

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.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: (old) Port Gibson High School \_\_\_\_\_

Other names/site number: Port Gibson Middle School \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic Resources of Port Gibson \_\_\_\_\_

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 161 Ramsey Drive \_\_\_\_\_

City or town: Port Gibson \_\_\_\_\_ State: MS \_\_\_\_\_ County: Claiborne \_\_\_\_\_

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

<u>Katie Blount</u>	<u>3-31-16</u>
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>SHPO</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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#### 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	_____	sites
<u>2</u>	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school \_\_\_\_\_  
RECREATION/sports facility \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school/ \_\_\_\_\_  
RECREATION/sports facility \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE GOTHIC REVIVAL/Collegiate Gothic \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Asphalt shingles, Cast-stone

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The (old) Port Gibson High School, now the Port Gibson Middle School, occupies a suburban location on the southern edge of Port Gibson and on the west side of Highway 61 (Church Street). Begun in 1924 with a two-story brick administration building, the campus today comprises seven buildings, situated around a landscaped circular drive, and an adjacent football stadium.



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## Narrative Description

The (old) Port Gibson High School, now the Port Gibson Middle School, occupies a suburban location on the southern edge of Port Gibson and on the west side of Highway 61 (Church Street). It sits well off the highway and is organized around a long circular driveway. The topography is relatively flat on the front of campus but drops off behind the main buildings on the west and the south, where a creek bed separates the main campus from the athletic field and stadium. The paved drive is landscaped with grass and crepe myrtles, and mature pecan trees and water oaks informally line the outer edges.

Seven structures compose the campus, which beginning in 1924 served as the elementary and high school for all white students in Port Gibson. They generally face east at the end of the circular drive, except for the band hall, which is separated from the rest of the buildings and is located on the south side of the drive facing north. All buildings are substantial brick structures, except for a few temporary structures on the back part of the campus. Three buildings—the original administration building (1924), the elementary building (1939) and the elementary school annex (1958) are joined together with hyphens that allow internal passage between them along one continuous hallway.

### C 1. Administration Building Emmett J. Hull, archt.

1924

Scored-brick school building on a raised brick foundation, symmetrically massed with two one-story wings flanking a center two-story block, all with flat roofs behind a parapet with concrete cap. Two entrance towers buttressed with brick pilasters with concrete caps rise slightly above the roof with gabled parapets; concrete panels in the gable ends read "High School" and "Erected 1924." The first floor entrances are delineated with round-arched cast-concrete hoods supported on brackets. One-light steel doors are replacements and semicircular transoms are boarded. Windows are 6/6 double-hung sash replacements in the original openings, and window groupings representing single classrooms are tied together visually with continuous rowlock-course sills, and continuous soldier-course lintels run around the building to create a stringcourse. A wide cast-concrete watertable surrounds the building on all sides.

The original floorplan included classrooms opening onto a U-shaped hallway on the first floor and an auditorium on the second floor, probably extending the width of the façade between the entrance/stair towers and with the stage in the back. A 1941 fire was reported in the Port Gibson *Reveille* as having charred all of the woodwork and leaving the northwest wall in a "crumbling condition." It appears that the interior of today mostly reflects the repairs after this fire. That the second-floor auditorium was replaced with a double-loaded hallway of classrooms and a large library at this time is indicated by the consistent use on both floors of 6-light, 3-panel wood doors, 6-light wood-framed awning-type transoms, chair rails in the halls, plaster walls, 1' x 1' acoustic tile ceilings, and linoleum flooring. A second renovation probably occurred either in the

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late 1950s or 1960s that involved reconfiguring the southwest corner classroom for a hallway that would connect with the hyphen built between the elementary building and the administration building. Probably at this time, the stairs in the north and south entrance hallways were replaced with steel units. Most classrooms retain built-in cabinetry from the 1941 renovation, as well as wood-trimmed blackboards.

**C. 2. Elementary Building**

**1939**

**E.L. Malvaney, archt., Flint-Jordan Construction Co., builder**

One-story, scored-brick, irregularly massed, T-plan school building with Colonial Revival details and a cross-gabled roof of asphalt shingles. The auditorium wing projects to the front with quoined corners, short cornice returns, and a broken pediment center entrance whose doors have been replaced and transom enclosed. Windows are 20/12 (in the auditorium wing) and 12/12 (classrooms) modern replacement in the original openings, with concrete sills and in groups of two, three, and four. Secondary (non-auditorium) entrance on the E elevation is a 2-light steel doors with 1-light replacement transom. Interior retains its original floorplan, auditorium space with raised stage and replacement seating, 2-panel wood doors, 6-light swivel-type transoms, plaster walls, a chair rail in the hall, and most built-in cabinetry in the classrooms. While the ceilings in the classrooms are 1' x 2' acoustic-tile, the hallway has a modern dropped-in ceiling. Later alterations include linoleum or vinyl floor over either a wood or a concrete original floor.

This building was built with funding from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (which later became the Public Works Administration or PWA). A flat-roofed brick hyphen on the north, probably dating to the 1960s, connects the elementary building to the old administration building and contains offices and other support spaces. This section differs from the gabled hyphen on the south end that connects with the 1958 classroom annex.

