

PH0000043

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: ALABAMA	
COUNTY: LAUDERDALE	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUN 20 1974	

1. NAME

COMMON:
Wesleyan Hall

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Wesleyan University

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Morrison Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Florence

STATE: Alabama	CODE: 01	COUNTY: Lauderdale	CODE: 077
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Florence State University

STREET AND NUMBER:
Wesleyan Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Florence	STATE: Alabama	CODE: 01
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Lauderdale County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
South Court Street

CITY OR TOWN: Florence	STATE: Alabama	CODE: 01
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

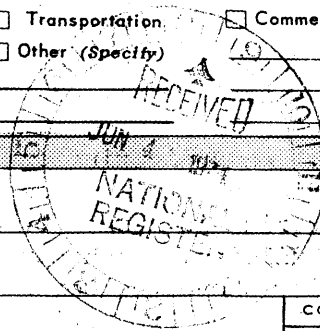
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:
COUNTY:
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DATE
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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building is an example of the Gothic Revival style and the Castellated sub-style of the mid-nineteenth century. It is a restrained design of the style and survives in good structural condition. The exterior walls are brick masonry and the interior partitions are wood frame, plastered, with wood and cast-iron floor frame. Two additions have been made to the original building in such a way that they do not alter the historic value of the original design.

The plan of the building appears to have been formulated from an earlier plan for a church structure and there are features of the design that indicate that the designer was an experienced professional with a Neo-classic background. The interior trim, doors, and stairway reflect the work of the known builder, Z. P. Morrison, and are identical to the work recently razed at the Synodical Training School site in Florence also constructed by the builder. The unique features of the design are the casement windows and frames, the exterior front entrance, the cast-iron long columns, and the brick exterior masonry battlements which terminate the corner turrets of the design. A large number of the original sash and frames have been replaced with counter-balanced double hung windows in such a way as to alter the original lintels of the masonry openings. None of the original hardware survives except for door hinges and a small quantity of casement window hardware.

The building is three story and attic in height and is arranged in an inverted "T" plan. The arrangement is symmetrical with the axial entrance hall crossed by a stair hall and side entrances about midway of the plan. An auditorium exists on the second floor level of the rear of the building and this space extends through the third floor. The stage of this auditorium is formed by an axial apsidial projection on the rear wall of the building. Each corner of the plan contains an octagonal turret projecting above the cornice or parapet line and is terminated by a masonry corbeled and projecting octagonal battlement coped in thin limestone. The finest feature of the design is the front entrance, exterior, which contains excellently proportioned and detailed Gothic and Tudor motifs.

The exterior masonry is now painted and appears to have been painted in the original work as the mortar joints are carefully cut to obscure the masonry unit in the wall surface. Specially formed, splayed, brick were used for the corners of the octagonal turret masonry.

Particular design preferences and the lack of the most commonly used elements of the Gothic Revival vocabulary suggest that the building was built from prepared drawings by a professional architect-designer without his structural supervision. The erection of the building is documented as having been done under the supervision of Zebulon Pike Morrison, a local builder-architect. This building remains as the most important and skilled accomplishment of the builder.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian; 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This building is one of the few surviving examples of the Gothic Revival style in the Tennessee Valley area and is perhaps the only non-domestic survival. It also is the last public or semi-public building of the past century in the Muscle Shoals area. Its relatively good condition renders it capable of authentic restoration to its original form and design.

Wesleyan Hall, or Wesleyan University, was built in 1855 on what is now Florence State University campus. It was an outgrowth of LaGrange College, a Methodist male academy located approximately twenty miles from Florence, Alabama. LaGrange opened in 1830 and until 1863, when it was burned by Federal troops, it continued to be a college for young men in the Tennessee Valley.

By 1846, LaGrange College had seen its best days and was suffering from lack of money and malarial surroundings. The need of money became so acute that by 1854 the trustees resolved to sell one hundred thousand scholarships at one hundred dollars each in order to endow the college permanently.

Such was the situation when the people of Florence asked the trustees to move LaGrange College to Florence. As an inducement they offered better buildings, a larger endowment, and a better local patronage. This offer was accepted by the Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi conferences of the Methodist Church, and in January, 1855, most of the faculty and students moved to Florence.

