

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1938 Clinton High School, East Feliciana Parish, LA

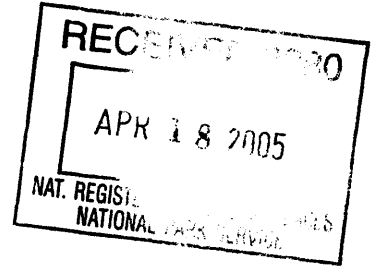
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: 1938 Clinton High School

Other Name/Site Number:



506

2. LOCATION

Street & Number 12525 Cedar

Not for publication: NA

City/Town Clinton

Vicinity: NA

State: Louisiana 70722

Code: LA

County: East Feliciana

Code: 037

Zip Code:

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

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

Nationally: Statewide: Locally: X

Jonathan Fricker (Signature)

April 15, 2005 (Date)

Jonathan Fricker, Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1938 Clinton High School, East Feliciana Parish, LA

Page 2

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
Determined eligible for the National Register
Determined not eligible for the National Register
Removed from the National Register
Other (explain):

Joe Edson M. Beall
Signature of Keeper

6/1/05
Date of Action

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private:
Public-Local: X
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s) X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing
1
1

Non contributing
buildings
sites
structures
objects
0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1938 Clinton High School, East Feliciana Parish, LA

Page 3

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Education Sub: School
Current: Vacant Sub: Not in Use

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Classical Revival

Materials: Brick, concrete

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Brick, Concrete

Roof: Asphalt

Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The 1938 Clinton High School, a restrained example of the Classical Revival style, faces a heavily traveled road a few blocks southeast of downtown Clinton. A large lawn or playground separates it from the highway. Because the brick and concrete building is sited at the edge of a low hill, the lowest of its three stories is an above ground basement. The building has received some additions at the rear and is deteriorated on the interior. However, it more than retains enough integrity to meet National Register standards.

A word of explanation is necessary regarding the reference to the building as the 1938 school. Three public high schools, two of which are historic, survive in Clinton. The oldest is a two-story frame structure constructed in 1903. It too is being nominated to the National Register. The candidate is the town's second public school; it opened in 1938 after the original building and its satellite structures became too small to hold the student body. The current Clinton High School dates to the 1980s. Construction dates are used as part of the names in order to distinguish the institutions from each other.

The simply styled building is rectangular in shape and has a hipped roof with overhanging eaves. Its Classical ornament includes: 1) rustication elaborated in concrete on the previously mentioned above ground basement story, 2) a belt course surmounting the rustication, 3) a second belt course which encircles the original building at the level of the second story window sills, and 4) a central portico. The latter is composed of two pairs of colossal Tuscan columns which support a molded entablature and a pediment with a raking cornice. The entrance behind the portico is reached by a grand flight of concrete stairs. These ascend to a mid-level landing from three directions, then turn and rise in a single flight to the portico's floor. Bands of large windows with multiple panes pierce the school's middle and upper stories. The windows piercing the above ground basement are much smaller than those above.

The school's floor plan is different on each level. The main (second) floor contains a range of

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1938 Clinton High School, East Feliciana Parish, LA

Page 4

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

classrooms paralleling the façade. A narrow central hall leads from the main entrance to a wide, two-story auditorium filling the central portion of the building's rear. Two very large skylights pierce the roof above the auditorium. Vestibules flank the auditorium's rear stage and link the auditorium to rear exits. Additional classrooms are grouped off the sides of the auditorium. Staircases leading to the upper floor and the basement are found at each end of the building. The upper story is similar to the main floor, in that classrooms parallel the façade on this level. The upper hallway overlooks the auditorium and stage and, despite its narrow depth, was used as a balcony as well as a hall. Interior decorative treatments include plaster walls above beaded board wainscots and a leaf motif decorating the molding surrounding the stage. Otherwise, the interior is unadorned. The basement story contains boys' and girls' restrooms, two classrooms, a mechanical room, several storage areas, and a large (roughly finished) area where movies were shown to the student body.

