United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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: American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District

Other names/site number: American Baptist College

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: 1800 Baptist World Center Drive

City or town: Nashville State: Tennessee County: Davidson

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A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 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

[ ] **national** [X] **statewide** [ ] **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria: [X] **A** [ ] **B** [ ] **C** [ ] **D**

Claudia Lee 4/26/13

**Signature of certifying official/Title:** **Date**

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

**Signature of Commenting Official:** **Date**

**Title:** **State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District — Davidson County, Tennessee
**Name of Property** — **County and State**

## 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action: 6.14.13

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Private | X |
| Public – Local | |
| Public – State | |
| Public – Federal | |

**Category of Property**
(Check only **one** box.)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 0 | buildings |
| 1 | 0 | sites |
| 0 | 0 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 4 | 0 | Total |

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

## 6. Function or Use

| **Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions) | **Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions) |
|---|---|
| EDUCATION/college | EDUCATION/college |
| RELIGION/church school | RELIGION/church school |

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY: Classical Revival; Colonial Revival
OTHER: Stripped Classicism

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE, BRICK, CONCRETE, METAL, GLASS

**Narrative Description**

The American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District (ABTS, now American Baptist College) is located at 1800 Baptist World Center Drive in Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee (2010 population: 626,681). It is located just north of downtown Nashville on the north banks of the Cumberland River. The district comprises the 6.65-acre historic core of the approximate 55-acre ABTS campus. The historic core occupies the prominent location of the larger campus when viewed from Baptist World Center Drive, as newer buildings on campus have been built toward the rear, or west, end of campus. The nominated district includes the three intact buildings historically associated with the campus, the 1924 Griggs Hall, the 1947 J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, and the 1954 T.L. Holcomb Library, as well as the contributing historic campus plan and landscape. The three contributing buildings are minimal in their stylistic detailing, but exhibit trends in scholastic architecture seen during their periods of construction. Classical influences are seen in Griggs Hall, Colonial Revival in J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, and Stripped Classicism in T.L. Holcomb Library. These influences are particularly evident in their entrance surrounds. All three buildings are brick and rest on stone or brick foundations. They each have composite shingle gable or hipped roofs. The earlier two buildings feature double-hung wood windows, while the 1954 library building has tall awning and hopper windows. Historic landscape features found throughout the district include open

lawns, stone fences, driveways, walkways, and signage. Together with the core historic buildings, these elements form a cohesive district, distinct from later campus development, and contribute to the overall setting and character of the historic district.

The ABTS Historic District sits on the west side of and is accessed from Baptist World Center Drive, which forms the eastern boundary of the nominated district. Haynes Meade Circle surrounds the historic core and roughly forms the south, west, and north boundaries. At the northeast corner of the district, the boundary extends beyond Haynes Meade Circle to encompass a stone wall historically associated with ABTS. Griggs Hall and J.B Lawrence Administration Building face south and north, respectively, onto an open lawn. T.L. Holcomb Library is located just southwest of J.B. Lawrence Administration Building and faces east onto a second open lawn followed by a parking lot and Baptist World Center Drive. Church property is adjacent to the district on the south, and additional American Baptist College property is adjacent on the north. Just west of the district boundary are two rows of modern campus structures built in the 1970s or later. They are oriented toward the historic core and include eight buildings of various sizes that serve as offices, dining space, and living space. The buildings are smaller in footprint than the historic buildings, are set within the lower elevation of the hillside, and are not clearly visible from Baptist World Center Drive. The Cumberland River borders the larger campus on the west. On the east side of Baptist World Center Drive is an early to mid-twentieth century residential neighborhood. With its intact historic buildings and campus plan, including landscape features, the ABTS Historic District retains its integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.

**1. Griggs Hall (1924, 1948 contributing building)**

Dedicated on September 14, 1924, Griggs Hall faces south and sits near the northern end of the ABTS lawn.[1] The building was constructed in two phases, the original 1924 portion of the building forms the eastern half and the 1948 addition forms the western half. The addition exhibits the same stylistic traits and materials as the original building, and appears as an extension of the historic design. The original building consisted of an administration room, a library, classrooms, and dormitory rooms to accommodate sixty students.[2] With the construction of the 1947 J.B. Lawrence Administration Building (Resource #2) housing administrative offices, classrooms, and a temporary library, the original portion of Griggs Hall was converted to sole use as a dormitory. The capacity was further expanded with the 1948 addition, which includes dormitory rooms to accommodate twenty-five additional students.[3] Minimal classical detailing is seen in the door and window surrounds of both the original building and the 1948 addition. The building is rectangular in shape, though the ends of the original portion of the building project approximately two feet from the façade and rear elevation, thus framing the central five bays. It sits on a continuous rough-cut stone foundation, is clad in stretcher-bond brick, and has an asphalt-shingle hip roof featuring flat-roof dormers with clipped corners. As the building is set within the hillside, the stone foundation is a prominent feature, particularly in the façade of the addition and on the west and north elevations. An external brick chimney on the rear of the original structure is visible from the façade, centered over the main entry. Principal windows are paired and are a mix of original four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows and replacement two-over-two and one-over-one, double-hung wood sash. The original window and door openings are intact; however the doors

[1] Ruth M. Powell, *Lights and Shadows: The Story of the American Baptist Theological Seminary, 1924-64* (Nashville: private, 1964), 31.
[2] *Ibid.*, 29.
[3] *Ibid.*, 61.

have been replaced with modern metal-and-glass doors. The building is currently vacant and undergoing renovation.

Exterior

The façade of the building is divided into thirteen roughly symmetrical bays (Photograph 2). The nine easternmost bays constitute the original structure, and the four westernmost bays are a part of the 1948 addition. The original portion of the structure contains five central bays with a massing projecting slightly on either end (Photograph 3). The main entry is centered on the original structure and marked by a set of concrete steps leading up to a Classical Revival entrance (Photograph 4). Flanking the concrete steps are cast iron lamp posts with a conical cap. The entrance is composed of an elaborate flat-roof entry hood supported by decorative concrete classical columns. On either side of the door is a round, tapered, freestanding column as well as a rounded engaged column. The columns have minimal bases and Doric capitals. Beneath the shallow roof is a concrete entablature bearing the name of the building: Griggs Hall. A modern metal-and-glass door is within the original entrance surround. Above the door in the central bay of the original structure is a set of paired windows set within a concrete surround with a flat sill and a molded lintel. The easternmost window is an original four-over-four, double-hung wood sash window and the westernmost window is a modern one-over-one, double-hung metal sash window. A window air conditioning unit has been placed in the lower sash of the original window. Four bays occupied by windows flank either side of the central entrance bay. Paired windows with concrete sills are located on the first and second stories. The lower story windows feature a decorative nonstructural header-course brick arch above the windows, while the second story windows have brick soldier course lintels. Seven of the eight lower story paired windows contain two original four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows; the window bay just east of the entrance has one original four-over-four, double-hung wood sash window and one replacement one-over-one, double-hung metal sash window. Each set of windows in the upper story of the central block match the configuration above the entry bay. A window air conditioning unit has been placed in the easternmost lower sash of all but two sets of windows on the first floor. Flat-roof dormers with clipped corners and stucco walls are located above the central five bays of the original structure. All but one of the dormers contains a replacement one-over-one, double-hung metal sash window with a window air conditioning unit in the lower sash. Rectangular metal vents are located in the foundation level of the central five bays.

The façade of the1948 addition consists of four bays extending from the western end of the original building (Photograph 5). This addition is set within a slope and the stone basement level is exposed on the façade. The entrance is located in the easternmost bay of the addition and is built between the basement and first story. It contains a solid single-leaf replacement wood door set within an original molded concrete surround with a four-light wood transom. Above the door and set between the basement and first floor is a set of paired four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows with a concrete sill and a brick soldier course lintel. The three westernmost bays contain paired windows in the basement, first, and second levels. The windows on the first and second levels have concrete sills and brick soldier course lintels. On the first floor, all windows are original four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows. The second floor window pairs each contain one original four-over-four, double-hung wood sash window and one replacement one-over-one, double-hung metal sash window. Each pair of windows contains a window air conditioning unit. The basement levels of the three window bays each contain a pair of four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows with stone voussoir arches above. Dormers identical to those of the original structure are located above the central two bays of the addition. The westernmost dormer contains an original eight-over-eight,

double-hung wood sash window; however, the lower sash has been replaced with a window air conditioning unit.

The east elevation of the original building is divided into three symmetrical bays (Photograph 6). A set of concrete steps leads up to the central entrance bay. The door is a modern metal-and-glass door, set within an original molded concrete surround with a molded concrete architrave. On the first story, the flanking bays each contain original paired four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows with concrete sills. Located above the window is a decorative header-course brick arch. On the second story are three window bays each containing paired replacement one-over-one, double-hung metal sash windows. The windows have original concrete sills and brick soldier course lintels. A flat roof dormer is centered over this elevation and features three one-over-one, double-hung metal sash windows. Metal vents are located in the basement level of the outer two bays.

The north elevation is divided into fourteen bays (Photograph 7). Because of the slope of the hill, the stone basement level is clearly visible from this elevation on both the addition and original massing. The original portion of the building contains ten bays, six central bays with two projecting outer bays on each end. A brick exterior chimney is centered on the original section of the building. Flanking either side of the chimney are two symmetrical bays occupied by windows. These four window bays each contain paired windows on the basement, first, and second levels. Like the façade, the windows on the first and second levels have concrete sills; above each of the first story windows is a decorative nonstructural header-course brick arch, and above the second floor windows is a soldier course brick lintel. The first story windows are all four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows with a window air conditioning unit replacing the lower sash of the westernmost window. The second level window pairs have one original four-over-four, double-hung wood sash window and one replacement one-over-one, double-hung metal sash window with window air conditioning units. The basement level of these four central window bays is slightly irregular. The two westernmost bays each contain a pair of four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows with radiating stone voussoirs. Just east of the chimney in the basement level is another pair of four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows as well as an off-center boarded door. Both the window and door of this bay have a radiating stone voussoir. The basement level of the easternmost bay of the four central window bays contains a boarded vent opening. In the basement level, some of the sashes have been replaced with window air conditioning units or have been boarded. Flanking these four central bays is a single irregular window bay on each side. The westernmost bay contains two mid-level four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows with concrete sills and a brick header course lintel. The basement level of this bay contains a single boarded door with a bracketed hood. The easternmost bay contains a single mid-level four-over-four, double-hung wood sash window with a concrete sill and a header course lintel. This bay has a single-leaf metal door with a bracketed hood in the basement level. Flanking the central six bays of the original building are the two projecting bays on each side. The windows of the first and second floors are identical to those of the central portion of the elevation. The westernmost outer bays have windows in the basement level identical to the other basement windows on this elevation. The easternmost outer bays have metal vents in each bay of the basement level. Three irregular dormers sit atop the original building on this elevation. Two dormers on the east side of the chimney are identical to those on the façade. On the west side of the chimney is a wider dormer with a flat roof, stucco sides, and two eight-over-eight, double-hung sash windows.

The north elevation of the addition contains four window bays with a pair of windows in the basement, first, and second levels. The windows are identical to those of the façade of the addition (Photograph 8).

The three-bay west elevation of the addition has central entrances on the basement, first, and second floors accessed by an exterior metal fire stair (Photograph 9). The basement level has a central double-door entrance with replacement metal doors and a metal surround. Window bays with concrete sills and voussoirs are on either side of the door. The southernmost window bay is a pair of four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows. The northernmost window bay has been boarded. The first floor contains a single metal door flanked by window bays with concrete sills and header course brick lintels. The door opening appears to be smaller than the original opening as the area around has been bricked. Like the basement level, the southernmost window bay has paired four-over-four, double-hung wood sash windows and the northernmost window bay has been bricked-in. The second floor contains a single door opening that also appears smaller than the original. The door on this level has been removed. Flanking the entrance are window bays with concrete sills, header course brick lintels, and paired replacement one-over-one, double-hung metal sash windows. Centered on this elevation is a dormer matching that of the east elevation. The roof is partially missing from this dormer.

