

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAR 28 1975  
DATE ENTERED APR 3 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Wilcox Female Institute

AND/OR COMMON Wilcox Female Institute

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Church Street

CITY, TOWN Camden

STATE Alabama

VICINITY OF CODE 01

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT I

COUNTY CODE Wilcox 031

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: vacant

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Wilcox County Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER c/o Mr. Guy Kelly, President (1975)

CITY, TOWN Camden

VICINITY OF

STATE Alabama

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Wilcox County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Camden

STATE Alabama

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE H. A. B. S.

DATE 1935

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN Washington

STATE D. C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wilcox Female Institute is a two-story, red brick structure of Greek Revival design. It measures approximately 75 feet by 40 feet and the solid brick walls are 20 inches thick.

A central two-story portico, approximately 20 feet square, dominates the front of the building and features two plain Doric columns of plastered brick. The floor of this porch is now concrete, but was originally wooden. The central entrance door is topped by a four light transom and is similar to the door which gives access to the balcony.

Windows are four feet by seven feet and double hung with six lights in the upper sash and nine in the lower. Two end-interior chimneys are located on both sides of the structure and provided heating for the eight main rooms of the buildings.

The roof is hipped and topped with a square wooden bell tower 25 feet in height. The original louvers of the tower have been boarded over. The rear of the building clearly shows the outline of the two-story wing which measured 35 feet by 60 feet. Also visible is the bricked up outline of three doors which led to porches. These porches were removed along with the wing in the 1960's.

The interior walls and ceilings are of plaster and the wooden floors have been covered with tile. Some alteration of the original floor plan, a central hall with four rooms per floor, were made in the early part of the century.

The building is structurally sound but in need of restoration.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      1850

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wilcox Female Institute is the oldest educational landmark in this section of the state and is one of the better known early Alabama institutions for the education of women. Incorporated in 1850, the school reflects the interest of the prosperous planters to provide a "correct" education for their daughters.

In 1833 the seat of Wilcox County, in the rich black belt section, was moved from Canton Bend to Camden. The land for the town had been donated by W. T. Dunn whose conditional gift specified that the county seat be moved to the property. In 1842 the new town was incorporated.

The school had its beginning in 1848 when a group of citizens from the area made up subscriptions for the establishment of a school for young ladies. By 1850 the institute had been incorporated, a faculty employed, a catalog published and the building completed.

Records show that in the fall of 1850 the Institute had an enrollment of 250, including the primary department, the music department, the department of fine arts and embroidery, and the department of French language.

The incorporators of the Institute were James A. Tait, L. W. Mason and Joseph George. The original trustees were Col. J. C. Jones, D. W. Sterrett, Col. C. C. Sellers, Joseph George, Major M. M. Bonham, Dr. M. Reid, J. W. Bridges, Dr. Robert Irvin and Major F. K. Beck.

Records of the school indicate that it remained in operation throughout the Civil War, but in 1866 the property was sold to Dr. John Miller, an Associate Reformed Presbyterian minister and educator who conducted the school for a period of seven years. After Miller relinquished leadership of the Institute, it continued in operation as a private school under a series of principals until 1908 when it was deeded to the State of Alabama for use as a county high school.

High school classes were conducted in the building until 1937 when the new high school building, located on adjoining lot, was completed. After that time only two rooms in the downstairs of the building were used for elementary school classes, and after 1965 the building was used only for band practice.

The rear wing of the building, originally used for dormitory and classrooms was altered about 1930 when the principal converted it into a gymnasium. Removal of beams during this conversion weakened the wing and in 1960 it was condemned and torn away.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jones, W. J. "42 years as an Alabama Blackbelt County Superintendent of Education" unpublished manuscript, 1974.

Kennedy, R. C. "1932 Camden's Centennial year - Black Belt County Seat founded in 1832," unpublished manuscript, Camden Public Library, 1932.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

Latitude: 31° 59' 34" Longitude: 87° 17' 46"

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

W. Warner Floyd, Executive Director

ORGANIZATION

Alabama Historical Commission

DATE

March 18, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

725 Monroe Street

TELEPHONE

832-6621-22

CITY OR TOWN

Montgomery

STATE

Alabama

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

SIGNATURE

*Nils B. Howard, Jr.*

TITLE SHPO

DATE March 21, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*AR Young*

DATE

4/5/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*[Signature]*

DATE

APR 2 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

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Plans call for the restoration of the school which has been deeded to the Wilcox County Historical Society for use as a center for senior citizens.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliographical ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

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Liddell, Viola, "Benjamin Meek Miller, 1864-1944: The Sturdy Oak of Wilcox."  
unpublished manuscript, 1969.