

May 22, 2008

Dr. Janet Snyder Matthews
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places and Associate Director for Cultural Resources
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)
Washington, D.C. 2005

Dear Dr. Matthews:

The Mississippi Professional Historic Preservation Review Board, at its May 15, 2008, voted to recommend the delisting of the following National Register listed properties which were lost to fires:

Meridian Baptist Seminary, Lauderdale County, Mississippi 79001326

Talbert-Cassels House, Amite County, Mississippi 84002125

We have prepared amendments to the nomination noting the loss of historic integrity. We hope these documents are satisfactory.

Sincerely,

Kenneth H. P'Pool

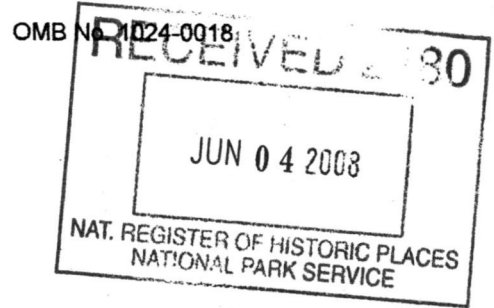
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

By: William M. Gatlin

National Register Coordinator

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**



Section: _____

Page: _____

Meridian Baptist Seminary
Lauderdale County, Mississippi

Amendment for Purposes of Requesting Delisting

The Meridian Baptist Seminary, Lauderdale County, Mississippi, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on January 8, 1979. The building was destroyed by fire in September 2007. A site visit by MDAH staff in February 2008 confirmed that building was completely destroyed. Since the date of listing the building has lost the qualities which originally caused it to be listed.

Section 11:

Form prepared by:

William M. Gatlin, Architectural Historian
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
P.O. Box 571
Jackson, MS 39205-0571
601-576-6940

Date: March 25, 2008

Section 2:

Certification



State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: 5-19-2008

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: REMOVAL

PROPERTY NAME: Meridian Baptist Seminary

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MISSISSIPPI, Lauderdale

DATE RECEIVED: 6/04/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/18/08
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 79001326

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

~~removed from the National Register~~

DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N
RECOM./CRITERIA Remove
REVIEWER Edson Beall DISCIPLINE History
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 7.16.08

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

PH 0688037

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 20 1978
DATE ENTERED JAN 8 1979

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Meridian Baptist Seminary

AND/OR COMMON Meridian Baptist Seminary

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 16th Street and 31st Avenue

CITY, TOWN	Meridian	VICINITY OF	Third	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT	Third
STATE	Mississippi	CODE	28	COUNTY	Lauderdale
				CODE	75

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Vacant

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME East Mississippi Baptist State Convention ✓

STREET & NUMBER 16th Street and 31st Avenue

CITY, TOWN Meridian STATE Mississippi 39301

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Registry of Deeds, ETC. Office of the Chancery Clerk
Lauderdale County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 1587

CITY, TOWN Meridian STATE Mississippi 39301

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE 1977 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN Jackson STATE Mississippi 39205

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR
 DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Meridian Baptist Seminary is situated prominently on the rise of a barren lot in a residential neighborhood of Meridian. A toppled marble monument, erected in memory of Professor G. M. Reese (a former president) and his wife, Johnnie Pearl, is located near the northeast corner of the building. Built on hard clay, the structure is without a foundation, with brick bearing walls rising three stories to an asphalt-covered hip roof pierced by three chimneys. The seven-bay north and south elevations have belt courses between each floor and double-hung six-over-six windows decorated with flat masonry arches. The east and west elevations are varied with respect to window placement, and a masonry stair provides access to a second-floor entrance on the west elevation.

The first-floor plan consists of a center hall running the full length of the building with small classrooms on both sides. Ceilings and wainscot have varnished tongue-in-groove boards; walls are plaster over brick. A straight-run stair to the second floor is located near the west entrance. A library room and offices are located on the west side of the second floor and an auditorium on the east side. The auditorium features eight chamfered supporting posts and a stage along the east wall. Plaster board partitions now divide the auditorium into three sections. The third floor has a large central hall with small dormitory rooms along the sides.

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Black History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1920-21

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Tom Ware, Albert Gains, Adam Peterson,

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Builders

The Meridian Baptist Seminary was founded as one of the early educational institutions for blacks in eastern Mississippi. Providing secular and religious instruction on the secondary school level since 1896, the Baptist Seminary building has substantial associational significance for Meridian's black community. The earliest black public school in Meridian, Wechsler High School (1888), did not offer the high school diploma until 1920 (Ivy, p. 113).