Interior

The building has been vacant for several years and the interior is in need of repair. Plans for restoration are underway. The interior of the structure follows its function as a dormitory. A small lobby is accessed from the main entrance on the south façade, and a hallway runs east to west through the center of the building on the levels above ground, with small rooms on the north and south (Photograph 10). These rooms include closets built into the space, or in some cases the walls between rooms have been converted to include closets (Photograph 11). Most of the room doorways include awning transoms to allow ventilation, and the rooms on the southwest side of the original structure on the first floor also feature doors linking the rooms themselves. The stairs between floors vary, but in the addition, they are enclosed according to fire safety codes, as opposed to being open stairs in the original portion of the building. The dormers appear to be later additions to accommodate students in the attic level, though rooms are only located on the south side of the central hall. Spaces on the northern side are used for attic storage. The dormers may have been added in 1948 when the western addition was put on the building. The rooms on the east and west ends of the attic are much larger and designed for double occupancy. The basement level is divided between the original portion of the building and the 1948 addition. The space in the original building offers storage and access to the hot water heater and other necessities. It is mostly one larger room, with a few smaller spaces on the eastern end. The basement of the 1948 addition has one large room toward the center of the building and several smaller spaces on the western end. It once supported group meetings for various student organizations and served as a general common area for residents of Griggs Hall.

**2. J.B. Lawrence Administration Building (1947, contributing building)**

The two-story, side-gable administration building faces north onto the American Baptist Theological Seminary lawn and exhibits subtle Colonial Revival stylistic influences including the asymmetrical façade, closed eaves and cornice returns, shallow entrance hood, and the multi-light, double-hung, rectangular sash windows. It was constructed in 1947 to house administrative offices and a temporary chapel on the first floor; a temporary library and five classrooms on the second floor; and recreation space in the basement.[4] The library and chapel were removed from this building in 1954 with the construction of the T.L. Holcomb

[4] *Ibid.*, 56.

Library. The rectangular office building hosts one small addition on the east end to accommodate an interior stairwell. The addition was constructed in the second half of the twentieth century and is compatible with the original building. The original foundation is rough-cut continuous stone, however the addition's foundation is molded concrete, made to resemble the original stone foundation. The walls are brick; one Flemish bond course after six running bond courses. The composite-shingle gable roof has a minimal horizontal wood cornice on the north façade and south elevation as well as wood cornice returns on the west and east gable ends. The principle fenestration is original eight-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash windows *(see Figure 1)*.

Exterior

The north façade consists of ten asymmetrical bays, nine bays of the original structure, and one in the set-back east addition (Photographs 12 and 13). The entrance is slightly off center and consists of a simple concrete surround accessed via a concrete stoop with iron railings and concrete steps (Photograph 14). The replacement metal-and-glass doors are framed by replacement sidelights. A small wood entrance hood with a raised-seam, metal flared roof is atop the door. An inscribed concrete panel above the entry reads:

J.B. Lawrence
Administration
Building

The sign is framed on the sides by stack bond bricks. Atop the sign is an original eight-over-eight, double-hung wood sash window with a concrete sill. Above this window is a section of decorative basket weave brickwork framed by two rows of stack bond bricks on the side and a soldier course brick course above. West of the entrance bay are three window bays, each with an eight-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash window on each floor. Directly east of the entrance bay is a single window bay with an eight-over-eight, double-hung wood sash window on each floor. East of that bay are three window bays, each with an eight-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash window on each floor. The easternmost bay of the original façade has a narrow, single two-over-two, double-hung wood sash window on the first floor. The single bay of the east addition is set back and has an eight-over-eight, double-hung wood sash window on each floor. All are original wood windows with concrete sills, and lined above by a brick soldier course lintel. To the west of the entrance at the foundation level are two original six-light awning basement windows covered with metal bars. The westernmost bay of the foundation level used to have a window opening, but is currently covered with a wood panel. In the foundation just east of the entrance is one original six-light awning window. To the east of that window in the foundation level are two arched windows, smaller than the original opening, filled in with vinyl siding, and covered by metal bars.

The west elevation consists of four window bays (Photograph 15). The windows of the first and second floors are original eight-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash windows with concrete sills and brick soldier course lintels. The bottom sashes of the two southernmost windows on the first floor are covered with an iron railing. There is one six-over-six, double-hung wood sash window in the attic level of the gable end with a concrete sill and a brick soldier course lintel. On the northern side of the elevation is an entrance to the basement level via concrete steps and iron railings. The single-leaf metal door appears to be a replacement, c. 1960.

The south elevation has a nine-bay arrangement (Photograph 16). The easternmost bay is the set-back addition. The eight bays of the original structure each have an eight-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash window with a concrete sill and a brick soldier course lintel on the first and second floors. The one-bay eastern addition has an eight-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash window between the first and second floors with a concrete sill and brick soldier course lintel. Replacement arched windows are in each bay of the original foundation. The windows are smaller than the original opening, are filled in with vinyl siding, and covered by metal bars.

The addition's east elevation has three bays and extends from the original elevation (Photograph 17). The foundation of the addition is molded concrete made to look like the stone foundation of the original building. A concrete stoop with iron railings leads to the central entrance. A small wood entrance hood with a raised-seam metal flared roof covers the entrance. The replacement metal-and-glass doors are framed by replacement sidelights. Above the door is minimal decorative brickwork composed of stack bond and soldier course bricks. A plaque just north of the entrance reads:

ABC J.H. Flakes JR.
Administration Building
American Baptist College
Nashville, TN

Windows flank the entrance on the first floor. The southern window is bricked-in and the northern window is an eight-over-eight, double-hung wood sash window with a concrete sill and brick soldier course lintel. On the second floor, in each bay, is one eight-over-eight, double-hung wood sash window with concrete sill and brick soldier course lintel. In the attic level at the gable end is a six-over-six, double-hung wood sash window with a concrete sill and brick soldier course lintel.

Interior

The interior of the J.B. Lawrence Administration Building is laid out with rooms on either side of a central east-west hallway. The interior has been updated over time, but it retains much of its original floor plan and materials. The main entrance on the north façade leads to a mid-level stair hall. The concrete stairs have their original wood handrail and metal railings, but the treads and risers have been covered with carpet. At the entrance, the stairs lead up to the main lobby and down to the basement level. The main lobby retains original tiles floors, wood baseboards, and drywall floors and ceilings (Photograph 18). The main hallway of the first floor is accessed on either side of the main lobby. The hall retains original tile floors, wood baseboards, and drywall walls (Photograph 19). The ceiling in the hallway is dropped acoustical tile. On either side of the hall are original single-leaf wood doors with original wood surrounds leading to office and classroom space. Some office and classroom spaces have carpeted floor.

The second floor is laid out on a similar plan. The hallway consists of original tile floors, wood baseboards, drywall walls, and dropped tile ceilings. Classrooms are located on either side of the hallway. Doors are original single-leaf wood doors with original wood surrounds.

The basement level contains meeting spaces surrounding a common area. The floors are carpeted, but original wood baseboards and drywall walls remain. The ceiling is dropped acoustical tile.

The addition on the east end the building houses a stairwell similar to that of the original portion of the building. It has metal railings with a wood handrail and carpeted treads and risers.

**3. T. L. Holcomb Library (1954, contributing building)**
Dedicated on April 14, 1954, the T.L. Holcomb Library is located just southwest of the J.B. Lawrence Administration Building. In addition to library space, the building also houses the school's only chapel in the north wing. It faces east onto an open lawn and is Stripped Classical in style. With an emphasis on function, this modernist style is formal and symmetrical, but with reduced classical detail. The brick T.L. Holcomb Library is roughly T-shaped and has a two-story central block flanked by single-story wings that are slightly recessed. Set within the hillside, the rear of the building exposes the basement level and appears three stories along this elevation. A recessed portico with a heavy limestone surround dominates the central block. The building sits on a brick foundation and has a flat roof. Parapet walls with limestone coping are located on the east façade and north and south elevations. The brick walls are laid in an uncommon pattern: one Flemish bond course followed by five rows of running bond. Tall eight-light windows are located around the building and are a combination of awning and hopper windows arranged vertically. A small c.1960 addition has been added to the rear in the southwest corner of the T.

Exterior
The east façade has a two-story central entrance bay that consists of a two-story, limestone, distyle portico following a Stripped Classical modernist influence (Photograph 20). The portico features a molded limestone surround with two square limestone distyle columns (Photograph 21). The recessed façade of the entranceway is also faced in limestone. The porch steps and floor are poured concrete. Within the recessed porch are three bays. On the first story, a set of single-light double wood doors is flanked by single-light wood doors on either side. The side doors have single-light transoms. The double doors have a two-light transom. On the second story is a central six-light wood hopper window flanked on either side by a narrow vertical three-light wood hopper window. The windows have limestone sills. On either side of the recessed porch is a single window bay. The first story has a vertical four-light wood window on the south side of the entranceway; the middle two sashes are fixed, while the bottom sash opens as a hopper and the upper sash opens as an awning. The first story window just north of the central entrance is a vertical three light window; like the southern window, the bottom sash opens as a hopper and the upper sash opens as an awning. A single-light fixed sash has replaced the middle two sashes. The second story of these flanking bays has vertical three-light windows; the lower sash is a hopper window. Each window on the first and second floor has a simple limestone surround. The recessed wings of the building each have three vertical eight-light wood windows that are a combination of hopper and awning windows. The sills are limestone and the lintels are decorative brick.

The south elevation consists of the south wing and a small addition (Photograph 22). The south wing is brick with four eight-light wood windows that are a combination of hopper and awning windows matching those of the facade. The second window from the east is slightly different from the others as the lower two sashes have been replaced with a single fixed sash. The two-story addition at the rear is recessed slightly from the south wing and has a lower roofline than the main building. It is brick and consists of two vertical four-light wood windows on each story with limestone sills; the lower sash opens as a hopper and the upper sash an awning. The easternmost window has a window air conditioning unit in the lower sash. The south side of the central block is hidden behind the addition and is plain brick.

The west elevation of the building includes the plain brick rear elevations of the south and north wings, the rear elevation of the addition, and the rear elevation of the central block (Photograph 23). The rear of the addition has a six-panel wood door in the center with a vertical four-light wood window directly above it identical to those on the south elevation of the addition. The window has a limestone sill. To the north on the second story is a small, two-light wood window with limestone sill. The rear elevation of the central block consists of eight window bays each with a vertical four-light wood window with limestone sills on each of the three stories; the lower sash of each window opens as a hopper and the upper sash opens as an awning.

The north elevation consists of the rear central wing and the north wing (Photograph 24). The north elevation of the north wing consists of four vertical eight-light combination hopper and awning wood windows. They have limestone sills and decorative brick lintels. The north elevation of the rear central wing has a single-leaf metal door on the upper story. A black metal quarter-turn staircase with a plain metal railing leads to the door.

Interior

The central block of the building is divided between front lobby and office space and a rear wing with stacks and classroom space. The school's chapel is located in the north wing and a reading room is located in the south wing.

The main entrance doors lead to a narrow foyer before entering into the main lobby. The foyer has new wood floors, a dropped ceiling, and concrete block walls. On the north wall is an inset mirror with plain wood surrounds. The west wall has a set of single-light double doors leading to the main lobby of the library. On either side of the doors are single-light fixed windows with simple wood surrounds.

The main lobby of the library has new wood floors, a dropped ceiling, and vertical board walls (Photograph 25). Decorative ceiling molding extends from the west wall partway around the north and south walls. Simple wood baseboards are around the room. On the north wall of the lobby is a set of single-light wood doors leading to the north wing chapel. The south wall has a set of single-light, two-panel wood doors that lead to the south wing. Centered on the west wall is a metal door that leads into the rear wing and the stairways to the upper and lower floors. The east wall has a staircase to the south that leads to the upper floor. The north side of the east wall has a doorway leading to an office. The windows and doors all have decorative wood surrounds.

