

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: Meridian Senior High School and Junior College

Other names/site number: Meridian High School

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: 2320 32nd Street _____

City or town: Meridian _____ State: MS _____ County: Lauderdale

Not For Publication: Vicinity: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 X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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

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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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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>5</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>3</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school _____
RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility _____

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school _____
RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility _____

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Other/Stripped Classical
MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Moderne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Concrete

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.)

Summary Paragraph

The Meridian High School and Junior College campus occupies a large site north of downtown in the midst of early and mid-twentieth century residential neighborhoods. Begun in 1937 with an administration building and stadium, the campus today comprises nine buildings, all of a similar monumental scale, although two are too recent to be considered contributing to the National Register listing.

Narrative Description

The Meridian High School and Junior College campus occupies a dense suburban campus north of downtown Meridian. The campus grew around a large E-plan administration building, gymnasium, and stadium, all built with funding from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works and completed in 1937. The campus is bounded by 23rd Avenue, a primary thoroughfare from downtown, 32nd Street, and Poplar Springs Drive—lined with some of Meridian’s most distinctive early twentieth century residences. The southern boundary is less defined, an L-shaped line along 29th Street and 24th Avenue. In a departure from many school campuses of the period, the main building faces inward toward the campus rather than onto the

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city streets. The original buildings and the concrete stadium have been joined by later buildings, and the campus, which now houses only the high school, today centers on a quad enclosed by the Administration Building on the north, the R.D. Harris Building (2009) on the south, Turnage Gymnasium (1964) and Ray Stadium on the west, and 23rd Avenue and parking lots on the east. Before this quad became the primary pedestrian space on campus in 2009, this area was taken up mostly by paved curvilinear drives that allowed students to be dropped off directly in front of the administration building. The massive poured concrete Ross A Collins Building, a vocational school created as part of Meridian Junior College, lines the east side of 24th Avenue, set apart from the main campus.

The campus ranges in architectural styles from the Stripped Classic style of the administration building to the Art Moderne Ross Collins Vocational Building and Student Activities Building to the Modernist Turnage Gymnasium. The red brick and cast concrete details on all of the campus buildings—except for the Ross Collins Building which is set apart from the main campus—visually unifies these disparate stylistic approaches. The two original buildings, the administration building and first gymnasium, were connected in 1952 by an addition and breezeway, but remain two separate buildings for the purposes of this nomination.

The administration building is an E-plan school, an urban school form popularized by Progressive-era school architects, most prominently William B. Ittner of St. Louis. In an E-plan school, a center auditorium wing and two flanking classroom wings lead off of a long, usually administrative and circulation wing. The plan was designed for buildings facing either north or south—this allowed the classroom wings to be oriented so that the large banks of windows lighting the classrooms faced either east or west, desirable in an age when electric lighting was not considered sufficient for close desk work. This plan was especially useful for junior and senior high schools, where a separation of age groups was desired, and where vocational and scientific laboratories needed to be separated because of noise or odor or fire hazards. Because Mississippi has few large towns or cities, the E-plan is relatively rare in the state and even fewer of those that were built survive. Natchez' Margaret Martin High School, built in 1927 and also designed by P.J. Krouse, is a Tudor Revival example, as is Jackson's Central High School (1923, C.H. Lindsley, NR). Stewart M. Jones Junior High in Laurel is a sophisticated Georgian Revival E-plan, designed by P.J. Krouse in 1926. In contrast to Meridian's building, all of these have the wings turned to the rear, presenting a long planar façade to the front.

The topography is hilly in a rolling way: a long rise from south to north situates the administration building at the top, with the stadium set into a slope to the west. The extensive Rose Hill Cemetery occupies the opposite side of 23rd Avenue, and a small Depression-era pavilion stands on a bluff behind the Collins Building, accessible only from 23rd Avenue.

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C 1. Administration Building 1936-37
Krouse & Brasfield, archts.; John L. McLemore, contractor

The Meridian High School and Junior College building is a Stripped Classic-style two-story red-brick masonry structure facing south. The E-plan school is turned with its three wings to the front, while an original cafeteria wing projects to the rear at the center. This rear wing, after a 1952 addition, connects with the original gymnasium to the rear.

The unusual placement of the three wings on the front allows the wings to create a symmetrical tripartite composition, with the center auditorium wing being slightly taller and predominant. This arrangement also made the auditorium a community space with its own entrance, in contrast to E-plan schools with their wings to the rear. The auditorium's steel truss roof disappears behind the wide, plan cast-concrete that surrounds the front three sides of all wings. Poured-concrete porticos shelter three center entrances on the front, their rectangular piers and chamfered corners suggesting classicism but in a minimal, abstract and Moderne way; two cast-concrete medallions flank the larger auditorium portico, with the symbol of the Meridian School District in high relief. Two brick colonnaded walkways, also carrying a concrete cornice and flat roof, connect the two classroom wings with the auditorium.

All original 9/9 wood double-hung-sash windows have unfortunately been replaced, but the replacement 3-light windows fill the original openings, maintaining the pattern of paired windows on the east and west-facing walls. The auditorium entrance retains its original three sets of 10-light double-leaf wood doors with 12-light transoms, and the classroom wing entrances, but the classroom wing entrances have replacement steel doors and transoms have been infilled.

