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**E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

HISTORIC CONTEXT: **THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN ORANGEBURG COUNTY,  
SOUTH CAROLINA, 1955-1971**

**Introduction**

Orangeburg County witnessed several periods of civil rights activity during the 1950s and 1960s. With a large population of African-American college students and a black majority, the county was prime territory for the civil rights movement. Grassroots black protests in Orangeburg County combined with those in other southern communities to pressure the federal government to end Jim Crow segregation.

In addition to African-American civil rights activities, Orangeburg County was the scene of massive white resistance in a state with a moderate image on race matters. In The Orangeburg Massacre, authors Jack Bass and Jack Nelson state that "Orangeburg was a fountainhead of white ultraconservatism."<sup>1</sup> In Black Carolinians, Idus A. Newby calls Orangeburg "an unusually conservative community" and "the most racially troubled place in the state."<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this document is to explain the significance of the civil rights movement in Orangeburg County and to identify properties associated with that event. In order to represent the entire history of the movement, this multiple property nomination seeks to identify a wide range of sites including those associated with black protests as well as those associated with white resistance. This document defines one historic context and three property types.

Before closing this introduction, a brief discussion of Criteria Consideration G seems appropriate. Since the events described by this document occurred within the past fifty years, properties nominated as part of this multiple property listing must meet that criteria consideration.

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<sup>1</sup>Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, The Orangeburg Massacre, 2nd ed. (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1984), 2, 7.

<sup>2</sup>Idus A. Newby, Black Carolinians: A History of Blacks in South Carolina from 1895 to 1968 (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 345-346.

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Scholarly research has firmly established the pivotal position of the civil rights movement in the history of the United States. The movement depended on grassroots activities in numerous communities such as Orangeburg County. Unquestionably, the civil rights movement brought significant changes to southern society, especially in majority black counties like Orangeburg. Thus, properties associated with the civil rights movement in Orangeburg County should qualify for listing on the National Register as exceptionally significant at the local, state, or national level.

**A Profile of Orangeburg County in the 1950s and 1960s**

During the 1950s and 1960s, Orangeburg County was home to nearly seventy thousand people spread across eleven hundred square miles of land. With a sixty percent African-American majority and rich black soil, the county was a major part of South Carolina's black belt. Agriculture was the economic basis of the county historically, although major changes were occurring. Several large industrial plants located around the county seat at Orangeburg during the early 1960s. Over that decade, the percentage of the county's workforce in agriculture declined from thirty to sixteen percent, while the percentage in manufacturing increased from eighteen to twenty-seven percent. The City of Orangeburg was Orangeburg County's seat and the commercial center for Orangeburg, Bamberg, and Calhoun Counties. With a population of nearly fourteen thousand, Orangeburg was the state's tenth largest city in 1960. Although the county was majority black, the city was majority white due to a municipal boundary that excluded several large African-American neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup>

Orangeburg County was a center of African-American education. Located in the City of Orangeburg, Claflin College was a Methodist institution for blacks which had almost five hundred students. Just south of Claflin was South Carolina State College with approximately twenty-six hundred African-American students.<sup>4</sup> The middle class African-Americans associated with the colleges provided much of Orangeburg's black leadership. Additionally, the law school at S.C. State produced most of South Carolina's African-American attorneys who would win the civil rights cases of the 1950s and 1960s. Founded in 1947, this law school was created in order to maintain a

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<sup>3</sup>United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1960, vol. 1, part 42 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), 8-9, 19-20; Background for Planning: Population and Economic Study, Orangeburg Urban Area (Columbia, S.C.: Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff, 1969), 19, 23, 26-27.

<sup>4</sup>Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education, State of South Carolina (1963-1964), 154-155.

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whites-only law school at the University of South Carolina.<sup>5</sup> While there was a substantial black middle class due to the colleges, most African-Americans in Orangeburg County were worse off. In 1960, the median family income for the county was forty-six hundred dollars for whites and only two thousand dollars for blacks.<sup>6</sup>

In Orangeburg County before the mid-1960s, Jim Crow segregation governed race relations. Few blacks were registered to vote and all of the local politicians were white as well as most of the business elite. Public accommodations and governmental facilities were strictly segregated. The county's eight school districts all operated dual systems based on race. During the 1950s, Governor James F. Byrnes initiated a massive construction program aimed at upgrading the state's schools, especially its black schools. This effort was an attempt to defend segregated schools by trying to equalize them as court rulings required.<sup>7</sup> In the school district containing the City of Orangeburg, African-American education was upgraded with a new high school and three new elementary schools along with improvements to existing schools.<sup>8</sup>

**School Desegregation Petitions and Massive White Resistance, 1955-1956**

On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court handed down its decision in Brown v. Board of Education which declared segregated public schools unconstitutional. The decision sparked massive resistance by white southerners through legal efforts to circumvent the decision and the formation of white citizens councils to use economic intimidation against African-Americans who tried to desegregate local schools. South Carolina was directly involved in the Brown decision. In 1950, a group of blacks in Clarendon County brought suit against the Summerton school district since its white and black schools were unequal. This case was combined with several others into Brown v. Board of Education. Recognizing this threat to segregated schools, Governor Byrnes took steps to legally maintain the Jim Crow educational system. In 1951, he pushed legislation creating South Carolina's first sales tax with much of the proceeds going to improve

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<sup>5</sup>Newby, 346-351.

<sup>6</sup>Background for Planning, 15-16.

<sup>7</sup>Walter B. Edgar, South Carolina in the Modern Age (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 100.

<sup>8</sup>United States District Court for the Eastern District of South Carolina, Orangeburg Division, documents from Adams v. School District No. 5, 1964-1966, Answer to Interrogatories, Annex Number II, 1966, David W. Robinson Papers, desegregation files, 1954-1972, South Carolina State Archives, Columbia.

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public education for African-Americans. In addition, the General Assembly created the Gressette Committee to plan alternatives in case segregated schools were declared unconstitutional. In 1952, the state's voters repealed the provision in the state's constitution requiring a public education system. Similar efforts were taken in other southern states to avoid school desegregation.<sup>9</sup>

On May 31, 1955, the Supreme Court ordered the nation's school districts to comply with the Brown decision. In the wake of this order, school desegregation petitions were submitted to the officials of two Orangeburg County school districts. In late July, the Orangeburg School District, Orangeburg County School District Number Five, received a petition prepared by local black attorney W. Newton Pou and signed by fifty-seven African-American parents. By early August, the Ellore School District, Orangeburg County School District Number Seven, received a petition prepared by Pou and signed by thirty-nine black parents from the Ellore and Santee areas. The Ellore School District was immediately to the west of the Clarendon County district involved in Briggs v. Elliott, the South Carolina case combined with others into Brown v. Board of Education. White response to the petitions was swift.<sup>10</sup>

Whites in the Ellore School District acted by forming South Carolina's first white citizens council.<sup>11</sup> Over two hundred people attended a meeting on August 9 at an American Legion hut just outside Ellore. Emory Rogers, the Summerton lawyer who represented the Clarendon County district in the federal suit, was the guest speaker. Under the temporary leadership of Ellore's mayor, the group agreed to form a citizens council to resist the desegregation efforts of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Economic pressure was the tool that the Ellore Citizens Council used to attack desegregation efforts. This meant that African-Americans who supported desegregation would lose their jobs, rental houses, and credit. Officers were nominated at a meeting on August 14. On Wednesday, August 17, over one thousand people attended a mass Ellore Citizens Council meeting at a local ballpark to hear Rogers speak. By August 18, fourteen signers of the Ellore petition asked that their names

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<sup>9</sup>Steven F. Lawson, Running for Freedom: Civil Rights and Black Politics in America Since 1941 (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1991), 47-49; Edgar, 99-104.

<sup>10</sup>Orangeburg (South Carolina) Times and Democrat, 31 July 1955, 1-A, 7-A; 10 August 1955, 1.

<sup>11</sup>Howard H. Quint, Profile in Black and White: A Frank Portrait of South Carolina (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press), 47.

