

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Scott Zion Baptist Church
Other names/site number: VDHR# 005-5439
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2602 Galts Mill Rd
City or town: Madison Heights State: VA County: Amherst
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

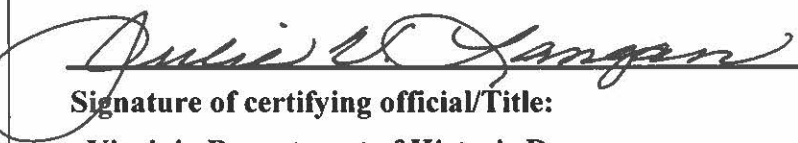
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets
the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional 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 at the following
level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

		<u>2/9/2022</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/>	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
<hr/>	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

James Gabbert
Signature of the Keeper

3.23.2023
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

FUNERARY/cemetery

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

FUNERARY/cemetery

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, STONE: Slate, ASPHALT: Composite Shingles

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Scott Zion Baptist Church, erected in 1942, stands on the north side of Galts Mill Road near Madison Heights in Amherst County. This Romanesque Revival-inspired church with a brick veneer is a prominent community landmark. Although no longer the church's primary sanctuary, the historic building is used for special events and a community food bank, and there are plans to use it as a community career reeducation center. The new, larger Scott Zion Baptist Church that replaced the historic church in 2004 is located directly across Galts Mill Road, and is not included in this nomination. On the west side of the 1942 church is a c.1956 exterior baptistry, now used as a flower bed, but otherwise undisturbed. It is identified as a contributing structure. The original church is surrounded to the east, north, and west by a cemetery that remains active and contains several hundred burials. The earliest burials date from about 1890. The cemetery, a contributing site, contains both marked and unmarked graves. The marked graves include unscribed fieldstones, handmade markers of concrete, and engraved stone markers of various styles. On the east and west sides of the church are two paved parking areas, these lots overlay the sites of the original frame church to the east and the two-room frame school to the west. However, they are not considered contributing sites because it is unknown if any subsurface remains exist.

Narrative Description

Church Exterior

The Romanesque Revival-inspired, 1942 Scott Zion church building is oriented on a north-south axis. It has a concrete block foundation, exterior walls clad with running bond brick veneer,

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and a front gable roof sheathed with slate shingles. The centered entry tower is prominently featured on the south elevation. It has a pyramid roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. The north end of the church has several brick additions dating from the late twentieth century. The gable and pyramid roofs of the rear additions are sheathed in asphalt shingles. This building partially was created with reused materials from another, older church that once stood in Lynchburg, Virginia. The reused materials include the stained-glass windows, slate shingles, interior lighting, and possibly larger framing pieces. The use of salvaged materials saved money and helped conserve materials for the war effort during World War II.¹

When completed in 1942, the building had a stucco exterior. The stucco was covered with a brick veneer in the late 1960s. In the 1950s, the membership dug a basement beneath the sanctuary. The north (rear) additions were added in several campaigns during the 1970s and 1980s. From Galts Mill Road there is a sidewalk that runs between two concrete block piers to the church's front brick stairs. The sidewalk extends to each side of the building and continues north through the graveyard to a driveway that provides access to the northern portion of the property.²

The church's main or south elevation has a center tower. The tower contains the main entry in which there is a single-pane glass double-leaf door. A concrete porch of six graduated risers on three sides is at the entry. The steps have simple iron railings. On the wall above the entry are letters hung containing the name of the church and there is a cross above the letters. Beneath the eaves on each side of the tower there is a round-arch louvered vent. The east and west sides of the tower have a narrow fixed-pane stained-glass window centered on each side. In the main walls of the building, flanking the tower on each side, there is a single narrow hopper-style window. On the southeast corner of the main elevation, there is an inscribed memorial stone:

Scott Zion Baptist Church
Organized 1873
Present Building Constructed-1942
Rev. H. H. Cabell-Pastor

The main block of the east elevation has three Romanesque Revival-inspired round head hopper-style stained-glass windows. These windows contain Christian symbols in the center, from south to north: a shield with a Greek cross, a star of David, and a triangle (the Trinity). The windows on the west elevation are identically arranged. The basement area of the main block has a variety of windows. There are two two-light hopper style windows and a six-over-six double-hung sash window from south to north. On the west elevation basement level, there is a one-over-one double-hung sash window and a six-light casement window.

¹ The original frame church was built on the traditional east-west axis. The church in Lynchburg where the salvaged materials were procured remains unknown. Amherst County Deed Book OO, 309; Amherst County Deed Book QQ, 129; and "The History of Scott Zion Baptist Church," Scott Zion Baptist Church files.

² Elder members of the church mentioned the original stucco exterior treatment. Roosevelt Christian remembered that the brick exterior was done during the time he was away in Vietnam. Esposito, Sandra, and Ellen Craig. "Interview with the Elder Members of the Scott Zion Baptist Church: Pastor Russell G. Lee, Magnolia Braxton, Julia Ann Sandidge, Shirley Megginson, Raymond Copeland, Delores Banks, James T. Banks, Dr. Beryl Poindexter-Saied, Consuela Penn Tabb, Anne J. Christian, Roosevelt Christian, James W. Thomas, Nat Poindexter, Michelle Poindexter, Ella Mae Callands, and Janell Franklin-Palmer," Madison Heights, Va., February 8, 2020.

