

PH0355887

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED FEB 17 1977  
DATE ENTERED JUL 14 1977

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  Ayer Hall  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Jackson State University Campus  
1400 Lynch Street  
CITY, TOWN Jackson VICINITY OF Fourth  
STATE Mississippi CODE 28 COUNTY Hinds CODE 049

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<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 checked="" 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 Jackson State University  
STREET & NUMBER 1400 Lynch Street  
CITY, TOWN Jackson VICINITY OF Mississippi

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hinds County Courthouse, Office of Chancery Clerk  
STREET & NUMBER East Pascagoula Street  
CITY, TOWN Jackson STATE Mississippi

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Centrally located on the Jackson State University campus and overlooking a shaded plaza is Ayer Hall, a twelve-bay rectangular brick structure, 115 feet by 40 feet, erected in 1903. The building was originally designed by Jackson architect W. D. Hull as a three-story structure, raised above a full basement, with hipped and gabled roof. To emphasize the approach axis, a center pedimented pavilion was created and a small wooden porch placed before the first floor entrance. As was typical of the period, all windows were segmentally arched. Several belt courses relieved the wall surfaces. Although Ayer Hall may be placed within the Colonial Revival school, economic considerations have necessarily outweighed stylistic ones throughout the building's history, and the structure is today substantially altered from its original appearance.

When fire severely damaged the building in 1938, the third story was removed and replaced by a flat roof, At the same time, the entrance porch was enclosed on the first and ground floor levels, stairs being installed in the enclosure. At this time, the main entrance was moved to the basement level. A south wing was built in 1940 to accommodate baths and additional stairways. A major interior alteration occurred in 1972, when the women's living quarters on the first floor were remodeled for use as offices. The exterior of the structure is now painted white.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1903

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ayer Hall, constructed in 1903 as the first academic building on the Jackson College (now Jackson State University) campus, is today the only extant original structure on the grounds of this institution and is significant for its role in the development of education for black Mississippians.

Originally established in Natchez, Mississippi, as Natchez Seminary, Jackson College was the direct outgrowth of a great humanitarian movement that had its roots in antislavery sentiment within northern Protestant churches and emerged during and after the Civil War as a missionary commitment to aid the newly freed black people of the South. A prevailing faith in America's democratic ideals and the capacity of black Americans to enter fully into the nation's life energized the founding and staffing during the postwar period of numerous educational institutions for Southern blacks.

In keeping with this spirit, the American Baptist Home Mission Society of New York in 1877 authorized Dr. Charles Ayer (1826-1901) of New York to establish a school in the Mississippi Valley for the training of Negro teachers and preachers who could provide sound leadership within the black community. Avowedly religious in their initial purposes, the founders of Natchez Seminary saw as their broad goal the development of the black sector as a vital force in the political, social, and cultural life of the state. The school operated successfully in Natchez for six years, and by 1883 the need for expanded accommodations and a more central location within the state resulted in a move to Jackson, where the Society purchased for \$5,000 the Campbell property on North State Street, consisting of fifty-two acres of land with a mansion house.

President Ayer was succeeded in 1894 by Rev. Luther G. Barrett (1838-1932), under whose administration Jackson College was moved to its present location. By the turn of the century, the migration of the more affluent members of the city to north Jackson was fast separating the institution from the people it was intended to serve. Recognizing the importance of a location within the black community, in 1902 the Mission Society sold the North State Street site for \$40,000 to Major Reuben Webster Millsaps. Temporary boarding and classroom facilities were used until in 1903 the present site in southwest Jackson on Lynch Street was purchased for \$7,800. Construction was immediately begun on two brick buildings, which were completed in time for the fall school session of that year. The first of these structures, erected at a cost of \$15,000 was Ayer Hall. Originally intended for use as a men's dormitory, the building at various times since 1912 has

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dansby, B. Baldwin. A Brief History of Jackson College: A Typical Story of the Survival of Education Among Negroes in the South. Jackson, Miss.: Jackson College, 1953.

Hinds County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Deed book 39.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	7,6,2	9,6,0	3,5,7,6	4,8,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE	History Department Jackson State University	Division of Historic Sites and Archaeology and Mississippi Department of Archives and History
ORGANIZATION	Mississippi Department of Archives and History	DATE February 11, 1977
STREET & NUMBER	P. O. Box 571	TELEPHONE (601) 354-6218
CITY OR TOWN	Jackson	STATE Mississippi

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Elmer R. Hilliard*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE February 11, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST <i>Wm. H. ...</i>	DATE <i>7/24/77</i>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE <i>6. 7. 77</i>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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8 - SIGNIFICANCE

also housed a chapel, president's office, library, recitation rooms, classrooms, manual training shop, dean's quarters, assembly room, women's dormitory, bookstore, post office, nursery, and storage facility. In 1942 the Twin Pines Cooperative Association used the building for its instructional program in cooperative enterprises headed by Jacob L. Reddix, the fifth president of Jackson College.