The stairway in the main lobby leads to upper floor offices on the east end of the central block. The stair treads are tile and the risers are wood. It has simple metal handrails attached to the wall. From the landing to the top of the stairs is a metal balustrade and railing. The upper hallway has tile floors, concrete block walls, and a drywall ceiling. It has two plain metal doors leading to bathrooms on the west wall and two single-light wood doors leading to offices on the east wall.

The ABTS Chapel, the only chapel on campus, occupies the north wing of the building (Photograph 26). Floors within this wing are carpeted. The north wing also features dropped ceilings and concrete block walls. The doors and window on the south wall have simple wood surrounds. There are no surrounds on the other windows. The chapel has simple wood baseboards throughout.

The south wing of the building serves as a reading room. It has new wood floors, concrete block walls, and a dropped ceiling. On the north side of the west wall is a wood door leading to the c. 1960 addition. There are simple wood baseboards around the room and simple wood surrounds on the doors.

The main stacks area of the library is on the main floor of the rear wing of the building (Photograph 27). It has a tile floor, concrete block walls, and a drywall ceiling. The center of the room has a stairway leading to the upper and lower floors. The center of the rear wing has the enclosed stairwell leading to the upper and lower stories. Each of the half-turn stairways has a landing with a door separating each section of the stair. The upper story of the central block serves as a classroom space. It has tile floors, concrete block walls, and a drywall ceiling. The lower level of the central block is the school's computer lab. It has a tile floor, concrete block walls and a drywall ceiling. The ceiling has exposed floor joists.

The c. 1960 addition is accessed from the south and rear wings. It has a tile floor, concrete block walls, and a dropped ceiling. It serves as a small kitchen.

**4. Campus Landscape (1924-1963, contributing site)**

The original campus land acquired in 1918, consisted of 43 acres.[5] By 1937 it had grown to 38 acres that included a 20-acre campus and an adjacent 18-acre residential tract.[6] By 1953, the campus had increased to 50 acres, and in 1958, they began leasing, and later purchased the adjacent six-acre National Baptist Training School for Women and Girls property, creating the present 55.18-acre campus.[7] The nominated district includes the 6.65-acre historic core of the ABTS campus and occupies the highest point of the larger campus (Photographs 28 and 30). Later campus development dates to the 1970s or later and is located just west of the nominated boundaries. This development includes eight small one-story structures, all red brick building of various sizes and minimalist styles. Due to their location at the rear of the hillside, the modern development is not clearly visible from Baptist World Center Drive (Photograph 31).

The campus landscape is composed of the open lawns, stone fences, stone posts, metal signage, driveways, walkways, and landscaping historically associated with the American Baptist Theological Seminary. The main entrance to the campus is the northernmost entrance off of Baptist World Center Drive. Marking the paved driveway near the road are two rough-cut stone posts installed in 1938 (Photograph 1).[8] A cast iron decorative urn sits atop each post. Beyond the posts, shrubs and mature trees line the entrance. The driveway reaches a "T" at the east end of the lawn between Griggs Hall and J.B Lawrence Administration Building. At the entrance to the lawn are two metal light posts supporting a modern arched sign reading: American Baptist College. At the "T", the driveway turns south toward a parking area and the south end of the campus. North of the "T," the driveway runs in front of the east elevation of Griggs Hall before turning west along the northern boundary of the district. On the east side of Griggs Hall and the drive is a c. 1930 rough-cut, stone fence that is approximately three feet high and blocks the view of the driveway from the road (Photograph 28). An opening at the center of the stone fence lines up with the center of the east elevation of Griggs Hall. A second drive from Baptist World Center drive is located toward the southern end of the campus. This drive also has two stone posts marking the entrance that match the 1938 posts at the northern entrance (Photograph 29). The southern drive leads along the southern boundary of the campus and

[5] *Ibid.*, 22.
[6] *Ibid.*, 46.
[7] *Ibid.*, 72, 87.
[8] *Ibid.*, 47.

creates a circle with the northern drive. The circling drive, Haynes Meade Circle, roughly forms the boundaries of the district. A small section of lawn that includes the historic c. 1930 rough-cut, stone fence at the northeast corner of the district sits outside the drive.

In addition to the main drives, various walkways and landscape features are located throughout campus. One major period of campus improvements occurred in 1948, when work was "in process to construct parking space for cars, landscaping the campus, building roads and walks, and sufficiently floodlighting the campus as well as the two entrances to the grounds."[9] The roads, walkways, and shrubbery all follow the general patterns and paths as originally designed for the campus.

The three buildings as well as drives, walkways, and landscape features remain largely intact and form a cohesive historic district, distinct from later campus development. The exterior of all three buildings retain their historic forms, styles, materials, and workmanship. Modern doors have been added to both Griggs Hall and J.B. Lawrence Administration Building; however, the entrance surrounds remain intact and clearly communicate the subtle stylistic influences of the buildings. Griggs Hall is currently vacant and in need of repair. About half of its windows have been replaced over time as the original windows have deteriorated. However, a substantial degree of the building's architectural integrity, including its historic appearance survives and renovation plans hope to restore the building to its historic form. The drives and parking areas have been repaved, but follow the path of those constructed during various periods of campus improvement. Plantings have changed over time, but a number of mature trees remain on the campus.

[9] *Ibid.*, 58.

## 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.)

- [x] 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.)
Property is:

- [x] 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.

**Areas of Significance**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
EDUCATION
ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black
RELIGION
SOCIAL HISTORY: Civil Rights Movement

**Period of Significance**
1924-1963
1954-1960

**Significant Dates**
1924; c.1930; 1938; 1947; 1948; 1954; 1960

**Significant Person**
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**
N/A

**Architect/Builder**
UNKNOWN

## Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District, located in Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee (population ~626,680), is being nominated at the State level as a significant historic district under Criterion A in the areas of ethnic heritage, education, and religion as an African American theological seminary. American Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) committed itself to Christian education and racial equality and fostered leadership among its students who went on to become prominent individuals in local and national civil rights efforts. Also under Criterion A, the district is significant for the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century for its associations with the Nashville Student Movement, in particular, its ties to significant local and national Civil Rights leaders, John Lewis, Bernard Lafayette, C.T. Vivian, James Bevel, and Kelly Miller Smith. The success of the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville hinged on student involvement, and indeed, students would become the driving force in the movement as it pushed into the Deep South. John Lewis, Bernard Lafayette, C.T. Vivian and James Bevel were all students at ABTS who came to the movement under the guidance of Reverend Kelly Miller Smith. The bonds between these men were forged both in class during the day and late at night in Griggs Hall Dormitory. Although the most iconic images of Nashville's Civil Rights Movement took place downtown, those images would not exist without the American Baptist Theological Seminary, which provided these men with the foundational experience that set them on the path to become leaders and icons of the Nashville Student Movement and the National Civil Rights Movement.

ABTS could not have fostered the leadership and values of these future leaders without the involvement of National Baptist Convention leaders like Reverend Kelly Miller Smith. From the moment of its foundation in 1924, ABTS served as a gathering place for leaders in the long Civil Rights Movement who preached in its church, taught in its classrooms, studied in its library, and slept in its dormitory. The ABTS campus was instrumental in bringing the long Civil Rights Movement into the Nashville sit-ins that would lead the charge for desegregating downtowns across the South. The period of significance begins in 1924 when the seminary first opened its doors as a Baptist educational institution for African Americans until the fifty-year marker in 1963. A second period of significance includes those years in which the school was directly associated with the Civil Rights Movement between 1954 when Kelly Miller Smith first joined the Board of Trustees, which coincides with the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, and 1960 with the integration of Nashville's downtown lunch counters as a result of the Nashville Student Movement. Significant dates include 1924 and 1948, marking the construction and addition to Griggs Hall; 1947 with the construction of J.B. Lawrence Administration Building; 1954 when T.L. Holcomb Library was constructed; c. 1930, 1938, and 1948 with the construction and additions of historic landscape features; and 1960 with the successful integration of Nashville's lunch counters.

## Narrative Statement of Significance

### Development and Growth of the American Baptist Theological Seminary

At the turn of the century, Nashville had evolved into a center for Christian education for African Americans, with earlier established African American theological seminaries existing at Fisk University (Jubilee Hall, NR 12/9/71, NHL 1/23/07; Fisk University Historic District, NR 2/9/78), Roger Williams University, and Walden University. In 1896 black Baptists began discussions with the white Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) headquartered in Nashville to create a separate black Baptist seminary under the auspices of the National Baptist Convention (NBC). The National Baptist Publishing Board already operated in Nashville.

These discussions remained unresolved by 1915 when the National Baptist Convention split into two new organizations, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., and the National Baptist Convention, Inc.[10]

The split in the National Baptist Convention meant that both groups began to pursue the creation of an African American seminary. In 1918, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. created the National Baptist Theological Seminary and Training School at the Boscobel School property (not extant) in Nashville. This seminary closed by 1934. The National Baptist Convention, Inc. (NBCI), worked with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). SBC leader Dr. O.L. Hailey was actively involved in maintaining institutional support and funding for a black Baptist seminary. Black Baptists in Nashville argued that the new institution should be in their city rather than Memphis, where the efforts to establish the seminary there were led by Rev. Thomas Oscar Fuller of First Baptist Church on South Lauderdale Street (First Colored Baptist Church, NR 7/14/2000). After much discussion, the NBCI and SBC agreed to open a seminary in Memphis for the training of African American preachers. The seminary began operation in 1916 with T.O. Fuller as President. The decision to locate the school in Memphis was "opposed vigorously by the Negro Baptist Ministers Conference of Nashville who favored locating the school near Roger Williams University" in Nashville.[11] The Southern Baptist Convention sought a solution and recommended the formation of a committee made up of seven men of each of the three conventions. This "Joint Peace Commission" ultimately recommended that the seminary be moved to Nashville, and with an invitation from the trustees of Roger Williams University, the seminary was opened on December 11, 1918 in connection with the Roger Williams University.[12] Between 1918 and 1924, NBC and SBC leaders worked to secure land and open the independent American Baptist Theological Seminary. Nashville's white Commercial Club raised a large part of the funds needed to purchase 43 acres for a campus adjacent to Roger Williams University on Whites Creek Pike; other funding came from the State of Tennessee. On September 24, 1924, the NBC and SBC opened the American Baptist Theological Seminary (now American Baptist College) at its present North Nashville campus.[13] The Southern Baptist Convention remained officially connected to American Baptist College until June 1995.[14]

The dedication of the first building erected on campus, Griggs Hall, took place in September 1924. Until the T.L. Holcomb Library was constructed on campus in 1947, Griggs Hall stood as the primary building and served a variety of purposes. In addition to dormitory rooms for approximately sixty students, Griggs Hall was constructed with an administration room, a library, a kitchen, a dining room, and classrooms, two of which could be used together as an assembly room. The building was named in honor of Dr. Sutton E. Griggs and his father Dr. Allen R. Griggs.[15] At the dedication ceremonies, the Roger Williams University Glee Club, directed by significant composer and educator John W. Work, provided music. Dr. W. F. Powell

[10] Bobby L. Lovett, *The African-American History of Nashville, Tennessee, 1780-1930* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999), 193-195.
[11] Powell, *Lights and Shadows*, 20.
[12] *Ibid.*, 19-22.
[13] *Ibid.*, 21-22, 28-30.
[14] Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, *African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century: Varieties of Protest and Accommodation* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 67-69.
[15] Powell, *Lights and Shadows,* 29, 34.

of Nashville's prominent white First Baptist Church, spoke to the gathered citizens and students. The new school offered a certificate for those without a high school education, a Bachelor of Theology degree and a Master's of Theology.[16]

On April 8, 1925, Dr. Sutton E. Griggs, Griggs Hall namesake, became President of the American Baptist Theological Seminary. Griggs was a significant figure in the history of the Black Baptist church and was influential in the history of Tennessee race relations and literature. In his profile of Griggs in the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, historian Brian Page notes:

> Sutton E. Griggs was active in a number of local and national organizations and remained committed to improving race relations in the American South. He was active in the National Baptist Convention, and while living in Nashville, he participated in the Niagara movement and helped organize a streetcar boycott to protest segregation. He was also a prolific writer. He wrote five novels between 1899 and 1908, and they are often considered a precursor to the Black Nationalist literary tradition of the "New Negro." In his first and best-known novel, *Imperium in Imperio* (1899), he wrote about a secret organization of black people plotting to sabotage the U.S. Navy and create a black state by taking over Texas and Louisiana. The two main characters debated the organization's advocacy of violence to accomplish its goals, highlighting the competing nationalist and accomodationist political strategies within the black community. While Griggs considered his novels' financial failures, W. E. B. Du Bois claimed that unlike his contemporaries he was one of the few African American writers who wrote to a black audience.[17]

Griggs resigned as ABTS president on October 1, 1926, citing poor health and other circumstances. He then returned to his home state of Texas to serve as pastor of the Hopewell Baptist Church in Denison, and later died in 1933 in Houston.[18] Although only serving as president for eighteen months, his writings and teaching helped foster the principles of racial equality that would influence later students at ABTS involved in the Nashville Student Movement and National Civil Rights Movement.