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The north (rear) additions are perpendicular to the main block and project to the east and west. The south elevations of the additions contain two single-leaf entries; one to the main level and one into the basement. The east elevation has a concrete stair that has been covered by a concrete ramp into the main level; the west elevation has a concrete stair into the main floor. The east and west elevations of the rear additions show a demarcation where the latest additions were added: the bricks of the later additions are darker than the earlier ones.

The east elevation of the addition has three windows and a single-leaf entry. There is a narrow hopper-style stained-glass window and a fixed pane stained-glass window, both having geometric patterns. The third window is a sliding window with two lights. On the northern end of the elevation there is a single-leaf entry. On the west elevation, there are two windows and a single-leaf entry. The windows are both fixed pane; the southern window has a Latin cross in the center. None of the stained-glass windows contain maker's marks.

The north (rear) elevation of the additions is two stories high, counting the basement and main level. The rear addition projects from the north wall in the center of the elevation. There are a variety of windows. Centered in the upper story is a square head, tripartite stained-glass window. The center window is fixed pane, and the flanking windows are the same hopper-style as seen on the east and west elevations. These have symbols in the center, from east to west: a six-point star, chalice, and Latin cross. On the eastern side of the elevation are two one-over-one double-hung sash windows. On the western side of the second story of the elevation is a rectangular hopper-style stained-glass window in a geometric pattern and an eight-over-eight double-hung sash window. The first story has a center alcove beneath the tripartite window. There are three bays in the first story of the rear projection, containing a two-light sliding glass window, a sliding glass window in the alcove, and a single-leaf entry with nine lights in the upper portion of the door. The western bay has two one-over-one double-hung sash windows on the first story.

Church Interior

At the main entry there is an anteroom in the tower and south of the sanctuary area. The room has simple decoration. The fixed-pane stained-glass windows are on the east and west walls. The east window is partly obscured by an open coat rack and a peg rack. The double-leaf door with fanlight transom, on the north wall, opens into the sanctuary.

The sanctuary consists of the nave and apse, both remodeled in 1974 after the apse was expanded to the rear. The nave has a center aisle plan with upholstered wooden pews. The west side of the aisle has seventeen rows of pews, and the east side has eighteen rows. The wooden floor is exposed beneath the pews. The traffic areas and apse are carpeted. There is a stair to the basement at the southeast wall of the nave. In the late twentieth century, an audio-visual platform was erected above the stair and is accessed by a ladder. The south, east, and west walls are paneled to the chair rail. It has a gambrel ceiling and wall ties join the east and west walls. There are chandeliers hanging from the ceiling that replaced the original pendant lights. The lighting change was part of the 1974 remodeling.

The apse is separated from the nave by a raised platform and a rail with turned balusters. Access to the apse from the nave is by means of risers set at an angle on either side of the raised platform. The apse area consists of the pulpit and choir loft. The choir loft was part of the 1970s addition to the church. This area is tiered and divided from the pulpit by a solid paneled wood rail

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and accessed by a double-leaf swinging gate. The area has the same gambrel ceiling, lighting, and upholstered pews as the nave.

To the northeast of the sanctuary is a multipurpose room and two restrooms. The restrooms, which were part of another building campaign in the late twentieth century, have half-tiled walls and concrete floors. To the northwest of the sanctuary is a hall containing two rooms and a stair to the basement. Decoration in these rooms and in the other areas outside of the sanctuary is very simple.

The basement was hand-dug during the 1950s. The basement area below the sanctuary has a fellowship hall, and two classrooms and bathrooms on the east side of the basement. In the southwest corner of the fellowship hall is a baptistry that was dug beneath the concrete floor around 1991. This indoor baptistry replaced the c. 1956 outdoor baptistry.

When the late twentieth century additions were erected, the church also expanded the basement. A hall runs behind the original building with three classrooms and a kitchen on the north side of the hall. The center classroom was later expanded, and another classroom was added behind it. The floors throughout the basement are concrete.

Outdoor Baptistry - Contributing Structure c. 1956

The outdoor baptistry is located on the west side of the church, near the west parking lot. It is a cross-shaped structure measuring approximately 20 x 6 feet. The steps to enter and exit the main pool area are on the east and west sides of the structure. The exterior is constructed of concrete block covered with stucco and capped with brick. The interior pool construction is unknown; it has been filled with dirt and is now used as a flower bed. This structure was built c. 1956 and was used until c. 1991. This baptistry was replaced by the indoor baptistry located beneath the fellowship hall floor.

Cemetery - Contributing Site c. 1890

Covering an area of nearly four acres, the cemetery occupies the property on the east, north, and west sides of the church. Two unmarked graves are contained within a wrought iron fence located in the grassy area across from the front of the church on Galts Mill Road. The cemetery is active and contains several hundred burials beginning about 1890. The earliest burials are on the east side, and some graves may have been paved over when the parking lot was created after the original 1872 building was razed. The placement of graves in the eastern area appears more haphazard in arrangement than the west and northwest burials. It is difficult to assess how many graves are in this section because many are unmarked and, according to church history, some were lost during Hurricane Camille in 1969. The church was undertaking a survey and mapping of the cemetery in 2020 when those plans were curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The markers that exist in the eastern section include fieldstones, handmade concrete markers, and granite etched stones. The styles of the stones include obelisks, standing stones, and lawn-level stones. Some graves are decorated with various plants including yucca, periwinkle, roses, and shrubs. Other stone markers are totally obscured by the plantings.³

³ Rev. Lee mentioned the mapping effort. Rev. Russell Gary Lee, interview by Sandra Esposito, 2021.