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be removed after a number of them lost jobs or rental houses.<sup>12</sup>

White citizens councils were subsequently formed in most of the other seven school districts in Orangeburg County. Orangeburg's was started Monday night, August 22, when around one hundred whites gathered at the Woodmen of the World Hall. On August 29, a mass meeting was held at Mirmow Field with over thirty-five hundred people in attendance. The president of the new Orangeburg Citizens Council was W.T.C. Bates. An office was established in an E. Russell Street building downtown with Bates and a secretary on staff. A number of petition signers asked for the removal of their names.<sup>13</sup>

With many Orangeburg merchants denying African-American activists credit, the local NAACP decided to boycott a number of white businesses. A boycott list of twenty-three merchants was distributed to area blacks. The NAACP was able to provide small loans to local African-Americans hurt by white economic pressure. For this purpose, the organization used a fund of fifty thousand dollars at black-owned Victory Savings Bank in Columbia. On Sunday, November 27, fifteen hundred local blacks attended a mass meeting at Claflin College's gymnasium. The speaker was NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall. Francis Donlan, a local white Catholic priest, was conspicuously present at the meeting.<sup>14</sup>

White officials tried to intimidate African-American educational institutions. Orangeburg's State Representative Jerry M. Hughes, Jr., introduced a bill in the South Carolina General Assembly in early 1956 calling for an investigation of NAACP activities at S.C. State. An investigative committee was created in March. In April, fifteen hundred S.C. State students boycotted classes for a week in protest. In response, the college's board of trustees expelled the student body president who led the boycott. Several faculty members did not have their contracts renewed by the college the following year. The state's investigative committee met only once. In addition, twenty-one African-American teachers in the Elloree School District failed to have their contracts renewed when they would not reveal on an application their views of the NAACP and school

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<sup>12</sup>Times and Democrat, 10 August 1955, 1; 11 August 1955, 1, 12; 14 August 1955, 1; 15 August 1955, 1; 18 August 1955, 1, 12; 19 August 1955, 1; Quint, 51.

<sup>13</sup>Times and Democrat, 18 August 1955, 1; 23 August 1955, 1; 24 August 1955, 1-A; 30 August 1955, 1, 10; 31 August 1955, 1; 5 October 1955, 5; 7 October 1955, 10; 13 November 1955, 8.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 15 October 1955, 8; 26 October 1955, 1, 4; 24 November 1955, 1; 28 November 1955, 1, 6; Quint, 51-53.

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desegregation.<sup>15</sup>

By mid-1956, the racial conflict in Orangeburg County was decreasing as the Orangeburg Citizens Council gave the NAACP some concessions including the resignation of Bates. Despite the efforts made by local African-Americans, the county's schools remained segregated. The number of names on the Orangeburg petition dropped to twenty-six. By late 1956, Orangeburg County had returned to normal.<sup>16</sup>

The school desegregation fight in Orangeburg County during the mid-1950s is significant as an example of early desegregation attempts by African-Americans. In addition, it is significant as an example of massive white resistance through economic intimidation by white citizens councils. In fact, Orangeburg County was the birthplace and a stronghold of the councils in South Carolina.

**The Sit-in Movement, 1960**

The year 1960 was one of transition for the national civil rights movement. African-Americans were disappointed by the lack of real change following the boycotts and successful legal challenges of the previous decades. In order to combat massive white resistance in the South, blacks increasingly turned to public demonstrations which would reveal to the nation the inequalities of the Jim Crow system and hopefully force additional action by the federal government. A major step towards this strategy was taken on February 1, 1960, when four African-American students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University sat down and demanded service at Woolworth's lunch counter in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina. The event sparked a sit-in movement by black college students which would spread to sixty southern cities by the end of March and would lead to the formation of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in April.<sup>17</sup> In South Carolina, the sit-in demonstrations began at Rock Hill and eventually spread to seven other cities including Orangeburg.<sup>18</sup>

On February 25, 1960, Orangeburg became the state's third city to experience sit-in demonstrations when around twenty-five African-American

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<sup>15</sup>Times and Democrat, 26 October 1955, 1, 12; 16 April 1956, 3; 26 April 1956, 1; 28 April 1956, 8; 17 May 1956, 14; Quint, 53-54.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 52-53.

<sup>17</sup>Lawson, 66, 72-74.

<sup>18</sup>Edgar, 104.

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college students staged one at the Kress Department Store's lunch counter downtown. The students left while the counter was briefly closed. The next morning, eight black pickets staged a demonstration at the store until city police broke it up. Another demonstration by forty students occurred at the same lunch counter later in the day. When a fight broke out between an African-American college student and a white spectator, both were arrested and the protestors left the store.<sup>19</sup> On March 1, around four hundred black students staged a march from the two African-American colleges to downtown as a protest against segregated lunch counters. Following the demonstration, Mayor S. Clyde Fair warned that any similar marches in the future would be stopped unless the protestors had been issued a parade permit.<sup>20</sup>

On March 15, the mayor's warning became a reality. Approximately one thousand African-American students began a march from the colleges to the city's business district. Waiting for the marchers were city policemen, city firemen, county sheriff's deputies, state highway patrolmen, and agents from the South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division (SLED). After the marchers refused to break up the demonstration, law enforcement officials began using tear gas and fire hoses. In addition, they arrested nearly four hundred protestors and placed them in an outdoor compound surrounding the county jail on St. John Street. While most of the demonstrators were arrested on the streets, a number of them were arrested at lunch counters inside the Kress Department Store and a local drug store. Later in the day, around eighty students staged a brief demonstration at the county courthouse.<sup>21</sup> The mass arrests effectively ended Orangeburg's 1960 sit-in movement. Three hundred and seventy-three students were eventually convicted of breach of peace. However, the students appealed and their convictions were overturned by the United States Supreme Court in 1963.<sup>22</sup> Apparently fearful of further demonstrations, the Orangeburg City Council passed an ordinance on March 7, 1961, which made municipal court bonds more difficult to raise.<sup>23</sup>

The 1960 sit-in movement in Orangeburg is significant as part of a larger movement across the South which altered the course of the civil rights

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<sup>19</sup>Columbia (South Carolina) State, 26 February 1960, 1-A; 27 February 1960, 1-B.

<sup>20</sup>Times and Democrat, 2 March 1960, 1, 5.

<sup>21</sup>Charlotte (North Carolina) Observer, 16 March 1960, 1A, 2A; State, 16 March 1960, 1-A, 5-A, 1-B.

<sup>22</sup>Times and Democrat, 22 October 1963, 1.

<sup>23</sup>City of Orangeburg, South Carolina, City Ordinance, vol. 5.



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movement. After the initial sit-ins at Greensboro, North Carolina, African-Americans increasingly turned to protests and demonstrations. Orangeburg's sit-in demonstration on March 15 is significant as an example of an extreme response by law enforcement officials. That one day saw the arrests of nearly four hundred protestors in Orangeburg, seventy in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and nearly eighty in Atlanta, Georgia. The South's arrest total for March 15 almost equaled the number of arrests which had occurred since the sit-in movement began on February 1.<sup>24</sup>

**The Orangeburg Movement, 1963-1964**

The South witnessed an increase in civil rights activity during 1963 as African-Americans staged protest movements aimed at desegregating public accommodations. While the most notable protest movement of the year was in Birmingham, Alabama, similar activities occurred in numerous southern cities eventually convincing the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations to act by proposing a civil rights bill.<sup>25</sup>

In South Carolina, the year began on a positive note for blacks with the peaceful desegregation of Clemson University in January.<sup>26</sup> Desiring the desegregation of the state's public accommodations, the NAACP's South Carolina Conference of Branches decided to conduct large protest movements in eight cities. Plans were formulated by early June and protest movements subsequently began in four South Carolina cities including Orangeburg.<sup>27</sup>

The Orangeburg Movement began on July 29 with a selective buying campaign following a planning session between local African-American leaders and NAACP State Field Secretary I. DeQuincey Newman the day before. The first arrest came the second day of the movement when a S.C. State student refused to leave a local restaurant. By August 1, black protestors began picketing certain white businesses throughout the city's downtown area. With the Orangeburg Movement under way, its leaders attended a city council meeting on August 20.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Charlotte Observer, 16 March 1960, 1A, 2A.

<sup>25</sup>William H. Chafe, The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 211-214, 230-231.

<sup>26</sup>Edgar, 104-106.

<sup>27</sup>Times and Democrat, 2 June 1963, 1-A, 6-A; South Carolina Conference of Branches, NAACP, Battlefront, 25 September 1963, 1.

<sup>28</sup>Times and Democrat, 29 July 1963, 10; 31 July 1963, 10; 4 August 1963, 10-A; 21 August 1963, 1, 4.