The east and west elevations are filled with six pairs of double windows with concrete sills, with each classroom lit by two paired windows, constituting one bay. Side entrances are at the rear in between the fifth and sixth bays, highlighted by pilastered surrounds with cornices and leading into the east-west hallway in the rear wing. Tall transoms above the entrances light the stairwells inside.

The rear elevation is framed by the rear projections of the classroom wings, with entrances similar to the side entrances, but is dominated by the two-story former cafeteria wing, which was extended in 1952 to connect with the original gymnasium. Along this wing's west wall, on both levels, a covered walkway was also added in 1952, allowing easy access between the administration building and gymnasium—here can be seen the only original 9/9 windows to survive the building's multiple renovations, probably due to their protection from the elements since 1952.

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Also connecting the administration building with the former gymnasium (now a library) is a long brick colonnade similar to those that connect the classroom wings with the auditorium. This runs between the rear of the east classroom wing and the rear of the gymnasium building.

The interior is organized by the two north-south classroom wing hallways, which intersect with the long east-west hallway at the rear. The classroom halls are double-loaded with classrooms on both levels and are finished with unpainted red brick. Ductwork and other mechanical systems run along the ceilings in the halls, and metal lockers and restrooms are confined to the east-west hallways. Two exits from the center auditorium wing also empty into this east-west hall.

Original 5-panel wood classroom doors have mostly been replaced in a 2009 renovation (Pryor & Morrow, architects) by slab wood doors, but 6-light wood transoms (swivel types) remain, both above the doors and as stand-alone hall transoms. Original wood cabinetry also remains in the individual classrooms. The only significant change to floorplan is at the southeast corner of the east classroom wing, where a former clothing lab has been subdivided into administrative offices.

The auditorium's exterior portico opens, via three pairs of 10-light doors, into a lobby with a tray ceiling, replacement light fixtures (2009), and two balcony stairs, and two 1-panel double-leaf doors that enter the auditorium proper. Here, the original wood seats were also removed in the 2009 renovation, but otherwise, the wood stage with its plain rectangular proscenium, plasterwork ornament in the shape of a harp, the orchestra pit, globe light fixtures, and simple metal pipe railings all remain intact. The balcony remains open, and the ceiling is finished with acoustical panels.

C 2. Gymnasium (now Library/Science Building)
Krouse & Brasfield, archts.; John L. McLemore, contractor

1936-37

The two-story red-brick former gymnasium to the rear of the administration building began without a discernable architectural style and has become even more astylar in later renovations. Its original massing is intact: a two-story rectangular block with pedimented parapet facing west is flanked by two lower flat-roof pavilions, both featuring continuous concrete window cornices decorated with geometric motifs and corbeled concrete parapets. A 1964 renovation inserted a flat-roof two-story vestibule with a second-floor ribbon of 2/2 aluminum windows between the outer pavilions. On this west façade, original windows, which appear to have been large steel multi-light units, have since been replaced with smaller metal-framed units and partially infilled. Side elevations feature the 1964 2/2 aluminum sash with concrete sills on both levels, with regular full-height pilasters creating a rhythm of bays—the original configuration probably featured high breeze windows that are now covered by stuccoed panels. The east (rear) elevation, which faces 23rd Avenue, has a similar three-part arrangement of masses as the west façade, but without the decorative treatment. A tall round power house chimney rises at the rear south side, detached from the building above ground.

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This same renovation eliminated the gymnasium space inside in favor of a two-story structural system that placed a library on the first floor and science laboratories and classrooms on the second. A proscenium arch featuring the same geometric symbols that are on the exterior cornices, now lines a hallway and outlines an enclosed stage that apparently originally opened into the gymnasium. These spaces remain intact to their 1964 creation, including the laboratory tables and classroom cabinetry.

NC 3. Classroom Annex (1960s)

A rectangular one-story building with flat roof located between the original gymnasium and the Student Activities Building. The flat roof extends over the south façade to form a covered walk. The large window banks on the south façade have been replaced with smaller 1/1 sash windows and partially infilled with Dryvet. The primary entrance is through double-leaf steel doors recessed at the center of the south façade.

NC 4. Student Activities Building

1952, 2001 renovation

L.L. Brasfield, archt.; L.B. Priestler & Son, contractors

2001 new façade, Landry & Lewis, architects; Construction Services Company, contractors

Built as a lounge, dance hall and girls gymnasium, primarily for junior college students, this two-story red brick building was renovated in 2001 and now contains a cafeteria, counseling and health services, and classrooms. As originally built, the east façade was dominated by a center entrance block with stepped parapet: entrance was through a one-story flat roof projection above which was a large window with an applied grid that lit the lobby and staircase inside. This block projected forward from the lower and recessed primary façade, which was lined by 2/2 aluminum windows with concrete sills and had a plain horizontal parapet line. The 2001 renovation not only gutted the interior but also added wings about ten feet in depth to the façade to bring the entire façade into the same plane as the center wing, which formerly projected. As now composed, the east-facing façade has three foci: the original center wing, which is intact, and two slightly lower stepped parapet sections, each with two entrances. Above the left entrance is the word "Activities" engraved in a concrete signboard and above the right is "Building." Windows are not paired three-light metal-framed units with concrete sills and doors are one-light steel.

C 5. Ray Stadium

1936-37

Two steel-reinforced concrete stadium bleachers face each other across a football field, each set within a man-made slope and supported at the rear by concrete columns attached with segmental arches that create circulation and concession spaces below. When viewed from the side, the bleachers follow a concave curve rather than a straight line. A small announcer's box stands at the top and center of the west side.

