on the southern side of the church. It is a detached one story brick building with a concrete foundation and asphalt shingled roof.

Detailed Architectural Description

Diamond Hill Baptist Church is located on the north corner of Grace Street and 14th Street in the Diamond Hill Historic District to which it contributes. The Diamond Hill Historic District displays some of the most elegant early 20th century houses in Lynchburg. The church is not directly on the corner but is set back down Grace Street about 30 feet. This setback provides space for a lawn and parking for the church. The church is situated near Grace Street along the sidewalk. Grace Street is a narrow two-way street that serves as an entryway into downtown Lynchburg.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Construction for Diamond Hill Baptist Church began in 1886. The building was designed in such a way that if the African-American congregation could not afford the cost of construction, it could be utilized as a theater. The design of the church is Late Gothic Revival. The building is predominantly composed of red face brick, string course construction with a decorative patterned brick along the frieze. The frieze is emphasized by the triangulated corbel. The main façade along Grace Street is a three-bay gable end with a three story tower in the north bay and a double stairway in the center. Two sets of concrete stairs with brick cheek walls flank a ground level basement entrance and rise to a single landing outside the centered main entry. The double leaf entrance features grand, carved wooden double doors anchored by three pointed arch windows- a large pointed arch transom above the door with two elongated pointed arch windows along the sides of the doorway. The flanking bays of the façade each feature a centrally located pointed arch window. The pointed arch windows all are composed of painted wooden sashes with stained glass, a limestone sill, and soldier course header. Above the entrance in the central bay is a very large, elegant round window with decorative "wheel spoke" muntins located on the second story. This too is accentuated by a soldier course border. There is also a round window on the north bay tower located at the second story, this window is slightly smaller than the centrally located round window and has simpler muntins. The tower is anchored at the corners by buttresses with limestone caps; corbels add a decorative feature to the base of the caps. The north bay tower is three stories high and is terminated by a pyramidal slate roof. The top of this roof is the highest point of the church. The roof on this tower, and prevalent throughout, is composed of slate shingles.

The remaining elevations are very similar in composition, including the façade of the addition. The original building was three bays deep. The right elevation follows the pattern established by the original front façade. It too is two stories high with pointed arch windows indicating the floor level. Buttresses divide the bays and express the verticality of the church. The buttresses extend from the ground to the third story. They are similar to the composition of the buttresses on the tower. Two pointed arch windows are located between each buttress. The corbels on the sides are similar in composition but differ in the patterning sequence when compared with the front façade. The corbels on the sides are all the same length while those on the front façade alternate length, one long then the next one short then the next long, etc. Also present on the side elevation is a clerestory composed of large rounded triangular windows located above each pair of pointed arch windows.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

Through the wooden carved doors on the central bay of the façade is the entrance of the church. The interior of the church has an open sanctuary with a balcony that wraps three walls; the wall that houses the pulpit does not have the balcony. The sanctuary ceiling is a barrel vault that forms three bays by use of molding along the seams with a chandelier located in the central bay. The balcony is supported by Tuscan iron columns with carved wood paneling along the fascia of the balcony. A decorative iron railing with curved foliage motifs is above the supported paneling. The balcony is accessible by narrow stairs located in the corners of the vestibule of the main entrance. The doorway is accentuated by pointed arches. Seating on the balcony and in the sanctuary is provided by wooden pews that display carved foliage motifs on the ends. The pulpit is located towards the rear of the sanctuary and sits on a stage. The pulpit is accentuated by a pointed arched alcove that features a pointed arched stained glass window in its center. Beyond the pulpit sits the choir and just beyond the choir is the baptistery. Flanking the pulpit are recessed alcoves, also in the pointed arch shape that are primarily decorative elements. Flooring throughout the church is wall-to-wall carpet. The windows within the sanctuary are stained glass. The round window located towards the rear of the balcony features rose patterns while the stained glass windows along the walls are composed of simple geometric patterns. The church was constructed with a full basement that includes an auditorium and office space.