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At this meeting, the Orangeburg City Council was presented with a list of ten demands from the Steering Committee of the Orangeburg Movement. In general, the demands asked for the desegregation of public accommodations, compliance with Brown v. Board of Education by the local school districts, and expanded job opportunities for African-Americans. The council responded by complaining about the pickets downtown and passing a resolution which allowed the mayor to appoint a bi-racial community relations committee.<sup>29</sup>

By late September, over forty arrests had been made during sit-ins in the city. On September 22, Orangeburg's first mass demonstration of the year occurred when over six hundred African-Americans marched to Memorial Plaza in the center of downtown. On September 28, a second mass demonstration was staged when three hundred protestors, mostly black college and high school students, made their way through the downtown area in the rain. Unlike the previous march, this one included singing, clapping, and shouting in violation of city ordinances. Awaiting the marchers were city police officers, county sheriff's deputies, state highway patrolmen, and SLED agents. Fifteen marchers were identified as leaders, arrested for breach of peace, and taken to the city jail on Market Street. With fire hoses standing by, nearly one hundred and fifty demonstrators were arrested and taken to the county jail or bused to state facilities in Columbia. This march began a series of demonstrations and mass arrests which would last for over two weeks.<sup>30</sup>

Sunday, September 29, was the second day of mass arrests with two demonstrations by African-Americans resulting in the arrests of over three hundred protestors. With both local jails full and most demonstrators unable to make bond, many of those arrested were sent to state facilities in Columbia. Monday witnessed the arrests of nearly two hundred blacks during a demonstration. A second march ended with no arrests, although Mayor Fair warned that all future marchers would immediately be arrested. On Tuesday, a small group left the Orangeburg Movement's headquarters at Trinity United Methodist Church headed downtown. Once police officers stopped the march, thirty demonstrators were arrested as fire hoses stood ready nearby. Over a period of four days, Orangeburg had seen seven mass demonstrations and a number of smaller sit-ins resulting in over nine hundred arrests. Finally, city officials agreed to discuss the situation

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<sup>29</sup>City of Orangeburg, South Carolina, Minutes of Meetings, City Council, vol. 7; Times and Democrat, 21 August 1963, 1, 7.

<sup>30</sup>State, 29 September 1963, 17-D; Times and Democrat, 29 September 1963, 12-A.

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with local African-American leaders on Wednesday, October 2.<sup>31</sup>

The city administrator and city attorney met with twelve African-American leaders at City Hall for three days. In the meantime, the demonstrations were temporarily postponed. By Friday, October 4, the meetings broke down after it became clear that city officials were unwilling to consider any of the Orangeburg Movement's demands. In fact, Mayor Fair had not appointed the bi-racial community relations committee as he had been authorized to do. The only offer that Orangeburg's white officials would make to the black leaders was to release all of those still in jail if the demonstrations were called off for ninety days.<sup>32</sup>

The city had good reasons for wanting to end the demonstrations. Arrested demonstrators filled the city jail, county jail, Orangeburg National Guard Armory, and state facilities in Columbia. When juvenile protestors were released, they returned to the marches. A major reason that African-American demonstrators were remaining in jail was the difficulty in raising bond money. However, the NAACP raised enough money to have most of the protestors released by the time that the negotiations broke down. Many of the three hundred released Thursday, October 3, arrived at a meeting in Trinity United Methodist Church as heroes. On Friday, the demonstrations began again with over three hundred protestors arrested.<sup>33</sup>

After over a week of mass protests and arrests, white officials began to apply pressure to black public educational institutions whose students or faculty members were involved in the Orangeburg Movement. By October 7, Governor Donald Russell was warning S.C. State students that the college may be closed if they continued to participate in demonstrations.<sup>34</sup> Orangeburg County School District Number Five's superintendent recommended to the board of trustees that it fire Gloria Rackley, a black third grade teacher, for her involvement with the Orangeburg Movement. She had been arrested during demonstrations in Charleston and Orangeburg, including one

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<sup>31</sup>State, 30 September 1963, 1-A, 7-A; 1 October 1963, 1-A, 2-A; 2 October 1963, 1-A, 7-A; Times and Democrat, 29 September 1963, 12-A; 30 September 1963, 1, 5; 1 October 1963, 5; 2 October 1963, 7; 3 October 1963, 2-A; 6 October 1963, 5-A.

<sup>32</sup>State, 3 October 1963, 6-A; 4 October 1963, 1-D; Times and Democrat, 3 October 1963, 2-A; 4 October 1963, 16; 5 October 1963, 8; 6 October 1963, 5-A.

<sup>33</sup>State, 2 October 1963, 1-A, 7-A; 3 October 1963, 6-A; 4 October 1963, 1-D; Times and Democrat, 1 October 1963, 5; 4 October 1963, 16; 5 October 1963, 8; 7 October 1963, 8.

<sup>34</sup>State, 8 October 1963, 1-B.

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in which she tried to use the white restroom in the Orangeburg County Courthouse. In addition, Rackley had filed a desegregation suit against the Orangeburg Regional Hospital. She was dismissed from her job in early October and was officially fired by the board in late October.<sup>35</sup>

The announcement of Rackley's dismissal led to a wave of student boycotts and demonstrations. On Tuesday, October 8, three fourths of the city's African-American students boycotted classes at Orangeburg County School District Number Five's seven black schools, causing them to close. An afternoon march to protest the dismissal ended with the arrests of nearly sixty juveniles. When the district's African-American schools tried to reopen on Thursday, law officers arrested over eighty demonstrators including those picketing the black schools. Although no arrests were made on Friday, attendance at the African-American schools was still only twenty-five percent. Attendance would not return to normal until the next week. With the most recent arrests, the total number reached fifteen hundred. However, only nine hundred demonstrators were involved, since many were arrested more than once.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to intimidating African-American protestors at S.C. State and in the black schools, white officials tried to cut down the number of pickets in downtown. On October 10, the Orangeburg City Council passed an ordinance requiring all pickets to register at the police station. On the first day of registration, thirty-five African-Americans went through the process.<sup>37</sup>

On October 14, the first group of arrested demonstrators went on trial and were convicted. However, on October 21, the United States Supreme Court overturned the 1960 convictions of nearly four hundred students arrested in Orangeburg on breach of peace charges. Even so, the city continued the trials and the arrests. Two days after the Supreme Court's decision, the arrests resumed when nearly sixty African-American juveniles were arrested. The mass demonstrations and arrests did largely cease for the last couple of months in 1963. Roy Wilkins, the NAACP's national executive secretary, spoke at a packed Trinity United Methodist Church on November 13. He praised the Orangeburg Movement and urged its members to continue

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<sup>35</sup>Times and Democrat, 9 October 1963, 1, 7; 23 October 1963, 1.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 9 October 1963, 1, 7; 11 October 1963, 1, 9; 12 October 1963, 5; 16 October 1963, 1.

<sup>37</sup>City Ordinance, vol. 5; Times and Democrat, 13 October 1963, 6-A, 2-B.

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protesting segregation.<sup>38</sup>

The year 1964 began with the arrests of two African-Americans picketing downtown businesses. On February 1, twenty-three pickets were arrested when they congregated together instead of marching separately. A group of forty staged a demonstration at the county jail the next day with the permission of city authorities. On February 3, another boycott began in the city's black schools. The next day, over thirty juveniles were arrested in a march downtown while sixteen others were arrested near an African-American school for encouraging the boycott of classes. But, this school boycott and the demonstrations died down later in the week.<sup>39</sup>

Besides trying to desegregate public accommodations, the Orangeburg Movement tried to make political gains in 1964. On March 9, local black businessman James E. Sulton announced his candidacy for the Democratic Party's nomination to the South Carolina House of Representatives. Local black leaders were hoping that the increased number of registered African-American voters would give Sulton a chance at one of the county's four House seats. The Orangeburg County Voter Education Project had been actively registering black voters throughout 1963 and into 1964. During the last weeks before the June 9 Democratic primary, both the Orangeburg Movement and a revived Orangeburg Citizens Council attempted to hold meetings to learn more about the candidates' views concerning segregation. Although all of the candidates were invited by the Orangeburg Movement to a forum at Trinity United Methodist Church, none of the eight white ones accepted the offer. However, seven of the white candidates agreed to appear at a forum sponsored by the Orangeburg Citizens Council which refused to invite Sulton. On June 9, four white candidates won the Democratic nominations for the at-large South Carolina House seats from Orangeburg County. Block voting by African-Americans failed to nominate Sulton since such voters were still a definite voting minority and did not turn out in large numbers.<sup>40</sup>

The Orangeburg Movement targeted segregated public facilities for protests in the spring and summer of 1964. The Orangeburg County Free Library maintained a white branch on Centre Street and a separate branch for African-Americans on Goff Avenue near S.C. State. Blacks staged read-ins at the white branch during late March causing the county's library

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 15 October 1963, 10; 22 October 1963, 1, 10; 25 October 1963, 7; 26 October 1963, 8; 14 November 1963, 8-A.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 4 January 1964, 8; 2 February 1964, 8-A; 3 February 1964, 3; 5 February 1964, 8; 6 February 1964, 10-A.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 8 October 1963, 5; 10 March 1964, 5; 24 May 1964, 9-A; 29 May 1964, 1, 9; 7 June 1964, 1-A, 10-A; 10 June 1964, 1; 11 June 1964, 4-A.

