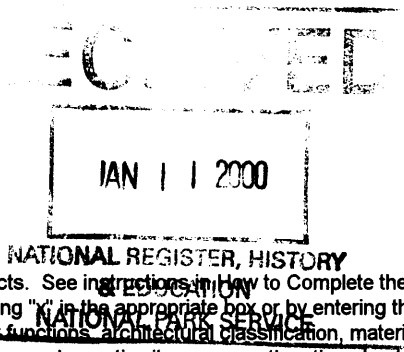


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

73



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on how to complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Phillips School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number approx. 1/2 mile west of junction of LA 421 and Harrisonburg Rd. NA not for publication

city or town Atlanta X vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Winn code 127 zip code 71404-2254

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 for additional comments.)

Gerri Hobdy

January 5, 2000

Signature of certifying official/Title Gerri Hobdy, Date
LA 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. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying 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):

Edison H. Beall
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

2/10/00

Phillips School
Name of property

Winn Parish, LA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
—	—	sites
—	—	structures
—	—	objects
1	1	Total

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Education

Sub. School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Vacant

Sub. Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick, Concrete

walls Weatherboard

roof Metal

other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 1

The Phillips School is a small one room frame building situated along a dirt road in southwestern Winn Parish's rural community of Emden. It shares a clearing with the nearby New Bethlehem Baptist Church. (The post office address for both buildings is in nearby Atlanta.) The school was constructed in 1918 using salvaged parts from an old building located nearby (see Part 8). A vernacular structure, it is classified as having no style. Although the building has received some non-historic alterations, mainly on the interior, it would be immediately recognizable by its former students.

Measuring forty-one feet by thirty feet, the hipped roof Phillips Schools stands on low piers (some made of concrete and some of brick), is sheathed by weatherboard siding, and is covered by a slightly overhanging metal roof with exposed rafter tails. Two single doors, set side-by-side in the facade wall, provide access to the interior and are protected from the elements by a metal shed roof supported by large brackets. The interior is well lighted, having one window on the facade, double windows on both sides, and eight windows (in bands of four each) on the rear elevation. Most of the windows display panes in a six-over-six configuration. However, two of them have sashes containing nine panes each, suggesting that the building may originally have been constructed of salvaged parts. A brick chimney survives on the rear; it served as the smokestack for a large wood-burning stove which once heated the interior. The school's one room is sheathed in beaded board siding, and this material also covers the ceiling. Two interior posts located along the building's center line help to support the weight of the roof.

Alterations to the school since 1918 include the removal of the wood burning stove, the covering of one window with metal, the loss of the original wood steps leading to the two entrances, the construction of a storage closet in one corner, and the subdivision of the original one room into three. However, this subdivision is not as significant as it might at first seem. The plywood partitions are flimsy and, in some cases, do not rise to the ceiling; and the room's original configuration is easily discernable. And, as noted above, the Phillips School meets the litmus test for integrity under Criterion A, for it would be immediately recognizable to students who attended school there during the historic period.

Non-Contributing Element

The New Bethlehem Baptist Church mentioned above is located within the nominated acreage. While the church is historic and is historically related to the

CONTINUED

Phillips School

Name of property

Winn Parish, LA

County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

Phillips School (see Part 8), it is being counted as a non-contributing element. It does not appear to meet the criteria consideration for religious properties – for example, it cannot be documented (other than oral tradition) to have served as a school (see Part 8). In addition, the church has experienced major alterations, including the application of vinyl siding and the construction of a large rear wing.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" next to the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- 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

NA

(Mark "X" next to all that apply.)

- 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

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Education _____
- Ethnic Heritage/Black _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

- 1918-1949 _____
- _____
- _____

Significant Dates

- 1918 _____
- _____
- _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

- NA _____

Cultural Affiliation

- NA _____
- _____
- _____

Architect/Builder

- Emden Community Members _____
- _____

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

NA

- 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: _____

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 1

The Phillips School is of local significance in the areas of education and ethnic heritage because it represents the only opportunity available for local African-American children to receive an education. It provided grades one through seven to children in Winn Parish's Emden community and immediate vicinity. The building was the area's only African-American school from its opening in 1918 until its closure in 1955. However, the ending date of the period of significance for this nomination is 1949 to follow the Register's fifty year cutoff.