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Most of the burials dating from the 1910s to the 1970s are located in the area behind the church running to the western edge of the property. There are some graves that are unmarked and some marked with temporary metal funeral home markers, as well as handmade concrete, etched granite, and military marble stones, mostly low headstones and standing stones in a variety of styles. The plantings in this area include larger shrubs such as forsythia and boxwood; one grave has a young maple tree.

At the northeast corner of the cemetery there is a collection of about 10-12 burials. Some of the graves are unmarked, and others are marked with stones. Most of the markers are modern etched granite stones or military marble stones. These burials date from around the late twentieth century. According to Rev. Russell Gary Lee, current pastor, these are people who were not in good standing with the church, and they are segregated from the others. This practice is no longer followed.⁴

The newest section of the cemetery is to the north, bound on the south side by the cemetery access road, with burials dating from the late twentieth century. The oldest burials are to the west, and the newer burials are to the east. There are fewer homemade stones; many are modern granite etched stones. Some of the headstones are very decorative, and some feature pictures of the departed. Many of the known burial traditions associated with African Americans are still practiced and are seen in the newer area. Some of the graves are decorated with assorted grave goods including signs, plastic flowers, and lawn decorations. One grave was decorated with an unopened bottle of alcohol. Grave plantings are still used. Some graves have daffodils, and one newer grave was decorated with a bed of both daffodils and tulips.

Archaeological potential

On the east and west sides of the church are two paved parking areas that are adjacent to Galts Mill Road. The eastern parking area was the site of the original frame church that was built in 1873 and razed around 1942. The western parking lot was the site of the frame, two-room public school that was in use from 1916 to 1958.⁵ The level of disturbance is not known, but there is at least potential for future discovery of subsurface remains.

Integrity assessment

Scott Zion Baptist Church possesses integrity of location and setting. The original church and outdoor baptistry are surrounded by the cemetery as they have been since the church and baptistry were erected. There are no non-contributing resources on the property. The property remains at the heart of a small community containing clusters of houses along the road and open fields surrounding the church and houses. The property's integrity of design, workmanship, and materials are also very good. The Romanesque Revival-inspired 1942 church was constructed utilizing reused materials from an older church that once stood in the City of Lynchburg. The original exterior treatment was stucco, and like many of the African American churches in Amherst County, the exterior was covered with a brick veneer in the late 1960s. This trend occurred around the same period in other African American churches of Amherst County: First Baptist Church of Coolwell, Mt. Shiloh, Rose Chapel, and St. Mary's Church. The congregation created more interior

⁴ Rev. Russell Gary Lee, interview by Sandra Esposito, 2021.

⁵ Amherst County Deed Book OO, 309; Amherst County Deed Book QQ, 129; and "The History of Scott Zion Baptist Church."

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space by digging a basement in the 1950s and added on the rear of the building in campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s. All additions were in proportion and design complementary to the original design of the church, and the building has been maintained. The c. 1956 outdoor baptistry remains. It is a concrete block and brick structure that was used until c. 1991 and later filled with dirt for use as a flower bed. The cemetery surrounds the church and baptistry on three sides. The burials on the east are the oldest and are arranged in a more haphazard manner. The burials behind the church to the west and in the newer areas are arranged in a more linear fashion. The materials used to mark the graves vary in the types of markers, plantings and decorations which are all associated with African American burial traditions. The paved areas to the east and west of the church, near the road, are the former sites of the original church and school, respectively. The entire property retains integrity of feeling and association, as it has been the heart of the community and in continuous use as a place of worship since the community was founded after the Civil War.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE:/African-American
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

ca.1890–ca.1969

Significant Dates

ca. 1890
1942

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Rose, Junius

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Scott Zion Baptist Church is being nominated under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage: African American and Social History at the local level of significance. Under Criterion A, its history is associated with the African American history of Amherst County. The property's period of significance begins c. 1890 when the first burial in the cemetery occurred and ends ca. 1969 when the stuccoed exterior was clad with a brick veneer. The property meets Criteria Consideration A for religious buildings and Criteria Consideration D for cemeteries because its significance is derived from the property's enduring role in the community established by emancipated African Americans after the Civil War. The congregation is among the largest and oldest African American congregations in Amherst County. The Scott Zion community included African American people and some Native American people who migrated away from agrarian communities along the James River, moving nearer to the City of Lynchburg. These people were seeking better jobs and higher pay. The Scott Zion community is about six miles northwest of Lynchburg. The property has been recognized as a place of worship, education and community gathering since 1872. Those who worshipped at Scott Zion included another primarily African American community, San Domingo. San Domingo is located about two miles southeast of Scott Zion. While San Domingo had its own school, it never had a church, and many of the community members were related to people in the Scott Zion community.⁶

