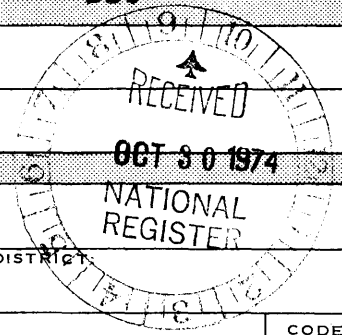


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Mississippi
COUNTY: Claiborne
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE DEC 27 1974



**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Oakland Chapel

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Alcorn State University Campus

CITY OR TOWN:  
Alcorn (~~Lorman vicinity~~)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
Fourth

STATE: Mississippi      CODE: 28      COUNTY: Claiborne      CODE: 021

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Alcorn State University

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Alcorn College Station

CITY OR TOWN:  
Lorman

STATE:  
Mississippi

CODE:  
39096      28

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Office of the Chancery Clerk, Claiborne County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Port Gibson

STATE:  
Mississippi

CODE:  
39150      28

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1972       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Division of Prints and Photographs

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Library of Congress

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE:  
District of Columbia

CODE:  
08

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Mississippi	COUNTY: Claiborne	FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER: DEC 27 1974		
DATE:		

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Oakland Chapel, an example of the Greek Revival style, is located on a low, crescent-shaped ridge on the grounds of Alcorn University seven miles northwest of Lorman, Mississippi. It is a temple-front building, three stories in height, dominated by a raised portico consisting of six columns approximating the Tuscan order, full entablature, and pediment. A cast iron stair, designed with heavy columnar newels and risers pierced in a floral pattern, rises on the center axis to the main floor. The composition is topped by a cupola designed with fluted Doric columns set between corner piers. A full entablature, with triglyphs, metopes, and mutules, extends uninterrupted around the cupola. A balustrade once rested on the entablature but was removed during the 1958 restoration.

The building is constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond on the facade and in common bond on the ground floor and the side and rear elevations. The fenestration pattern is regular and strictly symmetrical. The facade is five bays wide with entrance doors on the ground and main floors. Unmolded reveals are let into the spandrels and are stuccoed and painted on the facade elevation. Windows are double-hung with twelve-over-twelve glazing encased within a narrow, beaded architrave finished with a rolled backband. The windows of the front elevation are replacements but closely follow the original design. The main entrance consists of a double-leaf door with single vertical panels, flanking sidelights, and a large, twelve-pane transom. The opening is enriched by a massive yet simple Greek Revival frontispiece composed of pilasters, full entablature, and abstract pedimental form.

The plan of the main floor, which is repeated on the upper or third floor, consists of a spacious center stairhall and two flanking chambers occupying the forward third of the building, and a large, two story chapel occupying the remaining area. The woodwork of the secondary spaces is largely confined to the center hall. The stair consists of a single flight with winders at the top, a tapered octagonal newel, a ramped banister, and rectangular-sectioned balusters. The doorways which communicate with the flanking chambers are hung with vertically-paneled doors fitted with reproduction rim locks. The frames are designed with battered and eared architraves supporting a plain box cornice, the customary frieze having been entirely omitted. The chapel door, the most important of the interior doorways, repeats the basic form of the entrance door and frontispiece but eliminates the transom and pediment.

The two-story space occupied by the chapel is fitted with a gallery running along the back and side walls. Notable woodwork original to the room includes a flush-paneled dado which is repeated, with a balustrade, as the gallery railing, and the pews with their paneled and ramped end-boards. Of special interest is the wooden reredos placed directly opposite the entrance on the dias. Its design is based on the traditional tabernacle frame form with coupled pilasters, triple-facia architrave, plain frieze, and cornice with bead and reel, egg and dart, and enriched talon carving highlighted with color. The composition is completed by a low pediment with three gilt antefixae. Other special decorative features include a plaster chandelier medallion and bands of geometrically-patterned designs stencilled at the cornice and just above the dado level. During the 1958 restoration, the stencilled designs now painted a bright blue were retouched, following the faded evidence of the original.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Construction of Oakland Chapel was begun in 1838 by Oakland College, the first collegiate institution to be established south of the Tennessee River. The school was founded by Rev. Jeremiah Chamberlain, who first introduced to the Presbytery of Mississippi, meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1829, the idea of creating the college. Chamberlain, recognizing that no single native of Mississippi had ever entered the ministry (Mayes, p. 64), saw the establishment of Oakland as a means "to raise up in the southwest a native ministry" to serve the 300,000 inhabitants of Mississippi, Louisiana, and the Territory of Arkansas. Representatives of three Louisiana parishes and eight Mississippi counties met at Bethel Church, near Rodney Landing, Mississippi, in January, 1830 and on the fourteenth of that month approved Chamberlain's proposal to establish an "Institution of Higher Learning under the care of the Mississippi Presbytery." While its founders were searching for a permanent location, the school opened with three students on May 14, with Dr. Chamberlain as its President. By July of that same year, 250 acres were given to Oakland College by Robert Cockran and construction of the first buildings was begun. In 1833, James Smylie, later circuit court judge and vice-chancellor of the state, became the first graduate of Oakland, thereby becoming the first native Mississippian to be awarded a collegiate degree in Mississippi (Dunham, p. 8).