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commission to temporarily close both branches. In addition, the city operated segregated swimming beaches along the Edisto River. In early June, the city closed the two areas after blacks staged wade-ins at the white river beach for a number of days. Using riverfront property owned by a local American Legion post, a non-profit organization subsequently set up a whites-only swimming area funded by donations from the community.<sup>41</sup>

In the summer of 1964, the protests activities of the Orangeburg Movement died down after segregation in public places was largely ended. On Thursday, June 2, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law.<sup>42</sup> Soon after the act was signed, the NAACP tested sixteen Orangeburg business and found ten of them to be in compliance. Most businesses would eventually desegregated during that year.<sup>43</sup>

Resentful of federal activities such as the civil rights legislation supported by national Democrats and school desegregation court orders, white Orangeburgers continued their flight from the Democratic Party during the presidential election in 1964. The turn away from the party began well before that year. In fact, a Democratic presidential candidate had not carried the county since Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944. The county voted for Dixiecrat Strom Thurmond in 1948, independent electors for Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952, Harry Byrd in 1956, and Republican Richard M. Nixon in 1960. The increasingly Republican leanings of white Orangeburg were evident when President Johnson's wife briefly visited the city in 1964. On October 7, Ladybird Johnson's train made a campaign stop at the intersection of the Southern Railway's tracks and Whaley Street. During the rally, twenty-five hundred African-American students gave her a warm welcome. However, a vocal crowd of white Republican supporters chanted Barry Goldwater slogans during the speeches and a Goldwater billboard had been placed at the site. In addition, a mass rally for Goldwater was held on October 22. Two thousand supporters filled Mirmow Field to hear speakers back a candidate who they hoped would oppose future civil rights legislation. On November 3, Orangeburg County voted for Goldwater by a ratio of nearly two to one.<sup>44</sup>

The Orangeburg Movement is significant as one of the protest movements

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 5 April 1964, 1-A; 7 April 1964, 1; 5 June 1964, 1; 14 June 1964, 1-A; 17 June 1964, 1.

<sup>42</sup>State, 3 July 1964, 1-A.

<sup>43</sup>Times and Democrat, 10 July 1964, 7.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 8 October 1964, 1-A, 8-A; 11 October 1964, 1-B; 23 October 1964, 1, 6; 4 November 1964, 1.

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which were conducted across the South in 1963 and 1964 following the example set at Birmingham, Alabama. The cumulative impact of these grassroots movements pressured the federal government to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which desegregated the South's public accommodations.

**School Desegregation and the Rise of Private Academies, 1964-1971**

School desegregation began in South Carolina during the mid-1960s. However, only twelve districts had desegregated schools by 1969. Full-scale desegregation came between 1969 and 1971 as federal courts ordered school districts to immediately replace dual systems with unified ones. As a result of desegregation, nearly two hundred private segregation academies were founded in the state allowing many whites to avoid desegregation.<sup>45</sup> The history of school desegregation in Orangeburg County follows the state pattern fairly closely.

On March 20, 1964, Orangeburg County became the sixth county in the state facing a federal desegregation suit.<sup>46</sup> The school district involved was District Number Five or the city district. Twenty-three African-American children were named as plaintiffs with a legal team consisting of Matthew J. Perry and Lincoln C. Jenkins, Jr., both of Columbia, Zack E. Townsend and Earl W. Coblyn both of Orangeburg, and Jack Greenberg of New York City. Named Adams v. School District No. 5, the class-action suit alleged that the district deliberately segregated the races by maintaining a dual system of public schools.<sup>47</sup> While planning the suit at Trinity United Methodist Church, the attorneys decided that students who served as plaintiffs would have to meet two criteria in order to counter white resistance. The students chosen had strong academic backgrounds and parents who were not economically dependent on whites.<sup>48</sup>

The reaction of white Orangeburg to the suit was quick and negative. A meeting of the Orangeburg Citizens Council was called for Tuesday, March 31, at the Lake View Club. A fifty-member committee was appointed to study the available options for fighting the desegregation suit. On Friday, April 3, a second meeting was held during which the study committee reported its findings. The committee suggested that funds be raised in order to fight the suit with the successful defense strategy used in the

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<sup>45</sup>Edgar, 124-129.

<sup>46</sup>Times and Democrat, 22 March 1964, 10-A.

<sup>47</sup>Documents from Adams v. School District No. 5, 1964-1966, Complaint, 1-12.

<sup>48</sup>Zack E. Townsend, interview by author, 25 November 1994, Orangeburg, South Carolina.

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Stell case from Savannah, Georgia. In addition, the committee recommended that a private school be established if the school district lost the suit. The desegregation suit sparked a revival of the Orangeburg Citizens Council which gained one hundred new members by early April.<sup>49</sup>

Members of the Citizens Council were encouraged by the federal court's decision in Stell v. Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education in June of 1963. The judge in that case allowed a group of white students to intervene as a third party in the case to oppose desegregation. The defense argued that segregation was a rational method of educating children of both races. Using a number of university psychologists, the defense claimed that there were major differences between black and white students in intelligence, learning rates, and behavior. Furthermore, they argued that these differences were controlled by heredity, not the environment. According to the defense, mixing the two races would bring down the academic levels of the school district. The judge agreed with the arguments of the defense and dismissed the suit.<sup>50</sup>

Another Orangeburg Citizens Council meeting was held in the gymnasium at Thackston Junior High on Friday, April 24. The council's legal committee had been busy recruiting white students to act as intervenors in the federal suit. Even so, many members argued that steps should be taken to start a private school since desegregation was probably inevitable. Dr. T. Elliott Wannamaker announced that he and other white citizens were sponsoring a mass meeting on April 30 to discuss the formation of a private school. Wannamaker would emerge as the leader of Orangeburg's private school movement. In addition, the Orangeburg Citizens Council decided that it would not become involved in starting a private school since another group could be formed to do so.<sup>51</sup>

In April, District Number Five responded to the federal suit. In addition, the court allowed eighteen white students and their parents to intervene in the case. The defense relied on the strategy used in the Stell case and argued that black and white students differed in their abilities. However, the strategy failed and Judge Charles E. Simmons, Jr., issued a

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<sup>49</sup>Times and Democrat, 31 March 1964, 8; 3 April 1964, 1; 4 April 1964, 1.

<sup>50</sup>Federal Supplement: Cases Argued and Determined in the United States District Courts and the United States Customs Courts, vol. 222 (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1964), 667-685.

<sup>51</sup>Times and Democrat, 15 April 1964, 1; 25 April 1964, 1, 5.



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desegregation order for the district on August 12.<sup>52</sup>

On April 30, a crowd of nearly two thousand whites met in the gymnasium at Orangeburg High School to discuss the establishment of a private school in the city. With Wannamaker as the meeting's chairman, it was decided that a permanent committee should be appointed to study the possibilities of a private school locally. The Study Group of Private Schools was given the job of determining the feasibility of such a school and developing a plan. Solutions had to be found to logistical problems like temporary and permanent housing, teachers, and funding.<sup>53</sup>

On Thursday, June 25, one thousand whites met at Orangeburg High School's gymnasium to receive copies of the Study Group's report and questionnaires concerning the amount that individuals would be willing to pay in tuition or donations.<sup>54</sup> Information for the report was gathered from early segregation academies in Virginia such as Huguenot Academy in Powhatan, John S. Mosby Academy in Front Royal, Prince Edward Academy in Farmville, and Rock Hill Academy in Charlottesville. The Study Group concluded that a private school was feasible and could be temporarily housed in churches or civic clubs. Funding could come from two sources. The first funding system included the use of state tuition grants.<sup>55</sup> In order to provide an escape from desegregated public schools, the South Carolina General Assembly passed a 1963 bill which would give state grants to parents whose children attended secular private schools. The school district's board of trustees had to request the grants.<sup>56</sup> The second funding system depended on tuition payments by parents and donations. In addition, the Study Group recommended that plans be made for establishing a private school to be named in honor of Wade Hampton, a Confederate general from South Carolina who led the Redeemers to victory in 1876 ending Reconstruction in the

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 17 April 1964, 1, 11; 18 April 1964, 4; 23 April 1964, 1-A; 13 August 1964, 2-A; Documents from Adams v. School District No. 5, 1964-1966, Answer, 4-8.

<sup>53</sup>Times and Democrat, 1 May 1964, 1, 10; 7 May 1964, 1-A, 7-A.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 26 June 1964, 1, 10.

<sup>55</sup>"Report of the Committee Investigating the Establishment of Private Schools," Orangeburg, South Carolina, 25 June 1964, 3-10, David W. Robinson Papers, desegregation files, 1954-1972, South Carolina State Archives, Columbia.

<sup>56</sup>Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, Regular Session of 1963 (printed under the direction of the Code Commissioner, 1963), 498.