The Seminary was organized in 1896 and classes were held in the basement of the New Hope Baptist Church (East Mississippi Baptist State Convention, p. 12). G. M. Reese was elected president of the school in 1889, a position he held until his death in 1939. A two-story frame building was erected in 1905 (Deed Book 74:417) for the purpose of teaching theology and Christian service to young blacks. A survey of Negro schools in Mississippi in 1916 described the institution as a "poorly managed elementary school with a few pupils in secondary subjects" (Department of the Interior, p. 375). Despite the lack of financial resources, the Seminary continued to offer secondary courses and the high school diploma for black students.

In 1920-21 the deteriorated frame building housing the Baptist Seminary was demolished and the existing brick structure was erected on the same site (Deed Books 131:523; 149:346). Local builders Tom Ware, Albert Gains, and Adam Peterson are said to have constructed the building. E. T. Ware is listed in the 1907 "Guide of the Colored Community" as a contractor and builder. The school flourished during the 1920s and 1930s under the leadership of President Reese. G.C. Wells served as president from 1939 to 1945; Herbert Lang, 1945-1947; and M. W. Wilson, 1947-1968. Course offerings included the traditional high school curricula with college preparatory and vocational programs, as well as Negro history. After 1949 the Seminary offered only two-year high school transfer certificates, and gradually academic offerings were curtailed until the closing of the school in 1972.

Restoration of the Seminary building is planned by the Reverend Mr. James C. Chandler, representing the East Mississippi Baptist State Convention. Mayor I. A. Rosenbaum of the City of Meridian has also expressed interest in the availability of city funding for rehabilitation of the building. Reverend Mr. Chandler foresees use of the space for community events, public meetings, offices, cultural programs, and Project Head Start. The adaptive use of the property would provide a valuable neighborhood resource for Meridian, serving the contemporary needs of the proximate black residential area.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"A Business, Professional, Church, Fraternal and Educational Guide of the Colored Community of Meridian, Mississippi." Pamphlet. Meridian, Mississippi. 1972.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

5

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

QUADRANGLE NAME Meridian South

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 339 180 3582860

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Block 150 of and according to Ragsdale's Survey of the said city, county, and state.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Jack A. Gold, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE November 3, 1978

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 571

TELEPHONE 601- 354-7326

CITY OR TOWN Jackson

STATE Mississippi 39205

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL X

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 Elmer B. Hilliard

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE November 6, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 1-8-79

ATTEST: Anna H. Gilmore
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 1/5/78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	NOV 20 1978
RECEIVED	-----
DATE ENTERED	JAN 8 1979

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Bibliographical References (cont'd)

"East Mississippi Baptist Convention Dedicates the Newly Erected Baptist Day Care Center." Pamphlet. Meridian, Mississippi. 1972.

Gold, Jack A., architectural historian. Personal inspection, July 27, 1978.

Gold, Jack A., architectural historian. Personal interview with Reverend Mr. James C. Chandler, Meridian, July 27, 1978.

Ivy, Horace Macaulay. A History of Meridian Public Schools 1885-1953. Meridian, Mississippi. 1975.

Lauderdale County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Deed Books 61:58; 74:417; 94:411; 100:53; 131:523; 149:346; 191:264.

Thirty Years in Review 1923-1953 with Dr. H. M. Ivy, Superintendent. Compiled by T. J. Harris Senior High, W. A. Reed, Jr., Principal.

United States. Department of the Interior. A General Survey of Negro Education in the United States and a Summary of Public School Facilities: Mississippi. Washington: Government Printing Office. 1917.

United States. Works Progress Administration. Lauderdale County, Mississippi. Source Material for Mississippi History: Preliminary Manuscripts. Compiled by Statewide Historical Research Project. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

Property

Meridian Baptist Seminary

State

Miss.

Working Number

11.20.78.4577

79 001326

TECHNICAL

Photos 4

Maps 1

CONTROL

OK 11.21.78

HISTORIAN

*accept
Hardy
11/2/79*

This property was constructed in 1900-01 to facilitate the ongoing educational & religious needs of the black community in Meridian. Preservation activities to be supported by city and East Miss. Baptist State Convention. no boundary justification see attached

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

Organized by black Baptists, built by black contractors, staffed by black teachers, and now to be rehab'd for the black neighborhood's use: This is significant as a ^{symbol of a} community's self-help efforts in one of the communities offering few opportunities under Jim Crow. Its simple design reflects the social & economic realities of its context.

OTHER

*Accept 11/2/79
Joe Tomlin*

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

Important for black history.