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Church History and Traditions

There is very little documentation for the earliest history of Scott Zion Baptist Church. Much of the history available is based on oral tradition and many events within the church are dated in association with the pastor at the time who led the congregation. The service of church pastors is listed to help better understand the church history. The earliest pastors served between 1873 and 1925. There is very little information available concerning these men or their service. The pastors of Scott Zion were Rev. L. Stewart, Rev. Archie Ferguson, Rev. G. B. Minor, Rev. R. A. Claxton, Rev. John Ballard Sales (1869-1918, he served the church for nine years), Rev. William Price, and Rev. Henry Johnson, Rev. Harry H. Cabell (1874-1956) served from 1925 to 1956, Rev Henry Wilson Pryor (1911-1990) served from 1956 until 1990; and Rev. A. A. Winn

⁶San Domingo, as a community, is still listed on Amherst County maps. It was about two miles to the southeast of Scott Zion. The community goes by several names such as Saint Domingo, San Gomingo, or City Gomingo. The name seems to have originated from the Catholic missionaries believed to have started a school in the area soon after 1865. Current members of Scott Zion church have related stories about the interaction between the communities and that families would travel from San Domingo to Scott Zion regularly for services. The community is delineated in the 1910 census records. United States Federal Census, 1910, accessed March 17, 2020. ancestry.com; Amherst County Deed Book 77, 48; and *The African American Schools File* (Amherst County Museum and Historical Society Research Files: Amherst County Museum and Historical Society).

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served from 1991 until 2001. Rev. Russell Gary Lee began serving in 2003 and continues to lead the church.⁷

The congregation began meeting in a brush arbor sometime between 1865 and 1870. This brush arbor would become the site of the church when the building was completed in 1872. In 1870, the congregation entered into an agreement with the landowner, Samuel Scott (1823-1880). The agreement stated that once construction was complete that he would deed them the land. In 1873, Samuel Scott deeded them about half an acre of land on which the church stood. This type of arrangement with landowners was typical, except in this case, the landowner was not deeding a piece of a former plantation. This landowner was a “free man of color,” and he was a member of the Buffalo Ridge Cherokee community that lived near the Buffalo Ridge area of Amherst County. The grateful church named the congregation in his honor, Scott Zion Baptist Church.⁸

The earliest church building is only documented through historical plats. It was frame and had an east-west orientation with the long south side of the church perpendicular to the road, as it still runs through the community, Galts Mill Road. During construction, the congregation met at the home of Isaac Claytor (1825-1925), whose property was adjacent to the church. Once completed, the church remained unfurnished for a period. Church tradition states that wooden crates were stacked for the pulpit, and additional crates served as seats. Church elders said that when the church accumulated the money, they had a carpenter, whose last name was Wright, build the furnishings. This man was likely Hiram Wright (1848-1920), and the road known today as Wright Shop Road was named for him. His shop stood on the road that connected the communities of Scott Zion and San Domingo. The original Scott Zion church was in use until the 1942 church was completed under the service of Rev. Cabell.⁹

Around World War II, the congregation had outgrown their original church. During this era, raw building materials were scarce, and many people simply reused or recycled materials from older buildings for new construction. Scott Zion acquired an old church building from Lynchburg and reused the materials in their new church. The original congregation that used the building remains unknown. Church member Junius Rose (1905-1983) supervised the membership in constructing the new building. When complete, the exterior of the new church was stucco, and many of the furnishings were recycled from the original building. Since then, the building was expanded in the 1970s and 1980s, and in 1974, the interior underwent redecoration in honor of the church’s centennial.¹⁰

The stucco exterior is of note because the church upgraded the exterior in the late 1960s. The church had become prosperous enough to cover the exterior with a brick veneer. This appears to have been an action of many African American churches in Amherst County around the same

⁷ “The History of Scott Zion Baptist Church.”

⁸ “The History of Scott Zion Baptist Church;” *Amherst County Deed Book JJ*, 157; Various databases from ancestry.com; Dr. Horace Rice, “Samuel Scott and Scott Zion Church History,” interview by Sandra Esposito, 2020. and Sandra Esposito, *Amherst County Churches* (Amherst County Museum and Historical Society Research Files: unpublished document written July 11, 2018, and updated October 9, 2020).

⁹ Church cornerstone; Amherst County Deed Book OO, 309; Amherst County Deed Book QQ, 129; and “The History of Scott Zion Baptist Church;” Virginia Death Records database and United State Federal Census database, ancestry.com; and “Interview with the Elders of Scott Zion.”

¹⁰ The Madison Heights Christian Church and El Bethel Methodist Church were other churches built from recycled materials of earlier churches. Esposito, “Churches of Amherst County;” “The History of Scott Zion Baptist Church; and “Interview with the Elders.”

