

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Cherry Hill School
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 210 Dillon Road not for publication
city or town Hilton Head Island vicinity
state South Carolina code SC county Beaufort code 013 zip code 29926

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
___ national ___ statewide **X** local

Signature of certifying official Date
Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, South Carolina Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social/Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Brick

walls: Wood

roof: Asphalt

other: _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Cherry Hill School on Hilton Head Island, in Beaufort County, South Carolina, is a simple, gable-front rectangular one-room frame and weatherboard-sided schoolhouse. While it is located within the boundaries of the Fish Haul Archaeological Site [38BU805], in the Mitchelville section of the island, which was listed in the National Register on June 30, 1988, the twentieth-century Cherry Hill School has no association with or related significance to that listing in the National Register, which is an archaeological site with prehistoric and historic nineteenth-century integrity and significance. The school building remains at its original location on the island. The footprint of the original building and the grounds remain relatively unchanged since the building's completion in 1937, except for a 1984 secondary nested gable-roofed addition on the northeastern [rear] elevation. The building's lot is a grassy field surrounded by other wooded lots. The Cherry Hill School is located on the southeast corner of Dillon and Beach City Roads, and the façade faces onto Dillon Road. Oriented southwest/northeast, the original building has two small windows on its northwest elevation and a bank of six large windows on its southeast elevation in order to capitalize on natural lighting and ventilation. A kitchen/bathroom addition, new roof, and a ramp for the disabled allowed the building to meet Hilton Head Island building codes and to remain a viable meeting place for the community. These changes did not compromise the integrity of the building.

Narrative Description

Located at 210 Dillon Road, the Cherry Hill School is situated on the northeastern edge of Hilton Head Island in Beaufort County, South Carolina. It is situated on the corner of Dillon and Beach City Roads, and is located in a largely residential area that contains a church. The Cherry Hill School replaced a school of the same name that operated out of the parsonage of the St. James Baptist Church. The Cherry Hill School, built ca. 1937, is the only one-room schoolhouse that was constructed on the island, and is still at its original site on the island. While the architect is unknown, African-American community members were paid by the Beaufort County School District to construct the building. The lumber for the original part of the building came from an off-island mill.¹

The Cherry Hill School is located on a small, open, level 0.77-acre grassy lot. The schoolhouse is oriented southwest/northeast and is located on the southwest corner of the property. The façade of the building faces southwest, toward Dillon Road. There is a black asphalt pathway running in front of the building and parallel to Dillon Road. On the southeast corner and the northwest portion of the property as well as directly behind the building there is a grass parking lot that can accommodate at least twenty-six cars.

Directly across Dillon Road from the façade of Cherry Hill School is St. James Baptist Church, owner of the schoolhouse. There are several old oaks in the immediate area surrounding the buildings. The school originally had an detached sanitary privy and a well for drinking water. A kitchen was added several years after the school opened. None of these buildings/structures survive. According to

¹Tom Barnwell, Phoebe Wiley Driessen, Rev. Charles Hamilton, Ethel Green Rivers, Barbara White, Dr. Ben Williams, Dr. David White, Fran White, Perry White interview, Hilton Head Island, S.C., September 4, 2010. Mrs. Driessen, among the first students at the new Cherry Hill School when it opened in 1937, is the daughter of Mr. Arthur "Conrad" Wiley.

former students, the footprint of the original building and the grounds are as they were when the school was originally built.²

The Cherry Hill School is a rectangular, one-story building on an open brick-pier foundation and covered with an asphalt-shingled, gable-front and rear roofline.³ A brick chimney, built to accommodate a potbelly stove, rises from the roof ridge and is located at front of the building.

The southwestern elevation (façade) facing Dillon Road has no windows and has a single six-panel main entry door near the southwest corner of the building's façade. An asphalt-shingled shed-roof with square post supports shelters the main entrance stoop. There are four simple, wooden steps leading up to the stoop. Attached to this stoop is a ramp built for access by the disabled that runs parallel to the façade and attaches to the side of the porch. The access ramp was not part of the original building.