The early years of Oakland College were characterized by lusty growth and optimism. Dr. Chamberlain reported to Governor McNutt in 1840 on the status of the college:

We have 250 acres of land . . . and subscriptions to above \$100,000, near one-half of which is due in the form of a permanent fund. Our buildings are a president's house, a professor's house, a steward's house, and fifteen cottages for lodging the students, calculated to contain from six to eight students each. The first story of a main building, 100 by 65 feet, is now raised, and the house shall be finished three stories high as soon as funds will warrant it. (Mayes, p. 66)

The unfinished structure referred to by Chamberlain was the chapel, the foundations of which had been laid two years earlier (Bruss, p. 26). The funds necessary for the structure's completion were not soon forthcoming, for it was not until two years after Chamberlain's death in 1851 that the construction would be completed (Stanton, p. 8). While the structure was consistently

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Alcorn A and M College. Catalogue of Officers and Students. Jackson: Clarion Steam Printing Establishment, 1886.  
Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1891. Reprint. Wooster, Ohio: Micropublishers, Bell and Howell, 1973.  
 Bruss, Melvin Kellogg. "History of Oakland College 1830-1871." M.A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1965.  
 Dunham, Melerson Grey. The Centennial History of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College. Hattiesburg: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1971.

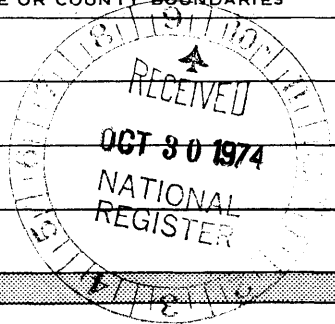
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		31 ° 52 ' 34 "	91 ° 08 ' 22 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than one acre**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**William C. Allen, Architectural Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **Mississippi Department of Archives and History**      DATE: **October, 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**P. O. Box 571**

CITY OR TOWN: **Jackson**      STATE: **Mississippi**      CODE: **28**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name Elmer B. Williard

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date October 28, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

W. C. Allen  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 10/27/74

ATTEST:

W. J. [Signature]  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date DEC 26 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Mississippi	
COUNTY	
Claiborne	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 27 1974

(Number all entries)

7.

Of the original fabric of the two main floors, most remains intact, the notable exception being the disappearance of the stoves served by the twelve small chimneys. The ground floor, however, retains very little of its original finish. This level, which continues to be used for classrooms, has undergone heavy remodeling that has left only one original eight-paneled door intact. The plan, which may follow the original, consists of a center hall running the full length of the building, with entrances at either end and four rooms on each side. At the front of the building, the hall widens to accommodate a modern stair, which is undoubtedly in the location of the original stairway.

8.

referred to as the chapel, the building also housed recitation and library rooms, space for philosophical and chemical apparatus, and an observatory on the cupola. Oakland Chapel therefore united the religious and academic activities of the college in one building.

The optimistic future of Oakland was severely curtailed with the death of its founder and president, Jeremiah Chamberlain, in 1851. Chamberlain, an ardent unionist and Whig, was assassinated on the campus by George A. Briscoe, a secessionist. Following this great loss, Oakland moved into a period of less growth than it had experienced in the Chamberlain years. The college's final decline was precipitated by the Civil War, which closed its doors and ruined its former financial stability. Rev. Joseph Calvin, the school's last president, complained that Oakland was "being pressed beyond measure by some outstanding debts and suffering from want of patronage" (Rogers, "Oakland College: An Early Presbyterian Educational Endeavor," p. 55), but the school managed to continue operation until 1871. At that time the buildings were purchased for \$40,000 by the state in order that a school might be established for blacks.

