

Added to Alabama Register 6/19/99

ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE

Nomination Form

1. Name

historic Leighton Training School/Leighton Middle School

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 2255 North Washington Street

city, town Leighton

---vicinity of

state Alabama

county Colbert

zip

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 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 type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Leighton

Phone number 205-446-8477

street & number c/o City Hall/Mayor's Office, P.O. Box 83

city, town Leighton

---vicinity of

zip 35646

5. Floor plan & site plan. Use space below to sketch floor plan and site plan or attach additional sheet.

Attached

6. Description (See attached instructions for specific guidelines.)

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.

Dating from 1929, the Leighton Training School is a one-story, five-bay, red brick building. It was constructed under the Rosenwald School program as the Colbert County Training School and remains as one of only a few such schools heretofore documented to be constructed of brick. The U-shaped plan, eastern exposure, and Colonial Revival stylistic elements typical of the Rosenwald pattern of construction have been maintained, giving the structure a fairly high degree of architectural integrity.

The school is situated on approximately 11 acres on the western edge of the rural Colbert County community of Leighton, approximately 10 miles east of Tusculumbia. The building faces east, just south of the Southern Railroad track. Over the years, it has grown from a six-classroom building to a complex of four buildings. Alterations to the original portion include the lowering of the ceilings and replacement of the windows and exterior doors (c. 1950), as well as the addition of two rear wings in 1937 and 1957.

Resting on a continuous concrete foundation measuring 20 inches in height, the building features a decorative brick soldier course at the foundation level. Cast iron ventilators are spaced at intervals around the foundation. On the facade, each of the three prominent projecting gabled bays features a gabled parapet with a louvered oculus accented by four keystone or voussoir elements. The upper edge of each parapet is crowned with a stone coping. On the center bay, entrance is gained by ascending four brick steps leading through a round brick arch and into a recessed porch. A handicapped ramp has been added on the northern side of the steps in recent years. A fixed 8/8 transom surmounts the double metal replacement entrance doors. Fenestration includes 4/4 replacement metal sash windows with stone sills and brick lintels flanking the main entrance arch, as well as four symmetrically placed groupings of five 6/6 metal replacement sashes on each of the remaining four bays (two innermost recessed and two outermost projecting).

The north elevation includes a brick wall extending the depth of the front (northeast) classroom and four window groupings reflecting the location of the four classrooms extending to the rear (west). Two of these are part of the original U-shaped plan and are joined by interior folding doors, featuring six horizontal panels, creating a small auditorium. The two rearmost classrooms are a result of a 1937 addition. Similarly, the south elevation consists of a brick wall extending the depth of the front (southeast) classroom followed by single and paired replacement sashes providing illumination for the office wing.

On the rear (west) elevation, the 1937 gabled brick addition extends from the northernmost rear wing. A modern shed-roof walkway extends along the south wall of the addition, creating an outdoor hallway providing access to the classrooms. On the rear of the southernmost wing of the original structure, a gymnasium and utility and rest room facilities were added in 1957.

The interior floor plan features a U shape, with a T-shaped-hallway extending through the center of the building and along the rear of the four front classrooms. Rear wings extend outward to the west, forming the U, the south wing containing the principal's office and north wing containing a double classroom separated by folding wooden doors. A small room is located at the northernmost end of the rear cross hall and was used first as a lunchroom and later as a music room. Additional hallways extend along the innermost sides of the rear

wings, accentuating the U and surrounding a grassy lawn courtyard. Later rear additions extend to the west of both wings.

The interior of the original building features plaster walls with a simple base and chair rail. In portions of the building, the lower wall area features beaded tongue and groove wainscoting. Original ceilings were beaded tongue and groove, but these were lowered during a renovation which occurred around 1950. This renovation also covered a picture rail. Floors are wood, though some have been covered with carpet in recent years.

Additional detached facilities were added to the complex in order to meet changing educational needs. In 1952, a vocational building was constructed on the northern side of the original structure. Around 1957, four classrooms were built on the west, and a gymnasium, with a stage, dressings rooms and rest rooms, was added on the rear of the south wing. At the same time, six acres were added to the complex to accommodate an athletic field and stadium. Later, in 1961, six additional classrooms, a library, and a lunchroom were located on the south side of the complex. The following year, a field house was constructed at the athletic field.

7. Significance (See attached instructions for specific guidelines.)

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"/> 1600-1799	<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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: ethnic history	

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph).

The Leighton Training School is eligible for listing on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage under Criterion A (education, ethnic history--African American) and Criterion C (architecture).

