

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0680648

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUL 21 1978
DATE ENTERED DEC 1

**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 Smith Robertson Elementary School
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 528 Bloom Street
CITY, TOWN Jackson VICINITY OF Fourth
STATE Mississippi CODE 28 COUNTY Hinds CODE 049

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Future

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME City of Jackson
STREET & NUMBER c/o Building Department
P. O. Box 17
CITY, TOWN Jackson VICINITY OF Mississippi STATE 39205

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, OFFICE OF THE CHANCERY CLERK
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hinds County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER East Pascagoula Street
CITY, TOWN Jackson STATE Mississippi 39201

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Statewide Survey of Historic Sites
DATE 1977
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Mississippi Department of Archives and History
CITY, TOWN Jackson STATE Mississippi 39205

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

- EXCELLENT
- DETERIORATED
- GOOD
- RUINS
- FAIR
- UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

CHECK ONE

- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Smith Robertson School is a two-story stuccoed brick structure with a flat built-up roof hidden by a low parapet. The building was originally U-shaped, and in later years the wings were lengthened and finally bridged by the addition of kitchen/lunchroom facilities at the rear. Designed in 1929 by the prominent Jackson, Mississippi, architectural firm of Hull and Malvaney, the building was wrapped around part of the previous 1909 school, no part of which is distinguishable today. All stylistic statements of this austere structure are reserved for the facade, which features a formal three-bay frontispiece of classical elements executed in the Art Deco idiom. Four pilasters are widely fluted with fillets. The low-relief capitals are composed of volutes evolving from the fillets and interlaced with "S" scrolls and stylized leaves. Bays one and three are identical, with paired eight-over-eight-sash double-hung windows at both floors, each window trimmed with an ornamental stepped lintel of cast concrete. Infilling the top of each bay is a cast concrete spandrel with low relief scrolls, volutes, circles, and stylized flowers and foliage. The center bay has the same second-floor treatment, but below, the smaller pilasters support a broken-arch pediment adorned with stylized leaves, anthemias, and a circular raised panel. The original double doors, now missing, were wood, each with long octagonal glazed areas. The frontispiece is capped by a simple entablature with a band of volutes in low relief. A flight of steps the width of the frontispiece allows access to the building.

The flanking portions of the facade are slightly lower than the frontispiece and are divided horizontally by three belt courses, one at the basement level, one above the second floor windows, and one finishing the top of the walls. These sections, as well as the other exterior faces of the building, are pierced with banks of five-window units, all of double-hung eight-over-eight wooden sash, each group indicating a classroom space.

Inside, the building is quite simple in both plan and decoration. From a rectangular entrance hall open two large classrooms, one on either side, a divided symmetrical stair on axis with the entrance, and two twelve-foot-wide corridors leading down the inside of the wings to the rear, with classrooms of various sizes opening from them. The original 1929 school included twelve classrooms, and eight more were added in 1935. In 1941 and 1952 brick and cinderblock lunchroom facilities were attached at the rear of the structure. Vacant since 1970, the building has been heavily vandalized but is still structurally sound.

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) Black History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1909, 1929 BUILDER/ARCHITECT 1909 C. H. Carroll, Contractor
1929 Hull and Malvaney, Architects

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Smith Robertson Elementary School is significant as the site of the first public school building for blacks in Jackson, Mississippi, and the parent school for all of Jackson's black community. Named for one of the city's most prominent black citizens of the nineteenth century, it memorializes this man, who devoted himself to the education of the youth of his race. The later portion of the building which remains today is an early and quite sophisticated example of Art Deco design in Mississippi.