There are four windows along the northwestern elevation that faces Beach City Road. Two of the four windows are small, high-set, one-over-one windows that are part of the original building.

The northeastern elevation, the rear of the building, does not face any street and opens onto a grassy field. A small porch attaches straight onto this elevation with four simple, wooden steps. There is a panel door at the top of the porch that leads inside the building. This porch is slightly larger on either side of the door. At the apex of the rear gable is a triangular louvered vent.

The southeastern elevation faces a small, grassy parking lot. Since this elevation of the building has best access to natural sunlight, it features a bank of six, large, one-over-one light windows on the original building, just under the roofline. The lower-profiled modern addition has three one-over-one light windows, the one nearest the rear corner of the building being approximately double the other two in dimensions.

The interior remains much as it did when the building opened. The original building is a 22x30-foot room⁴ with no closets. The ceiling and walls are original bead board panelling, the floors are original wood planking, and the door and window frames are likewise unaltered. Clearly marked in the wood paneling of the rear interior wall is the ghostmark outline of a blackboard once used in the school. The interior square flue-type brick chimney with its stovepipe thimble still intact is also original, although the period wood-burning stove that resembles the original stove is from another building. The only significant alterations to the interior are the vents in the ceiling that were added for the installation of an air-conditioning and heating unit. The original rear door leads to the addition that was added to the building in 1984.⁵

While the architect is unknown and any architectural plans or drawings are not known to exist, the school was constructed using typical design features found in other rural, southern, one-room schoolhouses of the time, including orienting the building and windows to capture the maximum natural sunlight and to promote proper ventilation. In particular, the Cherry Hill School somewhat resembles the Rosenwald plan that faces north or south with a single door in the front and a bank of windows on one side to capitalize on natural sunlight and good ventilation. But unlike Rosenwald

² Tom Barnwell, et.al. interview.

³ Fran White, e-mail message to JoAnn Zeise, Oct. 22, 2010; Property description by Charlie White, Building Committee, St. James Baptist Church, undated.

⁴ Property description by Charlie White.

⁵ Thomas Barnwell, Jr. et. al., interview.

Schools, the Cherry Hill School had no interior room divisions within the original block, and its façade does not have windows or a gable vent.⁶

Alterations

In 1956, the St. James Baptist Church purchased the Cherry Hill School from the Beaufort County School District.⁷ In 1984 the church added the nested-gable roofed rear extension that contains a kitchen, two bathrooms, and a storage area. During this renovation, a ramp for the disabled was built at the entrance to the school to place the building in compliance with the building codes of the then newly incorporated Town of Hilton Head Island.

The 1984 addition is not visible from the façade view of the building, and the exterior treatment of the addition resembles the original building, so that it is contemporary compatible but clearly a secondary addition to the original school building. Its roofline is clearly secondary to the original block. The town-mandated ramp for the disabled does not detract from the architectural integrity of the building. The northwestern section of the addition has two large, high-set windows, each containing one-over-one lights. The 1984 renovation also added three windows on the southeastern elevation, all one-over-one. Similar to the original building, the addition also features a brick pier foundation. Nine square wood posts and one brick pier support a small rear wooden porch deck.

During the 2000s, other improvements were made both to the original building and to the 1984 addition. Specifically, new ceiling lights were added to the original building, the HVAC system was installed to incorporate central heating and air conditioning, the kitchen was upgraded with improved cabinetry and appliances, and the kitchen and bathrooms were connected to the newly available public water and sewer systems.

Notwithstanding these improvements, over the years the building has maintained its historical, structural and architectural integrity, and remains in relatively good condition, positively reflecting the period of its original use and the cultural heritage of the Gullah/Geechee people of Hilton Head Island from the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s.

Although photographs of the building prior to 1986 have not been found, former students have commented that the building in its current condition would be absolutely recognizable to anyone familiar with the school during its years of operation as a schoolhouse, 1937-1954. The expanded roof, ramp, and kitchen/bathroom addition to the building do not compromise the building's integrity.