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state.<sup>57</sup>

For the next phase of the Study Group's plan, a canvassing committee was appointed to visit homes in white neighborhoods beginning June 26. The purpose of this committee was to determine how many potential students were available. An application was printed in The Times and Democrat with a deadline of July 13. On that date, the Study Group met and decided to proceed with the private school plan. Wannamaker reported that over eighteen hundred applications had been received.<sup>58</sup> During August of 1964, the final steps were taken to establish a segregation academy in Orangeburg. On the seventh of that month, Wade Hampton Academy received a charter from the state.<sup>59</sup> At a ceremony on August 18, the school was formally dedicated in the hut of a local American Legion post. Temporary facilities for school were Northside Baptist Church and an old house near downtown. A last minute attempt to enroll two African-American children in Wade Hampton Academy failed.<sup>60</sup>

In late August, two educational systems began the new year in Orangeburg. Eighteen African-American students made history when they entered previously white public schools on August 28. However, nearly three hundred white students escaped desegregation through Wade Hampton Academy which opened on August 31.<sup>61</sup>

District Number Five operated with a freedom of choice plan for several years after the 1964 court order. Around eighty African-Americans attended white schools during the 1965-1966 school year, while Wade Hampton Academy's attendance continued to grow as it moved into permanent facilities on the North Road above the city. However, in August of 1969, Judge Simmons issued another order which would force the district to

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<sup>57</sup>"Report of the Committee Investigating the Establishment of Private Schools," 13-16.

<sup>58</sup>Times and Democrat, 27 June 1964, 1, 8; 9 July 1964, 1-A, 8-A; 14 July 1964, 1.

<sup>59</sup>South Carolina, Secretary of State, Eleemosynary Corporations (6301-7000), 6678.

<sup>60</sup>Times and Democrat, 10 August 1964, 1; 11 August 1964, 1; 18 August 1964, 1; 22 August 1964, 1; 25 August 1964, 1.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 25 August 1964, 1; 29 August 1964, 1, 3; Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education, State of South Carolina (1964-1965), 140-141.

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abandon freedom of choice for the 1970-1971 school year.<sup>62</sup>

As directed by the new court order, District Number Five submitted a new plan to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare on November 15, 1969. Approved with few modifications, the desegregation plan called for a zoning system to assign students to individual schools. Two zones were created for high and junior high students, each with one high school and one junior high school. For the elementary students, seven zones were created, each centered around one of seven elementary schools. Students would attend the schools in their respective zone. Since neighborhoods were fairly segregated, the zones tended to be either majority black or majority white. For example, the high and junior high zones were divided by two railroad tracks creating a predominately black eastern and southern zone and a predominantly white western and northern zone. Although a couple of the elementary zones were balanced, most were predominantly black or predominately white. District officials argued that a zoning plan was needed in order to avoid large-scale busing. The plan was set to go into effect for the 1970-1971 school year.<sup>63</sup>

While the desegregation plan pleased some Orangeburgers, others were disappointed by it. A second private school was founded in Orangeburg in 1970 as a result of further desegregation. Named Willington Academy, the school began the 1970-1971 school year with nearly three hundred students. The plaintiffs from Adams v. School District No. 5 appealed in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals trying to force the district to adopt a more thorough desegregation plan.<sup>64</sup>

In early June of 1970, over three hundred whites showed up at a meeting in Orangeburg High School's cafeteria. They confronted the school district's superintendent about the zoning desegregation plan and presented him with a petition signed by over eighteen hundred residents asking for the plan to be reconsidered. These white citizens were upset because they were placed in the majority black zones on the eastern and southern sides of the city. Besides the possibility of having their children attend largely African-American schools, they feared that their property values may decline due to the zoning. On Monday, June 15, the group met again at the high school cafeteria and decided to organize as Help Orangeburg Public Education

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<sup>62</sup>Times and Democrat, 30 August 1965, 1; 31 August 1966, 12; 13 August 1969, 1-A; 27 January 1970, 1.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 13 August 1969, 1-A; 25 October 1969, 1, 2; 27 January 1970, 1.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 27 January 1970, 1; 23 July 1970, 3-A; 3 July 1971, 1; Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education, State of South Carolina (1970-1971), 77.

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(HOPE). The members of HOPE held meetings at the cafeteria almost on a weekly basis through August. The organization raised money to hire a Columbia attorney to fight the zoning desegregation plan. In addition, it conducted a survey of white parents in the majority black zones to see how many planned to send their children to private schools rather than the majority black public schools. The purpose of the survey was to develop statistics showing how little desegregation would be accomplished by the plan. HOPE proposed that a pairing plan replace the zoning plan. Essentially, the pairing plan would put all of the students of each grade at one school.<sup>65</sup>

In the end, the district was forced by the federal court to replace the zoning plan with a pairing plan for the 1971-1972 school year. Predominately white Orangeburg High School was merged with predominately black Wilkinson High School to form Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School. The pairing plan caused the number of students being bused to double from two to four thousand. The private school population of Orangeburg increased as a result of full-scale desegregation for the 1971-1972 school year. Wade Hampton Academy that year had nearly nine hundred students and Willington Academy had over six hundred. Thus, the trends of desegregated public schools and white flight to private segregation academies that began in 1964 culminated in 1971.<sup>66</sup>

Desegregation came to Orangeburg County's other seven school districts during this time period. Three of them were placed under desegregation court orders. As in the city district, private schools were formed to avoid desegregation including Bowman Academy in Bowman, Heritage Hall Academy above Norway, and Holly Hill Academy near Holly Hill. By the 1971-1972 school year, Orangeburg County had over two thousand private school students, the fifth largest total in the state.<sup>67</sup>

The events surrounding school desegregation and the founding of private academies in Orangeburg County are significant for the changes which they brought to the community. The dual school system was replaced by an unified system which was majority black. Many whites fled the public system for the private segregation academies which flourished after full-

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<sup>65</sup>Times and Democrat, 2 June 1970, 1, 10; 17 June 1970, 1, 10; 24 June 1970, 1; 2 July 1970, 14-A; 9 July 1970, 2-A; 16 July 1970, 1-A; 23 July 1970, 3-A; 14 August 1970, 1-A, 7-A; 27 August 1970, 13-A.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 3 July 1971, 1; 23 July 1971, 1; 30 August 1971, 1; 31 August 1971, 4; Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education, State of South Carolina (1971-1972), 322-323.

<sup>67</sup>Times and Democrat, 20 August 1971, 1; Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education, State of South Carolina (1971-1972), 309-325.

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scale desegregation in 1971. Thus, the county was once again largely segregated with predominantly black public schools and white private schools. In addition, Orangeburg played an important role in the rise of private segregation academies in South Carolina. Wade Hampton Academy was one of the first four such institutions and remained one of the largest in the state. Wannamaker became a leader of the state's private school movement and helped found the South Carolina Independent School Association of which he was president at one time.<sup>68</sup>

**The Confrontation at South Carolina State College, 1968**

Though segregated public accommodations were rare in Orangeburg by 1968, there were a few including the All Star Bowling Lanes, the city's only bowling alley. Located between the two colleges and downtown, the bowling alley became a major issue for African-Americans. The situation exploded into several nights of protests by black college students in February of 1968. On the eighth of that month, three students were killed by state highway patrolmen on S.C. State's campus. State officials referred to the event as "the Orangeburg Incident" while civil rights leaders referred to it as "the Orangeburg Massacre."<sup>69</sup>

In February of 1967, the students at S.C. State boycotted classes for two weeks as a protest against the lack of funding at the state institution and the strict policies of the college's president. The students received concessions including the president's resignation. By 1968, students were ready to protest the policy of the All Star Bowling Lanes. On Monday night, February 6, a group of African-American students from the colleges entered the bowling alley and refused to leave. Roger A. Poston, the city's police chief, closed the alley for the night and the students left.<sup>70</sup>

On Tuesday, another group came to the bowling alley and around fifteen were arrested for trespassing. After the arrests, approximately three hundred black college students came to the parking lot at the A & P Shopping Center where the bowling alley was located. In addition, about one hundred law enforcement officers were present including city policemen, county sheriff's deputies, state highway patrolmen, and SLED agents under Chief J. Pete Strom. After a student broke a window at the bowling alley, he was arrested. In addition, a fire truck arrived at the shopping center's

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<sup>68</sup>Edgar, 128-129; Times and Democrat, 10 June 1970, 2; 23 July 1970, 1-A; Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education, State of South Carolina (1971-1972), 309-325.

<sup>69</sup>Bass, 2, 15.

<sup>70</sup>Charlotte Observer, 8 February 1968, 7B; 15 February 1968, 1A.