NC 6. Field House (2012)

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A Y-shaped two-story brick and corrugated-metal field house at the south end of Ray Stadium. Outer walls are red brick, while the inside of the north-facing V is clad in horizontally oriented corrugated metal. A tall ribbon of windows lines the interior of the V, facing onto the field. Entrance is a double-leaf steel 1-light door at the façade's center.

C. 7. Turnage Gymnasium

1964

L.L. Brasfield, archt.; Polk Construction Co.

Built as the Boys Gymnasium, this building replaced the original gymnasium behind the administration building and led to that building's conversion to library and science functions. The wire-faced brick and metal Modernist building faces east and is set into the slope that goes down to the stadium at the rear, so while the front is one story high, the back of the building is effectively three stories high. A steel barrel vault spans the entire width of the building, topped with metal roofing and clad on the upper half of the side elevations with ribbed metal. The brick front façade is attached to this vault and is lower: a three-part symmetrical arrangement with a high center blank wall flanked by two entrances under long flat heavy awnings. The side elevations are blank except for the north side, which features triple 3-light steel windows set high in the metal clerestory, giving ventilation and light to the gym's interior. The rear (W) elevation is mostly brick, with two corner towers visually supporting the blue metal-clad vault end.

The front entrances lead into a deep balcony area with large trophy case overlooking the gymnasium floor and stepping down to the east side bleachers. Moveable wood bleachers remain intact on both sides as do pipe railings, wood floor, and hanging light fixtures. Locker rooms and physical education offices are in the rear three-story section.

NC 8. R.D. Harris Building

2009

Pryor & Morrow, archts.; Chris Albritton Construction Co.

A two-story red variegated brick building with flat roof, rectangular in plan, with concrete bands above the first and second floor acting as stringcourses. This plain block is fronted on its north façade by a one-story Stripped Classic lobby, distinguished by its chamfered corners and three-part pilastered composition topped by a wide abstract concrete entablature.

C 9. Ross Collins Building

1941-42

**Krouse & Brasfield, principal architects, James P. Yarbrough, associate architect;
Gardner & Howe, engineers; National Youth Administration, builders**

This monolithic concrete Art Moderne structure takes up most of the east side of 24th Avenue with its 304-foot-long west-facing façade. A three-story center block—composed of administrative and classroom spaces—spreads out to lower two-story wings that terminate in projecting end pavilions. Long horizontal lines created by inscribed courses in the concrete unify the façade. The primary entrance is in the center block, highlighted by vertical ribs rising to the building's tallest point and sheltered under a cantilevered flat awning. Glass blocks light the

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stairhall inside the entrance. Original windows—large banks of gridded steel hopped types—were replaced c.1990 with smaller 3-light aluminum frame units. This renovation apparently also included the removal of the large glass-block panels that mostly filled the west facades of the end pavilions. The two-story additions at either end of the building may also date to this remodeling. The floor plan is roughly E-shaped, with the three rear wings comprised of the largest shop spaces in the building: auto repair, airplane mechanics, welding, and wood working. The interior is utilitarian by design and mostly intact, except for the insertion (date unknown, c.1990?) of a center hall on the ground floor, where small shops had shared a semi-open floor plan. Newer walls can be identified by their painted concrete blocks, in contrast to the plastered or exposed concrete original walls. Floors are concrete in the shops and linoleum tile in the halls and classrooms.

C 10. Teacher's House, 2635 23rd Avenue c.1940

One-story, variegated red brick veneered bungalow with cross-gabled roof of asphalt shingles and stuccoed or concrete foundation. A gabled dormer is on the front slope at the south end holding a round-arched multi-light window. The front porch is three bays wide and centered on the E façade under a front-facing gable with stuccoed gable end, circular wood vent, and cornice returns. Two brick piers support the front gable, and a knee wall with concrete cap encircles the concrete porch deck. The main entrance is centered on the façade under the shelter of the porch and consists of a wood-paneled door with semi-circular fanlight surrounded by 4-light and paneled sidelights and an elliptical fanlight above. Windows are 6/6 wood-framed double-hung-sash with concrete sills. Eaves are boxed but with open strips between the tongue-and-groove wood strips for ventilation.

C 11. Pavilion, W side 23rd Avenue c. 1937

Open pavilion of four Catahoula sandstone piers supporting a pyramidal roof of asphalt shingles. Concrete deck. Crude wooden benches of 2x6 lumber atop concrete blocks encircle the outer edges between the sandstone piers.

C 12. Entrance Gates, E side Poplar Springs Drive at 29th Street (Wildcat Dr.) c. 1950

Two battered brick piers connected by a thin concrete slab create a pedestrian entrance in the landscaped median at the primary campus entrance. Lower buttressed piers connect with the pedestrian entrance via a knee wall and may have been matched with outer piers. If so, these outer piers have since been replaced with iron posts holding the later iron gates across the drive.

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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 _____

ARCHITECTURE _____

Period of Significance

1937; 1937-1964 _____

Significant Dates

1941 _____

1952 _____

1964 _____

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

P. J. Krouse, architect _____

L.L. Brasfield, architect _____

John L. McLemore, contractor _____

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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 Meridian High School and Junior College is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for association with Education. The facility has served the Meridian community as a school for more than seventy-five years. In addition to its role in secondary education, the school also housed a municipal junior college from the late 1930s through the mid-1960s, when the college moved to a new campus. The school is eligible under Criterion C with campus buildings providing good local examples of the Stripped Classical and Art Moderne styles.

