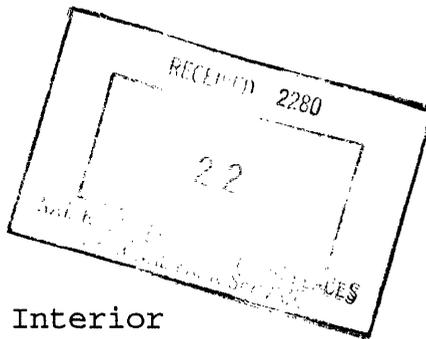


USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
(Oliver School)  
(Clark County, Kentucky)  
Site number CK-W-901

1795  
1



OMB No. 1024-0018  
(Expires Jan. 2005)

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. Aug. 2002)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name OLIVER SCHOOL  
other names/site number CK-W-901

2. Location

street & number 30 Oliver Street not for publication NA  
city or town Winchester vicinity NA state Kentucky code 049 county  
Clark code 049 zip code 40391

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. (     See continuation sheet)

David L. Morgan  
Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan, SHPO

May 28, 2004  
Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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):

Edson H. Ball 5/4/04  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure
	<input type="checkbox"/> object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:   EDUCATION   Sub:   SCHOOL  

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:   RELIGION   Sub:   Religious Facility    
  SOCIAL     Civic  

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements

Materials      foundation Poured-in-place concrete  
Roof: not visible, tar and felt /w bituminous aggregated  
walls wood and cement plaster / Brick  
floor wood and concrete

Narrative Description See continuation sheets.

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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 EDUCATION  
ETHNIC HERITAGE - Black  
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance 1938-1954

Significant Dates 1938

Significant Person NA

Cultural Affiliation NA

Architect/Builder Taylor, M. Gibson, Architect (Gymnasium)  
unknown for main building

Narrative Statement of Significance: **See continuation sheets.**

### 9. Major Bibliographical References See continuation sheets

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 0.713 acres

UTM References

		Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
Winchester	1	16	747 650	4208 880	3	_____	_____
Quad	2	__	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

Verbal Boundary Description: **See continuation sheet and PVA Location Maps.**

Boundary Justification: **See continuation sheet**

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Sheila Collins

organization M.A.S.T. of Winchester LLC

Date March 7, 2004

street & number 41 seventh street

telephone (859) 771-1569

city or town Winchester state KY zip code 40391

**Property Owner**

name Christ Temple II

street & number 30 Oliver Street telephone (859) 744-8551

city or town Winchester state KY zip code 40391

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## **7. Description**

The Oliver School (CK-W-901) is a three-story brick building located at 30 Oliver Street, Winchester, seat of Clark County, Kentucky. The building is located in a residential neighborhood, bounded on both sides (north and south) by residential zoned property, on the front by a city street (Oliver) and the rear by an alley. Like many historic urban schools, the site is highly confined, with virtually no excess outside space. The area proposed for nomination is 0.713 acres.

The site has a history of use as a school beginning in 1892. In that year, work was begun on a wood-framed wood-sided six-room schoolhouse; it was completed in 1895. In 1904 that school building was expanded to include high school classes, and by 1928 a gymnasium was added (Engle, 119). Between 1928 and 1938 the grade school in the southern half of the building was demolished and replaced by brick building (*Winchester Sun*, February 4, 1938). The wood-sided high school building on the north half of the site was demolished in the summer of 1938, and rebuilt from brick, with construction continuing until spring of 1939 (*Winchester Sun*, December 30, 1938). The school was expanded again in 1956 with the addition of a multi-purpose building. The building closed as a school in 1969.

The building, as it appeared in 1939, has a symmetrical plan, and the front entry is half a level above grade, approached by exterior concrete steps. The lowest level is about half below grade and is formed of concrete walls. The building has a flat roof composed of tar and felt, covered with bituminous roofing. The 1956 multi-purpose addition's roof was also flat, but has been changed into a pitch roof with metal tin being its cover. The main entries of both the 1938 and 1956 buildings face toward Oliver Street, in an east-southeasterly direction.