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period. Brick veneer exteriors were used at Rose Chapel, First Baptist of Coolwell, Mount Shiloh, and St. Mary's Church.¹¹

Church traditions were important to the early members. One of the best remembered traditions was Homecoming. Homecoming was usually held in September. Family members would come from distances to visit. Revival and Baptism were part of the event. The adults believed that Homecoming was time for children, about the age of seven, to start thinking about their salvation and relationship with God. Those children were sent to sit on the front pews, also known as the "mourners' bench." They were to remain there until they "got religion," or believed they were moved to accept Christ as their Savior. According to Pastor Lee, some kids remained on the bench for several years.¹²

Near the end of Homecoming week, all the children who came forward would be baptized. Before the leadership of Rev. Henry Pryor, all baptisms took place in a nearby pond or creek. The entire church would gather and watch the ceremony. At the end, the congregation would travel, en masse, back to the church. They would be singing and praising as a group as they returned to the church for a service. The new members were then given "the right hand of fellowship" and welcomed into church membership.¹³

The Homecoming baptismal service changed during Rev. Pryor's leadership. An outdoor baptistry was built on the west side of the church c. 1956. This concrete and brick pool replaced the trip to the pond. This use of the outdoor baptistry would continue until sometime during the service of Rev. A. A. Winn. During his tenure in the 1990s, a new indoor baptistry was dug beneath the fellowship hall, in the basement of the church. Today, baptisms take place monthly in the pool of the newest church. The newest church was completed in 2004 and is located across Galts Mill Road from the historic church building. Today, Homecoming is still held, but the old tradition of the "mourners' bench" for children is no longer followed.¹⁴

The African American churches, like many small churches throughout the county, could not afford to employ a full-time minister. A minister was shared between many churches and services were not held weekly as they are today. Elders remember on those days when church was not held, they would observe Sunday at home, and a parent would read Bible passages to the children.¹⁵

On the days church was held, it was generally an all-day affair. Preparation would start on Saturday night by studying the lesson for Sunday School. On Sunday morning, a meal was

¹¹ Esposito, "Churches of Amherst County."

¹² Homecoming is a memorable event associated with many African-American churches. Dr. Beryl Poindexter-Saied, "Scott Zion Remembrances," interview by Sandra Esposito, 2021; Magnolia Braxton, "Scott Zion Remembrances," interview by Sandra Esposito, 2021; Rev. Russell Gary Lee, "Scott Zion Traditions," interview by Sandra Esposito, 2021; Sunday, **HOMECOMING/FAMILY and FRIENDS DAY LECTIONARY COMMENTARY*, (2011), accessed June 26, 2021, https://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PDF/Homecoming_LC_Oct3011.pdf; and Tammy L. Kenodle, "Homecoming," *Theafricanamericanlectionary.org*, last modified 2009, accessed June 27, 2021, <https://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PopUpCulturalAid.asp?LRID=107>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Dr. Beryl Poindexter-Saied, "Scott Zion Remembrances;" and Rev. Russell Gary Lee, "Scott Zion Traditions."

¹⁵ Services at Scott Zion were held only twice a month, and they shared their minister with several other churches. Their first full-time pastor was hired in 1990. "The History of Scott Zion Baptist Church; Magnolia Braxton, "Scott Zion Remembrances;" Rev. Russell Gary Lee, "Scott Zion Traditions;" and "Interview with the Elders."

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prepared and brought with the family. The morning would start with Sunday school and sometimes in between Sunday school and worship service there would be members giving their testimony; sometime these would be shared during service as well. After the main service, they would break and eat, then return for a mid-afternoon service that might feature a program from the children or special music. Sometimes there was an evening service. "Worship was an important part of the lives of the Scott Zion members and remains so to this day;" this sentiment was expressed by Ms. Magnolia Braxton. It echoes the words of Booker T. Washington, "It [The church] is the core, the heart, the center of organization in our social affairs and under the wing of the Church, social life is apt to be more refined and wholesome than under any other auspices."¹⁶

Cemetery

Many traditional African American burial practices are still practiced and are observed in the Scott Zion Cemetery. The oldest section on the eastern side of the church has the haphazard burials noted in some traditions. There are many unmarked graves in this section. Some of the unmarked graves may have lost their stones, likely simple fieldstones, during Hurricane Camille in 1969. This area contains some of the oldest handmade concrete markers. These markers are shaped like obelisks, and one looks like a chimney with shoulders and flue. The most decorative markers in the oldest section belong to men who either preached at Scott Zion or were ordained in the church. Some stones are obscured by grave plantings. The traditional grave plantings in this area include yucca, periwinkle, roses, and shrubs. The grave of Liza Wayne is in the oldest section; according to the church history, she was first person buried in the cemetery sometime around 1890. The location of her grave is lost.¹⁷

The remaining burials of the cemetery are arranged in a more linear fashion. Throughout the cemetery one can find handmade concrete stones, various styles of granite etched stones, and marble military stones. Some graves are unmarked or are marked with metal temporary markers. In the northwestern section of the cemetery, some of the newer etched stones contain likenesses of the departed. The grave plantings in the western part of the cemetery include forsythia, boxwoods, and other shrubs. There is a tall, immature maple tree on one grave. The northwestern section has several graves with daffodils or tulips planted on the graves. One entire grave is a planted bed of tulips and daffodils.

Decorating a grave with personal items is a tradition still practiced in the newest area of the cemetery. Items such as lawn decorations, small statues, steppingstones, plastic flowers, and flags decorate some of the graves. Some of the more unusual decorations include one grave

¹⁶ Magnolia Braxton, "Scott Zion Remembrances;" and Joseph B. Earnest, Jr., "The Religious Development of the Negro in Virginia" (Dissertation, 1914), 125, accessed June 26, 2021, archive.org.

