



STATE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
725 MONROE STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130
PHONE: 832-6621



ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE
Nomination Form

COUNTY Wilcox

NAME: Present Snow Hill Institute Historic Colored Literary + Industrial Institute of Snow Hill

LOCATION: Street and Number

Town (Give directions if rural) Cty. Rd. 26, 1 mi south of Snow Hill, off Ala. 21

A MAP WITH THE LANDMARK MARKED MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM

CATEGORY: Building () Structure () Object () Site () District (x)

USE: Present Small music school/vacant Historic Private boarding high school

OWNERSHIP: Public (x) Private (x) - State of Alabama owns 10 acres on campus.

Owner's Name Multiple Ownership

Mailing Address

INTEGRITY: Original Site (x) Moved () When?

From where? (Give details in significance.)

CONDITIONS: Excellent () Good () Fair (x) Ruins ()

THREATS: No () Yes (x) By What? Neglect, vandalism.

RESTORATION WORK: Being considered (x) Underway () Completed () Not planned ()

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Open land (x) Woodland (x) Scattered buildings () High building density () Commercial () Industrial () Residential (x) Rural (x)

Acres approx. 60

For all categories other than a district and object give a site plan with a North arrow. Show related buildings.

For a district give a verbal boundary description and attach a sketch map of the district.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Why is this landmark significant? associated with events, persons, or movements
Local State National
 a good example of a type or style of structure
 other

Explain: (Briefly state why the above is true) Snow Hill Institute was founded and built primarily by one man - the founder, William J. Edwards. The school started as a small local school, later growing into a private boarding school that attracted students from as far away as Chicago, Ill. IT was OF THE FIRST of its magnitude for Blacks in the U.S.
Date of Construction or Period of major importance. 1893 - 19~~25~~²⁵

Architect or Builder (Give name and biographies, if known)

Give a complete but concise history of the Landmark. Include information on important people and events associated with the landmark. (USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY)

See attached sheet.

State sources of information, giving full bibliographical data: 1) Papers of W. J. Edwards; book: Twenty-Five Years in the Black Belt by W. J. Edwards; Mrs. Alberta G. Lee, daughter of W. J. Edwards

DESCRIPTION: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LANDMARK MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM.

Complete as directed below for each category.

BUILDING:

Number of stories _____ Foundation _____ Basement _____

Wall Material: (Note changes from one floor or wing to another)
(clapboard, brick, stone, wood shingle, board and batton, stucco over wood or brick, metal, logs)

Structural System: (If known)
Wood frame () Load-bearing masonry () Iron or Steel ()

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

STRUCTURE: On a separate sheet of paper give a complete as possible verbal description of the structure. (See examples)

OBJECT: On a separate sheet of paper give a complete as possible verbal description of the object. (See examples)

SITE: On a separate sheet of paper give the present description of the site and how the site is believed to have looked during its period of importance.

DISTRICT: On a separate sheet of paper give a general description of the district. Also needed is a numbered list of the structures in the district corresponding to the sketch map. This listing should include a name for the structure, a date of construction, a brief description, a statement of why the structure is significant, if it is.

A MAP WITH THE LANDMARK MARKED AND PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM

Map: A U.S. Geological Survey Map is preferred, but if you are unable to obtain one a county highway map may be used.

Photographs: Black and white, glossy finish, 5 x 7, or 8 x 10, is preferred.

FORM PREPARED BY

Name Consuela Lee Moorehead Date 11/10/80

Address SW Telephone ²⁰⁵ 746-2136

Town Snow Hill, AL 36778

Organization Spring-Tree/Snow Hill Institute for the

Performing Arts, Inc.

For Alabama Historical Commission use only

STAFF COMMENTS:

MAP REFERENCE: MAP _____

U. T. M. Reference Zone Easting Northing

Thematic Category _____

Added to ALABAMA REGISTER _____

NATIONAL REGISTER Potential

DESCRIPTION

The campus of Snow Hill Institute lies approximately in the center of the school's 1400 acres of open fields and wooded lands.

Because of a series of fires, many of the buildings in the sketch (circa 1920) no longer stand. Wallace Buttrick Hall (built in 1930) now stands where Simpson Hall was located. The Vocational Building (built in 1926) now stands where the Training Building - Elementary was located.

Please see back of accompanying photographs for further identification of structures currently standing.

BRIEF HISTORY
OF
SNOW HILL INSTITUTE
Snow Hill, Alabama

In 1893 William James Edwards graduated from Tuskegee Institute. Deeply inspired by the teachings of Booker T. Washington, Mr. Edwards returned to his home in Snow Hill, Alabama (Wilcox County) and founded the Colored Literary and Industrial Institute of Snow Hill. The school started with an endowment of fifty cents and three students. The first instruction took place in an old log cabin, fall of 1893.

The plantation owner, Mr. R.O. Simpson, on whose property Mr. Edwards was raised, later donated a hundred acres of land to the growing school.