Incorporated on May 13, 1871, Alcorn University was named for James L. Alcorn, the twenty-eighth governor of Mississippi, who first suggested that Oakland College be acquired to establish a normal school for training black teachers. Hiram R. Revels, the first Negro to be elected to the United States Senate, was selected as the school's first president, serving from 1871 until 1882. Under Revels, Alcorn responded to the 1862 Morrill Act by creating an agricultural department and changing its name to Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, becoming the first land grant college for blacks in the nation (1878). A. D. Snodgrass, who graduated from Alcorn in 1882, became the first black to receive a degree in Mississippi. Thus, Alcorn became the first college which had awarded degrees to black as well as white students (Rogers, "Oakland College: Presbyterian Endeavor," p. 55). The school continues to be maintained as one of Mississippi's three land grant institutions and was awarded university status in 1973.

Under the stewardship of Alcorn University, Oakland Chapel continued to serve as the main academic building on campus. The biennial reports to the legislature carry the usual requests for funds necessary for maintenance projects such as reroofing and "Kalsomining" (whitewashing). The most significant addition to the chapel was the installation of the cast iron balustrade and stairs which

(continued)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Mississippi	
COUNTY Claiborne	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 27 1974

(Number all entries)

8.  
now lead to the main floor of the portico. These artifacts were brought to Oakland Chapel after fire had destroyed the residence at nearby Windsor Plantation on February 17, 1890.

In 1958 a tornado that damaged the building made reroofing and interior repair necessary. The opportunity was taken at that time to restore the stencilled plaster of the chapel, refurbish a number of pews, install brass rim locks on interior doors, and replace the windows under the portico. The last major alteration occurred in 1967, when a Housing and Urban Development grant was used to remodel a bookstore and other facilities on the ground floor into classrooms.

9.

Mayes, Edward. History of Education in Mississippi. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899.

Montgomery, Frank A. Reminiscences of a Mississippian in Peace and War. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke Company Press, 1901.

Oakland Amicus. "Oakland College Should be in Natchez." Natchez Daily Courier, April 19, 24; May 5, 8, 12, 1853.

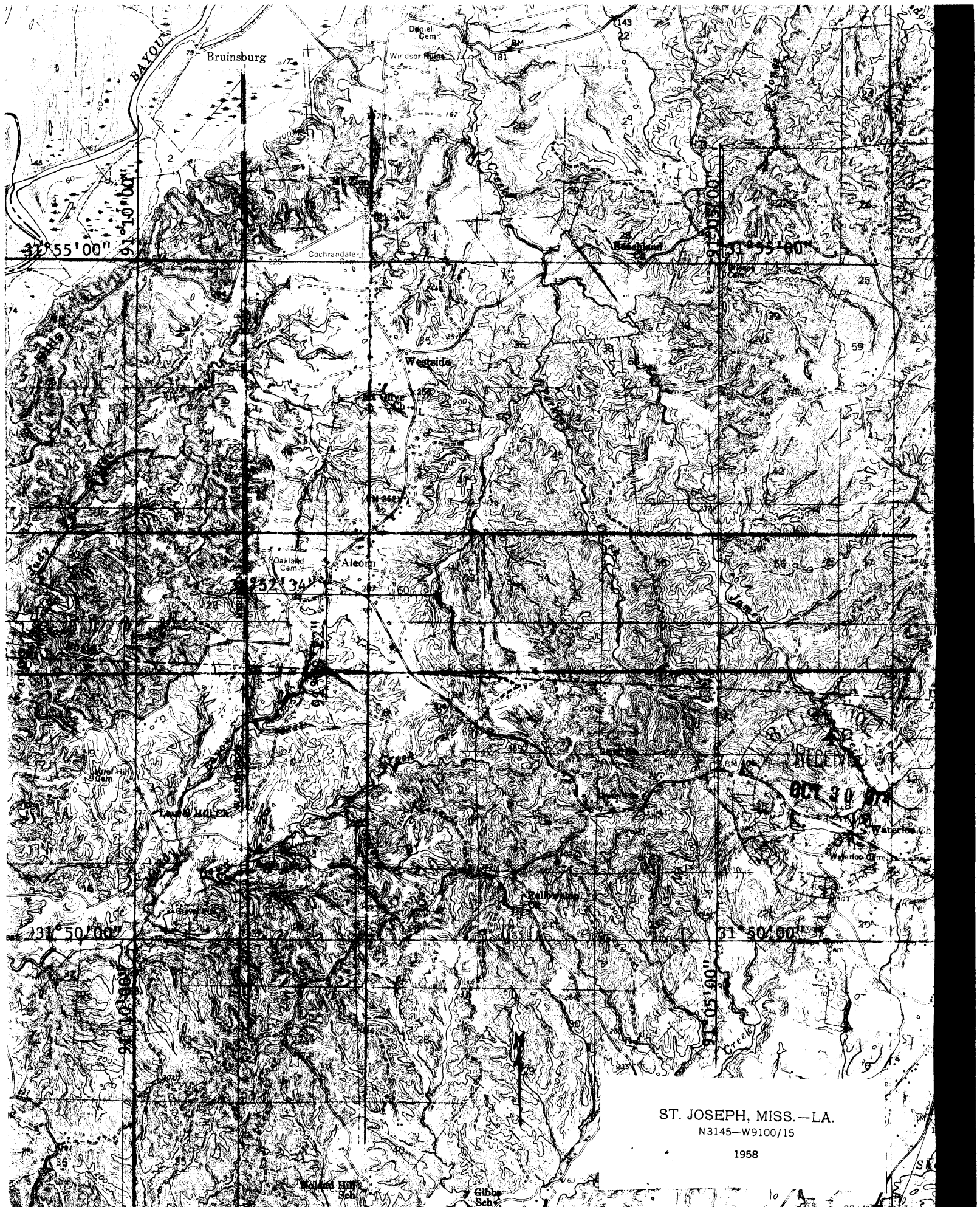
Rogers, Tommy Wayne. "Oakland College." Journal of Mississippi History 36 (1974): 143-160.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Oakland College: An Early Presbyterian Educational Endeavor in the Old Southwest." Journal of Presbyterian History 43 (1965): 37-56.

