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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUL 12 1989

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 Ocean Springs Community Center  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Washington Avenue N/A not for publication  
city, town Ocean Springs N/A vicinity  
state Mississippi code MS county Jackson code 059 zip code 39564

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Walter Anderson Thematic Resource Group

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1\*

(\*Included in a hist. dist. - see note on next page)

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.

Kenneth H. P. Pool July 7, 1989  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Jay L. [Signature] 8/24/89  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social: Meeting Hall (community center)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social: Meeting Hall (community center)

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof (not specified)

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### The Building

Built on a concrete slab on grade, this concrete masonry building has a truss-frame gabled roof. Rectangular and axial in plan, the community center has an inset front porch at the main entrance (west side) and kitchen wing on the south side. The large meeting room flanked by large nine-over-nine wood windows has a stage on the east side, two small restrooms on the west side, and storage rooms on either side of the stage. All the walls of the main room have been decorated by Walter Inglis Anderson. It is publicly owned, used as a community center.

### The Mural

The mural decorates the walls of a room 86 feet long and 48 feet wide, with 12 foot high ceilings, and covers approximately 3000 square feet of wall. Begun in 1951, and completed 13 months later, this extensive mural depicts the founding of Ocean Springs by D'Iberville and his reception by the Indians on the south side, the flora and fauna of the area on the north side (Anderson termed this the seven climates of the coastal area) and a more abstract rendition of color and patterning on the stage side (east), representing the sun on the left and rosebud on the right. The mural encompasses all the vertical walls of the main room, with color and patterning extending from baseboard to ceiling. Door and window frames are decorated with a band of geometric motifs that also occur on the top of the walls, on columns, and doors. The wildlife depicted is almost camouflaged at first by the overall patterning of plantlife, sunlight and water.

NOTE: This property is included as element number 28 in the Old Ocean Springs Historic District, which was listed on the National Register on October 7, 1987. In that district's nomination it is identified as non-contributing, because it does not fall within the period of significance of the district (ca. 1850 to ca. 1935); however, a note explains that it is to be included within the Walter Anderson Thematic Resources Group as an individually-nominated property.

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1951-52  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

Built 1945-48  
Murals 1951-52

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

Anderson, Walter Inglis

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

The Ocean Springs Community Center is significant under criterion C because it contains an extensive mural painted by Walter Inglis Anderson.

Executed in 1950-51, this mural covers the entire walls of the principal room, including baseboards, door frames, trim and window frames, even electrical switchplates, with a flowing depiction of life on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Anderson felt that his artistic duty was to educate the public to the history and natural history of the area, to develop a sense of pride of place. The mural blankets the Center's walls and is Anderson's largest mural. It depicts the "seven seasons" of the year that Anderson believed the coast experienced, each season having distinctive vegetation and animals. Anderson left a small portion of the mural unfinished because of the harsh criticism he received. In fact, a petition was actually circulated to have the mural painted over. It has been suggested that the murals in his own Cottage were the culmination of the artistic process that had begun here. Anderson was paid \$1.00 to paint the visual exposition, which is now valued at more than one million (\$1,000,000) dollars.

The building was erected in 1945-48 to serve as a community center for the City of Ocean Springs.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See bibliographical references for the Walter Anderson Thematic Resources Group.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	6
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3	2	4	4	6	0
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3	3	6	5	5	2	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 3, lot 17, Ocean Springs, MS

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the building and the city lot on which it is located.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Richard J. Cawthon (from materials submitted by Maria Bargas in 1986)  
 organization Mississippi Dept. of Archives & History date Feb. 17, 1989  
 street & number P. O. Box 571 telephone (601) 354-7326  
 city or town Jackson state Mississippi zip code 39205

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Ocean Springs Community Center,  
Ocean Springs, Jackson County,  
Mississippi

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Photographic Information

The following information is applicable to all five photographs:

- 1) Ocean Springs Community Center
- 2) Ocean Springs, Jackson County, Mississippi
- 3) Maria C. Bargas
- 4) July 1985
- 5) Mississippi Department of Archives and History

The photographs are identified as follows:

Photo 1: Oblique view of exterior, toward east

Photo 2: Interior - detail of mural on north wall (bear)

Photo 3: Interior - detail of mural on north wall (birds)

Photo 4: Interior - detail of mural on north wall (deer)

Photo 5: Interior - detail of mural on south wall (French soldiers)

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section:

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Ocean Springs Community Center  
(Additional documentation)  
Ocean Springs, Jackson County, Mississippi

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**AMENDMENT**

(Additional documentation to establish national significance)

The purpose of this amendment is to provide additional documentation about the Ocean Springs Community Center in Ocean Springs, Jackson County, Mississippi, in order to establish that the building has national significance because of its murals, which are the largest and most significant work of artist Walter Inglis Anderson. The building was listed on the National Register on August 24, 1989, as part of the Walter Anderson thematic group. It was listed as having state-level significance. Since that time Walter Anderson has received substantially greater national acclaim, providing a basis for recognizing the Ocean Springs Community Center and its murals as being nationally significant.

**Section 8: Major Bibliographical References**

See additional Continuation Sheets.