The Phillips School must be viewed within its historic context for a full appreciation of its significance. Firstly, it is important to understand that despite its location on land owned by the New Bethlehem Baptist Church, the school was not religious in nature. It represents a common and important phenomenon in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Louisiana – churches and/or church members who assumed much of the responsibility for providing a public educational system for African-American children. By way of background, Louisiana for the most part did not make significant progress in public education until the early twentieth century, whether for whites or blacks. The watchword among late nineteenth century politicians was retrenchment, and although provision for public education was made in various statutes, funding was woefully inadequate for even a single school system, let alone the dual system mandated by segregation. Another factor was the general lack of interest in public education. Private education was more desirable, with public education bearing the stigma of being "pauper" education. In short, its customers were those too poor to go to private schools. And in heavily Catholic South Louisiana, the church provided schools.

What developed in the post-Reconstruction years under the name "public education" was often a public-private system in which the state contributed some funding, with local sources providing the building and other necessities. Among African-Americans, churches played a prominent role. An important phenomenon across the state was a so-called public school being held in a church or in a building on church property. As T. H. Harris, State Superintendent of Education from 1908-1940, reported in his autobiography: "In most cases Negro churches were used for schoolhouses and the only equipment in these churches were the benches used for

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Section 8 Page 2

church services." These efforts were augmented with various private philanthropic funds aimed at improving African-American education in the South (for example, the Rosenwald fund).

All available evidence indicates that the Phillips School was a public-private partnership of the type described above. In a transaction dated March 24, 1908, William "Bill" Phillips (a local African-American landowner who had acquired his holdings through the Homestead Act) sold a two acre parcel of land (the present site) to "the Deacons & pastor in charge of New Bethlehem Church No. 1" in Southwest Winn Parish. The sale price was seven dollars. Current community members (including descendants of William Phillips) state that his purpose in conveying the property was to provide a church and school for members of the area's African-American community. However, the deed shows that a church already existed on the site. Most likely, Phillips had previously allowed the church to be constructed on his property and then decided to convey ownership of the land and building to church elders.

Because a separate building was not available, classes were held in this church, according to local tradition, for the first ten years of the school's existence. At first a committee of local citizens oversaw the school's operation. By 1918, however, the Winn Parish School Board had adopted the institution and, in that year, found new quarters for it. These quarters consisted of a one-room building located about five miles away, just across the nearby Grant Parish boundary in or near the rural community of Verda. The Board left the task of moving the building to the local school committee; so it was Emden residents who dismantled the structure and rebuilt it on the former Phillips land. Even children took part in this process; Morrell Fobbs (who attended the school from 1918-1924) remembers driving nails during the building's assembly. Born in 1913, he would have been no more than five or six years old at the time.

During the period remembered by former students interviewed for this nomination, the school served residents living in an approximate five mile radius from its site. Students routinely walked this distance in all kinds of weather, then made a return trip of equal length. Besides Emden, other communities served included Atlanta, Wheeling, Cooley Lake and, possibly, Verda. One early student remembers the

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building being “packed” with students. Records for 1920 and 1921 (preserved by a local family) document eighty students and indicate their ages as ranging from five or six to twenty at that time. By the 1930s the number of children served annually had fallen to between thirty and fifty, and they ranged in age from six to about fourteen. Locals estimate that Phillips educated approximately 1,850 persons during the thirty-seven years of its operation.

As documented in the interviews, the school’s equipment and operation changed very little over the years. The room contained a teacher’s desk made from beaded board identical to that which covered the walls. A bench or two stood near this desk, and the rest of the room was filled with student desks. At one point a stage existed on one side of the room. Its curtain consisted of a piece of cloth strung on a wire. Oil lamps provided light. Heat came from a very large wood-burning stove, the wood being donated by community members. A blackboard, pencils, paper, and books were available, possibly purchased with the small fees initially paid by students. However, as time passed some books were damaged, forcing teachers to skip some lessons entirely when the pages were missing.

Although the school eventually offered seven grades, the interviews indicate that there was never more than one teacher at a time. Some stayed for several years; at other times turnover was rapid. Teachers always boarded with local residents during the week but usually left the area on weekends. At first the school term was only about four or five months long, generally running from October or November through February. This schedule ensured that the children would be available to assist with their families’ farming activities.