**C. 3. Gymnasium**

**1949**

**Spain & Biggers, archts., Harvey Construction Co., builders**

One-and-a-half-story scored-brick structure topped by a gable-on-hip roof of asphalt shingles and resting on a concrete foundation. A one-story, flat-roof entrance lobby with a concrete-capped parapet is centered on the E façade with three replacement steel doors at the center. Flanking the lobby are two steel doors leading to the bathrooms and locker rooms below the bleachers inside. Two levels of identical windows—original 3-light steel awning types with concrete sills—line the façade, the bottom level lighting the support spaces beneath the bleachers and the upper level lighting the playing floor inside. Brick pilasters divide the blank side elevations into five bays. On the rear (W) elevation is a one-and-a-half-story brick wing (original) that houses the stage that makes this gym a multi-purpose space. A lower one-story brick addition (c.1970) is behind this wing, providing an exercise room. Inside, walls are plastered with a V-notch 1x4" tongue-and-groove wood wainscot surrounding the playing floor. Original wood bleachers, constructed of the same V-notch boards and with original pipe railing, are on the W side of the playing floor, facing the still-open stage across the original wood playing floor. The ceiling appears to be painted plywood, probably original.

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**C. 4. Elementary School annex**

**1958-59**

**Raymond Birchett, archt., Webster Construction Co., builders**

One-story, brick classroom building with a rectangular footprint, concrete foundation, and flat roof with concrete-capped parapet. Wide eaves with corrugated-metal soffits provide sun protection to the east and west elevations. Brick quoins decorate all four corners. The front (E) façade and rear (W) elevations reflect the interior arrangement of four classroom bays, each delineated with a tripartite window flanked by two paired windows connected by a concrete sill. Windows are 12/12 replacements (c.2005) of original 5-light steel awning types; they fill the original openings and maintain the original fenestration pattern but diminish the sense of horizontality imparted by the originals. A recessed 3-light steel door entrance is centered on the S elevation, opening to the center hallway, and the N elevation connects directly to the gabled hyphen that carries the long hallway from the main elementary building through to the annex.

Inside, stairs lead from the hallway in the main elementary building into a hallway that is double-loaded with classrooms and features green tile block walls and open wall transoms for ventilation and light between the hall and classrooms. Floors throughout are linoleum and ceilings are original 2'x2' acoustic tile. One-light wood slab doors lead into the classrooms, which retain original cabinetry and blackboards and have painted concrete-block walls.

**C. 5. Industrial Arts/Cafeteria Building**

**1958-59**

**Webster Construction Co., builders**

One-story, textured-brick building facing east with a flat roof and concrete foundation. The original building on the north end has narrow eaves and 5-light steel awnings windows with rowlock sills. A flat-roofed, brick wing on the N elevation comprises the kitchen and related support spaces. This wing directly connects to a gabled corrugated metal maintenance shop on a concrete foundation that served as the industrial arts section of the building when it was built. Large sliding doors at the center of the E façade are flanked by tripartite 3-light steel awning type windows. A later addition on the south end has wide eaves on the east and west elevations and 2/2 metal-framed double-hung sash with rowlock sills. The main entrance is recessed off-center on the E façade and consists of double-leaf, 1-light steel doors. Secondary entrances on the E façade are 2-light, 1-panel steel doors that may be the original doors. On the S elevation, a recessed entry with 1-light steel doors is at the center flanked by blank brick walls. Inside, a hallway with green tile walls runs north-south, connecting science labs in the south wing with the cafeteria on the north. Classrooms feature painted concrete-block walls, linoleum floors, and dropped ceilings, and 1-light wood doors, probably original.

**C. 6. Band Hall**

**c.1966**

One-story, textured-brick, rectangular building with a full basement at the rear and a flat roof behind a concrete-capped parapet. A concrete stringcourse runs around three sides of the building, defining an abstract cornice with a repeating pattern of recessed brick panels forming an entablature. Brick quoins decorate all four corners. Modern 6/6 and 9/9 metal double-hung sash windows have replaced the original 5-light steel awning type windows in the original openings and with original concrete sills. The N façade has three bays, symmetrically spaced and all edged with wide cast-concrete trim: a single window is at the center, flanked by two recessed

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entrances of double-leaf, 1-light steel doors. Side elevations are three bays deep and the rear (S) elevation has five windows at the basement level and four at the main floor level.

**NC. 7. New Cafeteria Building**

**c. 2000**

One-story, brick, irregularly massed building with flat roof and cast-concrete stringcourses. A concrete-deck porch under a shed, raised-seam metal roof supported on metal posts wraps from the E to the N facades, punctuated by three false-wall entrance towers, two on the N façade and one located off-center on the E façade, sheltering the main entrance. Windows are single and paired and consist of 4-light units with 1-light transoms. A loading dock under a lower flat roof is located on the S elevation.

**C. 8. Foot Bridge**

**c.1958**

A pedestrian bridge approximately 50-feet long and composed of steel I-beams, steel railings, and wood deck crosses the ravine on the south side of campus, connecting the school buildings with Abraham Athletic Field.

**C. 9. Abraham Athletic Field**

**1958-59**

This athletic field, located across a ravine from the main campus, is oriented roughly north-south with football goals posts located at either end of a grassy playing field. A paved track surrounds the field. A set of metal bleachers faces the field from the east and west sides, and a low metal wall separates each from the field. The home bleachers on the E side are deeper than the visitors' bleachers on the west and feature a centered, raised press box with flat roof. An irregular paved parking area surrounds the complex.