When the student body outgrew the 1938 building, the school board added frame classrooms to the rear of the upper level. Other alterations include the installation of acoustical ceiling tiles, the attachment of a runway (similar to those used in beauty pageants) to the stage, the subdivision of some of the classrooms, and a general state of deterioration caused by lack of maintenance. The only impact on the façade is deterioration, and none of the changes is serious enough to impact the building's integrity. Thus, Clinton residents from the historic period (some of whom were interviewed for this nomination) can still easily recognize the building. As the center of social life in the Town of Clinton between 1938 and 1955 (the required fifty year cutoff, see Part 8), the 1938 Clinton High School is a strong National Register candidate.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1938 Clinton High School, East Feliciana Parish, LA

Page 5

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance: Social History

Period(s) of Significance: 1938 - 1955

Significant Dates: 1938

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Herman J. Duncan, architect
W. M. Bozeman, builder

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USD/I/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1938 Clinton High School, East Feliciana Parish, LA

Page 6

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The 1938 Clinton High School is locally significant in the area of social history because it served as the focus of Clinton's community life from its opening in 1938 until 1955, the present fifty year cutoff. Once school consolidation began in East Feliciana in the 1940s, the school played a similar role in the lives of most parish residents.

Although Clinton traces its establishment to 1824, settlement in the region occurred as early as the 1790s when the area which would become East and West Feliciana parishes was ruled by Spain. During that decade, Lewis Yarbrough and a group of Anglo-Americans from Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia cleared land and built homes along Pretty Creek, a tributary of the Comite River.

Clinton's founding can be traced to the division of Feliciana Parish into East and West Feliciana by act of the Louisiana Legislature in 1824. Commissioners appointed to select a location for East Feliciana's parish seat chose a site on high land owned by Lewis Yarbrough slightly east of Pretty Creek. Citizens Susan Bostwick and James Holmes purchased land from Yarbrough, then commissioned a surveyor to lay out the town of Clinton. The entrepreneurs also donated a square to be the site of the courthouse and jail.

Early milestones in the community's history included the destruction of the first courthouse by fire in 1839; the construction of the still used, majestic Greek Revival courthouse with a domed cupola in 1840; the arrival of banking in the 1840s; and the completion of the Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad (also in 1840).

Like many Louisiana towns, Clinton's early economy centered upon the products grown on surrounding plantations. The railroad carried cotton, East Feliciana's main product, to the Mississippi River where it was loaded on steamboats bound for New Orleans. In 1858 the total shipped ranged between twenty and twenty-five thousand bales. By the end of the antebellum period, Clinton was a town to be reckoned with. According to *DeBow's Southern and Western Review* of September 1851, it did more business than any other Southern town of equal size. By 1858 the community supported two weekly newspapers, two buggy and carriage manufacturers, a livery stable, several private schools (see below), a large hotel, and the governmental and judicial functions of the parish.

This prosperity ended with the war of 1861-1865. During the battle for Port Hudson, the Marston House and Silliman Institute (see below) in Clinton served as Confederate hospitals. Once Baton Rouge was occupied in 1862, Clinton suffered foraging raids by Union soldiers. By the end of the war fire had destroyed the town's depot and the majority of its business district. After the war prosperity returned slowly to Clinton, but not as slowly as in some places in the South. By 1870 newspapers were again available and private schools (see below) had reopened. Using hired freedmen as laborers, East Feliciana planters revived the cotton growing industry. By the 1890s the town had several large mercantiles, as well as a brick and tile company, a cotton thread mill, and a large cotton seed oil mill. During the early years of the twentieth century coffee roasting and soft drink bottling plants contributed to the economy. The 1940s saw the arrival of the lumber industry, which stimulated the opening of several new businesses. However, Clinton followed the pattern seen in many small towns in the 1950s and 1960s as the commercial focus shifted to highway shopping strips and the local economy suffered.

Although its first several schools were private, Clinton's residents recognized the importance of

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1938 Clinton High School, East Feliciana Parish, LA

Page 7

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

education early. A girls' school opened in 1832; by 1858 the community hosted three private schools for girls and two for boys. Best known of the girls' schools was Silliman Female Collegiate Institute, a private school which operated from 1852 until 1931. A large (for its time) public school offering all grades opened in 1903 in a two-story frame structure (see Part 7). By the 1930s the frame school was far too small. Its auditorium had been subdivided as classroom space, additional classes had expanded into several small nearby structures, and all of the buildings were bursting with students. Education officials recognized that a larger school was needed. A new brick and concrete facility (the candidate) opened in 1938. The architect was Herman J. Duncan; the builder, W. M. Bozeman.