Stanton, Robert L. Southern Education. New Orleans: Office of the Picayune, 1854.

U. S. Department of the Interior. Bureau of Education. Negro Education, Bulletin, No. 39 (1916). Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917.





ST. JOSEPH, MISS.—LA.  
N3145—W9100/15

1958





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME

COMMON

Oakland Chapel

AND/OR HISTORIC

NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)

DEC 27 1974

2. LOCATION

STATE

Mississippi

COUNTY

Claiborne

TOWN

Alcorn (Lorman vicinity)

STREET AND NUMBER

Alcorn State University Campus

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Mississippi Department of  
Archives and History

DATE

October 14, 1974

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Mississippi Department of  
Archives & History, Jackson, Ms.

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

View of the chapel

#142  
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME

COMMON

Oakland Chapel

AND/OR HISTORIC

NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)

DEC 27 1974

2. LOCATION

STATE

Mississippi

COUNTY

Claiborne

TOWN

Alcorn (Lorman vicinity)

STREET AND NUMBER

Alcorn State University Campus

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Mississippi Department of  
Archives and History

DATE

October 14, 1974

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Mississippi Department of  
Archives & History, Jackson, Ms.

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

View of the north facade and west side elevation

#2

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER





OAKLAND CHAPEL

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Lorman Vicinity, Claiborne County, Mississippi

William C. Allen

September, 1974

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

View to the Northeast

Photo 3 of 11

Oakland Chapel

National Historic Landmark (NHL) Nomination

Listed on 05/11/1976

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NHL

# 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

Oakland Memorial Chapel, Alcorn University

AND/OR COMMON

Alcorn University

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Alcorn State University Campus

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Alcorn

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth

STATE

Mississippi

VICINITY OF

Lorman

CODE

28

COUNTY

Claiborne

CODE

021

## 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

Alcorn State University

STREET & NUMBER

Alcorn College Station

CITY, TOWN

Alcorn

VICINITY OF

Lorman

STATE

Mississippi

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Office of the Chancery Clerk, Claiborne County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Port Gibson

STATE

Mississippi

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

National Register of Historic Places

DATE

1972

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

National Register of Historic Places, 1100 L Street, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

20240

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Alcorn University was the product of the Mississippi Reconstruction Legislature. The college was founded in 1871, six years after the close of the Civil War, expressly for the education of blacks, on the site which had long been set aside for the education of the white youth of the area, Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas.

Oakland College was founded in 1828 in Claiborne County, Mississippi "amidst a beautiful oak grove, gently undulating and clothed in a perennial dress of green verdure that is pleasing to the eye and conducive to health and quietude." This campus was purchased by the state at a cost of \$40,000. Of this original campus there are three structures which remain. These are the President's Mansion, the Belles Lettres Building, and Oakland Memorial Chapel. The first two of these buildings have been greatly altered and modified for perpetual usage. Extensive alterations, additions and modernization have reduced their integrity. For this reason, it is impractical to include them as a part of this nomination.