In 1903, the original mortgage was paid off and burned which allowed the congregation to take out a new mortgage for renovation purposes. The new mortgage permitted the congregation to remodel the church in 1903. Presumably their success at paying off the first mortgage gave the congregation confidence that they would own their church for many years to come and the 1903 renovations focused on transforming the interior space from a multi-purpose space that could be used as a theatre, should the need arise, into a dedicated worship space. The details and extent of the 1903 renovations are not known, but it is believed that the sanctuary and basement were somehow renovated, the front tower with steeple was added, and the existing slate roof was installed.

After the 1903 renovations, 90 years passed before Diamond Hill was again altered. Appended to the northernmost side of the building in 1993 is a brick veneer addition that follows the same architectural style of the original building with buttresses that have limestone caps and a decorative frieze that wraps the building. It is similar in size and composition to the original church. The addition has a simple rectangular form and is three stories in height. The addition is lower than the original church, allowing the sanctuary to maintain its supremacy as the prominent architectural focal piece. The ridgeline of the roof is positioned slightly higher than the frieze of the sanctuary. The

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4

front and rear elevations of the addition are divided by buttresses, similar in style to the original sanctuary with limestone caps and staggered corbels. The addition has windows that are all double hung with wooden sashes painted white with limestone sills. The windows are paired in the center of each bay. Also present are three hipped dormers on the two long elevations of the addition. These dormers are white vinyl sided with slate shingle roofs and are located on-center to the bays divided by the buttresses. A chimney is located in the center of the addition. The roof follows the same jerkinhead style as the sanctuary. The addition does not diminish the architectural impact of the original building. Its orientation creates an open courtyard for the church. This courtyard features planted shrubs, low-lying trees, and a sloped grassy lawn that leads to the parking lot. The west elevation has a secondary entrance that is highlighted by a metal roof awning. Also present along the west elevation are low-lying evergreens. The interior of the addition has vinyl composition tile throughout and standard gypsum walls painted white. The ceiling features a suspended acoustical tile with fluorescent light fixtures. The windows and doors are done using typical modern construction techniques in lieu of the decorative gothic style present in the original building.

The parsonage is located approximately twelve feet south of the primary structure. It was constructed in 1951 and utilized construction techniques common to that era. The house is a one-story, three-bay Colonial Revival Cape Cod, that sits on a three-foot concrete poured foundation. It is primarily composed of red face brick along all facades. To delineate the change of materials from the concrete foundation to the brick wall, there exists a modified soldier course brick band that is three units high. The rest of the façade is composed of running bond brick. The windows are double hung with rectangular black shutters with a soldier course header. The gable roof is comprised of asphalt shingles and has two dormers penetrating it on the front façade. The gabled dormers have double hung windows and wood lap siding painted white on the sides. A brick exterior chimney is located on the south side elevation. A modestly detailed cornice is found on all four elevations. Downspouts are present on the corners of the house. The entrance is accentuated by a portico that features a gable roof supported by square wood posts with Doric-style capitals painted white. The front of the portico is comprised of wood lap siding painted white. The concrete poured stairs with wrought iron railings painted black lead you into the parsonage.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

Statement of Significance

Summary Statement of Significance

Diamond Hill Baptist Church, the City of Lynchburg's second oldest African American church, was a center of civil rights activity beginning in 1958 when Rev. Virgil Wood assumed the pastorate there. Along with Court Street Baptist Church, the oldest African-American church in Lynchburg, Diamond Hill Baptist served as the site of activities, meetings, speeches and discussions aimed at expanding educational, economic and social opportunities for the city's black residents. Diamond Hill Baptist is a Late-Gothic Revival-style brick church constructed in 1886, remodeled in 1903 and expanded in 1993. The brickwork (Lewis Bolling, mason) of Diamond Hill Baptist is intricate and ornate and possesses similar beauty as that of Court Street Baptist and Eighth Street Baptist Church. The church was important for the African American community in Lynchburg, serving as a social center as well as a place for political action. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the church took on added importance in the struggle for civil rights under the pastorship of the Reverend Dr. Virgil Wood. A friend and colleague of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Wood served with King as a member of the National Executive Board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and coordinated the state of Virginia for the historic march to Washington, on April 28, 1963. While serving as pastor of the congregation between 1958 and 1963, Rev. Wood, in his efforts to establish racial equality in the city, founded the Lynchburg Improvement Association and served on the city's Interracial Committee. The church is a contributing resource in the Diamond Hill Historic District.

