

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

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

For HCRS use only

received APR 16 1982

date entered MAY 20 1982

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

1. Name

historic Alcorn State University Historic District

and/or common same as above

2. Location

street & number Alcorn State University Campus N/A not for publication

city, town Lorman *MS* vicinity of congressional district Fourth

state Mississippi code 28 county Claiborne code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input checked="" 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 Mississippi State Building Commission

street & number 1501 Walter Sillers Building

city, town Jackson N/A vicinity of state Mississippi

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Chancery Clerk
Claiborne County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Port Gibson state Mississippi

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Mississippi Department of Archives and History

city, town Jackson state Mississippi

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 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

The Alcorn State University Historic District is located on a low, crescent-shaped ridge at the center of the campus. The buildings are closely grouped, and face a historic green area which is used for recreational and ceremonial purposes. The district consists of eight contributing buildings: five nineteenth century Federal style and Greek Revival structures, and three twentieth century Colonial Revival structures. The sole intrusion is a nondescript twentieth century building.

INVENTORY

Contributing Buildings Within the District

1. Administration Building. 1928. Colonial Revival. C. H. Lindsay, Architect. Two-and-a-half story, three-bay center structure flanked by one-story wings. Tile gable roof with three pedimented dormers; belltower with finial. Fanlight over new double-leaf door; stone frontispiece.
2. Dormitory #2. Ca. 1855. Greek Revival. Two-story, five-bay structure fronted by three-bay portico with second-story gallery. Nine-over-nine double-hung sash with jack arch. Low pyramidal roof.
3. Oakland Chapel. Ca. 1838. Greek Revival. Temple form, pedimented portico with six unfluted Doric columns. Cupola with columns in antis. Two stories above ground floor. (National Register of Historic Places, 1975; National Historic Landmark, 1976).
4. President's House. Ca. 1830. Federal. Two-and-a-half stories above full basement. Five-bays, twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash, wide gable roof, two interior chimneys. Original Federal porch replaced in 1930s. Interior possesses superb woodwork. A one-car garage and covered walkway are attached to rear of building.
6. Harmon Hall. 1929. Colonial Revival. C. H. Lindsay, Architect. Two-story, thirteen-bays. Hipped roof. Slightly projected pedimented three-bay central entrance pavilion with one-story portico with modified Tuscan columns.
7. Dormitory #3. Ca. 1855. Greek Revival. Two-story, five-bay structure fronted by three-bay portico with second-story gallery. Nine-over-nine double-hung sash with jack arch. Low pyramidal roof.
8. Lanier Hall. 1939. Colonial Revival. E. L. Malvaney and C. L. Olschnes, Architects. Two-story, nineteen-bays. Hipped roof. Slightly projected three-bay central entrance pavilion. Stone frontispiece at entrance, jack arches with keystones above first-floor windows.
9. Belles Lettres. Ca. 1855. Greek Revival. Two-story, three-bays. Monumental portico, Tuscan columns, pediment with lunette; raking cornice with acroteria. Second-story gallery, six interior side chimneys. Altered ca. 1890.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates N/A Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Alcorn State University Historic District is significant to the state political history (criteria B), the state architectural history (criteria C), and to national educational history (criteria A). Prompted by the incentives of the Morrill Act of 1862, the Mississippi legislature created Alcorn University on May 13, 1871, as the first land grant school for blacks in the United States. For its first president, the state chose Hiram Revels who served Alcorn from 1871 until 1882. Revels was the first black to serve in the United States Senate (1870-1871) and the President's House located within the historic district is the only structure in Mississippi known to have been occupied by this highly significant figure in the state's political history. The oldest buildings within the historic district were constructed for Oakland College, a Presbyterian school closed by the Civil War and subsequently purchased by the state in 1871. The President's House is a fine example of the Federal style, the quality and integrity of which is considered excellent in the Claiborne County context. The Greek Revival Chapel is one of the most significant examples of that style in the state, while the dormitories and Belles Lettres building are purely of local importance. Twentieth century Colonial Revival buildings (nos. 1, 6, 8) were designed by prominent Mississippi architects C. H. Lindsay and E. L. Malvaney and, in view of the local context, are considered excellent examples. The intrusion of the Library and Science building (no. 5) somewhat hampers the architectural harmony of the historic district but cannot affect its educational and political significance.

