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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name: Okolona College

other names/site number: Okolona Industrial School, Okolona Normal & Industrial School

2. Location

street & number: US Highway 245 North, 1.1 miles north of
intersection with MS Highways 41 & 32

city or town: Okolona

state: Mississippi

code: MS

county: Chickasaw

code: 017

not for publication ___

vicinity ___

zip code: 38860

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Kenneth H. P. Poul

Signature of certifying official

JUNE 27, 2002

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or 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 or other official

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. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

8/9/02
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:

Private

Number of Resources within Property:

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Category of Property:

District

Contributing

4

Noncontributing1 buildings
1 sites
1 structures
2 objects
2 Total**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Education/college

Current Functions:

Vacant/Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification(s):

Modern

Other: Vernacular

Materials:

foundation: brick, concrete

roof: asphalt

walls: brick, stucco, wood

other

Narrative Description:

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- XXX 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.

Areas of Significance A

Education
Ethnic Heritage/Black

Period of Significance
1929-1952

Significant Dates
1929, 1950

Criteria Considerations:

Property is:

- 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.

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation(s)

n/a

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance: See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet.

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:

Okolona City Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately thirty (30) acres

UTM References:

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|------|---------|----------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 16 | 337520 | 3765490 | C | 16 | 337935 | 3765160 |
| B | 16 | 337935 | 3765490 | D | 16 | 337535 | 3765160 |

___ See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Michelle Weaver Jones, Historian III
organization: Historic Preservation Division, date: 1/8/02
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
street & number: Post Office Box 571 telephone: 601.359.6940
city or town: Jackson state: Mississippi zip code: 39205-0571

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(s)

name: National Council of Negro Women, care of Dr. Jessie Mosley
street & number: 1968 Wingfield Circle telephone: 601-353.3354
city or town: Jackson state: Mississippi zip code: 39209

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 the 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.

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7 - Description

The Okolona College Historic District is located on the west side of US Highway 245, 1.1 miles north of its intersection with Mississippi Highways 41 and 32, and within the city limits of the City of Okolona. The campus consists of four extant buildings, Abbott Hall, McDougall Hall, Vocational Agriculture Building, and the T. D. Bratton Memorial Dormitory; one gazebo; and the ruins of a boy's dormitory. Entrance to the campus is through one of three sets of decorative brick piers flanking the drives. A historic neon sign on a brick pier is located at the north entrance to the campus. Abbott Hall and the gazebo are located on the interior of a horseshoe-shaped drive that connects the two interior entrances, forming a large green-space. All other buildings are to the exterior of the drive, face the green-space, and are connected by concrete sidewalks. The architecture of the buildings is vernacular and/or modern.

The district contains four contributing buildings, one contributing structure, three contributing objects, and one non-contributing site, identified as follows:

- 1 C **Abbott Hall. Circa 1929-1930.** Facing east, a one-story, brick and stuccoed building with side-gabled roof of asphalt shingles, divided into 7 bays, w-w-w-d-w-w-w, which are delineated by soldier-course brickwork around normal running bond. Primary entrance is centrally located on the east façade under a cross gable with lunette window in gable end and a cornice of terra cotta which reads "'Okolona Normal & Industrial School.' The door opening, which has been boarded-in, is surrounded by a soldier-course band with four, square, cast-concrete bricks at each corner and flanked by a pair of sidelights, which are flanked by brick pilasters with terra cotta capitals. Four (4) chimneys, all somewhat deteriorated, stretch along the roof just behind the gable ridge. Full façade porch is on the western, rear, elevation, undercut, and supported on simple, wooden posts. Doors are six-light, five-panel. Windows are boarded shut with non-historic and sheet metal; however, one opening exposes a multi-light metal window.

Rosenwald Fund records at Fisk University list "Okolona Industrial" as a recipient of Rosenwald funding. Abbott Hall matches the description in the records--brick, four classroom-- and it may be deduced that Abbott Hall is the building to which the records refer. The building's primary façade bears a resemblance to *Rosenwald Plan #6*, although the back porch deviates from this plan. Works Progress Administration records of Chickasaw County also refer to the building as "the Rosenwald building."

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Abbott Hall housed four (4) classrooms, the President's Office and a reception room, and the Registrar's Office. The students of Okolona College, primarily under the leadership of then President A. M. Strange built the building, begun in 1929 and finished by 1934.

