

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

historic name: Solomon Grove Smith-Hughes Building

other name/site number: FA 0868

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2. Location

street & number: South of County Road 29

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Twin Groves

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Faulkner code: AR 045 zip code: 72039

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3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: Public Schools in the Arkansas Ozarks, 1920-1940

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification:

Other: Plain Traditional

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: Ozark Stone Construction

Materials: foundation Stone roof Asphalt  
walls Stone other Wood, Stucco

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Education  
Ethnic Heritage: Black  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1938 - 1940

Significant Dates: 1939

Significant Person(s): N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: African-American

Architect/Builder: Owens, Silas, Sr.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Information provided by Albessie Thompson, March 1994

Faulkner County Historical Society. *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*.  
Conway, Arkansas: River Road Press, 1986.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- \_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- \_ previously listed in the National Register
- \_ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- \_ designated a National Historic Landmark
- \_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- \_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State historic preservation office
- \_ Other state agency
- \_ Federal agency
- \_ Local government
- \_ University
- \_ Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property: Two

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>551510</u>	<u>3908540</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Two acres in the form of a square, lying in the extreme SW corner of the NE 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of Section 24, Township 8 North, Range 14 West.

Boundary Justification: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes the nominated structure, the site of the destroyed main school building, and all of the property historically associated with this resource that retains its integrity.

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**11. Form Prepared By**  
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Name/Title: Robin Baldwin, Survey Historian  
Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 10/14/94

Street & Number: 323 Center, 1600 Tower Bldg. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

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**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**  
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I, as the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

Cathryn H. Statu \_\_\_\_\_ 10-14-94  
Signature of certifying official Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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**5. National Park Service Certification**  
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date  
of Action

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**6. Function or Use**  
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Historic: Education Sub: School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Current : Vacant/Not in Use Sub: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Summary**

Located in the community of Solomon Grove, near Damascus, in Faulkner County, the Smith-Hughes building was built in 1938-39. Its typical Depression-era school architectural style is made distinctive by the use of native stone construction in an artistic "herringbone" pattern.

**Elaboration**

The Smith-Hughes building in Solomon Grove is a single-story, two room school building constructed in a traditional style, with vernacular stone construction techniques. Uncourse, rough-cut stone, which was taken from a nearby quarry, forms the rectangular walls of this building. They were placed by a local stonemason, whose artistic skills resulted in their unique "herringbone" pattern. The two rooms of this structure rest on a continuous stone foundation and are covered by a composition-shingled, gable-on-hip roof with exposed rafters. A single, stuccoed, interior chimney is exposed on the northern slope of the roof.

The front or southern elevation is composed of a central single-leaf entrance located at the top of eight poured concrete steps. Two stone piers flank the lowest steps of the stoop. The front entrance is covered by a small hipped shingle roof that has exposed eaves and wood brackets. To the left or west of the entrance are four windows. The nearest is a small one-over-one, double-hung window. The remaining three are also double-hung with a nine-over-nine pane configuration. The right, or eastern, wall of the front elevation has no window openings and the solid rock wall displays the stonemasonry "herringbone" pattern very well.

The eastern and western side elevations each have three sets of paired nine over nine double-hung windows that are symmetrically arranged. Access to a crawl space under the building is found on the eastern elevation. The northern rear elevation, beginning on the eastern end has one set of two nine-over-nine windows, followed by one single nine over nine windows, then two smaller one-over-one windows, followed by another single nine-over-nine window. A large double-leaf utility door with a stone lintel and a standard sized single-leaf door set in its eastern side occupies the western end of the northern elevation. All of the nine-over-nine double-hung windows have stone sills and the smaller one-over-one windows have stone lintels and sills.

While the Solomon Groves Smith-Hughes building is quite deteriorated, the structure has been unaltered since the time of its construction. The community is seeking National Register status in part to gain ISTEAF funding to make repairs to the structure. Also included in the nomination is the site of the main school building which burned in the 1960's.



