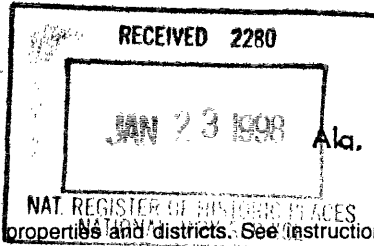


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



SEP 5 1997 110
Ala. Historical Commission

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 Merritt School

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Old Troy Road, approx. 1/2 mile south of U.S. Hwy 82 not for publication

city or town Midway vicinity

state Alabama code AL county Bullock code AL zip code 36053

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.)

[Signature] 1/16/98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
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): _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper
Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

2/20/98

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

The Julius Rosenwald School Building Fund and Associated Structures (1913-1937)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: no style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD

roof METAL

other

Narrative Description

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

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: N/A

- 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

Ethnic Heritage - African American

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1922 - 1937

Significant Dates

c. 1922

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith, Samuel (architect)

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): 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

Name of repository: Fisk University.

Merritt School
Name of Property

Bullock County, Alabama
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6	6	3	8	7	4	0	3	5	4	9	4	8	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

3

Zone		Easting						Northing						

4

Zone		Easting						Northing						

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 Jeff Mansell, Trina Binkley, and Susan Enzweiler (AHC)

organization Cahaba Trace Commission date February 16, 1997

street & number Route 1, Box 147 telephone (205) 665-7982

city or town Brierfield state Alabama zip code 35035

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 Bullock County Board of Education

street & number Post Office Drawer 231 telephone (334) 738-2860

city or town Union Springs state Alabama zip code 36089

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Merritt School
Midway
Bullock County, Alabama

The Merritt School, c. 1922, is a "two teacher" Rosenwald school building constructed according to Design No. 20 and No. 20-A, Two Teacher Community Schools found in Samuel Smith's *Community School Plans*, published in booklet form in 1924. In 1920, Smith became head of the Rosenwald Fund's Southern Office and began to supply plans for Rosenwald Schools. The exterior shape and form of the original school follow the elevation for Design 20 while the interior plan follows that of Design 20-A. Sympathetic additions to the Merritt School were made c. 1935 and c. 1946. Both additions were designed in a way that was compatible in design to the original school building. Furthermore, the original central block school building is still visually distinctive from the historic additions.

The one story frame building rests on a foundation of brick piers. The exterior wall material is simple weatherboarding. The cross gable roof is covered in standing seam metal and features four interior end brick chimneys, located on each end of the 1935 and 1946 end wings. As one would expect from a Rosenwald school, the building has an east-west orientation. The principal facade faces north, as is called for in Design 20-A.

The facade features a central projecting gable wing with a band of four 9 over 9 double hung sash windows. One story shed roof porches connect the principal gable wing with the flanking later gable roof wings. The eastern wing was erected in 1935, the western wing was built in 1946. Both projecting wings feature a single 6 over 6 double hung sash window. Small six light windows are also located on the facade as are secondary entrances on each side of the central projecting gable wing. The east and west elevations feature two bands of five 9 over 9 double hung sash windows. The southern elevation features a single leaf entrance in the end of the eastern gable roof wing and two bands of five 9 over 9 double hung sash windows.

The original interior room arrangement adheres to the plan provided in Design No. 20-A, consisting of two large 22' x 30' classrooms and a 12' x 20' work or industrial room. The two classrooms were originally divided by folding doors which have been removed. As called for in Design 20-A, cloak rooms were located in the eastern end of the eastern classroom. Today, this space has been converted into three bathrooms. In 1946, the industrial room was also enlarged with an addition to the north, creating a 22' x 30' room. The end wings originally contained two large 22' x 30' classrooms. The wings are sympathetic in design, construction and workmanship to the original school building. Presently, the east wing contains two bathrooms, a kitchen and dining facility. The west wing contains bathrooms, a clothing room, a former dining room and kitchen. While the interior of the building remains covered in beaded board, the school does not retain any of its original furnishings or window shades. It does retain some original chalk boards.

The Merritt school is in good condition and retains a high degree of integrity, retaining its original design and plan, location, workmanship, materials and sense of place. The later wings are historic and are sympathetic in design and plan, workmanship, and materials. Today, the Merritt School continues to be used as a nutrition/community center, and restoration plans are underway.