⁶ Thomas Hackett, "Rosenwald School Plans," <http://www.rosenwaldplans.org/SchoolPlans/OneTeacherNS-R/OneTeacher.htm>, accessed January 3, 2012.

⁷ State of South Carolina, County of Beaufort, Title to Real Estate from the Board of Trustees District #2 to Board of Deacons of St. James Baptist Church, Filed Oct. 27, 1956, copy in possession of author.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Ethnic Heritage - Black

Period of Significance

ca. 1937-1954

Significant Dates

ca. 1937

1954

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The first free-standing African-American school on Hilton Head Island, the Cherry Hill School was built and opened ca. 1937, and operated until all African-American children attended the new consolidated elementary school in 1954.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The Cherry Hill School is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Education and Ethnic Heritage-Black. While the building was a public elementary school from 1937 to 1954 it was owned by the Beaufort County School District.⁸ The school was significant to the education of African Americans on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. A communal undertaking, the school was built and maintained by the school district with contributions from community members who supplemented significant funding gaps. The St. James Baptist Church purchased the school in 1956 and currently owns the facility.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Built ca. 1937, the Cherry Hill School on Hilton Head Island in Beaufort County is significant under Criterion A as a building associated with the development of African-American education during segregation in South Carolina. The community that organized, purchased the property, built, helped maintain, and attended the school was comprised of the descendants of the former-slave town of Mitchelville, the first community to mandate education in the South.

While it is located within the boundaries of the Fish Haul Archaeological Site [38BU805], in the Mitchelville section of the island, which was listed in the National Register on June 30, 1988, the twentieth-century Cherry Hill School has no association with or related significance to that listing in the National Register, which is an archaeological site with prehistoric and historic nineteenth-century integrity and significance.

Cherry Hill School was the first school built specifically for educating African-American children on Hilton Head Island. The school was the result of a vigorous neighborhood effort to have a freestanding school building to replace a school of the same name that was located in the deteriorated parsonage of the St. James Baptist Church. The Beaufort County School District only consented to the creation of the new school after the community raised the funds to purchase the land. The community continued to be involved in the school by helping to raise funds to maintain the school and to pay teachers' salaries for extra months of school beyond the school district's calendar. Although the number of children who attended the Cherry Hill school was small, it was an important center of learning for the community, even beyond the first through fifth grades. Children unable to afford to continue their education off island, at one of the public schools or privately-owned boarding schools, were allowed to stay at the Cherry Hill School as teachers' helpers.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

Ethnic Heritage - Black

In 1930, the total population of Hilton Head Island was 1,474, of which the vast majority—1,377—were African Americans of Gullah-Geechee ethnic heritage. These numbers changed little until 1956, when a bridge connecting the island to the Beaufort County mainland opened.⁹ Before the bridge

⁸ State of South Carolina, County of Beaufort, Title to Real Estate from the Board of Trustees District #2 to Board of Deacons of St. James Baptist Church, Filed Oct. 27, 1956, copy in possession of author.

⁹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1930 Census: Population – South Carolina, Table 21 Population by Sex, Color Age Race Etc., for Counties by Minor Civil Divisions*; *1940 Census: Population – South Carolina, Table 28 Race and*

was built, the island was isolated from the mainland, and was accessible only by boat. As a result, the African Americans on Hilton Head Island were a close-knit community of inter-reliant land and business owners who established a cooperative economic system that fostered self-reliance and the continuation of the Gullah heritage of the South Carolina Sea Islands.¹⁰ By necessity, then, and because of their relative isolation during the period of significance, the Gullah/Geechee people of Hilton Head Island successfully created a complex society of independent land- and business-owners who sustained themselves and their families cooperatively and individually through farming, fishing, and hunting. Their social system of cooperative economics undergirded by tight-knit, religious-oriented, extended families, meant that everyone played a role in assuring the survival of their families and the community on the island and its Gullah/Geechee ways of life.