**C. 10. Landscape**

The topography is relatively flat on the front of campus but drops off behind the main buildings on the west and the south, where a creek bed separates the main campus from the athletic field and stadium. The campus's grassy lawn is criss-crossed with sidewalk connecting the individual buildings to each other and to the parking lot that takes up part of the circle inside the drive. The roadbed of the long circular driveway probably dates to the early days of the campus since white students from the surrounding county were bussed in to campus. The paved drive is landscaped with grass and crepe myrtles, and mature pecan trees and water oaks informally line the outer edges. At the circular drive's Y-intersection is a sign facing E composed of a decorative metal archway springing from two brick piers. A metal plaque on the left pier reads: "In Honor of Carrie W. Ramsey, Superintendent of Schools, 1917-1938." This sign may have been erected as a senior class gift and based on materials used, probably dates somewhere between the 1940s through the 1960s.

The resources at the (old) Port Gibson High School reflect ninety-two years of planning and growth for the education of Port Gibson's elementary and high school students. Some alterations have been made to the buildings over time as the educational needs and the nature and age of the student body changed. However, during that time the school has retained a remarkable degree of integrity.

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## 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.

### 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 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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1924-1966

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1924

1939

1949

1959

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Emmett J. Hull

E. L. Malvaney

Spain & Biggers

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The (old) Port Gibson High School is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion A for association with Education. Beginning with its construction in 1924, the (old) Port Gibson High School has provided an education to multiple generations of Port Gibson residents and remains a school up to the present. The intact campus provides a good example of the way education needs grew and changed during the twentieth century in a small Mississippi city.

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

Europeans first settled in the area known today as Claiborne County in the 1700s. The land was claimed by the French, the English, the British and finally, the Americans.<sup>1</sup> However, long before the LaSalle expedition in 1763, Native Americans lived in the region. The Natchez Indians lived south of Bayou Pierre and the Choctaw were living there when the first European, Samuel Gibson, settled on the Bayou Pierre in 1788.<sup>2</sup> In the 1801 Treaty of Fort Adams, the Choctaw ceded 2,700,000 acres of land to the United States. Claiborne County is included in that cession.

The United States created the Mississippi Territory in 1798. The territorial legislature, established Claiborne County in 1802, named for territorial Governor William C.C. Claiborne. A commission selected Gibson's Port on Bayou Pierre as the county seat. The legislature changed the name to Port Gibson in 1803.<sup>3</sup> The commissioners purchased two acres from Samuel Gibson for a courthouse, jail, and stock and pillory.<sup>4</sup>

No property was set aside for a school and no public education was provided in Port Gibson until 1870. As in many frontier communities, education was a private responsibility. Some children were taught in the home, or groups of families might join together and hire a tutor to provide lessons at a central location, while other students were sent away to boarding schools.<sup>5</sup> Private academies were established, some more successful than others. One of the earliest was Madison Academy which was chartered by the territorial legislature in 1809 and gone from the public

<sup>1</sup> Mary H. Ellis. *Cannonballs and Courage, The Story of Port Gibson*. (Virginia Beach: Donning Company Publishers, 2003), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Katy McCaleb Headley. *Claiborne County, Mississippi, The Promised Land*. (Baton Rouge: Port Gibson-Claiborne County Historical Society, 1976), p.7.

<sup>3</sup> Ellis, p. 10

<sup>4</sup> Ellis, p. 15

<sup>5</sup> Headley, p. 158.

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record after 1814.<sup>6</sup> The Port Gibson Female College was a more successful venture. Established in 1826, the school ran continuously, except during the Civil War, until it was closed in 1928.<sup>7</sup> The current Port Gibson City Hall occupies a building constructed for the school around 1838. (NR, 1979) Brasher Female Academy occupied a still extant building located behind the First Presbyterian Church. An advertisement in the *Weekly Southern Reveille* of June 13, 1857 announced that the Brashear Female Academy would begin its term on “Wednesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of October in the above named academy, which is now in the course of erection the rear of the Presbyterian Church.”<sup>8</sup>

The Chamberlain-Hunt Academy was the most successful private school in Port Gibson. The school grew out of Oakland College, established in 1828. The school closed following the Civil War and the state purchased the facility in 1871 to establish a land grant college for African Americans, now known as Alcorn State University. Chamberlain-Hunt Academy was chartered in 1878 and began instruction in 1879. The school moved to a ninety-acre site in 1900 (NR, 1979). The school operated until 2014.<sup>9</sup>

A private school for African Americans opened in October, 1867. Children attended during the day, and night courses were offered to adults.<sup>10</sup>

The first public schools opened after 1870, when a county school board was appointed. Port Gibson residents successfully petitioned for a separate municipal district. In December 1870, the board appointed teachers for two schools in the county and three schools in Port Gibson, one for whites and two for African-American students. The number of county schools continued to grow and by 1936, there were 43 elementary schools for blacks, mostly one teacher schools. Black students attended high school at the Alcorn High School or Richardson High School in Port Gibson. White students attended schools in Hermanville, Midway, Pattison, Westside and Grand Gulf.<sup>11</sup>

Port Gibson separate municipal district was governed by a school board appointed by the Board of Alderman. The district operated separate schools for whites and blacks. Over time there was a gradual consolidation of the county schools, with more and more county students attending high school in Port Gibson. By 1960, there were one high school for whites and one high school for blacks, one elementary school for whites and one elementary school for blacks in Port Gibson, and three elementary schools for blacks in the county.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Headley, p. 159.

