

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church

James City, Craven County, CV2050, Listed 3/1/2007
Nomination by Nancy Van Dolsen
Photographs by Nancy Van Dolsen, 2006

See photos at the end of the nomination

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018
(Rev. 10-90)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

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

1. Name of Property

historic name **Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church**
other names/site number **N/A**

2. Location

street & number **307 Scott Street** not for publication **N/A**
City or town **New Bern** vicinity **X**
state **North Carolina** code **NC** county **Craven** code **049** zip code **28560**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this **X** nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ___ 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.)

Signature of certifying official Date
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
4. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register _____

___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined eligible for the _____
National Register

___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined not eligible for the _____
National Register

___ removed from the National Register _____

___ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register **N/A**

Name of related multiple property listing **N/A**

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: **Religion** Sub: **Religious Facility**

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: **Religion** Sub: **Religious Facility**

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Late Gothic Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation **BRICK**
roof **ASPHALT**
walls **BRICK**
other

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

8. Statement of Significance
=====

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

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

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- X** A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance **1924**
Significant Dates **1924**
Significant Person **N/A**
Cultural Affiliation **N/A**
Architect/Builder **Elliott, Samuel Chapman (builder)**

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **.08 acres**

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	314160	3883630	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title **Nancy Van Dolsen** date **12 April 2006**
street & number **1601 Highland Drive**
city or town **Wilson** state **NC** zip code **27893**

=====
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 **Mt. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, Inc.** Street & number **307 Scott Street**
city or town **New Bern** state **NC** zip code **28560**

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Narrative Description

The Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church at 307 Scott Street in James City, built ca. 1924, is a Gothic Revival-style red brick building constructed by Samuel Chapman Elliott (1872-1956), a house carpenter who lived in James City, and who was a deacon of the Church. The church faces east, and stands at the corner of Scott and John streets, across from the railroad tracks. A large front-gable building with a tall projecting, corner tower, the church dominates this section of James City. The one-story, four-bay building features decorative brickwork that outlines each bay with corbelling, and each opening is capped with a lancet arch; the building is six bays deep. A gravel and grass parking lot is located to the south of the building. A mid-1970s two-story addition for Sunday School classrooms, a kitchen, and dining area was built onto the rear of the church.

The Mt. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church stands on a raised brick basement, and the entrances into the main section are reached from a flight of seven steps. The brick is laid in American bond, one header to every seven stretcher courses. The two primary entrances are through the tower at the southeast corner into a small foyer; the other entrance on the façade at the north end leads into a small passage to the stairs to the balcony area. The corner tower features two entrances with double-doors topped with gothic-arched windows; the original windows and doors have been replaced with dark glass. The entrances are framed within a brick inset panel with simple corbelling. The bell tower, approximately three stories high, features paired gothic-arched openings with louvered insets within a brick inset with simple corbelling. The tower is capped with a pierced parapet wall with extended corner towers, suggestive of a castellation. The gable front primary façade features three inset brick panels with paired gothic-arch windows in the center panel flanked by one gothic-arch window and a door to the balcony capped with a small gothic arch. The gable end features three smaller gothic-arched windows that light the balcony area. The south elevation is composed of six bays, the corner-tower bay and a projecting side entry bay are located at the east and west ends. The projecting side entry bay has a lancet-arched window on the south elevation, and a door topped with a lancet arch on the east elevation; the gable-roof of the projecting bay is capped with a slight parapet and includes a chimney; a shed-roof porch sheltering an entrance to the ground level was added to the east side of the projecting bay in the 1990s. The four central bays feature inset brick panels with a lancet-arched window centered in each. The north elevation also has four inset brick panels with a central lancet-arched window; the westernmost bay is a projecting side entry bay identical to the one found on the south elevation.

A three-bay, T-shaped addition was built onto the rear of the original church in the 1970s. The end-gable brick addition follows the roof line of the original building, and houses classrooms on the upper level, and a kitchen and dining area in the ground level. The west end bay on the south side of the addition also features a single bay, gable-roof wing. The windows in the addition contain two-over-two horizontal sash.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7

Page 2

Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church
Craven County, N.C.

The interior of the building features a small entrance foyer in the entrance tower, from which two doors open into the sanctuary. The walls of the sanctuary are covered in manufactured beaded board above a simple chair rail and vertical boards below. The wood floor is covered in carpet. The door and window surrounds are simple, plain boards, and the multi-colored stained glass dates to the late twentieth century. Three windows retain their original colored glass: the northern window on the projecting bay on the north side, and the two small windows flanking the altar in the sanctuary. These windows feature central lavender-colored panels with smaller periwinkle-colored panes around the perimeter.

