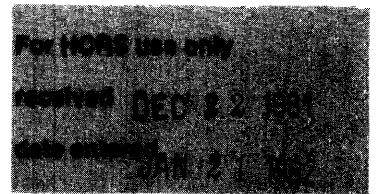


United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



## 1. Name

historic Voorhees College Historic District

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number a portion of the Voorhees College campus not for publication

city, town Denmark *ms.*  vicinity of congressional district Second

state South Carolina code 045 county Bamberg code 009

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Board of Trustees

street & number Voorhees College

city, town Denmark  vicinity of state South Carolina 29042

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bamberg County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Bamberg state South Carolina 29042

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina  
has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Voorhees College Historic District is located just southeast of the town of Denmark, South Carolina. This district includes the older portion of the campus in which the majority of the buildings date from 1905 to the mid 1930s. Six of the properties in the district are outstanding historically or architecturally. Seven other properties are also significant in these areas. Of the nineteen properties included in the historic district, thirteen, or 72 per cent, contribute to its historic or architectural fabric.

Key properties contributing to the character of the historic district:

- Booker T. Washington Hall. Built in 1905 as the Booker T. Washington Hospital, one of the first hospitals in the area, this building was designed by Professor Wilson Cooke from Claflin College in Orangeburg and was built totally by blacks. This two story brick building features Tuscan columns supporting a one story porch across the facade, dentil molding and a leaded glass fanlight.
- Blanton Hall. Two and one half story brick building with curvilinear gables, tracery windows in the dormers, arcaded portico and corbeled chimneys. Built in 1914 as the administration building, Blanton Hall now houses faculty offices, the financial aid office and classrooms.
- Menafee Trades Building. A gift of Mr. Ralph Voorhees, the Boys Trade Building was built in 1907 and later named for Martin A. Menafee, treasurer of Voorhees College and husband of Elizabeth Wright, the founder of Voorhees College. Two story brick building with one story wings on right and left elevations. Projecting pavillion with corbeled cornice and hipped roof cupola on facade.
- St. Philip's Episcopal Chapel. This 1935 chapel was built completely by Voorhees masonry students. The chapel features a steep pitched gable roof, brick buttresses and many decorative brick motifs.
- Grave site of Elizabeth Evelyn Wright. Burial place of the founder of Voorhees College. Elizabeth Evelyn Wright Menafee was buried here in December, 1906.
- Bedford Hall. Built in 1912 as a dining hall, this one story brick building features curvilinear central gable, metal shingled roof with polygonal cupola and decorative string course above windows. Named for Rev. R. C. Bedford, aide to Booker T. Washington and member of the first board of trustees of Voorhees.

Other properties contributing to the character of the historic district:

- Wright Hall. This three and one half story brick building was constructed in 1932 as a dormitory. It was named for the founder of the college and features casement windows and a corbeled brick cornice.
- Massachusetts Hall. Built in 1930, this large two story brick building was the first brick academic building on the Voorhees campus. It was named for the Massachusetts diocese of the Episcopal church. This building houses an 800 seat auditorium.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
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**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Voorhees College, located adjacent to Denmark, South Carolina, was founded in 1897 as Denmark Industrial School by Miss Elizabeth Evelyn Wright. The Voorhees College Historic District is comprised of thirteen buildings built between 1905 and 1935. The district's significance is derived from its importance as a pioneer in higher education for blacks in the area and from its association with Elizabeth Wright, teacher, humanitarian, and founder of Voorhees.

Elizabeth Wright's determination to establish a school modeled after her alma mater, Tuskegee Institute, began while she worked her way through the institute. After several failures in other small towns in the vicinity of Denmark caused by prejudice, arson, jealousy, and ignorance, Elizabeth Wright came to Denmark and tried once again to found her training school for poor children of her race. Under the patronage of such broad-minded residents as Senator S. G. Mayfield and Mrs. Ellen Kennerly, for whom the first building was named, and with the invaluable material and spiritual support of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Voorhees of Clinton, New Jersey, the school moved to a permanent home just outside the town limits of Denmark in 1901. Throughout her life Miss Wright was constantly in communication with Booker T. Washington, who guided her efforts with specific instructions, letters of recommendation, and donations from friends of the black education movement.

