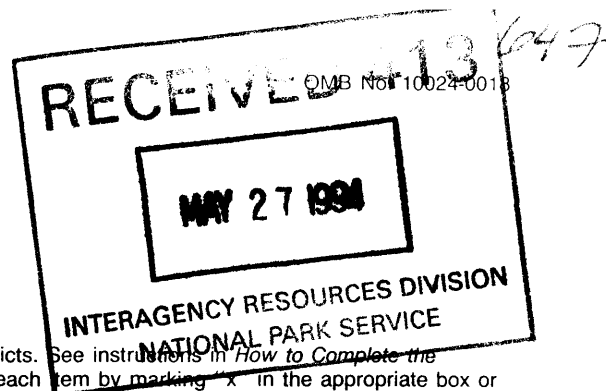


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



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

1. Name of Property

historic name Thompson School

other names/site number Old Thompson School

2. Location

street & number Ethel-McCool Road  N/A  not for publication

city or town Ethel  vicinity

state Mississippi code MS county Attala code 007 zip code 39067

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kenneth H. P. Paul May 20, 1994  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

for  
Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the National Register 6/24/94  
Date of Action

Thompson School  
Name of Property

Attala Co., Mississippi  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

OTHER: community center

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

foundation stone

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Thompson School  
Name of Property

Attala Co., Mississippi  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1880-1945

**Significant Dates**

ca. 1880

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Thompson School  
Name of Property

Attala County, Mississippi  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 2 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	6
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2	7	8	1	4	0
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3	6	6	6	4	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

4 

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 See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

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

### Boundary Justification

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

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title E. Pauline Barrow, Architectural Historian

organization N/A date February 24, 1994

street & number 1313 Pickett Avenue telephone 504/344-6410

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70808

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Harmony Baptist Church

street & number Route 2, Box 154A telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town McCool state MS zip code 39108

**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. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Ethel vicinity, Attala Co., MSSection number 7 Page 1

## 7. DESCRIPTION

One-room school buildings have practically disappeared from the landscape and our memory. However, the Old Thompson School building, believed to have been built ca. 1880, is the single exception in Attala County, Mississippi. It was the sole source of elementary education in the Thompson community until 1945. Then with the consolidation of the public schools, this isolated building became obsolete. With the realization that their schoolhouse would soon be gone as all the other pioneer school facilities, former students rescued and faithfully restored the building in 1982.

Still on the original site, the Old Thompson School is located behind Harmony Church in a remote area of Attala County. It is an unpretentious vernacular building that reflects the architecture of the rural area that it served. Unpainted and devoid of any stylistic architectural details, it is a rectangular (27'2" x 22'2") frame building resting on the original native stone foundation. All four elevations are pierced by two openings: two single-leafed entrance doors (one for boys, one for girls) on the front facade and two 4/4 windows on each of the remaining elevations. A gabled roof completes the exterior appearance. The interior is a single room with an elevated (12") platform across the back for a stage or "teacher area" with a black-board painted on the flush tongue-and-groove wall between the windows. The ceiling height is 7'9" and is covered with 3 1/2" beaded board, as are the remaining walls. The source of heat remains a wood-burning stove, similar to the ones from the historic period. It is placed in the original position, in the center of the room.

Assessment of Integrity:

Before restoration began, the building had lost a considerable amount of integrity due to neglect. The inner structure was basically sound, however, weatherboards, roof, windows and doors had to be replaced. It was also necessary to patch the interior walls and the floor but there was enough physical documentation to guide the new work on both the interior and the exterior. Some replacements are similar materials which were gathered from neighboring deserted buildings of the same period. Truly, it is with a sense of "déjà vu" when the former students return to the Old Thompson School.

The Old Thompson School retains integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association and is important as the only extant school building of its type and period remaining in Attala County.

