

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

MAR 7 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Silliman Institute

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number Bank Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Clinton N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 parish East Feliciana code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Silliman Institute W. J. Lawson, President, Board of Directors

street & number P. O. Box 946

city, town Clinton N/A vicinity of state LA 70722

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. East Feliciana Parish Courthouse

street & number St. Helena Street (no specific address) P. O. Box 263

city, town Clinton state LA 70722

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title LA Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Silliman Institute is located on the outskirts of the rural parish seat of Clinton. It is still a functioning school and contains numerous outbuildings; however, only the historic portion is being nominated. The nominated area includes the main complex of three attached buildings, a kitchen, a cistern and a modern building which is considered a non-contributing element. The three main buildings (c.1850, c.1860, 1894) are two to two-and-a-half story brick structures which reflect the Greek Revival, Italianate, and Second Empire styles. Their front galleries connect to form a more or less continuous colossal colonnade, and the buildings themselves are joined by breezeways. (Photo 1) Despite the changes described below, the Silliman complex retains those features which establish its significance.

The oldest building, built c.1850 in the Greek Revival style, features a simple temple front. The central entrances on both stories are flanked by 6/6 double hung windows that have lintels with keystones. The interior woodwork is very plain. (Photo 2)

The middle section was built c.1860 and mixes the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. It has a colonnade similar to the one on the earlier building, but it has a hipped roof, and a third story is squeezed into the attic. Central, double glass-paneled doors are on the first and second stories; windows are double hung and are French length on the first floor. Most of the front section of this building is devoted to large rooms with the library being on the first floor. (Photo 1)

An unpublished 1941 paper cites the 1853-54 Bulletin and describes the two structures that were built when the school was opened in 1852. One of the buildings described is most certainly the c.1850 structure, but the other one is smaller than the central building. A building was destroyed by fire in 1858 and replaced prior to the Civil War. It is assumed that the c.1860 building is that reconstruction.

The third building was built in 1894 in the Second Empire style. It has galleries similar to those on the other two buildings, but they are built on a slightly higher level. The mansard roof has a plain cornice and dormers with double, narrow windows. The facade has 6/6 double hung windows and central paneled doors; the side elevation has paired, narrow windows that are similar to those in the dormers. (Photo 3)

The Second Empire building has the most decorative interior of the three structures. The first floor accommodates two offices with pressed tin ceilings and a large auditorium that has wainscotting, elaborate fluted columns, and a stage. The ornate entrance to the auditorium features stained glass and paneling. The upstairs rooms retain their late-nineteenth century woodwork, and of special interest are the unusual doors on the bathroom stalls. (Photos 4-6)

Although the above three buildings are constructed of brick, the fronts are stuccoed. It is not known whether or not the stucco is original.

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Silliman Institute

Item number 7

Page 2

## 7. Description (cont'd)

Three other structures are included in the nomination. The small, nineteenth century, brick, one-and-a half story, gabled kitchen is located to the rear of the central building. Because it serves as the school lunch-room, it has received numerous additions that could be removed if desired. (Photos 7 and 8) The cistern is covered by a wood shingled roof supported by log posts and is situated between the kitchen and main complex. (Photo 9) Also included is a modern, one-story, rectangular building that is behind the oldest building. Although it is a modern intrusion, it is so near the oldest building and the kitchen that to exclude it would make it impossible to draw a simple and regular boundary around the complex. (Photo 7)

Assessment of Integrity:

Considering that Silliman has been in almost constant use as a school since 1852, there have been surprisingly few major alterations. The pedimented gable end on the oldest building appears to have had a fanlight enclosed when the pediment was re-sided. The building has also had some of its rooms subdivided, probably during the twentieth century. The center building has lost its sizable cupola and balustrade, but its interior appears to have received no major alterations.

Silliman Institute is mainly significant for its surviving Greek Revival inspired features which establish it as part of the local Greek Revival tradition. It is secondarily significant because of the mansard roof in the 1894 portion. This, of course, also survives.