During the period of significance, as before, a very sophisticated system of language, commerce, governance, and folkways continued to flourish among the “Native Islander” Gullah/Geechee people. Residents worked for wages, opened stores and other commercial enterprises, farmed, fished and hunted for their livelihood. Although many were classified as poor in material wealth, this pattern of independence, perseverance, and the entrepreneurial spirit continued throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.

The number and percentages of the Gullah/Geechee people on Hilton Head Island who are involved in successful commercial enterprises has dwindled in recent years. Indeed, the Cherry Hill School and its owner, the St. James Baptist Church, are the only Gullah/Geechee cultural institutions that remain within the area of the island that once was part of the historic town of Mitchelville. Residents of the area surrounding the school were the descendants of the former freedmen’s village of Mitchelville. This town, laid out in 1862 on land occupied by the United States Army the previous year after the capture of Beaufort and the Sea Islands, was home to former and runaway slaves from the surrounding area. The town was self-governing and was the first community in the South to establish a compulsory education system. After the United States Army left the island at the end of the Civil War, many of the black residents followed. Those who stayed represented a small, yet overwhelming majority of interdependent land owners who continued to value and support education.¹¹

Education

The desire for a proper educational environment was the impetus for the construction of the new Cherry Hill School. Indeed, in 1937, an unnamed writer for the Works Projects Administration compiled a travel guide for South Carolina and noted that in Beaufort County, “the majority of these Negroes will make every effort to send their children to school; the desire for education is as it was immediately after the Civil War.”¹²

At the time of construction of the Cherry Hill School in 1937, the island was still an isolated, largely undeveloped, unincorporated portion of Beaufort County. The first and only freestanding, purpose-built schoolhouse for African-American children on Hilton Head Island,

Age, by Sex with Rural-Farm Population, For Minor Civil Division, By Counties; 1950 Census: Population – South Carolina, Table 6 Population of Counties by Minor Civil Divisions: 1930 to 1950, <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/>, accessed January 3, 2012.

¹⁰ Natalie Harvey. “The History of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.” (master’s thesis, University of South Carolina, 2000), 11-12; Barnwell, et al, interview.

¹¹ Harvey. “The History of Hilton Head,” 6, 8-12, 21.

¹² Federal Writer’s Project, Works Project Administration, “Sea Island Negroes:” File F-2-50, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

the Cherry Hill School reflects the educational as well as the ethnic heritage of the freed and runaway slave descendants of the historic town of Mitchelville.

In the 1930s, the African-American community here requested that the Beaufort County School District build a new Cherry Hill School, one specifically for the African-American neighborhoods contemporaneously known on the island as Baygall, Big Hill, Cherry Hill, Drayton, and Mitchelville. The community was told that the population of the area was too spread-out to necessitate a school building. According to residents living in the area around that time, the district was reluctant to build a school because no whites lived on that end of the island and the district did not want to build a school for the black students. After some negotiation, the school district agreed to pay for a school building if the residents of the area would show support for the project by raising money to purchase the land for a new school. It was the only school in the Beaufort County School District with this requirement.

Being true to the fiercely independent, yet community-oriented heritage of the Gullah/Geechee people, and to the pre-eminence of spirituality and the church to the Gullah/Geechee culture, Mr. Arthur "Conrad" Wiley, a young deacon of the St. James Baptist Church, spearheaded the fundraising drive for a new school.

Mr. Wiley went around the neighborhoods collecting money, usually twenty-five cents, from area residents. Other money was raised from religious collections. The community was able to successfully raise twenty-five dollars, enough to buy the land where the school is now located.¹³ The Beaufort County School District supplied the building supplies, including lumber from an off-island mill and hired local African-American residents to construct the school. Once opened, the school served the community on the eastern-most edge of the island.