Despite Griggs' reputation and leadership, the seminary struggled in its early years. The school opened up rooms for students to board at Griggs Hall in the fall of 1927 but the number of students graduating was miniscule and the late 1920s and early-1930s became a time of slow growth compounded by the difficulties of the Great Depression. Trevecca College, a Nashville-based Nazarene institution now known as Trevecca University, purchased the campus in January 1932 only to abandon the campus in 1934 with the title reverting back to the American Baptist Theological Seminary. The seminary reopened classes in September 1934. Church historian Ruth Powell noted, "Few institutions founded by any denomination could have been

[16] *Ibid.*, 21-33.
[17] Brian D. Page, "Sutton E. Griggs," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, On-line Edition* (University of Tennessee Press, 2002---), retrieved on August 15, 2012.
[18] Powell, 35, 157.

shadowed by as many difficulties or could have encountered as many obstacles as beset the American Baptist Theological Seminary during its first ten years of meager existence."[19]

During this same period of struggle, ABTS saw a number of school presidents. After Griggs left in 1926, Dean W.T. Amiger became acting president and was then elected as the school's next permanent president in 1927. He died in 1929, and Dr. J.H. Garnett became Dean and acting president in 1930.[20] He served in this capacity until 1932 when Dr. Roy A. Mayfield was elected president. In 1934, Dr. Mayfield left to become field secretary of the Education Board of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc.. For the next two years Dean Garnett and Dr. J.C. Miles continued the administration and operation of the school.[21]

In 1936, Dr. J. M. Nabrit of Atlanta became the seminary's new president. Nabrit breathed new life into the institution. Nabrit convinced the Southern Baptist Convention to share in the seminary's costs with a 50-50 split. This financial certainty helped to stabilize the seminary and more students enrolled and graduated. Seminary administrators in 1938 began to add new structures, such as the present stone gates at the entrances to the school off Whites Creek Pike and driveways (Haynes Meade Circle), to the campus.[22] At that time, "eight acres of Seminary ground was used for truck gardening and 40 acres for pasture land to support five good milk cows, some pigs, chickens, and other live stock."[23] The number of graduating students continued to increase. Dr. Nabrit served as president until 1944 when he resigned for health reasons.[24]

Dr. Ralph Waldo Riley brought a new era of growth to the seminary when he became president in 1944. He proposed a $200,000 development drive "in order to furnish the Chapel, library, and homes for teachers and president."[25] At that time, the Chapel and library were both within Griggs Hall, while the homes for teachers and the president were on an adjacent parcel and are no longer extant. He also added to the faculty in 1944 Rev. Dr. Garland Offutt, who was the first African American Ph.D. to graduate from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. By 1950, Dr. Offutt had returned to Louisville, KY, to pastor the West Chestnut Street Baptist Church and become a key Civil Rights leader in Louisville. In 1947, the seminary opened the J. B. Lawrence Administration Building, named for Rev. J. B. Lawrence, the Secretary of the SBC's Home Mission Board, who had raised $90,000 for the building. The following year, administrators reported plans for the renovation and an addition to Griggs Hall, the construction of parking lots, and "building roads and walks and sufficiently floodlighting the campus as well as the two entrances to the grounds."[26]

In 1948, 38 students graduated, by far the largest class since the school's formation. For the 1948-49 session, the seminary offered a new Bachelor of Religious Education degree. In the spring of 1949, the

[19] *Ibid,* 41.
[20] *Ibid.*, 35-38.
[21] *Ibid.*, 40, 43.
[22] *Ibid.*, 45-47.
[23] *Ibid.*, 48.
[24] *Ibid.*, 52.
[25] *Ibid.*, 52.
[26] *Ibid.*, 53.

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. (NBC) adopted a new operating agreement for the seminary which called upon the white SBC to "purchase the necessary grounds and erect the necessary buildings for the Seminary" while the NBC would "furnish the original equipment for the buildings."[27]

The decade of the 1950s would be one of profound change. First, in 1951 came the publication of an important survey of the Baptist Inter-Convention Committee, supported and funded by multiple white and black Baptist organizations across the country. The survey directly addressed the future of American Baptist Theological Seminary by recommending that the seminary:

> Continue to operate as a national seminary of the National Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention, doing such work as may lead to the earning of the degrees of Bachelor of Theology or Bachelor of Religious Education emphasizing an in-service training program. For initiating such a program, additional appropriations, an increased faculty and revised curriculum are required. No half hearted approach or meager appropriation can attain the objectives indicated.[28]

The campus expansion and improvement of campus facilities, a renewed SBC-NBCA partnership, and better educational opportunities, served to attract more students to the seminary in the 1950s. They found a faculty and institution more in-tune with the needs of the community, which in turn encouraged students to minister to those in need outside of the campus grounds. "The city jail, the Knowles Home for the Aged, the Detention Home for Colored Girls, and Meharry Medical College and Hospital were centers for social service attack."[29] The new seminary library, the T. L. Holcomb Library, was built in 1953-1954.

American Baptist Theological Seminary, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Nashville Student Movement

In 1954, the year of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, coincided with the seminary's 30th anniversary. With a renovated Griggs Hall joined by the recent Lawrence Administration Building (1947) and the new Holcomb Library (1954), the campus had reached a new plateau in its development. For the next seven years this small red-brick campus in North Nashville became a center for Civil Rights activism. Within the buildings and landscape of ABTS, individuals gathered and were educated in Christian principles of equality and peace. Teachers such as Kelly Miller Smith encouraged students to be leaders within the community, particularly within the Nashville Student Movement and sit-ins of 1960. Four of these students in particular, John Lewis, James Bevel, Bernard Lafayette, and C.T. Vivian, stood out within the Nashville movement and later went on to influence the Civil Rights Movement on the national scale. While most of the events of the Nashville Student Movement took place downtown, ABTS provided these leaders the foundation on which to base their efforts for equality.

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[27] *Ibid.*, 62.
[28] "Report of a Survey Conducted by the Joint Survey Commission of the Baptist Inter-Convention Committee, 1951," cited in Powell, 66.
[29] *Ibid.*, 70.

Rev. Kelly Miller Smith (1920-1984) was the first nationally significant Civil Rights leader to be associated with the campus, being named to the seminary's board of trustees in 1954. Smith was born in 1920 in the black community of Mound Bayou, Mississippi to Terry Monroe and Priscilla Anderson Smith. He graduated from Magnolia High School in Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1938. For two years Smith lived in Nashville, studying music at Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School (now Tennessee State University; Tennessee State University Historic District, NR 6/14/96). However, he decided to transfer to Morehouse College in Atlanta in 1940, where he studied both music and religion. Smith continued his education at Howard Divinity School in Washington, D.C., and received his Master's degree in 1945. Following his graduation, Smith moved back to Mississippi to pastor the Mount Heroden Baptist Church in Vicksburg, a position he held until 1951. During this time Smith also became involved in higher education. From 1946 – 1948 he served as the head of the religion department at Natchez College in Natchez, Mississippi.[30]

In 1951 Smith returned to Nashville to pastor the First Baptist Colored Church now known as the First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill where he stayed for the remainder of his career. The church was popular among Nashville's middle-class black community. John Lewis attributes this directly to Smith's preaching: "students and faculty from the surrounding universities, doctors, lawyers, private businessmen and –women all filled the church's old wooden pews each Sunday to hear the words of one of the most impressive speakers I had ever listened to, the Reverend Kelly Miller Smith."[31] That same year, Smith joined the ABTS seminary's executive committee, *Ebony* magazine recognized him as one of ten "Great Negro Preachers." Despite not having the same national recognition as many of the others on the list, Smith performed surprisingly well in the poll deciding the honor.[32] Praise for Smith included recognition of "his deep knowledge of human nature and his appreciation of man's weaknesses as well as his strength."[33]

In addition to his ministerial activities as pastor of First Baptist Church, Smith was also involved in the black Nashville community as a member of the Nashville chapter of the NAACP. In 1955 Smith was part of a group of twelve black Nashville parents who sued the city to integrate schools in the wake of the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. The lawsuit led to the development of the "Nashville Plan," a slow integration of the schools each year by grade level. One of Smith's five children, Joy Smith, was among the first group of black students to integrate schools in Nashville. In September 1957, at six years old, she was one of a small group of black students who attended an integrated first grade.[34] In 1956 Smith took over as president of the NAACP in Nashville. Under his leadership the chapter undertook a voter registration drive, enrolling over 5,000 new voters.[35] In addition to his work with the NAACP, Smith was involved in organizing the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC). From 1957 to 1969 he served in

[30] Rice, Leila Meier. "'A Different Kind of Prophet': The Role of Kelly Miller Smith in the Nashville Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1960" MA Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1991, 5.
[31] John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 82.
[32] "Great Negro Preachers," *Ebony* (Vol. 9, no. 9, 26-30), 30.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] Bobby L. Lovett, *The Civil Rights Movement in Tennessee: A Narrative History* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 55.
[35] Rice, "A Different Kind of Prophet", 7.

various capacities on the organization's executive board and also helped form the first regional chapter of SCLC, the Nashville Christian Leadership Council (NCLC) with C.T. Vivian, an older student at the seminary. Smith served as the first president of NCLC and wrote the organization's first "Statement of Purpose and Principles":

> If we are to see the real downfall of segregation and discrimination it will be because of a disciplined Negro Christian movement which breaks the antiquated methods of resolving our fears and tensions and dramatically applies the gospel we profess.[36]

In his leadership roles in the SCLC and NCLC would be where Smith had the most impact on the racial segregation in Nashville. Introducing Reverend James Lawson (a teacher who had studied Ghandian nonviolence in India and who was personally chosen by Martin Luther King, Jr. to train would-be Civil Rights leaders in nonviolence) to members of NCLC and others in the black community, Smith shaped the initial meetings that led to the Nashville sit-ins. Moreover, he served as a liaison between the student movement in Nashville and the older civil rights groups.

While a board member at ABTS, Smith was also a financial supporter of the school. During the 1955 school year, they had to rely almost entirely on donations to operate. To raise money directly from churches, the One-Hundred Memorial Club was started. Smith is listed as one of the first ministers to sign on and support the program.[37]

Between 1958 and 1962, Smith taught homiletics, the study of composing sermons, at American Baptist Theological Seminary. According to John Lewis: "This was Reverend Smith's forte – how to organize a sermon, how to build it, brick by brick, testing and stretching concepts and ideas, using logic and dialogue for the purposes of power and persuasion."[38] He also occasionally taught a class on Howard Thurman, a Black theologian who applied the Social Gospel Movement in the black context, addressing the racial oppression faced by the black community that was ignored by Walter Rauschenbusch and other theologians.[39] While Smith and others involved in the Civil Rights Movement embraced this theology, it was not without controversy. Many ministers continued to believe that religion should focus on the afterlife rather than on the earthly concerns of its people. Lewis recalls that there was a divide among seminary students as to whether the Social Gospel was useful or important. James Bevel, who would later take on an active role in the Movement famously asked Lewis why he was "always preaching this *social* gospel and not the *Gospel* Gospel?"[40] Smith's influence over students like Lewis cannot be underestimated. In addition to his teaching, Smith took an interest in ensuring the personal growth of the students. He mentored them and

[36] Lewis, *Walking with the Wind,* 82.
[37] Powell, *Lights and Shadows,* 82.
[38] *Ibid.*, 83.
[39] Barry Everett Lee, "The Nashville Civil Rights Movement: A Study of the Phenomenon of Intentional Leadership Development and its Consequences for Local Movements and the National Civil Rights Movement," PhD Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2010, 59.
[40] Lewis, *Walking with the Wind,* 74.

treated them as equals in the movement. He convinced other adults in the movement to do the same, fostering cooperation between the two groups. This group cohesion helped the movement succeed. The Social Gospel was the grounding for the Nashville Civil Rights Movement and both the students and adults involved carried this spirit and strategy into the national movement.