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

The City of Meridian traces its history to a land grant to Richard McLemore in 1831. Plans called for the Alabama & Vicksburg Railroad to run east and west and The Mobile & Ohio Railroad to run north and south, with the two lines intersecting on McLemore's Plantation. He sold land to L.A. Ragsdale and J. T. Ball, railroad builders. In 1854, they built a one-room Union Station. In the errant belief that Meridian meant "junction," railroad supporters applied the name to the station and village which developed around it. A post office was established in 1854 and Meridian was incorporated on January 10, 1860. Union troops under the command of General William Sherman destroyed most of the community. However, due to its location on two major rail lines, the city recovered and grew following the war. The access to railroads made Meridian a major center for processing and shipping cotton. By 1883, there were at least fifty firms in Meridian involved in ginning, compressing, storing and shipping cotton.¹ The population of Meridian grew from less than 3000 in 1870 to just under 32,000 by 1930.²

¹ Lloyd B. Lewis. "The Impact of the Railroad on Meridian and Lauderdale County, Mississippi." Mississippi Humanities Council Scholar in Residence, Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History, Summer 1988. P. 13

² *Statistical Summary of Population, 1900-1980*. Economic Research Department, Mississippi Power & Light Company, February 1983.

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Education

Meridian established its first public school in 1884. From about 1870 to 1885, Lauderdale County and the city shared responsibility for public education³. Additionally, private institutions served the community's educational needs. In his *History of Meridian Schools*, Superintendent Emeritus Horace Macaulay Ivy identified six private schools in operation at the time the city established its public schools: East Mississippi Female College (Methodist), St. Aloysius Academy (Catholic), Miss H. E. Booth's School, Miss Pet E. Moore's School, Mrs. T. K. Watts School, and Mrs. J. R. Phillips School of Music and Art.⁴

The City of Meridian gradually assumed responsibility for education in the city. The first city public school, Whitfield graded school, opened in 1884 in a converted boarding house at 10th Street and 25th Avenue.⁵ The city established the Municipal Separate School District in 1888 and quickly built three brick schools for white students, Chalk, Southside and Witherspoon.⁶

The district built the city's first high school in 1888. Whitfield High School, also known as Big Central, sat atop a small hill at 14th Street and 25th Avenue. Big Central was a two-story brick building with three towers. After a new high school was built in 1902-03, Big Central became a middle school and was finally demolished in 1928.⁷

The cornerstone for the new building at 28th Avenue and Valley Street was laid on November 2, 1902. The building had twelve classrooms, a library and a large study hall that also served as a 300-seat auditorium.⁸

With continued population growth, by the early 1930s the Junior-Senior High School had inadequate space to meet the district's needs. The trustees decided to build a new plant and acquired a 39 acre site south of 32nd Street between Poplar Springs and Magnolia Drive.⁹ A separate decision of the school board also supported construction of a new facility. Legislation in 1928 authorized some separate school districts to offer junior college courses. Dr. Ivy, the Meridian superintendent, recommended to the school trustees that the district establish a junior college. In 1937, the district created Meridian Municipal Junior College. The district adopted a 6-4-4 organization program, with a unified and sequential curriculum for grades 11 through 14 on the new campus.¹⁰

³ Horace Macaulay Ivy, PhD. *History of Meridian Schools, 1885-1953*. Meridian, 1975, p. 2, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS.

⁴ Ivy, p. 1.

⁵ Jack Shank. "Whitfield graded school began city's public education in 1884." *Meridian Star*, May 18, 1986.

⁶ Ivy, p. 6.

⁷ Shank, p. 2C

⁸ Jack Shank. "City's population growth in 1900 increased demand for classrooms." *Meridian Star*, June 1, 1986.

⁹ Ivy, p. 54.

¹⁰ Ivy, p. 55.

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The Meridian firm of Krouse & Brasfield designed the new school. Largely funded by the Public Works Administration, the campus was composed of three facilities. The main school building was a two-story structure with brick exterior walls trimmed with cast-stone. The building housed classrooms, laboratories, a cafeteria and an auditorium. A two-story gymnasium with bleachers seats on two sides was built north of the main building. A large stadium with concrete bleachers completed the campus. The district awarded the construction contract to Meridian contractor John McLemore.¹¹

The local newspaper, *The Meridian Star*, kept the community informed of the progress on the project. By May 1936, grading for the new building was almost completed and blasting and excavation for the stadium was continuing.¹² Employing 75 to 80 men, the foundation was laid and concrete support columns were in place by the fall of 1936.¹³ John Watts, city engineer, appears to have had responsibility for the construction crews.

Although some work was incomplete, the new Meridian High School opened for the fall term of 1937. A formal dedication and public open house was held in November 1937. 1500 people toured the new school. They visited the modern home economics department which featured two kitchens, one with an electric stove and one with a gas stove. The home economics department included a model apartment with a living room, dining room, bedroom and bathroom.¹⁴

The new gymnasium seated 2000 people. There were tiled dressing rooms for both boys and girls. The gymnasium also housed the band rooms. The auditorium seated 1300 and featured a large orchestra pit. It included a projection room for showing motion pictures.¹⁵

The 14,000-seat stadium was composed of east and west seating units supported by a steel frame covered with concrete.¹⁶ The Meridian High School football team opened the 1937 season against Morton in the new stadium.