<sup>7</sup> “Schools of Yesteryear.” Source Materials for Mississippi History. Series 447, Box 10665, Subfolder Claiborne County, Education. Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

<sup>8</sup> Headley, p. 166.

<sup>9</sup> National Register of Historic Places. Chamberlain-Hunt Academy Historic District, Port Gibson, Claiborne County, Mississippi. National Register# 7900341

<sup>10</sup> Headley, p. 168.

<sup>11</sup> Headley, p. 180-181.

<sup>12</sup> Headley, p. 181.



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After 1964, the separate municipal and county districts merged, with a single board. Members were elected by districts and the county superintendent was elected.

The Port Gibson Separate School District published a "Notice to Contractors" in the March 13, 1924 edition of the *Port Gibson Reveille*<sup>13</sup> soliciting bids for the construction of a new high school building, along with bids for heating and ventilation, plumbing and electrical wiring. Interested bidders were referred to Jackson architect Emmett Hull for plans and specifications. In an article titled "Local Improvements," the *Port Gibson Reveille* reported:

A \$10,000 colored school building has been completed and will be ready for use when the school opens in September. The \$50,000 white school will be completed soon after the date of opening of the schools.<sup>14</sup>

The new white school, a two-story brick building, had eleven classrooms. A second floor auditorium seated 500. The library held 1200 volumes.<sup>15</sup> The new high school officially opened in October 1924, with a formal dedication ceremony, which included musical selections, a picnic lunch on the grounds, and an address by a local legislator.<sup>16</sup>

As enrollment increased, and more students living in the rural areas of the county came to Port Gibson for high school, additional space became necessary. The availability of federal funds to counter the effects of the Great Depression assisted Port Gibson in building a new elementary school immediately to the south of the 1924 building. Built under the auspices of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Project Miss. 1385, the new school, designed by Jackson architect, E.L. Malvaney, opened in August 1939. The new school had four classrooms and an auditorium seating 439, described as "one of the finest in this section of the state."<sup>17</sup> As part of the work, the old auditorium in the 1924 building was converted for use as a library, science classrooms and a commercial classroom. Superintendent of Education C. E. Harris, speaking to a local Lions Club, said,

The world war taught us the need for better physical training, and the depression and crime statistics have revealed other things which need to be done in the children's education...we are in fine shape to give the children proper scholastic training with the new building, and

<sup>13</sup> *Port Gibson Reveille*, March 13, 1924.

<sup>14</sup> *Port Gibson Reveille*, August 28, 1924.

<sup>15</sup> "Schools of Today." Source Materials for Mississippi History. Series 447, Box 10665, Subfolder: Claiborne County, Education. Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

<sup>16</sup> *Port Gibson Reveille*, October 2, 1924.

<sup>17</sup> "Local School to Begin Session on September 11<sup>th</sup>." *Port Gibson Reveille*, August, 28, 1939.

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remodeled old building and with good organizations and athletics we can round out the program.<sup>18</sup>

Disaster struck in March 1941 when a fire, believed to have originated in a boiler room, nearly gutted the 1924 building. In addition to major structural damage, the fire destroyed equipment in the science laboratories and home economics room. The *Port Gibson Reveille* described the extent of the damage, reporting

Sweeping up to the first floor through the flooring and stairs on to the second floor, the flames threatened the entire structure. What woodwork in the building not actually burned was charred and damage extends the entire length of the building, with the northwest wall in a crumbling condition.<sup>19</sup>

Local officials quickly developed plans to use insurance proceeds to repair the building. They also planned to secure federal assistance. High school classes proceeded in the elementary building, while the elementary students attended classes in the Irwin Russell Memorial Building (now Port Gibson City Hall) and the old Brashear Academy building.<sup>20</sup> When the school district asked for bids for the repair work, the project also included plans to construct a new brick and stucco gymnasium.<sup>21</sup> In December 1941, the school district let a contract to general contractor, A. W. Button, as well as J. R. Ward for electrical work and Enterprise Plumbing and Heating Works of Vicksburg. Work was scheduled to begin immediately, with the plans for the gymnasium put on hold.<sup>22</sup> The work must have moved ahead with few delays since the *Port Gibson Reveille* reported in its February 20, 1942 edition that work on the school building was expected to be completed by March 1, 1942.

Although the school district announced plans for a new gymnasium in the spring of 1941, the district could not afford to build at that time. With the beginning of World War II, the attention of the country was on the war effort. Not until 1949 were conditions in Port Gibson favorable for a new construction project at the school. Voters approved a \$77,000 bond issue in January 1949 for a new gymnasium. Jackson architects Spain & Biggers designed the building, which could be used as an auditorium seating 1000 or for basketball games with about 500 seats.<sup>23</sup> Construction began in March 1949 under the supervision of general contractor Harvey Construction Company of Jackson. Choate Company of Utica performed the plumbing work and Clarence Moore of Port Gibson handling the electrical work. As the 1949 fall term approached, the *Port Gibson Reveille*

<sup>18</sup> "Harris Tells Lions of Many School Improvements." *Port Gibson Reveille*, August 28, 1939.

<sup>19</sup> "Fire Damages Port Gibson School B'lding." *Port Gibson Reveille*, March 20, 1941.