Before the new Cherry Hill School opened, African-American children attended school for four consecutive months out of the year. In 1935, the school calendar was lengthened to five months until 1937, when an additional half month was added. In 1940, the school year was lengthened to six and a half months. From 1943 to the school's closing in 1954, the school operated for eight months. During the years it operated, then (1937-1954), the length of the school year doubled.

The only teacher at the Cherry Hill School listed on the "Application for State Support of Teacher's Salaries" reports from Beaufort County for the years where records exist is Miss Rachel Johnson, although former students recall two other women who taught at the school at various times. Cherry Hill teachers stayed in community homes and the school district paid their salary, room and board.¹⁴

Besides offering more days to the school calendar, the Cherry Hill School also allowed children to continue to attend school past the fifth grade. Normally the school covered only first through fifth grade, but former students remember an unofficial sixth grade. At the Cherry Hill School, students were not refused education after fifth grade. Those who wished to remain at the

¹³Barnwell, et al, interview. Mr. Wiley collected money for Cherry Hill School, although his children attended the Chaplin School. His association with Cherry Hill School was through St. James Baptist Church which is located in the Cherry Hill School area.

¹⁴Application for State Support for the Teacher's Salaries for the Session, Beaufort County, 1933-1950, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia; Barnwell, et al, interview.

school could stay and work as teachers' helpers and continue their education informally.¹⁵ By the 1938-39 school year, however, the official records of the State Department of Education show that there was an official 6th grade at the Cherry Hill School.

Typical School Days

Remembrances of students enrolled during the Cherry Hill School era (1937–1954) spoke volumes about the culture in which residents lived during the period of significance. Interviewees recounted several practices and common cultural lifeways during the period of significance. “Unlike today, no pants were allowed on the girls.” Also, there was no such thing as ‘truancy.’ “Even if you were late, you’d get 10 (hits) on the hand...and if your parents learned that you were late and received a whipping, they’d whip you at home, too.”¹⁶

During its earliest days, the school day at the Cherry Hill School lasted from five to five and a half hours. A typical school day began with the teacher ringing a hand bell to call the students to class. The teacher did not sit at her desk, which was on the wall opposite the front door. She moved from one table to another to instruct the students who were grouped by grade level at each of six tables. “The teacher was very organized. . . . She would have classes working with their “sheets,” or workbooks while she was working with another class; everyone was working at the same time.” There was one chalkboard on the back wall, the outline of which can still be seen, and another on the left side wall. Because of her experience in the one-room setting at the Cherry Hill School, Mrs. Phoebe Wiley Driessen, who later entered the teaching profession, felt she was “well equipped to work with different groupings of students in the same class.” She continued, “Today, many teachers find it difficult to divide their time effectively between different levels of students. . . . Discipline was perfect. . . . Children’s work came from their books and they often had homework. . . . Parents would meet with Ms. Johnson once a month in a group meeting or individually as needed.”¹⁷

“The school day was ordered, and discipline problems were addressed with switches and notes home. . . . Everyone came to school because their parents made them. In those days, students were glad to get to school. . . . All parents met with Miss Johnson (teacher) once a month. They met as a group. If you were in trouble, the teacher would send a message to your parents, and there would be a meeting for that, also. But you would be in trouble at home, too, for being in trouble at school.”

During the period that the Cherry Hill School operated, parents were responsible for providing all supplies and books. In interviews with former students, it was common practice for parents to buy their own books.¹⁸

Students enrolled at the Cherry Hill School, and for at least five years subsequent to its opening, brought their lunches to school and would go outside at lunchtime to eat. However, at some point during the operation of the Cherry Hill School, a kitchen (not the current kitchen)

¹⁵ Harvey, “The History of Hilton Head,” 21; Barnwell, et al, interview; Michael H. Simmons, interview by Fran White, Hilton Head Island, S.C. June 10, 2010.

¹⁶Helen Jackson Greene (1926-2011), interview by Fran White, May 18, 2010. Mrs. Greene attended the new Cherry Hill School on its opening day.

¹⁷ Barnwell, et al, interview, September 4, 2010; Phoebe Driessen, interview by Fran White, April 27, 2010.

