

1065

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service JUN 12 1990

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: Garnet High School

other name/site number: Garnet Career Center; Garnet Adult Education Center

2. Location

street & number: 422 Dickinson Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Charleston

vicinity: N/A

state: WV county: Kanawha code: 039 zip code: 25301

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>    </u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	structures
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. 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.    See continuation sheet

William C. Larson  
Signature of Certifying Official

6/6/90  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.    See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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):

Jerry L. [Signature]

7/24/90

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: Education - school

Sub: secondary school

Current : Education - school

Sub: trade and technical school

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7. Description  
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Architectural Classification:  
Late 19th and 20th Century Revival  
Classical Revival

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Brick-stone roof Asphalt  
walls Brick other \_\_\_\_\_  
Tile

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance  
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Yes, state \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : G

Areas of Significance: Education  
Ethnic Heritage - Black  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1928-1956

Significant Dates : 1928-29

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Warne, Tucker, Silling, Hutchison, architect  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  
X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

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

X Other -- Specify Repository: Kanawha County Board of Education

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of Property: 1 acre approximately

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>17</u>	<u>444940</u>	<u>4244740</u>	B	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
C	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	D	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

Verbal Boundary Description:    See continuation sheet.

Consists of Parcel No. 16, Assessor's East Charleston Map No. 10, 18-158, 159, 11-17-65. Bounded on the North by Lewis Street, on the east by Shrewsbury Street, and on the west by Dickinson Street.

Boundary Justification:    See continuation sheet.

Encloses the parcel historically associated with Garnet High School and its later addition.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian; James D. Randall, Charleston

Organization: Division of Culture & History Date: April 20, 1990

Street & Number: The Cultural Center Telephone: 304/348-0240

City or Town: Charleston State: WV ZIP: 25305

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Garnet High School, now Garnet Career Center, occupies a substantial parcel facing Shrewsbury Street, Lewis Street, and Dickinson Street close to the core of downtown Charleston, Kanawha County, West Virginia. The building's continuous use for educational purposes, first for African Americans, and during the late 20th century as an adult education center, has invested the building with a unique status in West Virginia's capital city. With the demolition of the mammoth Charleston High School in 1989, Garnet is the only remaining public school building in the city's commercial center.

Constructed in 1928-29 from the plans of the prestigious Charleston architectural firm of Warne, Tucker, Silling and Hutchison, and dedicated December 2-4, 1929, Garnet High was designed with quality materials in a style similar to that of Charleston High (1925-89) and Roosevelt Junior High (1922), also by the same firm. Building density in the neighborhood denied the school a campus, though the architects were careful to design the building with three formal elevations that convey a strong Classical impression.

Three stories high, and rectangular in plan, Garnet High is a red brick over tile structure with a steel frame. Smooth limestone accents the arched recessed entry, first story beltcourse, and cornice. The building's principal entrance faces east, off Shrewsbury, within a shallow 3-story pavilion. Two shallow setbacks break the plane of the front facade between the entrance pavilion and the corner of the building at Lewis and Shrewsbury. The effect was intended to break the monotony of a nearly cubic mass on a limited building site. Dominating the building's front is the limestone arched entrance containing two sets of double doors, transom lights, and a limestone tympanum. Within the frieze of the tympanum is the carved inscription "Garnet High School," and above this a cartouche displaying an open book. The soffit of the deep entrance arch is paneled; a carved keystone caps the structure.

Large character-defining steel windows pierce the Lewis Street and Dickinson Street elevations. These openings contain as many as 25 panes each.

Attached to the south wall of Garnet High School is a less than fifty-year-old addition; it is of considerable interest despite its recent age. The design of the addition was intended to complement the older building through a set-back arrangement, an attempt to soften the effect of the later addition. The glazing and brick textures were also chosen for their complementary effect. Designer of the addition was John C. Norman (1892-1967), West Virginia's first licensed black architect and structural engineer.

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Well preserved interior components include the intact building plan, spaces, architectural features, and various finishes and materials. Garnet's lobby, auditorium, and gym, opening off the main entrance, present excellent ornamental plaster mouldings, millwork, and wood floors. Hallway floors are covered with terrazo.