Criteria Statement

Diamond Hill Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia is eligible for listing at the local level in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A in the area of Ethnic History: Black for its association with the African American community and its role in the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s in Lynchburg. Construction began on the church in 1886 at the corner of Grace Street and 14th Street. The church is representative of the growth of the African American church during the Reconstruction Era immediately following the abolition of slavery and became a center of the African American community in Lynchburg providing a place for worship as well as for social and political organization. The church played a pivotal role in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Diamond Hill Baptist Church was an integral component in the effort to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

secure social equality for Blacks in Lynchburg, Virginia, as it provided leadership and meeting space for community organizing to combat social inequality and injustice.

As a religious property and a property with a period of significance ending less than 50 years ago, Diamond Hill Baptist Church also meets Criteria Considerations A and G. The church, built by an African American congregation and still used for religious purposes today, is directly associated with numerous events in Lynchburg's Civil Rights history. It is significant as a place where mass meetings were held to plan actions to register voters, to turn out the vote or to promote racial healing in the City. It was a place where meetings were held about the integration of public schools or the desegregation of local lunch counters, or to plan protests against unfair hiring practices. It was a rallying point where participants gathered to begin demonstrations and marches, and where audiences assembled to hear speeches by various luminaries in the local and the national Civil Rights movement. The church meets Criteria Consideration G because it is one of the two oldest and largest African American churches in Lynchburg that served as pivotal bases of operations in the local effort for civil rights with pastors who played leading roles in what was one of the most significant movements of the 20th century.

Period of Significance

The period of significance begins in 1958 when Reverend Virgil Wood, the pastor most associated with the Civil Rights movement in Lynchburg, assumed the pastorate and extends until 1963, when the pastorate of Rev. Wood ended.

Detailed Statement of Significance

Writing in The Book of Remembrance, Lynchburg Historian and Educator, Dr. Harry S. Ferguson, notes that the Diamond Hill Baptist Church congregation was established for worshipping in 1872, just seven years after slavery ended. It is the second oldest Baptist Church for "Negroes" in Lynchburg, Virginia. Court Street Baptist is the oldest. Diamond Hill Baptist, White Rock Hill Baptist, and Eighth Street Baptist Church all were an outgrowth of Court Street Baptist Church and were established in neighborhoods more accessible to the population.. When the corner stone was laid in 1886 it was with the idea that the church could be sold for use as a theater if the congregation should be unable to pay for the building. The total cost of the original structure was \$30,000.00. The brick-work for the church was contracted to Lewis Bolling, a brick mason who was a member of Diamond Hill Baptist Church. Other church members, such as J. P. Hubbard, are said to have assisted with the construction.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Seventeen years later in 1903 the mortgage was retired and burned. Another mortgage made it possible to remodel the church sanctuary and basement and to add a tower with steeple and install a slate roof.

Diamond Hill Baptist Church, like many African American churches in the late 1950s and early 1960s, served as a center of political activism and pastors at Diamond Hill and other African American churches in Lynchburg often addressed the topic of Civil Rights. Rev. W.J. Hodge, who was the pastor of Diamond Hill from 1949 to 1957, represented a group of ministers who addressed the Civil Rights Movement in their preaching but would not be considered an "activist" in ways similar to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. On March 9, 1952 the Lynchburg Branch of the NAACP held a mass meeting at Fifth Street Baptist Church. The guest speaker was the Rev. Leslie Francis Griffin, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Farmville, Virginia. He spoke on "The Wisdom of Dangerous and Reckless Living." Rev. W. J. Hodge, who was president of the local branch of the NAACP attended the meeting.¹

While Rev. Hodge was pastor, the church erected and furnished a parsonage at a cost of over \$16,000 and renovated the basement of the church to include modern Sunday School facilities consisting of a nursery, library, classrooms and an assembly room at a cost of over \$14,500.

