

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bettis Academy and Junior College
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Bettis Academy Road and Nicholson Road not for publication _____
city or town Trenton vicinity X
state South Carolina code SC county Edgefield code 037 zip code 29847

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally.
(____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds 4/6/98
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy SHPO, S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register _____
See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register _____
See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register _____
 removed from the National Register _____
 other (explain): _____
Edson H. Beall 5/20/98
Signature of 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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION
EDUCATION

Sub: School/Junior College
Library

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION
VACANT/NOT IN USE
VACANT/NOT IN USE

Sub: Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick/Block
 roof Asphalt/Tin
 walls Block/Stucco
 other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Education
- Ethnic Heritage/Black
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Significant Dates

1942

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

African-American

Period of Significance

ca. 1935-1952

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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: Alexander Bettis Community Library, Trenton, S.C.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Approximately 2.75 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
1	17	420380	3724500	3	17	420340	3724320
2	17	420440	3724480	4	17	420280	3724340
		See continuation sheet.					

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Willie (Willa) J. Lanham and A'LaPerle Hickman
organization Bettis Academy Heritage Corridor Team date 8 December 1997
street & number 513 Henry Street, S.E. telephone (803) 649-7709
city or town Aiken state S.C. zip code 29803

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mt. Canaan Association
street & number P.O. Box 223 telephone _____
city or town Trenton state SC zip code 29847

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Bettis Academy & Junior College
name of property
Edgefield County, South Carolina
county and State

Bettis Academy and Junior College, located on what was once a campus of fourteen classroom, dormitory, and related buildings near Trenton, in Edgefield County, South Carolina, now consists of three historic buildings and one historic landscape, all dating from the last twenty years of the institution, which closed in 1952.

These properties contribute to the historic character of the campus:

1. **Alexander Bettis Community Library (1938):**

Constructed of rock-faced with tooled draft imitation stone blocks molded by student labor, this bungalow-form building was built as the Bettis Academy and Junior College Library. Featuring imitation stone block pedestals with textured-stucco battered piers supporting a wraparound porch, the library boasted some 4,000 volumes in the mid-1940s, now (1998) serves as a community library and meeting hall. The low, dual-pitched pyramidal roof is clad in V-crimp metal sheeting, which also covers a small one-bay rear ell and shed-roofed side porch supported by similar but ziggurat-type or staged piers atop pedestals.

2. **Classroom Building (ca. 1935):**

This bungalow-influenced, stuccoed-brick building with expansive V-crimp metal-clad hip roof was constructed by students to house classrooms and later included some dormitory space as well. It features exposed rafter tails, gable hoods with knee-braces over entry stoops on the principal facade and both side elevations, and tripartite windows, some of the sash of which is no longer intact. The building is presently (1998) used in part for storage; however, is largely unused.

3. **Biddle Hall (1942):**

Also constructed of rock-faced with tooled draft imitation stone blocks molded by student labor, the building was named for Mr. and Mrs. Clement S. Biddle of New York, who donated the funds for a "modern home economics unit" at Bettis Academy and Junior College. Of the three intact historic academic buildings now on the campus, Biddle Hall exhibits the most stylistic sophistication. In form it is more akin to the classically-inspired or Colonial Revival secondary schools of the rural South. It features a H or I plan, whereby it has a lateral middle section that is flanked by gable-front wings which extend to the front and rear. At the center of the building's facade, it features three paired windows of six-over-six light sash [presently boarded over to protect it from the elements]. At the left

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(northeast) wing is a solid wall with pedimented gable clad in weatherboard and featuring a bull's eye window or oculus. A roof extension at the interior corner provides for a segmental-arched portal entry. At the right (southwest) wing (principal entry) is a three-bay wing with an engaged segmental-arched portal, two single six-over-six, double-hung sash windows, and gable with boxed cornice and returns. A marble inlaid tablet next to the entry reads "BIDDLE HALL ERECTED 1942." Window openings around the building are either single or paired, each with six-over-six, double-hung sash. As the ground recedes toward the building's rear, a brick foundation and water table becomes more visible. A one-bay boxed cornice with returns cross gable is present at center of southwest (side) elevation. At least three crobel-capped chimneys rise above the roofline. On the building's interior, in the home demonstration segment, can be seen a decorative brick fireplace with simple mantel shelf in the living room, built-in closets, and a kitchen. Other segments include partitioned areas for sewing, cooking, and assembly. Presently (1998) vacant/not in use, plans are underway to raise funds for its renovation as an African-American museum.

4. **Bettis Academy and Junior College Park (1942):** A triangular park including monuments to three presidents of the Academy: Rev. Alexander Bettis, Alfred W. Nicholson, and Acie C. Hightower. This area features cast stone coping, steps, and historic plantings, principally mature sycamore trees.