During the administration of Dr. B. Baldwyn Dansby, the fourth president, increasing financial difficulties forced the American Baptist Home Mission Society to discontinue its operation of Jackson College in 1934. Through the dedicated efforts of black and white leaders within the community, the institution was saved from collapse, and in 1940 by an act of the state legislature the college became a training school for Negro teachers. Today, as Jackson State University, the institution has taken its place among the eight state-operated senior colleges and universities of Mississippi.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

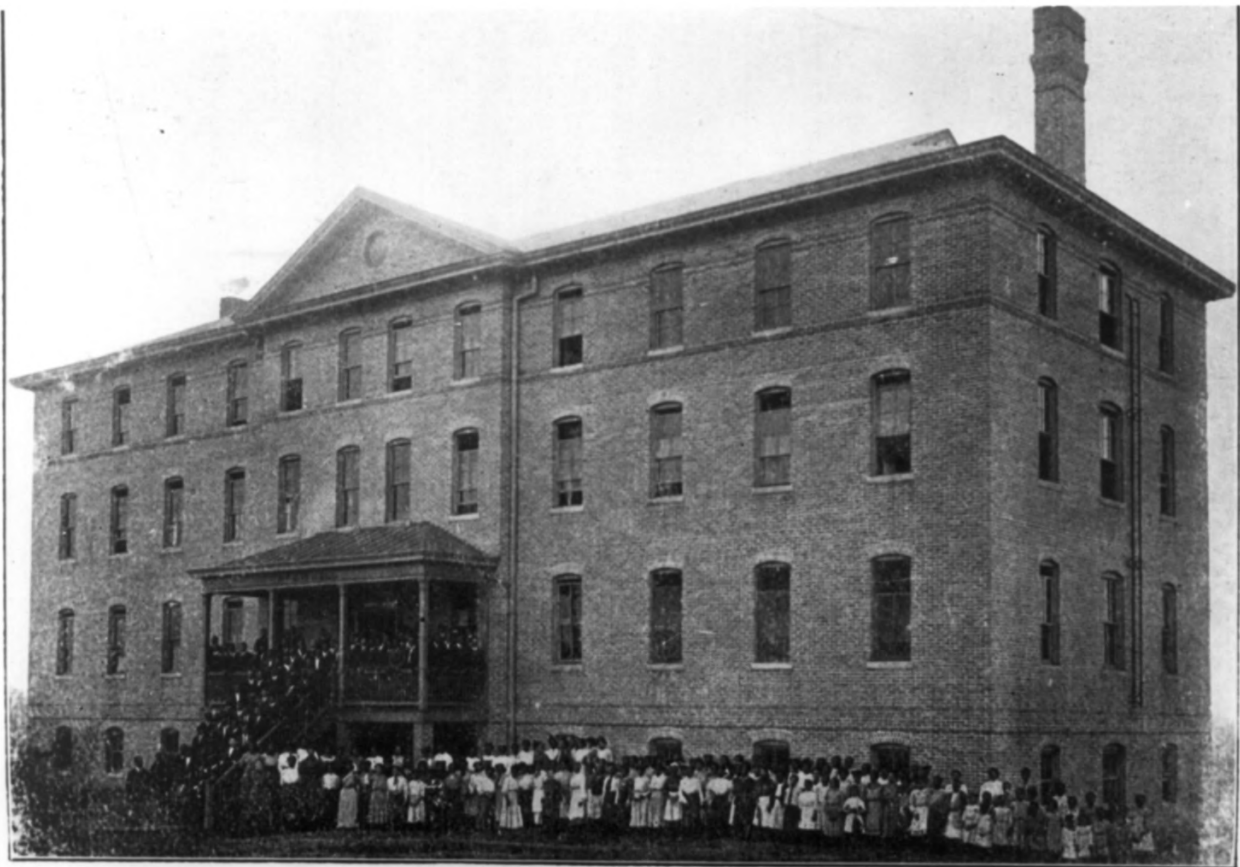
Hurns, Walter M. "Historic American Buildings Survey, Charles Ayer Hall."  
Unpublished graduate report, Jackson State University, 1976.

Jackson State University. Report of plant operations.

Reddix, Jacob L. A Voice Crying in the Wilderness: Memoirs of Jacob L. Reddix.  
Jackson. University Press of Mississippi, 1974.

Rhodes, Lelia. Class lecturer and consultant to History 302 class, Jackson State University, Spring, 1976.

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. National Ministries, Division of Archives, American Baptist Churches, U.S.A. American Baptist Home Missionary Society of New York, Minutes of the Board Meeting, March 9, 1903.



AYER HALL—BOYS' DORMITORY.

Photo No. 1 - Ayer Hall  
Jackson (Jackson State University),  
Hinds County, Mississippi  
Mississippi Department of Archives  
and History  
ca. 1910  
Facade view, looking southwest

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Photo No. 2 - Ayer Hall  
Jackson (Jackson State University),  
Hinds County, Mississippi  
Jackson State University  
Mississippi Department of Archives  
and History  
1976  
General view, looking northwest

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