

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section: —

Page: —

Meridian Baptist Seminary
Lauderdale County, Mississippi

Amendment for Purposes of Requesting Delisting

The Meridian Baptist Seminary, Lauderdale County, Mississippi, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on January 8, 1979. The building was destroyed by fire in September 2007. A site visit by MDAH staff in February 2008 confirmed that building was completely destroyed. Since the date of listing the building has lost the qualities which originally caused it to be listed.


Section 11:

Form prepared by:
William M. Gatlin, Architectural Historian
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
P.O. Box 571
Jackson, MS 39205-0571
601-576-6940

Date: March 25, 2008

Section 2:

Certification



Date: 5-19-2008

State Historic Preservation Officer

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Meridian Baptist Seminary

AND/OR COMMON
Meridian Baptist Seminary

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
16th Street and 31st Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Meridian

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Mississippi

CODE

28

COUNTY

Lauderdale

CODE

75

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Vacant

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
East Mississippi Baptist State Convention

STREET & NUMBER
16th Street and 31st Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Meridian

VICINITY OF

STATE
Mississippi 39301

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Registry of Deeds, etc. Lauderdale County Courthouse
Office of the Chancery Clerk

STREET & NUMBER
P.O. Box 1587

CITY, TOWN

Meridian

STATE
Mississippi 39301

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE
1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE
Mississippi 39205

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Meridian Baptist Seminary is situated prominently on the rise of a barren lot in a residential neighborhood of Meridian. A toppled marble monument, erected in memory of Professor G. M. Reese (a former president) and his wife, Johnnie Pearl, is located near the northeast corner of the building. Built on hard clay, the structure is without a foundation, with brick bearing walls rising three stories to an asphalt-covered hip roof pierced by three chimneys. The seven-bay north and south elevations have belt courses between each floor and double-hung six-over-six windows decorated with flat masonry arches. The east and west elevations are varied with respect to window placement, and a masonry stair provides access to a second-floor entrance on the west elevation.

The first-floor plan consists of a center hall running the full length of the building with small classrooms on both sides. Ceilings and wainscot have varnished tongue-in-groove boards; walls are plaster over brick. A straight-run stair to the second floor is located near the west entrance. A library room and offices are located on the west side of the second floor and an auditorium on the east side. The auditorium features eight chamfered supporting posts and a stage along the east wall. Plaster board partitions now divide the auditorium into three sections. The third floor has a large central hall with small dormitory rooms along the sides.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Black History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1920-21

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Tom Ware, Albert Gains, Adam Peterson,

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Builders

The Meridian Baptist Seminary was founded as one of the early educational institutions for blacks in eastern Mississippi. Providing secular and religious instruction on the secondary school level since 1896, the Baptist Seminary building has substantial associational significance for Meridian's black community. The earliest black public school in Meridian, Wechsler High School (1888), did not offer the high school diploma until 1920 (Ivy, p. 113).

The Seminary was organized in 1896 and classes were held in the basement of the New Hope Baptist Church (East Mississippi Baptist State Convention, p. 12). G. M. Reese was elected president of the school in 1889, a position he held until his death in 1939. A two-story frame building was erected in 1905 (Deed Book 74:417) for the purpose of teaching theology and Christian service to young blacks. A survey of Negro schools in Mississippi in 1916 described the institution as a "poorly managed elementary school with a few pupils in secondary subjects" (Department of the Interior, p. 375). Despite the lack of financial resources, the Seminary continued to offer secondary courses and the high school diploma for black students.

In 1920-21 the deteriorated frame building housing the Baptist Seminary was demolished and the existing brick structure was erected on the same site (Deed Books 131:523; 149:346). Local builders Tom Ware, Albert Gains, and Adam Peterson are said to have constructed the building. E. T. Ware is listed in the 1907 "Guide of the Colored Community" as a contractor and builder. The school flourished during the 1920s and 1930s under the leadership of President Reese. G.C. Wells served as president from 1939 to 1945; Herbert Lang, 1945-1947; and M. W. Wilson, 1947-1968. Course offerings included the traditional high school curricula with college preparatory and vocational programs, as well as Negro history. After 1949 the Seminary offered only two-year high school transfer certificates, and gradually academic offerings were curtailed until the closing of the school in 1972.

Restoration of the Seminary building is planned by the Reverend Mr. James C. Chandler, representing the East Mississippi Baptist State Convention. Mayor I. A. Rosenbaum of the City of Meridian has also expressed interest in the availability of city funding for rehabilitation of the building. Reverend Mr. Chandler foresees use of the space for community events, public meetings, offices, cultural programs, and Project Head Start. The adaptive use of the property would provide a valuable neighborhood resource for Meridian, serving the contemporary needs of the proximate black residential area.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"A Business, Professional, Church, Fraternal and Educational Guide of the Colored Community of Meridian, Mississippi." Pamphlet. Meridian, Mississippi. 1972.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

5

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

QUADRANGLE NAME Meridian South

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 339900 3582860

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Block 150 of and according to Ragsdale's Survey of the said city, county, and state.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Jack A. Gold, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE November 3, 1978

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 571

TELEPHONE 601- 354-7326

CITY OR TOWN Jackson

STATE Mississippi 39205

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL X

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 B. Hilliard

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE November 6, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Bibliographical References (cont'd)

"East Mississippi Baptist Convention Dedicates the Newly Erected Baptist Day Care Center." Pamphlet. Meridian, Mississippi. 1972.