Following the recommendation of Governor James L. Alcorn, the Mississippi legislature created a state-operated college for blacks on May 13, 1871. The University was located in rural Claiborne County on the campus of the former Oakland College, an institution founded in 1828 by the Rev. Jeremiah Chamberlain under the aegis of the Presbyterian Synod of Mississippi. At the time of the purchase by the state, buildings located on the campus included the President's House (ca. 1830); Oakland Chapel (ca. 1838, National Register of Historic Places - 1975, National Historic Landmark - 1976); Dormitory #2 and Dormitory #3 (both ca. 1855); and the Belles Lettres building (ca. 1855).¹

Hiram R. Revels, one of the country's most distinguished blacks during the era of Reconstruction, served intermittently as the first president of Alcorn University from 1871 to 1882. A native of Fayetteville, North Carolina, Revels was born a free black in 1826. He attended school in the north, and in 1845 was ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. During the Civil War, Revels organized two Negro units in Maryland, and in 1863 moved to St. Louis and "founded a large school for freedmen, and helped recruit a negro regiment."² In 1864 Revels moved to Vicksburg and later to Jackson where he "organized churches, lectures, and attempted to organize schools."³ Concurrently, Revels pastored the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Vicksburg.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Douglas, Ed Polk. Architecture in Claiborne County, Mississippi: A Selective Guide.
 Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1974.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, National Register File, Claiborne
 County, Oakland Chapel.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 10

Quadrangle name St. Joseph, La.-

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References Miss.

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>
E	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
G	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>

B	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>1</u> <u>4</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u> <u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u>
F	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
H	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>

Verbal boundary description and justification

The crescent-shaped district, outlined in red on the accompanying sketch map, is located near the center of the Alcorn State University and is bounded by unnamed drives and historic green spaces. The primary northern and western boundaries are

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title P. Ana Gordon, Historian
 organization Mississippi Department of Archives and History date January 5, 1982
 street & number P. O. Box 571 telephone (601) 354-7326
 city or town Jackson state Mississippi

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Robert J. Bailey*

Deputy title State Historic Preservation Officer date April 5, 1982

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
William H. Braxton date 5.20.82
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: *Carol Duke* date 5/20/82
 Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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DATE ENTERED

Alcorn State University Historic District
Claiborne County, Mississippi

CONTINUATION SHEET

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7 - DESCRIPTION

Intrusions Within the District

5. Library and Science Building. 1959. Godfrey & Bassett, Architects. Two-story brick and concrete structure, metal windows, five-bay entrance, flat roof.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Alcorn State University Historic District
Claiborne County, Mississippi

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

After a brief journey to the north in 1868, Revels relocated in Natchez, Mississippi. There he pastored the African Methodist Episcopal Church and was appointed a city alderman. In 1870 Republican delegates from Adams County drafted Revels to the State Senate. One of the duties of the new legislature was to fill the seat vacated by Senator Jefferson Davis in 1861. The legislature had previously agreed that the seat should go to a Negro, and due in part to his eloquent prayer which opened the legislative session, Revels was nominated and elected. Within the month, Revels was in Washington, D.C., and on February 24, 1870, he became the first black man sworn into the United States Senate.⁴

During his one year in the Senate, Revels defended the new rights of Negroes, appointed a black to West Point, and advocated the readmission of the southern states to the Union. Upon the completion of his term, Revels refused political offers in Washington and returned to Mississippi. His arrival coincided with the establishment of Alcorn University. He resisted the legislature's attempts to name the school in his honor but accepted the presidency of Alcorn University in 1871. Revels served three separate terms of office. His initial presidency lasted from 1871 to 1873 when he resigned to fill the vacancy created by the death of Mississippi Secretary of State James D. Lynch. Revels returned to Alcorn University in 1874, but later that year moved his family to Holly Springs in north central Mississippi where he pastored the Asbury African Methodist Episcopal Church. Revels' last and longest term at Alcorn began in 1876 and ended in 1882 when he retired permanently to Holly Springs. Revels died at Aberdeen, Mississippi, in 1901, and his body was taken to Holly Springs for burial.⁵

Revels' contribution to Alcorn is largely unrecorded, but certainly his state and national reputation brought creditability and respectability to the new venture in black education. In 1878 during his last administration, Revels oversaw the transformation of Alcorn University into Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, the first black land grant college in the nation.⁶