The gable roof ceiling has a broken pitch, which gives the impression of a gothic arch. The ceiling is sheathed with tin. The tin covers the underside of a complicated roof system. Each rafter is two pieces of wood, one reaching from the peak to about three quarters of the way to the plate, with a second rafter face nailed to the first that then rests on the plate. The rafter pairs are linked by cross ties, which aid in supporting the ceiling with its original tin sheathing.

Five steps on the north and south walls lead from the main sanctuary floor to the chancel, elevated at the west end of the building. A curved balustrade with turned balusters and newels separate the chancel from the sanctuary. A neoclassical screen with paired Doric-style columns creates the two separate areas; above the columns is a painted scroll with the words, "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism." The painting dates to the mid-twentieth century. The screen has a central, full arch over the altar which is flanked by two lower, flatter arches. A gothic-arched door leads from each eave wall into the two brick wings at the gable end of the building.

A balcony is located at the east end of the building, and is supported by paired columns. The balcony is reached by a set of stairs on the north side of the building. A balustrade with turned balusters separates the balcony from the sanctuary. The balcony has four levels to provide all congregants seated in the balcony with a view of the pulpit. Wood pews, moved from the first Mt. Shiloh Church to this building in 1924, stand on the risers.

The 1970s addition is a brick-faced concrete block building with classrooms on the upper level and a kitchen and dining area in the basement. The interior of the upper level has painted concrete block exterior walls, and plasterboard sheathed with composite wood paneling on the interior walls.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8

Page 3

Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church
Craven County, N.C.

Summary

The Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion C for architecture as an excellent local example of a brick Gothic Revival-style church. The church, constructed circa 1924, is a major building in James City and is one of two large brick churches extant in the community. The Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church is located in the Brownsville subdivision of the “new” portion of James City, which is situated south of the city of New Bern, at the confluence of the Trent and Neuse rivers. The “new” James City was developed in the 1890s as a result of a dispute between the freed Blacks who had settled in James City during the Civil War and Reconstruction period with help from the Union Army, and the landowners who had purchased the property from the heirs of the plantation owner, Col. Peter G. Evans. The Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church also meets Criterion Consideration A since its significance lies in its architecture. The period of significance is for the year of its construction, 1924.

The Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church was founded in 1863 by the Reverend Hurley Grimes and was one of four black churches in James City by the mid-1870s. It was the last of the four churches to move from the old to the new part of James City. The builder of the church, Samuel Chapman Elliott (1872-1956), was a house carpenter and contractor who lived and worked in the James City area his entire life. Elliott most likely apprenticed with his father, Willis Elliott (1811-ca. 1905) who was also a house carpenter. Samuel C. Elliott was a Deacon of the Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church for twenty-five years.

Historical Narrative

The Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church was founded in 1863 by Reverend Hurley Grimes, a prominent and significant religious and civic leader in the James City community, located south of New Bern. By 1862, New Bern was under federal authority, and the city became a refuge for slaves from all over eastern North Carolina. Thousands settled in the area by 1863, and the Reverend Horace James, a chaplain from Massachusetts, was appointed superintendent of Negro affairs in North Carolina in that year. He arrived in New Bern and established an organized camp at the site of James City on land owned by the heirs of Col. Peter G. Evans.¹ In 1867 the federal government restored the land to the Evans family, and the residents that elected to stay had to pay rent for their lots in the camp and work either as farm laborers or as sharecroppers for the Evanses and other area planters. Freedmen’s Bureau officials encouraged the Evans family to sell the lots to the freedmen but the family refused.²

¹ Peter B. Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern and Craven County, North Carolina* (New Bern, N.C.: The Tryon Palace Commission, 1988) 538.

² Mobley, Joe A. *James City: A Black Community in North Carolina 1863-1900* (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina, 1981) 61.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8

Page 4

Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church
Craven County, N.C.