The Civil Rights Movement in Lynchburg essentially started in 1958 when the Diamond Hill Baptist Church called to its pastorate the Reverend Dr. Virgil Wood. Dr. Wood, a native Virginian and nationally recognized church leader, educator, and civil rights activist, has committed much of his life's work to the struggle for economic and spiritual development among the nation's disadvantaged. He was educated at Virginia Union University and Andover Newton Theological School. He received a doctorate from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Ordained as a Baptist minister in his late teens, Wood has served churches in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Virginia.²

During his pastorate at Diamond Hill Baptist Church (1958-1963) Rev. Wood became actively involved in the Civil Rights movement. He thrust Diamond Hill into the very center of the struggle for equal rights for African Americans when he began, mostly from the pulpit, admonishing Black citizens to register and vote, to plan and carry out public demonstrations, and to voice their discontent with separate and unequal conditions in all aspects of life in and around Lynchburg. Wood led a years-long campaign of sit-ins, picket lines and boycotts to protest segregation in the city. Virtually every civil rights milestone recorded in Lynchburg during those years has his fingerprints on them in some way.³

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Longtime church members recall that Reverend Wood encouraged student groups and college students (both black and white) to test the stifling patterns of discrimination and bigotry by attempting to attend church services together even at the city's white First Baptist Church at 11th & Court Streets. From his office at Diamond Hill, Reverend Wood sent approximately 4-5 teams of young African-American college students to various white churches with large congregations attended by prominent members of the white community. This attempt, almost every Sunday from 1958-1960 but at least twice a month, to encourage integration through worshipping together proved largely unsuccessful; almost of the students were immediately turned away from the White churches.

To further support full integration efforts, in 1960 Reverend Wood organized and participated in various organizations to work toward integration and to protest the inequality of segregation. He organized a satellite chapter of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Montgomery Improvement Association, which was established in 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama by a group of black ministers and community leaders. The Montgomery Improvement Association guided boycotts and facilitated sit-ins that garnered national attention for their efforts to protest racial segregation in the South. Rev. Wood was also a member of the Lynchburg Interracial Committee, an organization made up of both white and black community leaders that was formed by Lynchburg city manager Bob Morrison in the early 1960s to improve race relations.⁴

Reverend Wood held many meetings at Diamond Hill Baptist Church to organize the community to stage protest marches on Main Street for equal rights and to challenge the patterns of segregation in the city's department stores and schools. The church's proximity to Dunbar High School (black) meant Dunbar students could easily attend the mass meetings. Georgia Barksdale, a member of Diamond Hill Baptist, recalled one mass meeting attended by her daughter, Linda Woodruff:

*In 1961...when my daughter was twelve years old...,she went to Diamond Hill. Virgil Wood was there, holding a [mass] meeting for the kids from Dunbar, to see if they wanted to fill out applications to start the School Board process" to petition the Pupil Placement Board in Richmond for permission to attend the white high school, E.C. Glass.*⁵

Rev. Wood organized night rallies at the church featuring well known personalities in the Civil Rights movement including the legendary Rev. Dr. Vernon Johns, Dr. King's predecessor at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. These rallies mobilized the community and brought citizens together to receive information, to address their concerns of consumer discrimination and integration in public schools,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9

and to organize future actions such as voter registration and voter turn-out on election days. Rev. Wood often conferred with the Rev. Wyatt T. Walker of Petersburg, Virginia who was later to become Dr. King's first Chief of Staff at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Rev. Wood, Rev. Walker, and Rev. Dr. Milton Reid of Norfolk, Virginia were invited by Dr. King to become active members of the national board of the SCLC; each accepted the offer.⁶ Rev. Wood served on the National Executive Board of the SCLC for the last ten years of Dr. King's life and work. In 1962, the Lynchburg Improvement Association changed its name and became the local unit of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.⁷