- 2 C McDougall Hall. Circa 1931.** To the north of Abbott Hall and facing south toward Abbott Hall, a two-story, painted brick building with roof obscured by flat parapet. Decorative brickwork is evident along the cornice on all sides and in the quoined pilasters at each of the corners of the building. These pilasters also divide the northern and southern elevations into three (3) bays and the eastern and western elevations into two (2) bays. Windows are generally paired of singular, sixteen-light steel casements. The entrance is a six-light, one-panel, double-leaf door with four-light transom, in the central bay of southern façade. This entrance is under a flat-roofed, open vestibule with rounded arch. Iron railing on the roof of this vestibule forms a balcony for a second-storey entrance, which is a four-light, one-panel, double-leaf door with two-light transom. The entrance is flanked on each side by windows: single, four-light, steel casement windows with diamond-shaped, metal muntins on the first storey and single, eight-light, steel casement windows on the second storey. Decorative, terra cotta panels are located at the cornice, above the entrance, and on either side of the entrance and between the first and second storeys.

McDougall Hall is the most architecturally significant, extant building on the Okolona College campus, built in a modern style. On the first floor, the McDougall Hall housed the offices of the Chaplain, Business Manager and Dean as well as a Chapel. The Health Department and Nurse's Office, the Science Department, and Home Economics Department, and a guest chamber were housed on the second floor.

- 3 C T. D. Bratton Memorial Dormitory (Bratton Hall). Circa 1950.** To the west of Abbott Hall, facing south, T. D. Bratton Memorial Dormitory, more commonly called Bratton Hall, is a multi-winged, asymmetrical, one-story, scored-brick building with gabled, hipped, and gable-on-hip asphalt roofs. Windows are primarily paired, ten-light, steel casements. Front façade has two entrances, one being a three light, one-panel, double-leaf wooden door with three-light transom and the other being a non-historic, single-panel, double-leaf metal door with

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three-light transom. Windows on the southern elevation of the primary façade are two- and four-ganged, eight-light, steel casements.

The two major wings of Bratton Hall were used for the women's dormitory. The building also housed a laundry for the campus, as well as the campus cafeteria.

- 4 C **Vocational Agriculture Building. Circa 1950.** Across the campus greenspace from Bratton Hall, and facing north, the Vocational Agriculture Building is a one-storey, brick building with a side-gabled, asphalt shingled roof. Windows are paired, two-over-two, multi-light, and aluminum-framed. Primary entrance is on the northern façade, centrally located, under a gabled portico supported by two brick columns and enclosed with decorative, open-work, poured-concrete tiles.

This building apparently was built on the site of the Robert Patton Library and Old Okolona Hall (not to be confused with the Okolona Hall known as the Boy's Dormitory), both apparently destroyed by fire at the same time but documented on the 1945 Sanborn Maps of the campus.

- 5 NC **Boy's Dormitory. (Also called Okolona Hall in a school yearbook from 1954.) Circa 1950.** Two the east of the Vocational Agriculture Building and facing north, the Boy's Dormitory is a one-storey, scored-brick, flat-roofed building. Decorative basket-weave brickwork is evident along the upper wall beneath a concrete-capped parapet. Windows are paired, multi-light, steel casements. Primary façade features interesting, diagonal-wall entrances. Only the northern façade and partial walls of east and west façades stand after a fire destroyed the rest of the building in 1992. Because of its ruinous condition, it is considered non-contributing.
- 6 C **Gazebo. Circa 1950.** Within the campus greenspace, off-center to the south and almost centered between the Trades Building and Okolona Hall, the gazebo is octagonal with a domed, asphalt-clad roof with wooden cornice. Brick arches in a running bond pattern form each of the eight sides of the gazebo. The floor of the structure is poured concrete that connects to sidewalks linking the gazebo with the campus buildings.
- 7 C **Brick entrance piers. Circa 1950.** Located at the southern entrance to the campus, a pair of brick piers flanks the drive. Each entrance pier is composed of two square piers with stepped bricks laid in a pyramidal formation.

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Connection the two piers is a brick wall with a basket-weave pattern surrounded by a soldier pattern, all on a base of running bond and topped by a row of header bond.

- 8 **C** **Brick entrance piers. Circa 1950.** Located at the northern back entrance to the campus, a pair of brick piers flanks the drive. Each entrance pier is composed of two square piers with stepped bricks laid in a pyramidal formation. Connection the two piers is a brick wall with a basket-weave pattern surrounded by a soldier pattern, all on a base of running bond and topped by a row of header bond.
- 9 **NC** **Brick entrance pier. Circa 1950.** Located at the northern main entrance to the campus, a brick pier and wall flanks the northern side of the drive. This brick entrance pier holds little integrity, in comparison to the other piers, and is therefore considered non-contributing.
- 10 **C** **Okolona College Entrance Sign. Circa 1950.** At the northern entrance to the campus, located on the former US Highway 45, now a dirt road, is the Okolona College entrance sign. A metal, arrow sign tops a large, pyramidal pier of decorative brickwork, pointing west toward the campus, which once had the words "Okolona College" lit by neon gas in tubing. Above the arrow is a small metal piece on the north side of the sign which reads, "Founded 1902" and below the arrow "Wallace A. Battle."

