

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000033

Date Listed: 10/1/92

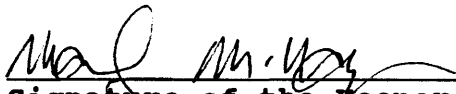
Gainestown Schoolhouse
Property Name

Clarke
County

ALABAMA
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

10/19/92

Date of Action

===== Amended Items in Nomination:

S3ection No. 8

This nomination is amended to clarify the period of significance, which extends from 1919 to c. 1930.

This question, which was inadvertantly not raised in the earlier return, was clarified in a telephone conversation with the Alabama SHPO (10/15/92).

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

MAR 2 1992

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Ala. Historical Commission

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Gainestown Schoolhouse

other name/site number: Same

2. Location

street & number: West side of Gainestown-Suggsville Public Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Gainestown

vicinity: N/A

state: AL county: Clarke

code: 025

zip code: 36540

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

1/2/02
Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

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

[Signature] 10/1/92

for Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: EDUCATION

Sub: school

Current : SOCIAL

Sub: civic

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7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late 19th and 20th Century Revival

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation stone roof tin
walls wood other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : _____

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1919 _____ 1930 _____

Significant Dates: 1919 c.1920-30 _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: 2 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>16</u>	<u>434200</u>	<u>3479800</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

Beginning at the 1/2 mile post on the South line of Section 29, Township 6, Range 4 East, thence East 22 yards to the West side of the Gainestown and Suggsville Public Road, thence North with Gainestown and Suggsville Road 100 yards, thence West 100 yards, thence South 100 yards, thence East 78 yards to the place of beginning, lying and being in SW 1/4 and SE 1/4 of Section 29, Township 6, Range 4 East, and containing 2 acres more or less.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

The boundaries include the school, the privy and the spring which are all contained within the 300 x 300 foot lot that is historically associated with the school.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Jennifer Bryant/National Register Intern

Organization: Alabama Historical Commission Date: July 10, 1991

Street & Number: 725 Monroe Street Telephone: 205/242-3184

City or Town: Montgomery State: AL ZIP: 36130

JAN 13 1992

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

Gainestown Schoolhouse

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The Gainestown School is located on Gainestown-Suggsville Public Road in rural Clarke County directly across from the Wilson-Finlay House (c. 1846, NRHP 1978). This early 20th-century wood frame, one-story, two-room schoolhouse faces south on a wooded 300 X 300 foot lot.

The structure rests on stone piers, has painted weatherboards and is crowned with a cross gable metal roof. The larger room with a front gable contains many hand hewn timbers which may have been taken from the ruins of the Gainestown Methodist Church located a few miles south of the schoolhouse. A cupola was added on this section to replace a crumbling limestone stove flue. The structure is ornamented with a Greek Revival box cornice and return. The facade once contained two sets of 6/6 single sash double windows and a central door. Due to their dilapidated state, the double windows were replaced with two large single windows. The original glass, however, was reused and the central door remains.

The second room of the schoolhouse attaches to the larger room to form an L. It also has a metal roof and stone foundation piers, however it is clad with painted novelty or drop siding which suggests that it was constructed later in the 1920s. At one time, it also had a limestone stove flue, but it has since been removed. The facade contains a single door and two 6/6 sash windows.

The interior of the large room contains a raised stage across the northern end. All of the walls, floor and ceiling in both rooms are wood with little ornamentation.

There is a modern, wood frame, noncontributing privy to the southwest of the schoolhouse. A spring (contributing) once used by residents of the Wilson-Finlay house for their water, is located on the western end of the lot.

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Criterion C (Architecture)

The Gainestown Schoolhouse, located in rural Clarke County, is a fine and intact example of an early 20th-century, two room schoolhouse. Although it has undergone significant restoration, it still retains most of its original features such as its form, framing members, weatherboards, windows and many interior features including the stage.

Historical Summary

In the early 1800s, Gainestown simply consisted of the land above Gaines Trading Post, a site on the Alabama River run by George Strother Gaines to control trading between whites and Indians. In 1817 the first settler in Gainestown, Joshua Wilson, arrived with his family from North Carolina. By 1860 Gainestown was one of the largest settlements in Clarke County and the landing was one of the most active ports on the Alabama River. Siltation of the river coupled with arrival of the railroad nine miles outside of Gainestown caused a steady decline of the town's population.¹ In 1910 the population of the Gainestown precinct stood at 2,233 and by 1930 it had fallen to 1,154. In 1950 two years before the school closed, there were 1,241 people in the precinct, only a slight increase over the 1930 figure.² Today there are few people in this area, and paper companies own a large quantity of the land.³

The first schools in Clarke County were private and established by local plantation owners to educate their children as well as their neighbors' children.⁴ The Lambard School was established in 1840 as Gainestown's first school. It eventually became Gainestown's public school as funds for schools were not provided by the county until the 1880s. By 1900, the public school at Gainestown was located on the second floor of the Gainestown Methodist Church and shared quarters with the Gainestown Masonic Lodge. A March 1911 storm virtually destroyed the church and as a result, the Gainestown School needed a new home.⁵ The school trustees bought a parcel of land owned by Charles W. Smith and his wife in 1919 to build their new school.⁶ Carved into a stone foundation pier of the Gainestown School is the date: October 3-4, 1919. It is believed that the entire community gathered on those two days and erected the present building. A second room was added in the 1920s. The school was in continuous use until September 1952 when the County decided that it had become too small. At that time only six students were enrolled.⁷