Interior has walls of plaster and lath and hardwood flooring with boards running from the front to the back of the school. On the second and third level these floors are in acceptable condition, but show some spots of water damage from the leaks in the ceiling. The wood windows of the original building will require either replacement or significant rehabilitation. These windows measure 7'-8" in height and 4' 0" in width. The windows are double-hung sashes. Each room has 4 windows lighting it. The upper two levels contain classrooms roughly equal size: 33'10" x 25'2". School offices consisted of secretary and principal's office divided by a wooden door with square windows. Bathrooms consist of 5 stalls and an oval elongated sink with two faucets.

The 1956 multipurpose addition to the 1938 building contains a gymnasium, cafeteria, stage, kitchen and offices, making no attempt to re-create the architectural character of the original building. It is a utilitarian structure constructed to meet code and usage requirements of the time of its construction.

The building is generally in good condition, although the original structure has continued to deteriorate due to roof leaks and the lack of use and maintenance. All mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems will require complete renewal and the building will have to be fully sprinkled in order to comply with current safety codes. Apart from the 1956 addition, no significant changes to the appearance of the 1938 portion of the building have occurred since its completion. The architect for the historic portion of the building is unknown. M. Gibson Taylor, Jr., a Winchester architect and civil engineer, designed the multi-purpose room in 1956.

## **8. Statement of Significance**

Oliver School (CK-W-901) meets National Register criterion A, and is significant within the historic context, "African American Education in Clark County, Kentucky, 1865-1956." The school is locally significant in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage because during the period that the site was used as a school, 1892 – 1956, it provided the greatest educational opportunities for African-American students in Winchester and Clark County. The education of African Americans within Kentucky and elsewhere throughout the Southern states occurred much differently than for Whites, and is marked by great challenges of funding for adequate facilities. Often, schools for Blacks were not built in an enduring way. The Oliver Street School building stood, at its construction, as a remarkably well-constructed edifice. As a result, it remains as the most prominent feature of the local landscape associated with this important historical theme. Its significance also derives from the fact that it was the only place in the community where African-Americans received education at the secondary level. The Oliver Street School is the only surviving historic community high school structure, as both the Winchester High School and the original Clark County High School buildings have been demolished.

### **African American Education in Clark County, Kentucky, 1865-1969**

Clark County, Kentucky, was established in 1792, the year Kentucky gained statehood. The population of Blacks in antebellum Clark County varied from a low of 5,000 people to a high of 13,000 people in 1860 prior to the end of the Civil War (1860 U.S. Census). During this time, of course, the County's African American population was not formally educated in schools. In isolated instances, blacks received education during antebellum years due to the benevolence of slave owners. Judge Charles Stephen French was one who gave his slaves "religious and industrial training." Philip B. Winn taught his slaves to read and write; one of them, George R. Gardner, proved so adept at business that after gaining his freedom he amassed an estate of \$25,000 (Engle, p. 26).

Immediately after emancipation, little formal education was available to blacks in Winchester or in Clark County. The first school in the county was started in 1866, yet was so instable that it took place in a rented building. In 1869 the Freedman's Bureau gave money to build the first permanent school for blacks in Winchester, after blacks themselves had raised money to purchase the lot. This building went up at the corner of Broadway and Wall Street, and survived at least into the 1930s (Engle, 29, 43, photo on 125). The first school in the county outside of Winchester was erected in Howard's Creek in 1870 (Engle, 29).

Among the first known efforts to provide general education for Blacks came in 1880, with election of a board of trustees composed of African American men. This marked an effort to organize and support a school system independent of the white-only County school system. It operated for 15 years. The 1880s board of trustees was elected, and consisted in J. T. Taul, Dan Baker and M. Bell. One measure of success for this effort

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was the proliferation of schools that arose. By 1886, 11 black schools were in operation within the county (Engle, 30).