¹⁸ Helen Jackson Greene, interview by Fran White, May 18, 2010; Barnwell, et al, interview, September 4, 2010.

was built by the community, and the children received a free hot lunch daily. The parent who cooked lunch for the children was Mrs. Ethel Green Rivers, a lifelong resident of Mitchelville, an esteemed “Mother” of the St. James Baptist Church, and its oldest living member. Mrs. Rivers’ home was, and remains, on property that is located very close to the schoolyard. Several of her children attended the Cherry Hill School. She recalled that the parents and the community would purchase or supply the food and she cooked a full meal from a menu that was typical during the period of significance, including fish, venison, beans, rice, okra, tomatoes, collard greens, and cornbread. It is not known how widespread the practice of providing free, hot lunches was at all other schools on Hilton Head Island, or on the Mainland. Nevertheless, the interest and pride that the church and community took in the Cherry Hill School and its students was, indeed, special.

Furthermore, the parents were responsible for maintaining the building, and getting wood to the school for the stove. According to Mrs. Greene, the girls would retrieve the wood, and the boys were responsible for building the fire and keeping the stove operating.

To raise money for the school, there were parties on Saturdays, with social clubs also meeting on every second or third Saturday raising money.¹⁹ The community supported the school with fish fries and Saturday parties. Money was raised also from collections taken at churches.

At the close of the school year, parents received a list of books to purchase for the coming school year, and they went to the Post Office and ordered new books for as little as \$0.69. The books usually had a “Resale Price” noted in the front, and parents either handed the books down to other family members, traded them to other families, or sold them to others at the resale price. In her interview, Mrs. Phoebe Wiley Driessen, a retired teacher from the Beaufort County School District, recalled the name of the company from which parents ordered books: The R. L. Bryan Company in Columbia, the state capital.²⁰ Parents would continue to purchase books for their school children until 1955, when all elementary schools on the island were consolidated.

Also at the close of each school year, there was a program at the school where students demonstrated their accomplishments. Mrs. Helen Greene, remembering one of the songs that students memorized, softly began singing: “*Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus; steal away, steal away home, I ain’t got long to stay here.*”²¹ The song she chose to sing symbolized the centrality of religion to the schools during the period of significance.

At the Cherry Hill School, and at other African-American schools on Hilton Head Island, the community worked together to raise money to fund additional days of school beyond the district’s schedule. One former student, Mr. Michael H. Simmons, recalls a summer school program that helped improve struggling students’ grades.

This practice at the Cherry Hill School of allowing students to remain in school for instruction before formally enrolling and beyond their reported grade level meant that the age ranges of students being taught varied widely. In an interview with Mrs. Estella Ferguson Jenkins, she recalled that she wanted to go to school with her sister. She was five years old at the time, so her father talked to the teacher about allowing her to go to school to observe. The teacher

¹⁹ Helen Jackson Greene, interview by Fran White, May 18, 2010.

²⁰ Phoebe Wiley Driessen, interview by Fran White, April 27, 2010.

²¹ Helen Jackson Greene, interview by Fran White, May 18, 2010.

gave permission and she went to school with great excitement, if only to observe. She was proud to bring her own books home, and her father helped her with her lessons “all the way through high school.”²²

According to Mrs. Mary Wiley Bryant, sister of Mrs. Phoebe Wiley Driessen, her father (Mr. Arthur Wiley) also took an active role in the education of his children. He taught his children at home after school. Students, she recalled, who finished 6th grade, were allowed to go to school “as long as the teacher would allow them to come.” In other words, no one “aged” out of school.²³

Such informal practices may be attributed to the fact that students did not recall the school being monitored by the Beaufort County School District. They were pretty much left on their own, partly due to choice, and partly due to the island’s isolation from the Mainland. All interviewees held fond memories of their elementary school experience at the Cherry Hill School, and of the quality of instruction received from Miss Johnson.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

At the time when the Cherry Hill School was built, there were three other black elementary schools serving the various black neighborhoods on Hilton Head Island. However, none met in buildings specifically built as schools. The Cherry Hill School had the smallest enrollment of the black elementary schools on the island.