See attached Statement of Significance from Rosenwald School National Register Multiple Property Nomination (Section FIII).

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES:

(See Section FII of NR nomination).

The Leighton Training School appears to be a Subtype #3 school (p.F81-82), as it was constructed in 1928-9 after the Rosenwald Building Fund was transferred to the Southern Office in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1920. It possibly resembles the Miles Memorial Practice School cited in the NR nomination (p.F83), as both are one story, brick, basically U-shaped, with a central section and projecting end wings. Photographs of the Miles College building were not available.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS:

(See Section FIV of NR nomination).

The Leighton Training School meets the Registration Requirements established on p. F85 of the NR nomination. It was constructed within the specified time period (1913-1932) with funds provided by the Rosenwald School Building Fund program. It has maintained integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association. Though alterations (replacement of original window sashes and lowering of ceiling) have to some degree compromised its integrity of materials and workmanship, these changes are reversible and do not destroy the overall integrity of design and feeling.

ASSOCIATED HISTORIC CONTEXTS:

(See Section B of NR nomination).

The Rosenwald School Building Fund Program in Leighton, Alabama (1928-29):

Dating from 1928-29, the Leighton Training School embodies the early-20th century ideals and efforts of local citizens, the State of Alabama, and philanthropist Julius Rosenwald to make available to rural black children a better education and a better way of life. In addition being a manifestation of Rosenwald's generosity, the school reflects the philosophies of Booker T. Washington and James Hardy Dillard who were instrumental in the establishment of vocational training and normal schools for African American youth.

Local historians believe that the school had its beginnings just before the turn of the century, when around 1892, local children were taught at the Galilee Baptist Church. Later locations are believed to have included Ricks' Place (a house on the northwest side of town), the Clay Mound (later leveled for brick making), the Grove Church, and the Masonic Lodge (used for around 20 years). Finally, in 1928, a local man by the name of Dick King, had ten acres of land available for sale to the "colored folk" of the community for the location of a Negro

school. Within two weeks, a thousand dollars had been raised for the purchase of five of the ten acres. King himself gave \$400 toward this amount, with both black and white residents contributing the remainder. A building committee consisting of D.D. Mullins, Chairman, and Frank King, Emmett Wallace, Adam Horn, and Andrew Hankins, Trustees, began making plans for construction of the school. With the aid of M.H. Griffin, State Agent for the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the necessary money was raised. The Julius Rosenwald School Building Fund Papers list the school as the Colbert County Training School, constructed in budget year 11, according to type 6, at a total cost of \$10,950, with contributions as follows: Negroes, \$6,500; whites, \$1,000; public \$2,000; and Rosenwald, \$1,450. Local sources give a figure of \$8,000 for the cost, but this might have excluded the cost of the land and furnishings.

Local historians have compiled a brief history of the early years of the Leighton Training School. When the building was completed for the 1929-30 school year, the faculty consisted of five teachers, teaching grades one through eleven, with 192 students enrolled. Faculty member were M.P. McDonald, 1st Grade; Carrie Pierce, 2nd and 3rd Grades; Albertha Banhston, 4th, 5th, and 6th Grades; Ethel W. Lawson, 7th, 8th, and 9th Grades; R.S. Childs, Principal, 10th and 11th Grades. The school colors were crimson and blue; the motto, "Give Light and The People Will Find Their Own Way;" and the slogan, "Character Building thru the Love of Nature and the Appreciation of Farm Life." P.T.A. officers were Myrtle McDonald, President; Forest Madden, Vice President; Inez Campbell, Secretary; Minnie P. McDonald, Assistant Secretary, and Ella Mullins, Treasurer. In 1932, three girls, Mary Pearl Pruitt, Edna L. Wallace, and Methal King Davis, became the first to complete the twelfth grade.

In 1937, after the resignation of Childs, W.C. Ross of Cincinnati, Ohio, became the principal. During his tenure, three additional classrooms and three additional teachers were added. [From the diagram, this appears to be two classrooms]. Ross entered military service during World War II, and Mrs. Sadie M. Hicks succeeded him as principal. Following the war, Mr. S.N. Nance took charge. During the post-war period, a vocational building was added in 1952; additional classrooms and a gymnasium, with a stage, rest rooms and dressing rooms, were completed around 1957; more classrooms, a library, and a lunchroom were built in 1961; and a field house was constructed the following year.