The beginning of public education for blacks in Jackson was marked by an 1894 ordinance adopted by the city "providing for the issuance of bonds amounting to \$7,500.00 for the erection of a school building for colored children, and the payment of the purchase money for the lot on which the said building is to be erected." Soon after, a wood frame building was constructed on Bloom Street. In 1903 it was named for Smith Robertson, a black who had served as alderman from the city's fourth ward. Robertson was born a slave in Fayette, Alabama, in January, 1840. In 1869, he moved to Meridian, Mississippi, where he joined his brother in the business of barbering. He came to Jackson in 1874 and opened a barber shop near one of the city's most popular hostleries, the Spengler House. Smith Robertson soon became widely respected and was featured as one of Jackson's outstanding citizens in an 1890s booklet compiled to advertise the city's advantages and attractions. In 1893, he was elected, "without any solicitation on his part," to the office of city alderman, a position he held until his death on December 30, 1899.

At a time when popular support for black education in Mississippi was drastically on the wane, it was through his urging and influence that the city fathers moved to establish this school. As further testimony to his efforts on behalf of his race, he was appointed by the city government in 1897 a trustee for the school which was later to bear his name. He held a seat on that board for two years.

Since its establishment, the Smith Robertson School has been popularly regarded as the "mother school" by Jackson's black community. The original school building burned on January 3, 1909, "but was immediately rebuilt and opened again on September 20, 1909." The general contractor for this reconstruction was C. H. Carroll. The new building was considered to be "a great improvement over the one destroyed by fire, but was not yet really large enough" (Dalehite, p. 117). Subsequent alterations and additions to that building, and the construction of a

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dalehite, William Moore. A History of the Public Schools in Jackson, Mississippi, 1832-1972. Baton Rouge: The TJM Corporation, 1974, pp. 117, 294, 313.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History Jackson Scrapbook. N.p., n.d.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.4 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Jackson, Miss.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 764918 3577560
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A rectangular plot of land, part of Block 2, Hamilton addition, City of Jackson, measuring 383.43' x 159.99' x 382.88' x 159.99', situated between East Oakley, Bloom, Henry and John Hart streets.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Gregory B. Free, Restoration/Preservation Specialist
W. Norman Chronister, Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>Mississippi Department of Archives and History</u>	<u>July, 1978</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>P. O. Box 571</u>	<u>7326</u> <u>(601) 354-6218</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Jackson</u>	<u>Mississippi 39205</u>

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL X

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 Elmer B. Hilliard

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE July 25, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<u>Charles A. [Signature]</u>	DATE <u>12/13/78</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
ATTEST: <u>Ann H. Gilmore</u>	DATE <u>12/12/78</u>
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION	

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8 - SIGNIFICANCE

later front portion and facade in 1929, have given the building its Art Deco appearance. Other building programs added classrooms in 1935 and lunchroom facilities in 1941 and 1952.

Designed by the Jackson architectural firm of Hull and Malvaney, the 1929 facade of the building is of great interest with its high-style Art Deco frontispiece applied to what is otherwise a nondescript, almost industrial building. Of the buildings designed in this idiom locally, only a handful survive. Emmett Hull, well known for public and private buildings all over the state, produced as up-to-date a design for the new Smith Robertson School as he did for his upper-class clientele. This action constituted a significant break in the ideology that high-style design should be allowed only for those who could afford it. For 1929 Mississippi, the school building makes a significant architectural and social statement.

In order to achieve balanced racial integration of the Jackson public schools, Smith Robertson became one of nine city schools closed by an order of the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, June 22, 1971, since which time it has remained vacant. A new inner-city traffic loop will bring about the demolition of the 1941/1952 lunchroom additions (not included in the National Register nomination). The remainder of the building is under consideration for adaptive reuse by the City of Jackson as a multi-service community center for the black neighborhood surrounding it.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

McCain, William D. The Story of Jackson, A History of the Capital of Mississippi, 1821-1951. Jackson, Mississippi: J. F. Hyer Publishing Company, 1953, vol. I, pp. 216, 238, 248, 251, 252.

Wharton, Vernon Lane. The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1947, p. 249.

Wilson, Charles H. Education for Negroes in Mississippi Since 1910. Boston: Meador Publishing Company, 1947, p. 116.