Engle based this count on the annual report of the County's Superintendent of Schools, which did not identify the location of all 11 schools. However, some of those early buildings are reported in Engle's work and elsewhere:

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Approx. Dates of Operation</b>
First Winchester School	Unknown	1866-
Freedman's Bureau school	Broadway and Wall Street	1869-
Log school	Maple and Washington	unknown
School	24 Second Street, Winchester	unknown
Mr. Moore's House	423 Washington	unknown
next to Numan's Saloon	Washington Street	1888-
Mrs. Benton's home	Third Street	1880s
Rosenwald School	Water Works Road	unknown
Forest Grove Schoolhouse	Forest Grove Road	unknown
Old Laundry	South Highland Street	ca. 1885-1890
Mrs. Benton's school	Third Street	ca. 1885-1890
Unnamed School	Washington and Oliver Streets	ca. 1885-1890

Perhaps some of Winchester's early success in educating blacks benefited from an unusual nearby institution, Berea College, one of the nation's first places to educate blacks and whites together. As early as 1855, blacks could obtain teaching degrees from Berea, which is 30 miles south of Winchester. In fact, the black school trustees named G.A. Benton, a Berea graduate, as the first principal of the black County system, and named Lizzie Hummons, Carrie N. Wills, Julia A Benton, and Nettie David as teachers. Benton's wife, also a Berea alumna, operated a school out of their home for a time (Engle, 117-118).

Berea-educated Benton occupied a vastly important role in local educational affairs and in promoting the social stability of Winchester's African American community. In Winchester, as elsewhere in the state, the principal had to maintain the school's operation under extreme pressures of under-funding. In 1880 Benton began by organizing the County's black school system according to professional models he learned about at Berea. He started a generalized system of graded education for the school that resulted in fewer grade divisions than in the 8-grade elementary white schools.

In the mid-1880s, a local shift in the local school financing resulted in the temporary closure of the main school for African Americans in Winchester. In 1885, Winchester became a 4<sup>th</sup>-class city, earning the right to collect taxes to pay for a city school system independent of the county school system. As part of this change, the city named a school board with white trustees, who took control of the black school in town, closing it

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for a time. This resulted in a local controversy over the governance of black education: did it lay in the hands of the trustees and Berea-educated Benton working for the County, or under the newly formed white-only City school system? During this controversy, the main Winchester school for blacks was closed, and classes were conducted in several of the locations above, such as the old laundry on South Highland, the building at the corner of Washington and Oliver Street, and Mrs. Benton's home (Engle 118).

With the adoption of the state's new constitution in 1891, blacks in Winchester began to campaign for greater control of the separate school system. In 1892, a local bond issue was passed that financed the construction of a new school. On the Oliver Street site, a 6-room school began construction.

Benton's contributions in the 1880s laid a solid organizational and educational groundwork that led to the construction of the school, but by the early 1890s local disputes weakened his framework. Construction on the Oliver Street School was not completed. In 1893, the County's black board of trustees replaced Benton with J.H. Mingo, and replaced Mingo in 1894 with J.H. Garvin. Amid this seeming chaos, in 1895, Winchester's white school system took control of the city's black school system, and completed construction of the building (Engle, 119).

In 1895, a defined course of study was given for the grades, and the first class of eleven students graduated from the school. The board subsequently adopted a two-year high school course of study, and in June 1897, a class of six students completed the course and graduated (Oliver School Yearbook 1910-1920, and Clark County Clerk Office Deed Book).