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

*James H. Colmore
1/5/78
Accepts*

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered JAN 8 1979

Federal Register Entry _____

3-6-79

Re-submit _____







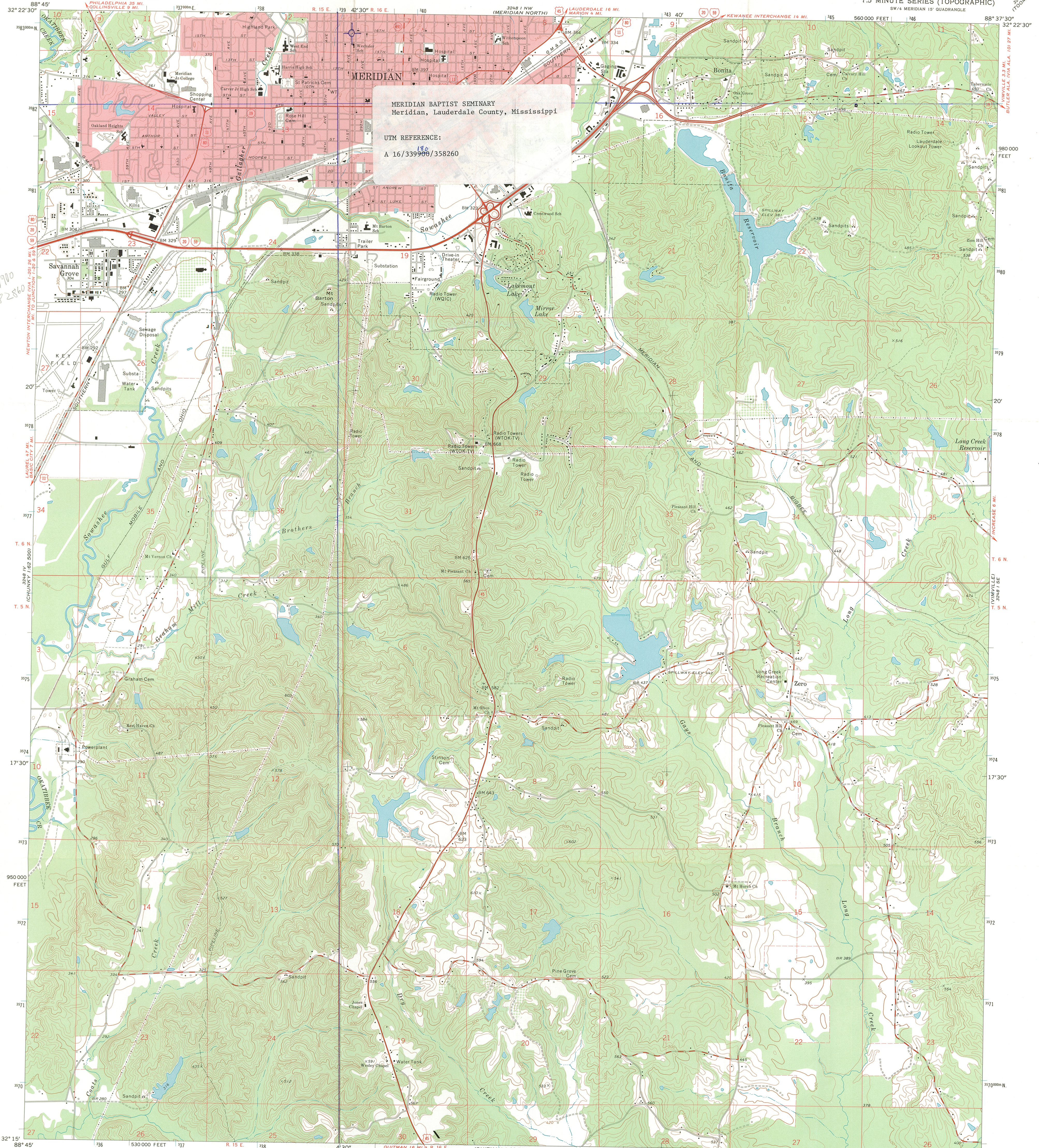


MERIDIAN BAPTIST SEMINARY
Meridian, Lauderdale County, Mississippi

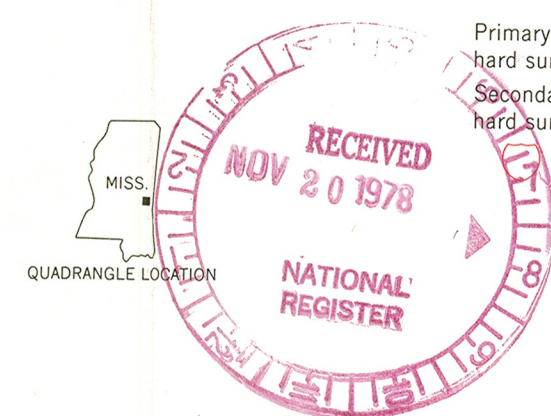
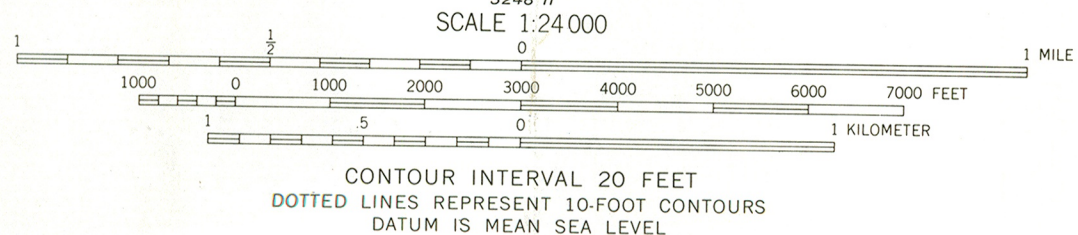
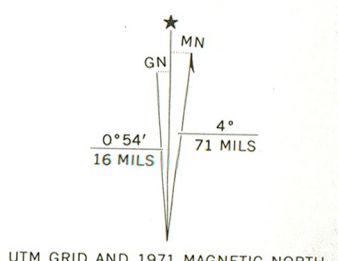
UTM REFERENCE:
A 16/339900/358260