The name LaGrange College went with the group to Florence, but the General Assembly of Alabama refused to recognize the new institution under the old name because the dissenters at the earlier location claimed that title. In fact, there seems to have been active opposition to chartering the college at all. The act authorizing its incorporation was vetoed by Governor Anthony Winston, but on February 14, 1855, it was passed over his veto. This act created thirty-eight trustees and clothed them with corporate authority under the title of Trustees of Florence Wesleyan University.

more

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Diary of Sallie Independence Foster in the Collier Library, Florence State University, Florence. Alabama.
Memorial Record of Alabama in Two Volumes. Brant & Fuller, Madison, Wisconsin, 1893.
 Sherman, General William T., Memoirs of General William Tecumseh Sherman. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1957.
 Vaughn, Susan K., History of State Teachers College, Florence Alabama published as a quarterly bulletin of State Teachers College, Florence, Alabama.

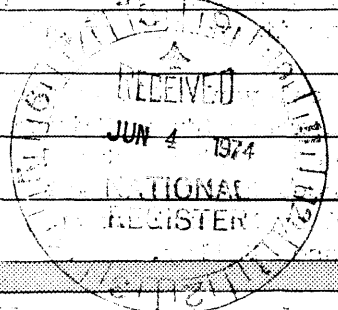
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		34 °	48 ' 32 "	87 ° 40 ' 47 "
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **2 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **W. Warner Floyd, Executive Director**

ORGANIZATION: **Alabama Historical Commission** DATE: **May 2, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER: **305 South Lawrence Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Montgomery** STATE: **Alabama** CODE: **01**

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u> Milo B. Howard, Jr. </u></p> <p>Title <u> SHPO </u></p> <p>Date <u> May 15, 1973 </u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u> Ernest A. Curralley </u> Chief Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation Professional Services JUN 20 1974</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u> Charles A. Ferry </u> acting Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u> 6/18/74 </u></p>
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE ALABAMA	
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(Number all entries)

8. Significance--Wesleyan Hall

Dr. R. H. Rivers, a member of the faculty at LaGrange College and a man of much experience and rare ability, was the first president of Wesleyan University and under his care the institution grew in numbers and standing.

The main, and only, building for the Wesleyan University was what is now known as Wesleyan Hall. This building, erected in 1855, was constructed by Zebulon Pike Morrison, a native of Rockbridge County, Virginia. Morrison moved to Lexington, Virginia, at the age of fourteen and was apprenticed to a cabinet maker. In later years he settled permanently in Florence where he was cabinet maker, coffin maker, funeral director, alderman, mayor and architect. He built several bridges in the area as well as the Florence Synodical College, the Wesleyan University, and other edifices.

The University continued to grow in enrollment until enlistment in the Confederate fighting forces attracted both students and faculty and the school was forced to close. During the war both armies used the grounds and buildings of Florence Wesleyan University for the billeting of troops and for other activities. When General William T. Sherman was in Florence in 1863 many of his troops were camped on the college grounds. In November of 1864, when the Confederates were again in control of Florence, they used the "Male Academy on the Hill" for parties and dances and concerts for three weeks. During this period Generals Beauregard, Forrest, and Stephen D. Lee were on the grounds of the University and probably used the building for offices.

After the war the Methodists found that they no longer had the money needed to run the University. They offered the building and grounds to the state for the establishment of an agricultural school, but the grant was not finalized because Auburn was chosen in preference to Florence. A second offer, this time for a normal school, was accepted. State Normal School was established on December 15, 1872, by an act of the State Board of Education. The establishment of this school was the most far-reaching change made in the educational life of Alabama since the beginning of the Public School System in 1854. The importance of the founding of the first (state supported) school for the training of teachers not only in Alabama, but in the entire South, for such a pioneer is the State Normal School at Florence, cannot be overestimated.

The school was founded in order that young men who wished to fit themselves for the profession of teaching might be the beneficiaries; but the act was amended in 1873 to include the education of ladies. The State Normal became also the first state supported coeducational teacher training school south of the Ohio River.