Engle's statistics give an overview of education of Clark County blacks from the 1890s through the later 1920s. Enrollment figures show a steady increase in the number of children in the system from 1890-1916, then a gradual decline in enrollment from 1917-1927 (p. 122). It took several years for construction of schools to meet the demand of students. The County Superintendent's annual report of 1897 notes that many students were schooled in churches or other buildings. By the 1920s the county had caught up with that demand, creating 15 black school districts and building 15 frame schools and one stone school. These schools collectively contained 2000 seats, and were populated by 20 teachers, 10 male and 10 female. But by the late-1920s, the system of one-room schools spread across the county had come to be seen as inefficient. By 1928, the County only operated eight one-room schools, estimating the total value of that physical plant at \$1,200, with their furnishings being worth \$1,000 (pp. 73-76). This low figure contrasts with the Oliver Street School's value in 1928, which was \$46,280 (p. 120).

The increasing value of Oliver Street School over time occurred through expansion of the building and its property—expansions that paralleled a growing curriculum. In 1904, the building was remodeled to a larger faculty, as music, drawing and domestic science were added to the course study. In 1909, the faculty grew to twelve members, and manual

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training was added to the study course. Principal Garvin resigned in 1917 to serve in World War I, and E.S. Taylor, who was assistant Principal, took over.

Taylor organized the school so that it divided students into a Junior and Senior High School. In 1923, the Board of Education purchased a nearby house occupying the southern one-half of lot twenty-one of the plat of Oliver's Addition, to erect a gymnasium with the aid of community welfare workers. Taylor also secured a four-acre playground for the children, through raising one thousand dollars each from local sources, from the Board of Education and from the Harmon Playground Fund Commission of New York. That 4-acre playground occupies a separate location of the school, three blocks away.

In November 17, 1923 the Board of Education continued to expand the property, purchasing a house and lot on the southern one-half of lot twenty-one in Oliver's Addition (Clark County Clerk Office, Deed Book 100, pg. 542).

E.E. Reed became Principal in 1928, upon Taylor's death. That year, Oliver School became a four-year high school. Reed expanded the physical plant by having a gymnasium constructed and a playground on the left side of the school property. He also raised the educational standards of the school by laboring to have the school accredited with the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Mr. Reed resigned in 1932, and Scott V. Mitchell guided the school through the Depression Era. The school's survival required extraordinary help from the African American community; individuals, local businesses, and churches contributed to the operations. In 1937 G.W. Adams succeeded Mitchell. He was instrumental in the erection of the new building in 1938. That year, the Board of Education gave to the school the old remaining books from the white school to continue education. In 1938 the wood-frame portion of Oliver School, used for high school classes, was demolished. During the second half of 1938 the school building was completed, making the entire school appear to be constructed at the same time.

The Oliver Street School had the same financial support as the white schools. The rules and regulations were governed by the Winchester Public School Corporation until 1944. On December 8, 1944 the three schools were turned over to the City of Winchester for purchase price of \$177,625.00 and placed under the New Deal bond issued. (Clark County Clerk's Office, Deed Book 150 pg. 464 and Deed Book 125 pg. 446).

The Oliver Street School was an all-African American High School and Elementary School until local efforts to integrate education began to change the system's organization in 1955. The school-renewed bond was to serve the area known as the Oliver School District under Winchester Board of Education. The building came under a contract of lease, and was rented to the City of Winchester Commission in August 23, 1955 (Clark County Clerk's Office Deed Book 197 pg. 20). The lease was an effort to reconstruct the following schools: Hickman Street, Fannie Bush, and Oliver Street School. In 1956, following the Brown vs. the Board of Education decision, and the

federal ruling regarding school desegregation, Oliver High school was terminated and African-American high school students were assimilated into the two other existing high schools in the community.

On February 20, 1956 the Winchester Board of Education terminated the High School. Integration was begun in the Winchester High School and Clark County High School in 1957. Both groups tried to make the venture a success. Almost one-fourth the city high school population was African American in 1956. The Hickman Street School is the only elementary school that was integrated, and had 26 African Americans among its 278 students. In the midst of this social and educational change in the community, the year 1956 marked two other important changes for the Oliver School, the construction of the multi-purpose building the retirement of G.W. Adams as principal.