The 1937 initial freshman class of the Meridian Municipal Junior College had 128 students. The college planned to add a sophomore class the next year. The high school and college were operated under a unified budget, with faculty members often teaching in both programs. The school trustees approved a reorganization plan in 1963 to create a separate two-year college. The college relocated to the former Stevenson Elementary School while a new campus was constructed on Highway 19.¹⁷

¹¹ "School Contract Awarded to Meridian Firm," *Meridian Star*, January 5, 1936.

¹² "Construction Of School To Begin." *Meridian Star*, May 27, 1936.

¹³ "Foundation For New School Laid," *Meridian Star*, October 27, 1936.

¹⁴ "1,500 Attend Open House of Senior High-Junior College." *Meridian Star*, November 11, 1937.

¹⁵ "1,500 Attend..."

¹⁶ "Pour Cement at Grid Stadium." *Meridian Star*, September 7, 1936.

¹⁷ James B. Young and James M. Ewing. *The Mississippi Public Junior College Story, The First Fifty Years, 1922-1972*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1978), 182.

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Dr. Horace Ivy, the district superintendent, began planning for a vocational education program in 1930. However, the program did not reach fruition until 1938 when seventeen students were enrolled in a part-time cooperative program. Within three years enrollment expanded to 175 students.¹⁸ With the expanded enrollment in the vocational education program, the district asked the Meridian architecture firm of Krouse & Brasfield to prepare plans “for a modern, firesafe building which would constitute a pleasing addition to the Meridian High School-Junior College building group.”¹⁹ The architects designed an E-shaped building with a three story-main wing and three two-story rear wings. Large windows and skylights provided light in the shops. Construction crews supervised by National Youth Association squad leaders performed all the work. The completed building had classrooms and shops devoted to such industrial crafts as woodworking, welding, and vehicle repair, as well as cosmetology, typing and operating commercial machines.

The Ross Collins Vocational Building provided a site for training 15,000 workers for the shipbuilding and aircraft industries during World War II. More than 6000 veterans of WWII and the Korean War utilized the GI Bill to complete vocational training in such fields as welding, sheet metal work, cabinet making, and automotive mechanics.²⁰ Hartley Peavey, founder of the nationally prominent Peavey Electronics Corporation (based in Meridian) has stated that “If it weren’t for the Ross Collins Vocational Center, there would be no Peavey Electronics.”

Meridian continued to grow in population in the years following World War II. The school board supported a \$3 million bond issue, which passed in 1951. The funds were used for construction of three new schools and additions to others.²¹ The board contracted with L. L. Brasfield to design an addition the high school and junior college campus. When the Activities Building was completed in 1952, it housed a girls’ gymnasium and dressing rooms on the ground floor. Upper floors included a student lounge and snack bar, a dance studio, two classrooms and offices. Sound-proof rooms were available band and choral music, with a recital and dramatic auditorium. Office space was provided for student publications and the building housed a fully equipped radio station.²²

The historic development of the campus was completed in 1964. The Boys’ Physical Education Building was built that year. Designed by Meridian architect L.L. Brasfield, the building is still in use as a gymnasium and is the home court for boys and girls Wildcat basketball teams. No later development occurred until a spate of activity in the early 2000s, when the Students Activities Building was remodeled (2001), the Harris Building was built (2009), and the Field House (2012) took its place on the south side of Ray Stadium.

¹⁸ W. L. Newton, “Ross Collins Vocational School 1938,” in *History of Meridian Schools, 1885-1953*. P. 60.

¹⁹ L.L. Brasfield, “Vocational School for Meridian, Miss.” *Architectural Concrete*, 1944, 32-33.

²⁰ Young and Ewing, 180.

²¹ “Assign Schools as Board Meets.” *The Meridian Star*, January 9, 1951.

²² Department of Education School Building Surveys, Lauderdale County (Meridian). Mississippi Department of Archives and History, RG 50, Series 1653.

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Although it is not mentioned in most contemporary newspaper accounts, another high school was included in the same 1936 building program. Harris High School, located at 3951 12th Street, northwest of downtown, was Meridian's Negro high school, and its early buildings provide a useful comparison of school facilities in Mississippi's segregated system. The Harris campus covered 23 acres to Meridian High School's thirty-nine. Its buildings also fell short: Where MHS contained 28 classrooms, three science labs, three commercial arts labs, four home ec food and clothing labs, a library, a little theater, a cafeteria, and an auditorium seating 1200, Harris contained only 16 classrooms, two home ec labs, a library, and an auditorium seating 700. The MHS building's construction was also more substantial, called "fire resistive, with concrete floors and plastered walls and ceilings" in a later report, while Harrison had wood floors with celotex ceilings and plastered walls. While amenities like a gym, cafeteria, and stadium were built into Meridian High School's original building program, Harris waited until 1946 to have a cafeteria on campus and until 1951 to have a gymnasium. The Harris football team played on a field described in 1955 as "lighted and enclosed by cyclone fencing" with a press box, seating for 2000, and a stone and concrete ticket sales building. Harris did have a Trades Building, built in 1937, that taught male students vocational trades akin to the Ross Collins program, but it was a one-story frame building that lacked the fire resistive quality that made Ross Collins so valuable and also probably lacked the equipment supplied to Ross Collins. Harris also had a college program, added in 1949 in a one-story frame four-classroom building. All of these early buildings have been demolished, but a few 1950s structures survive as T.J. Harris Elementary School.