Alcorn University, on the other hand, is a bustling modern university campus. The cogs of progress have turned rapidly and the sites of the original structures have been lost. The only structure which retains the character of the original campus is Oakland Chapel.

Built as one of the first of the original buildings at Oakland College in 1838, Oakland Chapel, an example of the Greek Revival style, is located on a low, crescent-shaped ridge on the grounds of Alcorn University seven miles northwest of Lorman, Mississippi. It is a temple-front building, three stories in height, dominated by a raised portico consisting of six columns approximating the Tuscan order, full entablature, and pediment. A cast iron stair, designed with heavy columnar newels and risers pierced in a floral pattern, rises on the center axis to the main floor. The composition is topped by a cupola designed with fluted Doric columns set between corner piers. A full entablature, with triglyphs, metopes, and mutules, extends uninterrupted around the cupola. A balustrade once rested on the entablature but was removed during the 1958 restoration.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

CONTINUATION SHEET DESCRIPTION

ITEM NUMBER #7

PAGE TWO

The plan of the main floor, which is repeated on the upper or third floor consists of a spacious center stairhall and two flanking chambers occupying the forward third of the building, and a large, two story chapel occupying the remaining area. The woodwork of the secondary spaces is largely confined to the center hall. The stair consists of a single flight with winders at the top, a tapered octagonal newel, a ramped banister, and rectangular-sectioned balusters. The doorways which communicate with the flanking chambers are hung with vertically-paneled doors fitted with reproduction rim locks. The frames are designed with battered and eared architraves supporting a plain box cornice, the customary frieze having been entirely omitted. The chapel door, the most important of the interior doorways, repeats the basic form of the entrance door and frontispiece but eliminates the transom and pediment.

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# 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Afro-American History		

SPECIFIC DATES **1871**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT **Slave Labor /Not known**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Alcorn University is historically significant because it was the first land grant college in the nation founded exclusively for blacks. Established by the Mississippi state legislature six years after the end of the Civil War, the university was founded in the midst of the black Reconstruction era when it seemed, a few years, that the plight of black folk would be better. Mississippi's white political leaders were fearful that the state's black citizens would seek admission to the white state university. Hiram R. Revels, who became its first president, in his memoirs wrote of the founding that he and Governor Alcorn "prepared a bill for the establishing of Alcorn University and presented it first to the Senate and then to the House of Representatives.... As a compliment to me, the legislature styled it Revels University but on my earnest solicitation it was named for the Governor, Alcorn University."

This first state land grant college for blacks, created by an act of the Mississippi legislature, May 13, 1871, was located on a site which had long been set aside for the education of the white youth of the area, Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas.

Oakland College was founded in 1828, in Claiborne County. The founder was the Reverend Jeremiah Chamberlain who convinced the Presbyterians of Mississippi that there was a need for such a college. By 1840 this college had 250 acres of land and an endowment of \$50,000. And at that time, the president, in describing the growth of the campus mentioned the progress of construction by skilled black craftsmen of the college's main building, "150 by 65 feet ... three stories high." That main building was Oakland Chapel.

The decade of tension, 1850-1860, which culminate in the Civil War and closure of the college, in its initial year, saw the demise of the college's founder. The Reverend Jeremiah Chamberlain, a Whig and a unionist, was assassinated by an advocate of secession. The college was opened again after the war, but was "being pressed beyond measure by some outstanding debts and suffering from want of patronage" when it was sold to the state of Mississippi for \$40,000.

Alcorn State University began operations under the guidance of one of the most distinguished blacks of the Reconstruction Era, Hiram R. Revels. Born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, September 27, 1827, Revels was educated in Fayetteville and later in Indiana. In the years before the war he was a preacher and sometimes a teacher in Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri. He was in Maryland during the War and played a role in organizing regiments of black troops to fight in that war. After the Civil War he became involved in politics and in religious activities in Mississippi. In 1870 he was elected to the United States Senate, the first black man in history to attain that office. (He served in that office with distinction and at the end of his term his friend Governor Alcorn wrote that he had dignified

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service for him in the state of Mississippi. Revels had already declined other employment, "I preferred remaining in Mississippi where I could be more beneficial to my race."