When it was first formed in 1958, NCLC did not have any distinct projects to direct their attention. The group sponsored a voter registration drive and was involved in several other projects with other rights' groups. This changed when Smith introduced Lawson to NCLC and Lawson along with Glenn Smiley began holding workshops on nonviolence at Clark Memorial United Methodist Church in North Nashville. These workshops began in the fall of 1959 and attracted primarily students from ABTS and Fisk University. They were coordinated in preparation for the downtown sit-ins and "led directly to the organization of the 'Nashville Student Movement' and the student sit-ins."[41] Smith announced the workshops to his congregation at Sunday services and recruited his student John Lewis to attend. Other ABTS students including Bernard Lafayette and James Bevel would eventually become regular attendees of the workshops. While Lewis looks fondly on Smith and the class he took with him, he attributes Smith's introduction of Lawson to have had the biggest impact on him and his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement.[42] After the sit-ins began, in April of 1960 the organizing conference of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was held at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. James Lawson and Martin Luther King, Jr., served as the keynote speakers, while Bernard Lafayette, James Bevel, and John Lewis were in attendance.[43]

Rev. Cordy Tindell (C. T.) Vivian is the second national Civil Rights leader who attended the seminary after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the addition of Rev. Kelly Miller Smith to its board of trustees. Vivian attended the seminary from 1955 to 1960 and received a Bachelors Degree of Theology. As one of the founding members of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council (NCLC), Vivian was instrumental in the planning and implementation of the Nashville sit-in movement beginning in the fall of 1959 while a seminary student. Following the success of the sit-ins, Vivian continued working with the Nashville Civil Rights campaign. In addition, Vivian became a leader in the National Civil Rights Movement as a bus rider on the Freedom Rides, in organizing campaigns in Birmingham, Alabama, and eventually formalizing his leadership as the National Director of Affiliates for the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) using the training and experience gained during the Nashville movement. In this position, Vivian was involved in nearly all of the major campaigns of the Civil Rights Movement including those in St. Augustine, Florida and Selma, Alabama.[44]

Vivian came to American Baptist Theological Seminary as a Civil Rights veteran. In 1942 he graduated from Macomb High School, Illinois, and enrolled in Western Illinois University. After encountering racism in both the Sociology and English departments at the college, Vivian dropped out and moved to Peoria, Illinois.

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[41] David E. Sumner, "The Publisher and the Preacher: Racial Conflict at Vanderbilt University," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 56 (Spring 1997): 35.
[42] Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, 83.
[43] Sumner, 35.
[44] Pam Adams, "Changing the Nation" *Peoria Journal Star* October 24, 1999.

In Peoria he worked at the Carver Community Center where he met his wife Octavia Geans. In 1947 Vivian participated in sit-ins to desegregate local restaurants in Peoria organized by his friend Ben Alexander. This was Vivian's first exposure to nonviolent action. The sit-ins did not garner much attention, but only because they were successful in ending segregation in Peoria restaurants and encountered little resistance. In 1953, Vivian was elected vice president of the local NAACP chapter. [45]

While working at the mail-order company Foster & Gallagher, Vivian felt called to the ministry. In 1954, he found a job preaching at Peoria's Mount Zion Baptist Church. Financial assistance from his employer and the church allowed him to move to Nashville to attend American Baptist Theological Seminary in 1955. Once arriving in the city, as he worked on his bachelor's degree, Vivian found a job as pastor at the First Community Church in Nashville and also served as an editor of the National Baptist Sunday School Publishing Board of the National Baptist Convention. He resigned from this position on the publishing board after they refused to print an interview he conducted with Martin Luther King, Jr.[46] Vivian was almost arrested for refusing to move to the back of a Nashville Transit Authority Bus in 1956. Although the bus driver drove him to the police station, because the city was actually in process of integrating the bus system, officers declined to arrest him.[47]

As a student at American Baptist, Vivian helped to organize the Nashville Christian Leadership Council (NCLC) along with Reverend Kelly Miller Smith, pastor at First Colored Baptist Church (now First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill).[48] Vivian served as the group's vice president in 1958.[49] Although it is unclear if Vivian ever took a class with Smith, Vivian likely met him at ABTS where Smith taught homiletics part-time. Vivian was one of the regular attendees at the workshops on nonviolent resistance Smith sponsored in conjunction with Reverend James Lawson. In addition to training in nonviolence, Vivian often spoke at the meetings about the problems facing the black community. The workshops, in conjunction with community meetings, led to the decision to pursue downtown lunch counter desegregation. As part of NCLC, Vivian was instrumental in the planning and execution of the sit-ins. As an older ABTS student, he helped to bring the students and older civil rights activists together. He joined Smith and other NCLC members in meeting with the downtown store managers to ask them to voluntarily desegregate before the sit-ins were staged.[50] After black lawyer Alexander Looby's home was bombed in 1960, Vivian, still a student at ABTS, along with the student central committee (as the group of students who attended Lawson's workshops called themselves) helped to organize a silent march from Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial University (now Tennessee State University) to Nashville's City Hall. The silent march was reported at the time to consist of approximately two thousand people, although Vivian estimates that the true number was closer to four or five thousand. [51] At the end of the march, Vivian and Diane Nash famously confronted Nashville's Mayor

[45] *Ibid.*
[46] Lee, "The Nashville Civil Rights Movement", 69.
[47] Halberstam, *The Children,* 57-58.
[48] Powell, *Lights and Shadows*, 93.
[49] Lydia Walker, *Challenge and Change: The Story of Civil Rights Activist C.T. Vivian* (Georgia: W.H. Wolfe Associates, 1993), 26.
[50] Lewis, *Walking with the Wind,* 90.
[51] Lee, "The Nashville Civil Rights Movement", 214.

Ben West about whether he believed the lunch counters should be desegregated. Nash eventually got the mayor to admit that he believed they should be integrated leading to the official integration of the six downtown facilities in May 1960.[52]

Even as the lunch counter sit-ins wound down, as vice-president of NCLC, Vivian continued planning action campaigns in Nashville including stand-ins at local movie theaters. Along with this, Vivian volunteered to be part of the Freedom Rides. Joining the rides in May 1961 for the Montgomery, Alabama to Jackson, Mississippi leg of the trip, Vivian was arrested in Jackson along with the other riders.[53] Later that year, Vivian moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee, to become the pastor of Cosmopolitan Community Church. While in Chattanooga, Vivian was the president of the Chattanooga Voters Council in 1962 and was that State Executive Committeeman of the Tennessee Voters Council. The Chattanooga Voters Council worked to increase the number of registered voters in the city and also worked to improve employment opportunities for the African American community.[54] Vivian has continued to work as a community activist, most recently rejoining SCLC as Vice President.[55]

If Smith and Vivian were the older, experienced voices for Civil Rights at American Baptist Theological Seminary in the late 1950s, their impact would have been far less without the dedicated devotion of the younger seminary students Bernard LaFayette, John Lewis, and James Bevel. The ABTS students were different from the Fisk and Meharry students who attended Rev. James Lawson's non-violent workshops of the late 1950s. ABTS was a deeply impoverished institution, and its students were generally much poorer and from more rural backgrounds than students at other institutions. Despite the poverty of their finances, the professors and students shared a deep faith and commitment to learning.[56] Bernard Lafayette and John Lewis were among Lawson's earliest converts among the seminarians, and they brought along a more skeptical James Bevel whose early attendance was due less to genuine interest and more to his role as chauffeur to Lafayette and Lewis.[57] These three, who had overcome so much in simply getting to American Baptist, possessed an inner strength that made them perfect partners for Lawson as he moved forward with a plan for challenging segregation in Nashville.

Dr. Bernard Lafayette, Jr. (1940--) graduated from high school in Tampa and felt called to attend ABTS over other educational opportunities, including a scholarship to Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee. Like many other students, he worked his way through school, serving as a janitor at the seminary, washing dishes at a downtown restaurant, gardening for several black and white families, and helping out around Dr. Kelly Miller Smith's house. In addition to his coursework, he also made time to attend Reverend Jim Lawson's nonviolence seminars.[58]

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[52] Lewis, *Walking With the Wind,* 116.
[53] Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*, Pivotal Moments in American History (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 261, 279.
[54] Walker, *Challenge and* Change, 41.
[55] "Former Peoria Civil Rights veteran named VP of SCLC," *Peoria Journal Star,* January 8, 2012.
[56] Halberstam, *The Children*, 64-65.
[57] *Ibid.*, 69-70.
[58] *Ibid.*, 71.

While at the seminary, Lafayette became fast friends with John Lewis, who introduced him to Lawson's workshops. Lafayette and Lewis also recruited James Bevel, who was a bit older and more skeptical but owned a car and could ferry them all back and forth to the workshops.[59] The training with Lawson and a weekend session with Myles Horton at Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee, cemented Lafayette's commitment both to the struggle and nonviolence.[60] Lafayette and Lewis, eager to test the waters, integrated a bus themselves on their way home for Christmas 1959. Lafayette sat behind the driver, and Lewis a few rows back on the opposite side. Despite the vocal opposition of the driver and threats to alert the KKK, both men arrived in Troy, Alabama, where they would part ways, unharmed. The experience left them both exhilarated and outraged, and eager to begin working on the Movement in earnest.[61]

When Lafayette returned to Nashville for the start of term in 1960, he continued to attend Lawson's meetings. On February 27, 1960, he, Lewis, Bevel, and Diane Nash and Paul LaPrad of Fisk University began the first sit-ins in Nashville. At six different stores, they walked in and calmly took seats at the lunch counters. They were denied service, and white mobs grew, hurling abuse at the protestors who, thanks to their nonviolence training and preparation, did not respond. They left quietly when arrested for disorderly conduct, and refused to post bail or pay fines, content to remain in jail, straining the city's resources. The sit-ins continued and eventually snowballed into a boycott of the downtown. The boycott was political on behalf of the black citizens who refused to shop where they did not receive full service and whites who feared the violent activities of protestors.[62]

Following the successful silent march in May 1960 that ended with Mayor Ben West's announcement that the six downtown facilities would integrate, Lafayette joined with a group of students who elected to drop out of school in 1961 to continue working for Civil Rights.[63] Lafayette was part of the core group that founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which went on to do grassroots civil rights work across the South. Lafayette took part in the Freedom Rides, keeping up the tradition he and Lewis had begun with their bus boycott in 1959, though Lafayette was beaten badly by a group of Klansmen this time and jailed for his efforts.