E 339900
N 358260

ERRISE 1:62 5000
328 16 MILS



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1970. Field checked 1971
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Mississippi coordinate system, east zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 16, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

MERIDIAN SOUTH, MISS.
SW 1/4 MERIDIAN 15' QUADRANGLE
N3215-W8837.5/7.5
1971
AMS 3248 I SW-SERIES V843

ROY HOWELL
CONSULTING ENGINEER
POST OFFICE BOX 4401
MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI 39301

JUNE 1, 1978

REV. JAMES C. CHANDLER
2911 RUFFER
MERIDIAN, MISS. 39301

RE: RESTORATION OF MERIDIAN BAPTIST SEMINARY
31ST. AVE. & 15TH STREET
MERIDIAN, MISS. 39301

DEAR SIR:

THIS OFFICE HAS MADE A THROUGH ANALYSIS FOR REPAIRS
AND RENOVATIONS FOR THE ABOVE PROJECT AND FIND THAT COMPLETE
RESTORATION CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED AND WILL COST APPROXIMATELY
\$180,000.00.

LET US KNOW IF WE CAN BE OF FUTHER ASSISTANCE.

YOURS TRULY,

Roy Howell
ROY HOWELL
CONSULTING ENGINEER

RH/BMH

G.V. MONTGOMERY
3RD DISTRICT, MISSISSIPPI

2367 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
AREA CODE (202) 225-5031

DISTRICT OFFICE:
MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI 39301
AREA CODE (601) 693-6681

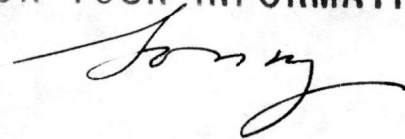
COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
JACK VANCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

July 17, 1978

FOR YOUR INFORMATION



Mr. Elbert R. Hilliard
Department of Archives and History
State of Mississippi
Post Office 571
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

ATTN: Mr. Jack Gold


Dear Mr. Gold:

It has been brought to my attention that the Meridian Baptist Seminary will be recommended for inclusion in the National Historic Register in the near future. By this letter, I would like to express my keen interest in this project.

I have been familiar with the history of the Baptist Seminary for many years, and I can fully support the effort underway now to recognize it as a historic landmark. The Seminary played a substantial part in the early educational history of black Mississippians in the East Mississippi area. In fact, I understand that high school diplomas were issued from the Seminary before they were available anywhere else in Meridian.

Please associate my letter of interest with your file on the Meridian Baptist Seminary so that my interest in this project will be on record.

Sincerely yours,



Gillespie V. Montgomery
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

GVM:jn/as

July 18, 1978

Mr. Jack Gold
Department of Archives and History
Post Office Box 571
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Re: Restoration and Preservation
of the Meridian Baptist
Seminary
31st Avenue and 15th Street
Meridian, Mississippi 39301

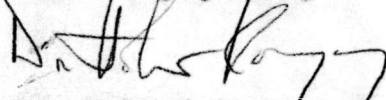
Dear Mr. Gold:

In my opinion if this building is restored to public use to the community it could provide one of the community's greatest needs. A program of recreation, a swimming pool, a General Educational program, at least two units of Headstart programs, two conference rooms, one reading room, several class rooms, office space and an auditorium to meet the need and the demand of the public. All of these needs and facilities could be provided with the restoration of the building.

The consideration of this project by the Department of Archives and History would be one of the most outstanding contributions made to the growth and development of the community and its people.

Any assistance given to Rev. Chandler and his associates will be greatly appreciated.

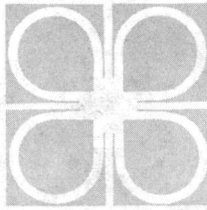
Sincerely yours,



Dr. Hobert Kornegay

HK/hic

cc: Rev. James C. Chandler



**GREATER MERIDIAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

July 19, 1978

Mr. Elbert Hilliard, Director
Department of Archives and History
P.O. Box 571
Jackson, Ms. 39205

Dear Elbert:

It is our understanding from Rev. James Chandler, Pastor of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, that efforts are being made to restore the Meridian Baptist Seminary which is rich in history.

