

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	DEC 19 1975
DATE ENTERED	MAY 4 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1** NAME

HISTORIC

\* \* Centennial Hall - Edward Waters College

AND/OR COMMON

**2** LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1658 Kings Road

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Jacksonville

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Florida

CODE

12

COUNTY

Duval

CODE

031

**3** CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- \_\_\_ DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- \_\_\_ STRUCTURE
- \_\_\_ SITE
- \_\_\_ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- \_\_\_ PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- \_\_\_ BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- \_\_\_ IN PROCESS
- \_\_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- \_\_\_ UNOCCUPIED
- \_\_\_ WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- \_\_\_ YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- \_\_\_ NO

PRESENT USE

- \_\_\_ AGRICULTURE
- \_\_\_ MUSEUM
- \_\_\_ COMMERCIAL
- \_\_\_ PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- \_\_\_ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- \_\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT
- \_\_\_ RELIGIOUS
- \_\_\_ GOVERNMENT
- \_\_\_ SCIENTIFIC
- \_\_\_ INDUSTRIAL
- \_\_\_ TRANSPORTATION
- \_\_\_ MILITARY
- \_\_\_ OTHER:

**4** OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Edward Waters College

STREET & NUMBER

1658 Kings Road

CITY, TOWN

Jacksonville

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Florida

**5** LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Duval County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Jacksonville

STATE

Florida

**6** REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

N/A

DATE

\_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Centennial Hall survives as the oldest building on the campus of Edward Waters College. It was completed in 1916 and was designed by the firm of Howells and Stokes, Seattle, Washington. The three-story brick building presents a classic appearance, being completely symmetrical and perfectly balanced on all elevations. The main facade faces south and the building occupies a prominent position amidst a large open green space with regularly arranged walkways. Entry to the building on the south side is gained via double wooden doors set into the base of a central two-story pavilion. The pavilion is defined by paired engaged columns sharing common capitals which rise on either side of the entrance to an entablature located at the level of second floor window lintels. The entrance is further defined by framing pilasters and entablature set within the aforementioned pavilion. Above the entrance is a grouping of three double-hung sash windows grouped into a common surround.

Fenestration is regular on all elevations, all windows being double-hung sash with stone sills and lintels. Due to the multiplicity of windows on the south elevation, there being forty on this side alone, there is very little expanse of brick wall visible. The building terminates in a plain entablature and boxed cornice beneath a hipped roof. At the midpoint of the roof ridge is a small octagonal cupola with glazed sides and a conical roof with slightly flared eaves. This cupola is of diminished size and is the only component on the exterior of the building which is completely out of scale.

The exterior of Centennial Hall remains completely unaltered. All alterations have been limited to the interior of the structure and have been kept to a minimum as building use has changed through the years. The structure is in a good state of repair and is in constant use.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) ethnic history
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1916

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Howells & Stokes of Seattle,

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Washington

The history of Edward Waters College is closely tied to the history of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Florida. In 1866, the Elder Charles Pearce (the spelling appears in a number of documents as Pierce) came to Florida and soon became involved in the development of the A.M.E. Church in Florida (Long, p. 83). He soon began to work towards the formation of a school which was to "better the condition of the newly emancipated people, and to prepare young men to preach the word of God with intelligent minds" (Long, p. 83). During a session of the Florida Conference of the A.M.E. Church held in Quincy in 1870, a resolution was adopted to found a school. At the invitation of Governor Harrison Reed, the conference adjourned to Tallahassee to discuss with the Governor the possibility of establishing such an institution. An excerpt from Governor Reed's letter to Bishop Brown reads as follows:

I should be glad to meet the representative men of a Church to which perhaps more than any other is committed the responsibility of shaping the character and destiny; and controlling the interest of a race so long held in bondage, and so recently admitted to the rights and privileges of freemen, and clothed with the responsibility of citizenship (Long, p. 80).

An Act to Incorporate Brown's Theological Institute passed the Florida Legislature in January of 1872 (Acts of Florida, Fifth Session, 1872, pp. 68-69). Section two of this charter states the purpose of the institute:

The design of this institution shall be to teach theology and the classics, without excluding such studies as tend to promote a liberal and complete education of the students.

Brown Theological Institute had its name changed in 1873 to Brown University. Live Oak, Florida was selected as the site for the school due to its location in north Florida between Jacksonville and Pensacola. By 1873 construction was underway;

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than ~~five~~ <sup>one</sup> acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	17	43	4	19	0	33	5	70	20
	ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING				
C									

B									
	ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING				
D									

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Diane D. Greer, Historic Sites Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Div. of Archives, History & Records Mgmt.

STREET & NUMBER

Dept. of State, The Capitol

CITY OR TOWN

Tallahassee

DATE

October, 1975

TELEPHONE

904-488-7365

STATE

Florida

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Robert Williams

TITLE

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

12/10/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

DATE

5/4/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

5-3-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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however, owing to the dishonesty of the individual superintending the project, the building was never brought to completion. After the confiscation of building funds, carpenters working on the project brought suit against the Trustees of the A.M.E. Church and the land and materials were sold to the highest bidder (Long, p. 84). Thus ended the brief history of Brown Theological Institute and Brown University.

From 1874 to 1883, there was no institute of higher learning for blacks in Florida. Finally, in 1883, through the efforts of Rev. W. W. Sampson, a small school was established in Jacksonville and it was known as the East Florida Conference High School (Long, p. 85). The new school expanded rapidly and in 1885 its name was changed to Florida Normal and Divinity School. On March 12, 1892, a resolution renaming the school "Edward Waters College" (after the third bishop of the A.M.E. Church) was filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Florida (Long, p. 91).

Work on the new college progressed rapidly during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The college was housed in a single three-story building located on East Beaver Street, and its enrollment continued to increase. All of this, however, was to be brought to an abrupt halt by the disastrous fire of May, 1901, which destroyed nearly all of the city of Jacksonville. After a three year period of using rented buildings, the General Conference of 1904 voted to purchase the Kings Road property in Jacksonville where the college stands today. Although construction of the first building, Salter Hall, began as early as 1908, the earliest remaining structure is Centennial Hall, built in 1916 and named to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the A.M.E. Church. Gradually other buildings were added to the nearly twenty acre complex and in 1925 the B. F. Lee Theological Seminary was constructed at a cost of two hundred thousand dollars (Long, p. 98).

Edward Waters College, as it exists today, is the culmination of a long history of educational work which was begun in earnest at the close of the Civil War. Centennial Hall was selected for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places because it survives as the oldest of the campus buildings and is in itself a fine piece of architecture. More important, however, is the fact that it represents a long and important effort within the African Methodist Episcopal Church to establish themselves as an independent

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body capable of insuring quality higher education within the black community. The history of Edward Waters College is interwoven with the history of Jacksonville--through its years of development into an important East Florida city, through its rebuilding after the 1901 fire, and finally, through its most recent periods of growth and prosperity.

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City Hall, Jacksonville, Florida. Building and Zoning Permit Office. City of Jacksonville Records (Subgroup: Original specifications for Centennial Hall, February 19, 1916).

Davis, William Watson. The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida. New York: Columbia University Press, 1913; reprinted with an introduction by Fletcher M. Green. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964. pp. 496, 665, 638.

Florida. Acts and Resolutions of Florida. Fifth Session, 1872, pp. 68-69.

Long, Rev. Charles Sumner. History of the A.M.E. Church in Florida. A compilation of the Reports of the East Florida Conferences. Philadelphia: A.M.E. Book Concern, 1939.