<sup>20</sup> "Boards Study Plans for Local School." *Port Gibson Reveille*, April 2, 1941.

<sup>21</sup> "High School To Be Repaired, Gym Erected." *Port Gibson Reveille*, October 16, 1941.

<sup>22</sup> "Trustees Let Contracts For School Repairs." *Port Gibson Reveille*, December 16, 1941.

<sup>23</sup> "New Gymnasium at Port Gibson's School." *Port Gibson Reveille*, June 30, 1949.

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reported that "the commodious and attractive Port Gibson gymnasium and auditorium is nearing completion and it will be in use during the approaching season."<sup>24</sup>

The gymnasium hosted its inaugural basketball games on December 6 with both girls and boys teams on the court. Between games, fans were treated to a performance by Mrs. Louise Lane's dancing classes. The local newspaper reported that "spectators will enjoy not only the games and dancing but will have the opportunity of seeing the fine new gym."<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps a result of the post-war Baby Boom, school officials in Claiborne County and Port Gibson recognized the need for an ambitious building plan. A bond issue raising \$500,000 passed voters in November 1957. An addition to Port Gibson Elementary School was among several projects funded by the bond issue. The project called for a new eight-room classroom wing. The auditorium, which had been temporarily used for classrooms, would be converted back to an auditorium. Jackson architect Raymond Birchett drew the plans. The school district awarded the construction contract to Webster Construction Company of Meridian. Prather & Seal Plumbing Company and Moore Electric Company won subcontracts. The contract required the construction be completed in 210 working days.<sup>26</sup>

By July, the work on the elementary school was nearing completion.<sup>27</sup> When students registered for classes in the fall of 1958, the local newspaper reported

Port Gibson Elementary School has had eight classrooms completed during the summer and the auditorium, which has been used as temporary classrooms for a number of years, has been reconverted to an assembly room.<sup>28</sup>

While school officials worked toward improving the physical plant of the districts' schools, including the Port Gibson High School, they were also looking forward to membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. A group of local and state educators visited Port Gibson in April and the committee evaluated the physical plant, the education program and the plans for additional improvements to the physical plant. After the committee recommended some improvements to the school's curriculum, it recommended the school for membership in the association. Superintendent Joel Chapman said,

We are pleased to be found worthy for membership in the Association, which is composed of the better high schools in the South.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> "School Gymnasium Nearing Completion." *Port Gibson Reveille*, August 18, 1949.

<sup>25</sup> "First Basketball Games To Be Played IN New Gym Tuesday." *Port Gibson Reveille*, December 1, 1949.

<sup>26</sup> "Contracts Let Tuesday By Board of Education For School Additions Totalling \$125,780." *Port Gibson Reveille*, February 13, 1958.

<sup>27</sup> "School Additions Nearing Completion." *The Port Gibson Reveille*, July 3, 1958.

<sup>28</sup> "School Registration Held Today Many Improvements Made At Local Schools." *The Port Gibson Reveille*, August 28, 1958.

(old) Port Gibson High School

Claiborne County,  
Mississippi  
County and State

Name of Property

With the recognition of the region's educational association, Port Gibson school officials moved forward with additional improvements to the campus. In the summer of 1958, the district let contracts for a new building located behind the Port Gibson Junior-Senior High School. Plans called for the construction of a new building to house an industrial arts shop, science and commercial rooms, the superintendent's office and a cafeteria. Webster Construction Company of Meridian garnered the construction contract. The district awarded the heating and plumbing contract to J.J. Hanley of Vicksburg and the electrical contract to Moore's Electric Service of Port Gibson. Passman Wholesale Company of Monroe, LA won the bid for kitchen equipment. The contract required the work be completed by the start of the 1959-60 school year.<sup>30</sup>

The work progressed without any apparent obstacles. The newspaper reported in August 1959 that

The Port Gibson High School isn't what it used to be—there have been additions made. Many improvements have been made to the plant of the School which will greatly facilitate the work of the school.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the new cafeteria and science building, Port Gibson High School also welcomed a new athletic field. Work began in August 1958, with reports that "big machinery is moving the hill south of Port Gibson High School."<sup>32</sup> As plans for the 1959 football season were announced, the newspaper reported

Abraham Athletic Field is expected to be completed in time for home games to be played there this year. Materials for lighting the field have arrived and will be erected in the near future. Bleachers are scheduled to be erected early in August.<sup>33</sup>

The campus neared completion by 1966 with the construction of the Band Hall. The most recent addition to the school is new cafeteria building, built c. 2000. The old cafeteria space was converted to a multi-function room.

The (old) Port Gibson High School campus is a unique resource in Claiborne County. There are no other educational campuses similar in age and scale in the county. The Chamberlain-Hunt Academy Historic District contains five buildings associated with the private boarding school which operated from 1879 to 2014. The buildings constructed between 1900 and 1947 represent a model of private education that is distinct from the public-school mission of the (old) Port

<sup>29</sup> "Local High School Recommended For Southern Association Membership By Visiting Evaluating Committee." *The Port Gibson Reveille*, April 10, 1958.

<sup>30</sup> "Contracts Let For Buildings Additions, Making Alterations To Port Gibson Public Schools." *The Port Gibson Reveille*, August 7, 1958.

<sup>31</sup> "Additions to PG High School." *The Port Gibson Reveille*, August 27, 1959.