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parking lot. When the crowd of students began moving towards the law enforcement officers, the officers began beating the students with long batons. On their retreat back to the colleges, the students broke car and store windows along E. Russell Street causing thousands of dollars in property damage. One city police officer and seven students were admitted to the hospital. As a result of the event, Governor Robert E. McNair mobilized an Orangeburg National Guard unit of two hundred and fifty men while placing an Edgefield unit on alert.<sup>71</sup>

The African-American college students requested a permit for a march to City Hall on Wednesday morning, but city officials refused to issue a permit since they feared that more violence may occur. Instead, Mayor E.O. Pendarvis, City Administrator Robert T. Stevenson, and two chamber of commerce officials attended a mass meeting of students at White Hall, S.C. State's auditorium. The officials received a list of grievances asking for an investigation into police brutality concerning Tuesday night, the formation of a human relations committee, increased job opportunities for blacks, and further desegregation including the All Star Bowling Lanes. M. Maceo Nance, acting president of S.C. State, suggested that African-Americans boycott downtown Orangeburg. Other meetings occurred Wednesday afternoon including one between city officials and student leaders at City Hall. On the issue of the bowling alley, there was little agreement. The U.S. Justice Department and the city attorney were uncertain if the establishment was covered under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. While the bowling alley's manager maintained that it was not, local African-Americans claimed that it was covered since it had a snack bar. McNair mobilized National Guard units from Bamberg and Edgefield on Wednesday. By that night, some of the National Guard forces left the local armory and took up positions surrounding the A & P Shopping Center and a demolition site between it and the colleges. After students began throwing objects at passing cars on College Avenue in front of S.C. State, a stretch of the street was closed by highway patrolmen. Most of the patrolmen gathered at the intersection of E. Russell Street and College Avenue.<sup>72</sup>

On Thursday, February 8, the situation remained the same with highway patrolmen and guardsmen stationed at certain locations around the city. Around nine o'clock that night, shots were fired from the direction of Claflin College towards patrolmen. Within the next hour and a half, students set grassfires and tried to burn down a vacant house. Around one hundred and fifty students gathered near a grassfire in front of the S.C. State campus. Fearful that the fire may spread, officials ordered a fire

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 7 February 1968, 4B; 8 February 1968, 1B, 7B; 10 February 1968, 1A; 15 February 1968, 12A.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 8 February 1968, 1B, 7B, 8B; 9 February 1968, 1C, 4C; 11 February 1968, 2A.

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truck to the scene. When a group of highway patrolmen moved in to protect the firemen, a number of the patrolmen positioned themselves on an embankment at the edge of the campus while the students moved into a field in front of Lowman Hall. A highway patrolman was hit in the face by a bannister from the vacant house, although many of the other patrolmen thought he had been shot. Sixty-six highway patrolmen, forty-five guardsmen, twenty-five SLED agents, and a number of local officers were in the vicinity. At this time, the students began coming back from the area around Lowman Hall. Suddenly, a number of the patrolmen and a city policeman opened fire into the crowd. The result was thirty students wounded, three mortally. The students who died were Samuel Hammond from S.C. State, Henry Smith from S.C. State, and Delano Middleton from a local high school.<sup>73</sup>

The state's leaders and most of the national media reported that the highway patrolmen returned fire. An Associated Press reporter claimed to have witnessed an exchange of gunfire during which a patrolman was shot. At an early morning press conference in the local armory, officials claimed that the protestors had fired at patrolmen. McNair blamed black power activists for the violence, especially Cleveland L. Sellers, Jr., who was a former high ranking officer in SNCC. On Thursday night following the shooting, he was arrested on five charges and taken to the state penitentiary in Columbia. Sellers became the scapegoat for the incident, although he denied any significant involvement. Both colleges were closed the day following the shooting and a curfew was declared for the city and later the whole county. Six hundred guardsmen patrolled the city using armored vehicles. Mayor Pendarvis quickly appointed a human relations committee which began holding meetings.<sup>74</sup>

African-Americans in Orangeburg responded to the shooting with frustration and anger. NAACP State Field Secretary Newman spoke to S.C. State students at the auditorium on Friday morning before most left the campus. He urged the students to remain calm and return home. At a mass meeting in Trinity United Methodist Church on Sunday, February 11, eight hundred African-Americans decided to boycott downtown until the city's leadership acted on the list of grievances. In addition, they called for the replacement of the guardsmen by federal troops. The NAACP rejected the mayor's human relations committee since black leaders were given no opportunity to suggest members, although this disagreement was quickly cleared up. By February 28, the situation in Orangeburg was returning to normal with the

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 9 February 1968, 1A, 1C; 10 February 1968, 1A, 2A; Bass, 56-77, 209.

<sup>74</sup>Charlotte Observer, 10 February 1968, 1A, 2A; 11 February 1968, 1A, 2A; 12 February 1968, 1B; 14 February 1968, 8B; 15 February 1968, 12A; Bass, 79-92.

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lifting of the curfew and the withdrawal of most of the guardsmen. The two colleges reopened in late February. On the day before S.C. State reopened, NAACP National Executive Secretary Wilkins spoke to the students.<sup>75</sup>

Soon after the shooting, the Federal Bureau of Investigation began its investigation of the event. On May 19, 1969, nine highway patrolmen went on trial for federal charges of excessive force. Held in Florence, the result of the trial was verdicts of not guilty for all nine defendants. In 1970, Sellers went on trial at the Orangeburg Count Courthouse for charges resulting from the events of 1968. He was found guilty of the charge of rioting and given the maximum sentence. During the trial, one hundred guardsmen were stationed at the Orangeburg National Guard Armory.<sup>76</sup>

While the state's leaders and much of the national media claimed that there was an exchange of gunfire, others disagreed. In a 1970 book entitled The Orangeburg Massacre, reporters Jack Bass of The Charlotte Observer and Jack Nelson of The Los Angeles Times argued that the highway patrolmen were not fired upon immediately before the shooting. In fact, many of the students were shot in the back by patrolmen using double ought buckshot for riot control. In addition, the two reporters criticized the FBI's investigation. Even though the evidence seems to confirm the positions of Bass and Nelson, the controversial events of 1968 are still debated.<sup>77</sup>

The confrontation at S.C. State was not the only racially tense time in Orangeburg during 1968. Like cities across the nation, Orangeburg experienced racial incidents after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on April 4, 1968. During the next day, four hundred students from S.C. State and Claflin marched to Memorial Plaza downtown and knelt in silence before returning to the two colleges. Two days later a large warehouse was destroyed by an arson fire causing a quarter of a million dollars worth of damage. On the same day, firemen responded to a number of smaller fires and false alarms.<sup>78</sup> Orangeburg was one of four South Carolina areas placed under curfew.<sup>79</sup>

Though the confrontation at S.C. State was significant to certain groups,

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<sup>75</sup>Charlotte Observer, 12 February 1968, 1B; 14 February 1968, 8B; 21 February 1968, 10A; Times and Democrat, 29 February 1968, 1-A; Bass, 92-93.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 82, 159, 161, 185, 205-210; Times and Democrat, 26 September 1970, 1; 29 September 1970, 1.

<sup>77</sup>Bass, xvii-xviii, 65-73, 79-97, 143-157.

<sup>78</sup>Times and Democrat, 6 April 1968, 1; 8 April 1968, 1.

<sup>79</sup>Edgar, 135-136.



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the event failed to achieve long-term national attention or to bring about any major reforms. Bass and Nelson argue that the shooting was largely ignored for several reasons. First, most of the national media misled the public by reporting that an exchange of gunfire had taken place. Second, the nation's concern about the civil rights movement had decreased by 1968 due to the rise of black militants, riots in major northern cities the previous year, and the growing war in Vietnam. Third, the shooting at S.C. State became just one of a series of violent incidents in a turbulent year which included the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the assassination of presidential candidate Robert Kennedy, and the rioting at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.<sup>80</sup>

While the impact of the confrontation at S.C. State was limited, the event is still significant for what it reveals about the national mood in the late 1960s and early 1970s. With the outbreak of black militancy and race riots, the national mood shifted to a "law and order" mentality. Richard M. Nixon would capitalize on this mood in his 1968 presidential campaign. As a result of this attitude, law enforcement officials began taking tougher measures in dealing with domestic disturbances such as civil rights and anti-war student protests. The shooting at S.C. State was just one of a string of violent confrontations between authorities and students on American college campuses during the late 1960s and early 1970s. In fact, the Orangeburg shooting resulted in the first federal trial of police officials for using excessive force at a campus protest in the United States. Campus violence culminated with the shootings at Ohio's Kent State and Mississippi's Jackson State in 1970 during Vietnam War demonstrations. The violence at S.C. State tells much about the police tactics used to control campus demonstrations in the United State during this time period.<sup>81</sup>

Additionally, the confrontation at S.C. State is significant since it reflects the mood of black America concerning the shortcomings of the civil rights movement by the late 1960s. Despite the passage of landmark civil rights legislation, the U.S. Justice Department seemed unwilling to enforce federal laws and authorities were using deadly force on an African-American college campus.<sup>82</sup> In response to the shooting, black students in the Carolinas and Virginia staged protests at Denmark, Spartanburg, and Rock

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<sup>80</sup>Thomas F. Pettigrew, foreword to The Orangeburg Massacre, 2nd ed., by Jack Bass and Jack Nelson (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1984), viii-ix.