Clinton's residents considered their public school the heart of their small community (population of 998 in 1940). According to several older residents interviewed for this nomination, three factors contributed to this attitude. First, Clinton's adults were sincerely interested in the town's young people, and the youths' activities centered upon the school. Second, the building was the place for any community activity of any size. (The only other possible space was the courtroom in Clinton's antebellum courthouse, but part of its area was taken up with facilities for judicial officials and juries.) Finally, as more than one person explained, "There wasn't anything else." Therefore, once the 1938 school opened, it became the focus of the community. And when school consolidation began in the early 1940s, people from throughout East Feliciana Parish came to feel the same way. Children targeted the school for their Halloween pranks. All residents supported the institution's activities, including turning out for graduation ceremonies whether one had a child graduating or not. Of course, sports were a special focus. When Clinton High School's football team competed for the state championship around 1950, the whole parish "emptied" because the game was being played in North Louisiana. Interest was so intense that a telephone operator relayed the score to those few people forced to remain behind.

Presentations that were not school-related drew large audiences to the school's auditorium. The interviewees remembered dance recitals, musicales, plays, minstrel shows, talent shows, style shows and weight lifting meets as being presented in the auditorium. However, the memory which generated the most smiles during the interviews was that of several "womanless weddings." These were hilarious spoofs of weddings in which young men and boys played all the roles. Some of these entertainments were used as fund-raisers as well as social events. Although students often took part, adults from the broader community also participated in the entertainments. Again, these were community-wide events, not school events. The school also served as the center of more serious activities. For example, the interviewees remember that a large Masonic convention held in Clinton during the historic period used the auditorium as its meeting space. And during World War II, for example, it was to the school that people delivered the scrap rubber and metal they collected for war materiel drives.

The high school's role as the social focus of the community lasted into the 1950s. However, as television and other types of entertainment became available, people began to look elsewhere for social activity and entertainment. The school continued in operation until the 1980s, when a new facility on the outskirts of town replaced it. However, the new institution does not inspire the affection and loyalty its predecessor generated in the community. In the days before television and the Internet, school activities and public entertainments were eagerly awaited diversions in rural and small town America, and Clinton and East Feliciana Parish were no exception. Thus, the 1938 school is greatly cherished by those who remember it as more than an educational institution; for they remember it as the very center of the town's (and later the parish's) community life.

NOTE: The 1938 Clinton High School has been vacant since the 1980s. Clinton officials are

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1938 Clinton High School, East Feliciana Parish, LA

Page 8

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

currently studying the possibility of restoring the building as a community center.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Duncan, Patricia L. "Town of Clinton Joins Main Street Program," *Preservation In Print*, December 2003, p. 7.

Eagle's Lookout. Clinton, LA: Clinton High School, 1948 [Clinton High School Annual].

East Feliciana Parish School Board Minutes, February 1, March 15, March 29, June 9, 1938; copies in East Feliciana Parish School Board Office, Clinton, Louisiana.

Interview with Betty Lou Cain, age 83, long-time resident of Clinton, October 28, 2004; notes in National Register file.

Interview with H. Toler Hatcher, age 73, long-time resident of Clinton and graduate of 1938 Clinton High School, October 28, 2004; notes in National Register file.

Interview with Hubert L. Polk, Jr., age 73, long-time resident of Clinton and graduate of 1938 Clinton High School, March 2004; notes in National Register file.

Interview with Louis C. "Skeet" McKnight, age 79, long-time resident of Clinton and graduate of 1938 Clinton High School, March 2004 and October 28, 2004, notes in National Register file.

Interview with Mary Ann Garner, long-time resident of Clinton and graduate of 1938 Clinton High School, October 28, 2004, notes in National Register file.

Interview with Nelwynne Tynes, age 67, long-time resident of Clinton and graduate of 1938 Clinton High School; notes in National Register file.

Interview with Sarah Phares Chaney, age 74, long-time resident of Clinton; notes in National Register file.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1938 Clinton High School, East Feliciana Parish, LA

Page 9

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
- 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

Acreage of Property: approx. one acre

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
 15 689940 3415800

Verbal Boundary Description: See attached sketch map.