<sup>32</sup> "High School Athletic Field Under Construction." *The Port Gibson Reveille*, August 14, 1958.

<sup>33</sup> "High School to Begin Practice Aug. 15." *The Port Gibson Reveille*, August 6, 1959.

(old) Port Gibson High School

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County and State

Name of Property

Gibson High School. Other public school buildings in Port Gibson illustrate the history of segregated schools in the community. The high school for black students was called the Claiborne County Training School. When the district built a new school for black students in 1959, the Claiborne County Training School building became the Richardson Primary School. The building, located at 411 Osage Street, is now a Head Start Center. The new school was named for a black educator, Augustus Addison. After school desegregation the Addison High School became a junior high school and later an elementary school named for former principal A. W. Watson, Jr. Additions to the A. W. Watson Elementary School resulted in a multiple-building campus. However, the (old ) Port Gibson High School remains the preeminent public school in Claiborne County.

(old) Port Gibson High School

Claiborne County,  
Mississippi  
County and State

Name of Property

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Ellis, Mary H. *Cannonballs and Courage, The Story of Port Gibson*. Virginia Beach: Donning Company Publishers, 2003.

Headley, Katy McCaleb. *Claiborne County, Mississippi, The Promised Land*. Baton Rouge: Port Gibson-Claiborne County, Historical Society, 1976.

National Register of Historic Places. Chamberlain-Hunt Academy Historic District, Port Gibson, Claiborne County, Mississippi. National Register# 7900341

“Schools of Yesteryear.” Source Materials for Mississippi History. Series 447, Box 10665, Subfolder Claiborne County, Education. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

*The Port Gibson Reveille*

### 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
- Other

Name of repository: Claiborne County School District \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 021-PGB-0319 \_\_\_\_\_

(old) Port Gibson High School

Claiborne County,  
Mississippi  
County and State

Name of Property

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** 36 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

See Continuation Sheet

**Or**

#### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |



(old) Port Gibson High School

Claiborne County,  
Mississippi  
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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The (old) Port Gibson High School is bounded on the southeast by Church Street along a line beginning near the northeast intersection of Ramsey Street and Church Street and running southeast to a point near the junction of a ravine and Church Street. The line turns northwest and runs along the south bank of the ravine to a point where it takes a southern turn. The line runs southwest along the edge of the improved property associated with the athletic field. Near the southeast corner of the athletic fields the line turns west and runs along the southern edge of the improved property of the athletic field. At the southwest corner of the athletic field the line turns to the north and runs in a northerly direction along the west edge of the athletic field. Near the intersection with the ravine, the line jogs slightly to the west and runs in a generally northern direction along the western edge of the improved property associated with the school buildings until it intersects with Greenwood Street, where the line turns to the southeast. It runs southeast until it reaches a point where it jogs more to the southeast where it runs along the improved property associated with the campus to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary line includes the property historically associated with the (old) Port Gibson School and is drawn to include the buildings, structures and sites that contribute to the historic character of the resources.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Jennifer Baughn, Chief Architectural Historian and William M. Gatlin,  
Architectural Historian \_\_\_\_\_  
organization: Mississippi Department of Archives and History \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: P.O. Box 571 \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town: Jackson \_\_\_\_\_ state: MS \_\_\_\_\_ zip code: 39205-0571  
e-mail: bgatlin@mdah.state.ms.us \_\_\_\_\_  
telephone: 601-576-6951 \_\_\_\_\_  
date: February 22, 2016 \_\_\_\_\_

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:



(old) Port Gibson High School

Claiborne County,  
Mississippi  
County and State

Name of Property

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

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: (Old) Port Gibson High School

City or Vicinity: Port Gibson

County: Claiborne State: Mississippi

Photographer: Jennifer Baughn, MDAH Chief Architectural Historian

Date Photographed: July 30, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

(old) Port Gibson High School

Claiborne County,  
Mississippi  
County and State

Name of Property

- 1 of 28. Landscape. Camera facing west.
- 2 of 28. Footbridge. Camera facing south.
- 3 of 28. Abraham Athletic Field. Camera facing south.
- 4 of 28. Exterior. Elementary School Annex. Camera facing northwest.
- 5 of 28. Exterior. Elementary School Annex. Camera facing southeast.
- 6 of 28. Interior. Elementary School Annex Hallway. Camera facing north.
- 7 of 28. Interior. Elementary School Annex Classroom. Camera facing south.
- 8 of 28. Exterior. Elementary School. Camera facing west.
- 9 of 28. Exterior. Elementary School. Camera facing southwest.
- 10 of 28. Interior. Elementary School Auditorium. Camera facing west.
- 11 of 28. Interior. Elementary School Hallway. Camera facing south.
- 12 of 28. Interior. Elementary School Classroom. Camera facing north.
- 13 of 28. Exterior. Administration Building. Camera facing west.
- 14 of 28. Exterior. Administration Building. Camera facing southeast.
- 15 of 28. Interior. Administration Building. Hallway. Camera facing north.
- 16 of 28. Interior. Administration Building Classroom. Camera facing northeast.
- 17 of 28. Interior. Administration Building Library. Camera facing south..
- 18 of 28. Exterior. Gymnasium. Camera facing west.
- 19 of 28. Exterior. Gymnasium. Camera facing northeast.
- 20 of 28. Interior. Gymnasium. Camera facing southwest.
- 21 of 28. Interior. Gymnasium. Camera facing southeast.
- 22 of 28. Exterior. Industrial Arts/ Cafeteria. Camera facing northwest.
- 23 of 28. Exterior. Industrial Arts/Cafeteria. Camera facing northwest.
- 24 of 28. Interior. Industrial arts/Cafeteria. Camera facing north.
- 25 of 28. Campus view. Camera facing southwest.
- 26 of 28. Campus view. Camera facing northwest.
- 27 of 28. Exterior. New Cafeteria. Camera facing south.
- 28 of 28. Exterior. Band Hall. Camera facing south.