Diamond Hill Baptist also served as a meeting place for students interested in the effort to integrate city businesses, including some of those who planned and carried out a sit-in at Patterson's Drug Store lunch counter in December of 1960.⁸ Late in 1960, several of Lynchburg's lunch counters had been quietly desegregated without incident, but Patterson's was not one of them. On December 14, 1960, an interracial group composed of Rebecca Owen and Mary Edith Bentley, students at Randolph-Macon Women's College, Terrill Brumback and James Hunter, students at Lynchburg College, and Barbara Thomas and Kenneth Greene, students at the African-American Virginia Seminary and College, sat down together at the counter of Patterson's Drug Store. They were arrested for trespassing, tried, and sentenced to thirty days in jail. Lynchburg College, in response to student participation in sit-ins at Lynchburg drugstores and other efforts to encourage integration, threatened that students participating in illegal activities of this kind -- even out of conscience -- would be "disassociated" from the school.⁹

Rebecca Owen was a scholarship student at Methodist-affiliated Randolph-Macon Woman's College. In 1960 Rebecca was a delegate to the summer National Student Christian Federation's General Assembly in Denver. There she met participants in the Greensboro, NC, sit-in. When she returned to school at R-MWC Rebecca began to organize discussion groups of black and white students which met at Lynchburg's Unitarian-Universalist Church and at Reverend Virgil Wood's Diamond Hill Baptist Church.¹⁰

Other demonstrations or sit-ins were the subject of meetings at Diamond Hill. Owen Cardwell, who, with Lynda Woodruff, desegregated E.C. Glass High School in 1962, remembers

"...when we strategized in the basement of Diamond Hill [Baptist Church] to integrate S & W Cafeteria. White students were brought in from Philadelphia to act as look-outs for us. They went into S & W Cafeteria, we parked down the hill...White kids came to the public telephone booth right

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

out front of the S & W, called us, we ran up the hill, went into the cafeteria, and were seated before they could call the police or anything. And we sat at the table with the White kids that were plants..."¹¹

Workers called the police and closed the cafeteria. When the Lynchburg Interracial Committee announced the following day that the cafeteria would serve black patrons, the Committee was given credit for bringing about the integration of the cafeteria.¹²

In 1962, Dr. Wood helped to bring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to Lynchburg. Dr. King always tried to visit the communities represented by his national board members and those aspiring to be members. In March of 1962, Dr. King met with Rev. Wood at his office at Diamond Hill Baptist Church prior to a speech that Dr. King delivered at the city auditorium at E.C. Glass High School. There was only standing room available at this venue as Dr. King spoke about social equality for all. Rev. Wood was a speaker that evening and actually introduced Dr. King. In the lower auditorium of the church that same day, Dr. King named Rev. Wood to organize the Virginia participants to the August 28, 1963 March on Washington.

On August 29, 1963, after the March on Washington, according to the *Lynchburg News and Advance* newspaper, "A brick was hurled through the window of the residence of the Rev. Virgil Wood, Lynchburg racial agitator ... " Rev. Wood responded to the paper by saying, "Our march in Washington is related to the demand for jobs in Lynchburg ... I am concerned that City Hall is lily white...and that is symbolic of the attitude of the city." Dr. R. Walter Johnson, a Black physician and member of Diamond Hill Baptist Church (who also discovered and coached tennis champions Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe in Lynchburg) said from Wood's glass-shattered home that "250 people from Lynchburg were at the march."

After the march, M. W. Thornhill Jr. who became Lynchburg's first Black Mayor 27 years later, said on the steps of Rev. Wood's parsonage that they "had never seen so many people in their lives and that the lack of any incident during the march was significant." The news article went on to say that Rev. Wood was "an agitator" and affiliated with "a Communist front organization".¹³

Following Dr. King's visit to the city, the name of the Lynchburg Improvement Association was changed to the Lynchburg Branch of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.¹⁴

Undeterred by news coverage, Diamond Hill Baptist Church continued to serve as a venue for civil rights activities and longtime church members recall the church playing

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11

host to a vanguard of titans of the Civil Rights movement. Those visiting Diamond Hill included Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, who succeeded Dr. King, as leader of the SCLC, attended Sunday service at Diamond Hill Baptist Church in 1962 and also gave instruction for nonviolent demonstration strategies.

Chief Apostle Lawrence Campbell, Sr. the national head of the Bible Way Church, World Wide, Inc. and senior staff members from King's Atlanta headquarters - Rev. C. T. Vivian, Rev. Dr. L.K. Jackson, Ms. Dorothy Cotton, Rev. Andrew Young (later to become the mayor of Atlanta) also assisted Rev. Wood at Diamond Hill with the planning and organizing of the non-violent demonstrations in 1963.

