

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 Faith Cabin Library at Seneca Junior College
other names/site number Oberlin Unit, Seneca Junior College

2. Location

street & number 298 South Poplar Street not for publication
city or town Seneca vicinity
state South Carolina code SC county Oconee code 073 zip code 29678

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 X statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
S.C. Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

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 _____

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	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

Faith Cabin Libraries in South Carolina,
1932-ca. 1960

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/Library

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Log Cabin

foundation: STONE

walls: WOOD

roof: METAL

other: Granite

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 Faith Cabin Library at Seneca Junior College, built in 1937, is located on South Poplar Street near its intersection with West South 3rd Street, in the town of Seneca, in rural Oconee County, South Carolina. It is situated near a northeastern facing hill. The library is an inverted T-shaped, lateral-gabled building oriented to the southwest. It is of log construction with chinking and the front or main portion of the building appears to be set on a stone foundation, while the centered rear gabled wing appears to sit atop concrete piers that have been in-filled with corrugated metal. The roof is covered with V-crimp metal sheets or galvanized tin. It is the only building remaining from the Seneca Junior College campus, as all other buildings were razed in 1963. A large metal and brick multi-purpose building, housing the Seneca Institute Family Life Center, was built on the site of the college in 1978. Although immediately adjacent to the Faith Cabin Library, this modern building is excluded from the boundaries of the nominated property.

Narrative Description

The façade (southwest elevation) of the Faith Cabin Library features a central engaged, vertical plank-clad gable that projects slightly to cover the double-leaf wood plank entrance doors. A single one-over-one light, double-hung sash window is located to either side of the door. Along the northwest elevation of the building is a tapered or battered stone chimney. A single one-over-one window is on each side of the chimney. The exposed gable shows horizontal wood planking. The rear addition can be seen with the metal reinforcing the stone foundation underneath.

Along the northeast elevation of the building is the rear wing addition to the log cabin. The rear addition is of log construction as well, is gable-fronted with horizontal wood planking in the gable. Within the gable is a small fixed four-light window. To the right of the window is a small circular opening that likely accommodated a heater or stove pipe when the library was operational. Below the window is a larger one-over-one window. Wooden knee brackets support, at least visually, the projecting gable overhang/eave. At the foundation level at left of center is a small wooden access door for the area beneath the building. Along the southeast elevation of the building is a gable with horizontal wood planking as well. Set in the wood planking is a small window. Set in the logs beneath the upper window are two one-over-one windows. Knee brackets are also visible on this gable end. The rear addition can be seen with the metal foundation visible.

Faith Cabin libraries in South Carolina, built from 1932-1943, fall into two subtypes based on physical and associative characteristics. The Faith Cabin Library at Seneca Junior College, built in 1937, falls under Subtype 1: Free-Standing Log Cabins, within the Property Types section of the Faith Cabin Libraries in South Carolina, 1932-1943, multiple property documentation form. The wood for construction was supplied by the local community. This library is a two-room building with a roughly-coursed granite chimney, culled from local supplies. There exists little documentary evidence beyond this narrative description; however, the property still possesses architectural integrity to convey its historic function and be nominated to the National Register for Historic Places.

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

1937-1939

Significant Dates

1937

1939

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.

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Period of Significance (justification)

The Faith Cabin Library at Seneca Junior College is significant from 1937, when it was built, to 1939, when Seneca Junior College closed, for its role in African American education and social history in Oconee County and upstate South Carolina during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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

The Faith Cabin Library at Seneca Junior College, located in the town of Seneca, in Oconee County, South Carolina, is significant under Criterion A for its role in African American education and social history in South Carolina between 1937 and 1939. This building, constructed in 1937 and known as the Oberlin Unit because it was largely the result of the interest and efforts of students at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, is important on a local level for its impact on the African American community in Oconee County, and on the state level as one of only two remaining free-standing Faith Cabin Libraries extant of the thirty built in South Carolina between 1932 and 1943.