This letter is to let you and other interested parties know that restoration of the Seminary would be very beneficial to our community and that we would be grateful for any action you and your agency could take to bring this about. With its restoration, the building could house as many as two head start units, rooms for GED courses, an auditorium, two conference rooms and office space.

We appreciate what you've already done in having Mr. Jack Gold from your staff investigate the project.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

W. J. Johnson, Jr., CCE
Executive Vice President

cc: Rev. James Chandler



KAY TAYLOR
DIRECTOR

TELEPHONE
693-6771

MERIDIAN PUBLIC LIBRARY



MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

July 19, 1978

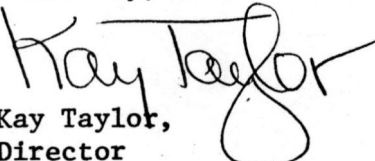
Mr. Jack Gold
State of Mississippi
Department of Archives and History
P. O. Box 571
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Dear Mr. Gold:

Dr. James C. Chandler and Reverend C. O. Inge have been doing research for some time on the history of the Meridian Baptist Seminary which is located here in Meridian at 31st Avenue and 16th Street. Old city directories here at the library first mention the Seminary in 1911 and last mention it in 1944. Thus, for at least thirty-three years, this institution existed in our midst and served our community. At one time, according to Reverend Inge, it was the only high school for Blacks in east Mississippi.

Because of the contributions this institution made to our state and to the education of the Black race, Dr. Chandler and Reverend Inge are working towards the preservation and restoration of the building. I fully support their efforts and would hope that the Seminary Building can be listed in the National Register of Historic Places to facilitate funding for such. Any assistance and guidance that you can give them in their work will be appreciated not only by me but I'm sure our community as a whole because of the important role this institution played in our history.

Sincerely,


Kay Taylor,
Director

cc. Dr. James C. Chandler

Also Serving Lauderdale County

July 19, 1978

Mr. Elbert R. Hilliard
Department of Archives and History
State of Mississippi
Post Office 571
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Attention: Mr. Jack Gold

Dear Mr. Gold:

We are very interested in the project to get the Meridian Baptist Seminary recommended for inclusion in the National Historic Register.

This project means a lot to this community and is deserving of all the recognition that can be afforded.

This building has been used as an educational center throughout my lifetime and the roots of Black education extends to the Meridian Baptist Seminary.

Please consider this letter as my personal support of this project.

Sincerely,

Charles L. Young

CLY:elg

copy

July 26, 1978

C.R. Moore
1820 12th AVENUE
Meridian, MS 39301

Mr. Elbert Hillard
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
P.O. Box 571
Jackson, MS

Dear Mr. Hillard:

I have been informed that efforts are being made to restore the Meridian Baptist Seminary for educational purposes, and what a joy it brought to me and other citizens of this community. The Baptist Seminary is a true historic monument and site where hundreds of youth and ministers have received inspiration and knowledge.

My family, on my mother's side, has loved and supported the Baptist Seminary from the very beginning, and I assure you and Rev. James C. Chandler, who is a prime mover, my wholehearted financial support. I further plead with you to do all within your power to make this effort a success.

Yours truly,

C. R. Moore
C.R. Moore

SW

1 copy to Mr. Jack Greer

*Copy & send to Rev. James Chandler - Mt Olive Bapt. Church - also to Garden Church
2911 Copper St. - Mer*



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
P. O. BOX 571
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39205

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
WILLIAM F. WINTER PRESIDENT
JOHN K. BETTERS WORTH
ARCH DALRYMPLE III
FRANK E. EVERETT, JR
MRS MITCHELL ROBINSON
ESTUS SMITH
EVERETTE TRULY
THOMAS H. WATKINS
SHERWOOD W. WISE
ELBERT R. HILLIARD
DIRECTOR

1 August 1978

Mr. W. J. Johnson, Jr., CCE
Executive Vice President
Greater Meridian Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 790
Meridian, Mississippi 39301

Dear Bill:

Thank you for your letter of July 19 concerning the nomination of the Meridian Baptist Seminary to the National Register of Historic Places. The proposed plans of the City of Meridian for the restoration of the Seminary are a commendable example of adaptive reuse, and I hope the project will be successful.

As for the nomination, the decision rests with the Mississippi Historic Preservation Professional Review Board, which has responsibility for approving nominations forwarded from the state to the National Register office in Washington, D.C. The Board will base its determination on the history of the Seminary as documented by Jack A. Gold. We will be happy to let you know the Board's decision immediately following the next quarterly meeting on October 27.