Attorney Reuben Lawson, an attorney for the Legal Fund of the NAACP from 1961-1962, was invited and met at Diamond Hill Baptist Church, and subsequently agreed to litigate Lynchburg's first integration lawsuit. Known as Jackson v. The School Board of the City of Lynchburg Virginia, the lawsuit initiated the desegregation of E.C. Glass High School and ultimately the rest of the public schools in the city. Through due process, the courts ruled in favor of Lawson's clients and E.C. Glass had its first integrated class by the fall of 1962.¹⁵

Diamond Hill Baptist played a prominent role in other activities in the effort to secure civil rights. In May of 1961, Bates Houston Ford, also a member of Diamond Hill Baptist Church, led an organized march from the church to the A & P Supermarket at 12th and Court Streets to protest the store's practice of hiring only white checkers.¹⁶ Ford later helped lead the infamous march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. This march on Sunday, March 7, 1965, was for equal voting rights and is often referred to as "Bloody Sunday" because protestors and marchers were attacked by police at the bridge with billy clubs and tear gas.

At the center of the movement, O. C. Thaxton, G. F. Jackson, and T.N. Burton, a member of Diamond Hill Baptist Church, met in the lower level of the church and authored the first Omnibus suit in the history of Lynchburg. This case is known as THAXTON v. VAUGHAN and was decided in 1963. The suit was to eliminate the practice of racial segregation in all public facilities in Lynchburg including: public pools, public parks, the nursing homes, the hospitals, the jails, the city armory, City Hall, the City Cemetery, and the courts. O. C. Thaxton, owner of a Lynchburg hauling business and a charter member of the Lynchburg Improvement Association (LIA), lost his contract with Patterson Drug Store after the 1960 downtown drug store sit-in.¹⁷

Rev. Dr. Haywood Robinson, Jr. was Rev. Wood's handpicked pastoral successor at Diamond Hill and in 1964 became Lynchburg's first Black School Board Chairman. He continued Wood's practice of taking a leadership role in the fight for civil rights and was

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

renowned as a recreational accessibility, resources, programs, and facilities available to the Black youth. ¹⁸ Robinson served as pastor at Diamond Hill from 1964 until October 2000.

Through the efforts of Rev. Wood, to effect change in city policies, practices and behaviors and to encourage members of his congregation and other citizens of Lynchburg to develop the means to work for and acquire economic, educational and social equality, Diamond Hill Baptist Church is recognized today as an important center of the civil rights movement in Lynchburg. The church is a tangible reminder of the challenging role taken on by black pastors and their congregations to foster and encourage racial equality in Virginia in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 13

Major Bibliographic Sources:

Board of Directors of the Center of Economic and Social Justice, Biography on Rev. Dr. Virgil Wood
<http://www.cesj.org/about/cesjnetwork/directors.htm#Rev.%20Dr.%20Virgil%20A.%20Wood%20bio%20brief>

Ferguson, Dr. Harry S. "A Book of Remembrance". Unpublished history of Diamond Hill Baptist Church.

Laurant, Daniel. *A City Unto Itself: Lynchburg, Virginia in the 20th Century* by Darrell Laurant, The News and Advance, 1997.

The MLK Council of Elders, Dr. Virgil Wood"
<http://kingmakermag.com/councilofelders/virgil-wood.html>

Powell, Henry. "A Fight for School Desegregation in Farmville" in *The Life and Times of the Prophet Vernon Johns: Father of the Civil Rights Movement*. 1998.

