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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name State Street Public School  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 15 State Street N/A  not for publication  
city, town Newark N/A  vicinity  
state New Jersey code 034 county Essex code 013 zip code 07104

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official  
Acting Commissioner, DEP/DSHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

01/12/1990  
Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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): \_\_\_\_\_

Mark L. Baker Entered in the National Register August 3, 1990

[Signature]  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education/research facility

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Early Italianate/utilitarian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brownstone

walls brick and brownstone

roof asphalt

other wooden window sash

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The State Street School, located at 15 State Street, immediately north of Newark's Central Business District, is a two story, six bay, brick bearing, Italianate influenced, utilitarian school building. Built in 1845, with a major addition completed in 1882, the State Street School is the oldest public school building still in use in Newark. The school now serves as the audio-visual center for the Newark Board of Education. The common bond laid brick structure is characterized by segmentally arched windows and doors, protruding brick lintels with brownstone keystones, a wooden bracket-supported cornice and brownstone detailing such as the basement, water table, stairs and belt courses.

The plan of the original 1845 school was basically rectangular; with the 1882 addition to the rear, the plan was changed to an irregular "L" shape, with the addition forming the long leg of the "L."

The State Street, or main (south) facade of the structure consists of a central two bay, two story entrance block flanked by two bay, two story set-back wings. The main entrance is located on the first floor and is approached by a two-sided brownstone podium of four steps. Both the central block and flanking wings have a brownstone basement, water table and window sills. The projecting sills are connected by an unrelieved brownstone belt course on both levels. All the window surrounds in the original school building are segmentally arched with protruding brick lintels ornamented with brownstone keystones. The windows are 6/6 double hung wood sash with exterior 2/2 wood storm/security sash. The wooden entablature is composed of a simple architrave, a blank frieze, and a scrolled bracket-supported cornice. Wrought iron fencing flanks the stairs and encloses small strips of tree-planted green space in front of the set-back wings of the school. Two plaques adorn the main facade: a stone plaque, bearing the name of the school and the dates of erection and rebuilding, occupies the space between the two second story windows of the

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Education  
Black Ethnic Heritage

Period of Significance

1845, 1882  
1845 - 1939  
1869 - 1873

Significant Dates

1845, 1882  
1845  
1869

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Baxter, James Miller Jr.

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The State Street School is significant architecturally as one of the oldest school buildings in Newark. Built in 1845 at a cost of \$7,200, it has been in continuous educational use for 144 years (Newark Evening News, July 12, 1959: n.p.). The school is also significant in the areas of Education and Black Ethnic Heritage. Between 1869 and 1873, the building housed the Colored School of Newark under the leadership of principal James Miller Baxter Jr., the first black principal in Newark's school system. Although the Colored School moved around a lot in the nineteenth century, the State Street School is the only remaining home of this institution.

The State Street School is an example of mid-nineteenth century educational/institutional construction. Although ornamentation is sparse, evidence of the early Italianate influence is evident in the simple door and window surrounds, the masonry belt courses and the entablature. Interior space is left open with large classrooms interconnected by doorways. Although interior restrooms are provided, the oldest classrooms in the school have large, long sinks. The brick bearing walls provide limited fenestration capabilities, so that the interior must be artificially lit at all times. Ventilation is improved by the use of pivoting transoms over the interior doors.

The school is the oldest public school building in continuous use in Newark. The school was originally built as the First Ward school, a primary school, housing grades one through four, until 1908, when it became an annex to Barringer High School. When Central High was opened in 1911, State Street became a school for "defectives." It continued as a school for slow learners until 1949 when the audio-visual department and library of the Newark Board of Education moved in (Newark Evening News,

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet 9.1.

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Newark Board of Education

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property .30 acre Elizabeth, NJ Quad

UTM References

A 18 569920 4511000  
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

D         

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The State Street School is located on the northerly side of State Street, Block 50, Lot 37. The irregularly shaped lot is 100.0' x 110.50' x 105.25' x 125.75'.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area includes land historically associated with the State Street School.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Ilana D. Zakalak, Zakalak Associates, Historic Preservation Consultant  
 organization Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee date August 2, 1989  
 street & number P.O. Box 1066 telephone (201)622 - 4910  
 city or town Newark state New Jersey zip code 07101

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entrance block, and a bronze plaque honoring James Miller Baxter Jr., erected by the Schoolmen's Club of Newark, is located between the first floor windows of the set-back west wing.