¹⁷ Liza Wayne, according to the U.S. Federal Census Records, died after 1880 and before 1890, ancestry.com; Dr. Lynn Rainville, "Protecting Our Shared Heritage in African-American Cemeteries," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 34, no. 2 (January 2009): 196–208; Jae Jones, "Traditions of African-American Funerals and Burials -- Past and Present Day," *Black Then*, last modified October 15, 2018, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://blackthen.com/traditions-of-african-american-funerals-and-burials-past-and-present-day/>; and "The History of Scott Zion Baptist Church."

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decorated with signs and other items commemorating the birthday of the departed. One grave was decorated with an unopened bottle of whiskey.¹⁸

The people buried in the cemetery include some of the former ministers who led the church, men who were ordained by the church, men and women who came out of slavery to build the community, and veterans of wars beginning with World War I to the present. All these people contributed to the history of the county. There are several burials of people whose contributions to the county's history stood out. One of these was Carl Lewis (1912-1960). He was a veteran of World War II, and his service was unique because he was a member of the 300th Balloon Battalion. This group of men were responsible for raising and maintaining the barrage balloons that protected soldiers from being strafed by enemy airplanes during the D-day landings at Omaha Beach. These were the only African Americans who participated in that event, and they were on the beach without any weapons. There was little information available on his life; likely he returned home and simply lived a quiet life.¹⁹

Robert F. Braxton (1878-1953) was a member of the local Masonic Lodge. Today, the lodge sits adjacent to the church property, on the west. The Masonic Lodge as a fraternal order existed before the present building was constructed in 1963. The Lodge as a group named themselves and their new building in honor of Braxton. Braxton, according to an undated local newspaper article, became a deacon at Scott Zion in 1906 and served until 1951. He was named Sunday school superintendent in 1909 and was a member of the church Brotherhood. He was very civic minded. He became an organizer of the Amherst County Organizing Society, a member of the Amherst County Patrons and Civic League, and a member of the Masonic Lodge.²⁰

Another noted person in the cemetery is Major Alfred Rose (1945-2016). He was the first African American deputy in Amherst County. He served the community from July 1, 1972, until October 2012. He was well-respected and was a mentor for other people of color who later joined the force. During his service, he was assigned to help with some of the racial riots of the 1970s. One such riot included a clash with the Ku Klux Klan. Reverend Lee says he was honored to have become Maj. Rose's pastor as an adult, because Maj. Rose was an influential authority figure to him during his teen years.²¹

The church and its history are important to Amherst County, and both need to be celebrated. There are few sites recognized in Amherst that help tell the story of the communities of color including both the African American and Native American. It is hoped that this nomination will

¹⁸ Jae Jones, "Traditions of African-American Funerals and Burials -- Past and Present Day;" and "History of African-American Cemeteries," *Sciway.net*, accessed June 27, 2021, <https://www.sciway.net/hist/chicora/gravematters-1.html>.

¹⁹ "George A. Dawson," *Men of D-Day*, accessed 2020, www.6juin1944.com; Linda Hervieux, *Forgotten: The Untold Story of D-Day's Black Heroes*. (Gloucestershire, England: Amberly, 2016); and United States Federal Census database, ancestry.com

²⁰ Amherst County Heritage Book Committee, *Amherst County Virginia Heritage 1761-1999* (Amherst, VA: Amherst County Heritage Book Committee; Summersville, WV, 1999), 84.

²¹ Steve Harding, "Amherst County's First Black Deputy Retires," *The News & Advance*, 2012, accessed June 28, 2021, https://newsadvance.com/new_era_progress/lifestyles/amherst-countys-first-black-deputy-retires/article_3ce3f133-f780-55ff-a7d3-0501aa7e8c7d.html; "First African American Officer of Amherst Sheriff's Office Dies," 2016, accessed June 28, 2021, wdbj7.com; Marissa Parra, "Retired Major Alfred Rose Dies" (, 2016), accessed June 28, 2021, west.com; and Rev. Russell Gary Lee, "Scott Zion Traditions."

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encourage people to become more interested in learning and recording all contributions to the rich history of Amherst County.

Education

In Amherst County, some community schools were established between 1868 and 1870. Many of the churches doubled as schools until a dedicated school building was constructed. School buildings usually stood near the churches and were named after the church. In Amherst County, some community schools were in operation before the Rosenwald schools were introduced. The first Rosenwald school, St. Mary's School, was constructed between 1917 and 1920. There would be five additional Rosenwald schools built in Amherst from 1922 until 1925. The Scott Zion school predated the Rosenwald schools and was constructed through community effort and cooperation.²²

The Scott Zion school was organized by a northern missionary about the time the community was established soon after the Civil War. The one-story, two-room, frame building was constructed on the western end of the church property in 1906. This facility was used as a racially segregated public school during the Jim Crow era of segregation until around 1958, and it was razed soon after use was discontinued. The 1906 building was a bigger facility than the one-room, frame school at San Domingo, and joint events between San Domingo and Scott Zion were held at the larger facility. One memory that many of the elders mentioned was the last teachers at the school: the husband-and-wife team of Walter R. (1898-1964) and Mary (1901-1986) Robinson. Each one taught several grades at the school. Mary taught the younger kids, and Walter taught the older ones. This team was also very active with the church. Walter was the choir director, and Mary was the church organist.²³ A paved parking lot later was built on the school's site and, while it is not known if any cultural deposits remain beneath the asphalt, community memory of the school is still strong.