Stamps, Sr. Dr. L. Garnell , interview (434-525-1963)

Other Websites:

Lynchburg News and Advance (website with articles on Civil Rights movement)
http://www2.newsadvance.com/lna/news/local/article/civil_rights_in_central_virginia

Lynchburg, VA public library "Speech at E.C. Glass High School – 1962" Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Lynchburg, Virginia – March 27, 1962. <http://www.lynchburgva.gov/index.aspx?page=687>

'Til Justice Rolls Down [\(A](http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/) website created to accompany and supplement "Til' Justice Rolls Down: The Civil Rights Movement in Lynchburg, Virginia," a television program researched and produced by Gloria Cannady for Virginia's 13/ABC. The half-hour program was narrated by Dr. Virgil Wood, Lynchburg's most noted civil rights leader and presents revealing interviews with a number of prominent civil rights activists, news footage and newspaper headlines from the fifties and sixties, and photographs and recordings which tell the city's unfolding civil rights story).
<http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/>

We Shall Overcome: Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement (A partnership project produced by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Transportation, The Federal Highway Administration, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers)
<http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/players.htm>

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 14

Endnotes for Section 8

¹Powell, Henry. "A Fight for School Desegregation in Farmville" in *The Life and Times of the Prophet Vernon Johns: Father of the Civil Rights Movement*. 1998.

² [Board of Directors of the Center of Economic and Social Justice, Biography on Rev. Dr. Virgil Wood](http://www.cesj.org/about/cesjnetwork/directors.htm#Rev.%20Dr.%20Virgil%20A.%20Wood%20bio%20brief)
<http://www.cesj.org/about/cesjnetwork/directors.htm#Rev.%20Dr.%20Virgil%20A.%20Wood%20bio%20brief>

³http://www2.newsadvance.com/lna/news/local/article/civil_rights_in_central_virginia_reverends_shared_frustration_over_segreat/12522/

⁴ <http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/commission.php>

⁵ Georgia Barksdale, interview, September 27, 2004

http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/mass_meetings.php

⁶"Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker, Bio" http://www.wyatteewalker.com/about_chrono.html

⁷ "The MLK Council of Elders, Dr. Virgil Wood" <http://kingmakermag.com/councilofelders/virgil-wood.html>

⁸http://tiljusticerolls.com/civil_rights_events.php

⁹Murdock, James. "Lynchburg College Takes Strong Stand on Sit-Ins". *The News and Advance*. January 18, 1961: Section 2. http://media.gatewayva.com/lna/specials/sitins/publish_to_web/indexs.htm

¹⁰ http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/bucket_carriers.php

¹¹ Georgia Barksdale, interview, September 27, 2004 http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/mass_meetings.php

¹² Interview, January 15, 2002 with Owen Cardwell at <http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/commission.php>

¹³ An unnamed African American former city councilor quoted in *A City Unto Itself: Virginia in the 20th Century* by Darrell Laurant, *The News and Advance*, 1997, p. 187

¹⁴ (from "No Matter How Long," an unpublished manuscript by O.C. Cardwell, pp. 8,16
http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/civil_rights_orgs.php)

¹⁵ " <http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/jan29.php>

¹⁶ http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/civil_rights_events.php

¹⁷ <http://www.tiljusticerolls.com/economics.php>

¹⁸ "Reverend Haywood Robinson, Jr." http://tiljusticerolls.com/bucket_carriers.php

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 15

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

This listed property includes the church and the parsonage and associated parking lot identified by parcel ID numbers 02520005, 02520008, 02520004, 02520003, and 02520001 by the Lynchburg City Tax Assessor. The total acreage is .87. The address of the church is 1415 Grace Street, Lynchburg, Virginia, 24504.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries are those historically and currently associated with the Church. Diamond Hill Baptist Church did acquire adjacent land and structures that are also affiliated with the church but these resources were annexed after the period of significance and are not included in this nomination.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photo List Page 16

Photographic Documentation

All photographs are of Diamond Hill Baptist Church
Location: 1415 Grace Street, Lynchburg, Virginia 24504
VDHR ID Number: 118-0060-0057
Date of photographs: July 2010
Photographer: Kelvin L. Moore
Location of Original Digital Files: 616 Court Street, Lynchburg, VA 24504

Subject: Exterior view of front elevation of church
View: Facing west
Photo: 1 of 8

Subject: Exterior view of front and side of church
View: Facing northwest
Photo: 2 of 8