Reverend Hurley Grimes, in addition to establishing Mt. Shiloh, also established the Farmers Association of James City in January 1868 to help its citizens and sent a set of resolutions to General Howard, the commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, urging the federal government to aid the black families by looking at their arrangements with the landlords, which they believed to be unfair. As a consequence of the petition, the bureau ordered an investigation, but by the end of 1868, the Freedmen's Bureau terminated all aid to the inhabitants of James City.³

The Evans family sold the land, including James City, to James A. and Mary Bryan in 1880. Many of the residents of James City believed that the land should be theirs since the Union Army had settled them there, and rent had not been collected on many of the lots since 1867. The Bryans were diligent about trying to collect rent and when some of the inhabitants refused to pay, the Bryans tried to evict them and went to court to do so. The inhabitants argued in court that they should be granted ownership based on their occupation of the land. After numerous appeals and court decisions, the Bryans were awarded legal ownership of the land. Some citizens decided to stay in the "old" James City and pay rent to the Bryans under new rental agreements entered into in 1896, while others moved to the new section which incorporated the subdivisions of Graysville, Meadowsville, Brownsville and Leesville⁴.

The original Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church was known as the Mount Shiloh First Baptist Church, and was located on lots #21 and #24 on Ford Street in "old" James City. The congregation purchased these lots for \$124 in 1907.⁵ According to an oral interview with Sadie Hill, who attended the first church, they had no windows in the original church, so burlap sacks were placed on the windows to keep out the rain and cold.⁶ The first church was painted periwinkle blue, and this color is prevalent in the 1924 church building as well.

The church remained at this location until 1924, when the congregation moved to lot #7 in the Brownsville section of the "new" James City. Mt. Shiloh was one of the last churches to leave old James City. The church was built with bricks from the drying kiln of the Turner Sawmill, and brought to the new location by mule and cart.⁷ On the Sunday in 1924 when the new church was dedicated, the congregation marched from the old church to the new one singing hymns, including the traditional hymn, "Trampin."⁸ The pastor of the church at that time was H. B. Moore, and his annual salary was \$358. The congregation numbered 140, with forty-five male

³ Mobley, 61-64.

⁴ Mobley, 76-91.

⁵ The old church has been demolished and the site is now occupied by a new subdivision.

⁶ Daisy English, Interview.

⁷ William Spivey, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, April 13, 2006.

⁸ Daisy English, Interview. William Spivey, Interview. "Trampin" is a traditional hymn included in the hymnals of the Missionary Baptist Church.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

members and ninety-five female members. The Sunday School had seventy-five pupils and seven teachers. Of the thirty-nine churches within the New Bern Eastern Missionary Baptist Association of North Carolina in 1924, the Mt. Shiloh church property was one of four churches to be valued at \$5,000, which was the highest valuation.⁹

The new church was built, and most likely designed, by Samuel Chapman Elliott (1872-1956), a house carpenter and deacon of the Church for twenty-five years. His father, Willis Elliott (1811-ca. 1905), was also a carpenter, and lived in James City at least as early as 1870; he may have been one of the refugees that arrived from other parts of eastern North Carolina in 1863, or he may have been a native of the county.¹⁰ In 1880, Willis was one of five house carpenters living in James City.¹¹ Both Willis and his wife Francis could read, although they could not write. Willis and Francis Elliott had at least five children: Levi, Samuel, Susan, Isaac, and Mary.

By 1900, Samuel Chapman Elliott had married his wife Francis, and had set up on his own as a house carpenter; his father was no longer working (at age eighty-nine) as a carpenter. Samuel and Francis owned their own home in James City, free of any mortgage. They had two children, Edna and Martin. In subsequent federal census records, Elliott is always listed as a carpenter. Other buildings that he constructed are said to be located on East Front Street in New Bern; he also built houses in James City that do not survive.¹²

The Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church continued to thrive, and today is one of two large brick churches in James City. Most of James City's historic buildings were demolished in the 1970s by the construction of U.S. 70 bypass and the expansion of the nearby Simmons-Knott airport.¹³ The construction of the bypass also made the trip between James City and New Bern more difficult for those on foot.

Architectural Context: Brick Gothic Revival Churches in New Bern and James City, North Carolina, 1900-1930

The Gothic Revival style first appeared in New Bern during the 1820s with the construction of Christ Church (320 Pollock Street) between 1821 and 1824. New Bern's Christ Church was one of North Carolina's earliest Gothic Revival style buildings, and it combined gothic and Federal

⁹ Proceedings of the 59th Annual Session of the New Bern Eastern M.B. Association of North Carolina Held with St. Luke M.B. Church, Morehead City, N.C. October 16th to 19th, 1924. New Bern Eastern Missionary Baptist Association. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/newbern1924/newbern.html>. Accessed 4/11/2006.