(old) Port Gibson High School

Claiborne County,  
Mississippi  
County and State

Name of Property

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 100 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.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

(old) Port Gibson High School
----- Name of Property
Claiborne County, Mississippi
----- County and State
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   10   Page       1      

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**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

(Follow similar guidelines for entering these coordinates as for entering UTM references described on page 55, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. For properties less than 10 acres, enter the lat/long coordinates for a point corresponding to the center of the property. For properties of 10 or more acres, enter three or more points that correspond to the vertices of a polygon drawn on the map. The polygon should approximately encompass the area to be registered. Add additional points below, if necessary.)

Datum: WGS 84

- |              |           |            |            |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | 31.953598 | Longitude: | -90.988631 |
| 2. Latitude: | 31.953140 | Longitude: | -90.987920 |
| 3. Latitude: | 31.951674 | Longitude: | -90.987533 |
| 4. Latitude: | 31.950878 | Longitude: | -90.985977 |
| 5. Latitude: | 31.951309 | Longitude: | -90.987300 |
| 6. Latitude: | 31.949698 | Longitude: | -90.988751 |
| 7. Latitude: | 31.950303 | Longitude: | -90.989941 |
| 8. Latitude: | 31.951561 | Longitude: | -90.988927 |

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

(old) Port Gibson High School

Name of Property

Claiborne County, Mississippi

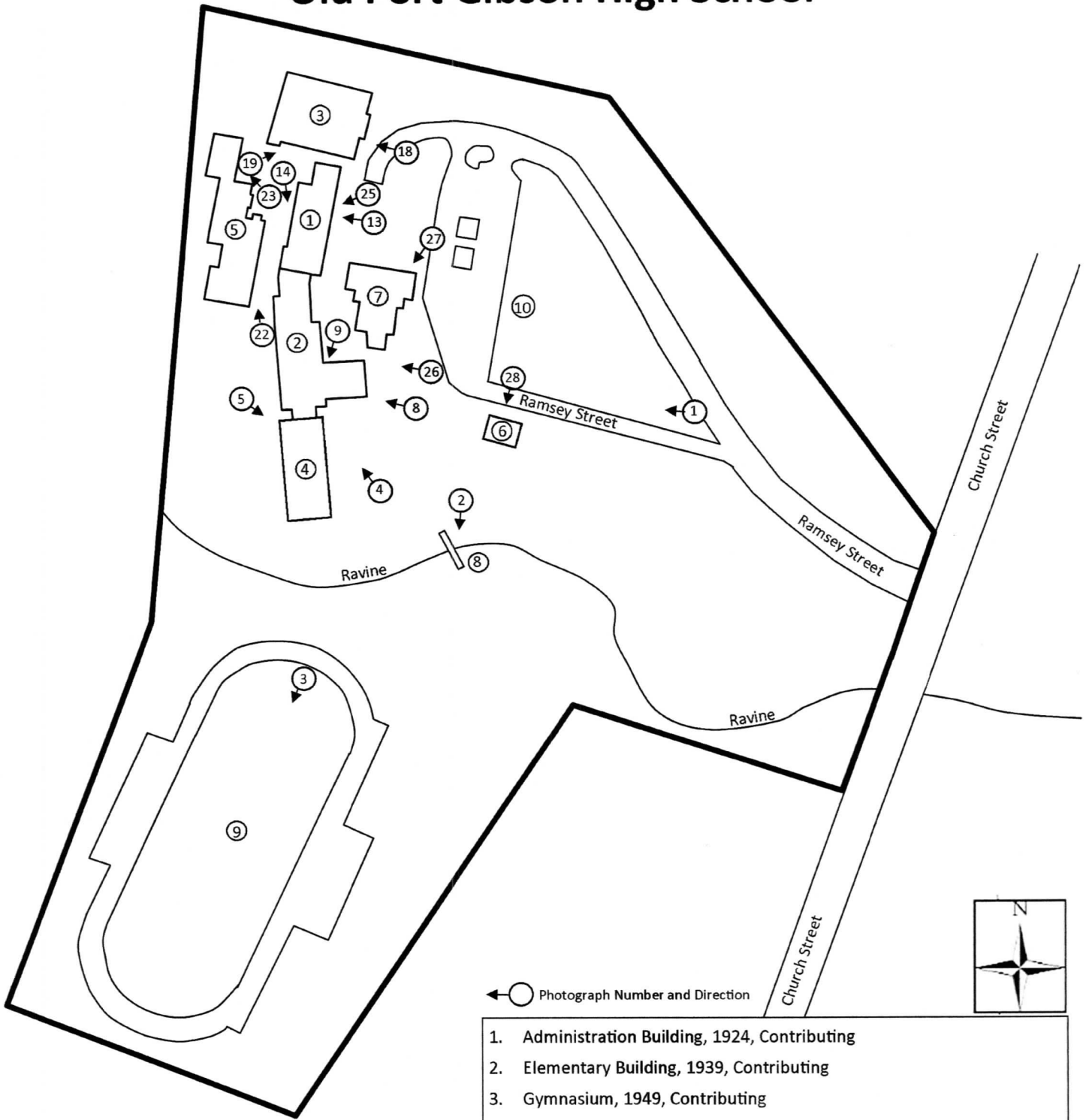
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 10 Page 2