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8 - Statement of Significance

The Okolona College Campus Historic District is locally significant for its role in Education and African-American history under Criterion A. The period of significance is from the date of construction of the oldest extant building, Abbott Hall, in 1929 to 1952, fifty years from this date. The campus played a vital role in the education and vocational training of African Americans in the northeast region of Mississippi during the twentieth century prior to integration of the state's educational facilities.

Okolona College (formerly the Okolona Industrial School or Okolona Normal and Industrial School) was founded in 1902 by Wallace A. Battle who believed the answer to the problem the African-American population was facing was best found through education. He challenged interested citizens in Okolona to raise \$4,000 to begin a school for the African Americans of northeast Mississippi. Mr. Battle also enlisted the assistance of some of the leading white people in Okolona, who were interested in the institution and were able to dissipate animosity from members of the community about the education of African Americans at the Institute. In 1904, Okolona College was incorporated and instruction began in the old Calvary Baptist Church and Mr. Battle's blacksmith shop.

Okolona College was a non-sectarian school until 1920 when it became affiliated with the American Church Institute for Negroes--a branch of the Protestant Episcopal Church that operated nine educational institutions for African Americans in the south at that time.

Okolona College served as a four-year high school and two-year junior college. Students were able to choose from course study in elementary education, business education, general education, building trades, home economics, and agriculture. Coursework was based on the idea that "no one is truly educated unless one is trained to earn a living with his hands as well as his head." (J. L. Raspberry) Consequently, the curriculum was based on three days of academic study with two days devoted to trade or industry for young men and women. Many of the buildings at Okolona College were built by students in the course of their vocational training. This training can be seen in the changes that occurred on the campus: many wooden framed buildings were built, that were later bricked or stuccoed by other students.

At its height, Okolona College encompassed 380 acres of land in the rich prairie section of northeast Mississippi and educated more than three-hundred day and boarding students a year. Curriculum provided training to high school age students since there was no African-American high school in the area until 1959. A survey in 1964 indicated that Okolona College had provided education to 85% of all African-American teachers in the tri-county area of Chickasaw, Calhoun, and Monroe Counties. Okolona College ended its educational service to the African Americans of northeast Mississippi in 1965. The campus and buildings were purchased by the Local Sections, National Council of Negro Women, State of Mississippi, Inc. in 1986.

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9 - Major Bibliographical References

Bailey, Eileen. "Okolona College: Women's group breathes life into 94-year old school." *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*. Monday, March 25, 1996, Page 1A.

Calvin, Mabel and Ruby E. Cook "Races & Nationalities in Chickasaw County." Chickasaw County Historical Research Project, Volume 3, Assignment #10, August 18, 1936. Mississippi Works Progress Administration Records. Okolona Library, Okolona, Mississippi.

Calvin, Mabel and Elma Holloway, Supervisor Mrs. J. C. Hightower, "Schools of Today." Chickasaw County Historical Research Project, Volume 3, Assignment #19, December 17, 1936. Mississippi Works Progress Administration Records. Okolona Library, Okolona, Mississippi.

Mayhorn, Steve. "A.M. Strange: Legacy Untapped in Lee County." *Northeast Mississippi View*. August 20-26, 1983.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson. Historic Preservation Division. Historic Resources Inventory for Okolona College, Okolona, Chickasaw County.

Okolona Sanborn Map. 1945:1.

"Okolona, Mississippi: A Case Study Speculating on the Possibilities." Small Town Center, School of Architecture, Mississippi State University, 1996.

Owen, Brenda. "For Okolona College It's a New Beginning." *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*. Weekend Edition, August 23-24, 1986, Section C, pp. 1 & 3.

Raspberry, J. L. "Chapter XXV: History of the Okolona College." *History of Okolona*. Okolona Chamber of Commerce, 1984.

Raspberry, William A. *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*. Tuesday, August 6, 1996, Page 4A.

Rosenwald Fund Records, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee.

Site visits, January 9, 2001 and January 7, 2002, by Michelle Weaver Jones, Historian III, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

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The Voice of Okolona College. (Also, The Voice of OIC.) Okolona College Commencement Issue, 1954 Yearbook. Pp. 23 & 25.

Works Progress Administration photograph, undated, Okolona Library, Okolona, Mississippi.

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Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet.