Boundary Justification: Boundaries were chosen to encompass the significant resource while excluding various non-contributing buildings on school board property.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: National Register Staff

Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: Fall 2004

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

1938 Clinton High School, East Feliciana Parish, LA

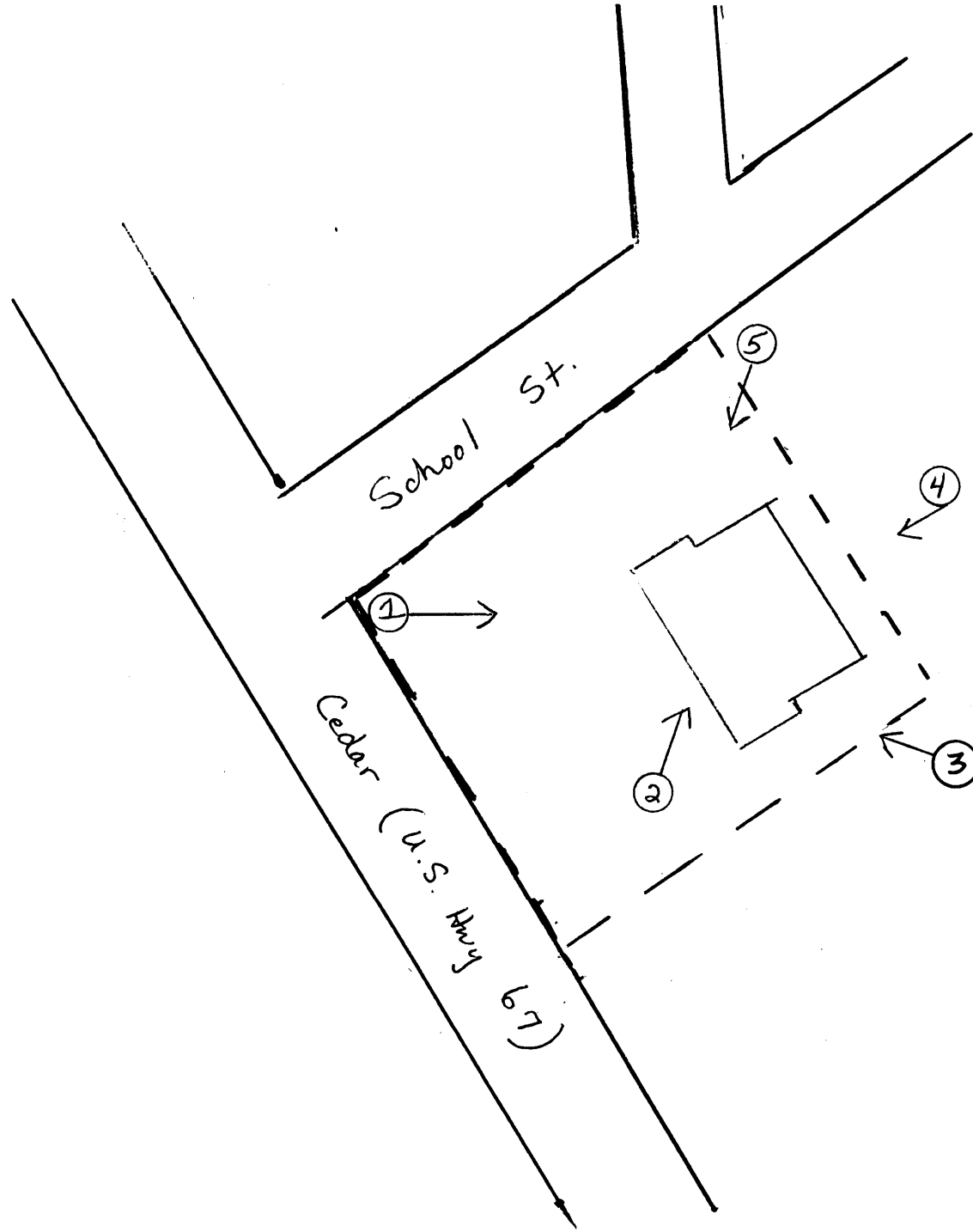
Page 10

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

PROPERTY OWNERS

East Feliciana Parish School Board
P. O. Box 397
Clinton, Louisiana 70722



Clinton High
School (1938)
East Feliciana
Parish, LA



1" = 80'

--- BOUNDARY