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## Summary

The Solomon Grove Smith-Hughes Building was built by the National Youth Administration with funding assistance from the Smith-Hughes Act in 1938-1939. Local African-American youths were employed as labor for the project, which was directed by local stonemason Silas Owens, Sr. The school building is being nominated as an amendment to the *Public Schools in the Arkansas Ozarks, 1920 - 1940* multiple property submission under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the building is locally significant both for its association with the evolution of the public school system in the Ozark Mountain region and for its direct association with the historic African-American settlement at Solomon Grove. The Solomon Grove Smith-Hughes Building is also locally significant under Criterion C for its association with the prominent local stonemason, Silas Owens, Sr., and features his signature herringbone-patterned stonework.

## Elaboration

The Solomon Grove community, located in northwestern Faulkner County, was settled by African-American families from Memphis in 1880's. The Solomon Grove Baptist Church was founded in 1883, and a one-room log schoolhouse for children from both the Solomon Grove and Zion Grove communities was built shortly thereafter. The Solomon Grove community was very successful during its early period, attracting African-American families from as far away as North Carolina after the Civil War. However, the population in the area gradually declined, leaving only the names of the early families in the cemetery near the site of the original church.

The original schoolhouse burned in the early 1930's and the community was assisted in building a new school for their children by two federal programs created by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration in response to the Great Depression: the National Youth Administration and the Smith-Hughes Act. The Smith-Hughes Act provided for the funding of vocational education projects in rural areas nationwide. The National Youth Administration, managed by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, was a public works program that employed young people in community projects and taught them valuable career skills.

The new school, which included a main school building for grades 1-8 and a "shop" were built in 1938-1939. The main school building was lost in a fire in the 1960's. The "shop" was a multi-use facility that held regular classrooms when school attendance was high, as well as being a center for vocational education including agriculture and brickmasonry. Many of the men currently living in the Solomon Grove vicinity still earn their living as masons and practice the agricultural skills taught to them and their fathers in the "shop".

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The primary craftsman involved in the construction of the new school was the prominent local stonemason, Silas Owens, Sr. Owens was well known in the north-central region of the state for his skillful, artistic work. His family had owned the land on which the school was built since 1903, when his father, H. W. Owens, had been granted ownership of the property in a court decision. The land was sold to the school district by Silas Owens, Sr. in 1937.

The Solomon Grove Hughes-Smith is being nominated as an amendment to the *Public Schools in the Arkansas Ozarks, 1920 - 1940* multiple property submission under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the building is locally significant for its association with the evolution of the public school system in the Ozark Mountain region and is testimony to the effectiveness of Smith-Hughes Act. The school, along with the church, provided a focal point for the small and scattered farming community. As such, the Smith-Hughes Building is also significant under Criterion A for its direct association with the historic African-American settlement at Solomon Grove. Architecturally, the Solomon Grove Smith-Hughes Building is very similar in appearance to other vocational and agricultural buildings constructed during this period throughout the Ozark Mountain region. This building, however, is locally significant under Criterion C for its association with the prominent local stonemason, Silas Owens, Sr. The uncoursed, rough-cut stonework reflects Owens' not infrequent use of the herringbone pattern and is similar to other Owens-constructed buildings in the area.



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The Solomon Grove Hughes-Smith is being nominated as an amendment to the *Public Schools in the Arkansas Ozarks, 1920 - 1940* multiple property submission under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the building is locally significant for its association with the evolution of the public school system in the Ozark Mountain region and is testimony to the effectiveness of Smith-Hughes Act. The school, along with the church, provided a focal point for the small and scattered farming community. As such, the Smith-Hughes Building is also significant under Criterion A for its direct association with the historic African-American settlement at Solomon Grove. Architecturally, the Solomon Grove Smith-Hughes Building is very similar in appearance to other vocational and agricultural buildings constructed during this period throughout the Ozark Mountain region. This building, however, is locally significant under Criterion C for its association with the prominent local stonemason, Silas Owens, Sr. The uncoursed, rough-cut stonework reflects Owens' not infrequent use of the herringbone pattern and is similar to other Owens-constructed buildings in the area.

Solomon Grove Smith-Hughes Bldg.  
Damascus vil. (Twin Groves)  
Faulkner Co.  
UTM: 15/551510/3908540