Subject: Exterior view of side of church
View: Facing north
Photo: 3 of 8

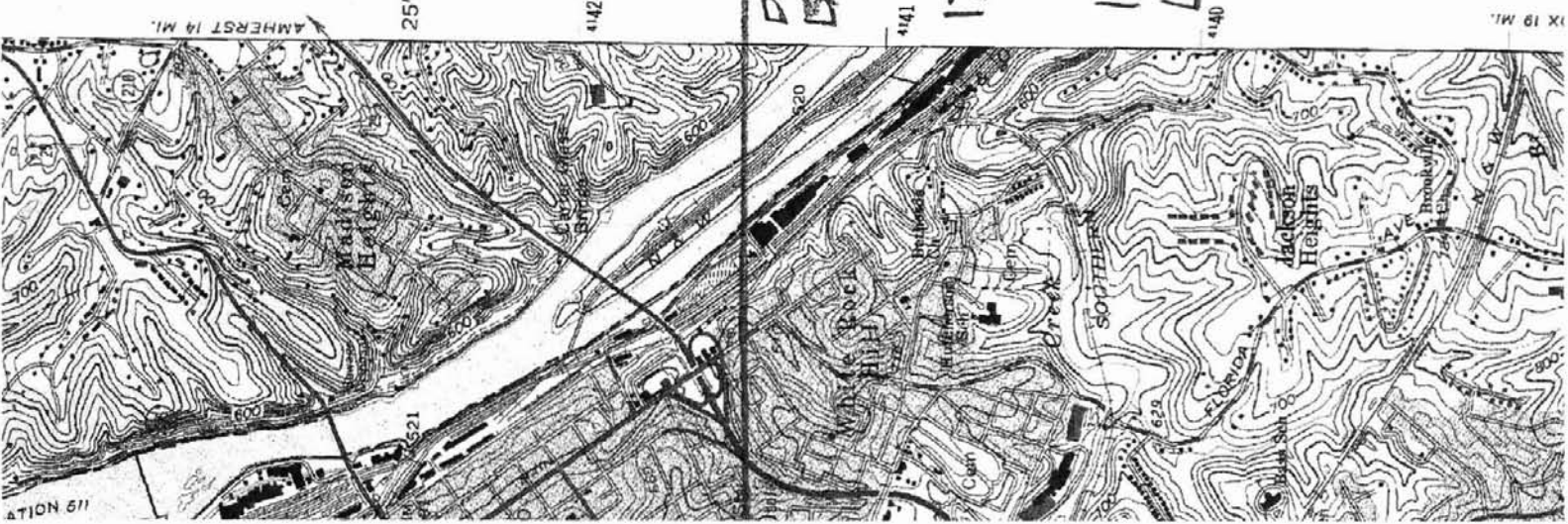
Subject: Exterior view of front and side of church
View: Facing southwest
Photo: 4 of 8

Subject: Exterior view of parsonage
View: Facing west
Photo: 5 of 8

Subject: Interior view of sanctuary
View: Facing east
Photo: 6 of 8

Subject: Interior view of sanctuary
View: Facing west
Photo: 7 of 8

Subject: Interior view of pew detail
View: Facing south
Photo: 8 of 8



DIAMOND HILL
BAPTIST CHURCH

PHR ID: 118-0060-00

17 UTME: 00604297

UTMN: 4141696

1415 GRACE ST.

Lynchburg, VA 24504



THE CITY OF LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

Community Development Department
Planning Division

City Hall, 900 Church Street
Lynchburg, Virginia 24504 • (434) 455-3900

FAX • (434) 845-7630

Mr. Marc Christian Wagner
State and National Registers Manager
Department of Historic Resources
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23221

RE: Diamond Hill Baptist Church – National Register Nomination

Dear Mr. Wagner:

The National Register Nomination of Diamond Hill Baptist Church has been carefully reviewed by the City's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) as requested. The HPC toured the property with representatives from the church on August 4, 2010 and reviewed the request for nomination on August 16, 2010.

After discussion the HPC voted 6-0 with 1 member absent to support the National Register Nomination. In recommending support the HPC recommends that the property be included on the National Register not only for its significance during the civil rights era, but also for its exemplary architecture and history surrounding its founding.

If you have further questions, please contact me at (434) 455-3909.

Sincerely,

William T. Martin, AICP
City Planner / Secretary Historic Preservation Commission