The central spaces within the building are dominated on floors one and two by the auditorium and gym. Hallways and classrooms are found on the perimeters. The principal's office and library on the second floor, and book store with "Dutch door," are intact. Classrooms throughout feature original blackboards, baseboards, hardwood floors, oak trim, and paneled wood doors. Extending the building to the south is the later addition containing an auto shop and classrooms.

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Significance

Garnet High School is significant because of its association with events and processes that have been significant parts of the growth of education in West Virginia, Charleston, and the Kanawha Valley. Under Criterion A of the National Register, Garnet qualifies as a significant symbol of black pride and as an educational and cultural center for blacks in Charleston, West Virginia's capital, before Brown versus Board of Education in 1954 ended racial segregation of public schools in the United States.

**GARNET HIGH SCHOOL  
By JAMES D. RANDALL**

We have written in the past about the church being one of the strong influences of the Black race, but equally important are the Black Schools of yesteryear. They were staffed by dedicated and knowledgeable persons, and we cannot proclaim enough praises for them. Today, we hear much talk about students graduating from high school who cannot read. There was no way that a student coming through our elementary, junior and senior high schools could not read. Our teachers in the past saw that such did not happen. It is a sad commentary on the teachers of today that a child spends twelve years in school and cannot read.

Garnet High, located in Charleston was one of three Black High Schools in the Kanawha Valley. The other two being West Virginia State College Teachers Training High, and Washington High at London. Garnet received students from Boyd, Cabell, and Carter G. Woodson Junior High Schools.

Talk about "busing," Black students knew all about it. In Kanawha County the buses would pick up the Blacks before daylight, and deliver them to their schools, two or more hours before school would begin. This allowed the buses to go to the white neighborhoods to pick up the white students to deliver them to their schools just in time for school to start. When the school day was ended, the buses would go to the white schools first and return the white students home immediately after school. Then go to the Black Schools to take the Black students home. By now several hours have passed since school let out. Most of our bus students left home in the morning when it was still dark, and returned home in the evening when it was dark.

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Despite this and other hardships, which weren't necessarily recognized at the time, the students and teachers were for the most part one big happy family. This is evident by the number of former Black High School Reunions that take place now throughout the state. This leads to another point—the friendship and enjoyment of the competition among the schools. Football and basketball games, tournaments, commercial contests, track meets, play (drama) tournaments, marching bands—all along with academia, contributing to the development of a well rounded student. Our rivals, Douglass (Huntington), Simmons (Montgomery), Washington (London), State Hi (Institute), Kelly Miller (Clarksburg), Sumner (Parkersburg), Dubois (Mount Hope), Aracoma (Logan), Lincoln (Hinton and Wheeling), Conley (Mullens), Gary (Gary), Excelsior (Excelsior), Stratton (Beckley), Byrd Prillerman (Amigo), Park Central (Bluefield), Dunbar (Fairmont), Liberty (Williamson), and Kimball (Kimball) are a part of the esteemed history of Garnet, as Garnet is a part of their esteemed history and all a part of the history of education in the state of West Virginia.

Throughout its fifty-six years of existence, Garnet as a Black High School was guided by four principals, C.W. Boyd, J.F.J. Clark, Scott M. Brown, and Harry E. Dennis.

Mr. Boyd, born in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, came to Charleston as a teacher in 1892 and organized Garnett High School in 1900. This grew out of a graded school by the same name, being named for Henry Highland Garnett. Although being born a slave in Maryland, Mr. Garnett and his parents escaped from slavery and settled in New York City. He attended school, graduating from college, and continued his education by becoming a minister. He became a leader of the abolitionist movement.

Mr. Boyd was made Garnett's first principal and held that position until 1908 when he became Supervisor of Charleston Negro Public Schools. He later became principal of Boyd Junior High School, when it came into existence. Mr. Boyd retired in 1936 after forty-five years in the teaching profession.

Mr. J.F.J. Clark became Garnett's second principal in 1908. A year later a separate high school building, the first of its kind for the instruction of Negro youths in the state of West Virginia, was constructed on the same plot of ground with the grade school building, located on Jacob Street. The growth of the high school was such that in 1927 a new building, and location was proposed at the corner of Lewis and Shrewsbury Streets. In addition to conventional classrooms, this building included an auditorium, gymnasium, library, cafeteria, special rooms for sewing, domestic science, mechanical drawing, printing, and separate laboratories for chemistry, physics, and biology. Throughout its years the building always maintained its newness.