Architecture

The Meridian High School and Junior College buildings provide local examples of two Modern Movement styles executed on the local level.

In the years following World War I, architects began to reject the eclectic classicism that had pervaded design for many years. One response was to continue to seek inspiration in the classical tradition expressed in Beaux-Arts Classicism. Architectural historian David Gelernter writes that "a popular strategy began with designing traditional architectural shapes and arrangements, and then stripping off the traditional ornamental devices like window frames and hoods, and elaborate entablatures."²³ The resulting design has been dubbed Stripped Classical. The style was associated with monumental public buildings since it retained the massing and proportions found in the classical tradition, but is a pared down state. A national example of Stripped Classicism is Henry Bacon's Lincoln Memorial, completed in Washington, D.C. in 1929.

²³ Mark Gelernter. *A History of American Architecture, Buildings in their Cultural and Technological Context*. (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999), 239.

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The 1936-37 Administration Building at Meridian High School and Junior College reflects a Stripped Classical design scheme. The E-plan building, with the south-facing wings, presents a classically symmetrical look. The cast-stone cornice seen on three wings is a greatly simplified. The poured concrete porticos approximate a classical scheme, with the centered Auditorium entrance supported by stylized columns and the flanking entries supported by stripped pilasters.

Although central Meridian has been surveyed, MDAH has not identified any other significant examples of Stripped Classicism in the community. However, the style is well-represented in educational and public buildings in other parts of Mississippi. The Greenwood City Hall and Fire Station No. 1 (NR, 1985), designed by the Howell Brothers and completed in 1930, has a restrained symmetrical façade that is a hallmark of the style. The Warren County Courthouse (NR, 2007) in Vicksburg, Mississippi, designed by Havis & Havis in 1939-40, presents a refined temple-front with simplified pilasters that reflect its classical antecedents. The Denton Gymnasium on the Raymond campus of Hinds Community College is an example in an educational setting. Completed in 1937 by J. M. Spain, the building has a plain cast-stone cornice and is ornamented by simple cast-stone pilasters outlining double-leaf entry doors. More recent examples found on the Clinton campus of Mississippi College include the Leland Speed Library (1950) and Mary Nelson Hall (1955), both designed by Spain, then in partnership with Boyce Biggers.

In contrast to the architects who chose to employ stripped classical details, other architects, as well as artists and industrial and graphic designers, adopted a program of ornamentation that has come under the umbrella description of “Art Deco.” Drawing on influences from art nouveau, fauvism and cubism, Art Deco designers employed “a repertoire of visually dynamic shapes like zigzags, sunbursts and dramatic angles and... a taste for opulent and glittery materials.”²⁴ The most prominent Art Deco building in Meridian is the Threefoot Building (NR, 1979).

Over time, the exuberance of the Art Deco gave way to a more simple design ethos. The Art Moderne style was characterized by flat roofs, smooth wall finishes and rounded edges emphasizing a streamlined appearance.²⁵ The Ross Collins Vocational Building provides a definitive example. Designed by Krouse and Brasfield, the three-story reinforced concrete building exhibits textbook characteristics: flat roof, smooth wall finishes, rounded edges with streamlined moldings, and ribbon windows.

The Art Moderne style is well-represented in educational buildings built in the same period. Like the Meridian building, many of these buildings were funded by Depression-era federal public works program. Jackson architect N. W. Overstreet designed at least three school buildings employing Art Moderne details in that era. The schools include the 1936 Bailey Junior High School in Jackson (NR, 2012), the 1936 Church Street School in Tupelo (NR, 1992) and the 1937 Columbia High School in Columbia (NR, 2008). Other Mississippi architects with

²⁴ Gelerntner, 241.

²⁵ John J.-G. Blumensom. *Identifying American Architecture, A pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*. Rev. Ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 79.

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statewide reputations built Art Moderne school buildings. J. Emmett Hull was a principal in the firm of Hull & Drummond, which is credited with the design of the Senatobia High School in 1938 (NR, 1994). E. L. Malvaney designed the R. C. Weir Administration Building for the town of Vaiden in 1941 (NR, 2009).

Although Stripped Classicism and Art Moderne represent competing approaches to design, in this case both buildings were designed by the Meridian firm of Krouse and Brasfield, reflecting the architects' versatility. Penn Jeffries (P. J.) Krouse practiced from 1904 until his death in 1944. Krouse designed courthouses, churches, and schools throughout Mississippi. Luther Lee Brasfield joined Krouse as a draftsman in 1920, becoming a partner in the firm in 1930. Following Krouse's death, Brasfield designed many school buildings and served on the State Board of Architecture and as president on the Mississippi chapter of the American Institute of Architects. One of his last designs was the 1964 gymnasium at Meridian High School.

Meridian High School and Junior College

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

- Brasfield, L.L. "Vocational School for Meridian, Miss." *Architectural Concrete*, 1944.
- Blumenson, John J.-G. *Identifying American Architecture, A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*. Rev. Ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981.
- Department of Education School Building Surveys, Lauderdale County (Meridian). Mississippi Department of Archives and History, RG 50, Series 1653.
- Gelerntner, Mark. *A History of American Architecture, Buildings in their Cultural and Technological Context*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999.
- Ivy, Horace Macaulay, PhD. *History of Meridian Schools, 1885-1953*. Meridian, 1975, p. 2, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS.
- The Meridian Star*
- Newton, L. "Ross Collins Vocational School 1938," in *History of Meridian Schools, 1885-1953*. Mississippi Department of Archives and History.
- Young, James B. and James M. Ewing. *The Mississippi Public Junior College Story, The First Fifty Years, 1922-1972*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1978.