In 1962, Lafayette headed back to Nashville to continue his education at ABTS. Like Lewis, however, he elected to attend Fisk, where he was offered a full scholarship and transfer of his credits from American Baptist, which was not an accredited university. Lafayette found himself restless and unable to concentrate after the excitement of his more activist role, and soon left Fisk for the Atlanta headquarters of SNCC.[64] Lafayette decided that he was ready to direct a project for SNCC, but the leadership claimed that they had no directorships available, so Lafayette pressed them and volunteered to go work in Selma, Alabama, on the

[59] *Ibid.*, 70.
[60] Arsenault, *Freedom Riders,* 105.
[61] *Ibid.*, 105-106.
[62] Henry Hampton and Julian Bond. *Eyes on the Prize. America's Civil Rights Movement Vol. 2, Ain't Scared of Your Jails (1960-1961)*, PBS Video, 2006.
[63] Leon E. Frazier, "Civil Rights Icon Dr. Bernard LaFayette 4 - YouTube", n.d., retrieved on November 20, 2012, from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRDTdg_SWuk&feature=relmfu.
[64] Halberstam, *The Children*, 410-411.

voter registration effort. Two previous SNCC delegations had gone to Selma and reported that there was no chance for the movement to succeed there because, "the black folks are too afraid, and the white folks are too mean." Lafayette stepped up to the challenge, and began his trip in Tuskegee, where he researched for a week to figure out the best approach in Selma. He eventually met up with Mrs. Amelia Boynton, who hosted him in Selma and along with Miss Marie Foster, convinced Lafayette to begin work in Selma.[65] He served as the director for SNCC Alabama Voter Registration Project starting in 1962, and he and his wife Colia began their voter registration clinics in February 1963.[66]

It was in this work that Lafayette found his niche. He succeeded in laying the groundwork for the arrival of Dr. King and the SCLC delegation in Selma (which included his old friend from American Baptist, John Lewis). Lafayette enjoyed the behind-the-scenes work of the Movement, and went on to fulfill a similar role in the Chicago Movement.[67] Lafayette and his wife were hired by the American Friends Service Committee to begin testing nonviolent methods in Chicago, and they were still there in 1966 when Martin Luther King appointed him to plan and execute the SCLC's direct action program in Chicago.[68] King hired him as the SCLC's program coordinator in 1967, and he took over the 1968 Poor People's Campaign, and remained there working with Ralph Abernathy following King's assassination.[69] Lafayette's relationship with Colia had deteriorated over philosophical differences, and they split up in 1967. Lafayette used this time to complete his degree at American Baptist College in 1967.[70]

In 1987, Lafayette returned to ABTS, by then renamed American Baptist College (ABC), as vice president of academic affairs. After five years in that role, he took over as president in 1992. While President of American Baptist College, Lafayette started a number of programs. He worked to continue the historic legacy of leadership from ABC's early days of providing church and Civil Rights leaders, and founded youth outreach programs to encourage young people to stay in school and embrace their history. Under his leadership, ABC also made an effort to extend its services in the form of adult education for those who dropped out or never attended college.[71] Lafayette believes that ABC, despite its size, placed more people on Martin Luther King's executive staff than any other college.[72]

Of the five American Baptist-associated Civil Rights leaders, Rep. John Lewis of Georgia is the most famous. Born February 21, 1940 in Troy, Alabama, Lewis attended Dunn's Chapel Elementary School (not extant), the same Rosenwald School his parents and grandparents attended in their youth.[73] Lewis' passion

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[65] Leon E. Frazier, "Civil Rights Icon Dr. Bernard LaFayette 4 - YouTube."
[66] "Lafayette, Bernard (1940- )," *King Encyclopedia*, n.d., retrieved on November 20, 2012, from http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/about_king/encyclopedia/lafayette_bernard.html.
[67] James Haney, "American Baptist College, BLaFayette1 - YouTube", 1993, retrieved on November 20, 2012, from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghp_unrGe5o.
[68] "Lafayette, Bernard (1940- )."
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] Halberstam, *The Children*, 562.
[71] James Haney, "American Baptist College, BLaFayette1 - YouTube."
[72] Halberstam, *The Children*, 658.
[73] Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, 44.

for education propelled him toward higher education, but lack of financial resources constricted his options. Lewis' mother discovered a pamphlet for ABTS, at the local National Baptist Convention-operated orphanage where she laundered for extra income.[74]

Lewis arrived at ABTS in September 1957 to begin his college career.[75] Lewis was a shy young man as well as one of the youngest students at ABTS where the curriculum centered on religion and philosophy.[76] Lewis lived in the Griggs Hall dormitory. Living on campus provided Lewis deepened fellowship and late night opportunities for improvised preaching among colleagues.[77] In exchange for room and board he worked on campus in the seminary kitchens washing dishes three times a day.[78] He also attended chapel three times a day.

Lewis' activism began early in his educational career. During his first year at the seminary, Lewis applied to start a chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) on campus; however, the ABTS President Dr. Maynard P. Turner Jr. denied the request under pressure from the white Southern Baptist Convention.[79] That same year, Lewis applied to transfer to Troy State University in hopes of integrating the student body. He successfully enlisted the assistance of Attorney Fred Gray, Reverend Ralph Abernathy, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; ultimately, the pressure on and danger to his family put an end to this first campaign.[80] But Lewis' commitment to equality did not falter. From his earliest years at ABTS, Lewis distinguished between the "social gospel" and the "gospel gospel."[81] Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached the social gospel, in which Christian principles of acceptance and love shape society on earth.
As a leader in the Nashville Student Movement, Lewis participated in the initial "tests" to gauge Nashville's racial climate. Lewis was one of the *first* students to attend workshops sponsored by Jim Lawson in Nashville regarding non-violent protest methodologies. Lawson's work and methodologies offered Lewis, one of the first ABTS students who joined, an application and channel through which to work for the social gospel.

The students selected Lewis as one of the leaders for the first wave of lunch counter protests where his group was stationed at Woolworth's. As leader, Lewis acted as spokesperson for the protestors and monitored the well-being of the other group members. This responsibility required Lewis to communicate with store management while also maintaining the morale and nonviolent efforts of his fellow protesters.
During spring break of the 1960 school year, Lewis along with other students from the Nashville Student Movement created the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in response to appeals from traditional leaders that the students join the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). These young leaders chose to form their own organization to continue employing Lawson's nonviolent methods

[74] *Ibid.*, 63.
[75] *Ibid.*, 69.
[76] *Ibid.*, 71.
[77] *Ibid.*, 73.
[78] *Ibid.*, 71.
[79] *Ibid.*, 75.
[80] *Ibid.*, 79.
[81] *Ibid.*, 74

rather than wait for change through the United States judicial system.[82] The SNCC statement of purpose states, "We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action."[83]

The Nashville Student Movement accomplished lunch counter integration in May 1960. That same year, the Nashville Student Movement elected Lewis chair of the organization. The success of the Nashville sit-ins provided a catalyst for similar efforts in other southern cities. ABTS students such as Lewis continued their studies while also promulgating the nonviolent protests. Unlike other college presidents in Nashville, Dr. Turner of ABTS refused to expel students arrested in the sit-ins.[84] The skills students earned at ABTS as well as the support of the seminary equipped advocates like Lewis for peaceful protests grounded in Christian ideologies. Lewis attributes the integration successes in Nashville to the "discipline and care used to approach the demonstrations."[85]

ABTS bestowed a Bachelor's of Arts degree, major in Bible, on Lewis at the conclusion of the spring 1961 academic year.[86] After three successful academic years at ABTS, Lewis missed his graduation ceremony to be one of the first Freedom Riders. The Freedom Rides represent a turning point in the Civil Rights movement. The publicity garnered from the peaceful protesters and violent segregationists spurred increased involvement in the movement and forced the federal government to respond.[87]

The Nashville Student Movement played an integral role in the campaign's ultimate accomplishments. Lewis served as a leader during the rides surviving segregationist mob attacks, beatings, and multiple incarcerations. After his time in Nashville ended, Lewis was elected President of SNCC. He later served as a city councilman of Atlanta and since 1986 serves as a Congressman of Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives.

James Bevel (1936-2008) was from Itta Bena, Mississippi. Bevel's parents were divorced so he spent his childhood living in both Mississippi and Cleveland, Ohio.[88] Bevel served from 1954 to 1955 in the U.S. Naval Reserve.[89] After reading Leo Tolstoy, a gift from a fellow serviceman, and following the "call" he received from God, Bevel concluded his military service on nonviolent principles.[90] Bevel saved for his

[82] *Ibid.*, 115.
[83] Peter B. Levy, ed. "SNCC Statement of Purpose," April 1960," in *Let Freedom Ring: A Documentary History of the Modern Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Praeger, 1992), 74.
[84] Lovett, *The Civil Rights Movement in Tennessee*, 127.
[85] Lewis, *Walking with the Wind,* 178.
[86] Powell, *Lights and Shadows,* 96.
[87] Lewis, *Walking with the Wind,* 178.
[88] *Ibid.*, 70.
[89] "James Luther Bevel," *Encyclopedia World Biography*, (Thomson Gale, 2005) on Book Rags Web site, retrieved July 27, 2012, from http://www.bookrags.com/biography/james-luther-bevel/ .
[90] Halberstam, *The Children*, 100.

Christian education and served as a young pastor at the Chestnut Grove Baptist Church in Dickson, Tennessee, to further fund the endeavor.[91]

Bevel arrived at ABTS as a student in January 1957. Bevel lived on campus in Griggs Hall where, on late nights, students listened to famed preachers such as Reverend C.L. Franklin of Detroit and Caesar Clarke of Dallas on the radio. In addition, late night gatherings offered students opportunities for improvised preaching in the name of coursework and for professional development.[92]

John Lewis described Bevel as a talented preacher focused on the traditional gospel.[93] Bevel said, "I was overwhelmed by my own need for redemption, the need for man to turn his life over to God, and to seek and parallel the life of Christ."[94] Further, Lewis described Bevel as the student leader and brotherly mentor of the 1957 class.[95] Bevel had a strong, melodious singing voice, which he would later wield as a tool for protest.

Initially Bevel's participation in the Nashville non-violent workshops was sporadic. His dedication, however, increased dramatically after attending the Highlander Folk School in the fall of 1958 under Myles Horton where he accepted the nonviolent revolution of the Civil Rights Movement in a racially mixed classroom setting.[96]

Bevel was ordained a Baptist minister in 1959.[97] ABTS bestowed a Bachelor's of Arts degree, major in Bible, on Bevel at the conclusion of the spring 1961 academic year.[98] That same year, the Nashville Student Movement elected Bevel chair of the organization. The success of the Nashville sit-ins provided a catalyst for similar efforts in other southern cities in no small part due to the efforts of the ABTS-educated believers in Christian principles of equality and peace. Although the school did not directly train these students to participate in the protests, ABTS provided a place for these students to nurture their beliefs as they became leaders in the movement. The organization's celebration, however, would not last long due to the violent response to the Freedom Rides. In 1962, Bevel joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) as the Mississippi Field Secretary. Later, Bevel served as the director of the "Alabama Project," a statewide SCLC voter registration drive. Bevel left SCLC in 1967 to join the anti-Vietnam War movement.

For Smith, Vivian, Lewis, LaFayette, and Bevel, ABTS provided a foundation of Christian education and fellowship that fostered their lifelong dedication to nonviolent philosophies. The Social Gospel Movement fueled their commitment to racial equality in American society through work outside the ABTS campus.

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[91] Helen L. Edmond, *Advocate for the People's Rights: James Luther Bevel: The Right to Vote Movement* (Chicago: Edmond Publications, 2007),1.
[92] Lewis, *Walking with the Wind,* 73.
[93] *Ibid.*, 74.
[94] Halberstam, *The Children,* 98.
[95] Lewis, *Walking with the Wind,* 5.
[96] *Ibid.*, 89.
[97] "James Luther Bevel," *Encyclopedia World Biography.*
[98] Powell, *Lights and Shadows,* 96.

Starting with Smith's mentorship, the Nashville network of activists grew beyond the classroom and friendships forged in Griggs Hall to include students on other campuses. Unlike other African-American students in Nashville, ABTS seminarians were mostly from poor, rural America. Yet, in the Nashville Civil Rights Movement they became prominent leaders and garnered greater community influence than expected from such an impoverished institution. Ultimately, they were among the most significant individuals in this movement that reshaped the nation.

Following their time at ABTS these men continued to work for racial justice on the national stage. They met in the unassuming three brick buildings that serve as the historic core of ABTS and became, literally, brothers in arms. Despite hardships in its early history, this institution proved to be a cradle of African-American Baptist education drawing students from several surrounding regions. American Baptist Theological Seminary became American Baptist College in 1971, the first African-American Bible College to be accredited by the Association of Biblical Higher Education.[99] ABTS deserves recognition, albeit belated, of its significance in shaping the modern Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

[99] Steve Hoskins, "American Baptist Theological Seminary," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, On-line Edition,* (University of Tennessee Press, 2002---), retrieved on November 20, 2012.