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There was no campus. We didn't realize the lack of one or complain about not having one. The building opened directly on the streets. Perhaps that is the reason for persons around the country having an attachment for Shrewsbury Street.

It has been said that when the school name was cut in the cornerstone and the arch over the entrance, the stone cutting company omitted one of the 't's in Garnett's name. The Board of Education did not require them to correct the mistake. Thus, after 1929, the school became Garnet, with one 't'.

Under Mr. Clark's leadership, Garnet developed into a first-class senior high school. He retired from active service as principal in May, 1946, having served for almost four decades. Many, many students remember Mr. Clark.

September of "46" saw Mr. Scott M. Brown at the helm of Garnet. He had been principal of Wake Forest Junior High for eight years, and principal of Boyd Junior High for two years. He continued the tradition of excellence at Garnet, and in June 1949, he became Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

September 1949, Mr. Harry E. Dennis became Garnet's fourth and last principal. Prior to coming to Garnet High as principal, Mr. Dennis taught at Dunbar High, Weirton; Lincoln High, Wheeling; West Virginia State College; and was principal of Carter G. Woodson Junior High, St. Albans.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision of 1954 declaring "separate, but equal" unconstitutional would naturally have its effect on all Black schools. So it was that Mr. Dennis presided at Garnet's last commencement May 25, 1956.

Shortly thereafter Garnet lost its identity and became known as John Adams Junior High, but in a later ceremony after a new John Adams was constructed on South Hills, the building was renamed the Garnet Adult Education Center. It so remains today.

From the thousands of students who passed through the halls of Garnet, who are scattered across the country, who are in every walk of life, and who have happy memories, a Great Big Thank You to the principals, teachers, and staff who, at sometime during its fifty-six years, were a part of Garnet's history.

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Such love of school and each other so exist today that every three or four years a thousand or more former students return home to attend Garnet's Reunion. It is a joyful and heart warming occasion. Garnet will live many more years.

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Garnet High was famous in West Virginia for the quality of its programs and curriculum. Its graduates attained renown in many professional fields such as medicine, dentistry, law, education, social work, music, the airline industry, and the military. Among famous graduates are Tony Brown, host and president of Tony Brown Productions and Tony Brown Journal; Dr. John C. Norman, a leader in thoracic and cardiovascular surgery (his father became West Virginia's first registered black architect and engineer); Rev. Leon Sullivan, for over 30 years pastor of the largest black church in Philadelphia and the first black member of the Board of Directors of General Motors Corporation; and Lewis R. Smoot, Sr., president and CEO of the Sherman R. Smoot Company of Columbus, Ohio.

Another significant aspect of Garnet High School is the 1952 addition which meets National Register Criterion Consideration G. This extension of Garnet High School is of local importance as a work of John C. Norman (1892-1967), West Virginia's first registered black architect. Norman attempted to integrate the newer unit with the older using a design obviously contemporary but possessing setbacks, scale, and textures complementary to the older building.

Garnet High School has achieved significance under Criterion Consideration G because of the special importance the building played in the life of the black community before 1956, the year the school closed. An illustration of that importance is the branch library of the Charleston library system which located at Garnet. Public library resources were thus made available to the city's black citizens through Garnet High.

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Period of Significance

The period of significance begins with the construction of the building, 1928-29, and extends to the year of the building's closure in 1956. The excellent state of the building's preservation is the result of the pride that both the black community and student showered upon it during the decades of its service to Charleston area blacks.

The Garnet High School Name

Garnet High School was named for Henry Highland Garnett (1815-1882), a noted black clergyman, abolitionist, and diplomat. Garnett was born in Maryland, a descendant of Mandingo peoples of African Sudan. Escaping from slavery, Garnett settled with his parents in New York City. After graduation from Oneida Institute near Utica, N.Y., Garnett became a leader in the abolitionist movement. Active in Great Britain and in international peace movements Garnett was appointed U.S. Consul General to Liberia by President Garfield.

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### Bibliography

Garnet High School dedication program, December 2-4, 1929.

Randall, James D. and Anna E. Gilmer. Black Past. Charleston, W.V., 1989.

Randall, James D. "West Virginia Historic Properties Inventory Form." Division of Culture and History, 1987.