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

Meridian High School and Junior College

Lauderdale County,
Mississippi
County and State

Name of Property

___ University

___ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 075-MER-1499

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approx 29

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 32.390833 | Longitude: -88.724167 |
| 2. Latitude: 32.404444 | Longitude: -88.717500 |
| 3. Latitude: 32.392500 | Longitude: -88.709722 |
| 4. Latitude: 32.395833 | Longitude: -88.714444 |
| 5. Latitude: 32.390000 | Longitude: -88.711944 |
| 6. Latitude: 32.401944 | Longitude: -88.710000 |
| 7. Latitude: 32.410556 | Longitude: -88.710278 |

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: |

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

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Beginning at the southwest corner of 32nd Street and 23rd Avenue in Meridian, Lauderdale County and running west along 32nd Street until it intersects with the east property lines of the parcels facing Poplar Springs Drive south of 32nd Street and north of 29th Street. Turning south and running south until it intersects with 29th Street. Turning west and running along the north side of 29th Street until it intersects Poplar Springs Drive. Turning south until it intersects with the south side of 29th Street. Turning east and running east until it intersects with 24th Avenue. Turning south and running along the west side of 24th Avenue until it intersects with the north lot lines of the parcels facing 26th Street on the north south 29th Street and north of 26th Street. Turning east and running east until it intersects with 23rd Avenue. Turning north and running north along the west side of 23rd Avenue until it reaches the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the property owned by the Meridian Public School where the buildings and structures historically associated with the Meridian High School and Junior College.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jennifer Baughn and William M. Gatlin _____
organization: Mississippi Department of Archives and History _____
street & number: P.O. Box 571 _____
city or town: Jackson _____ state: MS zip code: 39201-0571 _____
e-mail bgatlin@mdah.state.ms.us _____
telephone: 601-576-6951 _____
date: _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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.

Meridian High School and Junior College

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- **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: Meridian High School

City or Vicinity: Meridian

County: Lauderdale County State: Mississippi

Photographer: Jennifer Baughn, MDAH Chief Architectural Historian (Photos 1-19)
William Gatlin, MDAH Architectural Historian (Photos 20-30)

Date Photographed: September 18, 2013

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

- 1 of 30 Administration Building. Exterior. South elevation. Camera facing northeast.
- 2 of 30 Administration Building. Exterior. South elevation. Camera facing north.
- 3 of 30 Administration Building. Exterior. South elevation. Camera facing north.

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- 4 of 30 Administration Building. Exterior. South elevation. Camera facing north.
5 of 30 Administration Building. Exterior. East elevation. Camera facing southwest
6 of 30 Administration Building. Exterior. West elevation. Gymnasium (Library/Science).
West elevation. Camera facing east.
7 of 30 Gymnasium (Library/Science). Exterior. South and east elevations. Camera
facing northwest
8 of 30 Classroom Annex. Exterior. South elevation. Camera facing north.
9 of 30 Student Activities Building. Exterior. East elevation. Camera facing northwest.
10 of 30 Ray Stadium. West stands. Camera facing northwest.
11 of 30 Ray Stadium. East stands. Camera facing northeast.
12 of 30 Field House. Exterior. Camera facing
13 of 30 Turnage Gymnasium. Exterior. East and North Elevations. Camera facing
southwest
14 of 30 R. D. Harris Building. Exterior. North elevation. Camera facing southeast.
15 of 30 Ross Collins Building. Exterior. West elevation. Camera facing northeast.
16 of 30 Ross Collins Building. Exterior. West elevation. Camera facing southeast.
17 of 30 Ross Collins Building. Exterior. West elevation. Camera facing east.
18 of 30 Ross Collins Building. Interior. Wood Shop. Camera facing
19 of 30 Teacher's House. Exterior. Camera facing southwest.
20 of 30 Administration Building. Interior. Typical classroom. Camera facing north.
21 of 30 Administration Building. Interior. Typical classroom. Camera facing south.
22 of 30 Administration Building. Interior. Typical hallway. Camera facing south.
23 of 30 Administration Building. Interior. Typical locker bank. Camera facing northwest
24 of 30 Administration Building. Interior. Typical interior door. Camera facing northwest.
25 of 30 Administration Building. Interior. Typical transom. Camera facing west.
26 of 30 Administration Building. Interior. Auditorium. Camera facing north
27 of 30 Administration Building. Interior. Auditorium. Camera facing south.
28 of 30 Gymnasium (Science/Library). Interior. Typical lab. Camera facing north.
29 of 30 Gymnasium (Science/Library). Interior. Library. Facing south.
30 of 30 Gymnasium (Science/Library). Interior. Typical hallway. Camera facing north.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 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.