Gainestown School served students in grades 1 through 8 and they then moved on to one of the larger high schools in the county. There were two teachers employed at the school until 1939 when the Clarke County Board of Education cut the staff to one teacher.⁸

After the school closed, the citizens of Gainestown petitioned the Clarke County School Board to deed them the school property for use as a community center. The Board agreed, and it was used as a local gathering place and voting precinct until the 1980s when the building had deteriorated to such a point that it was unusable. The property was purchased by the current owners, the Finlays, in 1989 and the building was restored in 1990. It is currently used as an office for the Clarke County Historical Society.⁹

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CLARKE COUNTY SCHOOL TYPES:

For the first three quarters of the 19th century, education in Clarke County was a privately sponsored activity rather than a publicly supported activity. The first education in Clarke County was probably conducted by individual parents, then later by private tutors in the homes of the most wealthy citizens. Once an area began to thrive economically, one of the first social amenities erected was a private academy to educate the children of the local planters. The Coffeenville Academy was established as early as 1832. By 1836 the community of Suggesville was promoted as a center of learning with both male and female academies. Gainestown had a private academy called the Lambart School as early as 1840. The West Bend Academy remained in operation from 1859 through the 1890s. Clarkesville had an academy in the 1850s that served the neighboring plantations. None of the private academies survive.

Education for the general public was not a high priority in Alabama until the end of the 19th century. Clarke County did not have the funds to provide public education until the 1880s. Then it was usually incumbent upon the community to provide a building to house the public school. Often the first public schools were located in local churches or lodges. The community of Carlton sold box lunches to raise enough capital to erect a community public school. In Thomasville the first public school was generously financed by a New York railroad investor. Because Clarke County was a relatively poor agricultural county, the first public schools in the county were small and short termed, lasting only three months. Public education for the county's African American children was not provided during this period.

The architectural form of the earliest documented public school buildings in Clarke County resembled the utilitarian front gabled form associated with the early churches and lodges. The late 19th-century school form was a small, one-story frame, rectangular shaped building with a front gabled roof. There was a single entrance on the gabled front and a row of small windows on each side elevation. The interior featured a large open room that served as the classroom. The best remaining example of this academic building is the Gainestown School, erected in 1900. Located in the Bashi community, the Bashi School also displays this front gabled form, although it has a small rear addition.

The school building form drastically changed around 1920 to reflect modern teaching techniques. The school building no longer resembled a utilitarian front gabled church but became elongate with a side gabled or low pitch hipped roof. The main elevation was located on the long end of the rectangle and featured a band of large multi-paned windows and a centrally located door. This enlarged school building form contained more than one classroom and often had side wings to house additional classrooms, creating a "U" or "H" shaped plan. There are several examples of this form in Clarke County. A simple example of the form is the Carlton School in the Carlton community, erected in 1919. Located in the West Bend community, the West Bend School was constructed in the 1920s and features a small classical pedimented entrance porch and a "U" shaped plan. Located in the Morvin community, the Morvin School, erected in 1934, is a late example of the form. The school has an "H" shaped plan and features a simple gabled entrance porch. The Coffeenville High School in Coffeenville is a large and elaborate version of the form featuring a front gabled central block with low classroom wings extending to each side. The building features subtle classical details such as the centrally located pedimented arched loggia.

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Page #1

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Clarke County Courthouse records. Deed Book Q, p. 239.

The Clarke County Historical Society. Historical Sketches of Clarke County, Alabama. Huntsville: The Strode Publishers, Inc., 1977.

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National Park Service

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Section number 8 Significance Gainestown Schoolhouse Page #2

1. The Clarke County Historical Society, Historical Sketches of Clarke County, Alabama. (Huntsville: The Strode Publishers, Inc., 1977), p. 51.
2. Alabama Official and Statistical Register, (Montgomery: The Brown Printing Company, 1923, 1951), p. 311 and p. 406.
3. The Clarke County Historical Society, p. 51.
4. The Clarke County Historical Society and the Alabama Historical Commission, Clarke County: A Historic and Architectural Inventory.
5. The Clarke County Historical Society, p. 52.
6. Clarke County Courthouse records. Deed Book Q, p. 239.
7. Louis M. Finlay, Jr., Interview by author. 27 June 1991.
8. Clarke County Board of Education Minutes. Located in the Clarke County Board of Education Building, Highway 34 west, Grove Hill, Alabama.
9. Finlay.

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Gainestown Schoolhouse

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For all photographs:

- 1) Gainestown Schoolhouse
- 2) Gainestown, Alabama (Clarke County)
- 3) M. Betz, Photographer
- 4) July 1991
- 5) Alabama Historical Commission

PHOTO #1: Front and Side Facades, Looking Northwest

PHOTO #2: Side and Rear Facades, Looking West

PHOTO #3: View of Interior

PHOTO #4: View of Interior

PHOTO #5: View of Interior