²² *The African American Schools File* (Amherst County Museum and Historical Society Research Files: Amherst County Museum and Historical Society); and Bryan Clark Green, "Rosenwald Schools VDHR# 012-5041," *Virginia Department of Historic Resources*, accessed June 26, 2021, www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/012-5041_Rosenwald_Schools_2004_NRHP_MPD_FINAL.pdf.

²³ The San Domingo school was a one-room building constructed about 1916. Alumni of both San Domingo and Scott Zion were part of an oral history program from Amherst Glebe Arts Response that recorded memories of many people who attended small community schools, especially African American schools in Amherst County. *The African American Schools File*; Amherst Glebe Arts Response, "Disc 1: Small Schools: Oral Histories | DISCOVERY VIRGINIA," *Discoveryvirginia.org*, accessed June 27, 2021, <https://discoveryvirginia.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A12105>; "Amherst County School Project: African-American Schools in Amherst County and Early Integration," *Amherst Glebe Arts Response*, accessed June 27, 2021, <http://amherstglebeartsresponse.org/amherst-county-school-project.html>; and "Elders of Scott Zion Baptist Church."

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Amherst County Museum and Historical Society, Amherst, VA;
Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR# 005-5439

10. Geographical Data

Scott Zion Baptist Church
Name of Property

Amherst County, Virginia
County and State

Acreage of Property 4.61 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.445680 N | Longitude: 79.068058 W |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic boundary of the property is coterminous with the parcel recorded by Amherst County, Virginia, as Tax Map #157 A 60. This map is available from the Amherst County government, and is the same parcel as described in Amherst County Deed Books JJ, p. 157, and 240, p. 339. There are no deeds recording the inclusion of the north section of the cemetery with the church property, however this section has been in use as a cemetery since the 1980s. The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Location Map, which has a bar scale of 1"=100'.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated parcel boundary encompasses the church, outdoor baptistry, cemetery and the former sites of the original church and the schoolhouse. This is the extent of the parcel that has been associated with Scott Zion Baptist Church throughout its history and an expansion of the cemetery in the 1980s.

Scott Zion Baptist Church
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sandra F. Esposito
organization: _____
street & number: 140 Cradon Hill Ln
city or town: Amherst state: VA zip code: 24521
e-mail sandiesposito@icloud.com
telephone: 540-520-0205
date: July 6, 2021

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Scott Zion Baptist Church

City or Vicinity: Madison Heights

County: Amherst

State: VA

Photographer: Sandra F. Esposito

Date Photographed: April & Aug 2020, March 2021

Scott Zion Baptist Church
Name of Property

Amherst County, Virginia
County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0001.

View: Facing N-South Elevation and Fenced Graves

2 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0002.

View: Facing N-South Elevation and Fenced Graves

3 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0003.

View: Facing N-Cornerstone on South Elevation

4 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0004.

View: Facing NW- East Elevation

5 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0005

View: Facing W-Detail: Stained Glass Window on East Elevation

6 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0006

View: Facing W-Detail: Stained Glass Window on East Elevation

7 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0007.

View: Facing SW-East and North Elevations and Cemetery

8 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0008.

View: Facing S-North Elevations and Cemetery

9 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0009.

View: Facing SE-North and West Elevations and Cemetery

10 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0010.

View: Facing E-West Elevation and Outdoor Baptistry (at left)

11 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0011.

View: Facing E-Detail: West Elevation, Rear Addition

12 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0012.

View: Facing E-Detail: West Elevation, Main Block

13 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0013.

View: Facing NE-West and North Elevations

14 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0014.

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View: Facing W-East Elevations, East Parking Lot, and East Cemetery

15 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0015.

View: Facing W-West Parking Lot

16 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0016.

View: Facing SE-Looking Toward 2004 Building of Scott Zion Baptist Church

17 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0017.

View: Facing W-East Cemetery

18 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0018.

View: Facing W-Grave Markers in East Cemetery

19 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0019.

View: Facing NW-North and NW sections of Cemetery

20 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0020.

View: Facing SW-West Cemetery

21 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0024.

View: Representative Examples of Grave Markers

22 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0022.

View: Representative Example of Concrete Marker

23 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0023.

View: Representative Example of Concrete Marker

24 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0024.

View: Facing NW-Northwest Cemetery

25 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0025.

View: Interior: Sanctuary Looking Toward Entry

26 of 31: VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0026.

View: Interior: Sanctuary Looking Toward Apse

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27 of 31. VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0027.

View: Interior: Sanctuary Looking Toward Choir Loft

28 of 31. VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0028.

View: Interior: Room Northeast of Sanctuary

29 of 31. VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0029.

View: Interior: Stair to Basement from Rear Hall

30 of 31. VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0030.

View: Interior: Basement Hall

31 of 31. VA_AmherstCounty_ScottZionBaptistChurch_0031.