We greatly appreciate the interest of the Greater Meridian Chamber of Commerce in the preservation activities of this Department. Best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Elbert R. Hilliard

ERH/mh

LAUDERDALE COUNTY
Board of Supervisors

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

W. H. (BILLY) MELTON, DISTRICT 1
VICE PRESIDENT

R. N. MCELROY, DISTRICT 2

JOSEPH M. MOSBY, DISTRICT 3

LAMAR TAYLOR, DISTRICT 4

TOMMIE COKER, DISTRICT 5
PRESIDENT



M. B. COBB, CLERK

WILLIAM E. READY
ATTORNEY

WALLACE E. HEGGIE
ADMINISTRATOR

BOARD TELEPHONES:
693-1692 OR 693-2951

POST OFFICE BOX 1587
MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI
39301

August 3, 1978

Mr. Elbert R. Hilliard
Department of Archives & History
State of Mississippi
P. O. Box 571
Jackson, MS 39205

Attention: Jack Gold

Dear Mr. Gold:

As President of the Board of Supervisors, Lauderdale County, Meridian, Mississippi, I would like to recommend to you that the Meridian Baptist Seminary Building be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Although now much in need of repair, this building is one of the older buildings in the community and was the pride of both the black and white community.

It is an intricate part of Lauderdale County's history, particularly the East Mississippi Black Community's Heritage and History.

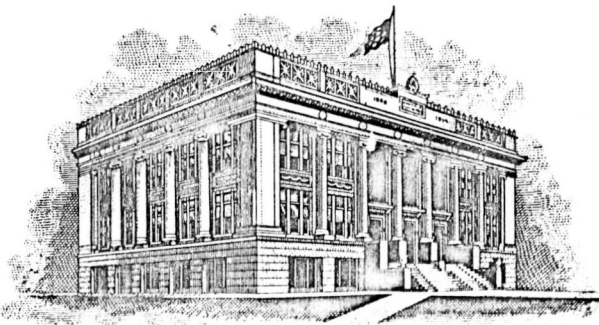
It was for many years the center of Religious and Civic activities and endeavors for the whole area for the black community; and was proudly one of the earliest facilities for meetings and brotherhood activities between blacks and whites of the area.

Sincerely yours,

William H. Melton,
President

WHM/csh

CITY COUNCIL
M. R. ANDERS
BILLY FORT
DR. HOBERT KORNEGAY
BROGAN PRICE
JIM SPEED



MUNICIPAL BUILDING



COUNCIL-MANAGER GOVERNMENT

MERIDIAN, MISS.

OFFICE OF
MAYOR

August 4, 1978


Mr. Elbert Hilliard
Department of Archives & History
P. O. Box 571
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Re: Restoration of Meridian Baptist Seminary at 31st Avenue and 15th Street

Dear Mr. Hilliard:

The project for restoration and preservation of the Meridian Baptist Seminary has been brought to my attention. I am satisfied that this building should be recorded in the National Historic Register.

Please advise me what the City of Meridian can do to achieve this end.

Yours truly,

I. A. Rosenbaum
Mayor

IAR/gy

cc: Meridian Chamber of Commerce
Rev. James Chandler



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

P. O. BOX 571
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39205

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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ELBERT R. HILLIARD
DIRECTOR

November 6, 1978



Mr. Charles Herrington
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
18th & C Streets, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Herrington:

We are pleased to enclose, herewith, the necessary nomination forms, map, and photographs for Meridian Baptist Seminary, Lauderdale County, Mississippi.

Meridian Baptist Seminary was approved for nomination by the Mississippi Historic Preservation Professional Review Board at its last meeting on October 27, 1978. This structure is located in the Third Congressional District, Congressman Gillespie V. Montgomery.

We trust that you will find the enclosed forms in order and will let us hear from you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Elbert R. Hilliard
State Historic Preservation Officer

ERH/ah

Enclosures

12

Charles
1-5

Meridian Baptist
Seminary 12/5/78

Dr. James C. Chandler
2911 Ruffer Street
Meridian, MS 39301

December 27, 1978

Dr. William J. Murtagh
Keeper of the National Register
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Dr. Murtagh:

Thank you for your letter of December 1, 1978, inviting comment on whether the Meridian Baptist Seminary should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In order to understand the historic significance of the Seminary, it is necessary to understand the history of education, especially education of blacks, in Mississippi. Shortly after Mississippi was readmitted to the Union, the state legislature passed the School Law of 1870. This law established for the first time in Mississippi state-supported public schools throughout the entire state. Public education was to be provided regardless of race and was to receive substantial state appropriations. With the end of Reconstruction in 1876, the state commitment to public education generally and in particular to public education for blacks diminished substantially. The systematic neglect of public education for blacks continued well into the twentieth century, as the following figures from Loewen and Sallis' Mississippi: Conflict and Change indicate:

	White Schools 1940	Black Schools 1940
1. Annual expenditure/pupil	\$ 41.71	\$ 7.40
2. Length of School Year	160 days	124 days
3. Average college education of teachers	3.5 years	1.5 years
4. Teacher salaries	\$ 776.00	\$ 232.00

As late as 1948 public education for blacks in one Mississippi county was provided in some eighty one-and-two-room, wooden school houses.