In 1902 the name of the school was officially changed to Voorhees Industrial School in honor of the Voorhees's generosity and in 1904 Voorhees was incorporated by the state legislature. A normal and industrial school was established in 1929 as the first step in higher education for teachers. Voorhees School and Junior College, as the school was known in 1948, was the only high school for blacks in Denmark. In 1950, in cooperation with state officials, an Area Trade School was established on land donated by Voorhees School. The final name change came in 1962 when the school became Voorhees College. The high school was discontinued in 1965. In 1967 Voorhees College began offering a four year program and in 1968 it was fully accredited as a liberal arts college by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Since the days when Elizabeth Wright walked from church to church seeking donations, Voorhees had had its financial problems, but in 1923 the school came under the protection of the Protestant Episcopal Church and the American Church Institute for Negroes. Shortly after this affiliation the students themselves built the school chapel, St. Philip's Chapel, with funds donated by the Women's Auxillary of the Protestant Episcopal Church and trustee Major W. B. Moore.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property approximately 40 acres

Quadrangle name Denmark

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

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4	8	8	3	4	8
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3	6	8	5	6	6	5
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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4	8	8	3	4	4
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3	6	8	5	2	9	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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4	8	8	0	6	3
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3	6	8	4	7	7	8
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D 

1	7
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4	8	7	7	2	0
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3	6	8	4	9	8	0
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E 

1	7
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4	8	8	0	0	0
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3	6	8	5	5	4	2
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F 

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G 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The boundary of the Voorhees College Historic District nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying Bamberg County Tax Map number 038 drawn to a scale of 400 feet to the inch. The boundaries contain all those properties which retain their historical and architectural integrity and which illustrate the significance of the district.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Walker, Suzanne Pickens

organization S. C. Department of Archives and History

date December 10, 1980

street & number 1430 Senate Street

telephone (803) 758-5816

city or town Columbia

state South Carolina 29211

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Charles E. Lee* 12/2/81

Charles E. Lee

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

### For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date

1/21/82

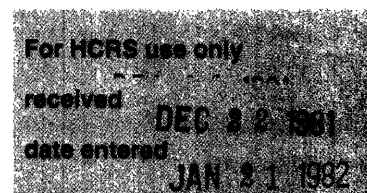
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

4. St. James Building. Two story brick building has one story wings to either side. Built in 1932 to house home economics department and campus guests, it now contains the business and economics departments.
12. Pine Grove Cottage. This one story frame cottage with hip roof was built in 1914-1915 as a cottage for male teachers. It was moved from another part of the campus to its present location in 1967 and now houses the Head Start program.
11. Old Agricultural Building. Teaching agricultural skills was one of the early goals of Voorhees. This one story brick building with gable roof and segmental arch windows and doorways was the location of the agriculture department from its construction in the early 1930s until 1956. It is now used for storage.
14. Guess family graves. Property for Voorhees Industrial school was purchased from Mr. Guess by Miss Wright.
19. Old Pump House. One story brick building with hipped roof and segmental arch windows and doorways. Now used for storage. Constructed ca. 1925.

Properties not contributing to the historic district:

3. Jessie Dorsey Green Infirmary. One story brick house built in 1949.
10. Faculty Grove Apartments. Built in 1937 as boys' dormitory. Now apartments for faculty.
9. Elizabeth E. Wright Memorial Library. Modern two story brick and concrete building constructed in 1970.
16. Modern trailer.
17. Horne Information Tower. Small brick structure built late 1950s.
18. T. H. Moore Student Center. One story brick building with modern windows and doors.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

EDUCATION

Voorhees College was founded by Elizabeth Evelyn Wright in 1897 for the education of poor black children in South Carolina. Consciously following the example set by Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute, Miss Wright stressed vocational education for her students. For some time the Voorhees Training School provided the only high school for blacks in the area. The later junior college and four year programs were leaders in higher education for blacks. Constant self evaluation and improvement have continuously raised the level of Voorhees's educational standards in order to provide a quality college education for black students from all geographic areas and several foreign countries.

SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

Elizabeth Wright's determination to establish a school for poor blacks based on the ideals of her mentor, Booker T. Washington, for whom the 1905 hospital was named, never waivered even in the face of anger, distrust, and prejudice. Her high ideals inspired those who worked with her as well as her benefactors. In 1923 Voorhees became affiliated with the Protestant Episcopal Church and the American Church Institute for Negroes which provide the chief support for the college today.