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National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Merritt School
Midway
Bullock County, Alabama

Archaeological Component

Although no archaeological study has been conducted, the potential for subsurface material remains is high. This material has the potential to yield significant information in regard to the themes identified in the historic contexts, in particular, the themes of education, ethnic heritage - African American, social and cultural history, and architecture.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

Merritt School
Midway
Bullock County, Alabama

Statements of Significance

Criteria A - Education, Ethnic Heritage-African American

The Merritt School is significant as a school building constructed under the Julius Rosenwald School Building Fund program. From 1913 to 1937, the Julius Rosenwald School Building Fund helped finance over 5,358 school buildings, teacher's homes, and industrial buildings for African American education in fifteen Southern states. The Rosenwald School Building Fund represents a benchmark in the history of black education, representing the most important philanthropic force that came to aid of African Americans during the first half of the twentieth century. As a result of the Rosenwald Fund's initiatives, more black children went to school longer and with better trained teachers in better constructed and equipped schools. The school-building effort awakened the public school authorities and the general public to the need for more adequate educational provisions for African Americans. Remaining Rosenwald Schools, such as the Merritt School, are the last remaining vestiges of one of the most important school building projects ever undertaken in the United States. They also reflect African Americans' pursuit of education and their struggle for educational opportunities in the segregated South.

Criteria C - Architecture

As a Rosenwald funded school, the Merritt School is significant as a building which was constructed according to designs and specifications supplied by Samuel Smith and the Rosenwald Southern Office in Nashville. Built according to Designs 20 and 20-A - Two Teacher Schools as found in Smith's *Community School Plans*, the Merritt School building reflects the architectural plans and specifications provided by the Rosenwald Southern Office to ensure the construction of a quality facility. The Julius Rosenwald School Building Fund was one of the most important and ambitious school building projects ever undertaken. Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald were determined to provide up-to-date educational facilities for African Americans. As such, these school buildings incorporated industrial rooms, libraries, cloak rooms, heating stoves, and folding doors between rooms so that facilities could be used as community centers. Plans dictated east/west orientation for maximization of natural light, window shades, sanitary privies, and interior paint schemes. So revolutionary were these mass produced, standardized designs, that education officials soon began building white schools according to these plans as well. By 1928, one in five rural schools for blacks was a Rosenwald School. By the 1930s, these modern buildings had replaced thousands of old shanty schoolhouses. These school buildings set the standard not only in regard to schoolhouse architecture but they influenced the construction, architecture, and maintenance of other structures in rural and nearby areas.

Historical Summary

In 1921, Margaret Elizabeth Merritt sold 2 acres of land for \$5.00 to the State of Alabama for the erection or repair of a rural school for the benefit of School District Number 30, Bullock County, Alabama. According to Rosenwald Records, the Merritt School cost \$2,600. Of that sum, the African American community raised \$1,000 while the State of Alabama and the Rosenwald School

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Merritt School
Midway
Bullock County, Alabama

Building Fund each contributed \$800. The building was used for elementary and later, junior high school classes. In the 1960s, Frank and Mabel Merritt, the heirs of Elizabeth Merritt, sold adjoining lands for \$1.00 to the State of Alabama for the construction of a modern school facility which is located immediately behind the Merritt School. The Merritt School continued to be used for educational purposes until it was renovated in 1978. Since that time it has been used as a nutrition/community center and today hosts activities such as tutorial classes, physical therapy, arts and crafts, Rural Senior Employment Program, and community meetings and food distribution. The Merritt School was listed in the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage in Nov. 1990.¹

¹A *Compendium of Rosenwald Schools and Their Costs for Alabama*, Julius Rosenwald School Building Fund papers, Fisk University Archives, Nashville, Tennessee; Samuel Smith, *Community School Plans*, Nashville, TN: Southern Office, 1924; National Register Nomination for Merritt School, Montgomery, AL: Alabama Historical Commission, 1990.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9, 10 Page 5

Merritt School
Midway
Bullock County, Alabama

Bibliography

Nomination Form for Merritt School, Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.
Montgomery, AL: Alabama Historical Commission, 1990.

Rosenwald, Julius F. Papers. Nashville, TN: Special Collections, Fisk University.

Smith, Samuel. *Community School Plans*. Nashville, TN: Southern Office of the Julius
Rosenwald Fund, 1924.