In light of this not so benign neglect, northern foundations, national religious groups, and associations of local black churches established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century a handful of private schools to fill the educational gap. The most famous of these was (and is) the Piney Woods School founded in 1910.

The Meridian Baptist Seminary also was one of these schools. Established in 1896 (fourteen years before the founding of Piney Woods), the Seminary is believed to be the only such school in the east central Mississippi area and, as noted above,

one of the very few in the entire state. As early as 1905, the Seminary offered the opportunity for twelve grades of study in an eight-month school year. By contrast, public schools in the surrounding counties offered classes only through the eighth grade and then only for four months of the year. (The students were needed to work in the fields and the forests the remainder of the year.) Indeed, even in the City of Meridian the black public schools offered only ten grades until the twenties. As a student who entered the Seminary in 1905 and graduated in 1917 recalls, "Every public school in Meridian was trying to keep up with the Seminary!"

From 1905 to 1921 the Seminary served as a day school for Meridian students and a boarding school for students from the surrounding counties. Because of the deterioration of the wooden structure, a fundraising campaign was inaugurated by the East Mississippi Baptist Convention. After considerable financial sacrifice, the necessary funds were raised or borrowed. The frame building subsequently was demolished and the present brick structure built in 1921 on the same site atop the hill at 31st Avenue and 16th Street. After completion of the building, the Seminary continued as a day school and boarding school, providing education for black Mississippians for much of the next fifty-seven years.

Counted among the Seminary's graduates during this period are numerous present-day teachers, administrators, clergy, and business people in the east central Mississippi area. A 1947 graduate recalls that she was sent to the Seminary because "My parents said it was a place of quality education ... the school was something special, too." Another graduate stated that "The Seminary's done so much for the black. So many of our people came out of it."

Clearly the present Seminary building does have especial significance in the experience of black Mississippians. Perhaps a Meridian clergyman summarized this significance best:

If a person doesn't remember his past, he doesn't have much future. Our children and our children's children need to know the sacrifices their ancestors made to get an education ... (The Seminary building) is a place where our children and our children's children can look up on that hill and see what we struggled to achieve!

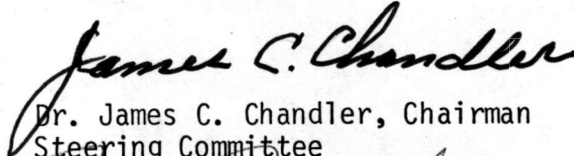
Because of the limited support of education for blacks in the past and thus the insubstantial structures in which so much of that education took place, there are very few buildings remaining in Mississippi that have this significance and none of this age in east central Mississippi

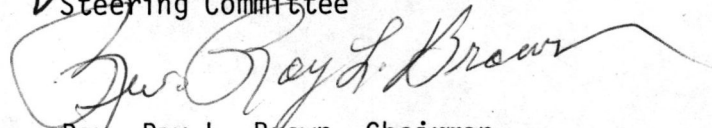
Finally, the planned future use of the restored Seminary building will build upon and, it is hoped, perpetuate the building's significance. A day care/early-childhood education program will be offered along with adult education programs.

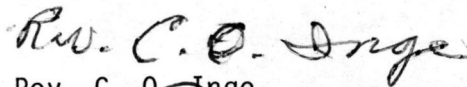
Again, thank you for this opportunity to comment upon whether the Meridian Baptist Seminary should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

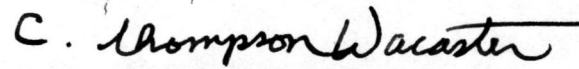
Additional evidence of community support for such listing is enclosed. If we may supply you any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,


Dr. James C. Chandler, Chairman
Steering Committee


Rev. Roy L. Brown, Chairman
Trustee Board


Rev. C. O. Inge


Dr. C. Thompson Wacaster
The Phil Hardin Foundation

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

DATE REC'D **JAN 02 1979**

REPORT BY FEDERAL SENT

TELEPHONE CALL (ATTACHED)

DATE ACTION TAKEN

1/5/78

INITIALS

ST

Meridian Baptist Seminary

1/2/79 - first Review - state not crazy about this nomination

→ acreage justification: Jack Gold 1/2/79

boundaries according to original area ~~at~~ historically associated w/ school.

no other structures (besides monument - insignificant) w/in acreage.