The school was subsequently incorporated as the Snow Hill Normal and Industrial Institute. It offered several trades along with challenging and inspiring academic and cultural programs. It featured a boarding department for boys and girls and attracted students from all of the southern states and a few from the mid-west. Later known as Snow Hill Institute, the school was one of the pioneer educational institutions of its kind in the nation. Grade levels were 1 - 12.

After the Edwards administration, the school gradually declined. The trades were discontinued, several buildings on the campus burned (including the dormitories) and the State of Alabama bought ten acres of land on the campus upon which was built two academic buildings. The Wilcox County Board of Education controlled the academic programs at Snow Hill Institute from 1928 to 1973.

Aside from the property owned by the State, Snow Hill Institute owns 1465 acres of land acquired through the hard work and struggles of the founder, William J. Edwards. A board of trustees manages the land.

ry - Snow Hill Institute (cont.)

The founding of Snow Hill Institute is chronicled in the book Twenty-five Years in the Black Belt by William J. Edwards, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut.

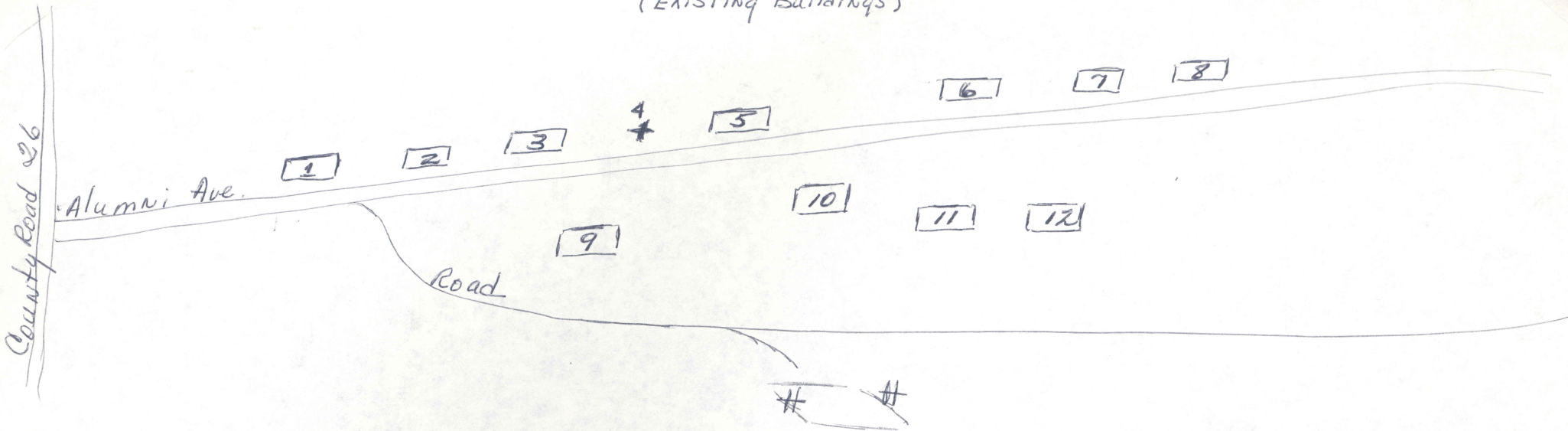
As a result of the desegregation edict, the State of Alabama closed Snow Hill Institute in 1973. The academic buildings owned by the State are, at present, not being used for any educational purposes.

In 1968, Mrs. Alberta Edwards Lee, daughter of the Founder, established the W.J. Edwards Memorial Library. In the summer of 1980 Mrs. Lee's daughter, Consuela Lee Moorehead, opened a school of music at Snow Hill Institute. The music program is presently housed on the campus in the W.J. Edwards Library. Community supported, the music school heralded the rebirth of a historic institution in the heart of the Black Belt: Snow Hill Institute.



CLM
9/24/80

① Campus of Snow Hill Institute
(Existing Buildings)



1. Duplex apartment building (built for Principal and staff, presently used as rental property) (circa 1957)
2. Vocational Building (one room presently used for adult education class, twice a week.) (circa 1926)
3. Wallace Buttrick Hall (academic building, presently housing no educational programs) 1926
4. Grave of W. J. Edwards, Founder. (d. 1950)
5. Cafeteria (presently NOT in use, in advanced state of deterioration) (circa 1958)
6. Edwards House (Founder). Presently occupied by daughter of Founder. (1898)
7. Barnes House (Presently Lee House, occupied by daughter of Founder.) (1898)
8. Rivers House (Presently Lee House, occupied by grandchildren of Founder.) (1897)
9. Teacher's Cottage (occasionally used for rental property, otherwise unoccupied.) 1959
10. Rehearsal Hall (Former Campus Inn). Presently housing the Music Program. (1940)
11. W. J. Edwards Memorial Library (formerly Rose Cottage) Presently housing library facilities and the Music Program. (1910)
12. Teacher's Cottage (Todd House) Presently not in use. (1912)



