Following the resignation of Revels, Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College grew under the guidance of a succession of black presidents. John H. Burrus served as president from 1882 to 1893. His administration, like that of fellow southern black educator Booker T. Washington, emphasized the need to train blacks in the manual arts. During the administration of Witt Lanier (1899-1905), the college became coeducational, and black women were given the chance to obtain a college education. During the first third of the twentieth century, Alcorn was governed by two graduates - L. J. Rowan, president from 1905-1911 and 1915-1934, and J. A. Martin, president from 1911-1915. Martin is credited with the initiation of night classes, and Rowan is known for his vigorous campaign for better state funding. Both Rowan and Martin improved the physical plant of the college. During Rowan's term, the new Administration Building (1928) and Harmon Hall (1929) were constructed. The final contributing building of the Alcorn University Historic District, Lanier Hall, was built in 1939.⁷

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Alcorn State University Historic District
Claiborne County, Mississippi

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FOOTNOTES

¹Ed Polk Douglas, Architecture in Claiborne County, Mississippi: A Selective Guide (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1974), p. 80; Mississippi Department of Archives and History, National Register File, Claiborne County, Oakland Chapel.

²George Alexander Sewell, Mississippi Black History Makers (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1977), p. 16.

³Ibid., pp. 16-17.

⁴Ibid., pp. 17-21.

⁵Ibid., pp. 22-26; Anabel Power, "Alcorn A&M College Pioneered for Negro," Clarion-Ledger - Jackson (Miss.) Daily News, January 13, 1957, article in Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1871-1951 scrapbook.

⁶National Register File, Oakland Chapel.

⁷Ibid.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

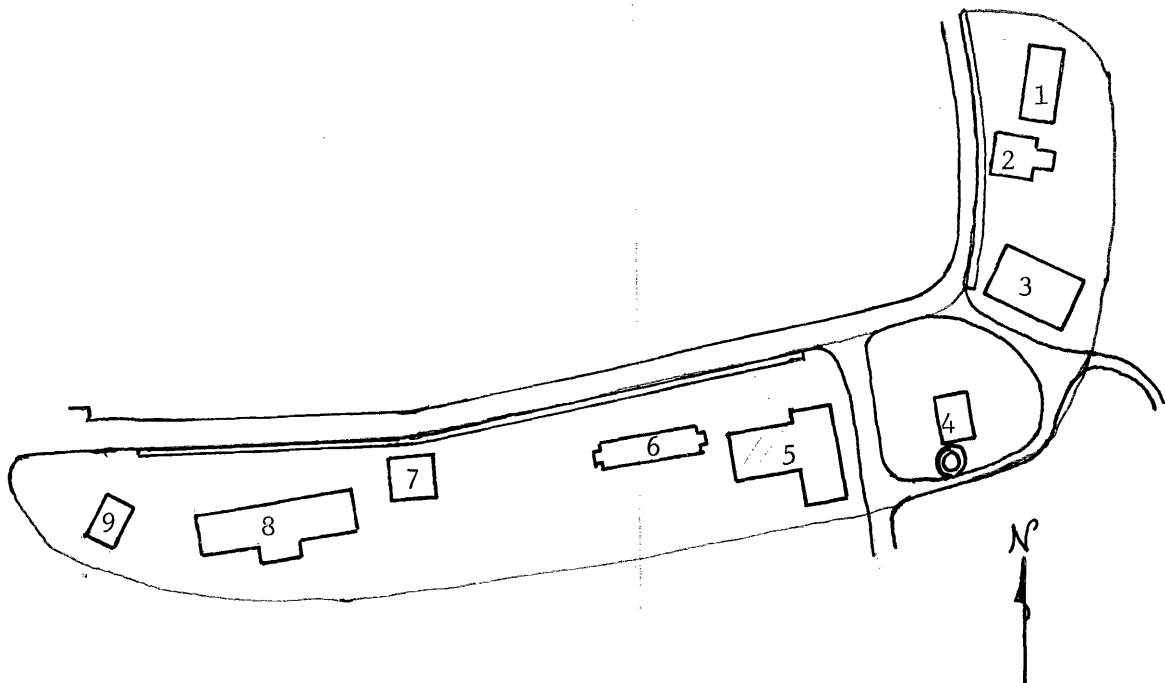
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 5

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY HISTORIC DISTRICT



1. Administration Building
2. Dormitory #2
3. Oakland Chapel
4. President's House
5. Library and Science Building
6. Harmon Hall
7. Dormitory #3
8. Lanier Hall
9. Belles Lettres