→ This only surviving black institution for private education in Meridian

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MISSISSIPPI

Date Entered **JAN 8 1979**

Name

Location

Meridian Baptist Seminary

Meridian
Lauderdale County

Old Noxubee County Jail

Macon
Noxubee County

Bobb House

Vicksburg
Warren County

Also Notified

Honorable John C. Stennis
Honorable Thad Cochran
Honorable Gillespie V. Montgomery
Honorable Jon C. Hinson

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Elbert Hilliard
Director, State of Mississippi
Department of Archives and History
P.O. Box 571
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

NR Byers/bjr 1/26/79

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.

NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

① NAME as it appears on federal register: Meridian Baptist Seminary
 ② OTHER NAMES:
 ③ date of entry: JAN 8 1979
 ④ county code: 75

⑤ LOCATION street & number: 16th St. and 31st Ave.
 city / town: Meridian
 vicinity of:
 state: MS
 county: Lauderdale
 ⑥ NPS REGION: SE

⑦ OWNER PRIVATE STATE MUNICIPAL COUNTY MULTIPLE FEDERAL (agency name)
 ⑧ ADMINISTRATOR:

⑨ EXISTING SURVEYS HABS HAER NHL
 ⑩ FUNDED? YES NO
 ⑪ CONGRESS. DISTRICT: 3
 ⑫ SOURCE of NOMINATION STATE FEDERAL
 if state who prepared form?

⑬ WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES, NAME NO
 ⑭ WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES, NAME NO
 ⑮ ACREAGE
 LOCAL PRIVATE ORGANIZATION

⑯ CONDITION
 deteriorated altered original site
 excellent ruins unaltered moved
 good unexposed reconstructed unknown
 fair unexcavated excavated
 ⑰ FEATURES:
 INTERIOR SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1 SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2 SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3
 NOT INTACT-0 NOT INTACT-0
 UNKNOWN-4 UNKNOWN-5
 NOT APPLICABLE-7 NOT APPLICABLE-8
 EXTERIOR NOT APPLICABLE-9
 ENVIRONS NOT APPLICABLE-9

⑱ ACCESS YES-Restricted YES-Unrestricted No Access Unknown
 ⑲ ADAPTIVE USE YES NO
 ⑳ SAVED? YES
 IS PROPERTY A HISTORIC DISTRICT? yes no

㉑ AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:
 ARCHEOLOGY-prehistoric-2 COMMERCE-6
 ARCHEOLOGY-historic-1 COMMUNICATIONS-7
 AGRICULTURE-3 CONSERVATION-8
 ARCHITECTURE-4 ECONOMICS-9
 ART-5 EDUCATION-10
 ENGINEERING-11 ENTERTAINMENT-26
 EXPLORATION-12 HEALTH-27
 INDUSTRY-13 INVENTION-14
 LANDSCAPE ARCH.-15 LAW-16
 LITERATURE-17 MILITARY-18
 MUSIC-19 PHILOSOPHY-20
 POLITICS/GOVT.-21 RELIGION-22
 SCIENCE-23 SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN-24
 SOCIAL/CULTURAL-30 TRANSPORTATION-25
 RECREATION-28 SETTLEMENT-29
 URBAN PLANNING-31 OTHER (SPECIFY)
 ㉒ CLAIMS: explain
 'first'
 'oldest'
 'only'

㉓ functions
 WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT:
 CURRENTLY:
 ㉔ dates of initial construction:
 major alterations:
 historic events:
 ㉕ ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION

㉖ architectural style(s):
 ㉗ architect:
 ㉘ master builder:
 ㉙ engineer:

㉚ landscape architect / garden designer:
 ㉛ interior decorator:
 ㉜ artist:
 ㉝ artisan:
 ㉞ builder/contractor:

㉟ NAMES give role & date
 PERSONAL:
 EVENTS:
 INSTITUTIONAL:

㊱ NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP

Meridian Baptist Seminary

(Resource Name)

79001326

(Reference Number[s])

3 / 15 / 2018

(Date Form Completed)

Lauderdale

(County)

MS

(State)

WACC

(Completed by)

STATUS:

1. MISSING _____ 2. REMOVED/ DEMOLISHED 3. NHL _____ 4. TR _____ 5. MRA _____ 6. OVERSIZED _____ 7. NPS UNDOCUMENTED _____ 8. DOE- OWNER OBJECTION _____ 9. RESTRICTED _____

EXPLANATION:

1. Missing Status: Entire Folder (); Nomination (); Map(s) (); Photos ();
Available on: Microfiche (); Optical Disk ();

2. _____
(Cause for Removal)

_____/_____/_____
(Date Removed)

3. _____
(NHL Name, if different than NRHP Name)

_____/_____/_____
(Date Designated)

4. _____
(If Multi-state/county TR, state/county where filed and location)

(TR or MRA Name)

5. _____
(If Multi-state/county MRA, state/county where filed and location)

6. _____
(Location of oversize file)

7. _____
(Current source of partial documentation)

_____/_____/_____
(Target Date)

COMMENTS: (Where found or source of replacement)

_____/_____/_____
(Date Found/Replaced)