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Thompson School  
Ethel vicinity, Attala Co., MS

Section number 8 Page 1

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Thompson School is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for the important role that it played in the evolution of the educational system in Attala County, Mississippi. It is of local educational significance because from circa 1880 into the 20th century, it was the only means of receiving an elementary education within a five-mile radius of the community of Thompson. The building is a good example of a school dating to the period before the first rural school consolidations, when small one- and two-room schools were typical. The period of significance begins circa 1880, with the construction of the building, and ends in 1945, the year the school closed due to consolidation of public schools. The Old Thompson School retains integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association and is important as the only extant school building of its type and period out of many that were scattered throughout Attala County.

The first school in the county was established in 1838, 12 miles north of Kosciusko, the county seat. After that time many schools or "subscription schools" (supported by tuition) were established throughout the county. Finally in 1870, the public school system was legislated, providing free schooling for a minimum of four months per year for every youth between 5 and 21 years of age. However, many people were too poor to consent to additional taxation. Consequently, the private schools continued and later became public. By 1896, there were 147 public schools in Attala County; 58 of these were African-American schools. Mr. Johnny White, who was Superintendent of Education in Attala County from 1940 until 1972, stated that in 1940, there were still 104 white and black private school buildings being utilized for public schools in the county.

At best, most of these schools were inadequate by today's standards. Teacher qualifications and salaries were low; the facility was uncomfortable and the equipment was limited; sanitary conditions were poor; short school terms and irregular attendance, along with over-crowding, were just a few of the handicaps. Nevertheless, a wide range of subjects was taught which prepared children for a productive place in the twentieth century.

Thompson School and the community of Thompson were named for one of the early settlers in the area, Elisha E. Thompson (1860, 1870, 1880 Census). This eastern part of the county with no major waterways has never been densely populated. The sandy-clay soil and the hilly topography has made the land limited for agricultural use. Its

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National Register of Historic Places  
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Thompson School  
Ethel vicinity, Attala Co., MS

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major value was the dense timber forests which still dot the landscape. The introduction of the steam powered sawmill allowed production of lumber on a larger scale; and after the railroad came in 1882, markets became more accessible, and more people began to settle in the area.

According to local tradition, Elisha Thompson started the school in his home circa 1870. Then later, circa 1880, as the attendance increased, a building was erected a short distance from the Thompson home on land owned by P.F. Doty. However, deed records indicate that the land was not donated for a school by Doty until 1890. Grades one through eight were taught here continuously until 1945 when modern transportation and consolidation of the schools proved Thompson School to be obsolete.

After the closing of the school in 1945, the small single-room building, which has never been altered or moved from the original site, was abandoned and the property reverted to Doty's descendants until 1982. At that time former Thompson School students, some octogenarians, organized a group to rescue the building from demolition by neglect and restore it with the aid of an annual reunion every Labor Day weekend. For protection, the property along with the building, was deeded to the adjacent Harmony Church with the stipulation that "the building is not to be moved, but restored and used as a church and community center and voting house for the Thompson precinct."

Today the building is a tangible symbol of the efforts of pioneer citizens to provide an education for their children. Beginning in 1982--as adults--some of these same children have returned with pride each year to the Old Thompson School to reminisce.

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Thompson School  
Ethel vicinity, Attala Co., MS

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9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Attala County Chancery Clerk's Office, conveyance records. P.F. Doty to Thompson School, 1890. Ruby Helen Hale and Guice Wood to Harmony Church, 1982.

Census Records, Attala County, Mississippi, Beat #5: 1860, 1870, 1880.

Interviews conducted with various teachers and students from the historic period by Sally T. Kuzenski, a descendant of Elisha E. Thompson.

Kosciusko-Attala History, Kosciusko-Attala Historical Society, 1976.

Minutes of the Harmony Church, Attala County, Mississippi, October 15, 1894.

"The W.P.A. Historical Research Project, Source Material for Mississippi History, Attala County." 1938. Attala County Regional Library, Kosciusko, Mississippi.

White, Mr. Johnny, Superintendent 1940-1972, Attala County Schools. Interviewed by his wife, Margaret, November 1993.