Although their numbers were very small, white students on the island attended their own segregated elementary school, as was the custom in the South during this period. Called “Hilton Head,” the elementary school for white students had from five to eight pupils who were taught by one white teacher, as reported by the SC Department of Education. In addition to extremely small class sizes, during the period of significance, white students officially received more time for instruction, as well. The white elementary school on the island officially operated for nine months of the year, while the Cherry Hill School officially operated from five to six and a half months of the year until 1943, when it operated for eight months, still less time for instruction than white students.²⁴

During the period of significance, the number of children enrolled specifically in the Cherry Hill School numbered from 27-32, with one black teacher. This statistic conforms to the interview with Mrs. Helen Greene, who reported that approximately 30 children were enrolled at the Cherry Hill School.²⁵ There was one teacher at the Cherry Hill School throughout the period of significance (c. 1937-1954). Miss Rachel Johnson was the teacher for a substantial number of those years.

In 1946, the Beaufort County School District operated a junior high school on Hilton Head Island for white students, but African-American children intent on continuing their education

²² Estella Ferguson Jenkins, interview by Fran White, June 10, 2010. Mrs. Jenkins began at the Cherry Hill School c. 1950, and left Cherry Hill when the school closed, and the new consolidated school opened.

²³ Mary Wiley Bryant, interview by Fran White, May 25, 2010. Mrs. Bryant is the daughter of Mr. Arthur “Conrad” Wiley.

²⁴ South Carolina Department of Archives and History. State Department of Education. State Aid Applications, Beaufort County.

²⁵ Helen Jackson Greene, interview by Fran White, May 18, 2010.

after completing elementary school still had to travel by boat to the Mainland (Beaufort, St. Helena Island, or Savannah, GA). Beaufort County had public junior high and high schools for African-American children on the Mainland, and there were private schools for black children in Beaufort County and in Savannah.²⁶ But because the distance was so great, during most of the period of significance, Hilton Head Island children had to live away from their families to attend junior high and high school. Although several families sent their children to public schools and private boarding schools off-island, this was a financially prohibitive undertaking for most black families on Hilton Head Island.

Schools and churches were the focal points of community life. Carrying on the interdependency established in the community after the Civil War, residents of the Cherry Hill School neighborhoods worked as a community to make the school successful and to supplement the meager allowances of the school district and other government funds. In 1950, the Beaufort County School District spent \$166 per white child and \$66 per black child for the school year. Also during this time, the white teachers' salaries on the island and Beaufort County were more than twice as much as similarly qualified African-American teachers, e.g., \$40 per month for black teachers vs. \$80 per month for white teachers in 1937-38; \$40-\$50 per month for black teachers vs. \$90-\$110 per month for white teachers in 1939-40.²⁷

With such disparities, during the period of significance (ca.1937-1954), it was imperative to their survival and to their quality of life that the African-Americans on Hilton Head Island be resourceful and inter-reliant. Supplementing teacher salaries and providing space where island students could be educated were just two of their areas of resourcefulness.

In her book on American education, author Johnnie P. Mitchell, M.Ed. states, "In the area of education, Blacks were on their own. White children were provided schoolhouses, bus transportation and the new books. Blacks experienced the flip side."²⁹ The history recounted by the students and parents of students at the Cherry Hill, Chaplin, and Spanish Wells Schools provides a glimpse of period elementary facilities on the island that tend to support this conclusion.

Prior to the construction of the new Cherry Hill School, students from the neighborhoods of Baygall, Big Hill, Cherry Hill, Drayton, and Mitchelville were taught at the old Cherry Hill School located in the St. James Baptist Church parsonage—a building to the rear of the church. And although built for other purposes, as was the case with the other buildings housing black elementary schools on the island, the parsonage was an ideal location for the old Cherry Hill School because there was very little overlap in its uses.