To the rear of the building are modern covered walks. In addition, there is a comparatively modern brick building. Moreover, the old kitchen building has received numerous additions. Despite the fact that this rear area has been significantly intruded upon, it was included in the nominated area because it still contributes to the resource. The old kitchen and cistern are still clearly visible. (Photos 7 and 9) They show that, unlike their twentieth century counterparts, large nineteenth century school buildings had outbuildings. They, therefore, contribute to one's appreciation of Silliman Institute as a historic school building.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input 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** c.1850, c.1860, 1894 **Builder/Architect** Architects unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** Criterion C

Silliman Institute is locally significant in the area of architecture mainly because it is an integral part of an identified architectural tradition native to the Feliciana Parishes. This tradition is characterized by the use of simple, round, two-story, stuccoed brick Doric columns on Greek Revival buildings.

The three main buildings are treated in a stylish, sophisticated, but conservative manner, and they exhibit an interesting combination of architectural features that are heavily dominated by the Greek Revival style. The oldest building is a "full blown" Greek Revival temple, and the other two have the colonnades and symmetrical facades that speak of the Greek Revival as it is popularly known in the South. Nevertheless, the latter two have rooflines that clearly place them within different stylistic categories. The center building was conceived in the Italianate style, but the loss of the cupola and balustrade lessens the statement the building originally made. The third building is characterized by its Second Empire mansard roof, a rarity in Louisiana.\* Though the dates of the Greek Revival and Italianate sections are in sync with the popularity of the style elsewhere, the Second Empire section was built after that style's vogue had passed, and the colonnade, which almost stylistically overpowers the mansard, was built long after it has passed out of fashion.

The Feliciana Parishes are known as an important center of Greek Revival architecture in Louisiana. Beyond the usual one-story raised cottages, the Felicianas have a significant collection of larger structures with colossal order columns. The use of simple, round, two-story, stuccoed brick Doric columns has been identified by the noted New Orleans restoration architect Samuel Wilson as a local architectural tradition. The buildings at Silliman exemplify this tradition, even in the 1894 addition. Moreover, they stand as one of about ten major examples in the two parish area. Although Silliman does not stand above the other major examples, it constitutes a vital part of a local tradition which lends architectural identity to the area.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH:

The school was chartered in 1852 as the Silliman Female Collegiate Institute and operated, except for the period during the Civil War, until 1932. It reopened in 1966 and currently teaches students in grades K-12.

Announcements containing information about the faculty and course offerings indicate that Silliman was a fairly typical nineteenth century girls' school. The curriculum included courses in mathematics and natural sciences, English and foreign languages, government and history, the fine arts, and, by 1899, typing. This reflected the notion that young women

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Harris, Jn. F. "History of Silliman College at Clinton, Louisiana," unpublished, 1941.  
Silliman Collegiate Institute. Bulletin. 1908-09.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approx. 1.8 acres

Quadrangle name Clinton, La.-Miss.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

A 

1	5	6	8	9	3	0	0	3	4	1	5	5	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to sketch map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Staff of Division of Historic Preservation Assisted by Applicant (Item 4)

organization State of Louisiana date February 1983

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-6682

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

## 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Robert B. DeBlieux*

Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date February 28, 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Sandra McClelland*