When in the classroom teachers taught one grade level at a time. The students in that grade moved to the benches to receive their lectures. Afterward they would return to their desks, where they were expected to either do homework or at least sit quietly while the next grade received its lessons. Sometimes the brighter students were asked to supervise and assist their friends during these study sessions. Unless the weather was poor, at least one grade was always outside at recess, leaving only six rather than seven grades inside the building. Older children supervised the younger ones during recess periods.

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At first the curriculum consisted of the three "Rs"—reading, writing (including spelling) and arithmetic. However, as the children's ability to read increased, the books they read expanded from "Dick and Jane" type readers to subjects such as geography and hygiene. The same subjects were repeated yearly, but were studied more deeply each year as the children grew older. Occasionally they also studied a bit of history. Some teachers added subjects of their own choosing. One taught telephone etiquette, even though there were no phones in the area at that time. Others organized school plays in which each child played a part. In the early 1930s someone built a small separate building to serve as the school's kitchen. Parents and children both raised money to purchase pots and pans, and the school board donated some food. Using this facility, the teacher taught her female students to cook; together they provided the school's first hot lunches (a daily allotment of beans and rice) to the student body. Until that time, the children carried their lunches to school. Although there were no organized sports activities, spelling bees and other academic events (some attended through field trips to the parish seat of Winnfield) provided some opportunities for competition and entertainment.

During the school's later years the facilities and teaching strategies remained basically unchanged, but other improvements did occur. Although by this time the school taught only grades one through five, the curriculum expanded to include science and Louisiana history. The term also expanded in length. Electric power arrived some time between 1937 and 1947, the kitchen was moved to a corner of the older building, and the school board assumed responsibility for providing food for lunches cooked on the site. (However, children still had to pay six cents per day for milk.) By 1950, buses were being used to carry children to the school.

The Phillips School's service to its community ended in 1955, when the Winn Parish School Board closed the facility. The board then donated the building to the local community; for years the adjacent church used it for meetings and dinners. It is now vacant except for a few pieces of furniture stored there.

Although the Phillips School is significant because of the traditional academic education it provided to its students, its influence was much more far reaching than this

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statement might suggest. Teachers taught other valuable life skills as well. Explained Dessarine Phillips Smith (who attended from 1933-1934), "The school made quite a bit of difference [in her life]. The teacher was very well educated and very creative. She taught us how to make do – to make things out of nothing." Another former student, Charles Melvin Willis (who attended 1950-1955), emphasized how the school's reinforcement of the discipline taught at home gave him "the greatest start" of his life. "I wouldn't have gone as far as I did in the military," said Willis, who retired as a Master Sargent after over twenty-two years of active service. "I was head and shoulders above some others." In conclusion, as the only source of education for African-American children in the Emden area of southwest Winn Parish for many years, the Phillips School is a strong National Register candidate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beats, Maude, Phillips School Attendance Records, 1920-1921, copy in National Register file.

Conveyance Record, copy in National Register file.

History of Phillips School submitted by applicant, copy in National Register file.

Interviews with various former students, including Morrell Fobbs, James E. Phillips, Linnie Sapp, Dessarine Phillips Smith, Quincy V. Howard, Charles Melvin Willis, and Vernon Rece Pennywell. Conducted by Patricia Duncan, November 15, 1999.

Site visit by National Register staff.

Phillips School
Name of property

Winn Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 522040 3512880

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date November 1999

street & number P.O. Box 44247 telephone (225) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

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

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

. . . the following described land situated in the State of Louisiana and Parish of Winn and described as follows: Beginning at a point fifty yards east of the New Bethlehem Church on Section line between Sec. 15 and 22 and running West (100) one hundred yards, thence South (100) one hundred yards, thence East (100) one hundred yards, thence North (100) one hundred yards to starting point containing 2 acres more or less together with all the improvements thereon. . . .

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

Boundaries follow the historic property lines of the parcel William Phillips sold to the deacons and pastor of New Bethlehem Church No. 1 in 1908 for the purpose of establishing a church and school for members of the Emden community.

PROPERTY OWNERS

Building:	Members of the Emden community
Land:	New Bethlehem Baptist Church 1950 Harrisonburg Road Atlanta, Louisiana 71404-2254