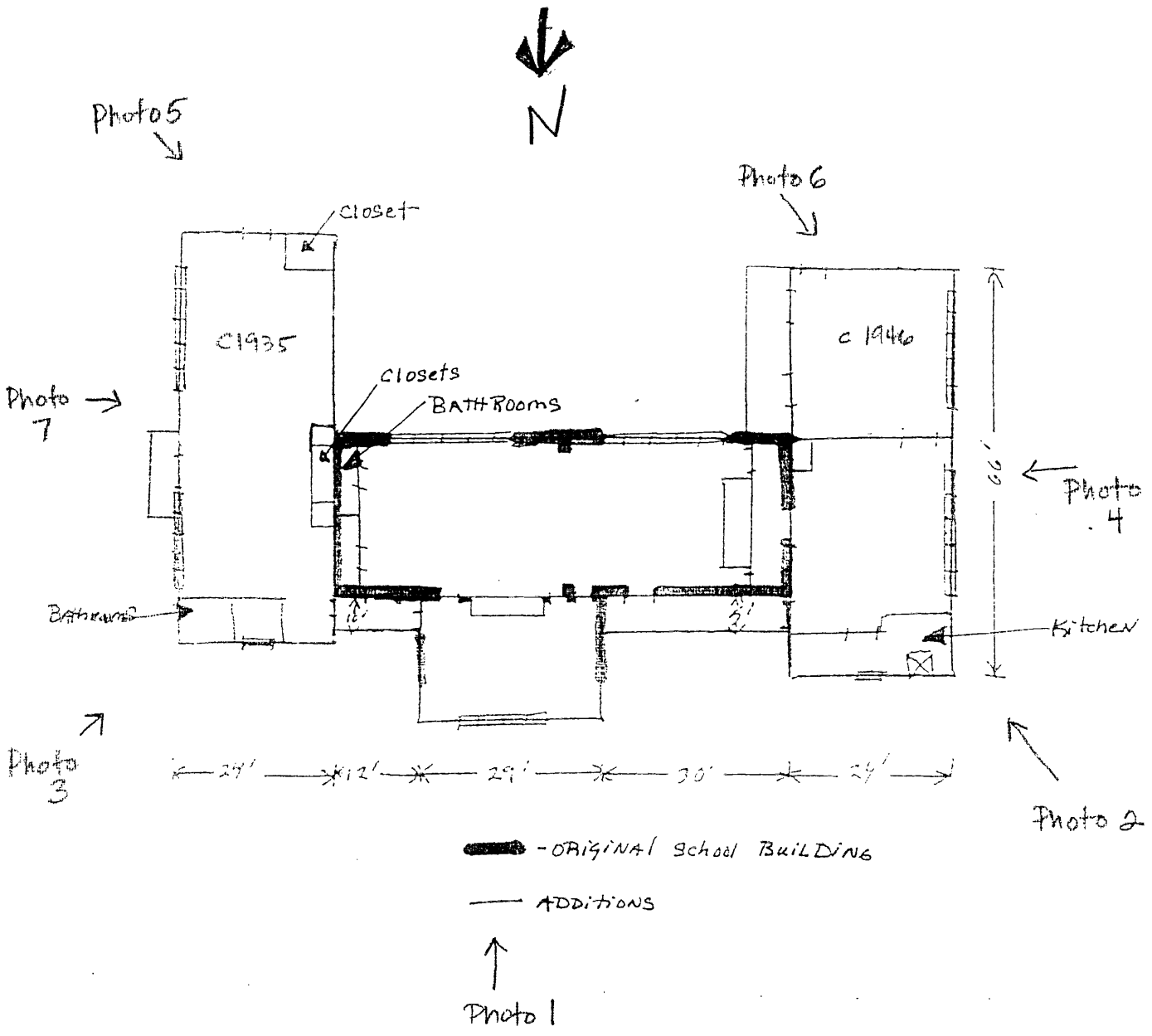
Washington, Booker T. and Clinton Calloway. *The Rural Negro School and Its Relation to the
Community*. Tuskegee, AL: Extension Department, Tuskegee Normal and Industrial
Institute, 1915.

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the southeast corner of the Midway colored public school lot and running thence south seven (7) chains and ninety-two links to a corner, thence west six (6) chains and thirty-three and one-third links to a corner, thence north seven (7) chains and ninety-two links to the southwest corner of said Midway public school lot, thence east along the south boundary line of said Midway public school lot, six (6) chains and thirty three and one-third links to the point of beginning and being a part of the SW 1/4, Sec. 17, Twp. 13, Range 25, and being a part of the sixty acre tract of land known as the M. C. Merritt "Sand Town Farm", and being located in the town of Midway, Bullock County, Alabama.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries were drawn to include that parcel of land historically associated with the Merritt School.



Photograph Identification &
Floorplan of the Merritt School

Midway vicinity, Bullock County, Alabama
 not to scale

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photos 6

Merritt School
Midway
Bullock County, Alabama

Section number _____ Page _____

Photographs

The information contained in items 1-5 is the same for all photographs.

1. Merritt School
 2. Bullock County, Alabama
 3. Jeff Mansell, photographer
 4. November 1996
 5. Negatives on File at the Alabama Historical Commission
 6. Photo #1
 7. Facade, camera facing south
-
6. Photo #2
 7. Northwest corner and facade, camera facing southwest
-
6. Photo #3
 7. Northeast corner, camera facing southwest
-
6. Photo #4
 7. West wing, camera facing east
-
6. Photo #5
 7. Rear elevation from southeast corner, camera facing northwest
-
6. Photo #6
 7. Rear of west wing, camera facing northwest
-
6. Photo #7
 7. East wing, camera facing west