Students traveled from as far as 20-25 miles to attend Leighton Training School, from communities such as Cave Springs, Colbert, Bethel, Lake Johnson, Buck Bridge, and Foster's Bridge, many riding county school buses. Other black schools in the county were Sterling High School in Sheffield, Trenholm High School in Tusculmbia, and Burrel High School in Florence. In the early years of operation, Leighton School did not have a cafeteria, and many black women of the town helped to prepare lunches and serve them in a small room at the end of the hallway. In 1970, the Leighton Training School graduated its last class of seniors, and, with desegregation, the building reopened as the Leighton Middle School until a declining enrollment forced its closure at the end of the 1993-94 school year. Since that time, it has been vacant except for occasional class reunions.

Outstanding alumni include entertainer Percy Sledge; Major William H. Perkins, U.S. Army; Emmitt E. Jamar, Colbert County Commissioner, District 4; Ruth Jackson Taylor, J.D.; Wayne Stanley, M.D.; Grady Thompson, M.D.; Bob Carl Bailey, owner WZZA Soul Radio Station; and educator-author Dr. Dorothy Hardy.

When the school opened in 1929, Leighton was an agricultural community supported primarily by cotton production. The town had several stores, a bank, a city hall, and a cotton gin, and a population of around 1000 people. Today many of the stores and the cotton gin are gone, the population has decreased to below 1000, and the town is on the brink of bankruptcy. As the economy declined, some residents began to commute to Decatur, Courtland, Muscle Shoals, and Florence for work. The black residential community, especially, has deteriorated. Leighton Training School alumni are interested in helping to restore the building as a community educational facility, to generate interest in the history of the school and the community.

Front entrance of LTS showing roof in
state of disrepair 8-12-93

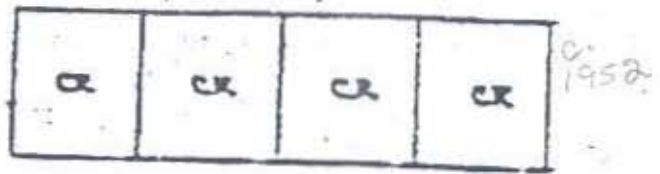


Back door northwest side
of original building (LTS) 8-12-93

Outside view of 8, 9, 10 & 11th grade room win-
dows and kitchen North sides of LTS