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

Criterion A – Education / Ethnic Heritage – African American

The Faith Cabin Library at Seneca Junior College was a part of the larger Faith Cabin Library program that offered library services to African Americans in South Carolina. The segregation laws of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, known as "Jim Crow" laws, barred African Americans from using other library facilities beyond what was offered in Columbia and Charleston. Created between 1932 and 1943, Willie Lee Buffington, a white textile worker who later became a Methodist minister and college professor, established thirty Faith Cabin Libraries in South Carolina which offered many African Americans the only means of access to library services and library books.¹

The black community residing in Seneca, South Carolina was one of the thirty communities fortunate to participate in the Faith Cabin Library program. With donated money and timber from the community, and books from the students of Oberlin College, Buffington established the library, a free-standing log cabin, on the campus of Seneca Junior College. This denominational Christian college, founded by the Seneca River Baptist Association in 1899 as the Seneca Institute, a primary and secondary school for African Americans, changed its name to Seneca Junior College in 1926 when it added two years of college instruction. When the Faith Cabin Library program began, the faculty of the college contacted Buffington to build a library on the campus. The library was built in 1937.² The library remained open for only two years, when in 1939 Seneca Junior College closed its doors due in part to the construction of a new black high school nearby and the economic impact of the Great Depression.³ It is one of only three known Faith Cabin Libraries to remain extant in South Carolina, out of an original thirty that were built.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See Faith Cabin Libraries in South Carolina, 1932-1943, Multiple Property Documentation Form.

¹ Tamara Powell, "Willie Lee Buffington and Faith Cabin Libraries: Doing Practical Good in a Disordered World." In *Grappling with Diversity: Readings on Civil Rights Pedagogy and Critical Multiculturalism*, edited by Susan Schramm-Pate and Rhonda B. Jefferies (Albany: State University Press of New York, 2008), p. 85.

² Tamara Powell, "Communities in Collaboration: A Struggle to Increase Literacy in South Carolina," PhD. dissertation, Department of Education, University of South Carolina, 2004, p. 113.

³ Powell, "Communities in Collaboration," p. 113.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Buffington, Willie Lee. Papers. South Caroliniana Library. University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina.

Carr, Louise Douglass. "The Reverend Willie Lee Buffington's Life and Contributions to the Development of Rural Libraries in the South." Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1958.

Powell, Tamara. "Communities in Collaboration: A Struggle to Increase Literacy in South Carolina." Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Education, University of South Carolina, 2004.

Powell, Tamara. "Willie Lee Buffington and Faith Cabin Libraries: Doing practical good in a Disordered World." In Susan Schramm-Pate and Rhonda B. Jefferies, eds., Grappling with Diversity: Readings on Civil Rights Pedagogy and Critical Multiculturalism. Albany: State of University of New York Press, 2008.

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 #
recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
x Other

Name of repository: South Caroliniana Library & Pendleton District Commission

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

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

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Table with 4 columns: Reference Number, Zone, Easting, Northing. Contains data for references 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is shown as the black line marked "Faith Cabin Library at Seneca Junior College," on the portion of the accompanying Oconee County GIS Map, Tax Parcel 520-33-02-04, printed at a scale of 1" = 100'.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property is restricted to the historic library and its immediate vicinity.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ashley D. Stevensorganization Public History Program, University of South Carolina date 25 September 2012street & number _____ telephone (912) 996-6210city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29208e-mail astevens@gmail.com

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 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: Faith Cabin Library at Seneca Junior College

City or Vicinity: Seneca

County: Oconee State: South Carolina

Photographer: Ashley D. Stevens

Date Photographed: 10/02/2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 9: Façade
- 2 of 9: Southeast Elevation
- 3 of 9: Northeast Elevation
- 4 of 9: Northwest Elevation
- 5 of 9: View near West South 3rd Street (setting)
- 6 of 9: Interior, view of fireplace
- 7 of 9: Interior, view through doorway of window
- 8 of 9: Interior
- 9 of 9: Interior

Property Owner:

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

name Seneca River Sunday School / Baptist Training Union & Education Convention
c/o William E. Cureton

street & number 1507 Old Walhalla Hwy telephone (864) 638-9938

city or town West Union state SC zip code 29696

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.