The boundaries of the Okolona College Historic District are delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points, from the northwest corner, clockwise:

A. 16 337520 3765490

B. 16 337935 3765490

C. 16 337935 3765160

D. 16 337535 3765160

Boundary Justification:

See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the largest intact area of historical resources related to the Okolona College campus circa 1929-1950.

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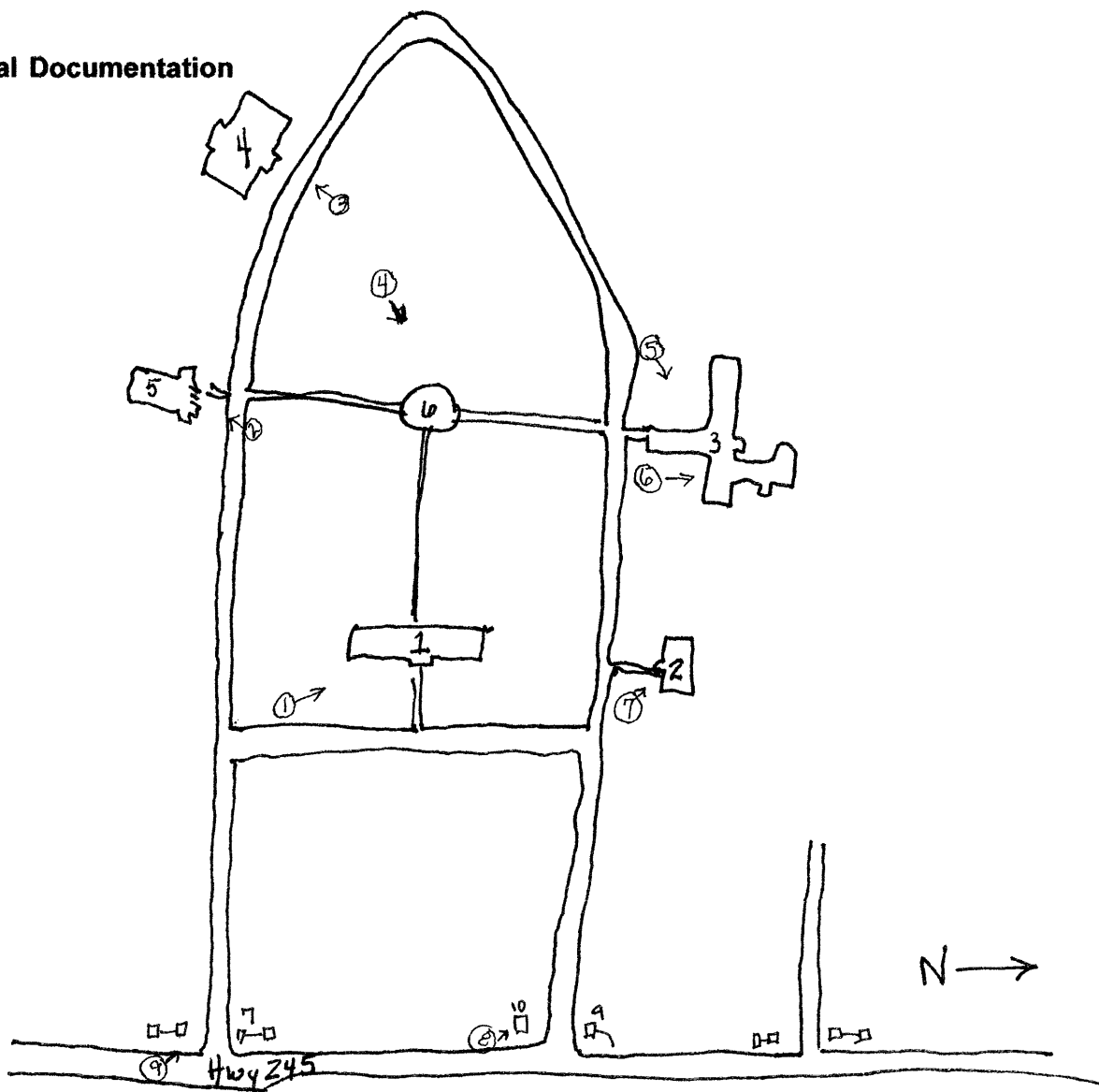
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Additional Documentation
Site Map



- 1 Abbott Hall
- 2 McDougall Hall
- 3 T. D. Bratton Memorial Dormitory
- 4 Vocational Agriculture Building
- 5 Boy's Dormitory

- 6 Gazebo
- 7 Brick Entrance Piers
- 8 Brick Entrance Piers
- 9 Brick Entrance Pier
- 10 Okolona College Entrance Sign

circled numbers indicate photographs, arrows indicate view