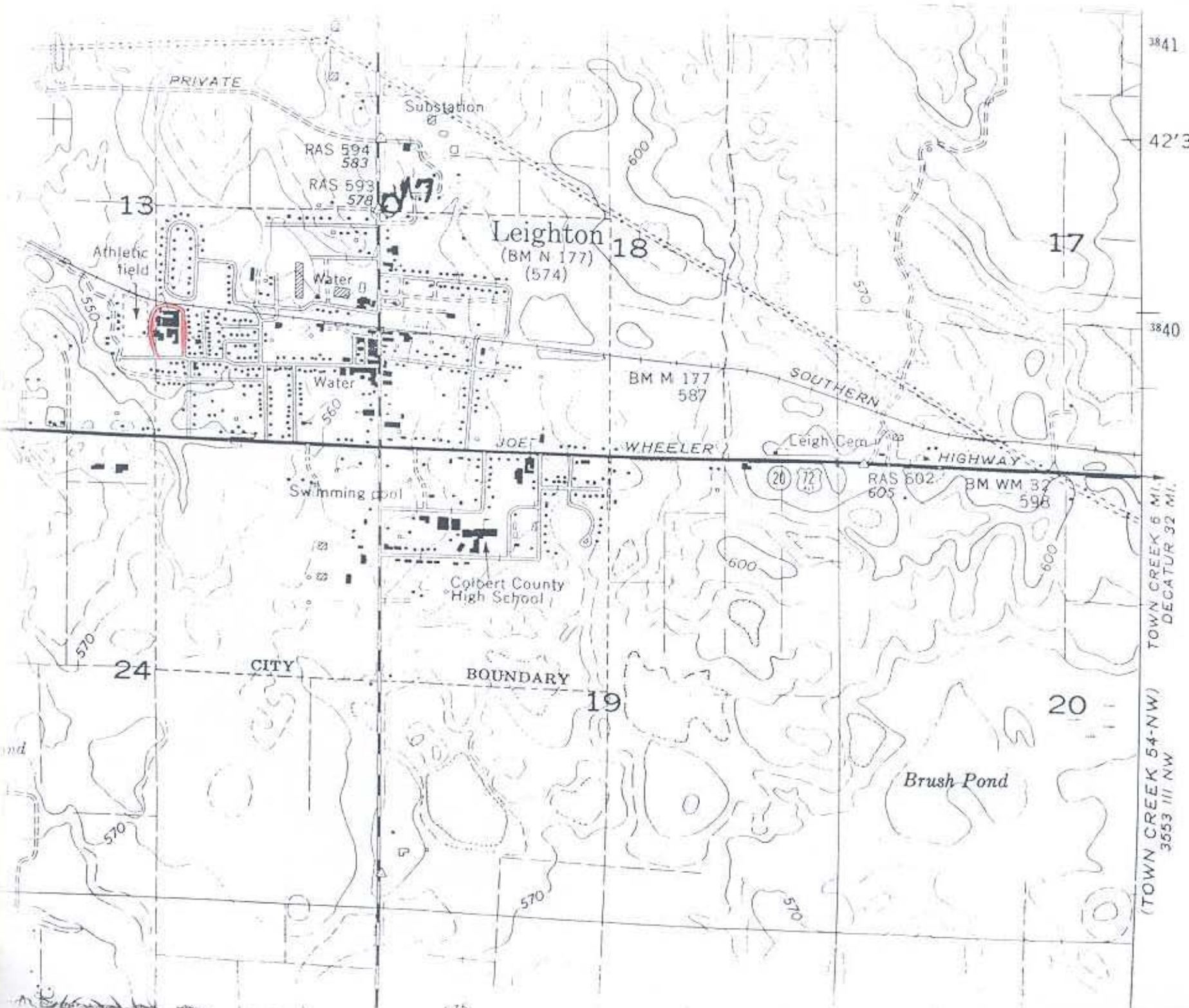


Outside view of classrooms, office, and
hall leading to other backdoor at gym
addition. (?) This appears to be the view
of north (1937) wing taken from W.
(South side of N wing)



1929
LEIGHTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

The original Leighton Training School Building is encircled in red. Everything outside of the red lines represents additions



LTS location
 Encircled in red

3841
 42'30"
 3840
 TOWN CREEK 6 MI.
 DECATUR 32 MI.
 (TOWN CREEK 54-NW)
 3553 III. NW

Legal description of the building

and in its name grant, bargain, quit-claim and convey and by these presents have granted, bargained, quit-claimed and conveyed unto the party of the second part all of the right, title and interest of the State of Alabama in and to the following described property, to-

wit:

9504 580

Starting at the Southeast corner of Section 13, Township 4, Range 10 West, thence West along the South boundary line of said Section 13 one-half mile to the mid-section line dividing Section 13 East and West; thence North 865.3 feet to the point of beginning; thence East 346.5 feet; thence North 618.4 feet to the Right of Way of the Southern Railroad Co.; thence West along the Right of Way of the said Southern Railroad Co. to the mid-section line, dividing Section 13 East and West; thence South 676.7 feet to the point of beginning, being in and being a portion of the Southeast quarter of Section 13, Township 4, Range 10 West situated, lying and being in the County of Colbert, and State of Alabama, and containing 5 3/8 acres more or less.

It is agreed and understood that when the above described property ceases to be used for education and community purposes as deeded it shall revert to the State of Alabama.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, to the said party of the second part together with all appurtenances, tenements and hereditaments thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining, in fee simple forever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the State of Alabama has caused these presents to be executed by Fob James, as Governor of the State of Alabama and Wayne Teague, as Superintendent of Education of this state.

This 10th day of February, 1995.

Attest:

STATE OF ALABAMA

Jim Bennett
Secretary of State

By: *Fob James*
As Governor of the State of Alabama

8. Major Bibliographical References

Bond, Horace Mann. *Negro Education in Alabama: A Study in Cotton and Steel*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1994.

Hardy, Dr. Dorothy. Draft nomination, news articles, correspondence, and phone conversations.

Mansell, Jeff. "The Rosenwald School Building Fund Program and Associated Buildings, 1913-1937." Proposed National Register nomination, Alabama Historical Commission.

Owen, Thomas McAdory. *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*. Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921.

9. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 11 acres
Quadrangle name _____

Enclose map showing location of property. (city or county map, state highway department map, or USGS map)

Attached.

10. Form Prepared By Sally Moore (AHC) and

name/title Dr. Dorothy C. Hardy, President
organization Leighton Training School Board of Directors date June 19, 1997
street & number 901 North Pine Street telephone 205-767-2487
city or town Florence state AL zip 35630

11. Please submit color slides of the property with this form.

Color slides are essential to the review process.

12. Please return ALABAMA REGISTER form and documentation to:

Alabama Register Coordinator
Alabama Historical Commission
468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900













LEIGHTON



MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND



