UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

NOV 1 5 1979

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CONDITION

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X_GOOD

__DETERIORATED

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The H.R. Butler School, formerly known as the Yonge Street School, is located in a high-density, public-housing area. Immediately to the north of the school is the small Selena Sloan Butler Park.

The school complex consists of the main school building, a wing addition, and the associated playground to the rear of the main building. The main building is a two-story, essentially rectangular brick structure, five bays across. The three central bays comprise the original structure built in 1911. The two flanking bays were added in 1940 and continue the original design. The center bay is marked by an arched entrance with fanlight. This main building is lighted through the east-front and west-rear elevations by two bands of double-hung, nine-over-nine windows stretching across all five bays. Detailing is limited to some patterned brickwork.

The interior of the school is typical of school construction for the period, with board floors and plaster walls. The plan of the central original bay is four-over-four. It should be noted, however, that the size of these original eight rooms is smaller than contemporary white classrooms.

A wing addition to the school within the property boundaries is a one-story brick structure. This wing was added in 1951.

SPECIFIC DAT	es 1910-Present	BUILDER/ARC		Architects uction Co., Builders
1700-1799 1800-1899 X_1900-	ARTCOMMERCECOMMUNICATIONS	ENGINEERINGEXPLORATION/SETTLEMENTINDUSTRYINVENTION	_music _philosophy X_politics/government	THEATERTRANSPORTATION X_OTHER (SPECIFY) Afro-American History
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The H.R. Butler School [formerly known as the Yonge Street School], is significant in Georgia social and political history, Atlanta educational history, and is an important landmark in Georgia Afro-American history. The school was the first modern brick public school built for black students in Atlanta. In addition, this school was the site of the organization of the first Colored Parents and Teachers Unit in the United States, an organization which later merged with the formerly all-white Parent-Teacher Association.

After Reconstruction and during the early years of the Atlanta publicschool system [founded in 1872], Atlanta's blacks were disfranchised by various means [including property requirements and literacy tests] and received little benefit from public-education monies. At the time of the decision to build the Yonge Street School, qualified blacks could vote in general elections and for final bond approval, but were still disfranchised by white primaries. The construction of this school resulted from the passage by city voters in February of 1910 of a \$3 million bond issue. This bond money contained provisions for new sewer systems, waterworks and crematory plant, as well as \$600,000 for new schools and improvements to existing facilities. Passage of bond issues in Atlanta in 1910 required a two-thirds majority of all registered voters. To increase the chances of passage, a token \$38,200 was allocated out of the \$600,000 for construction of a new school for black children. The new school was proposed for the Fourth Ward, which had the largest number of blacks. Later, voter registration drives gave the Fourth Ward the largest number of registered black voters. Although black leaders were fully aware of the inequitable distribution of bond monies, they advocated support of the bond issue on the basis that some benefit was better than none. The bond issue passed with overwhelming voter support. It seems clear that demographics and political awareness played important roles in the eventual location and construction of this first modern school for blacks in Atlanta in the Fourth Ward in 1910-11. In June of 1910, the City of Atlanta purchased for \$9,000 from Bishop Henry M. Turner, a prominent black leader and Methodist clergyman, the lot on Yonge Street as the school site. The school was completed in 1911.

During the first school year at Yonge Street, Selena Sloan Butler, with the cooperation and assistance of the school's principal, Cora Finley, organized

[continued]

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES Golden Anniversary History, Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1970. Founder The Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers [sic], 1971. Atlanta Constitution, February 1, 1910. Atlanta Journal, February 12, 1910. Personal inspection, May, 1979. 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.34 acres Northwest Atlanta, Georgia QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24.000 QUADRANGLE NAME UTM REFERENCES 1, 61 17 4 3 7 | 3, 7**1** 3, 7**1** 5, 3, 0| NORTHING ZONE ZONE VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The boundary of the nominated property is indicated on the accompanying property/ sketch map by the heavy black line. LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES STATE CODE COUNTY CODE CODE CODE STATE COUNTY FORM PREPARED BY NAME / TITLE Steve Henson, National Register Researcher DATE Historic Preservation Sec., Dept. of Natural Resources <u>August 31, 1979</u> TELEPHONE STREET & NUMBER 270 Washington Street, S.W. (404) 656-2840 CITY OR TOWN STATE Atlanta Georgia 30334 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS: NATIONAL_X 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. STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Elizabeth A. Lyon TITLE Acting State Historic Preservation Officer FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE nllee

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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JAN 2 4 1960

CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

ITEM NUMBER 8

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the country's first Colored Parents and Teachers Unit. The National Congress of Parents, later known as the P.T.A., had been incorporated in 1897 to serve white parents. In 1921, the Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers was created, with Mrs. Butler as president. Five years later, a national congress was founded. This national Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers merged with the Parents and Teachers Association (P.T.A.) in 1970. This school is, thus, the home of the first black P.T.A. unit in the country. In 1955, to honor Mrs. Butler's work, the name of Yonge Street School was formally changed to H.R. Butler School. According to Atlanta Board of Education policy, a school cannot be named for a living person; therefore, the name was changed to the H.R. Butler School in memory of Mrs. Butler's husband, and to honor her.

The 1978-79 school year was the last year of formal operation for the H.R. Butler School. Currently, it is serving as a community center for the largely public-housing population in the area. Inclusion of this significant school on the National Register should serve as an important preservation catalyst for this area.

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