While Revels was president of the college, fulfilling his political ambitions, as well, the state legislature reorganized the institution and made it a land grant college, in 1878. The name was to be changed to that of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College. The states funds from the Morrill Act, July 2, 1862, in the Agricultural Land Scrip Fund in 1878 was \$227,150.00. This money was divided between the white land grant college at Starkeville and Alcorn A & M College. Thus the college acquired an endowment of \$113,575.00 and received that year in interest, \$5,678.75.

John H. Burrus became president in 1882, and he and those who followed him during the remaining years of the nineteenth century supported a continuing and growing emphasis on agricultural and industrial education. This emphasis on industrial and agricultural education was so great that in 1888 it was reported that less than five percent of the 7,273 students in twenty-three of the leading "higher schools" for Blacks were "engaged in what are now considered classical studies."

John H. Burrus was president of the college from the time of the resignation of Senator Revels, 1882 until 1893. Burrus, aided by his brother, James Burrus, made the college one of the first modern State Colleges for blacks, maintaining high standards of scholarship. The Burrus presidency was followed by those of Wilt Reynolds, 1893-1894, and Thomas J. Calloway. President Calloway was the first to propose that the college become coeducational. His plea for the admission of women students was not immediately successful.

Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College became a coeducational institution during the presidency of Witt Lanier. It should be noted that women had been in attendance during the progressive Burrus years, 1883-1893, and that one "Beulah Turner Robinson in 1888 became the first Black woman in the nation to graduate from a state supported institution." Lanier's emphasis on education for women led to the construction of Truly Hall, 1903, and to the employment of women faculty for instruction of the new class of students in "sewing, cooking, laundering and in nurse training."

The history of the college during the first third of the twentieth century was closely allied to the life and time of L. J. Rowan. Rowan became president in 1905, served until 1911, when he was replaced by J. A. Martin. Martin's presidency ended in 1915, where upon Rowan returned to the presidency and remained in office until 1934.

Rowan and Martin were graduates of the college. Martin's presidency was very progressive for the college and physical plant received vast improvements. Martin, who was aware of the financial problems of Mississippi youth who wanted college training, began an evening college.

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During the Rowan eras Alcorn became one of the states most influential institutions. This was an era wherein the Booker T. Washington's Atlanta speech,"compromise" dominated and the college became the states principal exponent of the "compromise".

Agricultural and Mechanical came to include all of the trades. Young blacks from the rural areas of the state came to the college to be trained as agricultural teachers, farmer's advisors and home economics specialists. Education was available in other areas of trades and in the liberal arts. Mississippi and other Southern states, while their demogogues stridently insisted that their states were sovereign, eagerly sought federal funds to support various state activities. The Department of Agriculture was an important source of such funds. A statewide system of vocational high schools was established. Among black educators the most lucrative positions available were those as vocational teachers in such schools. Salaries for vocational teachers in these schools were supplemented by federal funds and consequently these teachers became an elite class among black educators.

Throughout the Rowan years Alcorn A & M College suffered severely from inadequate state support. This neglect forced the Rowan administration to be most frugal in its expenditures and Black state colleges in this era husbanded their inadequate financial resources. President Rowan reported in 1924, "Our first great handicap, and fundamentally, the cause of all the others, is the Support Fund that is too small for a plant such as ours." \$50,000 was the state's total contribution to the support of the college in that year.

In the midst of the great depression Dr. Rowan was retired from office and Dr. William H. Bell became president. During his administration the college made rapid improvements in the quality of training of the faculty and in improvement of the physical plant.

The program at the institution became more diversified and included the classical arts as well as vocational training. The college's science department attained high academic excellence. Almost all of Mississippi's black physicians and dentist are graduates of the college. Colleges and universities throughout the country have Alcorn State University graduates on their faculties. The college's graduates have distinguished themselves and their alma mater in numerous aspects of American life.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY

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The original campus of Oakland College has been severely impacted with the advances of Alcorn University. Though several structures dating from the 1830s - 40s period remain, their integrity has been severely reduced by modern additions and alterations. Recent development has led to the destruction of other significant buildings and the obliteration of historic sites. For this reason the selection of the Chapel as commemorative of the historic property is most appropriate.

Beginning at the point of intersection of Route 552 and a service street, proceed in an easterly direction along the north curb of this service street, a distance of approximately 175 feet, then due north approximately 80 feet, to a point of equal distance between the Chapel and a building on its north side, then proceed due west to Route 552, then south along the east curb of Route 552, to the point of origin.

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CONTINUATION SHEET RESEARCHERS

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October 30, 1975