ARCHITECTURE

The architectural significance of the Voorhees College Historic District lies in the sophisticated styles and elements used in building this early twentieth century black college. The district also draws architectural significance from the fact that many of the buildings were built solely by the students of the school. In keeping with Booker T. Washington's theory of education, Voorhees students learned skills such as masonry and carpentry which could be used to obtain jobs. As the original frame buildings burned, Miss Wright saw the advantage in replacing them with safer, more durable brick buildings. These new buildings had such fine details as leaded glass windows, curvilinear gables, dentil moldings, decorative brickwork, and cupolas. These buildings were not simply utilitarian but reflected an admiration for architectural design and a desire to master masonry techniques.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 3

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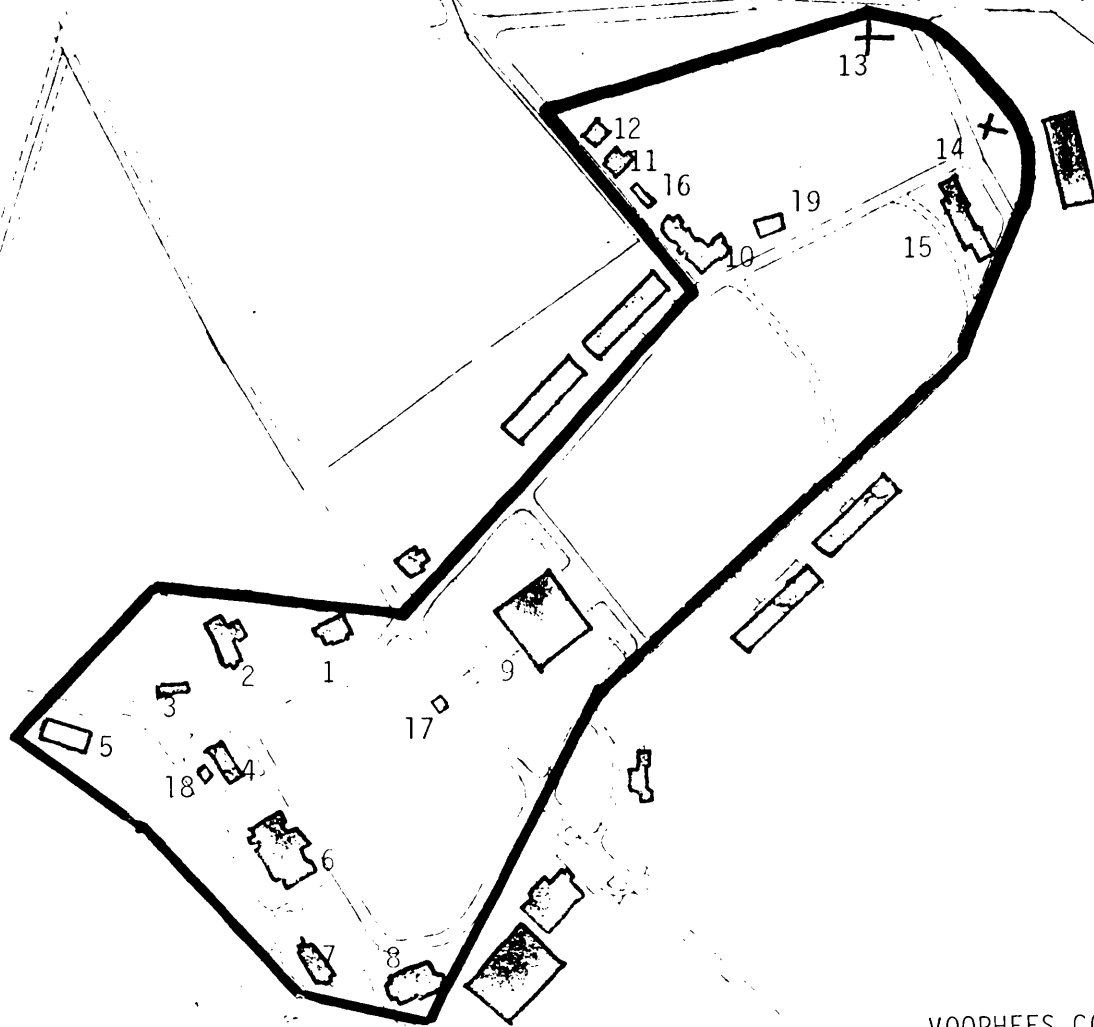
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VOORHEES COLLEGE HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Denmark, South Carolina

NOT TO SCALE

DEC 22 1981

JAN 1982