The 1882 addition, which is not visible from the street, is also of brick but is mostly utilitarian in appearance. Ornament is limited to slightly projecting flat brownstone lintels and sills. The rectangular windows are 2/2 double hung wood sash. A simple coping serves as the entablature for the addition. Only the west side of the addition can be seen; the south and east facades abut other structures.

#### Interior

The State Street School contains eight classrooms, four on each floor, and small work rooms and offices. Each floor of the front, or the original section of the school has two classrooms laid out east and west with a vestibule and rest room on the ground floor in between the rooms, and a principal's office and rest room on the second floor. Between the older and newer section is a stairway. The newer section of the school has two classrooms on each floor; however, these are arranged north and south, railroad fashion, so one must pass through the south classroom to get to the north classroom. The ground floor classrooms have an additional cast iron, papyrus capital column supporting the floor load of the upstairs classrooms. Bathrooms, a small kitchen, and additional stairways are located at the rear of the building.

Original finishes exist throughout the school. These include wooden floors and stairhalls, tongue and groove wood board ceilings and plaster walls. All windows and door have wood moulded surrounds as do the chalkboards. These have been painted over to blend in with the walls. Above the door, pivoting transoms provide additional ventilation. Traditional "schoolhouse" light fixtures are suspended from the ceilings. All of the classrooms in the original section have large sinks. Although the interior was somewhat updated in 1882, when the addition was built, and again in later years, it retains a high level of integrity and a nineteenth century schoolhouse atmosphere.

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## Site

The State Street School is located on the northerly side of State Street, Block 50, Lot 37. The irregularly shaped lot is 100.0' x 110.50' x 105.25' x 125.75'. The total area is .30 acre.

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July 12, 1959).

Between 1869 and 1873, State Street School was the home of the Colored School of Newark under the leadership of James M. Baxter Jr. The Colored School, which had been founded in 1828, had been consistently moved by the Newark Board of Education between various private locations such as churches until 1862, when the school was finally located in a public school building, the Third Ward Primary School. These facilities proved to be inadequate and the school was moved to State Street, then the First Ward Grammar School. In 1873, the school was moved to the Commerce Street Grammar School in the Fourth Ward, and in 1899 it was relocated to the Third Ward, or Market Street School. In 1907 the school was moved to its final location, the Commerce Street School. Of the above locations, only the State Street School still exists, and is representative of Newark's black population's struggle for educating their children (Anderson 1972: 254-276).

The Newark Board of Education also had problems retaining a teacher-principal for the Colored School resulting in a constant turnover. After a search, James M. Baxter Jr., who had just graduated from the Quaker-operated Philadelphia Institute for Colored Youth with high honors, was offered the position in Newark at the age of nineteen. Baxter entered service in Newark with a first grade New Jersey teaching certificate on October 26, 1864; two months later, he was officially appointed Principal of the Colored School (Anderson 1972: 167). By the time he retired on July 1, 1909, Baxter had left an indelible mark on the Newark Board of Education and his adopted community.

During Mr. Baxter's incumbency several major objectives, which had been recommended or suggested became a reality. The quality of the work done in the school was improved; an evening school was established; the school was moved to improved quarters; Negroes were admitted to public high schools, and all of the city schools were opened to Negro children (Wright 1941: 127). Prior to 1872, Newark public schools had been segregated, and no Negro child was permitted to enroll in the secondary schools. Through the leadership and positive climate created by James M. Baxter Jr., Newark's first Negro high school student, Irene Pataquam Mulford, was allowed to be admitted to the Newark High School. In 1872, a city ordinance was passed which allowed Negro children to attend school in any part of the city (Newark Evening News, February 12, 1967: n.p.). Baxter's popularity was such that although Newark's schools were integrated, the Colored School continued until his retirement in 1909. At this time, the Newark Board of Education voted to close the Colored School

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and place its pupils in the schools of the districts in which they respectively resided. This was the official end to segregated schools in Newark, 45 years before the Supreme Court's historic decision ordering an end to all separate but equal provisions nationally (Johnson, Newark Evening News, February 12, 1967: n.p.)