The African-American schools in Winchester were more than just educational institutions. They, along with churches, served additional purposes that provided services to youth in the area. For instance, schools and churches sheltered Boy Scout and Girl Scout activities. The school had a Parent –Teacher Association that contributed in many useful ways. Public Library facilities were made available during the summer and the school year. Recreational activities were provided through baseball, arts and 4-H camps. Until the closing of the Oliver Street School in 1969, its principal was Rev. George Frazier. The Oliver Street School graduated a total of 392 African Americans since 1956 and was supervised by a total of eight principals who acted as leaders as well as educators in Winchester's African-American community.

Oliver Street School closed as an active school in 1969. It reopened in March 1971 as a Citizens Community Center Organization (Clark County Clerk's Offices Deed Book 257 pg. 472). It was renamed the Whitney Young Community Center, helping the people of Winchester as a community service building. It housed different youth programs during the time when school is not in session. It had a day care and Head Start program. It also served as a social service and counseling program to the community. It closed the doors again in the late 1970's for lack of funding.

Now the school is reopened once again, and in the hands of a private owner, whose goal is to develop it into a community center and a historical museum. The Baby Boomers who attended Oliver School, that last generation to use it as a segregated institution, are now in their mid-to-late fifties. Very few of its teachers and administrators are yet living. All too soon, sources of first-hand knowledge of the Oliver School institution will be forever lost from this community. The tangible evidence it gives to this era of our racially segregated society heightens the significance of this landmark.

### **Conclusion.**

The remaining structure is the sole building representing over 123 years of African-American education in this community, and from the time of its construction, served as the town and county's major building associated with the contextual theme. In addition to

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its purpose as an educational facility, it also served its social context. The school was a site for activities including little leagues, arts and crafts circles and 4-H camps. It is one of the major institutions of both education and community for African Americans in th

## MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

### Published Sources

- 1928 Engle, Fred Allen  
*History of Education in Clark County*. University of Kentucky Master's Thesis  
:  
*DeBeer's Atlas of 1844, Lexington: University of Kentucky Library*
- 1860 U.S. Census Clark County, Kentucky
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- 1938 *Winchester Sun*  
"School Building Plans Announced" February 4, p. 1  
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- 1978 *Winchester Sun*  
Bicentennial Edition, September 18
- 1990 *Winchester Sun*  
"Hearing Set to Determine School's Fate" July 24, 1990 (p. 1?)

### Unpublished Sources

- Clark County Board of Education, photo Submit closing in 1969*
- Oliver Street School Year book 1910-1920, Editorial Staff
- Clark County Clerk's Office Deed Books*  
Book 63, pg. 59  
" 100, pg. 542  
" 116, pg. 130  
" 125, pg. 446  
" 150, pg. 467  
" 197, pg. 20  
" 257, pg. 472  
" 265, pg. 93

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## 10. Geographical Data

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The property dimensions are described in Deed Book 116 page 130 as follows:  
“Beginning on the West Side of Oliver Street, Winchester Kentucky, 272 feet north of the present north margin of Broadway Street, corner to lots 17 and 18 of Oliver Addition; thence running on the line between lots 17 and 18 North 67 degrees 00 minutes West 129 feet to the East margin of the 15-foot alley way; thence along the east margin of the alley North 23 degrees 45 minutes East 175.8 ft to a stone marking the center of the lot 21. Then South 67 degrees 00 minutes East 129.75 ft with a fence intended to be the center of Lot 21, to the end of a stone wall in front of the school property on the west margin of Oliver Street; thence South 23 degrees 45 minutes East 175.4 feet along the west margin of Oliver Street and with the stone wall in front of the Oliver Street school property”

### **Boundary Justification**

The area proposed for listing is the extent of land that has been associated with the significant resource, a historic African American school during the period of significance. The area proposed for listing contains school and the small setting that surrounded the school historically. No other features have been added to the site over time to impact the property's internal integrity of setting.