MS - Lauderdale County - Meridian High School and Junior College - 0001



MS - Lauderdale County - Mendenhall High School and Junn College - 0002



MS - Lauderdale County - Meridian High School and Junior College - 0003



MS - Lauderdale County - Meridian High School and Junior College - 0064



MS - Lauderdale County - Menden High School and Junior College - 0005



MS_Lauderdale County_Meridian High School and Junior College - 0006



MS - Lauderdale County - Mendenhall High School and Junior College - 0007



MS - Lauderdale County - Mendenham High School and Junior College - 0008



MS - Lauderdale County - Mendenhall High School and Junius Colley - 0009



MS - Lauderdale County - Meridian High School and Junior College - 0010



MS - Lauderdale County - Menden High School and Junon College - 0011



MS - Lauderdale County - Meridian High School and Juniper College 0012



MS - Landerdale County - Mendocino High School and Junior College - 0013



MS - Lauderdale County - Meridian High School and Junior College - 004



MS - Lauderdale County - Meridian High School and Junior College - 0015



MS - Lauderdale County, Meridian High School and Junior College - 0016



MS, Lauderdale County, Meridian High School and Turner College - 0017



MS. Lauderdale County. Meridian High School and Junior College - 0018



MS - Landerdale County, Mendocino High School and Ferris College - 0019



MS - Lauderdale County - Mendenham High School and Junior College - 0020



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MS - Lauderdale County - Mendenhall High School and Junior College - 0023



MS - Lauderdale County - Meridian High School and Junior College - 0024



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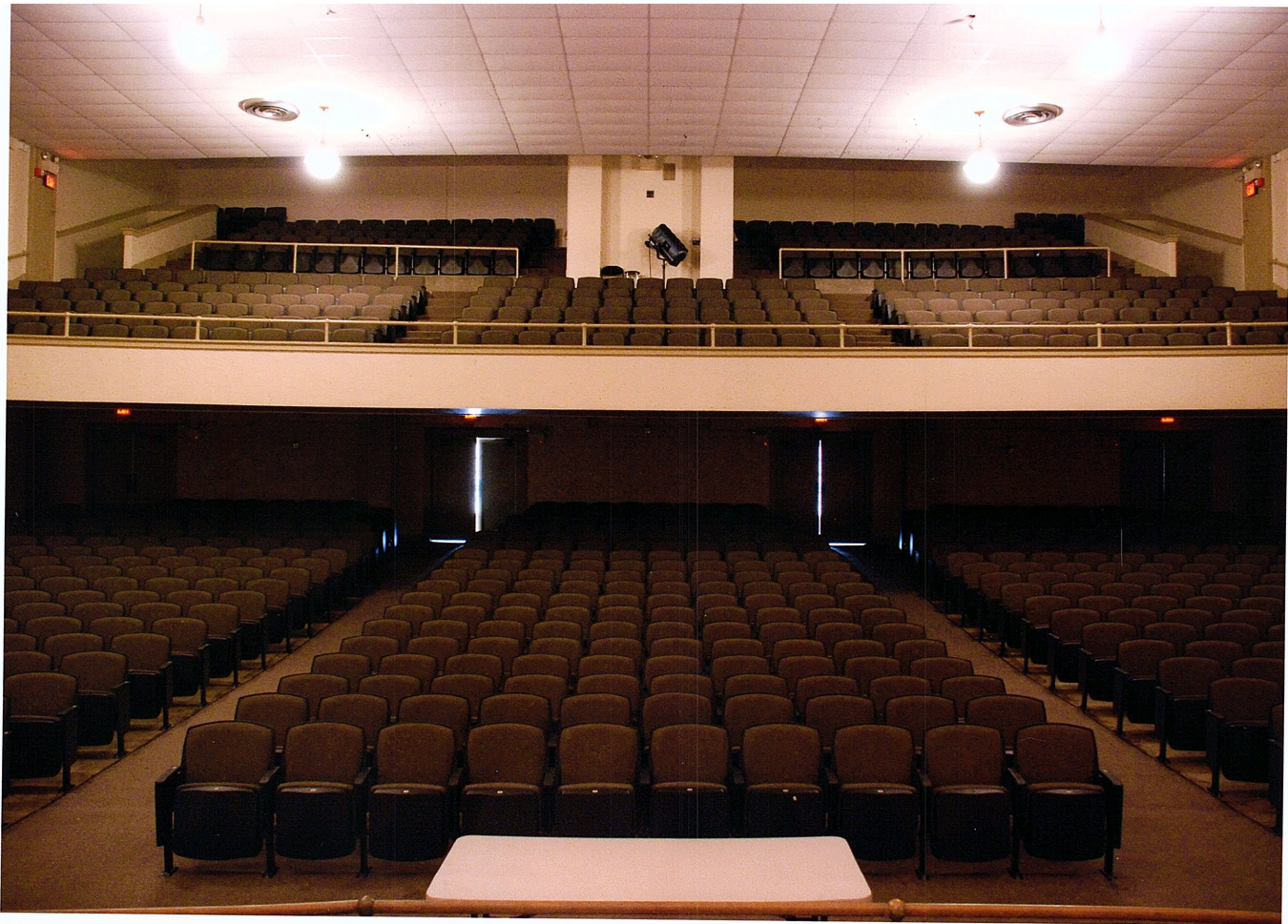


Meridian

MS - Lauderdale County - Meridian High School and Junior College - 0026



MS - Lauderdale County - Menden High School and Junior College 0028



MS. Lauderdale ~~High~~ Sh. County, Meridian High School and Juniper College 0027



MS - Mendocino /
Lauderdale County - Mendocino High School and Truman College - 0029



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