View: Interior: Kitchen in Fellowship Hall

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Scott Zion Baptist Church

Amherst County, VA

DHR No. 005-5439



Feet

0 600 1200 1800 2400

1:36,112 / 1"=3,009 Feet

Title:

Date: 11/5/2021

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.



AERIAL VIEW - VICINITY

Scott Zion Baptist Church

Amherst County, VA

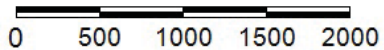
DHR No. 005-5439



Historic Boundary



Feet



1:18,056 / 1"=1,505 Feet

Title:

Date: 2/24/2022

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.

LOCATION MAP
Scott Zion Baptist Church
Amherst County, VA
DHR No. 005-5439

**Latitude/Longitude
Coordinates**
Latitude: 37.445680 N
Longitude: 79.068058 W



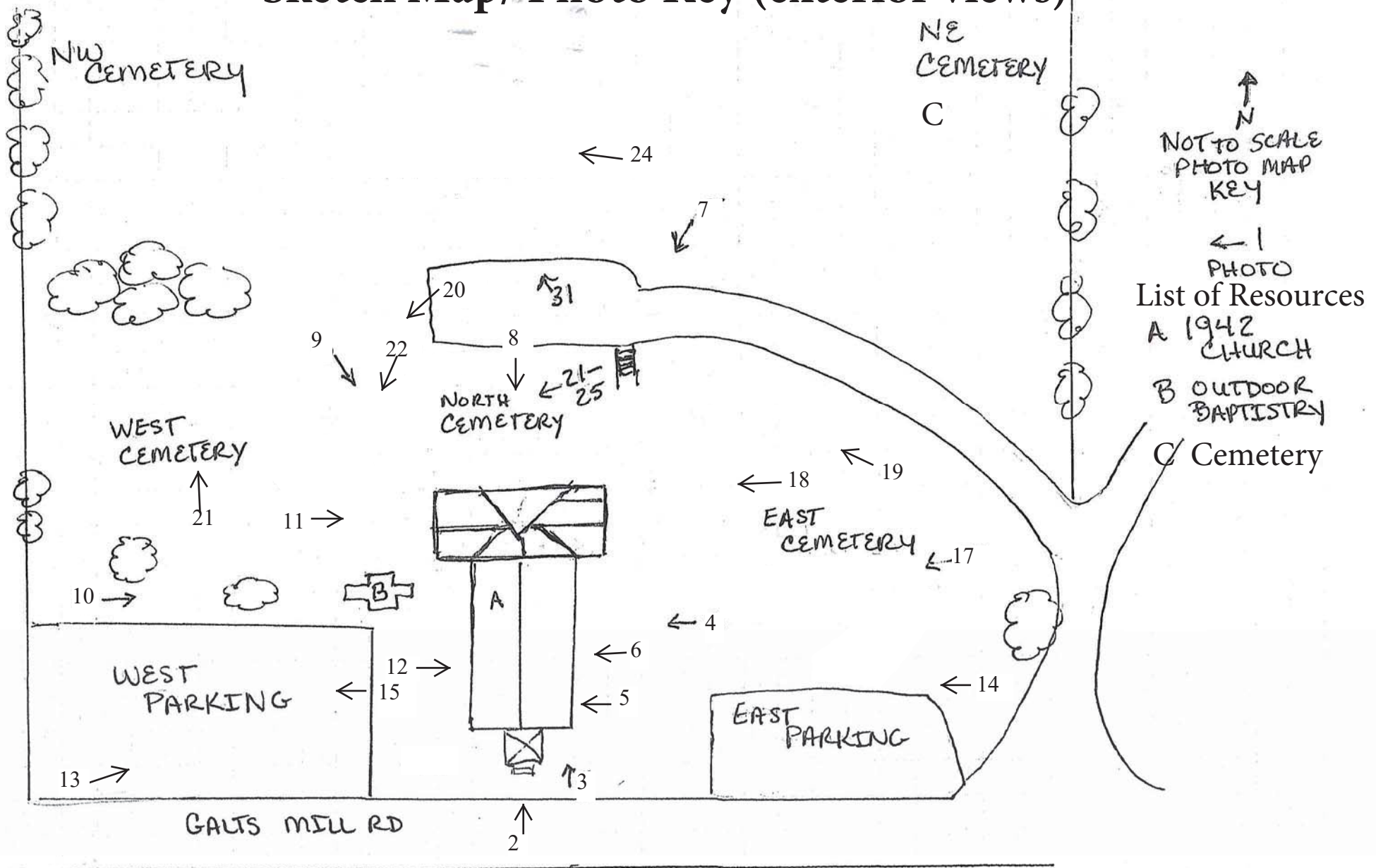
Historic Boundary

Scott Zion Baptist Church

RKL Outdoors
Outdoor sports store

Google

Sketch Map/ Photo Key (exterior views)



↑ N
NOT TO SCALE
PHOTO MAP
KEY

- ← 1
PHOTO
- List of Resources
- A 1942 CHURCH
 - B OUTDOOR BAPTISTRY
 - C Cemetery

All resources are contributing.

SCOTT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH
AMHERST COUNTY, VA
DHR # 005-5439

2004 CHURCH