<sup>81</sup>Chafe, 318, 382-388, 404-419; Bass, 86-87, 161.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 82-88.

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Hill, South Carolina; at Charlotte, Greensboro, Durham, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and at Petersburg, Virginia. The Durham demonstration ended with the use of fire hoses by police officers and the smashing of store windows by protesters. Many of these demonstrations included coffins to represent the three dead students and ceremonies where McNair was burned in effigy.<sup>83</sup> Another demonstration took place at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Students from S.C. State and other colleges staged two demonstrations at the South Carolina State House in Columbia.<sup>84</sup> Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., called for the patrolmen to be held accountable for the shooting of the students.<sup>85</sup>

In addition to what the event reveals about the nation in 1968, the confrontation at S.C. State is significant for its impact on South Carolina. The state had reacted to the civil rights movement with moderation unlike many of her sister southern states such as Alabama and Mississippi. This trend was clearly seen in the year 1963 when Harvey Gantt became the first African-American student at Clemson University. The event occurred without the violence that had accompanied desegregation at the University of Mississippi the previous year. Furthermore, Columbia's political and business leaders voluntarily desegregated local public accommodations winning that city national praise.<sup>86</sup> In fact, McNair was the moderate candidate on race issues in the 1966 gubernatorial election and won ninety-nine percent of the black vote. Before 1968, no deaths had occurred due to the civil rights movement in South Carolina. However, the event at S.C. State changed the state's record on race matters and destroyed its moderate image.<sup>87</sup>

Lastly, the confrontation at S.C. State is significant for the changes that it brought to Orangeburg. In the aftermath of the event, the U.S. Justice Department took legal actions to desegregate both the All Star Bowling Lanes and the Orangeburg Regional Hospital, two of the last remaining elements of segregation in the community.<sup>88</sup> The campus of S.C. State

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<sup>83</sup>Charlotte Observer, 16 February 1968, 3B; 17 February 1968, 1B, 3B; 19 February 1968, 1C.

<sup>84</sup>Bass, 92-94.

<sup>85</sup>Charlotte Observer, 14 February 1968, 1B.

<sup>86</sup>Edgar, 104-107.

<sup>87</sup>Charlotte Observer, 15 February 1968, 1A, 12A.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 11 February 1968, 15A; 14 February 1968, 1B.

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received a number of new facilities in the years following the incident thanks to a bond issue of over six million dollars passed by the South Carolina General Assembly in June of 1968. Created as a response to the shooting, the bond issue allowed the college to improve its facilities and accept more students.<sup>89</sup>

**F. Associated Property Types**

This section defines three property types. In addition, it provides a list of known sites for each type. The properties in these lists may be grouped into four categories: 1) properties which have been destroyed, 2) properties which may have lost integrity due to alterations, 3) properties which are already listed on the National Register for reasons other than their associations with the civil rights movement, and 4) properties that may be nominated under this multiple property listing. If a property is in the first three categories, its description will state so in italics. Properties in the fourth category may be eligible for the National Register pending further research.

PROPERTY TYPE: **SITES ASSOCIATED WITH ORGANIZING AND PROTEST**

A Site associated with Organizing and Protest is a property connected with the civil rights movement in Orangeburg County as either: a) the scene of planning sessions or mass meetings aimed at promoting desegregation or b) the scene/target of civil rights activities. These sites are significant for their association with the effort to end segregation in Orangeburg County. A Site associated with Organizing and Protest must meet the following requirements to be nominated as part of this multiple property listing:

- 1) It must be closely associated with the events of the civil rights movement in Orangeburg County and qualify for listing on the National Register under Criterion A or B.
- 2) It must meet Criteria Consideration G since its period of significance will be within the past fifty years. Therefore, the property must be of exceptional significance at the local, state, or national level.
- 3) If the site is a religious property, it must meet Criteria Consideration A as being significant in areas other than religion. Religious properties associated with civil rights activities should be eligible under Criterion A for social history.
- 4) It must maintain integrity of location, design, and materials. In other words, the property should retain its overall appearance from its

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<sup>89</sup>Bass, 96-97.

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period of significance. A property is not disqualified for minor alterations which do not change its overall appearance.

The following are known Sites associated with Organizing and Protest:

**All Star Bowling Lanes and Parking Lot** (located at the A & P Shopping Center on the north side of the 500 block of E. Russell Street, City of Orangeburg): In 1968, this segregated bowling alley sparked several days of protests and violence culminating in the S.C. State campus shooting on February 8. Violence between protesting college students and law enforcement officials occurred in the parking lot two nights before the campus shooting.

**Claflin College Gymnasium** (located on the campus of Claflin College, City of Orangeburg): Thurgood Marshall spoke to a mass meeting of African-Americans in this building in 1955.

**East End Motor Company** (located the northeast corner of E. Russell Street and College Avenue, City of Orangeburg): This automobile dealership was the scene of the worst property damage following a disturbance at a local bowling alley on February 6, 1968.

**Fisher's Rexall Drugs** (located at the southwest corner of E. Russell and Middleton Streets, City of Orangeburg): The lunch counter in this drug store was the scene of sit-in demonstrations in 1960. *The building is listed on the National Register as a contributing property in the Orangeburg Downtown Historic District.*

**Law Office of Earl W. Coblyn and Zack E. Townsend** (located at the northeast corner of Amelia and Middleton Streets, City of Orangeburg): This building housed the law office for two of the African-American lawyers who represented the plaintiffs in Adams v. School District No. 5. *The building is listed on the National Register as a contributing property in the Orangeburg Downtown Historic District.*

**Law Office of W. Newton Pou** (located at 159 N. Boulevard, City of Orangeburg): The building housed the office of the African-American attorney who prepared the Orangeburg and Elloree school desegregation petitions in 1955.

**Livingston Warehouse Site** (located at the southwest corner of N. Boulevard and Peasley Streets, City of Orangeburg): A arson fire destroyed this warehouse following the assassination of King in 1968. *The site is now occupied by a vacant field and apartments.*

**Orangeburg County Free Library's White Branch** (located at 133 Centre Street, City of Orangeburg): This segregated public library was closed following read-ins during the Orangeburg Movement in 1964.

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**Orangeburg Regional Hospital** (located on the block bound by Carolina Avenue, Holly Street, Poole Street, and Summers Avenue, City of Orangeburg): This hospital was the target of a desegregation suit and was one of the last public facilities to be desegregated in Orangeburg. In addition, the students wounded in 1968 were brought to this facility. *The front portions of the building have since been removed and the remaining sections have been substantially altered.*

**S.C. State Campus Shooting Site** (located at the southeast corner of State and Watson Streets, South Carolina State University, City of Orangeburg): This site was the field where state highway patrolmen opened fire into a crowd of demonstrating students on February 8, 1968. *The field has since been replaced by the university's administration building.*

**S.H. Kress Building** (located at the northeast corner of E. Russell and Church Streets, City of Orangeburg): The Kress Department Store in this building was the primary target of the 1960 sit-in demonstrations in Orangeburg. *The building is a non-contributing property in the Orangeburg Downtown National Register Historic District. Post-1960 alterations may have compromised the building's integrity.*

**South Carolina State College Law School** (located on the campus of South Carolina State University, City of Orangeburg): Founded in an attempt to preserve the all-white law school at the University of South Carolina, this law school trained numerous black attorneys in South Carolina who would win the desegregation cases of the 1950s and 1960s.

**Trinity United Methodist Church** (located at 185 N. Boulevard Street, City of Orangeburg): This African-American church may be considered the headquarters of the civil rights movement in Orangeburg. It served as a planning and meeting place for blacks during several periods of civil rights activity in the city as described above in Section E. *The church is listed on the National Register for other areas of significance.*

**White Hall Site** (located on the campus of South Carolina State University, City of Orangeburg): This college auditorium served as a meeting place for students during several periods of civil rights activity in Orangeburg. In 1968, a meeting between students and city officials occurred in White Hall. *The building has since been demolished.*

**White Edisto River Beach** (located behind the Orangeburg Arts Center which is at 649 Riverside Drive, City of Orangeburg): In 1964, this segregated swimming area witnessed wade-ins which convinced city officials to close the facility.