Gold, Jack A., architectural historian. Personal inspection, July 27, 1978.

Gold, Jack A., architectural historian. Personal interview with Reverend Mr. James C. Chandler, Meridian, July 27, 1978.

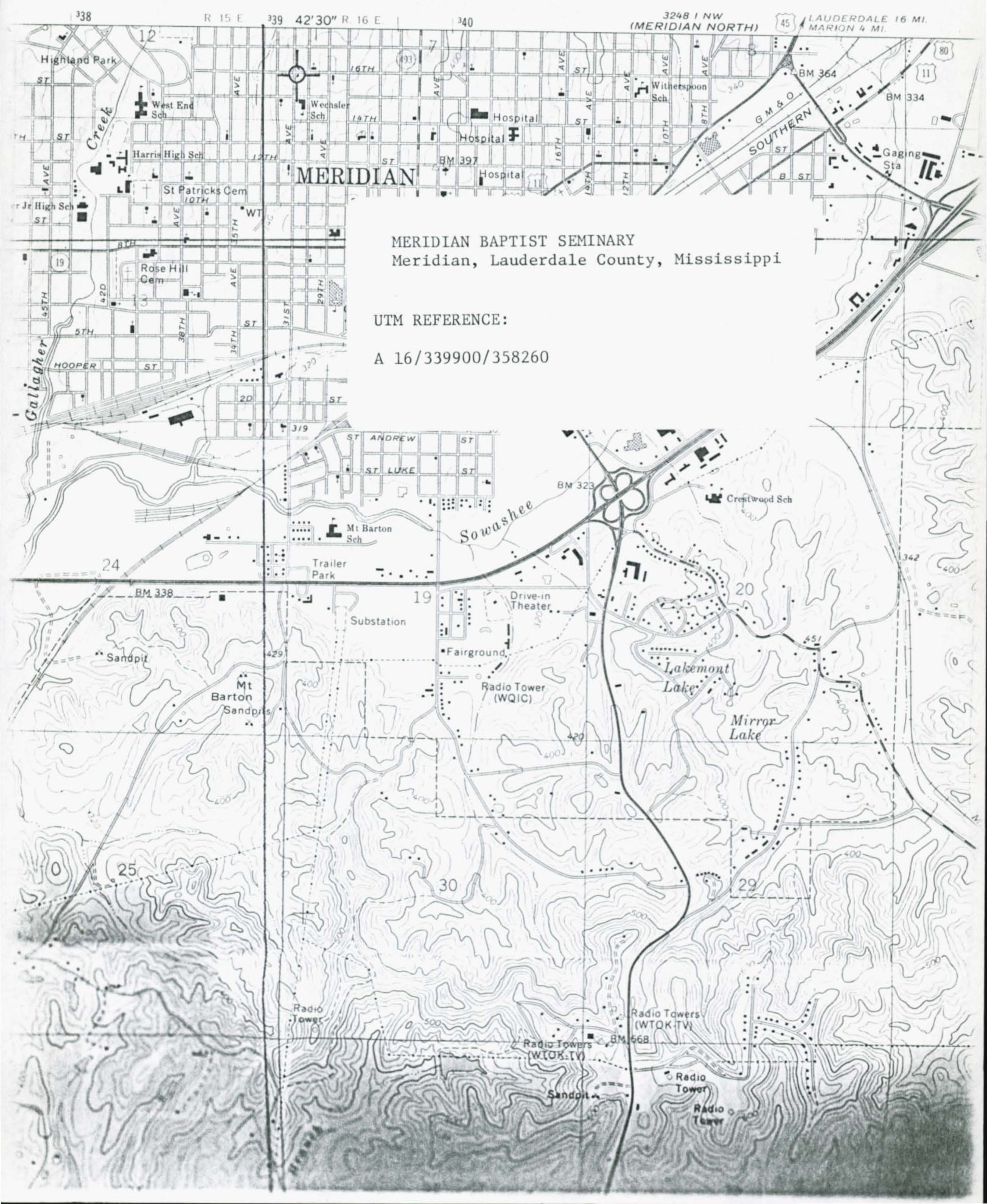
Ivy, Horace Macaulay. A History of Meridian Public Schools 1885-1953. Meridian, Mississippi. 1975.

Lauderdale County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Deed Books 61:58; 74:417; 94:411; 100:53; 131:523; 149:346; 191:264.

Thirty Years in Review 1923-1953 with Dr. H. M. Ivy, Superintendent. Compiled by T. J. Harris Senior High, W. A. Reed, Jr., Principal.

United States. Department of the Interior. A General Survey of Negro Education in the United States and a Summary of Public School Facilities: Mississippi. Washington: Government Printing Office. 1917.

United States. Works Progress Administration. Lauderdale County, Mississippi. Source Material for Mississippi History: Preliminary Manuscripts. Compiled by Statewide Historical Research Project. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.



MERIDIAN BAPTIST SEMINARY
Meridian, Lauderdale County, Mississippi

UTM REFERENCE:
A 16/339900/358260



MERIDIAN BAPTIST SEMINARY

Meridian, Lauderdale County, Mississippi

Jack A. Gold

July, 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

West facade and south elevation; view to
the northeast.

Photo 1 of 4



MERIDIAN BAPTIST SEMINARY

Meridian, Lauderdale County, Mississippi

Jack A. Gold

July, 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives and History
East and south elevation; view to the north-
west.

Photo 2 of 4



MERIDIAN BAPTIST SEMINARY

Meridian, Lauderdale County, Mississippi

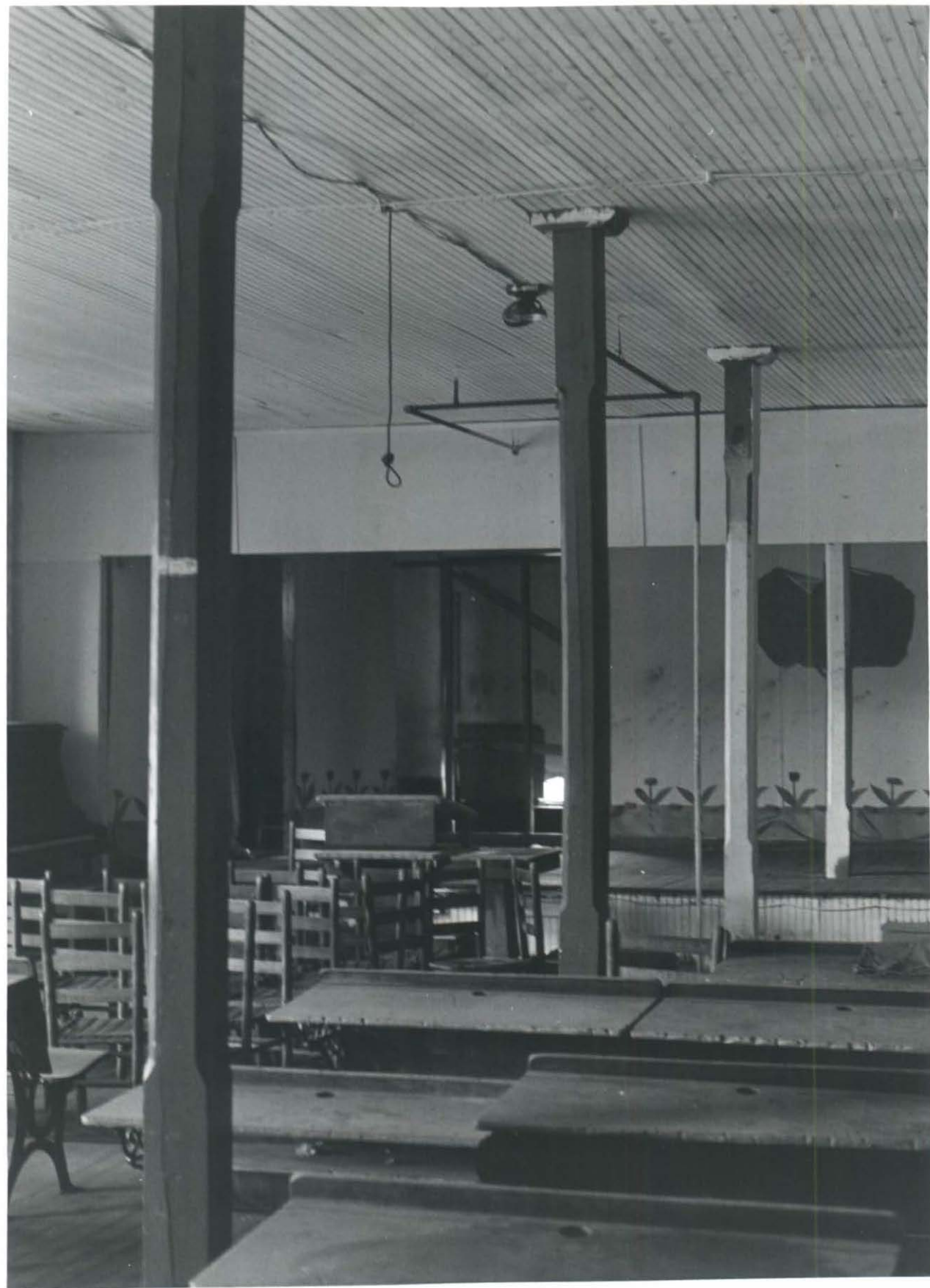
Jack A. Gold

July, 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives and
History

North elevation and (west) facade; view to
the southeast.

Photo 3 of 4



MERIDIAN BAPTIST SEMINARY

Meridian, Lauderdale County, Mississippi

Jack A. Gold

July, 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

Second-floor auditorium showing chamfered
posts and stage; view to the north.

Photo 4 of 4