Woods, Gladys Ray, student during historic period. Interviewed by E. Pauline Barrow, November 1993.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description: That certain parcel, containing two (2) acres, more or less, in Attala County, Mississippi, more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the NW corner of the NE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Section 33, and running due South 70 yards, thence due East 140 yards; thence North 70 yards; thence West to the point of beginning, lying and being situated in Township 15 North, Range 9 East, being the same property as described in that certain deed of September 1, 1890, from P.F. Doty, as recorded in Book II, Page 266, in the Office of the Chancery Clerk of Attala County, Mississippi.

Boundary Justification: The nominated property consists of the parcel of land historically associated with the school.



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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Thompson School  
Ethel vicinity, Attala Co., MS

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following information is the same for all photographs:

- (1) Old Thompson School
- (2) Ethel vicinity, Attala County, Mississippi
- (3) E. Pauline Barrow (Photograph #4 by Nancy Green, 1982)
- (4) November 1993
- (5) Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Photo 1--(6) Facade (north elevation), view to south

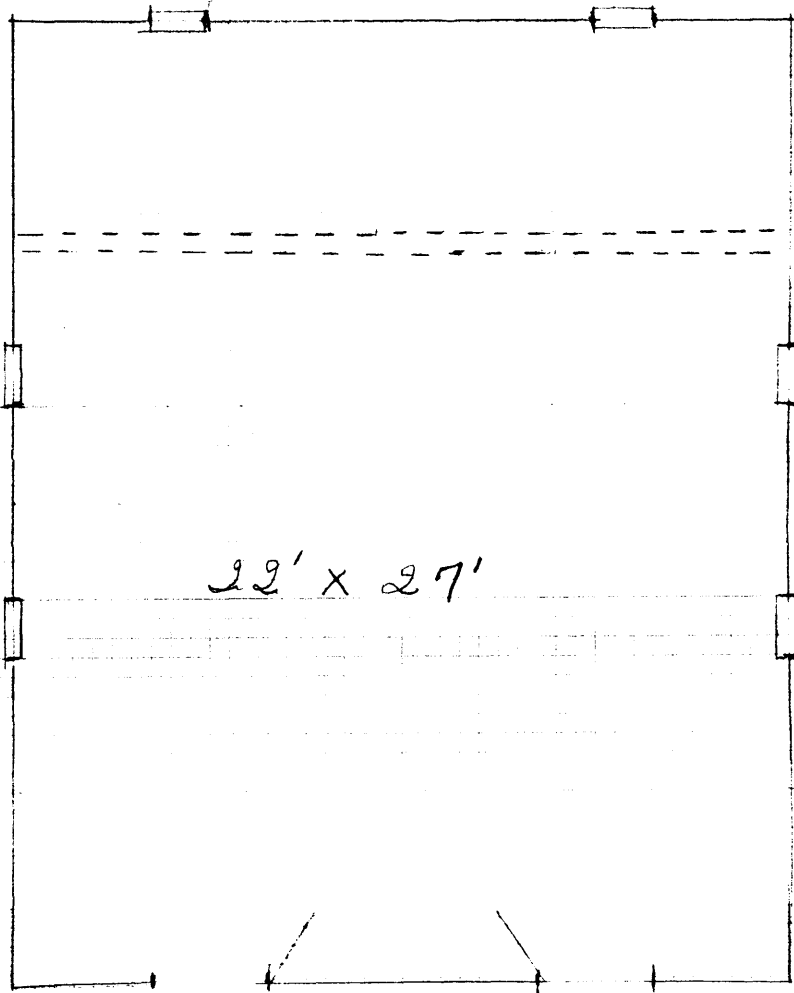
Photo 2--(6) South elevation, view to north

Photo 3--(6) Interior view

Photo 4--(6) Exterior before restoration, 1982

Old Thompson School Plan  
(not drawn to scale)