¹⁰ Federal Manuscript Population Census, Craven County, James City, 1870.

¹¹ Mobley, 102.

¹² Shirley Parmley, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, April 13, 2006. Great-granddaughter of Samuel Chapman Elliott.

¹³ Sandbeck, 538.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

style elements. The church had a monumental Federal-style pedimented portico but pointed-arch openings and diminutive gothic pinnacles at the top of the bell tower. The church was gutted by fire in 1871 and rebuilt with a Romanesque Revival tower in the 1870s and 1880s.¹⁴

The style reappeared in New Bern in the late 1840s and it was used primarily as an ecclesiastical style. The First Baptist Church, 1847-1848 (239 Middle Street) is a fully-executed Gothic Revival style, brick church, with pointed-arched windows, and buttressed entrance and bell tower.¹⁵ The Gothic Revival style remained the most popular ecclesiastical style in the city after the Civil War until about 1900 with examples constructed by Episcopalian, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian congregations.¹⁶ During the 1900 to 1940 period, the most popular style for church construction in New Bern was not Gothic Revival, but Classical Revival. Two Gothic Revival-style churches were constructed in the city, however, during the first half of the twentieth century, St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church (1910-1913) and St. Peter's A.M.E. Zion Church built in the 1930s.¹⁷ The brick St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church features a cruciform plan, a massive crenelated corner tower, gothic-arched openings, and some decorative brick corbelling. The church stands firmly on the ground, and does not have a vertical, light, appearance due to its large expanse of solid walls. St. Peter's A. M. E. Church is a solid, brick building with a central entrance into a small brick vestibule; the building has a shallow gable roof and no tower. The building also features buttresses, and lancet windows. Both St. Cyprian's and St. Peter's churches give an impression of solidity, more of "A Mighty Fortress is our God" feeling than the more vertical Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church of roughly the same period.

In the new James City, there were four major churches, Mt. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, Pilgrim Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Reform Missionary Baptist Church, and Jones Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, built in the early twentieth century; of these four, Mt. Shiloh (1924) and Jones Chapel (1915) are brick buildings, but Mt. Shiloh is larger, more ornate, and the only high Gothic Revival church in the community.

Mt. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church is an excellent local example of a late Gothic Revival style church. On the exterior, the building's asymmetrical, castellated tower, gothic-arched windows and doors, corbelled brickwork, and parapeted walls of its rear entrance bays, make it a well-executed example of the style. The interior is remarkably intact, and includes the original manufactured beaded-board walls and wainscot, the turned balusters and newel of the chancel rail and balcony, gothic ceiling, and original pews in the balcony area. The earliest glass in the church is periwinkle blue, and three of these windows remain intact.

¹⁴ Sandbeck, 52.

¹⁵ Sandbeck, 119-120.

¹⁶ Sandbeck, 136-137.

¹⁷ Sandbeck, 160-161.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9

Page 7

Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church
Craven County, NC

Bibliography

Bishir, Catherine. *North Carolina Architecture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

Bishir, Catherine W. and Michael T. Southern. *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Craven County Deed Books, Craven County Courthouse, New Bern, N.C.

English, Daisy. Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen. October 28, 2005.

Federal Population Census, Craven County, North Carolina, 1870-1930, online at Ancestry.com.

Mobley, Joe A. *James City: A Black Community in North Carolina 1863-1900*. Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina, 1981.

Mt. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church Archives, James City, New Bern, North Carolina.

Parmley, Shirley. Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, April 13, 2006.

Proceedings of the 59th Annual Session of the New Bern Eastern M.B. Association of North Carolina Held with St. Luke M.B. Church, Morehead City, N.C. October 16th to 19th, 1924. New Bern Eastern Missionary Baptist Association.
[Http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/newbern1924/newbern.html](http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/newbern1924/newbern.html). Accessed 4/11/2006.

Sandbeck, Peter B. *The Historic Architecture of New Bern and Craven County, North Carolina*. New Bern, N.C.: The Tryon Palace Commission, 1988.

Spivey, William. Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, April 13, 2006.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10

Page 8

Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church
Craven County, NC

Verbal Boundary Description

The historic boundary is Craven County Tax Parcel 7-005-044.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the land historically associated with the church, and is the original Lot 7 in West Brownsville, now a part of James City in New Bern, North Carolina.