date 4/18/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Patrick Andrews*

date 4/18/83

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Silliman Institute

Item number 8

Page 2

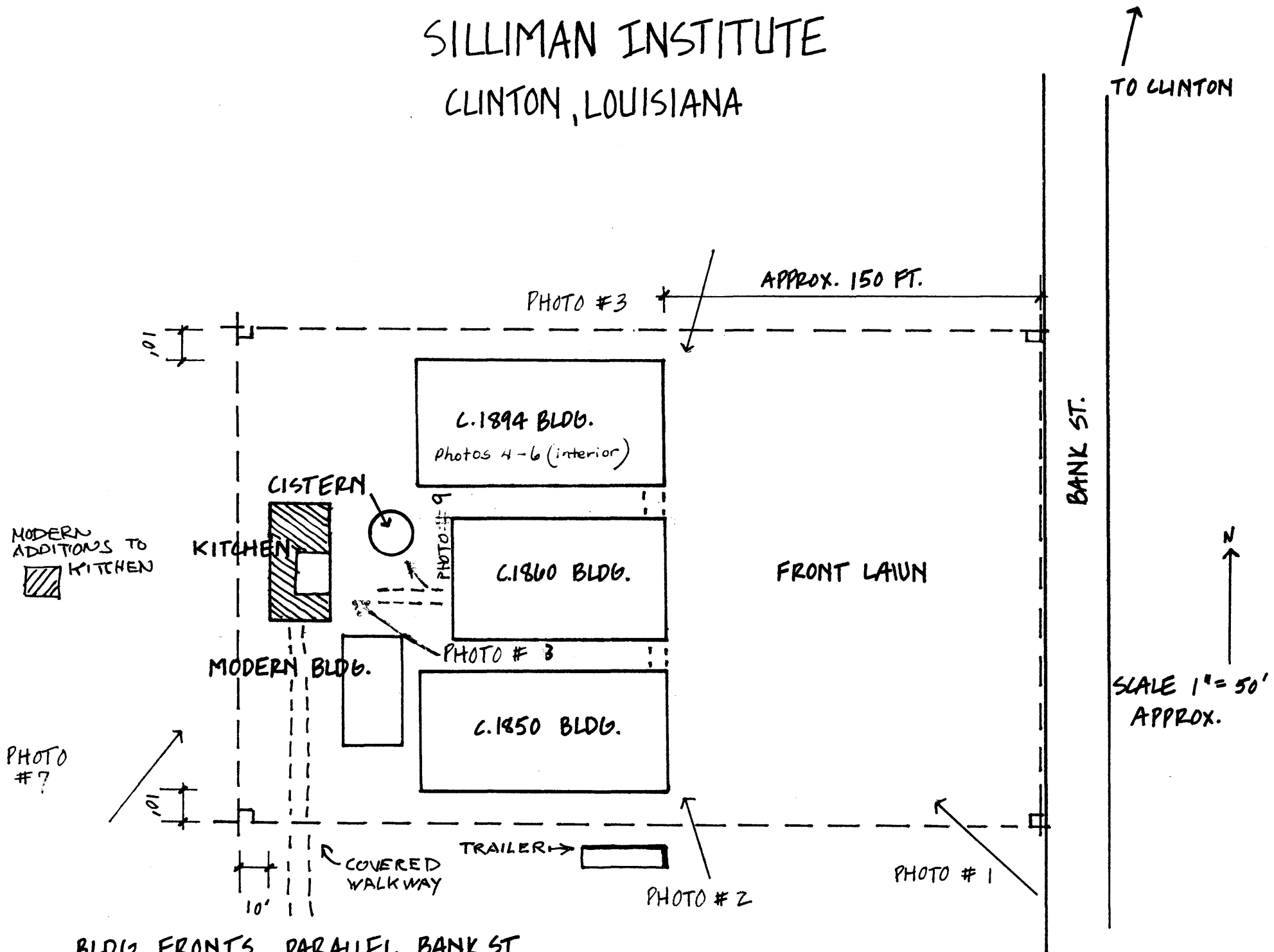
## 8. Significance (cont'd)

should have a well-rounded education and should not be only accomplished in the fine arts but also be conversant in more academic subjects.

Although the school attracted students from surrounding parishes and from more far flung areas of the state, it was not the only such school in the state or even in the Florida Parishes. However, the longevity and apparent prosperity and prestige of the school make it more noteworthy than the numerous other shorter lived academies.

\*Despite the fact that the mansard roof is assessed within the context of the state, the staff does not feel that this warrants a designation of significance on the state level for the entire complex.

# SILLIMAN INSTITUTE CLINTON, LOUISIANA



BLDG. FRONTS PARALLEL BANK ST.  
SITE BOUNDARIES ENCOMPASS LAWN & BLDG.S SHOWN, PARALLEL TO BLDG. FACADES.