**Section 9: Major Bibliographical References**

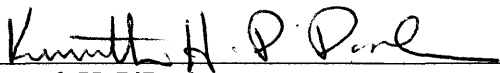
See additional Continuation Sheets.

**Section 11: Form prepared by**

Daisy Karam-Read  
Director of Public Affairs & Marketing  
Walter Anderson Museum of Art  
(228) 872-3164

edited and revised by  
Richard J. Cawthon, Chief Architectural Historian  
Mississippi Department of Archives and History  
P. O. Bo 571  
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0571  
601-359-6940

**CERTIFICATION**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth H. P. Pool  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

JANUARY 24, 2005  
Date

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Ocean Springs Community Center  
(Additional documentation)  
Ocean Springs, Jackson County, Mississippi

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**Significance**

Walter Anderson has been receiving increasing national recognition since the formation, in 1991, of the Walter Anderson Museum of Art, in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, which is now making available to the public a large and outstanding collection of his work. Numerous recent publications and a major show of his work at the Smithsonian Institution demonstrate that Walter Anderson is now considered one of the premier American artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The single largest and most complex work by Walter Inglis Anderson, and in many ways the most complete and accomplished expression of his unique style and artistic vision, is the huge continuous array of stunning murals which completely cover all four walls of the main interior space of the Ocean Springs Community Center. This remarkable group of murals, covering 2500 square feet of wall surface, was painted in 1951-1952 and is now valued at a minimum of \$8 million.

Anderson was an astonishingly prolific artist. According to Patti Carr Black, in *Art in Mississippi, 1720-1980*, "Anderson created a staggering quantity of work, including oils, watercolors, and drawings in crayon, pen and ink, and pencil. He sculpted in wood, carved pieces of furniture, created ceramic figures, carved and decorated earthenware, cut large linoleum blocks for printing panels and friezes, designed textiles, and painted murals." Within the vast array of his work, however, he produced very few murals, but, because of their size and complexity, they are the most prominent of his works. The array of murals in the Ocean Springs Community Center, constituting, in effect, a single huge work, is by far the largest and most prominent of these. The importance of this mural group inspired the establishment of the Walter Anderson Museum immediately adjacent to the Ocean Springs Community Center, which is now part of the museum complex.

Remarkable in their scope, all of the murals of Walter Anderson have inspired a splendid book, *Walls of Light*, devoted exclusively to this aspect of his oeuvres. Written by museum curator Anne R. King with a foreword by distinguished historian Stephen E. Ambrose, who founded the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans, this tome compares Anderson's Community Center murals to the journals of Meriwether Lewis for their boldness and sense of wonder, stating that his paintings "pass the test of greatness". In 1999, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* quotes Ambrose on this same subject, citing Ambrose's conviction that upon viewing the murals, he was in "the presence of genius"

In recognition of his contribution to 20<sup>th</sup> century American art and of the centennial celebration of his birth, the Smithsonian Institution featured Walter Inglis Anderson in a major solo exhibition at the Arts & Industries Building last year. The exhibit, *Walter Inglis Anderson Centennial Traveling Exhibition: Everything I See Is New and Strange* was on view from September 25, 2003 through January 11, 2004, and is an undisputed testament to the national significance of Anderson's creations. He is the first artist of the Mississippi Gulf Coast

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Ocean Springs Community Center  
(Additional documentation)  
Ocean Springs, Jackson County, Mississippi

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to be so honored. With increasing recognition of his mastery by national art critics, curators and historians, such as Colin Eisler (Ph.D., Harvard University); Susan C. Larsen (Ph.D., Northwestern University); Christopher Maurer (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania); Francis V. O'Connor (Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University), this major presentation of his work at the Smithsonian Institution moved critics to compare Anderson's work to such artists as Van Gogh, Homer and Sargent. Receiving this extensive critical praise as well as public acclaim, the Smithsonian's presentation welcomed more than 300,000 visitors through its extended run. Guest Curator Linda Crocker Simmons believes that the *Centennial Traveling Exhibition* "will provide an opportunity to present Anderson to a national audience who can appreciate his achievement as one of the most important individualists of the 20th century and acknowledge his work within the full context of American art."

In a review of the Smithsonian Institution's exhibition, *Washington Post* senior art critic Paul Richard stated, "The makers of great American watercolors - Winslow, Homer, John Singer Sargent, John Marin, Charles Demuth - are a select few. Anderson is worthy of inclusion in that company."

By placing Walter Anderson firmly on the national stage, the reputation of Walter Anderson has grown enormously and his compelling works are now exhibited widely and collected internationally. New York based art historian Francis O'Connor, the foremost authority on American murals, wrote of Anderson's Community Center murals, "His is a vision at one with its encompassing phenomena, which it is rare to find in art and rarer still to find so lyrically expressed in wall painting."

Walter Anderson's works no longer speak only to or for regional art, but have assumed nationwide significance. The country-wide importance of Walter Anderson's creations is evident when one considers that in addition to the Ogden Museum and the Smithsonian Institution, many of America's most prestigious museums hold Anderson's work in their permanent collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, among others.



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Ocean Springs Community Center  
(Additional documentation)  
Ocean Springs, Jackson County, Mississippi

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**Selected Bibliography**

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