In his private life, Baxter was a communicant, vestryman and clerk of the vestry of St. Philip's Church (Episcopal) for over forty years (Anderson 1972: 168). He was a founder and Past Master of the Alpha Lodge No. 116, Free and Accepted Order of Masons, and at the time of his death, had been its secretary for more than thirty years (Anderson 1972: 167). Baxter, who was also active in politics, was a Congressional Convention delegate, and a member of the New Jersey Central Committee (Johnson, Newark Evening News February 12, 1967: n.p.).

Baxter's abilities as a principal and teacher came to the attention of the United States government when, in 1881, he was considered for the post of United States Minister to Haiti. Baxter, however, chose to remain in Newark, where upon his retirement in 1909, he was considered the dean of Newark's corps of principals (Anderson 1972: 168). His death the same year was noted in the Records of the Newark Board of Education with more than a passing hint:

He was a man of sturdy manhood, high moral character, dignified and modest in bearing, and wholly devoted to the profession of teaching.

There are many in our city who owe to him not only their first impulse securing an education, but their inspiration toward a higher and better life. The memory of his many virtues will not soon be forgotten by those to whom he willingly gave his long life of service (Records 1910: 120).

Baxter's obituary was carried, not only by local papers, but by the New York Times, Boston Record, Boston Advertiser, Boston Transcript, Brooklyn Eagle, New York Sun, New York Herald, and the Jersey City Journal (Anderson 1972: 169).

One of Newark's first city housing projects built around 1940, the James M. Baxter Terrace, was named in honor of the famed educator (Johnson, Newark Evening News, February 12, 1967).



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9. Major Bibliographic References

Anderson, John R. Negro Education in the Public School of Newark, New Jersey During the Nineteenth Century. Volume I. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Doctoral Dissertation, October 1972.

Cunningham, John T. Newark. Newark, New Jersey: New Jersey Historical Society, Revised and Expanded Edition, 1988.

Wright, Marion Thompson. "Mr. Baxter's School." Proceedings New Jersey Historical Society, Volume 59, Newark, New Jersey: 1941.

New Jersey Black Historic Places Survey, as of January 5, 1984, with revisions by the Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee.

Newspapers

"Abandonment Set of Oldest School." Unidentified xerox in the Newark Public Library vertical file, dated 30 June 1959.

"Baxter Heritage, Negro Leader Left Mark on City." Newark Evening News, 12 February 1967: n.p.

"Helped Build A City, Teacher Writes on Negro Role." Newark Evening News, 2 February 1967: n.p.

Johnson, Rudy. "Last of Segregated Schools in City Abandoned in 1909." Newark Evening News, 12 February 1967: n.p.

"Old School Slated to Go." Newark Evening News, 12 July 1959: n.p.

"Schools of Newark: State Street Binet." Star Ledger, 22 May 1929: n.p.

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Photographs

The following information is the same for all of the photographs listed:

- 1) Name of property: State Street School, 15 State Street
- 2) City and state: Newark, New Jersey (Essex County)
- 3) Photo by: Ulana D. Zakalak
- 4) Photo taken: July 1989
- 5) Location of negative: Zakalak Associates  
57 Cayuga Avenue  
Oceanport, New Jersey 07757

6) & 7) Descriptions of views indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 7: South (main) facade, camera pointing northwest  
Photo 2 of 7: South (main) facade, camera pointing northwest  
Photo 3 of 7: Close-up of south (main) facade, camera pointing north  
Photo 4 of 7: West facade, camera pointing southeast  
Photo 5 of 7: Second floor southwest classroom, original 1845 building,  
camera pointing southwest  
Photo 6 of 7: Second floor south classroom, 1882 addition, camera  
pointing northwest  
Photo 7 of 7: First floor, south classroom, 1882 addition, camera  
pointing northwest