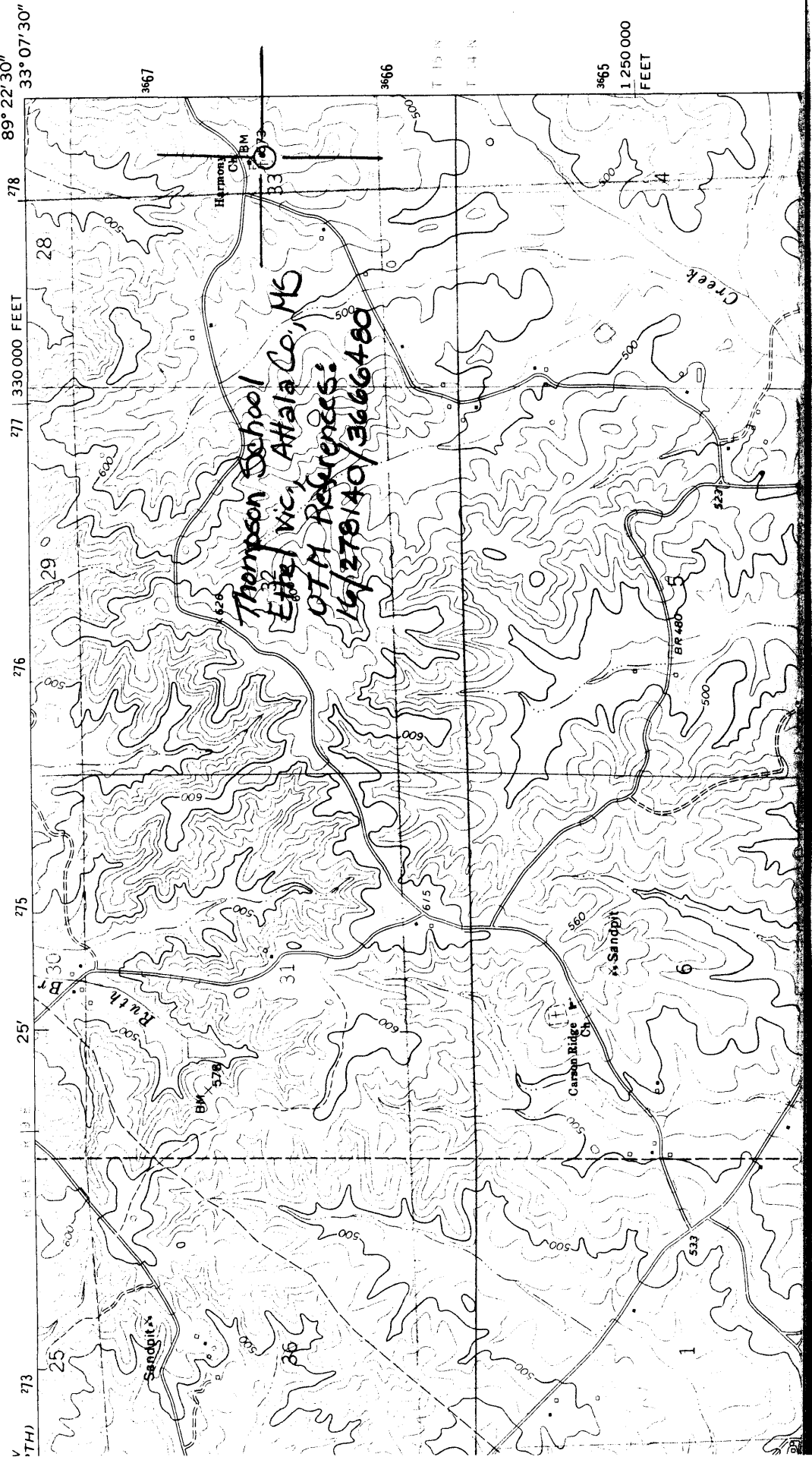
Ethel vicinity, Attala County, MS



↓  
North

ETHEL SOUTH QUADRANGLE  
MISSISSIPPI-ATTALA CO.  
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3150 (LINE  
MNC COOL)



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