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PROPERTY TYPE: **SITES ASSOCIATED WITH WHITE RESISTANCE**

A Site associated with White Resistance is a property connected with the civil rights movement in Orangeburg County as either: a) the scene of law enforcement and court activities aimed at restraining civil rights protests or b) the scene of efforts to preserve segregation and provide private whites-only alternatives to closed or desegregated public facilities. These sites are significant for their association with white attempts to delay and circumvent civil rights efforts. A Site associated with White Resistance must meet the following requirements to be nominated as part of this multiple property listing:

- 1) It must be closely associated with the events of the civil rights movement in Orangeburg County and qualify for listing on the National Register under Criterion A or B.
- 2) It must meet Criteria Consideration G since its period of significance will be within the past fifty years. Therefore, the property must be of exceptional significance at the local, state, or national level.
- 3) If the site is a religious property, it must meet Criteria Consideration A as being significant in areas other than religion. Religious properties associated with civil rights activities should be eligible under Criterion A for social history.
- 4) It must maintain integrity of location, design, and materials. In other words, the property should retain its overall appearance from its period of significance. A property is not disqualified for minor alterations which do not change its overall appearance.

The following are known Sites associated with White Resistance:

**Adam Moss House Site** (located at the northwest corner of Glover and Elliott Streets, City of Orangeburg): This structure housed part of Wade Hampton Academy for the 1964-1965 school year. *The house has since been demolished.*

**American Legion Post 4 Hut** (located on the west side of Riverside Drive across from the end of Carolina Avenue, City of Orangeburg): This riverfront property was the location for the whites-only swimming area founded after the public river beaches were closed due to wade-ins during 1964. In addition, the dedication ceremony for Wade Hampton Academy was held in the hut.

**American Legion Post 127 Hut Site** (located off S.C. Highway 47 west of the Town of Elloree): South Carolina's first white citizens council was founded here in 1955. *The building has since been demolished.*

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**Elloree High School Ballpark** (located on the southeast side of Harlin Street between Lexington Road and Dantzler Street, Town of Elloree): This baseball field was the scene of a mass meeting for the Elloree Citizens Council in 1955. *The grandstand and other elements of the ballpark have since been demolished.*

**Elloree High School Gymnasium** (located at the northwest corner of Harlin Street and Lexington Road, Town of Elloree): This gym served as a meeting place for the Elloree Citizens Council in late 1955. In addition, it is the last remaining building from the Elloree High School which was the target of a desegregation petition in 1955. *The replacement of the building's original windows may have compromised the property's integrity.*

**Elloree Training School** (located on the block bound by Wolfe Street, Learning Road, and Bay Street, west of the Town of Elloree): In 1956, over twenty African-American teachers lost their jobs at this black school after they refused to reveal their attitudes towards the NAACP and desegregation.

**Lake View Club** (located at 692 Murray Road, City of Orangeburg): The building served as a meeting place for the Orangeburg Citizens Council in 1964.

**Mirmow Field** (located at the northeast corner of Whaley and Rowe Streets, City of Orangeburg): This municipal ballpark was the scene of mass rallies by the Orangeburg Citizens Council in 1955 and Goldwater supporters in 1964.

**Northside Baptist Church** (located at the southeast corner of Columbia Road and Bennett Avenue, City of Orangeburg): This church's education building served as temporary housing for part of Wade Hampton Academy for the 1964-1965 school year. The sanctuary was added to the church after 1965.

**Orangeburg Citizens Council Office** (located at 367 E. Russell Street, City of Orangeburg): This building contained the office of the Orangeburg Citizens Council during late 1955. *The building is a non-contributing property in the Orangeburg Downtown National Register District.*

**Orangeburg City Hall** (located at the southwest corner of Middleton and Market Streets, City of Orangeburg): The Orangeburg City Council passed numerous ordinances attempting to restrict civil rights activities. Also, meetings were held in this building between city officials and African-American leaders in 1963 and 1968. *The building is listed on the National Register as a contributing property in the Orangeburg Downtown Historic District.*

**Orangeburg City Fire Station** (located at the northwest corner of Middleton and Hampton Streets, City of Orangeburg): Fire trucks and men from this station were used to break up a 1960 demonstration and were present during

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the mass arrests in 1963. In addition, fire trucks and men from this station played a role in the events of 1968. *The building is listed on the National Register as a contributing property in the Orangeburg Downtown Historic District.*

**Orangeburg City Police Station and Jail** (located on the south side of Market Street immediately behind City Hall and Stevenson Auditorium, City of Orangeburg): Civil rights demonstrators were incarcerated in this facility and pickets registered under a city ordinance here during the Orangeburg Movement. *The building is listed on the National Register as a contributing property in the Orangeburg Downtown Historic District.*

**Orangeburg County Courthouse** (located on the block bound by Amelia, Doyle, St. Paul, and Sunnyside Streets, City of Orangeburg): This building was the scene of trials concerning civil rights activities in Orangeburg. In addition, the building was the place where African-Americans registered to vote. *Post-1970 alterations may have compromised the building's integrity.*

**Orangeburg County Jail** (located at the southeast corner of St. Paul and Meeting Streets, City of Orangeburg): African-American protestors were incarcerated in this jail and within an outdoor enclosure surrounding it during several periods of civil rights activity in Orangeburg. *The property is listed on the National Register for other areas of significance.*

**Orangeburg High School** (located on the north side of Bennett Avenue between Columbia Road and N. Boulevard Street, City of Orangeburg): The gymnasium at this school was the scene of several mass meetings by the Study Group of Private Schools in 1964. In addition, the school complex was the main target of school desegregation in 1964. *Certain buildings in the complex may not retain integrity. For example, the gymnasium's windows have apparently been replaced.*

**Orangeburg National Guard Armory** (located at the northeast corner of Broughton and Bull Streets, City of Orangeburg): This facility was used as a temporary jail during the mass arrests in 1963. In addition, it served as the headquarters for the National Guard during the mobilization in 1968. *The building's integrity may have been compromised due to alterations apparently made during the early 1970s.*

**Thackston Junior High School Gymnasium** (located at 500 Sellers Avenue, City of Orangeburg): This facility was the scene of an Orangeburg Citizens Council meeting concerning the federal school desegregation suit in 1964.

**Wade Hampton Academy** (located at 2651 North Road, West Orangeburg Census Designated Place): This property was the permanent facility of the private segregation academy founded in response to school desegregation in 1964.



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**Whittaker Elementary School** (located at the northwest corner of Whittaker Parkway and Myers Road, Whittaker Heights Census Designated Place): Gloria Rackley, an African-American third grade teacher at this school, was fired in 1963 for her role in the Orangeburg Movement. Black students subsequently boycotted this and other African-American schools in the city's district.

**Willington Academy** (located at 955 Willington Road, West Orangeburg Census Designated Place): This was the permanent campus of Orangeburg's second private segregation academy founded in 1970.

**Woodmen of the World Lodge 17 Hall** (located at 460 Fair Street, City of Orangeburg): The Orangeburg Citizens Council was founded here in 1955.

PROPERTY TYPE: **COMMEMORATIVE SITES**

A Commemorative Site is a property which was created or named in honor of civil rights activity in Orangeburg County. These properties are significant for what they reveal about the commemoration of the local civil rights movement. A Commemorative Site must meet the following requirements to be nominated as part of this multiple property listing:

- 1) It must be closely associated with the events of the civil rights movement in Orangeburg County and qualify for listing on the National Register under Criterion A or B.
- 2) It must meet Criteria Consideration G since its period of significance will be within the past fifty years. Therefore, the property must be of exceptional significance at the local, state, or national level.
- 3) It must meet Criteria Consideration F. Thus, the site must be significant for what it reveals about the commemoration of civil rights activities, not simply as a commemorative property.
- 4) It must maintain integrity of location, design, and materials. In other words, the property should retain its overall appearance from its period of significance. A property is not disqualified for minor alterations which do not change its overall appearance.

The following are known Commemorative Sites:

**Smith-Hammond-Middleton Memorial** (located on the campus of South Carolina State University, City of Orangeburg): In 1969, this small monument was placed on the college's campus in memory of the three students killed there in 1968.

**Smith-Hammond-Middleton Memorial Center** (located on the campus of South Carolina State University, Brookdale Census Designated Place): This

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athletic facility was named after the three students killed at the college in 1968.

**G. Geographical Data**

The geographical area for this multiple property nomination is Orangeburg County, South Carolina.

**H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

This multiple property nomination was prepared after the civil rights movement in Orangeburg County was researched primarily through newspapers and secondary sources. Properties listed in this multiple resource documentation form were included based on the above research. Further research on each property is needed before determining eligibility. Those individual properties nominated as part of this multiple property nomination have been researched more fully. In addition, further research on the civil rights movement in Orangeburg County may reveal other properties.

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