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| **Previous documentation on file (NPS):** | | **Primary location of additional data:** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested) | X | State Historic Preservation Office |
| | previously listed in the National Register | | Other State agency |
| | previously determined eligible by the National Register | | Federal agency |
| | designated a National Historic Landmark | | Local government |
| | recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # | X | University |
| | recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # | X | Other |
| | recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # | Name of repository: American Baptist College; MTSU Center for Historic Preservation | |
| Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): | | | |

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Approx. 6.65 **USGS Quadrangle** Nashville West 308 NE

(Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates. Delete the other.)

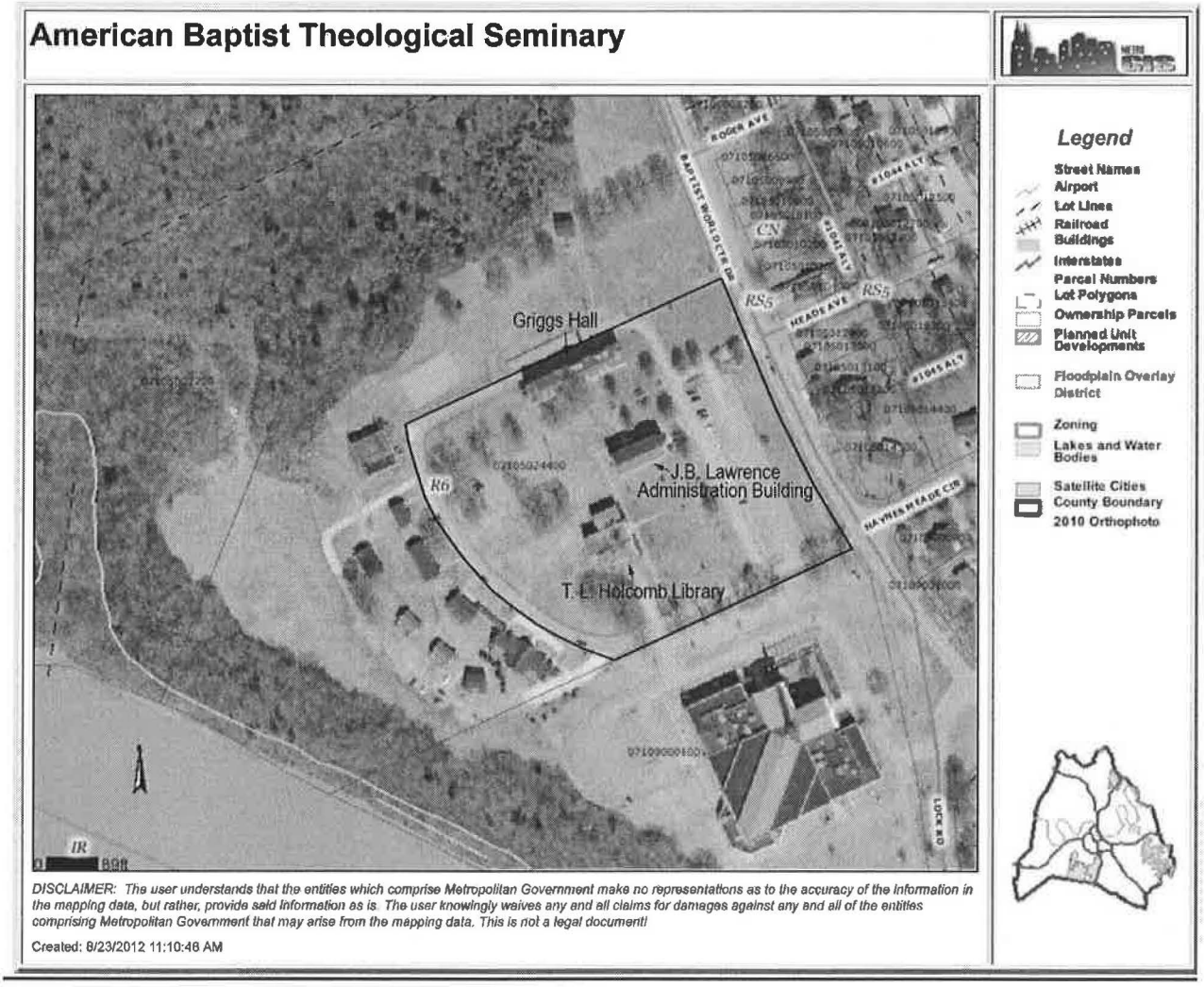
**UTM References**
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 16S Easting: 518872 Northing: 4006419

**Verbal Boundary Description**
The nominated property includes approximately 6.65 acres of the American Baptist College 16.44-acre parcel. The nominated 6.65 acres is located in the southeast corner of parcel 07105024400 as identified on the attached Davidson County Tax Map. The American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District sits on the west side of and is accessed from Baptist World Center Drive, which forms the eastern boundary of the nominated district. Haynes Meade Circle surrounds the historic core and roughly forms the south, west, and north boundaries. At the northeast corner of the district, the boundary extends beyond Haynes Meade Circle to encompass a stone wall historically associated with ABTS.

**Boundary Justification**
The nominated acreage is bounded by Baptist World Center Drive on the east and an encircling drive on the south, west, and north. The nominated acreage includes the extant historic core of the American Baptist Theological Seminary campus. A 1948 rough-cut stone central heating plant sits just outside the boundaries at the northwest corner of the district. The plant is no longer in use and is in poor condition. As such, it is not included within the nominated property.


American Baptist Theological Seminary
Griggs Hall
J.B. Lawrence Administration Building
T. L. Holcomb Library
BAPTIST WORLD CTR DR
ROGER AVE
HIGH ALY
HEADE AVE
HAYNES MEADE CIR
LOCK RD
RS5
R6
CN
IR
0 800ft
Legend
Street Names
Airport
Lot Lines
Railroad
Buildings
Interstates
Parcel Numbers
Lot Polygons
Ownership Parcels
Planned Unit Developments
Floodplain Overlay District
Zoning
Lakes and Water Bodies
Satellite Cities
County Boundary
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## 11. Form Prepared By


| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name | Carroll Van West, Elizabeth Humphreys, Amber Clawson, Jessica French, Abigail Gautreau | | |
| Organization | Center for Historic Preservation | | |
| Street & Number | MTSU Box 80 | Date | September 20, 2012 |
| City or Town | Murfreesboro | Telephone | 615-898-2947 |
| E-mail | Elizabeth.Humphreys@mtsu.edu | State TN | Zip Code 37132 |


**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 map.
- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints)
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. should be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps)

**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.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District
City or Vicinity: Nashville
County: Davidson State: Tennessee
Photographer: Elizabeth Humphreys
Date Photographed: March 2012

1 of 31. Main Entrance. Photographer facing west.

2 of 31. Griggs Hall, south façade. Photographer facing north.

3 of 31. Griggs Hall, south façade of original building. Photographer facing northwest.

4 of 31. Griggs Hall, detail of entrance on south façade. Photographer facing north.

5 of 31. Griggs Hall, south façade of addition. Photographer facing north.

6 of 31. Griggs Hall, east elevation. Photographer facing west.

7 of 31. Griggs Hall, north elevation. Photographer facing southwest.

8 of 31. Griggs Hall, north elevation. Photographer facing southeast.

9 of 31. Griggs Hall, west elevation. Photographer facing east.

10 of 31. Griggs Hall, interior. Lobby of original 1924 building. Photographer facing northeast.

11 of 31. Griggs Hall, interior. Example of intact dormitory room in northeast corner of first floor. Photographer facing northeast.

12 of 31. J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, north façade. Photographer facing southwest.

13 of 31. J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, north façade. Photographer facing south.

14 of 31. J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, detail of entrance on north façade. Photographer facing south.

15 of 31. J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, west elevation. Photographer facing east.

16 of 31. J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, south elevation. Photographer facing north.

17 of 31. J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, east elevation. Photographer facing west.

18 of 31. J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, interior. Main stair hall from north façade entrance. Photographer facing south.

19 of 31. J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, interior. First floor hall. Photographer facing east.

20 of 31. T.L. Holcomb Library, east façade. Photographer facing west.

21 of 31. T.L. Holcomb Library, detail of entrance on east façade. Photographer facing west.

22 of 31. T.L. Holcomb Library, south elevation. Photographer facing north.

23 of 31. T.L. Holcomb Library, west elevation. Photographer facing east.

24 of 31. T.L. Holcomb Library, north elevation. Photographer facing south.

25 of 31. T.L. Holcomb Library, interior. Main lobby toward chapel. Photographer facing north.

26 of 31. T.L. Holcomb Library, interior. Chapel. Photographer facing east.

27 of 31. T.L. Holcomb Library, interior. Rear wing stacks. Photographer facing northwest.

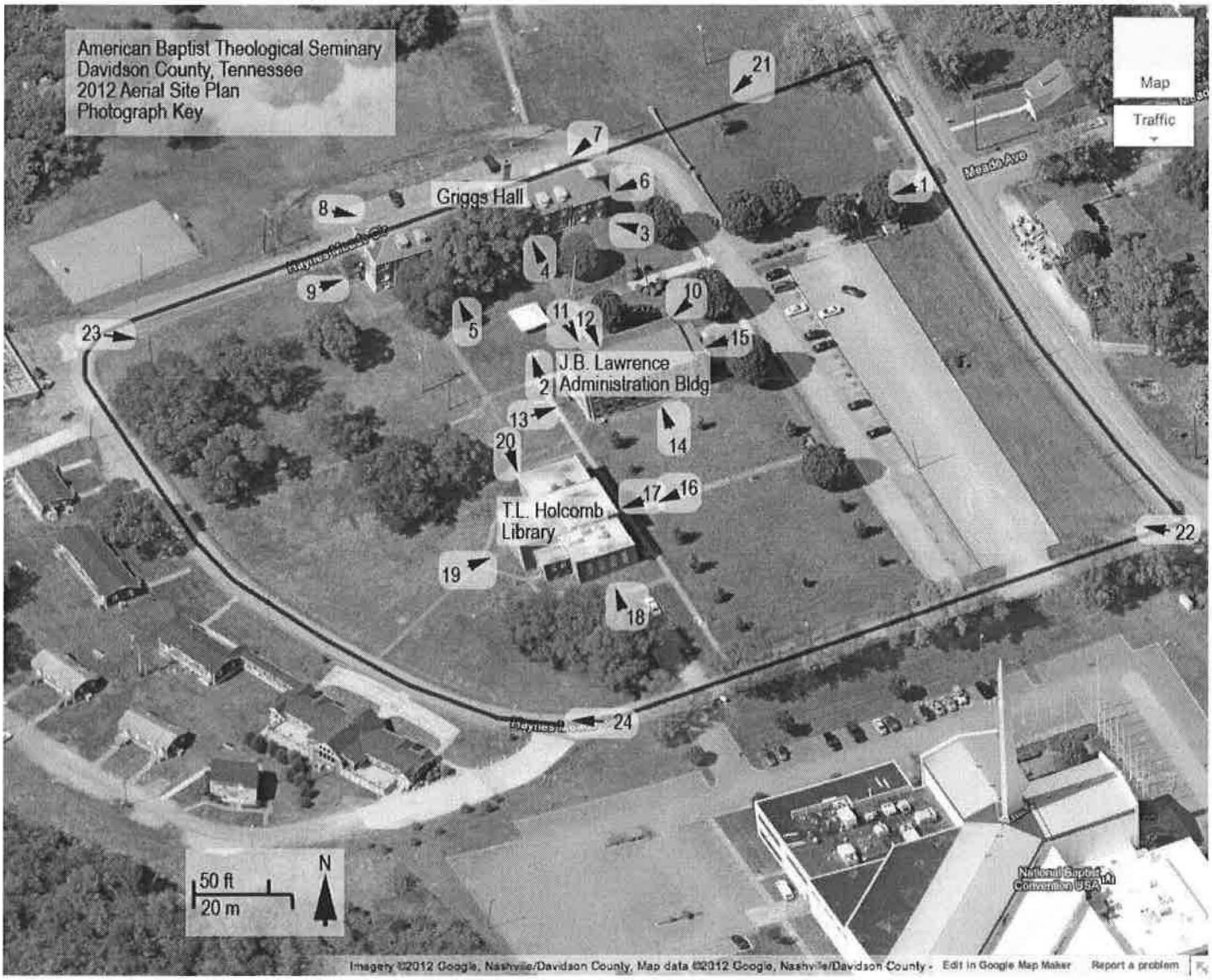
28 of 31. Campus view from northeast corner. Photographer facing southwest.