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Section 8 Page 7

Bettis Academy & Junior College
name of property
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county and State

Bettis Academy and Junior College, established in 1881 and closed in 1952, is significant for its role in the primary, secondary, and higher education of blacks in what is now Edgefield, Aiken, Greenwood, and Saluda Counties from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century, in a period when black education was neglected by many of the public and private institutions in South Carolina.

Alexander Bettis (1836-1895), founder of Bettis Academy, was born a slave on a nearby Edgefield District plantation owned by a Widow Jones and worked as an overseer and sawmill manager during the Civil War. In 1868, after the local Baptist association refused to ordain him, Bettis and a group of seventeen blacks, helped by three ministers affiliated with the association, organized Mt. Canaan Baptist Church ten miles west of Trenton. Bettis, once ordained by the newly-established, church, then helped organize as many as forty Baptist churches in the area, serving four--Mt. Canaan, Shaw's Creek, Jeter's, and Pleasant Grove--continuously until his death in 1895.

Bettis Academy was an outgrowth of the Mt. Canaan Educational Association, founded in 1880 by Bettis and other ordained ministers and representatives of various black Baptist churches in the area. The association, created to raise money and establish schools to serve the black community, purchased 27 acres at this site near the boundary of Edgefield and Aiken Districts and set aside the remainder of its funds for lumber. The land was cleared in the summer of 1881, and after the first school building--a one-room frame classroom building--was completed that fall it was dedicated and opened on New Years' Day 1882. The school became a boarding school in its earliest years, with a girls' dormitory built in 1883 and a boys' dormitory built in 1884. The curriculum at Bettis Academy included, in addition to the standard academic subjects, religious instruction, teacher training, and instruction in farming and home economics. Under the leadership of Alfred W. Nicholson, who served as Principal 1900-1945, Bettis Academy expanded its student body to more than 1000 students, its campus to fourteen buildings on more than 350 acres, and its curriculum to include instruction from the first grade through the junior college level. The academy and junior college, always strapped for funding for teachers, buildings, and equipment, was finally forced to close in 1952.¹

¹Alfred W. Nicholson, Brief Sketch of the Life and Labors of Rev. Alexander Bettis; Also an Account of the Founding and Development of the Bettis Academy (Trenton, S.C.: Published by the Author, 1913); Bettis Academy and Junior College, Bettis Academy and Junior College, Trenton, South Carolina: Bulletin of Information, 1947 (Trenton, S.C.: Bettis Academy and Junior College, 1947); Lewis K. McMillan, Negro Higher Education in the State of South Carolina (n.p.: Privately Printed, 1952); Interviews, Bettis Academy Heritage Corridor Files, Willie J. Lanham, Aiken, S.C.: Interviews with Cornelius Palmore, 24 March 1995; Patria Bettis Brayboy, 8 April 1995; Georgia Ann Mason Stevens, 18 August 1995; Jethro McCain, n.d.; and Richard F. and Gladys H. Boulware, n.d.

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Edgefield County, South Carolina
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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interviews, Bettis Academy Heritage Corridor Files, Willie J. Lanham,
Aiken, S.C.:

Richard F. and Gladys H. Boulware, n.d.
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Jethro McCain, n.d.
Cornelius Palmore, 24 March 1995.
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Nicholson, Alfred W. Brief Sketch of the Life and Labors of Rev. Alexander
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Bettis Academy & Junior College
name of property
Edgefield County, South Carolina
county and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the area marked "Bettis Academy and Junior College" on the accompanying Edgefield County Tax Map # 177, drawn at a scale of 1" = 400'.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes three historic buildings and one historic landscape feature on the former Bettis Academy and Junior College campus.

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Section PHOTOGRAPHS **Page**10 Bettis Academy & Junior College
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county and State

The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Bettis Academy and Junior College
Location of Property: Bettis Academy Rd. & Nicholson Rd.
Trenton vicinity, Edgefield County, S.C.

Name of Photographer: Andrew W. Chandler
S.C. Dept. of Archives & History
Date of Photographs: 20 February 1998
Location of Original
Negatives: S.C. Dept. of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.

1. Alexander Bettis Community Library (southeast facade)
2. " " " " (southwest elevation)
3. " " " " (detail of porch pier)
4. " " " " (northeast or rear elevation)
5. Classroom Building (southwest oblique view)
6. " " (northwest oblique view)
7. Biddle Hall (northwest facade)
8. " " (marble inlaid tablet)
9. " " (northwest facade)
10. " " (southwest or side elevation)
11. " " (southeast oblique view of rear)
12. " " (northeast oblique view of rear gabled pavilions)
13. " " (brick and wood mantelpiece in demonstration living room)
14. Classroom Building and Biddle Hall (northwest oblique view)
15. Bettis Academy and Junior College Park (three monuments to presidents,
Rev. Alexander Bettis, Alfred W. Nicholson, and Acie C. Hightower)