# Old Port Gibson High School

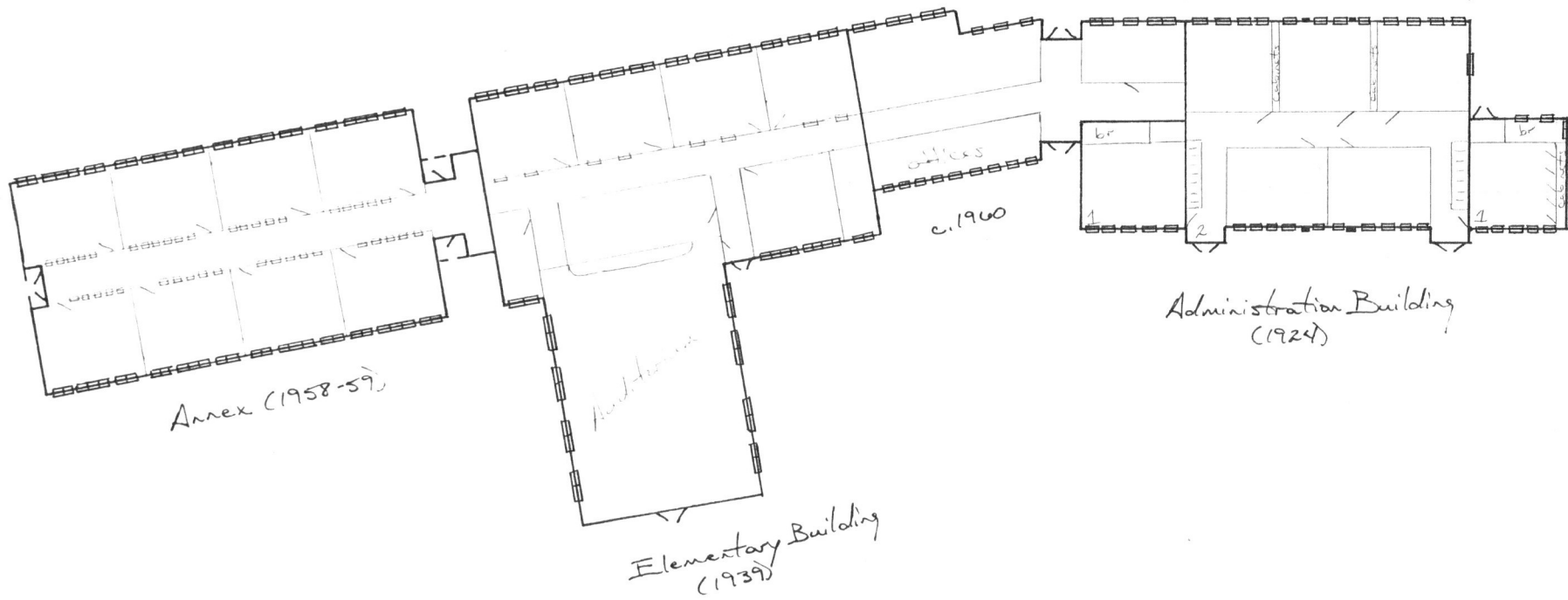


←○ Photograph Number and Direction



1. Administration Building, 1924, Contributing
2. Elementary Building, 1939, Contributing
3. Gymnasium, 1949, Contributing
4. Elementary School annex, 1958-1959, Contributing
5. Industrial Arts/Cafeteria Building, 1958-1959, Contributing
6. Band Hall, c. 1966, Contributing
7. New Administration Building, Non-contributing
8. Foot Bridge, c. 1958, Contributing
9. Abraham Athletic Field, 1958-1959, Contributing
10. Landscape, Contributing

(old) Port Gibson High School  
- classroom buildings



Administration Building  
(1924)

Annex (1958-59)

Elementary Building  
(1939)

c. 1960

offices

Second Floor

Library

br

1

br

1

Auditorium







MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0001



MS\_ClarborneCounty-(Old)PortGibson High School - 0002





MS\_Clarborne County\_(Old) Post Gibson High School - 0003



MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Post Gibson High School - 0004





MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Post Gibson High School - 0005



MS. Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0006



MS - Claiborne County - (old) Port Gibson High School - 0007





MS - Claiborne County - (old) Pat Gibson High School - 6008





MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Post Gibson High School - 0009



MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0010





ZONE  
This area is designated for...  
Please do not enter without permission.

EXIT

Seek First Understand

Synergize

Strategic Plan

ALPHA

MS- Claiborne County- (Old) Post Gibson High School- 0011





MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0012





MS- Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0013



MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Pont Gibson High School - 0014





MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0015



Ms. Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0016





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MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0024







MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0025



MS - Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0026



MS. Claiborne County - (Old) Port Gibson High School - 0027





MS. Claiborne County - (old) Port Gibson High School - 0028