29 of 31. Campus view from southeast corner. Photographer facing northwest.

30 of 31. Campus view from northwest corner. Photographer facing southeast.

31 of 31. View of modern structures on western portion of campus toward Cumberland River. Photographer facing west.

## Site Plan


American Baptist Theological Seminary
Davidson County, Tennessee
2012 Aerial Site Plan
Photograph Key
Map
Traffic
Griggs Hall
J.B. Lawrence
Administration Bldg
T.L. Holcomb
Library
Meade Ave
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Imagery ©2012 Google, Nashville/Davidson County, Map data ©2012 Google, Nashville/Davidson County - Edit in Google Map Maker Report a problem

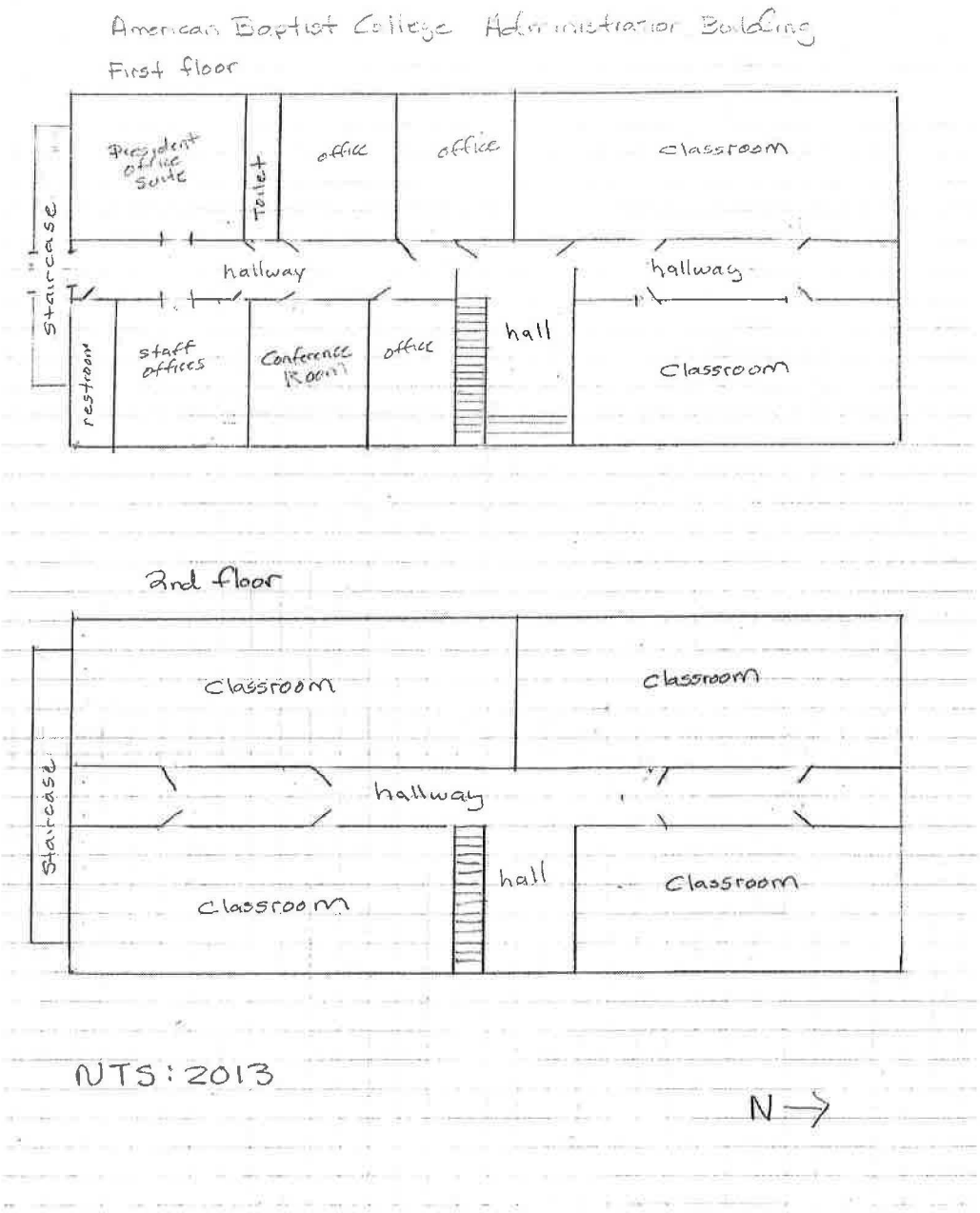
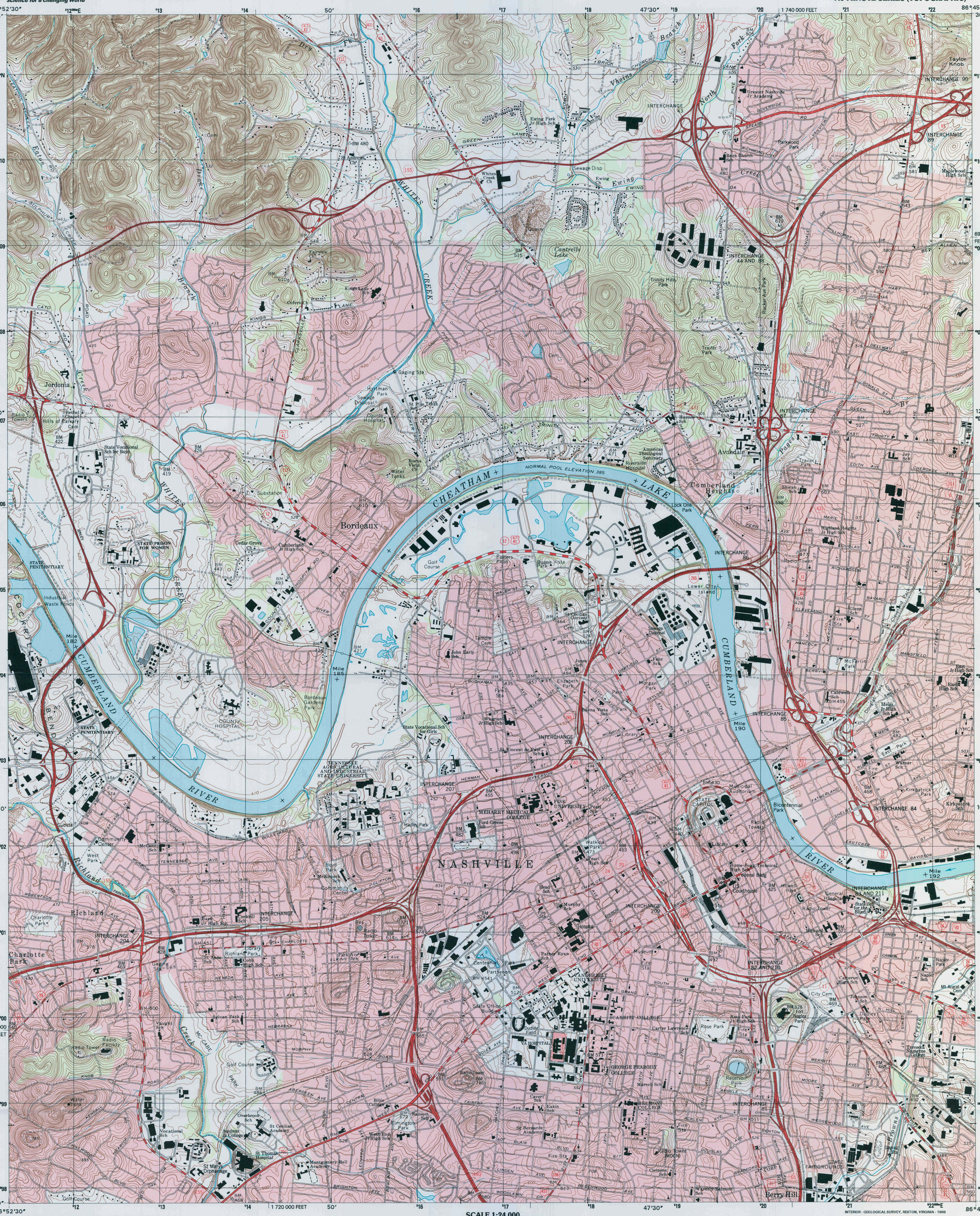



Figure 1: J. B Lawrence Administration Building floor plan located on the campus of American Baptist College in Nashville, Tennessee *(not to scale)*.

**USGS** science for a changing world

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**
**U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

# NASHVILLE WEST QUADRANGLE
## TENNESSEE-DAVIDSON CO.
## 7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)




American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District
16S 518872 E
4006419 N

**Produced by the United States Geological Survey**

Topography compiled 1951. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1997 and other sources. Survey control current as of 1968

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 16 10 000-foot ticks: Tennessee Coordinate System of 1983

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Landmark buildings verified 1968

Entire area lies within the Nashville-Davidson County Metropolitan Government

MN GN
2° 36 MILS
0°07' 2 MILS
UTM GRID AND 1999 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

20% TOTAL RECOVERED FIBER

**SCALE 1:24 000**

KILOMETERS 1 0.5 0 1 2
METERS 1000 0 1000 2000
MILES 1 0.5 0 1
FEET 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10000

**CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET**
**NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929**
**TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048**

**THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS**
**FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225 AND TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, DIVISION OF GEOLOGY, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243**
**A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

TENNESSEE
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 |

1 Forest Grove
2 Whites Creek
3 Goodlettsville
4 Scottsboro
5 Nashville East
6 Bellevue
7 Oak Hill
8 Antioch

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

INTERIOR - GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA - 1999

**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

Primary highway hard surface ..... Light-duty road, hard or improved surface .....
Secondary highway hard surface ..... Unimproved road .....

Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

**NASHVILLE WEST, TN**
**1997**
**NIMA 3656 III NE-SERIES V841**

ISBN 0-607-88737-0

GRIGGS HALL
CAUTION

GRIGGS HALL

GRIGGS HALL
CARRIER

GRIGGS HAL
Under Renovatio

EXIT
DEAN OF SEMINARY 12 YEARS
MEMBERS OF CLASS 1945

J.B. LAWRENCE
ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

101
PRESIDENT
EXIT
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

American Baptist College
LIBRARY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TENNESSEE, Davidson

DATE RECEIVED: 5/03/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/30/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/14/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/19/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000399

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| APPEAL: | N | DATA PROBLEM: | N | LANDSCAPE: | N | LESS THAN 50 YEARS: | N |
| OTHER: | N | PDIL: | N | PERIOD: | N | PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: | N |
| REQUEST: | N | SAMPLE: | N | SLR DRAFT: | N | NATIONAL: | N |

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT 6·14·13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA_____

REVIEWER_____ DISCIPLINE_____

TELEPHONE_____ DATE_____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

RECEIVED 2280
MAY 03 2013
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION**
**2941 LEBANON ROAD**
**NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0442**
**OFFICE: (615) 532-1550**
**E-mail: Claudette.Stager@tn.gov**
**(615) 532-1550, ext. 105**
**www.TDEC.net/hist**

April 26, 2013

Carol Shull
Keeper of the National Register
National Park Service
National Register Branch
1201 Eye Street NW
8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the documentation to nominate the *American Theological and Baptist Seminary Historic District* to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions or if more information is needed, contact Peggy Nickell at 615/532-1550, extension 128 or Peggy.Nickell@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

Claudette Stager

Claudette Stager
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

CS:pn

Enclosures(4)