

MULTIPLE RESOURCES OF GREENVILLE

BUTLER COUNTY, ALABAMA

Historic Name:	Theological Building (Boys' Dormitory) A.M.E. Zion Theological Institute	Owner: African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (Christian Education Dept.) c/o George L. Blackwell 158 East 58th Street Chicago, Illinois
Common Name:	Lomax-Hannon Jr. College	

Address: E. Conecuh Street

Acreage: less than one acre UTM: 16/536600/3519810

Verbal Boundary: Beginning at the southernmost right-of-way of a drive situated approximately 685 feet north of the northeast right-of-way of Warren and S. Conecuh Streets; and thence northeasterly approximately 75 feet along the easternmost side of said drive; and thence northerly approximately 300 feet to a point at the northern edge of a circular off-shoot of the drive, this point being the True Point of Beginning. Proceeding northerly 120 feet to a point; and thence easterly 100 feet to a point; and thence 132 feet southerly to a point; and thence westerly 100 feet to the TPB. Situated in Parcel 12 of the 24 acre section of the Lomax-Hannon Industrial College Campus in Greenville, Butler County, Alabama. Outlined in NW 1/4 Section 25, Township 10N, Range 14E on Map # 10-08-07-25-02. Building measures 60' x 48'.

Date of Construction: 1911

Statement of Significance:

Criterion A - Education/Religion:

The Theological Building of the Lomax-Hannon Junior College is significant as the earliest remaining building associated with black education in Butler County, and as the only known building associated with the efforts of the A.M.E. Zion Church in the development of church-supported schools for blacks during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Alabama. The building reflects a 40-year period extending from 1875 through 1915 when Alabama churches, both black and white, led the efforts to improve higher education by establishing and supporting schools and colleges. The leading black denomination in this movement was the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church which by 1911 had attempted three parochial school ventures in Alabama. Presently, the Lomax-Hannon Junior College (the second of these three ventures and the only one which survives) serves as the A.M.E. Zion Church institution of learning in the state and is administered by the Christian Education Department of the A.M.E. Zion Church.

Description:

The Lomax-Hannon Junior College Theological Building is a two-story brick building with a medium pitched hipped roof. The facade features a protruding two story entrance tower situated at the center containing a deeply recessed entry framed with a decorative brick arch. The symmetrically placed windows, which run primarily in ranges of fives, are capped by soldier-header brickwork.

Built in 1911 the building was constructed to accommodate its use as both a boys' dormitory (upper floor) and as classroom space below. The building's exterior brickwork and basic original form are intact; however, the building has been altered and is in need of extensive repair.

Integrity Assessment:

Alterations: The building has retained its basic form, approximately 60% of its original fabric and its integrity of location, setting and association. It has, however, suffered the loss of its two primary roof details (the truncated pyramidal roof capping the entrance tower and three gable roof dormers), its four original brick chimneys with corbeled caps, and all of its original window lights and most of its frames. Although the exterior shell of the building is basically sound and intact, the interior loss is much more substantial. While the second floor appears to be partially intact, only the first floor support system, center hall floor studding and staircase of the building's interior remain.

Historical Summary:

The Theological Building is the only structure remaining from the early 20th century development of the A.M.E. Zion Theological Institute. Established in 1893 as Greenville High School by Bishop Thomas H. Lomax and several leading elders of the East Alabama Conference at Butler Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church in Greenville. Classes were held in the Butler Chapel Church building in Greenville until 1898 when Reverend Allen Hannon initiated the purchase of land on which to construct a school building.

The second major parochial school venture of the A.M.E. Zion Church in Alabama (preceded by Jones University in Tuscaloosa which closed in 1900 and followed by Zion Institute in Mobile which became a local project and was renamed the Josephine Allen Institute), the school was assigned the support of all the A.M.E. Zion Conferences embracing Alabama, Louisiana and Florida. The first building, a female dormitory was completed in 1909 and followed in 1911 by the completion of this building. The first floor of the building was used as the Theology Department, although the upper story served as a male dormitory.

By 1920 the school had been lifted to junior college level, boasting more than 200 acres of land. The school's progress during this period is primarily attributed to the efforts of Bishop John W. Alstork who engineered a successful financial program for the school that surpassed the efforts of all the national or regional group affiliates combined. Alstork also maintained a long-time chairmanship of the trustee board. His ardent commitment to the advancement and perpetuity of this institution spanned the last twenty years of his life, and when he died he willed his home to the Lomax-Hannon Junior College.

In addition to the important role this building represents in the early training of black ministers, it housed area farmers who attended the County Farmer's Conferences during the early and mid-20th century, conducted as an extension service of Tuskegee Institute.

During the 1970's Lomax-Hannon A.M.E. Zion Connection and administrators began to embark on expanding the building facilities. As a result, The Theological Building suffered a lack of attention and subsequent depreciation. A movement to revive the building for re-use failed when funds were depleted. Still victimized by the failing finances of the institution, the area's oldest secondary/post-secondary education school building associated with black education and one among the earliest in the state lies in severe disrepair.