As related to the author by Mrs. Ethel Rivers (b. 1918) whose mother and grandparents were members of the St. James Baptist Church, the parsonage was not in use full-time, but was used by the pastor from time to time for sleeping quarters when he was on the island. The pastor came to the island by boat for one Sunday every other month—in February, April, June, August, October, and December. He usually "came across the river" on Friday, and left on

²⁶Application for State Support for the Teachers' Salaries; Barnwell, et.al, interview.

²⁷State Department of Education, State Aid Applications, Beaufort County.

²⁹Johnnie P. Mitchell, M.Ed. "The Jig is Up: We Are One! Race is a Hoax that FAILS American Education." p. 73.

Sunday evening. So, there was little use of the parsonage by the minister when school was in session.³⁰

Prior to the construction of the new Cherry Hill School in 1937, all schools for black students on the island were in buildings owned privately, rather than by the Beaufort County School District. Typically owned by members of the black community, these buildings were used only part-time as a school.³¹ During the period of significance, then, the new Cherry Hill School facility, used only as a school, was atypical for the island's black population.

White students, only a handful at any time and sometimes only one student, had a schoolhouse intended exclusively for educational use. On the other hand, African-American students held their school classes in community buildings not intended for educational purposes. Classes for African-American students were held in places such as praises houses, social halls, and dance halls.³²

Dr. Emory Shaw Campbell summed up the situation well. "As you might gather, school buildings and teachers were scarce premium resources on the island far into the 1970's." He continued, "The history of education for Black children on this island mirrors that of the Southern U.S., but when you add the physical and social isolation of the island's population during that period, it gives an even more grave picture."³³

It is notable that two other Native Island men (Mr. Benjamin White and Mr. Alexander Patterson) were involved in public education as co-owners of the building used by the Chaplin (Elementary) School. These men were contemporaries of Arthur Wiley (1896-1961), who spearheaded the fundraising drive to purchase the land for the new Cherry Hill School. All three (Wiley, White, and Patterson) served together on the St. James Baptist Church Board of Deacons during the period of significance. It is also notable that at least one of the three was a long-time Chairman of the Board of Deacons (White) who was raised as a child in the Cherry Hill/Mitchelville area. It is very likely, then, that the entire church leadership of the St. James Baptist Church played a pivotal role in the life cycle of both the old and the new Cherry Hill School, since all three of these men were staunch supporters of education.³⁴

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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
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>529066</u>	<u>3566297</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the heavy black line marked "Cherry Hill School" on the accompanying topographic survey map prepared for St. James Baptist Church in 2002, drawn at a scale of 1" = 30'.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nominated property is restricted to the historic parcel associated with the school.

Property Owner

St. James Baptist Church
209 Beach City Road
Hilton Head Island, S.C. 29926
(843) 681-6446

11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1) Francetta J. White
2) JoAnn Zeise

Organization 1) St. James Baptist Church
2) Curator of History, South Carolina State Museum date 27 September 2012

street & number 1) Post Office Box 21883
2) 301 Gervais Street telephone 1) (843) 681-2595
2) (803) 898-4942

city or town 1) Hilton Head Island zip code 1) 29925
2) Columbia State SC 2) 29202

e-mail 1) franwhite@roadrunner.com
2) joann.zeise@scmuseum.org

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Cherry Hill School
City or Vicinity: Hilton Head Island
County: Beaufort
State: South Carolina

Photographer: Rebekah Dobrasko

Date Photographed: September 5, 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1. Southwest elevation, entrance with porch and access ramp
2. Oblique view of southwest corner
3. Northeast elevation (rear)
4. Oblique view of southeast corner
5. Southeast elevation, windows detail
6. Northwest elevation, brick foundation piers
7. Interior, chimney and flue, with typical period potbelly stove
8. Interior, detail of original ceiling and wall boards
9. Interior, detail of original floor boards
10. Interior, beaded board ceiling and walls

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.